# SPORT IN SOVIET SOCIETY

## DEVELOPMENT AND PROBLEMS

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## SYNOPSIS

My general premise is that sports and recreations are among the most revealing mirrors of many societies, offering a distinctive insight into social patterns, cultural values and even economic conditions. From this it follows that research on the USSR, using the sport-system as a case-study, may throw light on important characteristics of social processes in Soviet-type societies -- all the more so because the place of sport is evidently more central in the Soviet social system. This study attempts to show the extent to which the forms of recreation which developed in the USSR have or have not coincided with the predictions and aspirations of Marxist writers about playful activities in the society of the future.

The study contains a historical account of sport in Russia and the USSR, with sections devoted to each of the main periods into which Russian and Soviet history is conventionally broken down according to the stages of its economic and political development. In addition, a special section is devoted to Soviet sport as a reflection of Soviet foreign policy.

Sport is taken in the widest sense to include, too, the systems of physical education which developed in Russian and Soviet schools and colleges. The Introduction examines the various Western and Soviet concepts of physical culture, sport and receational activities.

To my mother who worked so hard for me; to Rashida who sustained me;and to Geoff who tried to turn water into wire

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# SPORT IN SOVIET SOCIETY: DEVELOPMENT AND PROBLEMS

## 1. Origins of and Approach to Research on Soviet Sport

My desire to undertake this research springs from a long-standing involvement in sport and a more recent interest in the study of Soviet society. In 1961, I was able to combine the two by going to the USSR, where I lived and worked for five years and had an opportunity to observe and engage in Soviet sport.

In my first period of residence in the USSR, from July 1961 to August 1965, I was initially a postgraduate student (for 18 months) and subsequently an employee of a publishing-house in Moscow. As a student, I took an active part in student sporting activities as a member of student football and tennis teams and as a participant in less organised pursuits -- e.g., week-end rambles, fishing and skiing excursions. As a Soviet employee and trade-union member, I took part in sporting activities organised from my workplace (summer and winter fishing and shooting and chess) and then became a member of the Spartak Sports Society, playing regularly for the Moscow Spartak badminton team (1963-65). I also took part in a wide range of sports activities that included football most Sunday mornings in summer at the Lenin Stadium (and often, too, in the yard of my block of flats), tennis, swimming, skiing and chess.

As a spectator, I watched a great variety of sporting contests at levels from backyard to international matches, in Moscow and Leningrad, the Baltic republics, the Transcaucasus and Central Asia.

Finally, as the part-time Moscow correspondent (1961-65 and 1970-71) of the journal of the British Olympic Association, I was able to see sports organisations and amenities in different parts of the country, making special sports-tours of the three Baltic republics in 1964 and of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in 1965, which afforded an opportunity to discuss sport widely with administrators and athletes and see sport at various levels: school, children's sports-club, trade-union-society, factory-circle and collective-farm.

In my second period of residence in the USSR, from October 1970 to March 1971, I was again a resident employee of the same publishing house, though I now had specific research purposes in mind in revisiting Moscow. Largely because I was a Soviet employee, I gained access to primary sources normally inaccessible to Western scholars: materials in the Sports Archives of the Central State Institute of Physical Culture and Sport as well as in sports-libraries and museums both at the Central State Institute of Physical Culture and the Lenin Stadium. I became a regular member of a 'Keep Fit' (Bodrost' i zdorov'ye) group which met twice weekly at the Lenin Stadium. I also managed to visit (through the good offices of the USSR-Great Britain Society) two sports boarding-schools (one in Tallinn and one in Kiev) and other sports complexes and to interview a number of sports officials, sportsmen and physical educationalists. Some of these meetings developed into extensive less formal contracts: for example, an international sportsman played host at his town and

country homes, took me to training-sessions and sports-events and on a tour of his former institute. Since this second period of residence, I have managed to spend at least one month of each year in the Soviet Union.

This residential and first-hand experience provided me with opportunities for gaining some insight into an area of Soviet social behaviour revealing not only the workings of a set of institutions but also something of the motives, attitudes, response-patterns and values of those who work within them. It also led me to the conclusion that a periodised study of sport could contribute to an understanding of the nature of Soviet society, and of the place of sport in society in general. After reading material on sport in other societies, primarily Great Britain and the USA, and on the sociology of sport, I undertook this research, having in mind some questions to which I wanted to find answers -- questions generally concerning the relationships between sport and other components of the culture of a society -- particularly the relations between the state, social groups and individuals -- and, specifically, about sport as a 'mirror' of Soviet society and of Soviet society as 'mirrored' in sport. I would now formulate these initially half-formed questions, using Russian and Soviet society as a case-study, as follows:

(a) to what extent is sport an integral and essential part of the particular society in which it exists?

(b) to what extent does it act, if at all, as an instrument of social control, especially in regulating tensions between state and citizens?

(c) can a periodised study of the development of sport in a society throw light on the social rôle and social functions of sport in that society?

(d) can such a study shed any significant light on the social and political nature of the society concerned?

## 2. Some Implications of Competing Terminologies: Sport and Sports Sociology

In order to explain how I arrived at my initial hypotheses and my conclusions, I set out below what I see as general problems of understanding the place of sport in society and what specific problems a Soviet-type society seems to raise in the light of the conceptual framework I have used. This approach to sport is central to the whole of this study of the relationships between sport and other activities taking place in society and to my conception of the evolution of sport through time.

It is apparent that sport touches life at many points -- so many that it is difficult to define sport or set limits to sporting activity. As we shall see below, there exist significant differences in the commonly-accepted interpretations of 'sport' in the West and the USSR; in neither country is there a single generally-accepted definition.

### A. Western views and terms

In England, as Peter McIntosh has written, sport "covers activities ranging from mountaineering to making love, from motor-racing to playing practical jokes. As a noun it can refer to a man, a woman, a game, a pastime, a chase, a hunt, a fight, a joke or even a botanical freak."[1] Sport is, therefore, a highly

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[1] McIntosh, P., Sport in Society, Watts, London, 1968, p.11.

ambiguous term, having different meanings for different people in different situations. Its ambiguity is attested to by the range of topics treated in the sports-columns of daily newspapers: one may find accounts of various sports-competitions, advertisements for the latest sporting fashions, advice on how to improve one's skills in certain games and essays on the state of given organised sports, including discussions of such matters as recruitment, financial success and scandal. The broad, yet loose, compass of sport reflected in the mass media and writings on sport in general suggests that sport has to be dealt with on different planes of discourse. The American sociologist, J.W.Loy, has provided a classification of sport on four levels:

(i) as a game-occurrence or event;

(ii) as an institutionalised game;

(iii) as a social institution;

(iv) as a social situation.[2]

These categories are as relevant for Soviet society as they are for any Western industrial societies where organised sport plays an important part in everyday life.

a) Sport as a game-occurrence

Perhaps most often when people think of the meaning of 'sport' they think of sports. Sports in this sense are games of a special type. That is, a sport, as one of many "sports", may be viewed as an actual game-occurrence or event. A game may be defined as any form of playful competition whose outcome is determined by physical skill, strategy or chance, employed singly or in combination.[3]

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[2] Loy, J.W., "The Nature of Sport: A Definitional Effort," in Loy, J.W., Kenyon, G.S. (eds.), Sport, Culture, and Society, Collier-Macmillan, London, 1969, pp.56-71.

[3] This definition is largely based on the work of Caillois, R., Man, Play and Games, Thames and Hudson, London, 1962, and Roberts and Sutton-Smith (see Roberts, J.M., "Games in Culture," American Anthropologist, 1959, No. 61, pp.597-605; and Roberts, J.M., Sutton-Smith, B., "Child-Training and Game Involvement," Ethnology, 1962, No.1, pp.166-185).

b) Sport as an institutionalised game

To treat sport as an institutionalised game is to consider it as an abstract entity. For example, the organisation of a football-team as described in a rule-book can be discussed without reference to the members of a particular team; the relationships among team-members can be characterised without reference to personalities or to particular times and places. In treating sport as an institutionalised game, Loy conceives of it as "distinctive enduring patterns of culture and social structure combined into a single complex, the elements of which include values, norms, sanctions, knowledge and social positions (i.e., rôles and statuses)."[4]

c) Sport as a social institution

Extending the notion of sport as an institutional pattern still further, we can see that, in its broadest sense, the term 'sport' implies a social institution. Schneider writes that the term institution "denotes an aspect of social life in which distinctive value-orientations and interests, centring upon large and important social concerns . . . generate or are accompanied by distinctive modes of social interaction. Its use emphasises 'important' social phenomena; relationships of 'strategic' structural significance."[5] I would argue here that the significance of sport in modern industrial society justifies its consideration as a social institution. Dunning writes about sport in Britain that "the

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4 Loy, op.cit., p.62.

5 Schneider, L., "Institution," in Gould, J., Kolb, W. (eds.), A Dictionary of the Social Sciences, Free Press, New York, 1964, p.338.

sports movement is one of the most far-flung social movements of our time. It appears to be very deeply rooted. In some sense or another, it cuts right across the boundaries of class, race, religion, ethnic group and nation."[6] Boyle says about American sport that "it permeates any number of levels of contemporary society, and it touches upon and deeply influences such disparate elements as status, race relations, business life, automotive design, clothing styles, the concept of the hero, language, and ethical values. For better or for worse it gives form and substance to much in American life."[7]

In referring to sport as a social institution, there is implied a social organisation of sport or a <u>sport-system</u> composed of all the institutions in society which organise, facilitate, and regulate human action in sport situations. Such organisations as sports-goods manufacturers, sports-clubs, sports-teams, national governing bodies for amateur and professional sports, publishers of sports-magazines, etc., may be seen as constituting parts of a sport-system. Such a concept seems useful mainly for macro-social analysis in relation to sport. We can refer to the sport-system in an historical and/or comparative perspective. For example, we can speak of the sport-system of nineteenth-century Russia or contrast the sport-system of the USSR with that of Britain or the USA.

d) <u>Sport as a social situation</u>

As we have just noted, the sport-system is composed of all

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6 Dunning, E. (ed.), <u>The Sociology of Sport</u>, Cass, London, 1971, p. xviii.

7 Boyle, R., <u>Sport -- Mirror of American Life</u>, Little, Brown, Boston, 1963, p.3.

social institutions in society by which human action is facilitated and regulated in sport-situations. A sport-situation consists of any social context wherein individuals are involved with sport. And the term situation denotes ". . . the total set of objects, whether persons, collectivities, culture objects, or himself to which an actor responds."[8] The set of objects related to a specific sport-situation may be quite diverse, ranging from the elements of the social and physical environments of a football-match to those associated with two fans arguing the pros and cons of the manager of their local football team. Involvement in a sport-situation may be direct -- in the case of a participant or 'producer' -- or indirect (vicarious) -- in the case of a spectator or 'consumer'.

Following from these four levels at which Western sociologists generally discuss, we may follow Loy and Kenyon and define the sociology of sport in its broadest sense as being concerned with "the description and explanation of the interrelationships between sport and various levels of society. More specifically, sport sociology is the study of primary units of social life, basic social institutions, and fundamental social processes influencing, and affected by, human behaviour in sport-situations."[9]

B. Soviet views and terms

In established Soviet conceptualising, sport as a game-occurrence is considered to be part of physical culture. Physical culture is said, in fact, to consist of four components:

(a) organised physical education (gymnastics),

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8 Friedsom, H.J., "Social Situation," in Gould and Kolb (eds.), op.cit., p.667.

9 Loy and Kenyon, op.cit., p.83.

(b) playful activities (games),

(c) all forms of (socially approved) active leisure-pursuits (e.g., 'tourism')

(d) and organised sport.[10]

a) Organised physical education consists of general physical exercises with a therapeutic motive uppermost (e.g., morning exercises or P.E. in school); physical exercises with a sporting bias (such as gymnastics, calisthenics and acrobatics); physical exercises for utilitarian work-purposes (e.g., 'labour gymnastics'); and physical exercises for mass artistic or aesthetic display.

b) Playful activities may be individual, group or mass games which, although not as a strictly regulated obligation, are based on generally-accepted rules and relatively stable conditions of conduct.

c) Active leisure activities are included in physical culture as long as they are considered to add to the mental and physical well-being of the individual or to that of the community in general. Some pursuits are sometimes referred to more narrowly as 'tourism' -- which consists of a variety of organised outdoor pursuits including hiking, camping and rock-climbing.

d) Organised sport is regarded as a playful, competitive physical or mental activity, based on rules and norms, with the object of achieving a result. Soviet writers generally distinguish three forms of organised sport;-

(i) sports where the process of contest necessitates motor activity, skill or prowess employing strength

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10 These definitions are largely based on those provided in Novikov, A.D., Matveyev, L.P. (eds.), Teoriya fizicheskovo vospitaniya, Moscow, 1959, pp.95-136.

or craft (such as athletics, weightlifting, boxing, wrestling, gymnastics, swimming, rowing, skiing, skating or shooting); these can be subdivided according to the dominant skill involved -- e.g., according to speed, stamina, strength or craft.

(ii) sports similar to those in the first group but involving control of some external device or animal -- bicycle, motorcycle, car, boat, aeroplane or horse.

(iii) cerebral games (e.g., chess and draughts).

In other Soviet writings, the word 'sport' is sometimes used in somewhat different senses. As a leading Soviet sport theorist, Prof. N.I.Ponomaryov, has noted, "some writers take sport as the dominant form of expression of physical culture; they therefore use the concept 'sport' as a synonym for the concept 'physical culture'."[11] Moreover, the combined expression "physical culture and sport" is commonly found in Soviet writings on sport although, strictly speaking, it is incorrect -- since, in terms of the categories of widely-accepted Soviet theory, sport is a component of physical culture and not something separate.

Besides being a form of 'game-occurrence', for some Soviet authors sport is also a "social institution with the function of socialisation."[12] Others see sport in an even broader sense. Thus: "Sport is an important and complex social phenomenon. It may be viewed as physical exercise for the purpose of attaining top results and victories in competition; as a unique social movement

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[11] Ponomaryov, N.I., "K voprosu o predmete marksistkoi sotsiologii fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta," Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1973, No.1, p.63.

[12] Ponomaryov, N.I., "Fenomen igry i sporta," Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1972, No.8, p.6.

involving millions of people and consistently confirming lofty humane ideals; as the sum total of state and public organisations that help a certain vital social sphere to function; and as a complex and lofty art-form that inspires the sportsman and provides spectators with real aesthetic enjoyment."[13] This treatment of aspects of sport thus produces categories close enough to the Western categories described above (a game-occurrence, an institutionalised game, a social institution and a social situation) to provide a certain common language, applicable to both Soviet and Western situations in dealing with the concept of sport in this research.

The four components in the Soviet framework -- organised physical education, playful activities, active leisure-pursuits and sport -- together comprise physical culture which, itself, is regarded as part of the overall culture of a society. It is -- "the sum total of social achievements connected with man's physical development and education . . . (it is) part of the overall culture of society and represents all measures taken to make people healthy and improve their physical abilities."[14] This rather broad and explicitly instrumental definition (perhaps predictable in a planned 'conscious' society) implies that sport may be a separate sector of culture but is seen as an integral part of a broadly-conceived sphere of cultural life. In terms of its social significance, it is seen, to use the Marxist terms current in the USSR, as part of the cultural 'superstructure' of society resting on the 'basis' of the (ownership) relations of production; it is therefore expected to differ in nature and functions in different types of society.

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13 Kuchevsky, V.B., "Sport kak sovokupnost' obshchestvennykh otnoshenii," Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1972, No.9, p.5.

14 Entsiklopedichesky slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu, Vol. 111, Moscow, 1963, p.226

The following explanation of the place of sport in society is a fairly recent authoritative Soviet view: "The abolition of private ownership opens the way to the objective process of enjoying play and creativity . . . The Marxist theory of physical culture is concerned not with an abstract relationship between sport and social activities, not with the exclusiveness of sport outside of real life, but with a relationship between sport and the sum total of all social relations, with social-labour and social-cognitive activities, with other socially functioning institutions. In other words, sport is a voluntary physical and aesthetic activity, a relatively independent form of play, arising on the basis of the 'realm of need'."[15]

Another writer, likewise, emphasises the dependence of sport on the socio-economic structure of society, yet endows it with a certain autonomy: "The nature and level of development of sport are determined primarily by a society's entire socio-economic structure. On the other hand, sport has its specific laws and contradictions which act as an internal motive-force of development."[16] Sport, therefore, it is claimed, while shaped basically by the ownership-relations of the society in which it exists, has, at the same time, certain properties that give it more independence than other elements of the social superstructure (such as state institutions like the police, the army and the judiciary or -- in the realm of culture -- education, literature and the arts).

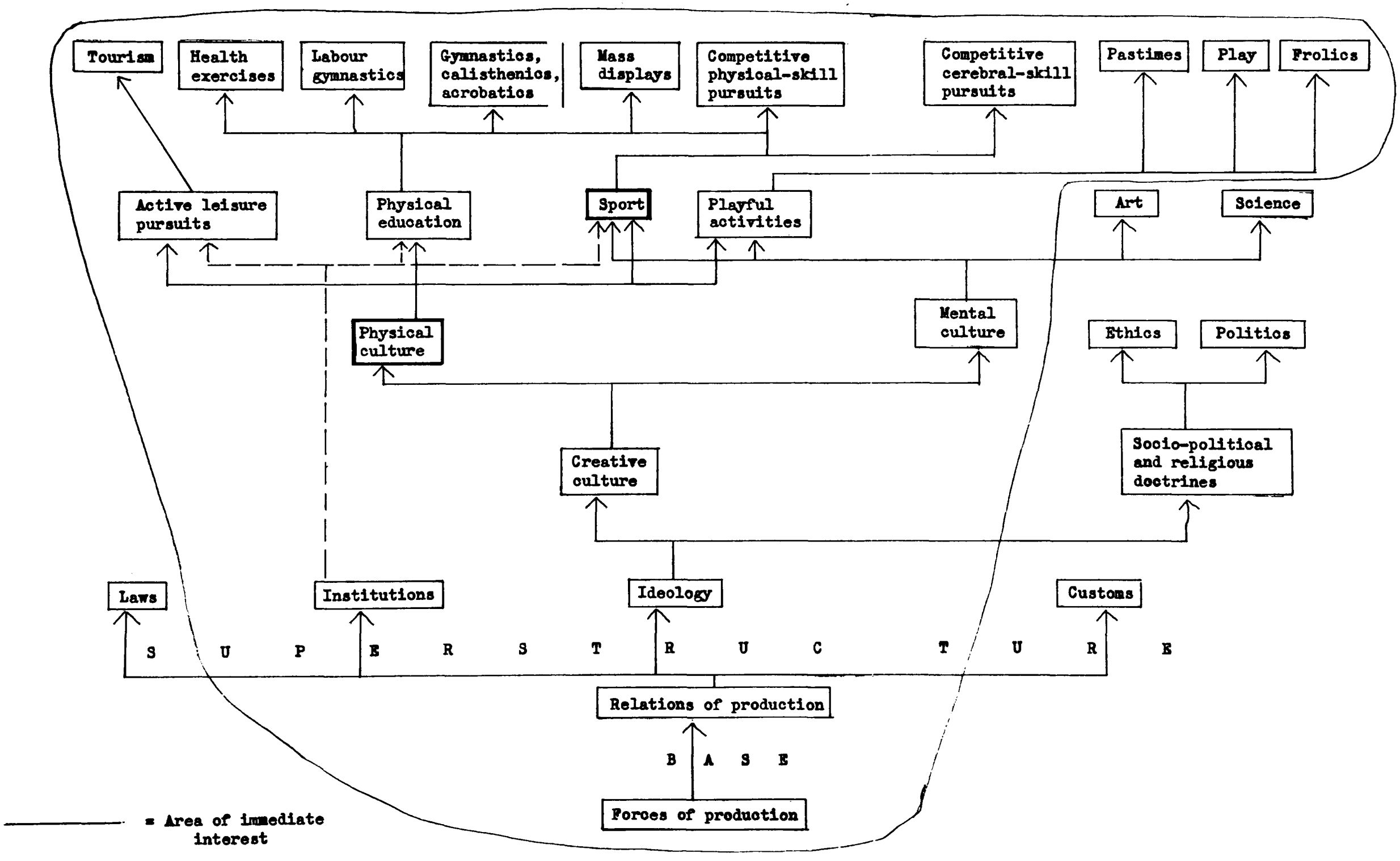
Figure 1 represents an attempt to portray the Soviet view of the component parts of physical culture and their relationships.

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15 Novikov, A.D., Grishin, V.G., "Igra i sport," Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1973, No.3, p.10.

16 Talalayev, Y.A., "Sport -- oblast' mirnovo sorevnovaniya," Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1973, No.1, p.7.

**Figure 1** **Sport in Society: the Soviet view**



The concepts implicit in Figure 1 serve, perhaps, to illuminate a Soviet definition of the sociology of sport: "The sociology of physical culture and sport is the science of the social nature, place and rôle of physical culture and sport in society. The science studies physical culture and sport as a compact social system; it studies the major laws (my italics -- JWR) of the structure, development and functioning of physical culture and sport as phenomena of social life."[17] This definition differs from that commonly given by Western sociologists of sport in that, while the latter are concerned (at least in principle) with investigating the two-way interaction between sport and other components of a social system, the former would appear to concentrate overwhelmingly on the influence of society on sport. There also seems to be in Soviet thinking an element of the ideal rather than the actual (not expressed in the above-quoted definition or Figure 1), a concern with what the authorities would like sport to be rather than what it is. This is, above all, evident in the primarily instrumental goals assigned physical education by the state: "The ultimate goal of physical education in our state is to prepare the younger generation for a long and happy life, highly productive labour for the benefit of society and for defence of their socialist homeland."[18] Prof. Ponomaryov is even more explicit: "Physical culture and sport in socialist society, as a complex multifunctional phenomenon of social life, has several social functions: to contribute to the formation of a harmonious personality, to socialisation and integration, to political, moral, mental and

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17 Ponomaryov, op.cit., (1973, No.1), p.64.

18 Belorusova, V.V., Pedagogika, Moscow, 1972, pp.182-183.

aesthetic education, to health-protection and improvement, to the development of people's physical capabilities, to the accumulation and transmission of knowledge and experience in motor activity, to rational utilisation of free time, to the forging of international cultural contacts, to greater international representation (i.e., more Soviet representatives on international sports-bodies -- JWR), to the fight for peace and friendship between peoples, etc."[19]

Yet another problem in trying to identify the penumbra of meaning surrounding the word 'sport' is that nuances change in the usages of people both in different cultures and among various social groups and at different times within a single culture. In the USSR during the 1920's, for example, as we shall see (pp.199 et seq. below), not only did the state and members of the public tend to see sport in differing ways, but so did various competing official and semi-official groups. Thus, an Army group thought of sport mainly in terms of paramilitary games and exercises; the minds of members of a trade-union group turned quite naturally to 'production-gymnastics' and newly-invented 'socialist workers' games' in the first place; for many Komsomol-members, sport evoked images of competitive tourneys; a strong health group thought only in terms of 'physical culture' and used the word 'sport' itself to denigrate physical competition as an evil deriving from bourgeois society -- while to the Proletkul'tists, it conjured up dreams of socialist pageants and spectacles. (Of course, diverging notions in the search for the ideal, for the forms appropriate to a new society, emerged, in the years immediately following the revolution, in all fields of culture -- in literature and theatre as much as in sport.)

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19 Ponomaryov, N.I., "Sport i obshchestvo," Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1973, No.6, p.72.

Although official views of what constituted physical culture and sport became more uniform with the onset of classical Stalinist controls and full-scale industrialisation at the end of the 1920's, the terms have remained loosely-defined to the present day. On the whole, official conceptualising has been governed by normative considerations -- i.e., promotion of the activities that the state has favoured.[20] All this makes comparison difficult between the sports or sports systems of different societies.

C. Similarities and differences

'Sport', then, is a highly ambiguous term about which there exists little consensus among Western sociologists and not much more among their Soviet counterparts. Even amid the confusion, there are certain marked discrepancies between Western and Soviet approaches to sport:

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20 While countenancing chess and draughts, for example, the state has stopped short of including such activities as dominoes and card-playing in the Soviet sports-movement (see p.369). Sometimes it draws distinctions within a sport: thus, men's football and wrestling are included in the sports-movement, women's football and wrestling are not (see pp.543-544); body-building and boxing are recognised as Soviet 'sports' as long as they keep within certain officially-prescribed limits -- which are not static. In yet other 'sports', the state appears to have been less motivated by functional than by political factors, tolerating activities such as horse-racing and folk games, which involve gambling and which imply values that go against the official ethos, as a concession to popular tastes.

(a) the controllers of the Soviet sports-movement would not tolerate such 'sports' of simulated or actual violence as professional wrestling and roller-coasting[21]; even American football, professional boxing and professional ice-hockey would (at present) be excluded because of the personal violence that (largely for commercial reasons) has become ensconced in those activities;

(b) a number of paramilitary 'sports' (such as fire-fighting sport, wireless communication and model-racing), some elements of 'tourism' and mass aesthetic-expressive displays that are part of the Soviet concept of 'physical culture' would surely not come under even the broadest definition of 'sport' in the West;

(c) physical culture is seen in Soviet Marxist terms as part of society's cultural 'superstructure', resting on the 'base' of the 'relations of production' (i.e., the dominant property-relationships in a given society), and therefore differing in its nature and functions in different socio-economic formations. In the West, sport is most frequently viewed in 'consensus' terms, as bringing together people from all walks of life, contributing to the stability of society and so performing important functions of social control quite unrelated, however, to ideas of class conflict,

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[21] Roller-coasting is a form of roller-skating race around a circular track between two teams. Interest in the 'sport' lies not so much in who wins as in the spectacular and 'violent' ways in which opponents may be stopped. Women frequently participate, apparently to add erotic spice to the activity.

to any dominant ideology or to prevailing ownership-relationships;

(d) for most of the Soviet period, as we shall see, physical culture and sport have received official attention and resources mostly because of their utility in preparation for work and military training. In this, one may see an echo of that side of the Western puritanical tradition in which recreation is seen as acceptable -- but only as an adjunct to or preparation for work. The play element is primarily of instrumental importance; it is not, as Huizinga defined it, merely "a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious'... It is not "an activity connected with no material interest" from which "no profit can be gained".[22] On the contrary, "as distinct from the idealist approach which identifies physical culture and sport with play and does not attribute any utilitarian importance to it, Soviet Marxist-Leninist theory asserts that sport has an important social and practical function in that it is a means of preparing people for work, of improving their health and their functional potentialities."[23] As with other means of recreation and leisure -- e.g., television and the cinema -- the official emphasis is on education rather than entertainment and fun.

For practical reasons, we shall, in the body of the research, generally adopt the Soviet interpretation of physical culture and sport, treating them not merely as a special type of game or exercise but as a social institution and as a social situation in the sense explained above.

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22 Huizinga, J., Homo Ludens, Paladin, London, 1970, p.198.

23 Asmolova, V.I., Peterson, A.A., "O svyazi fizicheskovo i esteticheskovo vospitaniya," Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1970, No.11, p.37.

## 3. Sport and Society: Conceptual Problems and Background

How is the relationship of sport to society to be understood? What hypotheses can we try to test? It seems logical in this study to take as a starting-point the Marxist one -- which is claimed to underlie the official Soviet view. This, as we have seen, argues that sport in any society is given its overall shape by that society's socio-economic foundation. If games are, in fact, elements of a cultural 'superstructure' and, in some sense, images of its values and norms, ultimately reflecting its class relationships, a civilisation can be studied and analysed as well through its games as through other elements of its culture -- although, of course, by no means all elements will be equally revealing. Games will reflect a society's cultural pattern; the games people play and the way they play them should be capable of being related to the behaviour of a people and, ultimately, to the economic base of their society. The nature of sporting activities could also be expected to alter with a change to a new socio-economic formation.

An implication of this theory is that the dominant pattern of sport will reflect the ideology of the dominant class and serve its ends. Contemporary Soviet writers have little difficulty in pointing out commercialisation of the 'sports industry' under capitalism -- with the implication of how little 'play' in such conditions has in common with the free, spontaneous activity seen as its essence by Huizinga. If consistent, they would point out further mystificatory features of the surrounding established sports ideology -- the whole 'ballyhoo' and 'razzamatazz' of flag-raising, community

singing, hat-holding solemnities, etc., -- the irrational loyalties that are cultivated through sport and the arguments used to justify the existence of the entire sports-system of officials, trainers, semi- and full-time professionals, spectators, sports-ware manufacturers, advertisers, football-pools-promoters, 'pot-hunters', drum majorettes and so on.[24]

But, highly-organised sport, looming large in mass consciousness, would seem to be common to all urban-industrial societies -- including Soviet society. Therefore, Soviet writers are to some extent inhibited from thorough-going critique -- in a way we are not.

The hypothesis is that the kind of sport dominant in a society can tell us something about class relations, which are ultimately and essentially determined by the type of dominant class it has. The games prevalent in various types of socio-economic formations, including Soviet society, can therefore be examined to test the

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[24] This is not to suggest that all sporting activities engaged in by all sections of the population lack a real play element, or are invariably commercially or politically manipulated. Of course, people play games, often casually with friends, as a free expression of and an outlet for physical and mental energy. Moreover, their choice of game may be governed by their physical environment -- long periods of snow and ice during the year, for example, disposing them to 'winter' sports. What is more, a wide variety of sports involving different modes of playing may flourish within a society, reflecting the various subcultures of the different social groups.

hypothesis.[25] Let us, then, briefly examine the evidence in relation to some societies of the past, already well-researched by both Western and Soviet scholars. What follows is not intended as a potted social history of sport, but as glimpses of key cultures and periods as perceived by Marxism.

(i) Primitive and classical societies

At this stage of social development, Marxist hypotheses suggest (though we have little direct evidence), there was no regular economic surplus to maintain a clear-cut ruling group not engaged in securing the necessities of life and having the leisure to disport itself; society was not such as could permit the development of organised sports as leisure-activities.[26] Sport -- if, indeed, playful physical activities could be termed such in those conditions -- would appear to have been a direct adjunct of work and combat.

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25 Although the French sociologist, Roger Caillois, has written that it is quite impossible without prior analysis "to determine which are in accordance with, confirm, or reinforce established values, and, conversely, which contradict and flout them, thus representing compensations or safety-valves for a given society" (Caillois, op.cit., p.78), the Marxist hypothesis being applied here would seem to suggest that the dominant pattern of organised sport in any class society will tend to reflect the ideology and the requirements of the dominant class in that society and constitute part of a sometimes highly elaborate apparatus for that class's self-legitimation.

26 For a Soviet Marxist view, see Ponomaryov, N.I., Vozniknovenie i pervonachal'noye razvitie fizicheskovo vospitaniya, Moscow, 1970.

The importance of such 'sport' must have lain above all in the transmission of skills through social training as a means of ensuring the livelihood and survival of the group through increasing its mastery over nature. Thus, swimming, hunting and fishing were absolutely needed for providing food and even for survival. All three had to be highly-skilled occupations and had therefore to be practised. Primitive warfare among tribes competing for limited resources of food-providing territory also required ways of training the body to extremes of physical endurance. In the same way, magical tribal dances and games can be seen as social activities objectively serving to adapt the group to the labour of hunting, gathering or even cultivation or to the movements of skirmishing or personal combat.

In the North-Mediterranean city-states, sport took on a new dimension -- the absorption of surplus wealth and leisure. This had important implications for the development of sport. A certain level of economic development was necessary before organised games and sports requiring more than rudimentary equipment or professionalism could appear. The part played by sport in the new urban environment became more complex and differentiated for various groups within the community, depending on their relationship to the means of production. In the ancient Greek city-states, for example, the exploitation of slave labour afforded free-born Greeks their means of leisure and sport, enabling some to train for ten months before each Olympic festival; yet slaves themselves were denied participation in sport.[27] The social structure was here reflected

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Willets, R.F., "Social Aspects of Greek Physical Education," in McIntosh, P., et al., Landmarks in the History of Physical Education, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1973, p.5.

in sport and even reinforced by it. The leisure of the minority of the population, the free-born citizens, was devoted in varying degrees to civic duties, peaceful and warlike; in the more advanced Greek city-states, these duties engendered organised sports and systems of physical education -- from the physical and military training of Sparta to the more balanced Athenian system. This form of civilisation implied that physical pursuits should become systematised, playing their part in a general theory and practice of social behaviour; they were to be an ideological justification for the status-quo and the continued privileged existence of both the Greek ruling class and the free-born citizens at the expense of the slaves. Philosophical debates developed among Greeks about the relationship between physical and general education, between physical education, military training, sport, health and social activities.

The question of sport absorbing leisure and surplus wealth became more acute in Imperial Rome of the first and second centuries. It has been estimated that "in the first century, Rome had one day of holiday for every working day."[28] Moreover, unlike the slaves of the Greek city-states, the slaves of Rome "shared in the recreations and amusements of the citizen population and enjoyed the same facilities at the baths."[29] The whole economy of Rome in fact rested upon the employment of slaves who, in the second century, make up a third of the total population of some 1,500,000. The only people who did not have "the equivalent of 17 or 18 out of every 24 hours free were the bureaucrats, administrative officials and professional men."[30] In this environment, sport was employed

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28 McIntosh, P.C., "Physical Education in Imperial Rome," in ibid., p.42.

29 Ibid., p.40.

30 Ibid., pp.41-42.

directly to train the body for work and warfare less than it was in Hellenic civilisation, since the Roman army had its own specialised form of physical training and work played a far less important part in people's lives than it had done in the Greek city-states. The military and work motives for sport became secondary to that of providing diversion and recreation for men and women who had little work and much leisure. To overcome the boredom which this state of affairs might have caused, to divert the population from thoughts and acts that might have threatened the continued rule of the Roman elite and to provide an outlet for the desires and passions of a populace debarred from political representation, sporting spectacles were provided at public expense. It has been estimated that "out of 159 public holidays in the year, 93 (i.e., nearly 60%) were occupied with 'games' provided by the state."[31]

The quite deliberate use of sport by the ruling class of Imperial Rome to perpetuate its own rule and to distract the attention of the populace from politics and socio-economic inequalities was aptly expressed in Juvenal's phrase '<u>panem et circenses</u>'[32] -- the circuses being the location, like the Greek hippodromes, for all manner of games. McIntosh has written that "the Emperors and the wealthy in general would not have gone to such lengths as they did to provide lavish festivals, spectacles, public baths and other buildings, even in times of treasury shortages, if they had not feared the political consequences of disappointing public expectation. The provision of facilities for physical recreation... made no small contribution to the problem of keeping the have-nots

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31 <u>Ibid.</u>, p.42.

32 Juvenal, <u>Satires</u>, x. p.81. To Juvenal we owe, too, the famous phrase "mens sana in corpore sano" (<u>ibid.</u>, p.356).

at a subsistence level of contentment."[33] In Rome, these facilities were associated with extremely corrupting cruelty.

This 'fetishism' of sport by a ruling group seems to be a key feature of all urban societies in which the interests of different social groups stand in fundamental opposition. Referring to sport in Byzantium ('the second Rome' -- Moscow was to become the third), the Byzantine historian Procopius (c.500 - c.562) wrote that the common people "develop a fierce and rancorous partisanship which is as irrational as it is ineradicable...All that matters is whether their side wins...They may be starving and they do not care; they may be persecuted and they do not notice. If all goes well with the Blues and Greens, then all goes well with them. It is a cancer of the soul."[34] Later on, in industrial Europe, this manipulation of the populace through sport was to take on infinitely greater proportions, albeit in a more humane way than the exploitation of 'games' in either the Hippodrome or the Circus. The historical parallel has been noted by a modern American writer on Byzantium: "In time the factionalism of the Hippodrome became the approved outlet for other disputes. A man cheering for his team might also be cheering for his sect in the innumerable theological quarrels that plagued the Byzantine Empire. To this the modern world has no real parallel to offer, unless it be the conflicting religious doctrines embodied in a Glasgow Rangers v. Glasgow Celtic game in Scotland, or the ardour of those who follow Notre Dame football in

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33 McIntosh, op.cit., p.38.
34 Procopius, History of the Wars, London, 1949, Book 1, Chap. 24, p.4

the United States."[35] The provision by the ruling group of a diversion from the realities of daily life has its parallel, of course, in religious rituals and paraphernalia of the temple. Both, served in their own way, as opiates of the people -- a point we shall return to later (see p.68 below).

The explicit manipulation of the public through lavish sports spectacles naturally brought changes in the nature of sporting activities, which became increasingly professionalised and commercialised. In the Greek city-states of the sixth century B.C., many physical activities appear to have been relatively spontaneous; the early Greeks ran, wrestled, swam, threw the discus, etc., because those activities appealed to them; they rarely seem to have specialised or trained in any one particular activity. With greater division of labour and surplus wealth and leisure, however, athletics and other sports began to become full-time occupations for gifted performers and, under the stress of competition in such festivals as the Olympic Games, special training-methods were devised to improve natural ability. By the time Rome came to dominate the Mediterranean world, "the Greek athletics festivals had been usurped by professional performers and, in the process of commercialisation, they lost much of the dignity and idealism which had been such noble features in the early years."[36] Thus, the '<u>ludus</u>' programme of games in Rome's <u>Circus Maximus</u> (which, in the time of Julius Caesar, had

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35 Arnott, P., <u>The Byzantines and their World</u>, Macmillan, London, 1973, p.75

36 McIntosh, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.44.

seats for 150,000 spectators -- i.e., was bigger than any modern British stadium, Wembley -- the biggest -- having mostly standing accommodation for only 100,000 people) "grew to include as many as 24 races a day for as long as 15 days, and the organisation of trainers, veterinary surgeons, grooms, stable police, jockeys and the rest was quite as intricate as that of modern times."[37]

The amount of leisure enjoyed by the people of Rome and the facilities provided by the Roman ruling group to distract the populace were unmatched until the development of the next important urban civilisation in Europe several centuries later. In certain respects, they have yet to be surpassed in the modern world. Although the Middle Ages were by no means devoid of organised sports, tournaments and other spectacles, rigid social distinctions tended to separate 'noble' and 'ignoble' elements in sport. Just as, in Athens, sport excluded slaves, women and even some of the male citizen body, so in feudal Europe, particularly in Renaissance Italy and Tudor England, a new pattern of sport grew up around the needs of the nobility and, for the most part, was never extended to the common people.

(ii) Sport in the British Empire

During the renaissance, the growth of a money economy, the breakdown of feudalism and the rise of a new privileged class of property and intellect were general features of European development; so, too, was the emergence of a substantially new pattern of sport for an industrial and urban population. In developing organised sports, the new industrial ruling class usurped the more casual field

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37 Ibid., p.42.

sports of the feudal aristocracy and altered the entire mode of playing games and even their location. The transition to the new pattern of sport was completed in Britain by the end of the nineteenth century: "The middle classes had produced their own team games such as football and hockey, their own form of track and field athletics, their own swimming competitions and their own racket game of lawn tennis. Rowing and cycling they organised, and into cricket they infiltrated in such numbers that they made it almost a middle-class game. Of all these activities only lawn tennis was invented by the middle class for the middle class. The other sports were discovered in an embryonic state and were developed and organised by the Philistines (i.e., the new industrial bourgeoisie -- JWR). The successful sports were all those that could be practised in or around the growing towns and cities, in suburban gardens, on quite small grass fields, in public parks, on rivers, in public swimming baths and on the public highway."[38]

The utilitarian purposes to which the sports were directed may be seen in the fact that the new sports grew up not as specific leisure-pursuits but as subjects on the curricula of schools -- the 'public' (i.e., private) and the state elementary, the first concerned mainly with the training of the mind, the second mainly with the training of the body.

In the public schools, 'organised sports' began to appear early in the nineteenth century, first as spontaneous recreation for the boys, then officially harnessed and sponsored as a means of moulding character and conditioning behaviour through physical education, as well as of

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McIntosh, P., Sport in Society, p.64.

acquiring physical skills as social accomplishments: "As the scene of the first industrial revolution, Britain had, by the nineteenth century, a prosperous middle class and good communications. These basic conditions allowed seven schools and two universities -- Rugby, Eton, Harrow, Charterhouse, Westminster, Winchester, Shrewsbury, Oxford and Cambridge -- to exercise a considerable influence in Britain, on the continent of Europe, and throughout the expanding empire. In these schools and universities, international sport was born. Most of the games that are now played across the world and which command such earnest attention from kings and presidents were invented by a few hundred wealthy young Victorian Englishmen."[39]

The training of so-called 'middle class' (i.e., ruling class) boys in such character-traits as self-control, self-discipline, initiative, loyalty, competitiveness and leadership, ensconced in an unwritten code of sporting ethics, was intended to prepare them for their future careers principally in laissez-faire capitalism or as agents of colonial development. The moral code of the builder of capitalism and of the British Empire equally applied to and was reinforced by the business-house, the Church and the playing field -- although it was probably industrial organisation and the drive for overseas profits which determined the 'ethics' of both sport and Protestantism.[40] There was no ambiguity about this: "If asked

39 Goodhart, P., Chataway, C., War Without Weapons, W.H.Allen, London, 1968, p.22

40 The historian R.H.Tawney, analysing the changes in religion with the rise in capitalism wrote that the Puritan " once engaged in affairs, brings to them both the qualities and limitations of his creed, in all their remorseless logic. Called by God to labour in his vineyard, he has within

himself a principle at once of energy and of order, which makes him irresistible both in war and in the struggles of commerce. Convinced that character is all and circumstances nothing, he sees in the poverty of those who fall by the way, not a misfortune to be pitied and relieved, but a moral failing to be condemned, and in riches, not an object of suspicion -- though like other gifts they may be abused -- but the blessing which rewards the triumph of energy and ill. Tempered by self-examination, self-discipline, self-control, he is the practical ascetic, whose victories are won not in the cloister, but on the battlefield, in the counting-house, and in the market" (Tawney, R.H., Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, John Murray, London, 1948, pp.230-271). To this McIntosh adds the postscript "and on the playing fields, but not on Sunday" (McIntosh, Sport in Society, op.cit., p.107).

what our muscular Christianity has done, we point to the British Empire. Our Empire would never have been built up by a nation of idealists and logicians."[41] The utility of the new sports, particularly the team-games, in training character and inculcating qualities of value to the ruling class was highlighted by one of the foremost advocates of 'muscular Christianity', the novelist Thomas Hughes (whose athletic heroes in Tom Brown's Schooldays and Ivanhoe epitomise the manly types required to administer capitalism and imperialism in their heyday); in a conversation about cricket between Tom Brown and one of his masters, the virtues of the new organised sports are contrasted to the vices of the old aristocratic sports: "The discipline and reliance on one another which it teaches is so valuable, I think," went on the master, "it ought to be such an unselfish game. It merges the individual in the eleven; he doesn't play that he may win, but that his side may." "That's very true," said Tom, "and that's why football and cricket, now one comes to think of it, are much better games than fives or hare and hounds, or any others where the object is to come in first or to win for oneself, and not that one's side may win."[42]

If games were instrumental in producing a recognised type of self-confident, cooperative and loyal public administrator and industrialist, they also performed the specific function of training an officer class for the army; the public-school playing fields became associated with the imperial battlefields. It must be remembered that, in the short period from the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837 to 1860, there were 11 wars fought by the British

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41
Minchin, J.G.C., Our Public Schools, London, 1901, p.113 (quoted in McIntosh, P., Physical Education in England since 1800, G. Bell & Sons, London, 1972, p.70).

42
Hughes, T., Tom Brown's Schooldays, Faber, London, 1948, p.96.

Army in various parts of the world. (The Crimean War had, in fact, revealed very serious defects in the British Army.) The famous statement attributed to the Duke of Wellington that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton is probably spurious, but when, after a visit to Eton at the end of the 19th century, the French educationalist Père Didon remarked that the boys who learned to command in games there were learning to command the Indies, "he was certainly voicing a view of the value of organised games in school life that was generally accepted."[43] Although military drill was established at Rugby, Harrow, Eton, Westminster and other public schools shortly after the Crimean War, "it was still the playing field that held pride of place in the training of officers for the battlefields."[44]

More direct military and work training for wider sections of the population took place outside the public schools and became systematised in a system of physical training adopted by the elementary schools[45]. This system had its roots in military drill,

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43
McIntosh, Physical Education in England since 1800, p.15.

44
Ibid., p.72.

45
The purpose of the elementary school was officially described as "to form and strengthen the character and to develop the intelligence of the children entrusted to it, and to make the best use of the school years available, in assisting both girls and boys according to their different needs, to fit themselves, practically as well as intellectually, for the work of life...The school must afford them (the children) every opportunity for the development of their bodies, not only in training them in appropriate physical exercises and in encouraging them in organised games, but also by instructing them in the working of some of the simpler laws of health...The corporate life of the school, especially in the playground, should develop that instinct for fair play and for loyalty to one another which is the germ of a wider sense of honour in later life" (Code of Regulations for Elementary Schools, H.M.S.O., 1904, Introduction, p.4).

gymnastics[46] and callisthenics and was designed for a wider section of the population than were the public schools. The link between sport and military combat was particularly evident during the period of rising nationalism and imperialism in the latter part of the 19th century (when, not coincidentally, the first international sports-contests took place between select national teams, drawn from the middle strata of society).

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46 Modern gymnastics, which was to be (and still is) the core of school physical education, originated in Germany as part of preparations for the 'war of liberation' against Napoleon. Johann Jahn, founder of the German Turnen gymnastics-movement, defined his intention as "protecting young people from softness and excess in order to keep them sturdy in the coming struggle for the fatherland" (Geschichte der Korperkultur in Deutschland, 1789-1917, Limpert, Berlin, 1965, p.63). Liberation from the 'French yoke' was, for Jahn, the first step towards the creation of a united German nation, free from feudal class-distinctions and with a liberal (capitalist) constitution. In France, some years later, Baron de Coubertin, who founded the modern Olympic Games (the first tournament taking place in 1896), regarded sport as an important component of educational reform to steel French youth to regain France's lost glory: "Germany had exhumed what remained of the Olympics; why should not France succeed in recapturing its old splendour through the new Olympics" (Senay, A., Hervet, R., Monsieur de Coubertin, Paris, 1956, p.3). Similarly, in Russia, the sports-movement was "inspired by defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05" (Legostaev, F., Fizicheskoye vospitanie i sport v SSSR, Munich, 1951, p.7).

In England, the introduction of a foreign amalgam of gymnastics into the elementary schools was argued for on the following grounds during the debate on the 1870 Education Bill: "Rational gymnastics... would increase work and military power...they would also save money by the dimunition of the Poor Rates, the Police Rates and the expenses of criminal machinery."[47]

At the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, there existed two interrelated systems of physical education in England, the public-school system of organised games and the elementary-school system of physical training. Of course, institutions and organisations outside the education system also exerted an influence upon the developing bourgeois pattern of sport. One important organisation was the Boy Scout movement founded by a British officer, Robert Baden-Powell (1857-1941), during the Boer War: "My idea of training boys in scouting dates from 1897 when I applied it to young soldiers in the 5th Dragoon Guards, having for years previously found the good of developing a man's character before putting upon him the dull routine of training then considered necessary for a soldier."[48] Baden-Powell pinned his faith on troop games and above all on physical fitness through camping, hiking, climbing and other outdoor activities. Here was character-training through physical activities to prepare boys, within the framework of a paramilitary organisation, for "loyal service to king and country".

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47 McIntosh, op.cit., p.108.

48 Reynolds, E.E., Baden-Powell, O.U.P., 1942, p.137.

These 'educational' institutions and organisations had developed to meet social as well as physical needs. At first, they were restricted to the bourgeoisie; but, increasingly, the requirements of monopoly capitalism and the Empire for fit and obedient, smart and orderly workers and soldiers brought the extension of organised sports and physical training to boys and girls of working-class background. Up til then (and for some time to come in certain sports), social distinction had found its reflection in the social exclusiveness of organised games, expressed often in their regulations which distinguished 'gentlemen' from 'players' and, as in rowing and athletics, excluded anyone who was "by trade or employment a mechanic, artisan or labourer."[49] The amateur-professional distinction was first made by the English ruling class "not so much from idealism as to keep the inferior masses out of their private pleasure garden -- sport."[50]

In any case, in the early stages of capitalist development, it was practically impossible for the mass of the population to engage in sport because of lack of free time. Entrepreneurs at that time endeavoured to increase the rate of profit primarily by prolonging the working day. As Karl Marx wrote in the 1860's: "If machinery be the most powerful means for increasing the productiveness of labour -- i.e., for shortening the working-time required in the production of a commodity, it becomes in the hands of capital the most powerful means, in those industries invaded by it, for lengthening the working-day beyond all bounds set by human nature."[51] Leisure-time for engaging in sport therefore did not exist for the working

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49 Quoted in McIntosh, op.cit., p.113.

50 Meisel, W., "The Importance of Being Amateur," in Natan, A. (ed.), Sport and Society, London, 1958, p.129.

51 Marx, K., Capital, Vol. 1, F.L.P.H., Moscow, 1961, p.403.

class: "Time for education, for intellectual development, for the fulfilment of social functions and for social intercourse, for the free-play of his bodily and mental activity, even the rest-time of Sunday...are sheer moonshine! In its blind unrestrainable passion, its were-wolf hunger for surplus labour, capital oversteps not only the moral, but even the merely physical maximum bounds of the working day. It usurps the time for growth, development and healthy maintenance of the body. It steals the time required for the consumption of fresh air and sunlight."[52]

The extension of sports to the working class took place during the transition from laissez-faire to monopoly capitalism; in Britain, this 'democratisation' of sport occurred largely in the last third of the nineteenth century. There were three main reasons for the changes.

Firstly, the campaigns by workmen for shorter working hours reached such proportions that factory-owners and the governments that shared their outlook were compelled to make concessions. For the first time, sections of the working people gained a period of free time over and above that necessary to re-create themselves and their energies for work; men were able to devote part of this period of 'leisure' to sporting activities. As McIntosh has written: "By about 1870 in many parts of the country a campaign by workers for a shorter working day -- the nine hours' day at this time -- became irresistible. This meant that for many workers in industry and business the working week was reduced by six hours. The clerks were the first to have increased leisure concentrated on Saturday

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52
Ibid., p.265.

afternoon but manual workers soon achieved the same concession. It was then, and only then, that the great proliferation of sports clubs and district organisations took place"[53] (my italics -- JWR). Previously, in the 1860's, as George Cadbury, founder of the Birmingham cocoa and chocolate firm had said: "Our working hours at that time were from eight o'clock in the morning until seven-thirty in the evening, Saturdays included. There was no factory in Birmingham, as far as I know, that closed on Saturday afternoons and I believe we were the first to close at midday on Saturdays: people told us it would mean ruin."[54] It did not mean ruin for Cadbury's or other firms -- partly because they were able to make concessions at home on the strength of their enormous profits from abroad, and partly because they were able to 'control' the leisure-activities of their labour-force so as to increase productivity and to keep down labour unrest.

Secondly, once the working class had leisure-time, it was important for the continued existence of 'civilised society' -- as much as it was in Ancient Rome -- to channel workers' energies into relatively 'safe' areas, into sports imbued with just the right type of values and norms -- of obedience, self-discipline, team-work -- that would divert them from the 'idle use of leisure' and from sedition and train them to accept 'polite society's' ideology and, therefore, the status quo. The working class was, therefore, accepted into some 'middle-class' sports on condition that it conformed to bourgeois ethics and conduct of play. Once the value of sport as a distraction from various 'evils' was fully appreciated,

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53 McIntosh, Sport in Society, p.73.

54 Molyneux, D.D., The Development of Physical Recreation in the Birmingham District, 1871-1892, Univ. of Birmingham, 1957, p.89.

some industrialists and like-minded ideologists in the Church even went so far as to introduce sports to working people with a missonary zeal. Several well-known English football clubs, for example, owe their origin to a young minister or curate eager to introduce football to the young men in his congregation: they include Aston Villa (founded in 1874), Bolton Wanderers (1876), Wolverhampton Wanderers (1877), Everton (1878), Queen's Park Rangers (1885), Southampton (1885) and Barnsley (1887). A survey of football clubs which had come into existence by 1880 in Birmingham and district "shows that of 344 clubs, 83, or 24%, are known to have been connected with church, chapel or religious organisation. Many more whose origin is obscure were almost certainly similarly connected. The comparable figure for cricket clubs is 21%."[55] Puritanism prevented (and, to a considerable extent, still prevents) these games being played on Sunday and undoubtedly influenced the thinking of many 'patrons' and 'initiators' who saw sport as the least of the evils that beset the urban populace and as an attraction which might well divert them from 'vices' ranging from drunkenness to economic and political 'agitation'. They saw in the 'democratisation' of sport a means of keeping the victims of the alienated industrial system under close control. To play games with one's workmates and superiors was evidently seen as creating feelings of togetherness which helped disguise what Marxists saw (and see) as the fundamental conflict of interest between labour and capital. Firms were therefore often prepared to pay a price for this by bearing the cost of building sports-grounds, endowing prizes and sponsoring sports

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55 Ibid., p.24.

competitions. When these same entrepreneurs took their businesses abroad (to Russia, for example) they often introduced team games for the same purpose as they had at home -- as a means of consigning any dissatisfactions of their work-force into the oblivion of the 'safe' sphere of sports and of obtaining trouble-free cooperation. A similar motivation lay behind the introduction of sports by colonialists in their imperial possessions -- with the added intention of implanting their values in the new soil. Even today, when colonial empires have crumbled, there remains an almost mystical belief among some Englishmen that one can 'trust' countries or individuals that play such games as cricket and golf (games thought to be imbued especially with the imperial values) but not those like Russia and China that do not.

More important than playing was watching sports spectacles, if only because it involved far more people. As long as sports were played exclusively by bourgeois teams, their attraction to the working class was limited. Football, for example, drew few spectators as long as it was played exclusively by public schoolboys. "During the first eight years of the F.A. Cup Competition, for example, the crowd at the final never exceeded 5,000. As the social origin of the players changed, however, and the centre of the game moved north, so the numbers who watched rather than played increased. In 1885, 27,000 saw the cup-tie between Aston Villa and Preston. The cup-final in 1893 was watched by 45,000 and 80,000 was the average number of spectators over the next ten years."[56] The evident attractiveness of certain sports as spectacles opened up new

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56 Dunning, E., "The Development of Modern Football," in Dunning, E., (ed.), The Sociology of Sport, Cass, London, 1971, p.148.

opportunities to the bourgeoisie for using sport to control the public's consciousness. On the one hand, the growing attraction of sport to working people who had increasing leisure and money could be put to profitable use in a variety of ways -- through entrance charges, advertising, gambling, football-pools, player-transfer-fees, sports journalism, etc. Entrance-fees for watching sporting spectacles led naturally to professional performers and to the promotion of some games as commercial entertainments, particularly football, horse- and greyhound-racing, boxing, wrestling and, in parts of the country where the working class was concentrated, rugby and cricket. On the other hand, spectator sport seemed a useful 'safety-valve' for the release of accumulated aggression resulting from the alienation and frustrations caused by the widespread appalling social conditions of the times. As one modern Marxist writer on sport has put it; "Aggression can also be released by simply watching a match. The identification of the fans on each side with their sporting idols creates a group situation in which the individual can abandon the repression of his unconscious impulses. Untroubled by intellectual scruples, he can relate aggressively to everything that prevents the gratification of his side's collective narcissism. Incidents on the pitch lead to outbursts of hatred, directed against members of the visiting team, the referee (who always appears to favour the other side), a local hero who is off form, or the supporters of the other team who resent your howls of triumph. Those who are subject to oppression and exploitation under the capitalist system are encouraged not to direct their aggression

against its true causes, the frustrations of an alienated society. Instead, they direct a destructive rage, fed on accumulated aggression, against their own selves and against others who are also victims. The element of masochism is part of the very nature of sport."[57]

Not only did the spectator sports provide a release of aggression (which has recently come to be known as 'agro', a word used to describe hooliganism among spectators at football matches); they also gave alienated workers an opportunity for some kind of group affiliation with the performers with whom they felt something in common. The need for this is not hard to find: "In the dingy nineteenth century towns, the proletariat found little opportunity for communal enjoyment, for enjoyable excitement in company with others or for ritual identification with some larger group. The urban working classes in the later nineteenth century were still to a considerable extent drawn from rural backgrounds. The impersonality of life in towns and the need to adjust to secondary forms of social control were conducive to high rates of alienation and anomie amongst them. Gradually, however, the ceremonial battles of the local football team came to form a major outlet for the need for leisure-time excitement and to provide a partial focus for the regular and ritualised expression of identity with the community, thus helping to counter alienation and anomie."[58] With the development of the mode of production and the increasing mechanisation of the labour process, the rôle of the passive spectator took on special significance: "As labour is progressively rationalised and mechanised his lack of will

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57 Vinnai, G., Football Mania, Orbach and Chambers, London, 1973, p.100.

58 Dunning, op.cit.

is reinforced by the way in which his activity becomes less and less active and more and more contemplative."[59] In this situation, the nervous strain carried over from work into leisure-time aroused a desire for a contrasting experience, yet mechanised labour exerted such an influence on the worker's leisure that, after work, he behaved passively, waiting to be entertained -- preferring, eventually, to have his sporting spectacles brought to his armchair via the television-set than actually to attend them himself. "The spectator offers no resistance, but allows himself to be overwhelmed. Since he has learnt at work to comply automatically with business rationality, to acquiesce passively in the demands of his superiors, he retreats in his leisure-time likewise from any independent performance. His imagination shrinks, for anyone who wants to conform must relinquish imagination. The spectator would even prefer not to formulate his own judgment on the sporting event; the mass media commentaries on the game have a magical hold on him. These reporters and commentators are themselves representatives of the system, which thereby seeks to make its enslavement complete."[60] Just as religion had once acted as a drug to control the minds and manipulate the actions of the working people, so commercial spectator sports came to replace religion as the opiate of the masses.

Thirdly, in the last third of the 19th century, changes were taking place within the capitalist system which had repercussions in sport. 'Middle-class' sports were extended to the working class as a means of training body and mind not only to get the masses to accept their alienated and passive status but to adapt them to the new demands

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59 Lukács, G., History and Class Consciousness, Merlin Press, London, 1971, p.89.

60 Vinnai, op.cit., pp.39-40.

of industry. "When the gradually surging revolt of the working class compelled Parliament to shorten compulsorily the hours of labour, and to begin imposing a normal working day on factories proper, so that an increased production of surplus-value by the prolongation of the working-day was once for all put a stop to, from that moment capital threw itself with all its might into the production of relative surplus value, by hastening on the further improvement of machinery."[61] The rationalisation of production-techniques in order to increase the intensive use of labour was projected onto the playing-field to the extent that organised sports, especially those played professionally for paying spectators, became a branch of production. "Those types of sport that originated in ball games have, in their rules, discipline and special kind of morality, taken over features of the work situation in a restructured form."[62] The increasing encouragement for workers to take up and support team-games, the changes within sports like football in the direction of greater team-play and strategy and of less individuality and spontaneity, all accompanied the growing cooperation and socialisation of industrial production. Several studies of the evolution of football have shown how the cooperation of players on the football-field has, from its earliest beginnings, undergone changes that have corresponded to those in the realm of work. "In the 1860's and 1870's, individual dribbling was the centrepiece of soccer. The fluctuating tension-balance between team interests and individual interests was geared in favour of the latter. This corresponds to the social characteristics of the game during that period. It was then a game primarily played by public school old-boys and by other

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61
Marx, op.cit., p.409.
62
Vinnai, op.cit., p.47.

middle- and upper-class people for their own enjoyment. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, this technique gave way to a different manner of playing. Team cooperation became accentuated at the expense of opportunities for the individual to shine competitively within the team. Thus, the balance between individual and team interests changed. Individual dribbling receded and passing the ball came to the fore."[63] Another author has written, similarly, that "The calculating logic of modern production, which has brought about such a fragmented division of labour, has its parallel on the football field. Like the labourer and the clerk, the footballer must stay at his post where his actions are reduced to repetitive tasks...In the very first days of football, as it was played before 1850, rôle-specialisation was unknown; the individual player had no particular function or position on the field of play...In striking contrast to this, the system commonly used in the 1940's and 50's involved a highly-developed role-differentiation...In such a rôle-allocation, every participant is expected to behave in a predetermined fashion. His position entails a limited sphere of operation, a specific function within the team system, and specific rôle-expectations (e.g., ability to shoot)."[64] It is interesting that when football was taken to America, where capitalism developed in a more individualistic and unbridled way than in Britain, it became quite a different game: "It is now well integrated and quite obviously shows in its vigour, its hard contact and greater centrality on the individual, the basic traits of the culture of American society."[65]

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63 Elias, N., and Dunning, E., "Dynamics of Group Sports with Special Reference to Football," British Journal of Sociology, December, 1966, pp.398-399.

64 Vinnai, op.cit., pp.49-50.

65 Riesman, D., Denny, R., "Football in America," in Individualism Reconsidered, The Free Press, Glencoe (Illinois), 1954, p.242.

Both in Britain and America, the development of each worker to a state of maximum efficiency became a guiding principle of capitalist economics: "The directing motive, the end and aim of capitalist production, is to extract the greatest possible amount of surplus value, and consequently to exploit labour-power to the greatest possible extent."[66] Similarly, in sport, the guiding principle of training was to exact the highest possible sporting performance from a given human potential. Time-and-motion studies found their parallel in sport: "The twenties saw the beginning of that remorseless pursuit of the world record which has continued ever since. It led to a rationalisation of training and movement comparable to that achieved in industry through time-and-motion studies."[67] Further, "The aim of time-and-motion study is optimum performance from each unit of energy, whilst the theory of motion in sport seeks to make each movement more purposeful, more rational and thus also more successful."[68]

(iv) Summary

From being virtually aristocratic and bourgeois preserves until the late nineteenth century, organised sports gradually became accessible to workers as they gained more leisure and income. This 'democratisation' process has continued during the twentieth century with fewer and fewer sports and sports-clubs being closed to workers, with the amateur-professional distinction being removed or circumvented in many sports and with increasing state intervention in sports-organisation -- parallelling a similar process in the capitalist economy.

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66 Marx, op.cit., p.331.

67 Dixon, J.G., "Prussia, Politics and Physical Education," in McIntosh et al., Landmarks in the History of Physical Education, p.139.

68 Vinnai, op.cit., p.53.

Internationalisation of capital has had its corollary in the internationalisation of sport, with the result that sport is said today to be a weapon employed not only in the contention between rival Western states, but in the 'battle for men's minds' between the capitalist and state-socialist systems: "International competitive sport has become an arena for ideologies, mirroring the same tensions as are seen throughout the world on the purely political plane."[69]

Notwithstanding this complex development, the dominant pattern of sport in Western societies, Marxists would maintain, has not ceased to be a microcosm of capitalist society -- indeed, the disappearance of deference reveals even more nakedly the 'cash-nexus' relations of capitalist production; sport has become a source of profits as well as a distraction for the masses, assisting in ensuring conformity with the consensual status quo.

C. Marxism on sport under capitalism

Since, for the Marxist, "the ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas",[70] under capitalism, based on private ownership and the means of production, it is the ideology of the possessing class that permeates every area of society, including the family, law, education, religion, literature, the arts, the social sciences and, of course, sport -- indeed, every area where ideas are held about what is necessary or desirable, what is the 'natural' and 'proper' way to do things. In sport, "there are some games that it is only 'proper' for boys to play, and some that are only 'normal' for girls to play. And we have an ideology of leisure that regards

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69 Nathan, A., "Sport and Politics," in Loy, J.W. and Kenyon, G.S. (eds.), Sport, Culture and Society, Macmillan, London, 1969, p.206.

70 Marx, K., Engels, F., The German Ideology, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1965, p.35.

it as something distinct from work and something that is to be earned. Leisure does not occur as of right; it is the proper recompense for having 'done an honest day's work'."[71] Marxism argues for the necessity of a probing of these 'self-evident' beliefs, of the ideology surrounding sporting activities in capitalist society. An understanding of the place of sport in Communist-ruled societies would seem to require a similar probing beneath phenomenal forms -- a task to which we attempt to turn, within the framework of the same Marxist hypothesis, in Chapter 10.

But, for the Marxist, it is not enough to perceive dominant ideas (including those about leisure, education and sport) as nothing more than the ideal expression of dominant material relationships; it is necessary to comprehend both the use to which the ideology is put and its limitations. "Bourgeois ideology, ever since Adam Smith, could only tackle the problem of education and leisure in a narrowly utilitarian framework: as 'amusement of the mind', destined partly to restore the worker's energies for the next day's soulless routine, and partly to keep him away from wasteful 'debauchery'. The conception of 'free time' as the vehicle of transcending the opposition between mental labour and physical labour, between theory and practice, had to remain far beyond the bourgeois horizon."[72] To the Marxist, sporting activities that are subordinated to the needs of capitalism in general and the leisure industry in particular cannot be either free or spontaneous; they merely serve to mitigate the sense of meaninglessness which people experience in their relations with one another. Why does this situation arise?

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71
Triesman, D., "Introduction" to Vinnai, op.cit., pp.25-26.

72
Mészáros, I., Marx's Theory of Alienation, Merlin Press, London, 1972, p.306.

Marxists argue that the answer to this question must be sought in laws that govern human relations under capitalism. Relations between people in capitalist society develop according to the principles of commodity-exchange. People's life-chances, their area of freedom depend on their relationships to commodities. They themselves, for a major part of their lives, become little more than the labour-power which is all they have to sell; they become appendages of the machine they serve. The system of production reduces them to mere adjuncts of commodities, cogs in the wheel of the industrial machine, deprived of self-control and operated on by external and impersonal economic forces. Members of the modern industrial working class, alienated from the means of production, lack all control over their working lives and so feel their lives to lack meaning. The human is reduced to the status of a thing; relations become 'reified'[73]. The products of human labour seem possessed of a life of their own, they seem to enter into relations with one another and with men: "A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses."[74]

That is what Marx termed the 'fetishism of commodities': "As a general rule, articles of utility become commodities only because they

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73 Lukács explains the concepts 'alienation' and 'reification' as follows: "What is of central importance here is that a man's own activity, his own labour, becomes something objective and independent of him, something

that controls him by virtue of an autonomy alien to man. There is both an objective and a subjective side to this phenomenon. Objectively a world of objects and relations springs into being (the world of commodities and their movements on the market). The laws governing these objects are indeed gradually discovered by man, but even so they confront him as invisible forces that generate their own power. The individual can use his knowledge of these laws to his own advantage, but he is not able to modify the process by his own activity. (This is reification.) Subjectively -- where the market economy has been fully developed -- a man's activity becomes estranged from himself, it turns into a commodity which, subject to the non-human objectivity of the natural laws of society, must go its own way independently of man just like any consumer article. (This is alienation.)" (Lukács, op.cit., pp.86-87).

74
Marx, op.cit., p.72.

are products of the labour of private individuals or groups of individuals who carry on their work independently of each other. The sum total of the labour of all these private individuals forms the aggregate labour of society. Since the producers do not come into social contact with each other until they exchange their products, the specific social character of each producer's labour does not show itself except in the act of exchange. In other words, the labour of the individual asserts itself as a part of the labour of society only by means of the relations which the act of exchange establishes directly between the products, and indirectly, through them, between the producers. To the producers, therefore, the relations connecting the labour of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as what they really are, material relations between persons and social relations between things."[75]

The rationale of capitalist production based on commodity-exchange, therefore reduces individuality in a mass society to a quantitative abstraction. It organises and controls people and objects not only in their work but also in their leisure. Under capitalism, the commodity becomes "the universal category of society as a whole."[76] The logic of the market thus permeates all aspects of individual and social life. "All that is left to the public", Mészáros has written, "is to assume the rôle of a passive consumer. In this impersonal relation -- where the recipient 'public' is an abstract entity -- there can be only one measure of approval and success: money."[77] The products of the culture industry are part of a system of mass-

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75 Ibid., pp.72-73.

76 Lukács, op.cit., p.86.

77 Mészáros, op.cit., p.205.

produced behaviour-patterns and manipulated consumer-habits. The end-result of this cultural 'brainwashing' is that "Ideology deposits itself as a sort of objective mind in the debased personality structure of today. It appears in the unconsciousness rather than the consciousness of the masses. A world of mass-produced artefacts shapes and ossifies the conscious and unconscious mind of those who consume them. Along with its products, the production apparatus sells the social system as a whole. Home furnishings, cars, clothes and films create attitudes which are declared 'normal' and result in mental and emotional behaviour that binds the consumer to the corporation and hence to the whole social system."[78]

Sport, too, in capitalist society must, of necessity, be seen in the same light by the Marxist. It, too, is "part of the system of capitalist mass culture designed to keep the victims of the alienated industrial apparatus under close control. Planned and directed by a calculating administration, it works, like other manifestations of the culture industry, to identify people with existing values and with the social conditions that lie behind them. All unsuitable behaviour is proscribed on the playing field, where conformism is hammered home, down to the most delicate emotional nuances. All utopian and critical impulses are suppressed, and of what was once ideology, there remains, in sport, nothing but patterns of behaviour which submit to the superior force of the situation."[79] The establishment therefore makes a fetish of sport and thereby draws a veil over the realities of the manipulation of people's imaginations and so makes opaque what

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78
Vinnai, op.cit., pp.113-114.
79
Ibid., p.114.

would be clearly seen as intolerable if social relations were transparent. Sport is singularly suitable, some would argue, for this purpose for application on a mass scale -- since, unlike more cerebral cultural forms, it is most commonly incompatible with a highly critical consciousness.

By sport, we are referring here to the vastly publicised, big-league, competitive commercial simulacra of play that so effectively take precedence in the mass consciousness over the <u>real</u> events and processes that actually shape the lives of the masses. A society, such Marxists will argue, in which the popular media supply the masses with enough pabulum of pseudo-events and plastic 'personalities' in the field of phoney sport (and depersonalised sex) can dispense with an official censor of news and comment in a government office and rely on the censor in the worker's head; it can operate by 'consensus'.[80]

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[80] Many Western sociologists of sport fail to go beyond investigating the rôle and functions of sport in society from the standpoint of its <u>functional</u> contribution to social stability (as, for example, a 'safety-valve' for 'man's naturally aggressive instincts'); they treat it, Marxists would complain, as an entity quite unrelated to the prevailing mode of production. Some other sociologists, too, find this approach inadequate: as David Lockwood has said, "The propensity to social change arising from the functional incompatibility between an institutional order and its material base has been ignored by normative functionalists because of their concentration on the moral aspects of social integration" (See Lockwood, D., "Social Integration and System Integration," in Zollschan, G.K., Hirsch, W. [eds.], <u>Explorations in Social Change</u>, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963, p.245).

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It was the less sophisticated forerunner of this 'sport', the P.R.O.-created 'non-event', that Lunacharsky, the early Soviet political leader, litterateur and educationalist, declared unsuitable to the new socialist state: "Bourgeois sport has a clearly-defined class character...It cannot have a far-reaching social significance, insofar as it leads to a fetishism of sport and to sheer commercialism."[81]

4. The Study of Sport in Soviet Society: Method

Sport in Soviet society is among those areas of enquiry which may justifiably be described as underdeveloped. Western traditions of scholarship in Soviet studies lie primarily in those areas where there already exists an established general theoretical framework to aid the investigator. The lack of attention in the West to Soviet sport may be due to at least five factors. First, few academics are interested in sport generally and the number of 'sovietologues' has to reach a 'critical mass' before one or two appear who are motivated to make a serious study of Soviet sport -- which is somehow regarded as 'not serious' -- of secondary, if not tertiary, importance. Second, and connected with the first, is the propensity among Western social scientists to examine ways in which Soviet-type societies deviate from liberal-democratic norms -- sport being a field of activity that does not, at first glance, seem likely to prove fruitful in illuminating such 'big' issues. Third, the emergence of a sociology of sport with its own concepts and methods is fairly recent; a lag may be expected to exist between the emergence of the new branch of the art and its acceptance by students of Soviet society. Fourth, the inaccessibility of sources and the linguistic barrier -- an acute problem as regards

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81
Lunacharsky, A.V., "Mysli o sporte," Fizkul'tura i sport, 1928, No.2., p.5.

both sport and sociology because so few Western specialists in either have spoken Russian -- have made study difficult. Lastly, Soviet sociologists of repute have, until quite recently, themselves tended to give only trivial treatment to sport in modern society (studies of work having overwhelmingly predominated in the first decade of the rebirth of Soviet sociology)[82]; this lack of internal analysis has provided foreign investigators with few critical starting-points. The Western social scientist, therefore, has, on the whole, had to start from scratch.

While not wishing to overstate the importance of sport in society, it is the present writer's belief that research on the USSR, using the sport system as a case-study, may throw light on important characteristics of social processes in Soviet-type societies. All the more so because the place of sport is evidently more central in the Soviet social system. Suffice it here to make the point that sport is one of the most far-reaching social activities in the USSR; it extends to and unites wider sections of the population than probably any other social activity, transcending nationality, sex, age, social position, rural/urban location and political attitudes. It has proved to be of peculiar utility in Soviet society by reason of its inherent qualities of being easily understood and enjoyed, capable of developing mass enthusiasm, being apolitical (at least superficially) and permitting emotional release safely. It has had an advantage over sex, drinking, religious ritual and other forms of emotional release and companionship-formation by being officially approved and therefore less guilt-inducing, and yet being relatively

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The acknowledged "first book to tackle the problems of the sociology of sport" was published in an edition of only 500 copies: Stepovoi, P.S., Sport i obshchestvo: nekotorye metodologicheskie i sotsial'nye problemy, Tartu, TGU, 1972. The first national conference "On Sociological Problems of Physical Culture and Sport" took place in 1973, followed by a second in 1974; the first international conference on sociological problems of sport ("Sport in Modern Society") was held in Moscow in November 1974.

free of rigid official sanctions. It has had the advantage over literature, theatre and other forms of cultural expression of being more readily comprehensible to the mass public as well as less amenable to direct political control over style and content. It has had the advantage over political meetings and parades by being less demanding on intellect and patience.

These advantages have been particularly marked in a society which has, in a short span of time, lived through such shattering events as two world wars, two revolutions, a civil war, rapid industrialisation, forced collectivisation, purges and mass terror. In this society, hard work, discipline, self-censorship and periodically necessary acute readjustments seem to have needed a counterpart in sport, which offers a broad channel for the discharge of emotional tensions.

The study of sport in a centrally-planned and communist-governed society could therefore be particularly revealing because it deals with such a wide range of social processes and investigable forms of activity within which a whole gamut of social phenomena are likely to find fairly open expression. They include the following:

- a strong autonomous and spontaneous interest on the part of a large section of the public,

- the autonomous formation (relatively free of political constraints) of choices, loyalties and conflicts,

- attempts at the superimposition by the state on such activity of central organisation, planning and control, and

- the longer-term social policies of the state (as well as the shorter-term -- in view of the relatively non-critical nature of this sector of policy-making).

Such a study may hope to throw light on the extent to which the forms of recreation which developed in the USSR have not coincided with leisure in the society of the future.

The USSR is also a particularly interesting industrial society for sociological study because it has progressed (if unevenly) from a way of life which quite recently was largely traditionalist in a comparatively brief historical span. The rapid process of modernisation and the high rates of change in socio-demographic indices (urbanisation, the degree of literacy, spread of mass media, formal education, etc.) have inescapably put their imprint on Soviet sport, especially as survivals of initial backwardness and defects consequent upon too rapid growth that fall into the category of social problems. (These are, of course, not unique to the Soviet Union, but are to be found, in other forms, in some other modern and modernising societies.) Soviet society, then, bears a variety of values and behaviour-patterns which may be incompatible with modern industrial society; many differ from those that were dominant in the West during its own initial stages of modernisation. We shall, then, attempt in what follows to use the study of sport to enlarge our understanding of the Soviet social order.

The study contains a historical account of sport in Russia and the USSR (set out in Chapters 2-9 with sections devoted to each of the main

periods into which Russian and Soviet history is usually broken down according to the stages of its economic and political development).

The method applied within each section has been to attempt to determine

(a) the main forms and levels of sporting activity,

(b) the main features of Party and government policies towards sport,

(c) the extent to which sporting activities have or have not been secondary (determined by problems arising from the pursuit of primary policy-goals),

(d) the main types of response in each period on the part of the state and of groups within the sporting public to the forms of social behaviour of the other, assuming a continuing tension and interaction between sets of independently-originating goals, and,

(e) the causal factors apparently involved in the state's successes and failures in terms of coincidences and conflicts between the interests of the state and of individuals and groups within the public.

In the final chapter, these results are used to try to test hypotheses[83] concerning

(i) the major social functions which sport fulfilled in each period,

(ii) the actual goals of those acting in the field of sport, and

(iii) the extent to which forms of recreation developing in Soviet society have or have not coincided with the predictions and

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[83] See below, pp. 661-681

aspirations of Marxist writers about playful activities in the society of the future.

From an exploration of the questions generated by this approach some general conclusions are drawn about the place of sport in Soviet society and about the light cast by a close examination of the development of sport in that society on the nature of some of the fundamental social processes which it has undergone in the past half-century.

# I BACKGROUND: SPORT IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA

This first chapter is provided as a source of background information -- something which is necessary in order to put our study of sport in the Soviet period into a perspective. It does not purport to be an original investigation of the society-sport relationship before the 1917 revolution; much of the material it contains is, in fact, based on secondary sources. It is intended, in part, to provide some corrective to the Soviet tendency to play down the extent and quality of pre-revolutionary participation in sport; it certainly cannot, however, be taken as presenting an exhaustive or fully balanced picture of sporting life in Russia before 1917.

## A. Early Times to 1861

Ethnographic material from round the world indicates that games have been present in all tribal societies, even the most primitive -- and including those inhabiting the Great Russian Plain. Furthermore, participation in them would seem to have been an important and often obligatory social function of all members of the tribe: the poor physical preparation of one member could, after all, endanger the efforts of a hunting-party and even an entire tribe. It took much practice to perfect coordinated movements and obtain physical dexterity in, say, hurling a club or spear or loosing an arrow (especially from horseback) at a swiftly moving object. The vital need for regular practice seems naturally to have given rise to contests of skill, strength and speed. Some of the games and sports we know today apparently originated in the need of early man to perfect his fighting and hunting skill.

The Ancient Russian steppe-dwellers were famed for their hardiness and military skills: "The Ancient Russian archers had good training and were masters of the bow and arrow. Training to shoot accurately commenced at childhood, at the same time as they were taught to ride. As a result of constant training in firing arrows from the saddle, the Eastern mounted archers acquired amazing accuracy. They could hit a target at full gallop, something

which Western archers -- whose shooting was normally confined to the infantry -- could not do."[1]

This type of physical activity was not pursued merely to beat off marauding invaders or to attack other peoples. The pagan Slavs held festivals of games in honour of their gods: Perun (god of thunder and rain), Yarilo (god of the sun and all earthly life), Kupal'nitsa (goddess of rivers and lakes) and Volos (guardian of herds and flocks). As elsewhere in the primitive world, the spring rites were mainly suppliant (for a good harvest) and the autumn -- festivals of gratitude, accompanied by feasting and general merrymaking. Games held a prominent place at these and other festivals: "The rites had always to culminate in a sacred festival accompanied by all manner of games, dances, songs, wrestling, fist-fights, horse-races, archery, running, javelin-throwing and leaping over fires."[2] It is thought that the jumping over fires was a cleansing religious act, in much the same way as the name of one's ancestor-protector was (and still is) invoked by the words 'chur menya' (meaning 'don't touch me') in the Russian versions of 'tag' (pyatnashki or salki). Soviet anthropological studies of peoples as far apart as the Evenki and the Abkhazians have stressed the importance of mimetic magic in primitive societies.[3] The dead were often identified with powers of growth and, just as blood shed by means of sacrifices was thought to refresh the dead for their labours, so the vigour expended in games was thought to be transferred to the powers of growth and fertility. Such games were, of course, fertility-rites of a more direct nature and not games with the motivation we usually associate with the idea of sport today.

[1] Medvedev, A.F., Ruchnoye metatel'noye oruzhie, Moscow, 1966, p. 98.

[2] Greznevsky, I., Issledovaniya o yazycheskom bogusluzhenii drevnikh slavyan, St. Petersburg, 1848, p. 92.

[3] See Anisimov, A.F., Religiya evenkov v istoriko-geneticheskom izuchenii i problemy proiskhozhdeniya pervobytnykh verovanii, Moscow-Leningrad, 1958, pp. 114, 115 and Elashvili, V.I., Narodnaya sistema fizicheskovo vospitaniya v Gruzii, Tbilisi, 1959, pp. 389-390.

The adoption of Christianity in the 10th century did relatively little to alter these rites and the games that went with them. When the Russian Orthodox Church began to persecute all these 'games of the devil', the pagan gods were either proscribed or assimilated as saints, some of their deeds reappearing in the legendary feats of the saints. The local cults continued, with the difference that they were now either condemned by the Church and became clandestine, or else adopted by the Church and the rites given a Christian gloss. Thus, Perun became Ilya the Prophet, Kupal'nitsa -- St. Agrippina and Volos -- St. Vlasia. The spring rites now coincided with Easter, the winter Calendae with Christmas and Yarilo's festival became Ivan's Day (June 24). And the games continued with little change. One Soviet ethnographer maintains that "right up to the 14th century, Christianity had little effect on village life and, in the towns, clericals complained that the churches were empty while the playing-grounds were full of people in all weathers."[4]

With the formation, in the late 15th century, of the centralised Russian state which gradually united the previously scattered Russian principalities, there was a sharper delineation between the life of the serfs and that of the upper classes -- the tsar, the princes, the boyars and the other ranks. This social structure was reflected in the playing of games and the games themselves.

Games of the People

As earlier, a great variety of popular games were played in the Middle Ages, mostly uncircumscribed by rules and actually frequently serving the purpose of preparing participants for military engagements (especially in view of frequent foreign incursions into the Russian state), for their arduous labour and, not least of all, for enduring the rigorous Russian climate. In fact, notwithstanding an official asceticism, in the so-called Dark Ages of the Tatar-Mongol occupation and the medieval period that succeeded them, a number of sports and pastimes were enjoyed. Many sports in current

4 Rybakov, B.A., "Prikladnoye iskusstvo i skul'ptura," in Istoriya kul'tury drevnei Rusi, Vol. II, Moscow-Leningrad, 1961, pp. 396-397.

practice in the 19th and 20th centuries in fact existed in a rudimentary form during the Middle Ages -- this despite the fact that most Russians lived in very small settlements and few villages providing opportunities for people to gather together for games existed until quite late in the 17th or early 18th centuries.

A number of folk-tales and heroic legends (byliny) testify to the popularity of archery and horse-riding (for example, the legends of Ilya Muromets and Mikhail Potok[5]) and one foreign traveller in Russia in the 16th century is said to have observed that "the Russians have a great predilection for riding and archery; great honour and esteem is accorded to the person who can draw the bow tighter, loose an arrow farther and hit a target accurately."[6]

Combat sports, too, were popular -- particularly fist-fighting and wrestling, both of which are mentioned in the Nestor Chronicle of 1068.[7] Fisticuffs existed in two major forms, each with its own set of surprisingly sophisticated rules. In 'wall-to-wall' fist-fights, all adult male members of one village would line up like a wall and advance against a similar wall of opposing villagers. The historian, de Grunwald, quotes an (unnamed) foreign traveller in the 15th century as being amazed at the ferocity yet apparent sportsmanship of the combatants: "What is astonishing is that the Russians engage for their pleasure, and sometimes without having taken a drop of vodka, with their best friends in fights the like of which would cost professional pugilists dear. To go by the ferocious expression on their faces, it would seem a matter of fighting to the death; yet as soon as the fight is over, off they go to drink together."[8]

[5] See Zenkovsky, S.A. (ed.), Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles and Tales, Dutton, New York, 1963, pp. 66-71.

[6] Quoted in Samoukov, F.I. (ed.), Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, p. 198.

[7] Zenkovsky, S.A., op. cit., pp. 99-101.

[8] De Grunwald, C., Peter the Great, MacGibbon and Kee, 1956, p. 14.

Both the accounts of foreign travellers in Russia and the chronicles of medieval Russia, like those of other medieval societies, describe many scenes such as this. Without reference to the frequency of outbreaks of uninstitutionalised violence in the Middle Ages, one cannot understand the more institutionalised forms, of which 'wall-to-wall' fist-fights was one. Semi-institutionalised fights between local groups arranged on certain days of the year, particularly on Saints' Days and Holy Days, were part of the traditional pattern of life in medieval societies. "Organised" fisticuffs -- or playing with a ball -- were ways of arranging such a fight. It seems to have been, in fact, one of the annual rituals of these traditional pre-industrial folk-societies. To remember this institution helps us to see their manner of life in better perspective. Wall-to-wall fighting and other similar encounters in those times were not accidental brawls. They seem to have constituted an equilibrating type of leisure-activity, woven into the fabric of Russian folk society. Encounters such as these provided one of the outlets for standing tensions between local groups.

What is interesting from the social viewpoint about these mass fights is that they crossed social boundaries, peasants, artisans, merchants and even noblemen joining in, and were, despite their ruggedness, restricted by well-defined traditional rules: kicking was forbidden, no stones or iron were to be concealed in sleeves, no weapons were to be used and no man was to be hit when down.[9]

The violence, therefore, was by no means unmitigated or completely lawless. Besides these customary 'laws' or rules, there seems to have been a rudimentary sense of what was to become known as "fairness". There was no formal organisation outside and apart from the players themselves to ensure that the rules were obeyed. There was no referee, no outside arbiter in case of disputes. In some respects, the manner of playing a game shows us an aspect of social life which is otherwise hard to grasp. While people in such

[9] Ponomarev, N.I., Vozniknovenie i pervonachal'noye razvitie fizicheskovo vospitaniya, Moscow, 1970, p. 176.

societies seem to have been more closely integrated than in modern ones or to have had a special kind of solidarity -- feeling absent among those living in modern society, they nonetheless had their conflicts, both within their own ranks and with neighbouring communities. The various folk-games seem to have been one way of releasing the ensuing tensions. The fact that there were no written rules, central authorities or referees did not mean that they played without any rules at all. Traditional rules, customary regulations which had developed over the centuries as a kind of communal self-restraint, took the place of the more formal institutional rules of today; it may well be that people in these earlier societies clung to their traditions -- among them, to the few customary restraints on tensions and conflicts -- as tenaciously as they seem to have done precisely because to lose them would often have meant to lose a very essential part of such restraints on their own passions as were available.

The games took place normally in meadows, through the village streets or, in winter, on ice. Like the English parallel popular sports of hurling and mob football, they were frequently banned and their protagonists prosecuted by the authorities.

The secular authorities evidently tried from fairly early on, for a long time and without much success, to suppress these riotous fighting games of the people. But one cannot wholly understand the strong survival-power of such customs if one sees in them merely games in our sense of the word. Medieval Russian mass fights formed, it seems, part of a traditional ritual; they mostly belonged to the Shrovetide (Maslenitsa) activities which were in part a Church ceremonial and were closely linked to the whole cycle of Saints' Days and Holy Days. In any case, although such fighting appeared as anti-social behaviour to the authorities, it remained for centuries a favourite pastime of the people; in many parts of Russia, they amused themselves with fighting or "football", regardless of broken bones and bloody noses. The state's apparatus for enforcing edicts banning such sports was as rudimentary as its ability to find equally satisfying alternative leisure-outlets for the people.

Single fighting bouts were also common, particularly as a means of settling disputes, as Lermontov describes in his Song of the Young Merchant Kalashnikov.[10]

With snow covering European Russia for six or seven months of the year, and parts of Siberia nearly all the year round, winter games naturally played a big part in popular pursuits.[11] Skiing was common, both for practical and sporting purposes. The first mention of it in ancient Rus' is in a chronicle of 1444 which describes how the Russian ski-troops of Vasili III defeated the Tatar cavalry of Khan Mustafa to save the town of Ryazan'.[12] Further, a charter promulgated by Ivan IV ('the Terrible'), first Tsar of Russia, refers to the sporting use in the Perm' area of skis -- "wooden shoes, six vershki in breadth and four arshiny in length."[13]

Sledding was first mentioned in written sources in the 16th century -- although it had existed much earlier (ancient Russian princes were traditionally buried in sledges) -- when the young Ivan IV was presented by his boyars with a type of toboggan. He used a steep bank of the Moscow River by the Kremlin for his downhill runs. In honour of the Russian victory over the Tatar-Mongol army at Kazan' in 1552, a winter festival was arranged with prizes awarded to winners of sledding contests along the same Moscow bank.[14] It is noteworthy that, from being pure entertainment, sleds came to be employed with good purpose in Ivan's army to transport cannon and other heavy material across the winter snow.[15]

[10] Lermontov, M. Yu, Sochineniya, Vol. I, Moscow, 1957, p. 173.

[11] In the centre of European Russia, in Moscow, the winter snow normally lasts from November to April, with the temperatures averaging 10 degrees Centigrade below zero in January. In the North-East of Siberia, in the Lena Basin, the average January temperature is minus 40 degrees Centigrade and snow lasts for 200 days a year; in Yakutia, the northern hemisphere's pole of cold, the snow lasts for most of the year.

[12] Zenkovsky, op. cit., p. 195.

[13] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1968, No. 12, p. 29; (the metric equivalent is 27 cm. x 2.8 m.)

[14] Zenkovsky, op. cit., p. 198.

[15] Ibid., p. 200.

Ice-skating, cudgelling on ice and the old favourite of a snow-fortress siege had their support among the common people; singing in chorus, hunting and dancing were common to all seasons.

Although hygiene was rudimentary, many medieval Russians seemed to attach great importance to bodily cleanliness and physical hardening. The weekly steam-bath followed by a dip in the icy river, or sometimes a roll in the snow, was an almost religious duty. Foreign travellers were evidently amazed to see adults at 30 or 40 degrees below zero "swimming gaily in ice-holes and rushing out naked from hot steam-baths to roll in the snow . . . mothers rubbing down young children with snow and pouring icy water over them".[16]

At itinerant fairs, professional entertainers or jesters (skomorokhi) treated spectators to displays of fencing with pikes and swords, acrobatics and tight-rope walking. And at folk festivals, combatants would measure their strength and skill by tossing and lifting weights, throwing stones at targets or for distance, hurling the javelin and leaping over fires.[17]

None of this implies that life in 'Merrie Rus'' was one long round of merrymaking. Far from it. Life was short, perilous and hard, leisure and the material means for it were at a premium and, increasingly from the 16th century, Church and State persecuted the serfs and urban poor for taking part in such 'idle pursuits' -- a notion not at odds with contemporary Puritan philosophy elsewhere in Europe. Most games were outlawed by Chapter 92 of the Stoglava (Church canons) adopted by the Church Assembly in 1551[18]; just over a century later, in 1664, Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich issued a special edict banning all popular games and sports.[19] The Church looked on games and suchlike, when pursued by commoners, as demonstrations of paganism -- and therefore proscribed as sinful. A society battling against natural and human elements vitally

[16] Ponomarev, op. cit., p. 221.

[17] Ibid., p. 199.

[18] See Ibid., p. 200.

[19] Ibid., p. 201.

needed a social discipline; those who would not work of their own volition were to be driven to it under the lash of compulsion.[20] Religion provided the strongest sanction for every law suppressing 'time-wasting' amusements.

Nonetheless, the ruling powers did also appreciate both the military value of sport and the danger of tippling and other vices taking the place of games if sport were to be completely denied to the people and therefore did not always enforce the anti-sport laws to the letter. In England, in 1633, James I had published his Book of Lawful Sports,[21] which actually encouraged some commoners' sport.

Games of the Upper Classes

Although an aristocratic leisure class existed — and grew with the formation of the Russian state — the princes were preoccupied with the defence of Russia against invaders, with enlarging the Russian lands and with keeping conquered territories in order. Hence sport for the upper classes was largely associated with military training and was of an applied nature -- e.g., horse-riding, fencing, archery, hunting and certain other 'amusements' that developed physical prowess and skill in warfare.

Royal and noblemen's children were often occupied with 'war games'; this was to reach its height in Peter I's childhood when thousands of boy-soldiers paraded and fought in mock battle on land and river for royal amusement.[22]

Military training was not confined to the officers; from the 17th century, other ranks for the first time began to be drilled in prescribed exercises. In 1647, a field manual translated from the German, The Teaching and Craft of Military Formation of Infantrymen, was published in Moscow; it prescribed daily physical exercises and marches, running, swimming, shooting and riding for all soldiers. From the mid-17th century, foreign military experts were

[20] Kievan life would seem to have been relatively easy; it was Moscow and serfdom which valued slavery, but Russians seem never to have valued work. Note, for example, the etymological connections between the world rab (slave) and rabota (work), strada (harvest) and stradat' (to suffer), trudny (difficult) and trud (toil).

[21] James I, Book of Lawful Sports, 1618 and 1633 (reprinted Quaritch, London, c1860)

[22] See below, p. 72.

invited to Russia and the style of training changed, with greater emphasis on drilling and less on encouraging individual feats of strength and acts of daring.

Although military games dominated the sporting pursuits of upper-class males, 'civilian' games were practised. The historian, I.E. Zabelin, describes things to be found in 17th century boyar homes, among them "little morocco, velvet and golden cotton-filled balls with round copper bells inside . . . children's sabres, whipping tops, bows and arrows in great abundance.[23] An illustrated compendium of games was published in 1664, describing games suitable for boyar children.[24]

For adults, the universal aristocratic pursuit of hunting was popular on the estates and in the abundant forests -- hawking in summer or the hunting of bear, elk and hare in winter. The feudal lords and their ladies also much enjoyed spectacles such as bear-baiting, exhibitions of wild beasts -- lions and elephants were imported -- and displays by the skomorokhi: wrestling, rope-walking, acrobatics, feats of strength and man-animal contests. The chronicles mention one serf who engaged bears in single combat for 20 years -- and then gained his freedom.[25]

The tsar' and tsaritsa, in their hours of leisure, played cards or chess, commanded servants to dance or sing or amused themselves with dwarfs or jesters.

Education and Sport in the Middle Ages

The growth of the Russian state brought in its wake writings on various branches of knowledge. This was nothing like the contemporary profusion of ideas unleashed by the Reformation in the West, but Russia was not entirely unaffected by challenging Western ideas, even if her own social conditions did not encourage a similar break from Church-centred culture towards a Renaissance. In Russia, the Church blocked much enlightenment, and physical education was one branch of knowledge specifically to suffer. Nevertheless, at the end of the 17th century, educational tracts on games started to appear.

[23] Zabelin, I.E., Domashny byt russkikh tsarei v XVI i XVII, vekakh, Moscow, 1862, p. 189.

[24] Ibid., p. 193.

[25] De Grunwald, op. cit., p. 27.

The most important of these works was a book by the monk and scholar, Yepifany Slavinetsky, (d. 1675), a "Westerner" in Moscow terms (coming from Kiev) and an admirer and contemporary of the Czech educational reformer, Comenius (Jan Komensky, 1592-1670). In The Civic Nature of Children's Customs[26] (published in 1660), Slavinetsky advocated a new humanitarian educational system and the harmonious development of children -- ideas that were contrary to the prevailing doctrines based on the medieval Domostroi, a code of socio-economic rules of conduct for the well-to-do. In a chapter 'On Playing', he recognised the right of children -- girls equally with boys -- to play games and sports as a means to education and health. He was also the first in a long line of eminent Russian thinkers (such as Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Tolstoy and Lesgaft[27]) to attempt an analysis of games from an educational standpoint. From the point of view of children's education, games could be divided into "proper" and "improper" -- the former including ball-games, running and jumping, the latter -- knucklebones and cards (i.e., games that encouraged "cunning, vanity and other vices") and also, rather strangely, swimming and wrestling -- inasmuch as they were alleged to be "injurious to health."[28] Slavinetsky's concern for a rational theory of playing games and his advocacy of sport as an essential facet of the full man have featured prominently in Russian thinking on physical education and feature up to the present day.

Contact with Foreign Sports

By the end of the 17th century, with the first signs of a breach in medieval thinking apparent, Russia was so far behind the leading European states in economic development that she was increasingly the subject of attack. In order to preserve her independence, it was patently necessary to improve the economy and reorganise administration and the armed forces. Radical reforms came under Peter I (1672-1725) and Catherine II (1729-96) that did much to

[26] Slavinetsky, Y., Grazhdanstvo obychayev detskikh, republished Kiev, 1901.

[27] See below, pp. 152-160.

[28] Ibid., p. 57.

improve the economic, political and military power of the nation. In the economic sphere, the 18th century witnessed a growth in manufacturing, ship-building and weaving and internal and external trade. These advances encouraged the growth of a class of merchants, artisans and small entrepreneurs among the population of about 14 million (1724). All the same, it was not until 1861 that serfdom was abolished, and 1905 before the first narrowly representative (and only consultative) body (the State Duma) was to be elected.

In the course of a struggle for outlets to the sea, a standing army and navy were formed and, in the process, a national system of military training evolved. The nobles' feudal obligation of lifelong military service was abolished in the mid-18th century. The reforms undertaken required the training of a substantial number of specialists in various fields of knowledge. For this purpose, several schools and colleges were set up, including the School of Mathematics and Navigation (Moscow, 1701), the Naval Academy (St. Petersburg, 1719), the Army and Navy Officer Corps College (St. Petersburg, 1737) and Moscow University (1755). The need for physically tough field-leaders in the army, navy and even in the civil service who were conversant with modern skills led to the inclusion of physical education in the body of compulsory subjects in all military and some civil colleges. What is more, increasing diplomatic and commercial intercourse with the West brought an acquaintance with foreign sports and pastimes -- especially those pursued by the cultured élite.

It is some indication of the rigid feudal conditions obtaining in Russia that opportunities for serfs to engage in games of any sort in their, in any case, restricted leisure-time were limited. Social conditions were exceptionally hard during the reigns of Peter I and his successors. Land-owners had the right to deprive a serf of his land, confiscate his property, sell and trade peasants individually or wholesale. These harsh conditions sparked off a number of unsuccessful peasant uprisings, culminating in the great Pugachov-led peasant war (1773-75) in the time of Catherine II (it is interesting to note that the insurgents operated on skis during their winter seige of Orenburg in 1774).

Popular games went on being enjoyed as long as the authorities did not intervene; the village fistfights continued to cause concern, however, to landowners and government as a possible means of training for the serfs and town poor for battle against their masters. In 1832, Nicholas I issued a decree banning fistfights.

The abundance of waterways and their strategic importance encouraged the transportation of cargoes in sailing and rowing boats on rivers and lakes. Fishing and shooting took place from boats, rafts and river banks. Although these were labours of necessity and not of sporting love, the water did provide a playground for rowing races, swimming and diving. On his peregrinations in Russia in the 1730's, the Russian traveller, Glagolev, described the diversions of the people in Tula: "One can only be amazed at their daring when they throw themselves into the river from a pile, bridge or lock four or five sazheni high[29]. They are quite agile and use virtually all known swimming styles -- 'side-stroke', 'back-stroke', 'frog-like' and 'in a sitting position' -- although they are not taught the rules and one would never even suggest that rules and schools exist."[30]

Other survivals from earlier times -- and ones which still have considerable support even today -- were Russian national games with various-size balls, sticks, bones and stones:

gorodki - a game in which a fifty-centimetre stick is hurled at a square containing wooden pegs, the aim being to knock the pegs out of the square (gorod now means 'town', but formerly meant 'fortified settlement');

lapta - a game similar to rounders or baseball;

lunki - a game in which a ball is rolled along the ground to try to land it in a hole some distance away;

shariki - a game similar to marbles;

[29] 8.5 m. - 10.7 m.

[30] Glagolev, I.S., Razvlecheniya zhitelei Tuly, Moscow, 1734, p. 78.

babki - a game using bones: one bone is used to knock two or more configurations of bones out of a circle; some 40 versions of the game are currently practised in the country;

svaika - a game in which a spear is thrown to land in the middle of a metal ring lying on the ground some distance away;

kila (or shalyga) - "On the left-hand side of a yard, eight or nine men play kila -- a leather hair-filled ball, the size of a man's head. The two sides come together wall-to-wall; one player kicks the ball and tries not to lose it to the other side . . . the aim being to force the ball into a gorod marked by a line. Anyone who breaks the rules has his neck 'soaped'. Players shout 'Kila!' when the 'town' is taken."[31] This game, evidently, was a primitive version of football; it was played both in summer and in winter (on ice).

It is claimed that, in 1800, a Urals craftsman, Artamonov from Verkhotur'ye, invented and built the first bicycle in the world; the following year he is said to have completed on his machine the round trip Verkhotur'ye - Moscow - Verkhotur'ye -- a distance of some 5,000 kilometres. The tsarist government allegedly gave no backing to the inventor and his machine was forgotten.[32]

In A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow (1790), Alexander Radishchev compares village girls and noblewomen, describing how the former may lack finesse but are infinitely fitter and stronger: "Well, my darling niece, stand next to them and run together -- see who will reach the high birch tree first! Remember (villagers), you run fast, you swim effortlessly, you can raise heavy weights without trouble, you can work a wooden plough, dig the soil, wield an

[31] Pomyalovsky, N.G., Ocherki bursy, St. Petersburg, 1801, p. 102.

[32] This may be so; it may also, however, be a story emanating from the intensely chauvinistic Stalin years in which a number of inventions of importance in the history of technology were attributed, often dubiously or even falsely, to Russians.

axe and a scythe, use a plane and a mallet, you can ride a horse and shoot."[33] The physical fitness of the rural population and the qualities they cultivated in their games were certainly to prove useful in the winter of 1812 in the war with Napoleon, when peasants armed with forks, spears, axes and scythes were so effectively to harass the soldiers of the French army.

In the 17th century, a large part of the Russian aristocracy enjoyed country life as much as, if not more than, they enjoyed town life. An essential part of this life was sport. The great number of sporting pictures produced and the many references in literature dating from the early 17th century bear witness to a love of outdoor life and pursuits. Hawking, shooting and angling were the principal aristocratic rural sports. In 1648, Tsar' Alexei kept more than 3,000 falcons, hawks and other hunting birds. To catch and feed them, he maintained more than 100,000 pigeons' nests; to train them, he retained more than 200 falconers. The royal stables contained over 40,000 horses groomed by more than 6,000 men. Like the falconers, these were all people of noble birth.[34] In the suburbs of present-day Moscow, there is still the extensive park of Sokol'niki ('Falconers') in which noblemen used to go hawking.

With the accession to the throne of Alexei's son, Peter, who became tsar', as Peter I ('the Great') at the age of 10 in 1682, the aristocratic leisure-pattern changed quite abruptly. Peter had an aversion to hunting of any kind; the hunting and stable staff were therefore mostly dismissed or, in the case of some, redeployed in two battalions, each of 300 young men, to provide the young tsar' with 'amusement'; in fact, they were given the name of 'playmates' (poteshnye). They were drilled and directed by the young monarch with all the panoply of a miniature army: cannon and firearms were supplied by the royal arsenal; there were barracks, stables, uniforms and regular pay. Soon Peter had at his disposal two regiments, the Preobrazhensky and the Semyonovsky, named after the two villages on the outskirts of Moscow where the 'war games'

33 Radishchev, A.N., Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu, Moscow-Leningrad, 1964, p. 109.

34 Klyuchevsky, V., Kurs russkoi istorii, Part IV, 2nd edn., Moscow, 1923, p. 14.

were played. The officers were mostly foreigners -- drawn from the German sloboda (free settlement) close to the villages.[35]

Apart from this childhood predilection for military toys and pursuits, Peter also took an interest in nautical affairs. He had the good fortune to stumble across an old, crumbling English sailing boat, preserved at the village of Izmailovo. He later referred to this boat as the father of the Russian fleet. In the heart of landlocked Russia, it spurred him on to nautical experiment on nearby lakes and rivers (particularly the Yauza) and at Pereyaslavl' outside Moscow, where he was to build the first Russian fleet (switching it to Archangel in 1693) and where he staged mock naval battles -- similar to those that were staged in his honour off Spithead, Portsmouth, during his visit to England in 1697 (no tsar' had visited a foreign state before this time). All this playing at war was to pay practical dividends: not only were a regular army and navy formed but training academies were established, social barriers inhibiting military proficiency were broken down, a common training regimen for all servicemen was established and compulsory military service was introduced (the latter was later to be set at 25 years for many conscripts). Crucial military battles were fought (notably at Narva in 1700 and Poltava in 1709 -- both against the Swedes), a new capital, St. Petersburg (Peter's 'window on Europe'), was constructed and the whole nation was immeasurably strengthened. The whole of society was, in fact, subjected to an intensive military-bureaucratic regimentation.

Sport became increasingly associated with military training and pursuits and less with the type of aristocratic leisure-time activities that prevailed in England and America. The large measure of state control, the 'militarisation' of sports activities and the considerable foreign influence were three peculiarities of Russian sports development that were to persist for many years to come.

[35] Ibid., p. 16.

The fundamentals of military training in the regular army and navy were pioneered in the training of the _poteshnye_ battalions. Their exercises comprised archery and musket-firing, firearm drill, tactical and military exercises, marches (often in full equipment) and mock attacks on fortresses. In three-week-long manoeuvres held near Kozhukh in 1694, an eyewitness, Prince Kurakin, reported that 30,000 men took part, led by the Aberdeen-born soldier-of-fortune, General Patrick Gordon; "about 24 people were killed by blanks and some 50 wounded."[36]

Riding and fencing for the first time became an integral part of education and good breeding when, in 1717, on Peter's orders, the old _Domostroi_ with its rules for _boyar_ living was replaced by _The Noble Mirror of Youth_, which instructed that "young gentlemen aspiring to the Court ought to be accomplished in foreign languages, horse-riding, dancing and fencing and be eloquent and well-read."[37]

In the first half of the 18th century, special _manèges_ or riding academies were opened in Moscow, St. Petersburg and elsewhere at which private lessons were to be had for a fee. With the improvement in Russian horse-breeding and the burgeoning cavalry needs, riding increased in popularity and, in the second half of the century, regular horse-races and steeplechasing appeared in newly-created 'hippodromes'.

Fencing, besides being a military prerequisite, was valuable to noblemen since they were liable to be called out to defend their honour in duels, which remained the method of settling gentlemen's disagreements throughout the 18th and the first part of the 19th centuries. All the leading colleges taught _l'art de l'escrime_, as it was known -- particularly that of the Army and Navy Officer Corps, which opened in the new capital in 1737 and became the centre for the 'noble art of fencing'. How widespread fencing was may be judged from the fact that, in one year alone (1751), 600 rapier-blades were imported into

[36] _Ibid._, p. 25.

[37] See _Ibid._, pp. 320-321.

Russia.[38] A number of fencing masters from abroad were invited to give instruction; in 1766, the famous German master, Herzenfeld, took up a teaching post at the Army and Navy College; a Swiss master, Fischer, had given public displays in the capital in 1765 and in 1786 published a book, L'art de l'escrime -- which, significantly, came out bilingually in French and Russian -- French language, culture and leisure-styles now being in vogue.

At the end of the 1760's came shooting-galleries (tiry) and shooting-clubs with contests, and then, at the turn of the century, the Amateur Shooting Society was founded. It was essentially an aristocratic social club that encouraged pistol- and other firearm-shooting -- and also fencing.

In line with Peter I's founding of a fleet and training of nautical specialists in the Naval Academy and the School of Mathematics and Navigation, regular training was encouraged in sailing and rowing. A start to government organisation of these two sports was made by a Petrine decree of 12 April, 1718,[39] which laid down the rules for maintaining and repairing boats and the type of training needed for handling boats. It established the first-ever sports (yachting-and-rowing) club in Russia, the 'Neva Flotilla' -- a quasi-military club confined to noblemen. The government granted noblemen 141 craft for their permanent use. Lessons were given from May to October regularly every Sunday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., the vessels being assembled at the firing of a cannon or the raising of a flag. For noblemen who had been allotted boats, lessons were compulsory. In winter, lessons and races were held on ice with wheels or runners attached to the sailing boats.[40]

Private swimming-pools opened in Moscow and St. Petersburg at the turn of the century. One school, started up in the capital in 1827, is described in the

[38] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1968, No. 6, p. 36.

[39] See Klyuchevsky, op. cit., p. 320.

[40] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1968, No. 4, p. 42.

journal Severnaya pchela as encouraging its members "to swim and dive like fish in the open sea and in the Neva itself in rough weather."[41]

The early 19th century also saw the development of gymnastics and experimentation by the aristocracy and armed services with the principal systems then popular in Europe. The Russians experimented first with German and Swedish and then with the Czech Sokol schools of gymnastics[42]. A Swede, de Pauli, was invited to give instruction to the army on gymnastics; in 1830, he opened a Gymnastics Institute in St. Petersburg which was advertised among the nobility as extremely beneficial to health and hygiene.

Ball-games, though of a more refined kind than those the muzhiks played, gradually grew in popularity. In 1772, a French 'professeur du jeu de paume', Corbin de Plessie, arrived to teach officer-cadets; he was succeeded six years' later by another Frenchman, Bionne.[43] As in other new sports, foreign coaches were much in vogue. They brought with them the games of tennis, bowls and croquet.

The Court was undoubtedly at the forefront of the sports movement but, in town and country, the nobility and gentry also fostered and practised old and new sports. Shooting again came into its own with the removal of compulsory military service for the gentry in the mid-18th century. Even the ladies joined in. Peter's niece, Anna, and her sister, Elizabeth, who succeeded her to the throne, had both led the way in the first part of the 18th century. As the historian, M.N. Pokrovsky, wrote: "The major aristocratic amusement -- shooting -- had become respectable again at the Russian court even in the time of Peter II; Anna, despite her sex, was here, too, a zealous continuer of the traditions if not of her uncle then of her nephew. Following her lead, Moscow ladies and young girls began to learn to shoot and the Empress showed a lively interest in their success."[44]

41 Severnaya pchela, 1827, No. 10, p. 7.

42 See pp.144-145 below.

43 Samoukov, op. cit., p. 207.

44 Pokrovsky, M.N., Russkaya istoriya s dreveishikh vremyon, Moscow, Vol. II,

Sports were pursued not only in the open air. Intellectual pursuits like chess and draughts were popular among the aristocracy in Russia from a very early date. The historian, Klyuchevsky, describes how Ivan the Terrible enjoyed long and frequent games of chess with his favourite opponent and henchman, Malyuta Skuratov, while Peter I "would sit and play chess with simple sailors, drink beer with them and stuff his long Dutch pipe with their makhorka."[45]

Education and Sport in the 18th century

The advance of science and increasing contact with the West had their effect on the practice of sport and on social attitudes towards it. Furthermore, the observation and objective analysis of physical phenomena, including the functions of the human body, contributed ultimately to a new respect for physical function and performance.

In the field of education, I.I. Betskoi (1704-95) had a considerable influence on sports programmes in colleges for the gentry (the Army Officer Corps College, founded in 1731; the Navy Officer Corps College, founded in 1752, the College of Pages, founded in 1752). He was concerned to teach young gentlemen the physical accomplishments of 'good breeding', and was worried about the effeteness of the aristocracy. He therefore advocated riding, fencing, wrestling, dancing, bowling and other ball-games.

Outside the military academies, a few civilian schools of learning attempted to develop a more balanced curriculum which accepted sport as part of all-round education, though all essentially maintained the dualism of mind and body and accorded physical education no higher place than that of a means to the end of 'more serious employment'. In 1703, at the instigation of Peter I, a German resident in Moscow, Pastor Ernst Glück, was permitted to open a private Gymnasium -- which Klyuchevsky describes as the "first attempt to run a secular general educational school in our sense of the word"; its curriculum included riding, horse-jumping and fencing. The attempt appears to have been premature;

[45] Klyuchevsky, op. cit., p. 42.

one pupil, Prince Kurakin, described it contemptuously as "an academy of various languages and cavalry sciences based on horses and swords."[46]

As the 18th century progressed, other Gymnasia and lycées were founded after the German and French models; these were more successful in establishing physical education and games as part of the school curriculum. Under the auspices of Moscow University (founded in 1755), two Gymnasia were opened -- one for the gentry, the other for non-gentry (raznochintsy); the former devoted 4 hours a week to fencing and 4 to dancing. Public examinations were compulsory. After a school reform in 1804, university regulations read: "Wherever possible, lessons of dancing, music and bodily exercises ought to be held"[47]; no money was forthcoming, however, for physical-education equipment either for the universities or the Gymnasia and lycées.

The man who did more than any other to change social attitudes to sport all over Europe was Rousseau[48]. Although his impact on official thought in Russia was not as great as in the West, he did exert a considerable influence on a number of great Russian thinkers -- from his Russian contemporaries, Alexander Radishchev (1749-1818), and Nikolai Novikov (1744-1818), publisher of the journal Moskovskie vedomosti, to Hertzen (1812-70) and the revolutionary democrats Belinsky (1811-70), Chernyshevsky (1828-89) and Dobrolyubov (1836-61).[49]

In the early part of her reign, Catherine II was actively interested in the Enlightenment. French became the language of the Court and with the language went the thought and many of the customs and leisure activities -- particularly attractive now that the nobles had been freed from State service and restrictions on foreign travel lifted. As Klyuchevsky succinctly puts it: "Once the gentry were freed from the burdens of compulsory service, they began to sense the proximity of liberty and there developed in them a need to fill

[46] Klyuchevsky, op. cit., p. 316.

[47] Samoukov, op. cit., p. 211.

[48] See below, p. 141.

[49] See below, pp. 142-147.

their leisure, to occupy their excruciating boredom with the fruits of someone else's mental and moral efforts, with the blossoms of a borrowed culture, since their own material was inadequate."[50]

The French Revolution, however, cooled Catherine's and her Court's ardour for French ideas and a number of experiments were curtailed.

B. The Beginnings of an Organised Sports Movement: 1861-1905

With serfdom abolished in 1861, the way was open for industrial development at a much higher tempo than hitherto. The reform was not intended to do this and, in fact, did not do so for nearly twenty years; nonetheless, it objectively created conditions (such as releasing -- even forcing -- peasants from the land) for the growth of factories and commerce. There were certain idiosyncrasies of Russian socio-economic development, however, that directly affected the parallel development of sport.

First: while the number of factory-workers increased considerably,[51] they failed, by and large, to share in the rise in the popular standard of living that elsewhere in Europe characterised the period. In fact, the acquisition of some degree of personal freedom was accompanied by a decline in living-standards, by land-hunger and by rural over-population.[52] Industrialisation did not bring the increased leisure and spending-money to the people that it did, say, in England. Hence it did not lead to the rise of professionalism and commercialism in sport to the extent that it did elsewhere.

[50] Klyuchevsky, op. cit., p. 211.

[51] The number of factory-workers increased from 358,000 in 1863 to 407,000 in 1867, 860,000 in 1893 and 1,100,000 in 1897 -- out of a population of 111,916,000 in 1897 (Pokrovsky, op. cit., p. 548.)

[52] On the eve of World War I, when tsarist Russia had attained the highest point of her prosperity, the national income per head was 10-12 per cent of that in the United States -- a fact which was "not surprising when you consider that 80 per cent of the self-supporting population of Russia was occupied in agriculture, while in the U.S.A., for every one engaged in agriculture, 2.5 were engaged in industry." (Trotsky, L., The History of the Russian Revolution, Gollancz, 1965, p. 31).

Second: while Russian industry was highly concentrated into large-scale enterprises[53], it was also closely associated with the state[54] -- which made serf-workers available, supplied a large part of finance and provided the markets. It was, therefore, the needs of the state rather than the profits of private capital that were the determining, though not the exclusive, factor in laying down the general lines of industrial development; the state therefore actually hampered the emergence of an industrial and capitalist bourgeoisie (as distinct from a professional and intellectual one).

In England, it was the 'philistines' of the developing industrial revolution "who laid down a pattern of sport for an urban community", as Huizinga put it.[55] They produced such team games as football and hockey, a form of athletics suited to their own needs, swimming competitions and a racket game of lawn tennis; they organised rowing and cycling and more or less took over the game of cricket from the gentry, and so on.[56] In Russia, bourgeois pressure to create an organised sports movement was feeble, and it was left to the conservative efforts of the state and the pioneering efforts of foreigners to organise urban sports for the growing urban populace.

53 Small enterprises involving fewer than 100 workers in 1914 employed in the United States 35 per cent of the total industrial labour force, but in Russia only 18 per cent. The two countries had an approximately equal percentage of undertakings with 100-1,000 workers. But giant enterprises, employing more than 1,000 workers each, in the U.S.A. accounted for 18 per cent of the workers, and in Russia -- 41 per cent (Ibid., p. 32). Lenin had estimated the Russian proportion as having been 40 per cent in 1879 and 27 per cent in 1866 (Lenin, V.I., "Razvitie kapitalizma v Rossii", in Polnoye sobranie sochinenii, Vol. III, Moscow, 1959, p. 535).

54 To give one example: in 1901, the Russian government owned two-thirds of the existing railway-track (Lyashchenko, P., The History of the National Economy of Russia, New York, 1949, p. 708).

55 Huizinga, J., Homo Ludens, Paladin, 1970, p. 32.

56 See McIntosh, P.C., Sport in Society, Watts, 1968, p.64.

Third: the proprietors of the principal industrial, banking and transport undertakings were foreigners.[57] The sports they imported were not always intended for Russian consumption and did not necessarily attract the Russians. Cricket and field hockey made little impact, for instance -- although cricket is reported as being played by British residents as far apart as Odessa and St. Petersburg between 1870 and 1890. Many of the clubs they founded were restricted in membership to foreign businessmen and merchants. Nonetheless, some foreign factory-owners introduced such team-games as football among their workers.

Fourth: the main reservoir from which the Russian working class was formed was not the craft guild, but peasant agriculture -- not the city, but the countryside. Furthermore, in Russia, the proletariat did not develop gradually, carrying with itself the burden of the past, as in England, but in leaps and bounds, involving both sharp changes of environment, ties and relations and a sharp break with the past.[58] It is this fact, combined with the concentrated oppression of tsarism, that made the Russian workers amenable to revolutionary ideas. This contributed, too, to the dichotomy in Russian intellectual thought in the second part of the 19th century -- liberal-monarchist on the one hand, and revolutionary on the other. Two effects of this revolutionary trend were the setting up of semi-clandestine politically-based sports-clubs by the working people and the elaboration of far-reaching sports theories and systems among intellectuals that could find no application under tsarism, but which were to play a big part in the formation of the post-revolutionary sports-movement.

57 "Heavy industry (metal, coal, oil) was almost wholly under the control of foreign finance capital, which had created for itself an auxiliary and intermediate system of banks in Russia. Light industry was following the same road. Foreigners owned in general about 40 per cent of all the stock capital of Russia, but in the leading branches of industry that percentage was still higher. We can say without exaggeration that the controlling shares of stock in the Russian banks, plants and factories were to be found abroad, the amount held in England, France and Belgium being almost double that in Germany." (Trotsky, op. cit., p. 32).

58 See note 51 on p. 79 above.

As team sports spread from England throughout Europe and the world, and as the various schools of gymnastics spread in popularity, they gradually made their way into a Russia that, in the 1860's, was becoming more and more receptive to new modes of entertainment and physical education. Members of the well-to-do middle class and liberal noblemen began to organise clubs in the major cities for the pursuit of such sports as yachting, tennis, skating, fencing, cricket, croquet and gymnastics. For their entertainment as spectators and punters, professionals and promoters provided horseracing, boxing, cycling and various displays of strength. In Table I on p. 83 are listed the earliest sports organisations formed in Russia.

Boating

The first sports club of a new type was the St. Petersburg River Yacht Club, formed in 1860. Its members were not to be drawn only from the aristocracy, as had been the case with the famous Imperial Yacht Club, dating from 1846, whose membership had been restricted to 150 noblemen — the Grand Dukes, the high dignatories of the Court, the tsar's aides-de-camp and a few foreign diplomats -- who were admitted on a temporary basis. Although the new club admitted the middle classes, it was still socially exclusive insofar as, like other clubs, it stressed its amateur status and excluded anyone who had ever been employed in manual labour for wages.[59] One novel concession it did make, however, was to admit women (in 1866). Besides yachting, the club also held regular rowing races, the first official tournament being held in 1860. A Scot called MacGregor set up the first canoeing club in the 1860's. In 1867, a yacht-club was opened in Moscow; others mushroomed along the Volga, the Dnieper, the Black-Sea and Baltic-Sea coasts. By 1898, there were over 40 such clubs in existence to form the All-Russia Association of Rowing and Yachting Clubs.[60]

[59] Tarabrin, I.A. (ed.), Pyat'desyat shagov sportivnoi Rossii, Moscow, 1967, p. 107.

[60] Ibid., p. 113.

TABLE I

The Organisation of Russian Sporting Activities in the 18th and 19th Centuries

| Period | Sport | Earliest organisation set up | Date founded | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1700–1799 | Yachting | Neva Flotilla | 1718 | Military |
| 1800–1824 | Shooting | Amateur Shooting Society | 1800[a] | Aristocracy |
| 1825–1849 | Horse-racing | St. Petersburg Horse-Racing Society | 1826 | ) |
| | Swimming | Neva School of Swimming | 1834 | ) Aristocracy |
| | Yachting | Imperial Yacht Club | 1846 | ) |
| 1850–1879 | Chess | St. Petersburg Chess Club | 1853 | ) |
| | Fencing | Officers' Fencing Gymnasium | 1857 | ) |
| | Boating | St. Petersburg River Yacht Club | 1860 | ) |
| | Lawn Tennis | Neva Lawn-Tennis Circle | 1860 | ) Gentry |
| | Gymnastics | Pal'ma Gymnastics Society | 1863 | ) |
| | Ice-skating | Amateur Skating Society | 1864 | ) |
| | Cricket | St. Petersburg Tennis and Cricket Club | 1868 | ) |
| 1880–1889 | Cycling | Tsar'skoye Selo Cycling Circle | 1880 | ) |
| | Heavy Athletics[b] | Krayevsky Heavy Athletics Circle | 1885 | ) Middle |
| | Athletics | Petrov Amateur Running Society[c] | 1886 | ) Class |
| | | St. Petersburg Circle of Amateur Sportsmen[c] | 1888 | ) |
| 1890–1899 | Football | Victoria Football Club[d] | 1894 | ) |
| | Boxing | Baron Kister's English Boxing Arena | 1895 | ) |
| | Skiing | Moscow Skiers' Club | 1895 | ) |
| | Ice-hockey | St. Petersburg Circle of Amateur Sportsmen | 1898 | ) |

a. Approximately.

b. Heavy athletics comprised a wide range of strongman feats and exercises: weightlifting, wrestling, body-building and various circus acts. Dr. Krayevsky's Circle was followed by The Hercules Club in 1896 and Sanitas in 1897.

c. The Petrov Society's members confined themselves to running, mainly cross-country; the St. Petersburg Circle at first engaged in a number of athletics events, then branched out into other sports, such as football, cycling, ice-hockey and lawn tennis.

d. Other clubs had played football as a sideline to other sports before 1897, but the Victoria (an Anglo-German club) was the first to be exclusively concerned with football.

Sources: Entsiklopedichesky slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu (v. 3 tomakh), Moscow, 1961: Vol. II, p. 22 (horse-racing); p. 252 (swimming); Vol. III, p. 312 (chess);

Samoukov, op. cit., pp. 216–222.

## Lawn Tennis

In the towns, lawn tennis attracted quite a following; other English lawn games, like cricket and croquet, were often linked with tennis under the umbrella of the same club. The Neva Lawn Tennis Circle came into being in the capital in 1860, to be joined, eight years later, by the St. Petersburg Tennis and Cricket Club. Both clubs played cricket and croquet, but these games do not appear to have caught on among Russians outside the twin capitals. Tennis did, however, and, in the following years, courts were laid in Moscow, Rostov, Taganrog, Kiev, Odessa and Nizhnyi Novgorod.

## Skating

During that part of the year when the rivers were ice-bound, yacht-clubs not infrequently turned themselves into ice-skating or figure-skating organisations. In effect, the first skating-club arose in the capital in 1864. Somewhat later, the Society of Amateur Skaters sent its members abroad to take part in competitions and, in 1883, A.P. Lebedev won the unofficial world figure-skating title in Helsinki -- the first real Russian success in international competition. When official world championships were inaugurated, Lebedev won the men's title in 1890.

A member of the same society, Alexander Panshin, won the Austrian speed-skating championships and then went on to win the world title in 1889 at the Amsterdam Speed-Skating Club. One month later, he won the first-ever Russian speed-skating tournament, held in Moscow.

## Fencing

Another sport at which Russians did well internationally was fencing. It had, of course, long had many adherents among the aristocracy, but now gained increasing popularity among the middle class, many of whom aspired to the culture of the nobility; skill with the foil was very fashionable. An Officers' Fencing Gymnasium opened in the capital in 1857, to be followed by similar paramilitary clubs in other parts of the Empire, notably at Warsaw and Kiev.

In 1900, Alexander Zakovorot, a working man by birth (one of the few to break through the social barriers), gained the world épée title in France.

Cycling

Cycling gained prominence in the 1880's, both as a participant and as a spectator sport. The first cycling-races in Russia were held on the Field of Mars in the centre of St. Petersburg in 1882; a year later, the first club was formed -- the Tsar'skoye Selo Cycling Circle. From being merely a relaxing novelty for lycéens, cycling began to be taken seriously; races were first held along the paths of Yekaterina Park, then a cement track was laid nearby and a stand for spectators built. Several other clubs grew up -- so that, by 1892, there were as many as 17 and some other cities had their own tracks and stadiums -- even as far away as Tashkent (the Tashkent Amateur Cycling Society was formed in 1885). Many of these were constructed and patronised by foreign bicycle firms, who not only saw a profitable outlet for their goods but also the prospect of big money in the first real Russian spectator sport -- for cycling was drawing large crowds: on 24 July, 1883, some 25,000 spectators watched cycling-races at the Moscow Hippodrome.[61] Similar large crowds attended cycling meetings in St. Petersburg's Semyonov Hippodrome.

In winter, racing took place indoors on wooden tracks, the first ones being laid in Moscow's manège on Manège Square in 1892, in the St. Petersburg Riding Academy and in Tula in 1894. The extent of the sport's popularity may be judged by the fact that the manège used by the Petersburg Amateur Cycling Society was open daily from 9 a.m. to 1 a.m. Besides lessons in cycling, the society also provided instruction in a variety of sports -- from tennis to tag! Entrance-fees were high, but ladies were admitted free (though as spectators only).[62]

[61] Fizkul'tura i sport v SSSR za 40 let, Moscow, 1957, p. 288.

[62] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1968, No. 5, p. 16.

The first national champion, in 1893, (over 75 versts[63]), was G. Davis, an English resident in Moscow. But Russian cyclists were no novices. Internationally, they gained a reputation that they have never matched since. In 1896, on the Catford track in London, Mikhail Dyakov won the 25-mile cycle-race. He held four world records between 1894 and 1898 while he was Russian national champion. His compatriot, Mal'kevich from Kiev, made the long-distance tours Kiev-Alexandria-Cairo, Chernyayev-Irkutsk-Moscow, and St. Petersburg-Paris. In 1895, Mikhail Dzevochko beat the Austrian road champion, Franz Herger, in the Petersburg-Moscow road race (725 km.).

Athletics

Athletics was given a boost by the St. Petersburg Circle of Amateur Sportsmen, founded at Tyarlevo near the capital in 1888; it had grown out of the Petrov Amateur Running Society, formed a couple of years earlier. By 1893, its athletics programme included jumping, hurdling, running, discus and javelin. The next year, it paid 90,000 rubles for a large area of wooded land on Krestovsky Island, which it turned into a sports-centre incorporating a football-field, pavilion, shooting-gallery, two tennis-courts, a running-track, jumping-pit and an area for field sports. The Circle was financed mainly by subscriptions from members (largely servicemen and foreign residents in the capital) who still numbered only 50 in 1900. By this time, athletics-clubs existed in all the major cities: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Khar'kov, Nizhnyi Novgorod, Riga, Warsaw and Odessa. Even so, some estimates put the number of athletics enthusiasts in the country at not more than 300.[64]

The two team-games that seasonally share the greatest support today, football and ice-hockey, began to take an organised form in the 1890's. They, like other competitive sports, had been encouraged by the enormous success of cycling, particularly as a spectator sport. It is worth describing at some length the development of football -- first, because it quickly became the most

[63] 80 km.

[64] Tarabrin, op. cit., p. 176.

popular organised sport in terms of numbers of both participants and spectators; second, because it pioneered the pattern of development of several other sports, though on a larger scale; and, third, because it showed the rôle played by foreigners, particularly the British, in introducing, popularising and finally abandoning the sport once it had taken root in Russia.

Football

The most important agents in popularising the game of football in Russia were the official and unofficial representatives of Britain in Russia. This paralleled the development of British-exported organised games in other industrialising states: "The majority of sports in current practice, and the very great majority of the more popular, were exported from Britain. They were taken abroad as soon as they were sufficiently refined and well organised to stand the journey, and as soon as ambassadors, official and unofficial, colonial administrators, missionaries, merchants, soldiers, sailors and settlers took a mind to playing games in their new homes, whether these homes were temporary or permanent."[65] In the case of Russia, these British 'ambassadors' were primarily owners of local factories and mills, their managers and technicians and the British diplomatic corps. Their dominance over football in Russia lasted until about 1908, when Russian clubs were numerous and strong enough to beat -- and usurp the positions of -- their former instructors.

Actually, the first football game started by the British in Russia was rugby. The bold initiator was a Mr. Hopper, a Scotsman who worked in Moscow. His efforts to launch rugby football were soon cut short. In 1886, the game was stopped by the police, who considered it a brutal game, conducive to demonstrations and rioting.

In the early days of soccer in Russia, the game was played, first, by the British among themselves and, a little later, by mixed teams of British and Russians, the latter being mainly students, cadets and clerks in business-houses.

[65] McIntosh, op. cit., p. 80.

In 1894, however, Harry Charnock, general manager of the vast Morozov mills (and one of four soccer-playing brothers in Moscow), introduced soccer to his workers. This step was said to be an attempt to woo them away from vodka-drinking on Sunday, the only free day of the week.

The first recorded football-match among Russians was played in the interval between cycling-races at the Semyonov Hippodrome in St. Petersburg in 1892. The rules of this game of kick and rush were primitive and there was no referee -- since nobody knew exactly how the game was played. It took a Russian-born Frenchman, Georges Duperont (later to become President of the All-Russia Football Association and, in Soviet times, Chairman of the Petrograd Football League[66]), a member of the St. Petersburg Circle of Amateur Sportsmen,[67] to translate literature on the game and to arrange the first Russian match to be played, in 1896 on Krestovsky Island, roughly according to the rules adopted by the Football Association of England. The next year, Duperont's team was challenged by the Petersburg Sports Circle[68] (which played on the Square of the First Cadet Corps), this being regarded as the beginning of organised Russian football. A section of the St. Petersburg Circle of Amateur Sportsmen branched off to form a football club under the name of Sport in 1897, but it was two years before a second Russian football club was formed. In the menatime, a number of teams of foreign residents were being formed and playing friendly matches against one another. The Victoria Football Club was formed in 1894 by English and German employees in St. Petersburg; they played occasional matches within the club in a reasonably organised way. The first refined game came, as in England and America, from English schools and colleges in the capital which attempted to codify and unify the laws about 1899.

66 See below, p. 184.

67 The St. Petersburg Circle of Amateur Sportsmen was formed in 1888 and popularised a number of organised sports in Russia, including athletics, ice-hockey and skiing. The Circle took up football in 1897 and entered the St. Petersburg Football League under the name Sport in 1902 -- the first Russian club to do so. It survived the 1917 October Revolution, was renamed Skoraya pomoshch' ('First Aid') for one year in 1921, reverted to Sport in 1922 and in 1925 became the Petrogradsky raion team. It seems to have disappeared in 1927.

68 The former won 4:3.

The united English college-students' team played under the name of Gloria; in 1899, it played matches against Victoria, the Scottish Circle of Amateur Footballers, the English Football Club and Germaniya F.C. (made up of German employees, primarily of the Putilov Factory). The following year, teams of foreign residents played their first games against Russian teams.[69] In the same year, nine new football-teams appeared, including seven Russian teams (the Yekaterinhof Circle of Amateur Footballers, the Lakhtinsky, Petrovsky and Krestovsky football-circles, teams from the Kolomyagi and Staroderevo Amateur Sports Circles, and the Rossiya Circle of Footballers) and two foreign residents' teams (Prussiya, attached to the German Football Association, and a team from the British diplomatic corps, under the somewhat pretentious title of 'The Special Circle of Sportsmen for Playing Football and Lawn Tennis of the High Society of the English Colony'). The game had now reached such proportions that a unified code was essential for successful organised competition to take place; a printed code was therefore forthcoming in 1900 and paved the way for the first football-league in Russia, the St. Petersburg Football League,[70] formed in 1901 by three foreign residents' clubs -- Nevka, Nevsky and Victoria. These three clubs contested the First St. Petersburg Football Championship in 1901, to the winners of which an English entrepreneur, T.M. Aspden, awarded a cup (known as the Aspden Cup and contested until 1917). The Nevka team (1900-1904) consisted mainly of Scotsmen working at the Sampson Weaving Mill and the Nevsky (1900-1912) -- of Englishmen employed at the Neva Spinning Mill. A Russian team, Sport, entered the league in 1902, but lost all its matches.[71] The next year, Sport did better and came third in the league, ahead of Nevka and Neva (the oldest English sports club in St. Petersburg, formed in 1860). Russian football was improving, with two Russian teams, Sport and the Petrovsky Circle, forming second teams in 1903. But friction

[69] The Russian team Sport beat Germaniya 2:0 but the Rossiya team lost 3:2 to Germaniya.

[70] The Moscow Football League was not formed until 1910.

[71] 1:2, 1:2, 0:3, 0:3, 0:6, and 1:7.

was arising between the previously dominant foreign residents' teams and the newer Russian teams. One cause for displeasure among the growing number of Russian football-players and fans was the fact that football administration in the capital was largely in the hands of foreigners -- who were accused of showing bias against Russian teams and players. Thus, during 1903, official protests were lodged at the exclusion of all Sport players from the St. Petersburg combined team that played the league-champions Victoria at the end of the season and at the sending-off of a Russian player, Chirtsov of Sport, by an English referee, V.S. Martin, during a match against Nevsky and his subsequent banning from football for one year. The Russians felt that Chirtsov had met with an injustice since he "had been knocked on to the snow and almost throttled by the English player Sharples" in retaliation for a "hard but quite legitimate tackle." Sharples was exonerated by the (English) league officials. In the reaction to this decision by the Russian sports magazine Sport, it is not hard to discern elements of the nationalistic feelings that were being nurtured along with the rise of Russian football: "The League committee's decision is to disqualify Chirtsov for a year and to let off Sharples with a 'caution'! This year we had Sharples the Throttler! In future we shall probably have Jim the Stabber and Jack the Ripper! Accounts of the matches will turn into a crime-report. Will that gladden the heart of Russian sportsmen? I don't think so. The English, in their typical high-handed way, having a large majority of votes, are banning a Russian who is completely guiltless and leaving a man who is obviously dangerous but is one of their own! Let Russian clubs band together and form their own league. I am sure that a great future awaits football in Russia, but for that we can do with fewer Sharples's!"[72] This admonishing of English officials and the call to Russian teams to form their own league were indications of the growing popularity and strength of Russian football. The next year, for the first time, there were as many Russian teams in the St. Petersburg League as foreign teams --

[72] Sport, 6 October, 1903.

Petrovsky,[73] Sport and Natsionaly (a football team formed from the Russian National Amateur Sport Society) as well as Nevsky, Victoria and Neva; the Russian teams came second, fifth and sixth in the championship. There were enough teams in 1904 to warrant a second division, the winners of which (until 1918) were awarded the Perzek Cup (donated by G.Y. Perzek, one of the organisers of football in the St. Petersburg Circle of Amateur Sportsmen); the 1904 Second Division consisted of the Petrovsky second team, the English college team Gloria, Merkur,[74] a Preparatory Gymnasium college team and Neva and Sport second teams. In the same year, the first inter-city match between St. Petersburg and Moscow took place. By 1905, therefore, football was well established as the most popular playing and spectator sport. From being a game played in Russia only by foreigners, it became diffused into society and was being taken up by a native industrial populace increasingly unwilling to play the game within a formal organisation dominated by foreigners.

Ice-Hockey

Ice-hockey was another game cultivated by the St. Petersburg Circle of Amateur Sportsmen after 1898, although mention had been made of it in the Petersburg Gazette of 1867, under the name of kubar', as "a new game which is played on ice and requires swift movement. The players are divided into two sides and use sticks to drive a wooden ball into a special place."[75] In 1890, the first ice-hockey matches were played in the capital; by 1900, eight clubs played the game.

[73] Petrovsky took its name from the St. Petersburg island on which the Petrovsky Sports Circle was founded; it formed a football section in 1902 and joined the League in 1904, becoming one of the strongest teams in the country. It survived the 1917 October Revolution, lasting until 1924, when it became the Vasileostrovsky raion team.

[74] Merkur was an old-established ice-hockey club that alternated this game with football from 1904 onwards; it competed in the city football-league until 1924, when its name was changed to Tsentral'ny raion 'A' team.

[75] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1968, No. 2, p. 29.

Riding

Equestrian sports - particularly as spectacles - were gaining support as the 19th century wore on. Horse-racing as an institutionalised sport had begun as far back as 1826, organised by noblemen in the small town of Lebedyan on the River Don. Since then, it had been mainly a sport for cavalry officers but, by the turn of the century, race-courses had been laid out -- not in the English open grass-course style, but also and more commonly as dirt-tracks in Roman-style amphitheatres known as 'hippodromes' -- which could also be used for other spectator sports, like cycling, athletics, football and even motor-cycling. (In fact, after 1890, they were as much the venues for cycling as they were for horse-racing, trotting, steeplechasing and hurdling.) By the end of the century, horse-races were attracting crowds of between 10,000 and 20,000. The hippodrome sports had had their paid performers since the early 19th century. There was money to be made, too, by backers and promoters. Nevertheless, horse-racing and other sports with professionals and a commercial element were firmly controlled by an aristocracy -- who often made money from sport but who could also afford to lose it. Horse-racing had long enjoyed royal and noble patronage -- particularly from cavalry officers -- the nobility taking a pride in the improvement of horse-racing stud and importing bloodstock from areas of the Empire noted for their fine horses -- e.g., the Caucasus, Turkestan and Bashkiria. The Orlov stables, for example, gained world renown in the late 19th century for their excellent bloodstock. Greyhound- and whippet-racing, so popular with the English working class, were evidently never introduced into Russia.

Wrestling and weightlifting

Russian strongmen had long had their following among both the populace and the nobility, who often sponsored them. Professionals mostly performed in travelling fairs -- of which there were more than 6,500 in the mid-1860's[76] -- and in circuses: "No circus performance was complete without its wrestlers,

[76] Lyashchenko, op. cit., p. 724.

boxers and weightlifters."[77] The acts varied from poses plastiques and muscle-play to weightlifting, wrestling, boxing and feats of strength -- all under the general heading of 'heavy athletics'. Members of the gentry and businessmen spent hours watching and betting on wrestlers (many of whose bouts were 'fixed' in the best commercial tradition). Such strongmen as the world-renowned Georgi Hakkenschmidt ('the Russian Lion'), Alexander Zass ('Sampson') -- who would culminate his performance by carrying on his shoulders out of the arena a grand piano and pianist plus a dancer on top of the piano -- Yevgeny Sandow -- whose speciality was to wrestle with an African lion in the circus ring (he was also author of the first Russian 'body-building' book in 1904) -- and Ivan Lebedev -- editor of the journal Hercules and the man on whom Anton Chekhov (a great patron of the sport) based his character Uncle Vanya -- are still names revered among world strongmen.

Even the 'weaker sex' were allowed to take part -- to attract more paying customers. At the end of the 19th century, 'Madame Atleta' pressed 89.5 kg. and raised 52 kg. with one hand and a certain Mrs. Trefilova-Bubnova, weighing only 52 kg., pressed 57 kg. and came third in a (men's) featherweight contest. Women wrestlers were regular members of circus-troupes; the redoubtable Masha Poddubnaya (wife of the great weightlifter, Ivan Poddubny) was women's world heavyweight wrestling champion and would invite all-comers to wrestle her in the circus-ring after she had disposed of her fellow-troupers.[78]

The popularity of weightlifting and wrestling (the Graeco-Roman style -- then known as the 'French' style -- was employed) may be judged by the existence of two regular journals, Hercules and Stadion; more than ten books were published on 'heavy athletics' before the 1914 war, as compared with one each on football, skiing and athletics (the only other sporting magazine in existence in the 19th century was Tsiklist). In 1885, Dr. V.F. Krayevsky set the sport on

[77] Legostayev, F., Fizicheskoye vospitanie i sport v SSSR, Munich, 1951, p. 8.

[78] Tenno, G., Sorokin, Y., Atletism, Moscow, 1968, p. 172.

a 'respectable' footing by founding the first wrestling and weightlifting club and propagandising the art and beauty of the sport among the nobility and, particularly, the growing body of industrialists. In 1896, a professional wrestler called Lebedev founded the famous Hercules Club; this was quickly followed by the equally famous Sanitas Club, which put out the following advertisment in the press -- reminiscent of similar advertisments in the West today, though no longer in Russia:

\+ + +

Sanitas Physical Development Club

98, Nevsky Pros., St. Petersburg.

Heavy athletics: Wrestling, Gymnastics, Therapeutic Body-Building with a guarantee of increasing chest-measurements by 5-15 cm.

Medical examination.

Special hours for women.[79]

\+ + +

Similar clubs sprang up in Kiev and Moscow in 1898 and in Riga and Chernigov in 1899. Sergei Yeliseyev from Ufa won Russia's first world weightlifting title in 1899 in Milan.

Boxing

The first boxing manual, English Boxing, was published in 1894 by Baron Kister of the First Life-Guard Regiment in Moscow; he set up Baron Kister's English Boxing Arena, which held boxing displays and sparring-sessions every Saturday evening; he also, in 1895, arranged the first public match between a London professional boxer, Fred Harrison, and a Russian Resident, Hennigsen; this was described in the magazine Tsiklist, although the result was not reported.[80] Boxing, however, tended to be regarded as a muzhik's sport, violent

[79] Stadion, 1897, No. 9, p. 5.

[80] Tsiklist, 1895, No. 7, p. 7.

and dangerous, devoid of grace and skill -- even when confined to the Marquess of Queensberry's Rules (formulated in England in 1866), as it was. As a Guards' officer and a gentleman, Kister was harassed for his association with the game, and, even though he transferred the Arena to his wife (it became Baroness Kister's Arena), he was eventually discharged from the army. The club continued successfully, putting on 'athletic' evenings on Saturdays, in which boxing was the highlight, until 1901. Boxing was further boosted by the arrival of the famous French pugilist, Erneste Lustalla, in 1898, who set up another boxing school.[81]

Gymnastics

Gymnastics became increasingly popular as the century progressed -- partly for political reasons. Russia's defeat in the Crimean War in 1855, like Germany's defeat by Napoleon, resulted in an examination of ways to enhance national solidarity, morale and preparedness. Just as the German Turnen gymnastics societies, the Czech Sokol and the Swedish and Danish gymnastics movements of the 19th century had been attempts to regenerate their peoples after military disasters -- so, some Russian officials hoped, the same could be done for Russia.

The first gymnastics circle arose in St. Petersburg in 1863 and was followed in the same year by the Pal'ma Gymnastics Society with branches in the capital, Riga, Moscow, Lódz, Odessa and Libava (now Liepaja, in Latvia). In 1868, the Moscow Gymnastics Society was formed and held its meetings in a large hall on Tsvetnoi Boulevard (nowadays the Dinamo Club gymnasium). In 1874, gymnastics on the German model was introduced into the army by Lesgaft[82]; training-courses for gymnastics-instructors were, under Lesgaft's supervision, established for army officers in 1877 and for civilians in 1896. In 1884, the first Russian federation for any sport came into being: the Russian Gymnastics

[81] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1970, No. 10, p. 30.

[82] See below, pp. 152 - 153.

Society, formed on the initiative of several notable social reformers, including the writer (and medical practitioner) Anton Chekhov.

As elsewhere in Europe, gymnastics was to be the basis of physical education and a major means for uniting young people and developing in them a love of their country -- not all young people, of course, but only that minority whose parents could afford the high entrance fees to the clubs and schools.

The physical exercises introduced into Russian schools and colleges in the 1870's largely served the interests of the army. Kozlovsky, their most influential exponent, succeeded in 'selling' his proposals to the tsar, Alexander II, by pointing out that gymnastics could be a direct form of military training, permitting a reduction of national service and great financial savings. So-called 'disciplinary exercises' were designed to produce "a disciplined subject in peacetime and a fearless fighter in war."[83] The official school gymnastics-manuals of 1872 and 1878 prescribed exercises modelled on the Prussian military-drill regulations of 1847. Marching in ranks and columns, turning on the march, wheeling, forming sections, etc., were to be practised under the command of a gymnastics-leader.

Nonetheless, it was the nationalistic Slav Sokol school of gymnastics (rather than the Prussian) that was assimilated into Russia in the 1880's and which, essentially, still underpins the present Olympic (and Russian) system of 'sporting' gymnastics (sportivnaya gimnastika) and 'artistic' gymnastics (khudozhestvennaya gimnastika) or calisthenics.

## Education and Sport in the Nineteenth Century

New school regulations issued on 19 November, 1864, made gymnastics compulsory for the senior classes of all schools and colleges -- although the government was not forthcoming with financial assistance to purchase equipment, build gymnasiums or train P.T.-instructors. Concerned at the ineffectiveness

83 Pamyati Petra Frantsevicha Lesgafta, St. Petersburg, 1912, p. 34.

of earlier instructions and anxious to improve pre-military training, the Minister of Education in 1889 made clear what he had in mind in a document entitled 'Instructions and Programme for Teaching Gymnastics in Men's Educational Institutions'. Once again, no provision was made for training instructors: instead, army officers and sergeants were to be invited into the schools (as was the practice in many English public schools). This led to a somewhat regimented version of gymnastics, with a stress on parades, military excursions and field-training -- e.g., forced marches, fording rivers, crawling and climbing . . . Discontented at the militarisation of sport in schools, a number of educationalists and social reformers brought pressure to bear on the Education Minister, who finally issued a circular (on 15 August, 1902) which envisaged the introduction into state-run schools of competitive games, military training, gymnastics, ice-skating, skiing, swimming, rowing, cycling, fencing, woodwork, dancing and singing. P.T. was to be given daily for 30 minutes in the middle of the school day. This was certainly an advance, but the old problem of paucity of qualified teachers and sports-equipment blunted the effectiveness of the circular. Some years previously, however, (in 1896), Lesgaft had begun his 'Courses' for physical-training instructors, a qualified body of men[84] was gradually coming into the schools and serious research into physical education was being done. His three-year course included lessons in anatomy, hygiene, physiology, history and methods of physical education and indoor and outdoor sports from 1898 onwards.

None of these educational measures affected either the majority of children (who remained without education) or children in primary, artisan or church schools, where sport did not feature at all in the curriculum.[85]

C. Sport up to the Revolution: 1906-1917

The 20th century opened inauspiciously for the tsarist authorities. An industrial crisis and an accompanying decline in urban living standards caused

[84] And women; see p. 154 below.

[85] See Appendix XIII.

a rash of strikes, both economic and political, and increasing violence. Although Russia was a backward country with a relatively small number of industrial workers (in all enterprises undergoing factory inspection in 1905, there were only about 1½ million workers out of a population of some 120 million[86]), the strike-movement attained proportions unequalled anywhere in the world.[87] Mounting unrest affected the countryside, too -- where, in many regions, peasants ransacked estates. Attempts to decapitate the absolutist political power resulted in the assassination of Prime Minister Plehve in July, 1904 and of the Tsar's uncle, Grand Duke Sergei, in February, 1905 -- both killed by bombs thrown by members of the terrorist wing of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. The immediate official reaction led to over a thousand demonstrators being shot outside the Winter Palace in January, 1905, the repression of workers' and students' organisations, and the inauguration of a period of intense reaction under Prime Minister Stolypin, who took office in 1906. Yet it also brought the Duma, which met in May, 1906, -- the first Russian parliament, though elected on restricted franchise and possessing very limited powers. Another blow to the state was the most humiliating military setback (with the possible exception of that in the Crimean War) it had suffered since the days of the Golden Horde: utter defeat at the hands of an oriental power in the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War.

One conclusion apparently tacitly drawn by some tsarist officials from these disasters was that sport might be employed as one means of counteracting the evils that had culminated in the events of 1905. Particularly after the Japanese-inflicted defeat, it was hoped that the participation of the population at large in some form of fitness-campaign would improve the country's morale and cohesiveness. Sport was also to divert the workers and students from their revolutionary activity and safeguard young people from the unhealthy influence

86 Trotsky, op. cit., p. 55.

87 The Factory Inspectorate gave the following figures for strikes: 1903 -- 87,000, 1904 -- 25,000, 1905 -- 2,863,000 (Ibid., p. 56). Note the remarkable increase in 1905.

of the street and political hooliganism -- said to have been particularly virulent in the strikes and domestic unrest that spread to industrial centres during 1905 and 1906. Further, by widening admission to existing clubs and admitting office-workers and qualified industrial workers and by setting up new clubs at factories, in army and navy units and even in the countryside, the government intended to counteract the growing popularity of the 'outlaw' sporting clubs and militant workers' druzhiny, which were engaging in workers' military training under the guise of sport. (The druzhinniki at the Obukhov Works, for example, would meet on Sundays on the banks of the Neva and row off to some deserted spot where they would practise hand-grenade and bomb-throwing, unarmed and armed combat, wrestling and fencing, and military drilling.[88] Members of the Workers' Boxing Club in Rostov, formed in 1905, also practised revolver-shooting and studied Marxist writings on the side.[89] Similar druzhiny existed in factories in Moscow, Khar'kov, Oryol and Ivanovo-Voznesensk. Often they would include folk games like lapta and gorodki in their physical training.

The early years of the 20th century were, therefore, a busy time for the organised sports movement, with tentative government backing and overall control. More and more clubs were formed, schools and courses of physical training were established in the larger cities and leagues and national associations came into being, providing competition in specific sports. In 1909, the first Russian sporting weekly, Russky sport, appeared; it was not as well produced as anything of the kind in Britain. Football and racing filled more pages than lawn tennis, gymnastics and wrestling put together.

This upsurge in organisation in the main sports was not too far behind that in other industrialising countries, as Table 2 shows.

According to official data supplied by the office of the Chief Supervisor of the Physical Development of the Population of the Russian Empire,

88 Sinitsyn, S.D. (ed.), Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury narodov SSSR, Vol. I, Moscow, 1953, p. 127.

89 Novoselov, N.P., "Fizicheskaya kul'tura v period russkoi revolutsii, 1905-1907", in Ocherki po istorii fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1950, p. 67.

TABLE 2

Dates of Founding of National Sports-Associations, Selected Countries, 1863-1903

| Sport | Britain | U.S.A. | Germany | Russia | Russia's lag on Britain (years) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Association Football | 1863 | -[a] | 1900 | 1912 | 49 |
| Swimming | 1869 | 1878 | 1887 | -[a] | ... |
| Cycling | 1878 | 1880 | 1884 | 1884 | 6 |
| Rowing | 1879 | 1872 | 1883 | 1898 | 26 |
| Skating | 1879 | 1888 | 1888 | -[a] | ... |
| Athletics | 1880 | 1888 | 1898 | 1911 | 31 |
| Lawn Tennis | 1886 | 1881 | 1902 | 1907 | 26 |
| Skiing | 1903 | 1904 | 1904 | 1910 | 7 |

[a] None formed.

Sources: McIntosh, op. cit., p. 85; Entsiklopedichesky slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu, Vol. I, pp. 123, 171; Vol. III, pp. 8, 52, 111, 190, 207.

General Voyeikov,[90] there existed 1,266 sports clubs, societies and circles in 1913, with an average membership of some 60 persons.[91] These were mainly small individual sports-clubs or gymnastics-societies whose members were largely recruited from the Russian middle class. Nonetheless, the growth from 50 registered clubs in 1900 and 100 in 1905 and 1,266 in 1913 is an indication of the upswing in the organised sports-movement that was to be cut short by World War I. Alongside these registered sports organisations and the army,

[90] See below, p.106.

[91] Chudinov, I.G., "Fizicheskaya kul'tura v gody grazhdanskoi voiny", in Ocherki po istorii fizicheskoi kul'tury, Vol. III, Moscow, 1948, p. 73.

there were 40 student clubs and a few workers' clubs, both registered and unregistered (dikie) at large industrial establishments.[92] It should be added that Voyeikov's figure of 1,266 included 378 shooting and fishing clubs; excluding these, the total membership of sports societies amounted to just under 50,000 -- most of whom belonged to clubs in the main Russian cities, particularly St. Petersburg and Moscow.[93] Nonetheless, the relatively industrialised provinces did account for substantial numbers: the Ukraine had 196 sports clubs with 8,000 members and Belorussia had some 1,000 members in its Sanitas, Sokol, Bogatyr' and Maccabee[94] sports clubs.[95]

These clubs mostly built their own sports-facilities; by 1913, the country had 156 sports-centres and 392 gymnasiums -- an average of 1 sports-centre and 2 gymnasiums for every million people.[96] The paucity of amenities as a whole may be judged from the 1913 figures for three Russian cities.[97]

[92] Sinitsyn, op. cit., p. 127.

[93] Ibid., p. 129.

[94] The world-wide Maccabee federation of Jewish gymnastics- and sports-associations was founded in 1902 and had organisations in a number of countries, including Russia, especially Belorussia and the Ukraine, where there were large concentrations of Jews. It held (and still holds) Maccabeeads once every four years on the Olympic principle, but for Jews only. The tsarist government appears to have tolerated a number of Maccabee sports associations -- some perhaps believing they might deflect more militant Jews from political action. In any case, Jews were frequently banned from membership of Russian sports organisations -- e.g., the Sokol and the Poteshnye (see below, pp.102-104).

[95] Kulinkovich, K.A., "Razvitie fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta v Belorussia SSR", in Ocherki po istorii fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, p. 36.

[96] Makartsev, N.A., Stranitsy istorii sovetskovo sporta, Moscow, 1967, p. 7.

[97] See Table 3 (p.102).

TABLE 3

Sports Amenities in 1913 in Three Russian Cities

| Amenity | St. Petersburg | Moscow | Rostov |
|---|---|---|---|
| Football-pitches | 15 | 7 | 2 |
| Gymnasiums | 10 | 8 | 1 |
| Swimming-pools | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Race-courses | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Tennis-courts | 65 | 50 | 2 |
| Cycle-tracks | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Boat-houses | 5 | 2 | 2 |

Sources: Ekonomicheskaya gazeta, 1967, No. 21; Makartsev, op. cit., p. 7; Fizicheskaya kul'tura i sport v SSSR za 40 let, Moscow, 1957, p. 242; Chudinov, op. cit., p. 73.

Many individual clubs, however, were well-equipped. The Morozovsy football-club, for example, had an excellent pavilion with its own dressing-rooms, baths, a dining-room, a large hall for social gatherings and a cinema -- facilities as good as, if not better than, most amateur clubs in Britain had at the time.[98]

The major branches of the sports-movement were the Sokol, the Scouts, the Poteshnye and factory, college and semi-philanthropic organisations like the Society for the Encouragement of the Physical Development of Youth -- plus, after 1912, the state body for physical education under General Voyeikov.

(i) The Sokol

The Sokol gymnastics- and sports-movement of the Czechs found ready application in Russia, but while the Czech version was distinguished by being a centre for Czech small-nation nationalism and independence aspirations, the Russian Sokol had an underlying great-power ideology that was explicitly pan-Slavist (and anti-Semitic: Jews could not become members). Its members were

[98] Lockhart, R.B., Giants Cast Long Shadows, Putnam, London, 1964, p. 175.

imbued with the 'patriotic' idea of uniting all Slavs under the aegis of Russia. After the debacle of the Russo-Japanese War, the movement and its ideology found increasing support from the government and from young Russians, especially in the schools and colleges. By 1910, Sokol gymnasts were strong enough to form the Union of Russian Sokols which united all the previously independent Sokol organisations of Russia. The unified movement flourished with government backing: it held congresses regularly, published two magazines -- Sokol and The Bulletin of the Russian Sokol -- and Russian members travelled abroad to attend all-Sokol gatherings. Activities were by no means confined to gymnastics, members engaging in field and track athletics, outdoor team-games and military training.

(ii) The Scouts (Skauty)

The Boy Scout movement had, of course, begun at the turn of the century during the Boer War in South Africa. A British officer, Colonel Baden-Powell, who had observed that the Boers used boys for scouting and reconnaissance missions, began to form units of boy scouts in the British army. Shortly after, similar units with a distinctly military-patriotic-religious stamp were set up in England; after 1907, the movement spread to other countries. Tsarist army officers who had trained abroad introduced the Scout movement to Russia, forming the first troop in Tsarskoye Selo in 1909. The Russian Scout Society was set up in 1914 to coordinate activities. By 1917, there were 50,000 Scouts and Guides (gyorlskauty) in 143 Russian towns.[99]

Many Scout organisations were attached to secondary schools; membership was largely confined to the sons of the middle classes (workers' sons more often joined the Poteshnye). Most of the Scout training was done by army officers, although several Scout leaders were specially invited from England for the purpose. As with Scout movements elsewhere, most of the activity was devoted to training of a paramilitary nature (rifle-shooting, learning the Morse code, tying knots, camping, parading, etc.), but it did include Sokol gymnastics,

[99] Pantyukhov, O.I., "Istoriya russkovo skautskovo dvizheniya. Otdel: Rossiya, 1909-1922 gody", in Russkie skauty, Tsentral'ny shtab Natsional'noi Organizatsii russkikh skautov, San Francisco, 1969, pp. 19-20.

athletics, team-games, skiing, skating and tobogganing. It may be that the authorities saw the Scouts as a means of training an army-reserve and a youth-group dedicated to the well-known trinity of Autocracy, Orthodoxy and Folkdom -- i.e., to Russian absolutist monarchism, obscurantist Russian Christianity and Russian great-power chauvinism.

(iii) The Poteshnye

The Poteshnye, named after the boys' regiments of Peter I, were first set up in 1908 to train rural and urban youth in military and gymnastic exercises and in sports that had a military application. In January, 1908, the War Minister, Sukhomlinov, submitted to the tsar' plans to organise military training for schoolchildren, primarily in the countryside, in out-of-school hours. The next year, the Education Ministry directed all education-inspectors to arrange military training at elementary schools in their areas under the supervision of retired or reserve army officers. This was accomplished by articles in the press praising the beneficial effects of drill and gymnastics on the physical development of rural children and stressing the likelihood of the new system bringing a reduction in national service. Nonetheless, largely because of the general apathy of instructors, the lack of equipment, money and qualified volunteers (and, most of all, the lack of any need for organised sport among rural youth), the Poteshnye did not make much impression on village youth.

In the towns, however, it was a different matter. An education-inspector of colleges in Bakhmut, one Lutskevich, gained publicity and imperial recognition by organising a whole battalion of Poteshnye cadets in the space of a year. For this, he was invited by Nicholas II himself to parade his battalion before him. This showcase parade took place on 22 May, 1910, at Tsar'skoye Selo; the attendant publicity led to the creation of Poteshnye units in other areas. The War Ministry ordered that "all military units in whose region there exist popular classes of military training and gymnastics (i.e., Poteshnye) are to afford them assistance of every possible kind."[100] Although the Poteshnye engaged in Sokol

[100] Quoted in Samoukov, op. cit., p. 238.

gymnastics and various sports and games, their main concern was the training of children and students for military parades and public displays. This militarisation of youth in lieu of its physical education brought a great deal of criticism from intellectuals, educationalists and medical people; by early 1914, as a result, the movement had virtually fallen into desuetude.

(iv) Factory Clubs

After the shock of 1905, a number of factory-owners began to set up sports clubs for their employees. The giant Morozov mills, for example, created sports clubs for their workers, starting in 1906 with a Workers' Sports Club at Orekhovo-Zuyevo, an industrial settlement about 60 miles east of Moscow.[101] In 1912, the Putilov management provided facilities for and founded a Circle of Amateur Sportsmen for their employees. The Welsh industrialist, Ivor Hughes, sponsored football at his steel factories in the town of Yuozovka (named after him). Similar clubs appeared in Khar'kov, Kramatorsk and elsewhere. Since many factory-owners, managers and skilled personnel were foreigners, there was an attempt to introduce a foreign pattern of sport on a factory basis, with intra- and inter-factory competitions. Many of the sponsors and a good proportion of the players were foreigners.

(v) Autonomous College Sports Societies

A student sports movement really began to get under way in 1908, with the establishment of sports societies in the Polytechnical and Electrotechnical Institutes in St. Petersburg and in its University. By 1914, their number had grown to some 40 registered societies (13 in St. Petersburg, 6 in Moscow, 4 in Kiev), some of which received financial backing from the Ministry of Education.[102] In 1911, a Students' Sports League came into being in the capital to control and organise the city's sports-contests involving students. It was the government's hope that sport would be an antidote 'to increasing unrest among students'. When it became clear that sport was failing to distract

[101] Perel, A., Football in the USSR, Moscow, 1958, p. 5.

[102] Zholdak, V.I., Stranitsy moskovskovo sporta, Moscow, 1969, p. 25.

students from politics, the Ministry cut off the flow of funds to the students' sports societies and either closed them down or strictly supervised them.

(vi) The Society for the Encouragement of the Physical Development of Student Youth

This was one of the societies concerned with sport that prospered and received the stamp of official approval after the revolutionary events of 1905. With support from the Ministry of Education, it was intended to become, in the words of the Minister, Kasso, "a means of counteracting the moral irresolution of students."[103] (Lesgaft, the society's National Secretary, was not so furtunate with his own 'Courses'; he had replaced them in 1905 by a 'Higher School of Free Exercises' to which he invited eminent academics to lecture. During 1905 and 1906, the School became a centre of student unrest and a meeting-place of the Soviet Workers' Deputies and other workers' councils. Not surprisingly, the school was closed by the government in 1907. Two years later, Lesgaft died.)

The society's branches were functioning in 1909 in cities as far apart as Ufa, Riga, Kazan', Kiev, Orenburg and Vilna (now Vilnius). In 1910, it was reported as having 80 branches, of which 25 were mainly devoted to gymnastics, 16 to a variety of sports, and 8 to team-games; the remainder sponsored more or less all sports and games equally.

(vii) The Chief Supervisor of the Physical Development of the Population of the Russian Empire

In 1912, General Voyeikov was appointed 'Chief Supervisor of the Physical Development of the Population of the Russian Empire'. His office was, in effect, the first state body for sport. Two years later, with the start of World War I, a Provisional Committee of representatives of various government departments and sports-societies was set up to assist the Chief Supervisor and General Voyeikov had effectual political control over all sports- and quasi-sports-organisations in Russia. This centralised state control of sport was primarily

[103] Tsiklist, 1906, No. 7, p. 17.

intended for mobilising the population for the war-effort; the organisation was to be taken over, three years later, by the Bolsheviks and turned into the military-training organisation, Vsevobuch.

Official Stumbling-Blocks to the Development of Sport

Within the antiquated social and political structure, it was difficult to progress far with the organisation of any independent activity from below without seeming to call into question the prevailing reactionary ideology and undermine the very foundations of the tsarist state. First, sport and physical education implied the cultivation of the body as well as the mind -- and this tended to be at odds with the extreme obscurantism of the educational and religious authorities; it smacked not only of the flesh, but of materialism. Second, although the régime was not blind to the importance of sport as a factor promoting military training, what it could not accept was that sports clubs should be given some measure of freedom of action -- since this could be utilised for very non-military purposes; it feared that the sports-clubs would serve as an excuse for people to meet and exchange ideas uncontrolled by the authorities, that they would become centres of revolutionary activity and, in the non-Russian parts of the Empire, of movements for national liberation -- just as they had with the Sokol movement in the Czech lands and with the Turnen in Germany. It was this dilemma that caused the government to start Lesgaft's courses -- and then to stop them, to appoint him supervisor of army physical training -- and then to banish him from the capital in 1901 for over two years, to encourage student and factory sports-clubs -- and then to curtail them and put them under strict surveillance, and to set up a state sports body -- and then to deny it funds.

Nonetheless, despite this government ambiguity, there is no doubt that the period from 1905 to the outbreak of world-wide hostilities and then the revolution witnessed a substantial growth in a wide range of organised sports. One reason for the upsurge was the growing realisation that there was money in sport. At no time previously had spectators in Russia been organised to

produce money for promoters of sports. A crowd had been a spontaneous gathering and the patronage of a few rich men had provided the necessary financial backing for a sport or a sporting event. Spectator sport and its accompanying professionals, performing for a paying public -- first in cycling and horse-racing, then in weightlifting, wrestling and football -- began to spread. Enterprising promoters, often foreign, built cycling-tracks, hippodromes (initially for horse-racing, but after also for cycling, athletics, football and winter sports) and gymnasiums. The first decade of the 20th century was the time of the creation of spectacles and the commercial development of sports on the rubles and kopecks of the large Russian petty bourgeoisie and the urban poor. (The flow of people from country to town had been particularly rapid since 1885, as Lenin had pointed out: "In a dozen years (1885-1897), the minimum annual influx of rural population into the towns was put by contemporary statistics at 2,500,000.")[104]

In Western Europe, it had been the industrialists who had inspired a large-scale sports movement based on the growing urban population: having taken over the economic power of the aristocracy, the new middle classes gradually (and sometimes abruptly) undermined its political power and social influence, so transferring the social structure, introducing a new state ideology and a new pattern of culture (including sport) justified by that new ideology. In Russia, though urbanisation created the needs for an urban pattern of recreation (including sport) that differed radically from the casual, open-air and largely unorganised rural pattern, this did not happen. That is not to say that the development of organised sport was altogether unaffected by the Russian bourgeoisie: in fact, many of the new sports clubs were set up and run by them. (Such clubs differed from the older aristocratic societies in that they mostly specialised in single sports that were currently popular in industrialised Europe.) But an even bigger influence on the sports-movement was the large foreign community resident in Russia: not only did the majority

104 Lenin, V.I., "Razvitie kapitalizma v Rossii", in Polnoye sobranie sochinyenii, Vol. III, Moscow, 1959, p. 505.

of sports then popular in their home-countries come to Russia with these foreigners, they also served as a bond between immigrants of different nationalities.

In the absence of a forceful pioneering bourgeois drive in Russian sport, the working class might have shown the way. But the outmoded social structure found little room for concessions to working-class pressures for recreational facilities or a pattern of sport that reflected the needs of the urban workers. Moreover, the high entrance- and competition-fees of existing clubs were often prohibitive for the urban poor, who had better uses for their wages -- or so some in authority thought: "Sport is primarily an expensive pastime and therefore is not for the workers. Their path is the kabak. And, in the morning, hunched and scraggy, off they go again to work."[105] There is more than a hint of contempt here to justify social apartheid in sport, which kept the workers out of the middle-class and foreign clubs and contests. Consequently, they tended to organise independently of middle-class and state institutions -- as they were to do politically in the Soviets -- in factory druzhiny (brotherhoods) and dikie ('wildcat' or 'outlaw') groups. Often they were refused admission to foreign and middle-class clubs and leagues, since they did not fall in with a definition of 'amateur' required for membership designed to discriminate against manual workers and artisans. There is, however, evidence to show that some outstanding working-class athletes did, in fact, manage to participate in registered clubs and in tournaments, as the following indignant letter, sent to Russkoye Slovo in 1911, makes clear: "It has happened of late that persons we know to be concierges (dvorniki), coach-drivers (izvozchiki) and artisans (mastera) have broken into skiing, figure-skating and speed-skating competitions alongside gentlemen students, government employees and men of respectable society. Is this correct? Of course not. Being engaged in manual labour by virtue of their trade affiliations, these people consequently have an unfair advantage over gentlemen, just as the professional has over the amateur. We

[105] K sportu, 1912, No. 11, p. 16.

therefore call upon the authorities to put the matter in order."[106]

In any case, the prevailing labour legislation made it hard for the industrial workers to take part in sport. Not only was labour in many Russian factories physically exhausting, but few workers had enough time off from work to enable them to spare leisure-time for active or spectator sport. The marxist historian, Pokrovsky, reports that, "despite the Law of 2 June, 1897, restricting the working day to 11½ hours (on Saturdays and the eves of feast-days to 10 hours), regulations were often broken and it was not uncommon for a worker to labour for 13 or 14 hours a day, six days a week."[107] The economist, Tugan-Baranovsky, noted that "the practical significance of the 1897 Law would not be in dispute if it were not for the fact that the establishment of a legal limit to the working day was paralysed by the absence of any coercive measures and by the allowing of overtime. The Finance Minister's circular of 14 March, 1898, permitting an unlimited amount of overtime, virtually deprives the 1897 Law of any force."[108]

These were different from the socio-economic conditions that shaped the organised sports-movements in Britain and America during the 18th and 19th centuries. Despite the many initiatives and efforts, therefore, the organisation of sport was far behind that in the rest of industrialised Europe and America.

The promotion of sport was, of course, dependent upon the economic growth of the community and an increase in leisure -- factors which, in the West, had turned the liberal views on sport of various intellectuals (Rousseau, Newman,

106 'N.V.', in Russkoye Slovo, 12 December, 1911. Social exclusiveness sometimes characterised sports-clubs in England during the development of organised sport. For example, in 1866, the Amateur Athletics Club excluded "mechanics, artisans and labourers" from membership. On the establishment of the Amateur Rowing Association in 1882, a definition of an 'amateur' was adopted such that "no person shall be considered an oarsman, sculler or coxswain who has ever been employed in or about boats or in manual labour for wages or who has been by trade or employment a mechanic, artisan or labourer, or engaged in any menial duty."

107 Pokrovsky, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 568.

108 Tugan-Baranovsky, M., Russkaya fabrika v proshlom i nastoyashchem, Vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1907, p. 523.

Arnold, Hughes and Kingsley) from academic theories with few practical applications as far as strata beyond the lower fringe of the upper-middle class were concerned into a philosophy of action for the populace. The extension of middle-class sport to the working class took place in England roughly during the two decades from 1870 to 1890 and coincided with a successful campaign fought by clerks, artisans and manual workers for a reduction in working hours (including Saturday afternoons off). It was then that the great proliferation of sports-clubs took place. Some representatives of the middle class, including a number of Protestant and Non-Conformist churchmen (particularly Methodists) took their sports to the workers with a missionary zeal that was quite absent in Russia (where the Church played no part in encouraging sport). Local churches provided the focal points for a vast number of sports-clubs in England during the 1870's. About one-quarter of English football- and one-fifth of English cricket-clubs are known to have been connected with a church, chapel or other religious organisation.[109] Although puritanism stood in the way of these games being played on Sunday, many clergymen seem to have welcomed sport as a valuable source of pleasure and satisfaction for the masses -- and, perhaps, as an attraction that might divert them from vices like drunkenness and fornication and from sedition.

That organised sport did finally advance quite rapidly in Russia at the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th centuries is, as we have seen, in no small measure attributable to the sporting imports of the foreign communities in Russia -- particularly the British -- and to the efforts of a small group of intellectuals and junior officers. Industrialism brought less leisure to the people and less money for them to enjoy what free time they had than it had in Britain and the U.S.A. In any case, social constraints and the exclusiveness of foreign and Russian bourgeois sports-clubs forced the urban workers to set up their own clubs and sports, which the authorities frequently refused to register, with the result that they stood outside the official leagues and national associations.

[109] McIntosh, op. cit., p. 72.

The tsarist régime's failure adequately to meet the mounting needs of the urban populace for appropriate recreation may well, inter alia, have contributed a mite to its demise in 1917. The British diplomat, Robert Bruce Lockhart, who was in Russia during World War I, wrote that, had British entrepreneurs been able to spread the passion for playing football more quickly in Russia, the Whites might have won on the playing fields of Moscow what they lost in the Reading Room of the British Museum. He regarded the introduction of football by the British industrialists and workers then resident in Russia as "an immense step forward in the social life of the Russian worker and, if it had been adopted rapidly for all mills, history might have been changed"(!)[110]

There is another instructive point to be made about the comparative development of Russian and English sport in an industrialising community: in embracing the populace in their sports, the English middle classes imparted their own values and attitudes which helped to integrate workers into the new urban-industrial environment. Their team-games encouraged just those qualities of cooperation, competition and conformity that were so much prized by a middle class which was establishing its power and influence throughout society. Some transference of identity from local club to local government almost certainly helped the growth of civic sense and pride in such cities as Birmingham, Manchester and Bradford. Local politicians, factory-owners, churchmen and others in positions of authority who advocated measures to promote sport among the working people did so in the conscious belief that they were helping to cement their loyalty, integrate them into the community and disarm militancy. In the absence of a strong upper-middle class in Russia, and given the inactivity of the state in sport, no integration of the populace into civil society through sport such as had occurred in Britain took place. When the tsarist authorities were moved to take action at the outbreak of war, faced by the need for a national physical-fitness

[110] Lockhart, op. cit., pp. 173-174.

programme, the measures it took came too late. In the second year of World War I, in 1915, the tsarist state made its first attempt to organise and encourage sport on any wide basis. It issued an Announcement on the Mobilisation of Sport and created special military sports committees to which were appointed, alongside army representatives, members of civilian sports-organisations. The aim was to generate civic activity which would produce fighting men who were more physically and morally fit. But these efforts were too tentative and too late; the government found it hard to arouse the public enthusiasm that it had deliberately dampened down for so many years. Apart from the Sokol and one or two other sports societies, the response was minimal: in some areas, like the artillery-workshops of the Putilov munitions-plant, the mobilisation-for-sport committees were actually run by revolutionary groups.

## The Development of Individual Sports and International Sports Relations

### Individual Sports

#### Football

After 1905, the popularity of football almost certainly exceeded that of any other sport in terms both of participants and of spectators. By 1910, the game "was the most widespread of all sports."[111] Robert Bruce Lockhart, who played for the Moscow Morozovsy team, reports that "at a league match the average attendance was about twelve thousand people, and the women must have contributed thirty per cent of the total."[112] This was in 1912. In the absence of any government backing for or interference in football, Russian and especially foreign factory-owners were instituting prizes, cups and competitions and even themselves founding their own teams in order to promote the sport. Football had been and was continuing to be a bond for the foreign community in Russia but these foreign residents, having introduced the sport,

[111] Zholdak, op. cit., p. 100.

[112] Lockhart, op. cit., p. 175.

were finding the Russian players improving in ability but not always abiding by the code of 'gentlemanly' conduct accepted in English football. Increasingly, the foreign residents were to leave the leagues and cups they had instituted to the Russians and either to abandon the game or to arrange their own separate competitions. The growing popularity of football among Russians may also be attributed to the rôle of football as a vehicle for group activities in a society that was industrialising at a fairly rapid rate -- just as, in England and some other countries that had industrialised earlier, the merging of the individual in the group was not confined to the players themselves, but, to some extent, was also experienced by those who watched and shared a common club- or factory-membership, a geographical location or a class affinity with the performers. In the first decade of the 20th century, the growth of urban areas was quite rapid and so amorphous as almost to smother the individual's sense of belonging to any group larger than the family. Particularly the Russian peasant, accustomed as he was to the old communal ways of Russian rural life, welcomed the chance to identify with his factory or district team in the new urban environment. On match-days, at least, he could identify himself and his interests with the eleven figures on the football-field as he took his place in the stadium with hundreds of others. Football was the focus of cooperative activity of workers tied by their place of labour and their homes. At the same time, the authorities were becoming aware that public sporting events provided a welcome opportunity to distract the masses politically and even to transform their applause for sports-achievements into acclamation for the political system.

In the St. Petersburg League Championships of 1905, 1906 and 1907, the foreign residents' teams continued to dominate, Nevsky winning the major League title in all three years. But the gap between foreign and Russian football was closing; in 1908, a Russian team, Sport, became the first to win the League title. This marked the end of foreign residents' teams as significant agents in the development of football in St. Petersburg. All

three major teams, Nevsky, Neva and Victoria, left the St. Petersburg League in 1909 and formed their own league, calling it the Russian Society of Amateur Footballers. They also competed for a cup awarded annually by the British Ambassador, A. Nicholson, from 1910. In response, the Russian clubs in both St. Petersburg and Moscow boycotted the 'foreign' league. Although the two leagues were reconciled in 1911, the foreign residents' teams never regained their former glory and dropped out of competition on the eve of the First World War in 1913. In Moscow, where there were fewer foreign firms and employees, football developed later than in the capital. Nonetheless, when a league was inaugurated, in 1909, the championship was won by the British Sports Club. The next year, the Moscow League Championship was won by the Morozov Mill team -- which was reckoned to be the best team in Russia between 1910 and 1914. It was trained by an ex-professional footballer (from Bolton Wanderers) by the name of Gaskell and was usually composed of roughly half British and half Russian textile-workers.[113]

One aspect of the keen Russian-English rivalry was that it was drawing a large number of spectators -- especially when there was prospect of a Russian victory. During the 1908 season, after the Russian team Sport had defeated Victoria[114], an all-time record 'gate' of over 2,000[115] came to see the big test of Russian-English strength when Sport met Nevsky.[116] Passions evidently ran high during the match and one English player, Monroe, was sent off the field -- which fanned the crowd's divided patriotic loyalties:

[113] Lockhart, op. cit., p. 174.

[114] 6:0.

[115] Even this large number (large by Russian standards) is far below the number of spectators in England who were then attending important matches. When the F.A. Cup, the first football-competition to be operated on a national level, was founded in 1871, the final attracted an average of 5,000 spectators in the first decade. As the public schools and their old boys' teams gave way to professional clubs, however, and as the social origin of the players changed and the centre of the game moved north, so the number who watched rather than played increased. In 1885, 27,000 saw the Cup-Tie between Aston Villa and Preston; the Cup-Final in 1893 was watched by 45,000; 80,000 was the average number of spectators over the next ten years (See Dunning, E., "The Development of Modern Football", in Dunning, E. [ed.], The Sociology of Sport, Frank Cass & Co., London. 1971. p. 148).

"Despite the blatant infringement of the football rules by Monroe and even of the rules of normal civility adhered to by educated people, the English section of the crowd made a terrible din and began to clamour for the return of Monroe, whose departure the Russian section of the crowd accompanied with loud hissing."[117]

The nationalistic element was not entirely removed by the discontinuation of Anglo-Russian fixtures after 1908, since St. Petersburg Russian teams began to make tours within the Russian Empire and other football clubs, including foreign teams, visited the capital. At the end of August, 1907, Sport met the Finnish team Unitas in Helsinki, and a Swedish team from Stockholm.[118] In 1908, Sport went to Riga and beat the local team Union.[119] Sport returned to Helsinki in 1910, and lost to the Finnish team Kampaterna.[120] A Russian newspaper, commenting on the defeats, blamed the first on "the biased referee who made two errors in favour of the Finns" that resulted in two Finnish goals, and the second on the Russian players who, "on the eve (of the match), to put it delicately, overindulged in drinking spirits."[121] Both weaknesses -- tendencies to blame biased referees for Russian defeats and for Russian sportsmen abroad to get drunk -- have remained with Russian sport up to the present.[122]

[117] Novoye vremya, 30 September, 1908.

[118] It lost both fixtures 3:2.

[119] 6:3 and 3:1.

[120] 5:4 and 5:0.

[121] Novoye vremya, 21 May, 1910.

[122] During the Munich Olympic Games in 1972, a Soviet athlete was sent back to the Soviet Union without competing after being found one night by the West German police in a stationary car "hopelessly drunk" (Sportworld, September, 1972, p. 63 ). Accusations of bias against Soviet players and teams on the part of foreign 'bourgeois' referees and judges were fairly common following defeats of Soviet teams between 1945 and 1956. After the Soviet Union had more or less asserted itself in a number of sports after 1956, such accusations became far less frequent.

But the fixtures that drew most attention were the matches between St. Petersburg and Moscow, inaugurated in 1907 and continuing without a break every year until 1940). In the first year, two separate matches were held in St. Petersburg against a combined Moscow team, the first featuring a combined English St. Petersburg team and the second -- a combined Russian St. Petersburg team.[123] Both matches attracted in excess of 1,500 spectators -- a record for the time. It was some measure of the growing strength of Russian football that, in the next year, 1908, the St. Petersburg English team drew with Moscow,[124] while the St. Petersburg Russian team beat Moscow.[125] From 1910 onwards, English clubs in the two cities were forced to confine their contests to playing against one another because of the boycott imposed on them by Russian teams.

Although the Russian teams in the major St. Petersburg League were largely confined to middle-class clubs, the game was spreading its popularity to other social groups within the city and extending its boundaries beyond the town. A suburban football-league and a cup-competition for secondary schools were both established in the capital in 1907. The school football competition is of particular interest because it was instituted by order of the government which, in 1907, had set up the Society for the Encouragement of the Physical Development of Student Youth (Obshchestvo sodeistviya fizicheskomu razvitiyu uchashcheisya molodyozhi -- OSFRUM).[126]

In 1908, 14 Gymnasia, Realschule and other schools took part in the OSFRUM Cup Competition in St. Petersburg; the number rose to 29 in 1909, 39 in 1910 and 1911, 50 in 1912 and 58 in 1913. It then fell with the onset of war to 50 in 1914, 45 in 1915 and 1916, and 22 in 1917.[127] A separate

[123] The home teams won 2:0 and 5:4.

[124] 2:2.

[125] 4:0.

[126] See above, p.106.

[127] Kiselev, op. cit., pp. 29-69.

competition for students came into being in 1911 with twelve St. Petersburg Institutes competing for the annual city cup.

The St. Petersburg Football League formed three divisions after the split with the English clubs in 1908. The new teams to join the major League in 1909 consisted almost entirely of middle-class clubs that had been formed in a particular area of the city or its environs. Thus, the Kolomyagi[128] club had been formed in 1904 in the village of that name by two Russian businessmen, V.L. Gomilius (later -- in 1918 -- to be Chairman of the Petrograd Football League) and V.A. Sindeyev. Udel'naya was named after the park in which its members played; another Russian team, Nadezhda ('Hope'), combined with Udel'naya in 1911 to form Unitas.[129] The other two teams in the major League in 1909 were Merkur, a mixed club containing both Russian and foreign players and which had teams in both the Russian and the English leagues, and Severny bank ('Northern Bank'), which was organised by a bank-manager, M.E. Verstrat, and consisted of players (mostly of foreign extraction) employed at the bank; Severny bank changed its name in 1912 to The Russian-Asiatic Bank. These and similar clubs represented Russian football in the capital. But the proliferation of teams, the uncertain interpretation of the rules and manner of play, especially between Russian and English residents' teams, along with the desire and need for regular organised competition on a nationwide level led, in January, 1912, to the holding of the first conference in the capital of the All-Russia Football Association, set up for the purpose "of uniting all Russian sports-organisations playing football, working out common laws of play and affiliating to FIFA".[130] In the autumn of the same year, the first Russian

[128] Kolomyagi was another Russian club to survive the 1917 October Revolution. It won the city championships in the years 1916-1920 and continued under that name until 1924, when it became Leningradsky uyezd; it was subsequeutly renamed Kommunal'shchiki and then Stadion (which can be traced up to 1930).

[129] Unitas became first Vyborgsky raion (in 1924) and then Pishchevkus -- which survived until 1930.

[130] Kiselev, op. cit., p. 39.

football-championships took place, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Khar'kov, Kiev and Odessa taking part. In fact, both Kiev and Odessa forfeited their matches against St. Petersburg in view of the relative weakness of their teams. The St. Petersburg team won the final in Moscow against the Moscow team. The continuing influence of foreign residents on Russian football may be seen in the inclusion of five players of non-Russian extraction in the championship team (P. Boras and E. Stanford of Neva, V. Andrew of Unitas, P. Viberg and A. Monroe of Nevsky); the nationality of the players is not specified but it is noteworthy that the All-Russia Football Association had forbidden any Russian city team competing in the national championships to contain more than three Englishmen.[131] Odessa, which won the 1913 national championships, was reprimanded for playing four Englishmen -- one above the limit! The second Championships involved teams from all the main industrial areas: Yuzovka, Rostov-on-Don, Khar'kov, Kiev, Kherson, Sevastopol', Odessa, Nikolayev, Bogorodsk, Lódz, Moscow and St. Petersburg. By this time, the game was so widespread that, in 1914, at the height of pre-revolutionary football development, 23 teams played in the Petrograd Football League; a total of 19 football-clubs and 97 teams played 324 matches in the capital, and 34 football-clubs and 93 teams from seven districts in and around Petrograd played 368 matches for the Dacha Cup.[132] In Moscow, 25 teams contested the Moscow League in 1913 and leagues existed in several southern towns, especially in the mining communities of the Donbas.[133] By now, the game was organised and important enough both to warrant the publication of a football periodical, Vestnik petrogradskoi futbol'noi ligi (The Petrograd Football-League Herald), published for the first time on 17 August, 1916, and to have a permanent panel of football-referees. The latter was formed in the capital in 1914; in the first year, it comprised 33 men, in the second -- 40. This panel survived until 1923.

[131] Ibid., p. 48.

[132] See Table 6 on p.121.

[133] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1971, No. 3, p. 17.

TABLE 4

Football-Clubs in the St. Petersburg Football League, 1901-1917

| Year | Clubs | Year | Clubs | Year | Clubs | Year | Clubs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1901 | 3 | 1906 | 7 | 1910 | 11 | 1914 | 23 |
| 1902 | 4 | 1907 | 9 | 1911 | 10 | 1915 | 23 |
| 1903 | 5 | 1908 | 9 | 1912 | 16 | 1916 | 25 |
| 1904 | 9 | 1909 | 11 | 1913 | 22 | 1917 | 21 |
| 1905 | 8 | | | | | | |

Source: Kiselev, N.Y. (ed.), 70 futbol'nykh let, Lenizdat, 1970, p. 70.

TABLE 5

Clubs, Teams and Matches Played in St. Petersburg, 1901 - 1917

| Year | Clubs | Teams | Matches | Year | Clubs | Teams | Matches |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1901 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 1910 | 9 | 44 | 118 |
| 1902 | 4 | 4 | 13 | 1911 | 15 | 58 | 201 |
| 1903 | 5 | 5 | 20 | 1912 | 15 | 76 | 219 |
| 1904 | 9 | 12 | 48 | 1913 | 17 | 88 | 246 |
| 1905 | 8 | 14 | 58 | 1914 | 19 | 97 | 324 |
| 1906 | 7 | 15 | 72 | 1915 | 19 | 87 | 283 |
| 1907 | 9 | 12 | 45 | 1916 | 17 | 93 | 329 |
| 1908 | 9 | 25 | 61 | 1917 | 18 | 125 | 381 |
| 1909 | 11 | 37 | 117 | | | | |

Source: Kiselev, N.Y. (ed.), 70 futbol'nykh let, Lenizdat, 1970, p. 70.

TABLE 6

Districts, Clubs, Teams, Matches and Players in the Dacha Cup, 1912-1917

| Year | Districts | Clubs | Teams | Matches | Players |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1912 | 1 | 5 | 10 | 40 | 148 |
| 1913 | 6 | 29 | 59 | 233 | 780 |
| 1914 | 7 | 34 | 93 | 368 | 1,093 |
| 1915 | 7 | 26 | 55 | 156 | 949 |
| 1916 | 6 | 20 | 43 | 111 | 587 |
| 1917 | 7 | 29 | 57 | 153 | 821 |

Source: Kiselev, N.Y. (ed.), 70 futbol'nykh let, Lenizdat, 1970, p. 70.

Alongside the official clubs and leagues, however, there existed the unregistered 'outlaw' workers' teams which had been refused entry to the Russian Football Association. They usually played on rough and open ground, watched by fellow-workers. The Murzinka Football Club,[134] which took its name from the village where a pitch was rented, was formed by employees at the Obukhov Factory in Petrograd. Workers at the giant Putilov munitions-plant in the capital hired the premises of the old Yekaterinhof Amateur Sports Circle. Both these workers' football-clubs, Murzinka and Putilovsky,[135] when the authorities removed the ban on workers' clubs playing against those of the gentlemen amateurs in 1914, entered teams (four and three respectively).

In 1916, two more workers' football clubs joined the Petrograd League -- Volga, a club formed by workers at the Alexandrov, Semyannikov and Atlas factories, and PTCh (abbreviated from Pochtovo-telegrafnye chinovniki ["Post

[134] Murzinka has, under different names, survived to this day; in 1924, it was renamed Volodarsky raion, then Bol'shevik and Klub imeni Lenina; today, it has become Sportivny klub "Bol'shevik".

[135] Putilovsky is today regarded as the oldest workers' club in the country; after the October Revolution, it became Krasny Putilovets ('Red Putilovite'), then Kirovsky zavod and, finally, Kirovets, which it remains

and Telegraph Clerks"7). One reason for permitting workers' football-clubs to take part in the League was to improve the chances of Russian teams against foreign opposition -- since, after 1910, Russian teams were increasingly developing international ties and the government was taking an interest in encouraging Russian success against foreign opposition.

In 1910, the first foreign team, Corinthians from Prague, came to Russia and played three matches in St. Petersburg, each watched by large crowds of paying spectators: "The three matches with St. Petersburgers evoked enormous interest. For the first time, tickets for the matches were sold prior to the games at the Central Ticket Office (23, Nevsky Prospekt). Each match was watched by 4,000-5,000 Petersburgers."[136] Corinthians won two matches and lost one to a combined city team.[137] The next year, an English proressional club, English Wanderers, came to St. Petersburg and played three days running, thoroughly beating a combined English residents' side, a combined Russian side and a combined Moscow and St. Petersburg side.[138] The press commented: "As we expected, Russians lost these international matches, but, after all, they were playing against the founders of the game, against their teachers."[139] Russian players did better against the visiting Dresden football club, winning one and drawing one,[140] while an English residents' team lost to Dresden.[141] In the same year, a combined Moscow team three times lost to Berlin,[142] In 1912, the newly-formed

[136] Novoye vremya, 4 October, 1910.

[137] 15:0, 6:0 and 4:5.

[138] 14:0, 10:0 and 7:0 respectively.

[139] Ibid., 22 August, 1911.

[140] 3:2 and 2:2.

[141] 1:4.

[142] 0:6, 3:6 and 2:4.

Russian F.A. sent the first team of Russian nationals abroad to represent their country in the Olympic Games, held in Stockholm. (The team wore yellow shirts with the national crest on their chests.) It lost to Finland and, disastrously, to Germany[143] -- a defeat that dented Russian national pride: "It is unpleasant even to report on the second match of 18 June. The utter impotence of the Russian players was so shameful. Our best players were completely played out of the game. The ball flew past them, they ran about willy-nilly without catching up with the ball or stopping German passes."[144] That was the first and last time a Russian team competed abroad in tsarist times. Nonetheless, foreign teams continued to come to Russia. In 1913, St. Petersburg teams played pairs of matches against a Swedish national team (losing both games[145]), Austro-Hungary (winning one game and losing one[146]) and Leipzig (losing both[147]). In the last season of foreign competition prior to the war, a team from Scotland, the Edinburgh Club, won all four of its matches in the Russian capital in 1914. Although all these international fixtures demonstrated the relative weakness of Russian football compared with that of countries in which the game had had a longer history, they did stimulate football in Russia, help to bring in a paying public and attract government attention to a sport that, it was felt, might yet prove to be a successful bearer of Russian patriotic hopes. Given a few more years, Russian football might, in fact, have developed the type of structure that prevailed in countries like England with its professional clubs which had, at the turn of the century, become commercial concerns with profit as a major yardstick of success, largely based on working-class participants and spectators.

[143] 1:2 and 0:16.

[144] Tarabrin, op. cit., p. 187.

[145] 1:5 and 2:3.

[146] 3:2 and 1:4.

[147] 1:4 and 2:3.

Ice-Hockey

Hockey developed more slowly than football -- mainly because it was not cultivated to the same extent by the local foreigners but also because there was little equipment available. As with football, there was initially a conspicuous absence of agreed rules. Nevertheless, a city championship had been held in the capital in 1898, two of the strongest teams being Yusupov Sad and Narva. The former went on a successful tour in 1907, winning 6 of its 8 games against Swedish, Norwegian and Berlin teams. In that year, the Petersburg League had 15 clubs which formed the basis for an All-Russia Ice-Hockey Association of 32 clubs in 1914. In Moscow, the game was mostly played by foreigners, who formed their own club, Union, and supported the River Yacht Club which devoted its winter activities to ice-hockey.[148]

Winter Sports

Skiing and ice-skating became very popular in the early years of the century, mainly because equipment for pursuing them was relatively cheap. Moscow became the centre of organised skiing and, in 1910, established a league with 10 member-clubs. A National Skiers' Association was formed in the same year, and the first national ski championships took place over 30 versts.[149] Henceforth, long-distance skiing became very popular; in 1911, four Moscow skiers completed the Moscow-St. Petersburg run (a distance of 680 versts[150]) in 12 days, 6 hours and 22 minutes. The next year, the first ski-jumping contests were held at Pargolovo, near the capital.

Both speed- and figure-skating were widespread and well-organised, Russian skaters doing extremely well in international contests. In 1910 and 1911, Nikolai Strunnikov won the European and world speed-skating titles and set a world record that remained unsurpassed for 17 years. The following year, however, he left the sport in protest over the parsimonious attitude of the government, having been refused any financial support for his

148 Idem.

149 32 km.

150 725 km.

journeys to take part in foreign tournaments. His vacant European title was won in 1913 by Vasili Ippolitov. The great Russian figure-skater, Nikolai Panin, won several Russian, European and world titles in the first decade of the 20th century, culminating in the acquisition of the sole Russian gold medal at the 1908 London Olympic Games. Ice-skating had, of course, a long tradition in Russia, thanks to the long, cold Russian winters.

Lawn Tennis

The game in the 1900's retained much of the social-club flavour of its aristocratic days; most of its adherents were either members of the gentry or foreigners. The high entrance-fees and subscriptions to the tennis-clubs, and the selective entrance-qualifications made playing the game too expensive for many Russians. The game was probably the favourite rich-man's sport and was patronised by the tsar himself. As many as 115 lawn-tennis courts had been laid by 1913 in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and the National Association of Lawn-Tennis Clubs, formed in 1907, had the large number of 48 clubs as members in 1908.[151] One reason for the game's popularity among the nobility was, no doubt, an eagerness to be fashionable, once Nicholas had set the trend.

Basketball

This American game (which had been invented by James Naismith of the Springfield Y.M.C.A. in 1891 as an indoor game that might serve in winter as an active competitive substitute for baseball and football) quickly spread out from the U.S.A. and was introduced into Russia at the turn of the century. In 1906, the St. Petersburg sports club, Mayak, formed several basketball-teams that competed with teams from the Bogatyr' Society and, in 1909, even defeated a touring American side.[152] Another American invention, volleyball (1895), appears not to have penetrated Russia before the revolution.

[151] Fizkul'tura i sport v SSSR za 40 let, p. 242.

[152] Ibid., p. 222.

Wrestling and Weightlifting

Russian wrestlers and weightlifters continued to astound their countrymen and the rest of Europe with their legendary feats -- even though these sports were badly organised. The long-standing popularity of strongmen among the public gave a commercial advantage to these sports; the tendency towards a professional pattern of development was strengthened by the stigma attached to wrestling, boxing and weightlifting. A number of 'heavy athletes' — and horsemen -- therefore performed their spectacular feats mainly in the circus ring. One of the most popular circus performers, Ivan Poddubny, was six times world heavyweight wrestling champion up to 1910. The amateur wrestlers, A. Petrov and N. Orlov, won silver medals at the 1908 London Olympics, and M. Klein won a silver medal at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. At the 1913 world weightlifting contest in Copenhagen, as many as six Russians were placed in the six weight-divisions: L. Chaplinsky (St. Petersburg), A.Bukharov (Moscow), A. Grinenko and G. Chkhikvadze (Kiev), K. Pavlenko (Chernigov) and J. Krauze (Riga). Despite the success of the strongmen, it was not until 1913 that a national association was formed, the National Heavy Athletics Association. The next years saw the first national boxing championships ('according to Marquess of Queensberry's rules', as the matches were billed).

Riding

Horse-racing continued to rank high as a spectator sport, pulling thousands of people into the hippodromes all the year round and providing a living for professional jockeys, who were employed to ride horses for the various noblemen's stables. That their skill was high is evident from a number of Russian victories abroad: a Russian jockey, K. Avalov, in 1912 rode the winner of the Grand National at Aintree in England -- the toughest steeplechase in the world.

The skills of horseriding were not confined to professional jockeys and the hippodromes. At the turn of the century, a small band of cavalry officers,

who had studied horseriding in Italy, carried off most of the Moscow and St. Petersburg riding concours and also won the King's Cup (awarded to the best horseman at the London Show-Jumping Tournament) for three years in succession (1912-1914). A Russian officer won the major hurdle-race in Vienna in 1914.[153] The Russian cavalry followed the system of riding taught by an ex-circus rider, James Fillis, an Englishman who had been invited to Russia, had taught horsemanship at the Officers' Cavalry School between 1898 and 1909, and who remained the principal influence on the Russian riding style right up to World War I, if not later.[154] Apart from the amateur horse-riding societies and the private riding-academies in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Warsaw and Riga, riding of a traditional and less organised kind was, of course, extremely popular among the various peoples of the Russian Empire, particularly among the Cossacks, Georgians, Bashkirs and Kirgiz.

Aquatic Sports

In 1908, a swimming-school opened in Shuvalov, near the capital; in addition to the various styles of swimming, it also gave lessons in diving and water-polo. Although no outstanding successes were gained internationally, water sports grew steadily in popularity. In 1912, an Amateur Swimming Society started up in Moscow; this inspired the creation in the same city of the Sanitas and Skhodnya swimming-clubs and the Society for Mountain Skiing and Water Sport. Swimming-schools and contests soon spread to other cities. All water sports were pursued out-of-doors, there being no indoor swimming-pools in the country. By 1914, it is estimated that some 1,500 swimmers belonged to the various clubs.[155] Rowing continued its traditions as a popular Russian sport, and, by 1914, had 24 clubs; a National Association was formed in 1908 and national championships were held every year from 1896

[153] Entsiklopedichesky slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu, Vol. II, p. 22

[154] Ibid., p. 24.

[155] Sport v SSSR, 1968, No. 6, p. 31.

to 1914. (Other outdoor sports were not so fortunate; the Russian Tourist Society had only a few hundred members and the Russian Mountaineering Society only 134 members in 1914.[156])

Chess

Of the cerebral sports, chess had a long tradition among the aristocracy and intellectuals. It was a popular game among dissident intellectuals and revolutionaries; men like Lenin, Gor'ky, Trotsky, Krylenko and Lunarcharsky did much to promote it after the revolution. It has been suggested that chess is a game that provides a satisfying and socially acceptable realm of free expression and self-assertiveness in a highly-disciplined society,[157] which might account for its popularity in Russia. But it has other qualities that lend it popularity: it is a relatively convenient mass pastime, being cheap and available to all ages and sexes. Whatever the reason, the All-Russia Chess Association had as many as 5,000 members in 1914 -- considerably more registered members than nearly all other sports and games.[158]

Athletics

The activities of the athletics-societies that had been established on private initiative continued; with little support forthcoming from the government, however, the sport actually went into decline. The government finally took some interest when it decided to send a contingent to the 1912 Olympic Games. The first national championships had been held in 1908, and a National Amateur Athletics Association had been formed in 1911; its membership had increased to some 50 athletics-groups by 1913. With a flagging interest from foreigners and the Russian middle class, results fell

156 Fizkul'tura i sport v SSSR za 40 let, p. 315.

157 See Richards, D.J., Soviet Chess: Chess and Communism in the USSR, O.U.P., London, 1965, p. 174.

158 Sport v SSSR, 1968, No. 6, p. 31.

far short of world standards; Russia came 16th out of 20 European countries in 1917.[159] There is no record of women's results; their participation in sport in general and athletics in particular was still not wholly socially acceptable.

The Olympic Games

Russia was a founder-member of the modern Olympic movement and Russian sportsmen first participated in the Olympic Games in 1908 (this was the Fourth Olympics, held in London). A team of five contestants went to Britain, sponsored by voluntary contributions. It did surprisingly well: Nikolai Panin won first place in figure-skating, and the wrestlers Petrov (heavyweight) and Orlov (lightweight) took second places, the other two Russians, both wrestlers, being unplaced. Despite their small squad, the Russians took 14th place overall (among 22 teams) in the unofficial team-lists.[160] This was some indication of development in the Russian sports-movement and acted as a further incentive to the public to take greater interest in sport.

[159] A comparison of the best recorded Russian and world achievements in athletics up to 1916 is given below:

| Event | Russian Record | World Record |
|---|---|---|
| 100 m. | 10.8 sec. | 10.5 sec. (Germany) |
| 200 m. | 22.4 sec. | 21.2 sec. (Britain) |
| 400 m. | 50.8 sec. | 47.4 sec. (U.S.A.) |
| 800 m. | 2.00.3 min. | 1.51.9 min. (U.S.A.) |
| 1,500 m. | 4.12.9 min. | 3.54.7 min. (Sweden) |
| 5,000 m. | 16.06.4 min. | 14.36.7 min. (Finland) |
| 10,000 m. | 33.58.6 min. | 30.58.8 min. (France) |
| high jump | 180 cm. | 201.5 cm. (U.S.A.) |
| long jump | 658 cm. | 761 cm. (Britain) |
| pole vault | 358 cm. | 402 cm. (U.S.A.) |
| discus | 42.20 m. | 48.27 m. (Finland) |
| javelin | 54.12 m. | 64.80 m. (Finland) |
| hammer | 38.74 m. | 57.77 m. (U.S.A.) |

(Russky Sport, 1916, No. 8, pp. 94-95).

[160] Lyubomirov, N., Sobolev, P., A Story of Soviet Sport, Moscow, 1967, p. 30.

For the next Olympic Games, held in Stockholm in 1912, the sports societies were prepared to sponsor a much larger contingent. The government, appreciating the prestige-value of sports success, set up a Russian Olympic Committee, headed by Baron F. Meyendorf. With quite generous government backing and organisation, a team of 169 athletes gathered to take part in all 15 sports on the Olympic programme. Whether the prospects of a foreign jaunt were too intoxicating (notably to the army officers who made up over half the party) is uncertain, but many of the team (including Baron Meyendorf) missed the boat altogether and had to stay behind! In the Games, Russia ultimately shared 15th place with Austria (out of 28 countries) and won few medals. The best performance, once again, came from a wrestler, M. Klein, who, breaking his arm in the semi-final and having to lose his chance to wrestle in the final, won a silver medal. The only other medals were one in gymnastics, second place for the Russian team in pistol- and revolver-shooting and third places in yachting and clay-pigeon-shooting.[161]

The Olympic setback -- referred to in the press as a 'sporting Tsushima' -- was largely a reflection of the backward state of Russian sport and Russian society.[162] Stung by the blow to Russian prestige, the government took steps to put sport on a more solid basis. One problem had always been how to bring together the nation's foremost athletes in national teams; given the anarchic organisation of sport and the vast size of the Empire, the task was far from easy. The government now decided to hold national championships ('Olympiads') on the model of the Olympic programme. This, it was felt, would stimulate the work of the sports societies and prepare athletes properly for international competition. However, it was to be another forty years before Russia participated again in the Olympic Games. It is worthy of note that the idea of

[161] Andrianov, K.A., et al, Olimpiiskie igry, Moscow, 1970, p. 231.

[162] On 27 May, 1904, during the Russo-Japanese War, virtually the entire Russian fleet was sunk by the Japanese off Tsushima in the Sea of China, thus bringing the war to an end with the victory of an Asiatic power (which had only recently acquired a modern army) and depriving Russia of her ice-free port on the Pacific.

holding national 'Olympiads' based on the Olympic Games is a notion taken up again in Soviet times; in 1956, 'spartakiads' were inaugurated -- games to be held in the year preceding each session of Olympics -- a sign of the importance in terms of national prestige attached by both the Imperial and Soviet authorities to international success in sport, particularly at the Olympic Games.

The first Russian Olympiad took place in 1913 in Kiev and attracted 570 athletes, about half of whom were army officers -- an indication of the military tradition in organised Russian sport. The programme lasted six days and included athletics, gymnastics, swimming, rowing, yachting, football, cycling, motorcycling, wrestling, weightlifting, fencing, the modern pentathlon and equestrian sports. Women competed only in fencing and athletics. Most athletes represented cities or clubs, andthe results show that St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa and Riga had the best trained and organised sports-clubs in the country.[163]

The following year, a Second Russian Olympiad was held with Riga as its venue, having virtually the same programme as its predecessor. On this occasion, about a thousand athletes from 24 towns took part; the results showed a considerable improvement on those registered at Kiev. The war put an end to these national Olympiads, and brought down the curtain on the Imperial government's belated attempts to organise the sports-movement into a force that could bring it and the country greater international respect and prestige.

The Soviet authorities were, then, to inherit from tsarist Russia an incipient sports-movement that, although it lacked many of the facilities and organisation to be found in most industrial Western states at the time, did have one great advantage for the Bolsheviks: it was at any rate largely centrally-controlled. In Britain and the U.S.A., on the other hand, the governing bodies of sports were separate from one another and independent

[163] Tarabrin, op. cit., p. 178.

of the government, based for purposes of control and largely of finance on their members.[164] Moreover, very many clubs specialised in a single sport. British and American sport was based on voluntary and independent organisations. In Russia, the very paucity of private sports-groups was to facilitate the change-over to Bolshevik management. As in the economy, the tsarist state had to some extent discouraged Russian individual enterprise; it had established some degree of control over the organisation of sport -- in schools, in the army, in the Olympic Committee and even in national sports organisations. It had set up the Office of the Chief Supervisor of Sport,[165] a government body to coordinate the sports movement and thus the pre-revolutionary equivalent of the present All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sport attached to the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers.[166] Further, most clubs were mixed-sport centres -- largely for historical reasons, inasmuch as the organisation of Russian sport had tended to develop in close association with the Olympic Games and the International Olympic Committee. In Russia, therefore, the organisation of sport tended to be in the form of sports-complexes linked to local and central government -- a similar structure to that which developed in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Spain and Italy and quite unlike that of Britain and North America.

To give it specialist counsel, the tsarist government had invited foreign exponents of various sports to Russia to teach the rudimentary skills of their particular art -- whether fencing, boxing, horse-riding or gymnastics -- and had had translated foreign manuals on sport. All this, including the centrally-controlled structure, had enabled the government to keep close control over the development of organised sport and to prevent it from being used for anti-monarchist, liberal or revolutionary purposes.

[164] They still are to a large extent.

[165] See above, p.106.

[166] See below, pp.387-388.

The Soviet authorities were thus able to take over a ready-made state organisation of sport -- however ramshackle -- without having to dismantle a wide-ranging structure of autonomous sports clubs and associations. Some private clubs and sports-movements, like Sanitas, the Moscow Bank Clerks' Sports Society, the Amateur Skiing Society and Moscow Skiing Club (neither confined to skiing), the Maccabee movement and the Scouts did linger on for a while after 1917, but most were engulfed by the ensuing Civil War and others were either taken over or forcibly disbanded in the mid-1920's.

Prerevolutionary sport: the determinant features

(1) In the early communities of Slavs who inhabited the lands now known as Russia, games and sports arose and evolved as a means of improving physical dexterity, coordinated movement and fitness -- utilitarian skills that were vital to working, hunting and fighting. They were at the same time both ritualistic and recreational occasions and participation was a more or less compulsory social duty on all members of the community.

(2) A differentiated games-pattern became pronounced in the Middle Ages, aristocratic leisure-pursuits being essentially rural, casual and sportsmanlike. A tendency to emulate foreign styles was marked later with Peter I's attempt to westernise the country. A pre-occupation with military matters lent a distinctly military tone to many of the sports practised, their organisation and etiquette. The games of the people, on the other hand, tended to be vigorous, even brutal, yet regulated by communal standards; they were occasionally proscribed by the Church and state. Natural conditions favoured the promotion of games that tempered the body and strengthened the will.

(3) The peculiar socio-economic conditions of Russia's late industrial development were responsible for a peculiar metamorphosis of sport in Russia. The stirrings of change from a rural-agrarian to an urban-industrial society created the need for an urban pattern of recreation similar to that

pioneered in the West by the new middle classes, with commercialised spectator-sports, alternative physical activities for an urban populace missing the rustic pleasures of hunting and fishing, and more or less organised provision of physical exercise via a wide variety of formalised sports as life for many became more sedentary. Yet a large-scale sports-movement did not arise in Russia, partly because of the restraining hand of the state (despite its centralising tendencies) and the absence of an independent class of entrepreneurs, but mainly because, in terms of social structure, Russia did not enjoy social conditions conducive to the independent development or to the effective diffusion and adoption of modern sports or of their functional equivalents.

(4) The inability -- and often the unwillingness -- of the tsars, the Church and the industrialists to take measures to promote organised sports, to find a balance between the needs of the people and the availability of resources and institutions to meet those needs, tended to widen the gulf between them and the urban workers and only served to create a dual power in the sports-movement between the unregistered workers' clubs and the officially-recognised sports-associations. As a consequence, most workers were not integrated into the system through the medium of games which are usually productive of conformist values and encourage cooperation and controlled competition within a culture; the workers' unregistered sports-clubs developed political overtones as a result of their semi-clandestine nature. The status-barriers in pre-Soviet Russian sport (which were just one aspect of status-barriers generally) stood in the way of the use of sport as an effective agency of social control.

## 11 THE IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF SOVIET PHYSICAL CULTURE AND SPORT

The October revolution brought a rupture with the past in many ways, yet several aspects of Soviet sport, as of other areas of social life (education, for example), still show, if not continuity with the past, at least strong influence by factors having their origins outside the Soviet period. It would certainly be wrong to imagine that a totally new structure, inspired only by new ideas, was erected after 1917. The roots of Soviet sport in part lie deep in Russian history, in the Russian people's habits and traditions, the Russian climate, the Russian state's preoccupation with external and internal enemies, the intellectual ferment of Russian society in the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It would have been strange had these currents played much less a rôle in shaping the practice of sport in the Soviet Union than the social thought of foreign philosophers -- and these, it must be realised, included Locke and Rousseau as well as Marx and Engels. In addition, foreign practice, in the form of the pattern of organised sport pioneered for industrial society by Britain, the gymnastics schools of Germany, of the Scandinavian countries and of what is now Czechoslovakia and Prussian military training all put their imprint on Soviet physical culture and sport. Individual foreigners were influential both in the practice and in the organisation of specific sports in Russia.

In this chapter, we shall try to identify the key ideas that have affected the development of Soviet physical culture and examine their sources -- both foreign and Russian.

a. Key Ideas

(i) The harmonious development of body and mind

Belief in the mutual dependence of mental and physical education is a recurrent theme in the writings of a number of Russian social thinkers prior to the Russian Revolution. Whereas, in other parts of Europe, a philosophical justification for sport as an activity in its own right had been more or less officially accepted since the 17th century, principally under the impact of the views of Spinoza (1632-77) and Leibniz (1646-1716) on metaphysics and on social and political philosophy (which brought a reconsideration of the relationship between body and soul), the tsarist authorities had clung more firmly to an idealistic dualism of mind and body. In so doing, they unintentionally encouraged a body of 'rational', democratic and progressive opinion which was constantly at odds with official thought and which mostly stood outside official institutions. This was the case with physical education, in which much of the theorising was left to social critics, writers, general and physical educationalists and physiologists who tended firmly to oppose the dualism that prevailed in Russian education, as well as the instrumental approach involved in seeing gymnastics and sport in general only as something to serve military purposes. Their concern for the health and physical development of Russian children led to research and the publication of revealing health statistics (some of which may be found in Appendix XII) and the formulation of theories about harmonious and balanced development of the physical and mental aspects of human life that were to be taken up more fully in Soviet times. The notion of 'harmonious development'

was to become, in fact, part of official Soviet policy and ideology.

(ii) Russian physical culture and sport from Russian soil

Some thinkers, particularly those of Slavophile persuasion, were convinced that the Russian pattern of sport, both in its theory and in its practice, should have deep roots in and grow out of Russian soil. The old feelings of simplicity, naturalness, moral strength and legitimacy that such thinkers perceived in the way of life of the Russian peasant commune should, they felt, be the foundation of a moral code which could be acquired and reinforced via sports and team-games. That such intellectuals saw popular games and folklore as important components of a proper education is perhaps some indication of the almost mystical belief they had in the moral power of the Russian common people and their culture.

The belief in predominantly Russian or, at least, Slav sport had a strong patriotic-populist base that was apparent in resistance to the importation from Germanic and Latin Europe of organised games and gymnastics-systems; this was manifest, for example, in the ardent propagation by some enthusiasts of Sokol calisthenics. In Soviet times, this belief reappeared in the 1920's in the form of a movement in favour of banning 'bourgeois' (Western) sports and gymnastics-systems and of encouraging Russian folk-games (as well as various 'production gymnastics' and mass physical-fitness displays). Just after World War 11, when Stalin's xenophobic campaigning was at its most pathological, this was to be reflected, too, in an official drive to purge sporting language of foreign terminology[1].

For all this, both foreign terms and foreign games have persisted. Despite sustained official encouragement, Russian folk-games, reflecting a peasant culture and peasant needs, have, it seems, had gradually to give way to organised sports of mostly foreign origin -- football, volleyball,

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1 See p.314 below.

basketball and tennis -- which apparently more immediately reflect the cultural needs of an urban-industrial society.

(iii) Faith in the people and their potentialities

As we have seen, there were those in pre-revolutionary Russia who believed that, if only the Russian people, particularly the 'dark peasant masses', had the opportunity of developing their mental and physical capacities to the full, they would surely work miracles and lift the country out of its backwardness. The image of the lumbering bear would give way to that of the sokol -- the bright-eyed falcon. A system of physical culture for the people and the opportunity for them to join clubs and take part in tournaments at home and abroad -- given shorter working hours, better nutrition and culture -- would, perhaps, open up an era that would put Russia in the forefront of world achievement. Such were the notions held by some other Russian intellectuals. Anton Chekhov, a founder of the Russian Gymnastics Society and patron of peasant-strongman sports as well as a playwright, voiced such thoughts in a speech to mark the opening of the Society: Referring to its members, he said "These are the people of the morrow. The time will come when everyone will be as strong and skilful. There lie the nation's hopes for the future and its happiness."[2] Chekhov, like his friend the writer Alexander Kuprin (a founder-member of the Kiev Athletics Society), was a patron of such peasant-athletes as Ivan Lebedev (the prototype for his 'Uncle Vanya') and Ivan Poddubny -- both renowned for their feats of strength.

This faith in and devotion to the common people had reached its zenith earlier than this, in the mid-1880's, when considerable numbers of populist

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2 Chekhov, A.P., "People of the Future", in Gerkules (Hercules), 1898, No. 11, p. 5.

intellectuals (with little success) discarded their 'soft' life to go 'among the people' (v narod) and spread enlightenment. In Soviet times, the idea of devotion to popular values (narodnost') was to become a pillar of official Soviet ideology; the continually reiterated notion that all the sacrifices and efforts, with little immediate return, were for the sake of 'the toiling people' helped to sustain the effort. In physical culture and sport, the related professed ideal of 'massovost' (mass participation) was to become a persistent ideological theme.

(iv) Physical effort as the source of dignity, morality and happiness

In some Russian writings, not only was physical effort something to be revered for its own sake but man's physical development through labour and exercise was presented as a cause for pride and a source of honour -- and its cultivation as a duty. Strength and skill, as typified by the legendary boqatyr' (knight), the dashing Cossack, the Russian army hero -- Suvorov, Kutuzov, or even Peter the Great -- were virtues to be admired and emulated, seen as the key to simple happiness and dignity. The sturdy virility of simple folk was held up against the sybaritic effeminacy of aristocrats -- brawn and calloused palms against flabbiness and 'lily-white hands' (beloruchki), the industry and hardihood of working people against the contempt for physical exertion of masters and their employment of peasant 'souls' and industrial 'hands' to do manual work -- even the menial tasks involved in such sports as hunting and yachting. Even the spirit could be tempered by tempering the body in the opinion of the most extreme, perhaps, of such writers.

The contempt for physical exertion rather general among the 19th-century Russian nobility did, in fact, evoke a reaction in their ranks -- from some

writers as well as the populists. Later, in the 'workers' state', some of the ideas of these aristocratic writers and populists were to be drawn on to express a 'correct' reverence for physical labour and feats of strength by proletarians. During the period of rapid industrialisation, feats of strength and skill in labour and sport were to be elevated to a particularly high status (sometimes not without elements of the demagogic) -- and rewarded accordingly. The slogan of 'healthy minds in healthy bodies' as a model for all citizens was widely propagated.

B. The Sources of these Ideas

If these were some of the key ideas contributing to form Russian attitudes to the cultivation of the physique, from what foreign and native currents of thought did they mainly derive?

(i) Foreign sources

Rousseau's (1712-78) naturalistic philosophy found a considerable response among Russian social thinkers during the 18th century. Certainly, the idea of character-training through physical activity was attractive to those who (like Radishchev[3]) saw the prevailing educational system as merely producing 'dandies'. Even more productive was Rousseau's proposition that games could and should be employed for political and national ends. When asked in 1773 to give a social philosopher's advice on the reconstitution of the state of Poland, he had written:

"The children should not be permitted to play separately according to their fancy, but encouraged to play together in public; the games should be conducted in such a way that there is always some common end to which all aspire to accustom them to common action and to stir up emulation. The

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3 See below, p. 142.

parents who would rather have domestic education, and want their children brought up under their own supervision ought, nevertheless, to send them to these exercises. Their instruction may be got at home and adapted to individual needs, but their games should always be played in public and shared by all. It is not merely a question of keeping them busy, or of cultivating a sound constitution and making them alert and graceful. The important thing is to get them accustomed from an early age to discipline, to equality and fraternity, to living under the eyes of their fellow citizens and seeking public approbation." Games were to make children's "hearts glow and create deep love for the fatherland and its laws."[4]

Alexander Radishchev (1749-1802) took up this theme in Russia, maintaining that men's souls should be given a Russian patriotic stamp through physical education and games. Mental, moral and physical education were, he asserted, inseparable: it was through physical skills, above all, that men would learn about the mechanics of life and satisfy their natural desire for physical movement and attainment. The best means of physical education, was, he said, hard work and physical exercise -- running, throwing, jumping and riding.[5] These ideas coincided with those that were being debated and often given the seal of official approval in other parts of Europe. But it was to be some time before they were put into practice in Russia.

Even before the end of the 18th century, Rousseau's educational theories, particularly the notion of character-training through physical activity, were being tried in Germany by J.B. Basedow in his Philanthropinum, founded at Dessau in 1774; it was here that a gymnastic system suitable for children was first devised. When the school was opened, the physical

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4 Rousseau, J.-J., Considérations sur le gouvernement de la Pologne, Paris, 1782, p. 51.

5 Radishchev, A., Polnoye sobranie sochinenii, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1938, p. 172.

education there consisted of instruction in the four 'knightly exercises' of dancing, fencing, riding and vaulting the live horse.[6] New schools were founded along these lines; at one of them, at Schnepfenthal, J.C.F. Guts Muths lectured on physical education for nearly fifty years from 1786 on. He not only developed and systematised the work of his predecessors but was also the first practising teacher to publish manuals of physical education.[7] From here, ideas on education spread to Denmark and Sweden, where they influenced Franz Nachetgall and P.H. Ling respectively. In Germany, too, F.I. Jahn developed from them his crusade for Turnen and, in Switzerland, they greatly inspired Pestalozzi. In Denmark, Sweden and Germany, a preoccupation with nationalism and with physical and moral regeneration after disastrous defeats in the Napoleonic wars transmuted a movement in favour of sport into a rigid system of gymnastics. Both Muths and Ling were as interested in sport as gymnastics; the former wrote a book on games, analysing 105 of them according to the skills they imparted. Ling,

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6 See Leonard, F.E. and Affleck, G.B., A Guide to the History of Physical Education, London, 1947, Chap. 10. The curriculum at the Philanthropinum subsequently changed to a simple system of 'Greek Gymnastics' consisting of organised exercises in running, jumping, throwing and wrestling, balancing exercises and ball-games such as tennis, fives and skittles. The youngest children had hoops and the see-saw. After 1777, J.-J. du Toit added skating and swimming, climbing and hanging exercises on an inclined ladder, and walking expeditions in the surrounding country. (See also McIntosh, P.C., Physical Education in England since 1800, Bell, 1968, Chap. 6).

7 Gymnastik für die Jugend appeared in 1793 and Spiele zur Übung und Erholung des Körpers und Geistes was published in 1796. These books, as well as later works, appeared at a time when the Napoleonic wars were directing attention towards the need for physical fitness among the masses and, within a few years, versions of Gymnastik für die Jugend appeared in Denmark (1799), Bavaria and Britain (1800), the U.S.A. (1802), France (1803), Austria (1805), Holland (1806) and Sweden (1813) -- but not in Russia. Like his immediate predecessors, Guts Muths included a very wide range of activities in his gymnastics: jumping, running, throwing, wrestling, climbing, balancing, lifting, carrying, pulling, dancing, walking, military exercises and swimming. He also considered that gymnastics included such activities as fire-precaution drill, keeping night-watch, recitation and fasting.

too, was interested in sports, particularly in fencing, riding and swimming. It was, however, the systems of gymnastics of these two pioneers which particularly met the political needs of their time; in Russia, they found expressions in colleges, the army and noblemen's clubs.

The main difference between the German and the Swedish systems was that the Germans laid greater store by the use of all manner of gymnastics-equipment (parallel-bars, rings, rope, horse, etc.), while the Swedes relied more on natural movement in rhythmics, dance and calisthenics. Both also contained broader notions -- whole philosophies of physical and general education that were being fiercely debated and tested in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Although a school of military drilling and physical training already existed in Russia, mainly based on the Prussian model and the instruction of General Suvorov (1730-1800), the Russian authorities attempted to refashion this at the turn of the century in line with German and Swedish ideas on gymnastics -- including the introduction of a variant of the German style of ceremonial marching ('goosestepping') which remains to this day. As we shall see later, both foreign schools made a lasting impression on Russian -- and Soviet -- gymnastics, calisthenics and army training.

From the 1860's, however, it was the Czech Sokol system that came to dominate in official Russia, largely because of its 'racial' folk associations.

The Sokol ("Falcon") movement had grown up in Bohemia and Moravia and some other parts of Austria-Hungary in the 1860's. Initially, it was, in fact, one of the legal forms for nationalism -- like the Turnen in Germany. The Sokol Gymnastics Society, formed in 1862, became one of the principal forms of uniting and organising young Czechs. Its members wore national costumes and called each other 'brother' and 'sister'. Besides holding

regular gymnastics meetings, the society also conducted a great deal of cultural work. By 1871, there were 130 Sokol societies in the Czech lands and the movement had its own newspaper. The Sokol system of gymnastics, popularised by Miroslav Tyrš (1832-84), a professor of fine arts at Prague University, was somewhat similar to the German school, inasmuch as it employed a variety of gymnastics equipment and put greater emphasis on the form of movement rather than the effect of exercises on the human organism. It lacked the disciplined repetition of exercises that distinguished the German system; rather, it featured complex and artistic combinations of exercises, giving stress to graceful movement and decorative configurations. To these ends, the gymnasts employed not only parallel bars, the horse and the beam, but also free exercises and exercises done in time to music, sometimes with scarves, sticks, swords and shields. All exercises were divided into four basic groups: (i) free-style exercises without equipment; (ii) exercises with equipment -- parallel-bars, swords, scarves; (iii) group exercises -- pyramid-formations and games; and (iv) combat exercises -- fencing, wrestling and boxing. Gymnasts, clad in the same uniform, would follow this programme through from group (i) to (iv).[8]

The political and cultural overtones of the Sokol made it more attractive to Russia (and the Soviet Union) than either German or Swedish physical education, since it implied a panslavism which was by no means alien to the régimes in either tsarist or Stalinist Russia.

(ii) Russian sources

Some important elements in Soviet theories on physical culture owe a great deal to the liberal and humanistic ideas developed in the fifty years

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8 Entsiklopedichesky slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu, Vol. III, p. 50.

preceding the revolution by specialists in a variety of fields of intellectual endeavour -- social thought, general and physical education and physiology, as well as political theory.

(a) Social theorists

The critic and social thinker Vissarion Belinsky (1811-48) believed that "the development of mental capacity corresponds to the development of the health and strength of the body"[9] and that the school régime should be so arranged that "children play sensibly, do gymnastics, study for a certain number of hours, get up and go to bed at set times."[10] (The slogan to be taken up many years later by the workers' movement in Russia and England "Eight hours work, eight hours sleep, eight hours play" sounds almost an echo of this.) For Belinsky, games were an essential element in education, the cornerstone of mental and cultural development. Not only would they encourage a balanced personality, they would inculcate certain desirable character-traits: "running, jumping, gymnastic play and, particularly, Russian folk-games encourage, more than any other physical exercise, such traits as will-power, initiative and creativity. . .and develop and strengthen harmonious personality."[11]

Supporters of Belinsky's educational views, both Nikolai Chernyshevsky (1829-89) and Nikolai Dobrolyubov (1836-61), though sons of clergymen, were materialists and members of the Russian revolutionary democratic intelligentsia of the latter half of the 19th century. By contrast with the 'men of the forties' -- Bakunin, Herzen, Turgenev and Belinsky -- these 'men of the

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9 Belinsky, V.G., Polnoye sobranie sochinenii, Vol. X, Moscow, 1957, p. 127.

10 Belinsky, V.G., Izbrannye pedagogicheskie sochineniya, Moscow-Leningrad, 1948, Vol. 11, p. 76.

11 Ibid., p. 77.

sixties', to whom the two radicals belonged, rejected, in the words of E.H. Carr, "sentimental romanticism for hard-headed realism, philosophical idealism for materialism, metaphysics for science."[12] Though the ideas of the Enlightenment had penetrated the Russian court under Catherine 11, they had made little headway in Russian life or Russian politics; the cult of reason, which played so fundamental a rôle in Chernyshevsky's and Dobrolyubov's thinking, was, in some respects, only a belated afterglow of the vision that had dawned on France and Western Europe in the 18th century, particularly in the works of Rousseau and Diderot and in those of the English Utilitarians (Chernyshevsky himself translated John Stuart Mill). To these two revolutionary democrats, human life and behaviour were to be explained in material and physiological terms. Games were an essential adjunct to mental development: "All that is fine and beautiful in a person is unthinkable without attention to the harmonious development of his system and his all-round health"[13], wrote Chernyshevsky. "No system can be called completely healthy if one facet of it is developed to the detriment of another"[14], said Dobrolyubov. Here, then, as in Belinsky's writings, we meet the emphasis on the full and harmonious development of the individual that was to reverberate through the Soviet period.

(b) Writers

At his experimental school for peasant children on the Yasnaya Polyana estate, the writer-patriarch Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) equipped a special gymnasium for children. Bodily exercises and sport featured prominently

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12 Carr, E.H., "Introduction" to N. Chernyshevsky, What Is To Be Done?, Vintage Books, New York, 1961, p. xi.

13 Chernyshevsky, N.G., Polnoye sobranie sochinenii, Vol. Xlll, Moscow, 1951, p. 73.

14 Dobrolyubov, N.A., Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedeniya, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1948, p. 119.

in his education system; in his deliberations on what a 'school' should be, he wrote that "Such influences of liberal culture as children's games. . . public spectacles and panoramas. . .folk-tales and songs, work and, lastly, the experiments of the Yasnaya Polyana school are just as important as formal education in higher institutions and public lectures."[15] For Tolstoy, games were cultural elements, especially in their unadulterated folk form; as such, they could have a valuable formative effect on character.

A children's doctor, E.A. Pokrovsky (1834-95), also believed that "games and toys are educationally often as important as, if not more important than, folk poetry, legend, tales, sayings and riddles."[16] Both Tolstoy and Pokrovsky looked upon popular games and folk-art forms as dynamic cultural forces which could be a means of modifying and enriching man's experiences, enabling him to discover and develop cultural resources hidden within himself. Society and the individual needed all-round education that did not neglect physical development -- for, as Tolstoy put it, "only a fully-developed individual, equipped with theory and science, can change life."[17]

In at least some aspects of his personal life in his later years, Tolstoy practised what he preached, displaying a spartan devotion to physical fitness through exercise, to such sports as cycling, fencing, gymnastics, horse-riding and ice-skating, to Russian folk-games like gorodki and lapta and to chess. He firmly believed that physical work and

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15 Tolstoy, L.N., Pedagogicheskie sochineniya, Moscow, 2nd edn., 1953, Vol. 11, p. 72.

16 Pokrovsky, E.A., "Zdorovaya dusha v zdorovom tele" in Vestnik vospitaniya, 1890, No. 7, p. 31.

17 Tolstoy, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 17.

exercise were essential to mental creativity: "Sedentary mental work without motion and bodily activity is sheer agony. I am no use for anything by evening if I do not work with my legs and hands during the day."[18]

Anton Chekhov, who has already been referred to above as an active propagator of competitive sports, was by no means the only sports-enthusiast among Russian writers. His friend Alexander Kuprin, with whom he rode to hounds, was a regular contributor to the journal Hercules, refereed wrestling-bouts and was a pioneer of several new sports: he went up in an air balloon over Odessa in 1909, shortly afterwards made one of the first aeroplane flights, made several underwater dives in the Black Sea, did a walking tour of France and practised his own dictum that "exercise is the mother and father of success".[19] Other Russian writers, too, took an active part in popularising sport, both in their writings and in their activities -- notably the inveterate rambler Maxim Gorky and the sporting squire Ivan Turgenev. Turgenev wrote enthusiastically about the joys of shooting, of getting out the racing droshky and setting off to the forest to shoot woodcock and snipe. "How fair the forest is in late autumn when the snipe are on the wing! They do not keep to the depths of the forest; they are to be found on the outskirts."[20] It is interesting that, at the dawn of the organised sports movement, a number of popular writers in the industrialising countries were noted for their devotion to sport and advocacy of it in novels and essays. In England, Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes in the mid-19th century highlighted the character-training of sport and presented heroes who were adorned with every sort of athletic

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18 Ibid., p. 97.

19 Fizkul'tura i sport, 1970, No. 9, p. 20.

20 Turgenev, I., A Hunter's Sketches, F.L.P.H., Moscow, 1958, pp. 444-445.

accomplishment. Somewhat later, in the U.S.A., Wilkie Collins, Mark Twain and Jack London portrayed the American sporting hero in similar terms, if distinctly more rugged and individualist. As Mark Twain said of baseball: "It is the very symbol, the outward and visible expression of the drive and push and rush and struggle of the raging, tearing, booming nineteenth century."[21] Russian writers saw other values in sport: Tolstoy stressed its moral qualities -- discipline, self-reliance and cooperation; Chekhov and Kuprin -- the chance for the ordinary Russian to excel, and Gorky -- the liberating feelings and the equality.

(c) Educationalists

In the field of education, I.I. Betskoi (1704-95) had considerable influence at an early stage on the physical-education syllabus in schools for army officers and court pages. He also was responsible for drawing up a daily regime for poor children in orphanages. For all the institutions under his auspices, he accorded games and physical exercises a high place -- particularly those that would harden both body and mind. Education, in his view, should be spartan -- tough physically and demanding mentally. In this, he derived much from John Locke (1632-1704) but went even further: Paragraph 80 of the Instructions for the College of Pages, which Betskoi drafted, said: "Teach children in their normal games to use both hands, thus: to play bowls, to hurl stones at distant targets, to wrestle and so on. Let them run in all weathers on the sand, over grass, ploughed fields, hills, steep slopes, sometimes walk barefoot on stone floors and in the hard frost go bareheaded and barechested . . . for all these things fortify their health".[22] Betskoi may have overdone the "toughening-up" process a little

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21 Twain, M., Speeches, New York, 1923, p. 145.

22 Betskoi, I.I., Sobranie uchrezhdenii i predpisanii, kasatel'no vospitaniya v Rossii oboevo pola blagorodnovo i meshchanskovo yunoshestva, 2 vols., St. Petersburg, 1789-1791, Vol. 1, p. 327.

(should the children catch cold, the treatment was to be continued -- but they were permitted to eat less): in the 20 years of operation of his Moscow orphanage and in the 12 years of his St. Petersburg school, 89 per cent of the children unfortunately died . . .[23] While not suggesting that the whole of this spartan education-programme has been carried over into the Soviet period, we can say that there are features of modern Soviet physical training and education which reflect precisely this concept of 'tempering' (zakalyvanie), particularly in the armed forces.

Konstantin Ushinsky (1824-70) is important because he can be said to have laid the foundation of modern primary-education methods in the Soviet Union. With regard to physical education and games, he strongly believed that a scientifically-grounded system of physical exercise should be an integral part of education. In his influential work, Man as the Object of Education, he wrote that the school should make "children mentally developed, morally pure, aesthetically appreciative and physically fit."[24] If physical education were to be properly based on a thorough knowledge of anatomy, physiology and psychology, it could exert a positive influence on all aspects of human activity, especially in strengthening a child's memory. "If an educationalist has fully understood that the mechanical basis for memory has its roots in the nervous system, then he will appreciate also the importance for the normal condition of the nerves of a healthy normal state of the memory. He will then understand why, for example, gymnastics, walks in the fresh air and everything that helps strengthen the nerves have more significance for a healthy memory than all manner of mnemonic aids."[25]

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23 Fizkul'tura i sport, 1968, No. 6, p. 37.

24 Ushinsky, K.D., Sobranie sochinenii, Vol. VIII, Moscow, 1950, p. 24.

25 Ushinsky, K.D., Izbrannye pedagogicheskie sochineniya, Vol. II, 1939, p. 206.

Physical recreation was, however, something more than a help to improve the mind; games were thought to have a profound influence upon character-formation, particularly among young people. Ushinsky stressed the relationship between idleness and the development of anti-social attitudes among the young. Games, then, both in and out of school, were to be an important part of young people's leisure-activities and keep them out of mischief; such ideas were later to find an echo in the Soviet concern for the rational use of leisure and the employment of sport to counter anti-social activities among young people.

(d) Physical Educationalists

The figure who made the most lasting impression on Russian and Soviet physical education was Pyotr Lesgaft (1837-1909), biologist, physical educationalist and social reformer -- the founder of the Russian physical-education system and the pioneer of the new discipline of physical education in tsarist Russia.

Lesgaft started his career in 1861 as a teacher of anatomy at the St. Petersburg Academy of Medicine; he was subsequently invited to take up a professorship at the University of Kazan' and went there in 1869, but was soon dismissed for his outspoken criticism of the unscientific methods used. For a while, from 1872, he worked as consultant on therapeutic gymnastics in the private surgery of a Dr. Berglindt but, after the publication of several articles and books (including a descriptive history of sport in Europe and Ancient Greece and an article, published in 1874, on naturalistic gymnastics), he was put in charge of the physical training of military cadets. The next year, in 1875, he was commissioned by the War Ministry to travel in Western Europe for two years, studying the systems of physical education current there. Altogether, he visited 26 cities in 13 West-European states. The English

system was evidently most to his liking, although he abhorred the "strict orders, fagging and lording of senior pupils over juniors"[26] that he witnessed in several public schools. He also visited the Central Army Gymnastics School at Aldershot, the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich and Oxford University. What especially took his fancy was the English predilection for strict rules of hygiene, competitive games in the open air, long walks and boat-trips, swimming and other regular exercises.[27] On his return, in 1877, he published his Relationship of Anatomy to Physical Education and the Major Aim of Physical Education in Schools, in which he outlined a P.E. programme for military colleges. He was, in fact, able to supervise its progress in twelve academies. At the same time, he took a keen interest in organising courses for physical-education instructors for the military academies -- provision for which, until then, had been non-existent.

While supervising officer-training, Lesgaft published his major works, Family Upbringing (1884), Teaching Physical Education to Schoolchildren (Part 1 in 1888, Part 2 in 1901) and Fundamentals of Theoretical Anatomy (1905).[28] His desire to organise sport in civilian schools was for some time thwarted by the authorities, who still tended to look on it as frivolous and tending to encourage academic idleness. This led Lesgaft in 1892 to found and become Secretary of the 'Society for the Encouragement of the Physical Development of Student Youth' which quickly spread its branches to Odessa, Kiev and Moscow. Besides encouraging public discussion of children's and young people's physical development both in the home and in school, this philanthropic organisation constructed play-areas in a number of towns and

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26 See Ekonomov, D., Strastny uchitel', Moscow, 1969, p. 76.

27 Ibid., p. 77.

28 Lesgaft, P.F., Sobranie pedagogicheskikh sochinenii, Vol. 11, Moscow, 1954.

provided sports-amenities for children of the poor, arranging for them competitive games, camps and excursions as well as boating in summer and ice-skating and sledding in winter. The Society finally in 1896 persuaded the Minister of Education to set up the first civilian physical-training courses for men and women instructors with Lesgaft in charge; two years later, he succeeded in extending the courses from two to three years. After the October Revolution, Lesgaft's 'Courses' were reorganised into the famous Institute of Physical Education in Leningrad that today bears his name. The admission of women to training was certainly novel: the official view in Russia had long been that sport was the preserve of men and that women were not suited to it by their anatomical structure and social status. For much of his academic career, Lesgaft espoused the cause of women's sporting rights, giving official P.E. and Anatomy courses to women students at his home and, after 1896, at the university; 100 women students attended in the first year and 166 in the second.[29] Lesgaft regarded women's participation in sport a means to social liberation: "Social slavery has left its degrading imprint on women. Our task is to free the maidenly body of its fetters, conventions and drooping posture, and return to our pupils their freedom and suppleness which have been stolen from them. We must develop in them firmness, initiative and independence, teach them to think and take decisions, give them knowledge of life and make physical educationalists out of them."[30]

Lesgaft's medical studies of the human system led him to the conclusion that it was in constant development and change, largely under the influence of the social environment; physical exercise was the only means of developing

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29 Ekonomov, op. cit., p. 94.

30 Lesgaft, op. cit., Vol. 111, Moscow, 1956, p. 178.

the system overall and in its individual components. It attained optimum development when all bodily organs were exercised in a balanced way. Physical-education instructors should, in his opinion, have a knowledge of chemistry and physics, particularly the general laws of mechanics, so as to be able to apply them to the 'human mechanism'.

On the basis of his theory, he elaborated and recommended a system of physical education for the school and the home:

(i) the child starts by simple movements which are explained to him but not demonstrated; he has to analyse them himself and distinguish one from another, then begin to understand them. The movements, recommended for early school classes, consist of normal walking, running, jumping and throwing a ball;

(ii) the child then learns to master exercises of gradually increasing complexity in various conditions, after which he can tackle more difficult tasks swiftly and easily. These exercises are designed for the intermediate classes and consist of running against the clock, long- and high-jumping and distance throwing;

(iii) the child then learns to harmonise his movements in time and space and in relation to surrounding objects, already foreseeing the result. By these exercises, he develops muscular control and learns to act in the best possible way in any circumstances. Exercises are for the upper forms and include running at a set speed, target or distance ball-throwing, exercises associated with an understanding of spatial relationships and the temporal distribution of effort;

(iv) simultaneously with these groups of exercises, the child checks the skills he has acquired and consolidates them by employing difficult actions during games, excursions and work-movements.

At each stage of physical education, different, increasingly complicated, pedagogical aims are pursued, the main purpose being to teach the child consciously to master the movements of his body and to attain the best results with the minimum energy and time-expenditure. In Lesgaft's opinion, just as, in intellectual education, the child should not merely accumulate knowledge but be able to apply it, so, in physical education, he should both develop physical skills and be prepared to apply them in the best way possible.

The exercises to be included in this system were mainly gymnastics, team games, expeditions and rambles. Lesgaft, however, opposed the German system and any gymnastics that employed special equipment: "Exercises employing equipment involve sharp sensations; they therefore blunt the emotions of young people and make them less receptive and impressionable; it is hardly surprising that, when young people go to university, they smoke heavily, drink and challenge one another to duels." Further, in his opinion, the type of gymnastics in vogue in Germany and Sweden did not correspond to children's anatomical structure and were therefore physically harmful. He favoured the type of free gymnastics that is today known in Russia as 'artistic gymnastics' and elsewhere as calisthenics, which would satisfy the children's natural desire for physical movement and achievement, and also encourage such qualities as will-power and initiative: "A person develops in the family, the family gives him affection, warmth, makes him responsive and kind; the school develops his mind, gives him the ability to possess his own views, judgments and thoughts; along with an independence of thought the person's moral values are formed. Physical exercises develop activity

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31 Pamyati Pyotra Frantsevicha Lesgafta, "Shkola i Zhizn'", St. Petersburg, 1912, p. 95.

in a person and he acquires the ability to subordinate all his desires to his will."[32]

Games were also a means of character-training. These did not, however, include (competitive - JWR) sport which, he believed, had a bad effect on the moral outlook of young people, encouraged egotism and was educationally harmful inasmuch as it did not develop exercises gradually. Games were to encourage a group spirit, unselfishness, social awareness and devotion to society: "Games arouse and gradually and consistently develop social instincts . . . In every school game, the player is a member of a small society, actively participating in it, forgetting about his personal, selfish aims and engrossed exclusively in the attainment of common aims, all the while adhering to all the accepted principles and laws that restrict the right of every individual . . . A sense of justice, of comradeship, of fair play, an acquaintance with public opinion -- these are all given us by games. Are not these the feelings we wish our children to possess, both as future citizens and as useful and active members of society?"[33]

Expeditions, particularly nature rambles, were to encourage creative thought and action by acquainting the child with nature at first hand rather than through learning to rote. That is why "excursions should not be spoiled by triumphant marches, military evolutions, flags, badges, prizes, sport (i.e., competitive sport - JWR) or the like. One should constantly remember that the fewer the strong diversions, the less the loss from the child's standpoint, the more he will preserve his strength and the better his self-possession. I personally believe that excursions will encourage

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32 Ibid., p. 98.

33 Ibid., p. 100.

the child to think, ennoble his feelings and inspire creative thinking."[34] For adults, too, "there is a very good English custom of taking a walk before breakfast, even if it is only 5-6 versts[35]. After that, one can tackle any mental or physical activity in a more active frame of mind."[36]

Lesgaft's ideal child, like Rousseau's Emile, was to grow up into the ideal citizen -- most able, physically and mentally, to provide the greatest contribution to the common good. Such a person had to be harmoniously developed, both physically and intellectually, and possess the 'ideal' organism: "Only if all organs are developed harmoniously is the human organism able to improve and produce the greatest effort with the least expenditure of time and energy."[37] Harmonious development was only possible, however, by observing the principle of gradualness and consistency of exercises, taking due account of the age, sex and aptitude of each person. The child had to be given activities which satisfied his desires and aspirations at his particular stage of development: "Education is in no way possible without the consistent improvement of the organs by which a person mainly perceives the stimulants operating on him from without. Therefore, to the extent that the finger (organ of feeling), eye, ear and all the sensory organs are developed, and to that extent the person should be able to act independently. The development of all these organs is exclusively by exercise, and this constitutes one of the principal aims of physical education."[38]

The implications of Lesgaft's system and views went far beyond what the

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34 Ibid., pp. 102-103.

35 3-4 miles (5-6½ km).

36 Lesgaft, P.F., op. cit., Vol. III, p. 299.

37 Pamyati Pyotra Frantsevicha Lesgafta, op. cit., p. 93.

38 Ibid., p. 97.

tsarist authorities were willing to allow [39]. Indeed, he had more in common -- particularly his views on harmonious development -- with the revolutionary democrats Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov than with the tsarist authorities. Certain of his views are remniscent of Rousseau's advice to Emile -- character-training through physical activity, the political and national ends of physical culture and its therapeutic value. Others were clearly inspired by his acquaintance with the British system of physical education, which he lauded, and British ideas on the unselfishness and team-spirit of the type of games encouraged by the English 'Muscular Christians'.

He himself was no revolutionary; if anything, his educational philosophy reflected the ideology of the small but growing Russian and the large West-European bourgeoisie. It was, though, Lesgaft more than anyone else who was to influence the Soviet system of physical education and sport. Several main tenets of his theory and his system today underlie the P.E. system prevailing in the U.S.S.R.: ideas of 'harmonious development', of social awareness through physical education, of the principle of gradual and consistent training, of belief in a scientific biological justification for exercise and games in general, of women's social emancipation through the bodily liberation of games and physical education, and of the strict observation of age, sex and individual idiosyncrasies of children when playing games and engaging in physical exercise can all be derived from him. Training and teaching in the U.S.S.R. are still largely guided by Lesgaft's views on mastering bodily movements by stages, starting from the learning of correct forms of movement and gradually increasing the load up to the elaboration of spatial and temporal orientation. On the other hand, his

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39 See above, p.97 .

hostility to "sport" -- competition and the paraphernalia surrounding it, such as badges, trophies and flags, professionalism, public displays, victory-celebrations and similar rituals -- while finding ready accord in the 1920's, came to be rejected totally with the onset of full-scale industrialisation and the widespread application of incentives throughout the economy.

(e) Physiologists

The physiological studies of certain Russian scientists were to have a considerable impact on Soviet physical education and sport (including national fitness-programmes, athletics training-methods and physical exercises at work). Their ideas are said to form the basis on which the Soviet theory of physical education is constructed; "The work of the great Russian physiologists, Sechyonov and Pavlov, and their followers forms the basis of the entire system of physical education in the Soviet Union."[40] Other Soviet sources explicitly acknowledge the debt to Lesgaft: "Pyotr Frantsevich Lesgaft . . . was the founder of the scientific system of physical education in our country."[41] The seminal rôle of these men cannot, therefore, be ignored. Their research largely involved the study of the effects of physical exercise on the growth of the human organism and on the mind, the recreative benefits of 'active rest' and the advantages of physical fitness for longevity and self-realisation.

Ivan Sechyonov (1829-1905). He was referred to by Pavlov as "the father of Russian physiology", admired Darwin and Chernyshevsky and advanced an essentially materialist conception of phychic and spiritual phenomena. According to his principal theory, mental and bodily activities were two forms of the vital activity of the human organism, of which the physical was

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40 Svetov, A., No Limits to Strength and Skill, Novosti Publishing Agency, Moscow, 1965, p. 44.

41 Samoukov, F.I. (ed.), Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, p. 230.

primary and psychological secondary. "Muscle-tone serves as the major controller of consciousness in coordinating movement."[42] Physical education should, therefore, in his view, be an integral part of all-round education as a means of strengthening the material foundation of consciousness.

His study of muscular activities, notably in three works -- "The Part Played by the Nervous System in Man's Working Movements" (1900), "Essay on Man's Working Movements" (1901) and "On the Question of the Effect of Stimulation of the Sensory Nerves on Muscular Work" (1903-04) -- brought him to the theory of 'active rest' -- i.e., that rest in movement is more beneficial than passive rest. An experiment he made with lifting weights by rhythmic motions -- first with the right hand, then with the left -- forced him to conclude: "When I first began the experiment, I was very much surprised to find that my left hand worked much more strongly than my right did. My surprise was heightened when it appeared that the work done by the tired right hand after the work of the left became much stronger than in the first period of work."[43]

The implications of his findings were to have great significance for later Soviet studies of fatigue and rest, of the physiology of work and training methods. "His (Sechyonov's) research is widely applied even today for substantiating work-and-leisure régimes and training for a variety of sports."[44] Sechyonov's work undoubtedly played no small part in justifying and working out the 'production gymnastics' or physical exercises that are so common a feature of Soviet factory life today.

Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936). If Lesgaft was the pioneer of a new

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42 Entsiklopedichesky slovar', Vol. 111, p. 23.

43 Sechyonov, I.M., Izbrannye proizvedeniya, Moscow, 1953, p. 144.

44 Entsiklopedichesky slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu, Vol. 111, p. 23.

discipline, a new theory of physical education, Pavlov it was who put it in the context of a general theory of physiology. "Pavlov's work has immense significance for physical education in that it sets it on a natural-scientific basis."[45] He was to become for many years the unquestionable authority in the U.S.S.R. on psychology; virtually all investigations into physical education and training-methods were to base their findings on his concepts.

By means of numerous experiments with animals, Pavlov concluded that the human organism and its environment were connected by conditioned reflexes -- "temporary connections of the nervous system that constantly appear, grow strong and then disappear."[46] According to his theory, "the conditioned reflex is the basis of all of man's higher nervous activity."[47] This theory had several implications for Soviet physical education; primarily, it meant that exercise was highly salutary for the central nervous system. Systematic participation in a variety of games, gymnastics and sports improves the general functioning and capacity both of the physical organism and of the mind: hence the need for regular sporting activity by all citizens, for the good of society as well as of the individual.

Pavlov's research affected the Soviet approach to the study of systems of physical education and training. The preoccupation with science and the search for a scientific technique of sports-development are conspicuous features of Soviet sports and training methods. Such is the commitment to

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45 Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 218.

46 Pavlov, I.P., Polnoye sobranie sochinenii, Vol. 11, Kniga I, Moscow, 1951, p. 245.

47 Ibid., p. 246.

'science' that trainers are expected to be as much scientists as they are athletes: "The trainer must be acquainted with Pavlov's physiology, Soviet educational theory and psychology. To analyse technique, he must also know mechanics, physics and mathematics."[48]

It is the official Soviet assertion that "the principles of Pavlov's theory of the nervous system are fundamental to the formation of motor habits, the physical qualities of strength, speed, stamina and skill, improving the functional capacity of the organism -- especially for purposes of work -- establishing, maintaining and developing sporting form, improving sports achievements, recuperating after strenuous muscle-work, tempering the organism, physical exercise at work, training-methods and maintaining fitness as people grow old."[49]

Pavlov remained a strong churchman and was long openly critical of the Soviet régime, yet it supported his work because his theory of conditioned reflexes was regarded as a substantiation of and belief in the plasticity of Nature -- including Man. In the last years of Stalin's life, Pavlov's teaching was officially made the obligatory basis of all medical theory.

(iii) Marxism-Leninism

Much is made in Soviet literature on physical culture of the debt owed to Marx, Engels and Lenin. Since all three wrote virtually nothing directly on the subject, this may sound a strange debt; it is, however, the implications of their teaching that are generally referred to. The section that follows attempts to examine sport in the light of Marxist-Leninist writing and Soviet

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48 Sobolev, P., Borodina, L., Korobkov, S., Sport in the U.S.S.R., F.L.P.H., Moscow, 1958, p. 52.

49 Entsiklopedichesky slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu, Vol. 11, p. 219.

interpretations of it. It will, therefore, examine in some detail sport and its place in the social system in terms of Marxist categories and theory, its peculiarities, the theories that involve it and the implications that follow from them.

(a) Marxist Philosophy

At the time Marx was writing, metaphysics was in the grip of a dualism that separated mind from matter and, under the influence of Christian theology, often exaggerated a distinction into an antagonism; in such a world-view, body and soul were seen as warring parties with the body cast as the villain of the piece. Marx rejected the dualist philosophy and stressed that not only was there an intimate relationship between matter and mind, but that the former largely determined the latter. In his view, political and social institutions and the ideas, images and ideologies through which men understand the world in which they live, their place within it and themselves -- all these ultimately derived from the 'economic base' of society -- the class relations into which men had to enter with one another in order to produce: "In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their wills; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society -- the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness."[50]

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50 Marx, K., A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Chicago, 1904, pp. 11-12.

This fundamental Marxist tenet contains certain implications for recreation:

(i) Since the human psychosomatic organism develops and changes under the influence of external conditions including the social environment, subjection to physical exercise not only develops that part of the body to which it is directed but also has an effect on the body as a whole -- on the personality. A strong bond exists between social and individual development and between the physical and mental development of the individual. Societies are likely to seek to shape this development.

(ii) In liberal capitalist society, whose prevailing ideology is that of 'independent' decision-making and 'free' contracting between 'equal' social atoms, sport has normally been regarded as the concern only of the individual, a feature of life unconnected with classes and social values, with economics and society's mode of production; little attention has been paid to it as a social phenomenon. To the Marxist, however, sport is part of the social superstructure and therefore strongly influenced by the prevailing relations of production -- not something 'in itself' and so divorced from politics; a society's pattern of sport will ultimately depend on the specifics of that society's socio-economic foundation, its class relationships. Moreover, says Marx, "with a change in the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed"[51] : the nature of sport can therefore be expected by the Marxist to alter with any change to a new socio-economic formation.

(iii) The acceptance of a dualist metaphysic, a sharp separation of body and mind, had often led to a concern with things of the mind at the expense of bodily activities. Marx emphasised that practical activities

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51 Ibid., p. 13.

have a decisive influence on all human development in the broadest sense. None more so than work, through which people could change themselves as well as Nature: "Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature."[52]

This proposition implies a strong link between work and such other bodily activities as physical exercise and games-playing. It has led some Marxist historians to seek the origin of games and sports in practices in primitive society leading to the improvement of physical dexterity and utilitarian skills vital to working and hunting. In this, they refer to Engels, who wrote "The use of various forms of weapons in work and military activity among primitive peoples developed their mental and physical abilities."[53]

(b) Recreation and Education

From his studies of early bourgeois society, Marx came to the conclusion that production was actually inhibited by, inter alia, the denial to the workers of time for recreation which would help restore their energy for production and make it more efficient. Marx was concerned with civil society's need for workers to obtain more free time -- not only for pure

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52 Marx, K., Capital, F.L.P.H., Moscow, 1961, Vol. 1, p. 177.

53 Engels, F., The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, F.L.P.H., Moscow, 1958, p. 28.

leisure but also for recuperating their strength and applying themselves more vigorously to productive work after reasonable rest and recreation. What he saw as the sheer wasteful inefficiency of the capitalist production of his day in neglecting the recreative functions of play agitated him: "The capitalist mode of production (because it absorbs surplus labour) produces . . . not only the deterioration of human labour-power by robbing it of its normal, moral and physical, conditions of development and function. It produces also the premature exhaustion and death of this labour-power itself."[54] In another place, he writes that "from the point of view of the direct process of production, this saving (of working time - JWR) may be considered as the production of basic capital; man himself is that basic capital."[55] Physically-fit and mentally-alert workers are better able to cope with new industrial skills and increasingly complex technology and to have higher productivity by showing less absenteeism and greater activity on the job.

Modern industry, however, objectively requires more than physically-fit workers; it needs versatile, fully-developed individuals, healthy in body and in mind. In the education system of the future, therefore, citizens were to be given, Marx advised, the opportunity for balanced all-round education, in which physical education was to be an integral part; the system would consist of three elements combining training of the mind with training of the body:

"First, mental education.

Second, bodily education, such as is given in schools of gymnastics, and by military exercise.

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54 Marx, K., Capital, p. 265.

55 Ibid., p. 332.

Third, technological training, which acquaints the pupil with the basic principles of all processes of production and, simultaneously, gives him the habits of handling elementary instruments of all trades."[56]

In the English Factory Acts, Marx had seen the germs of the prototypes of such a system in which mental and physical education would be combined with manual labour to improve social production and to produce all-round individuals: "From the Factory system budded, as Robert Owen has shown in detail, the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully-developed human beings."[57]

Whether games-playing contained its own justification within itself or whether its value was to be sought in ulterior ends was not a question specifically raised by Marx. The Marxist vision of the future, however, does seem to imply that work and physical recreation will merge, or that work will be elevated to the plane of recreation by the removal of the yokes of specialisation and compulsion. But Marx evidently did not envisage recreation under communism as simply games -- rather as a fusion of work-like activities with play. In this, he affirmed a principal criterion of playful activities, namely, that they are freely chosen and are pursued for their inherent

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56 Marx, K., "Instructions for the Delegates of the Provisional General Council. The Different Questions," in K.Marx and F.Engels, Selected Works, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, Vol. 11, p. 81.

57 Marx, K., Capital, pp. 483-4.

pleasure rather than for practical results[58].

To sum up, Marx provided few clear-cut guidelines on physical culture. On the one hand, he stressed the interdependence of work and physical recreation and, on the other, he saw the playful use of energy as contributing to the enrichment of the personality, or self-realisation. But, as the American sociologist, C. Wright Mills, once pointed out, "There is no one Marx. The various presentations of his work which we can construct from his books, pamphlets, articles, letters, written at different times in his own development, depend upon our point of interest, and we may not take any one of them to be The Real Marx."[59] The same might be said of Lenin. That is not to say, of course, that there is no consistency in the writings of Marx or Lenin, no Marxism or Leninism.

(c) Leninism

If Marx made scant direct reference to sport, Lenin was scarcely more prolific on the subject -- despite the sixty volumes of his writings in the latest Soviet edition. Unlike Marx, who personally abhorred any physical exercises[60], Lenin was, moreover, an active practitioner of physical fitness and sport in his own life. As one observer has put it "Of all the prominent Russian revolutionaries, he was the keenest sportsman. From boyhood he had been fond of shooting and skating. Always a great walker, he became a keen

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58 This view was later held by Trotsky who maintained that "The longing for amusement, distraction, sight-seeing and laughter is the most legitimate desire of human nature. We are able, and indeed obliged, to give the satisfaction of this desire a higher artistic quality, at the same time making amusement a weapon of collective education, freed from the guardianship of the pedagogue and the tiresome habit of moralising" (my italics - JWR) (See Trotsky, L., Problems of Everyday Life, Monad Press, New York, 1973, p. 32).

59 Wright Mills, C., The Marxists, Pelican, London, 1962, p. 42.

60 Kapp, Y., Eleanor Marx, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1972, Vol. 1, p. 193; the only game Marx seemed to enjoy was chess (p. 26); Engels, on the other hand, was "an enthusiastic rider to hounds, a mighty walker and a deep drinker" (Ibid., p. 108).

mountaineer, a lively cyclist, and an impatient fisherman."[61] Particularly during his periods of imprisonment and exile, he valued fitness as a stimulant to mental alertness. While in a St. Petersburg prison, he wrote that he did "gymnastics with great pleasure and value <u>every day</u>" (Lenin's emphasis).[62] In a letter from Munich to his sister, then in prison in Russia, he urged her "to do gymnastics and have a good rub-down every day. It is absolutely essential when you are alone . . . force yourself to do several dozen exercises (without stopping!)! That is very important."[63] Of his personal preferences, his wife recalled that he enjoyed ice-skating, shooting, hiking, <u>gorodki</u> and cycling -- even to the extent of ordering bicycles for his wife and himself from Berlin through the Russian Sports Society <u>Nadezhda</u> in 1910[64]. His favourite pastime -- like that of several other émigré Russian intellectuals -- was chess, which he played regularly (many games by correspondence with Lunacharsky and Gor'ky). On his return from Russia, however, his wife reports that "Vladimir Il'yich had to give up chess, his favourite game, because it involved too much of his time."[65] He did become, nonetheless, honorary president of the Moscow Chess Society in November, 1922.

Lenin's sporting activity may seem to have little relevance to an understanding of sport in the Soviet Union. One must bear in mind, however, the Soviet establishment's massive cult of Lenin and penchant for looking to

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61 Lockhart, R.B., <u>Giants Cast Long Shadows</u>, Putnam, London, 1960, p. 134.

62 Lenin, V.I., <u>Polnoye sobranie sochinenii</u>, Vol. LV, p. 72.

63 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 73.

64 Bonch-Bruyevich, V., <u>Nash Il'yich: vospominaniya</u>, Detgiz, 1956, Moscow, p. 22.

65 Krupskaya, N.K., <u>Vospominaniya o V.I. Lenine</u>, Vol. 1, Politizdat, Moscow, 1968, p. 242.

Lenin's personal example when seeking to justify current policies. Official advocacy of daily exercises and such pursuits as chess can thus call on Lenin's own preferences. The desire to promote certain forms of recreation has certainly resulted in the highlighting of individual aspects of Lenin's habits and mode of life.

What are clearly more important are his writings on the subject of sport and physical education. Like Marx, Lenin's educational philosophy favoured a combination of the training of the mind and body: "It is impossible to visualise the ideal of a future society without a combination of instruction and productive labour, nor can productive labour without parallel instruction and physical education be put on a plane required by the modern level of technology and the state of scientific knowledge."[66] In his article "Karl Marx", he refers to Marx's appraisal of Owen's school in Lanarkshire -- which combined mental and physical education with manual work -- as the germ of the education of the future[67]. This model even found some reflection in the decree "On Compulsory Instruction in the Military Art," passed in the crisis months of 1918, which brought into being the military-sports organisation Vsevobuch. Its chairman, Nikolai Podvoisky, later described the decree as "combining gymnastics and all forms of physical development and training with general and military training in our country. By this decree, physical culture was introduced into the working people's common education system, their training for defending their country and for highly-productive and varied work."[68] He went on to stress Lenin's contribution to the decree:

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66 Lenin, V.I., Polnoye sobranie sochinenii, Vol. 11, p. 485.

67 Lenin, V.I., Izbrannye proizvedeniya v 3-kh tomakh, Vol. 1, p. 53; see p.167 above.

68 Podvoisky, N.I., "Lenin i fizicheskoye vospitanie," in Krasny Sport, 1940, No. 4 (831) (21st January), pp. 3-4.

"Vladimir Il'yich often stressed, and the decree established, the correct view of the physical education of the masses as a means of obtaining the harmonious all-round development of the individual."[69]

Lenin, therefore, derived from and shared with Marx the notion of potential fully-developed individuals, of men who could not attain the full measure of their latent abilities under capitalism: "It is necessary to develop people's abilities, to reveal the talents which are an untapped source in the people and which capitalism has repressed, crushed, stifled in their thousands and millions."[70] Under socialism and complete communism, however, everyone would have a chance to choose the physical activity they wanted to pursue and attain complete self-realisation. It would "not merely satisfy the needs of its members, but ensure <u>complete</u> welfare and free <u>all-round</u> development of <u>all</u> members of society."[71]

Influenced by his own experience of physical and mental training during periods of privation and confronted by the practical problems of power, Lenin added an emphasis on character-training that was absent in Marx. He recognised the effects that sport might have, for instance, upon the development of qualities of character valuable to individuals and society, upon the social behaviour of citizens and upon the promotion of health. In his comments on the advocates of "free love" and on Leftism in the cultural revolution, Lenin took a position on the moral effects of sport which was not far removed from that of English "muscular Christians" like Dr. Arnold of Rugby and the novelists, Thomas Hughes and Charles Kingsley:

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69 <u>Idem</u>.

70 Lenin, V.I., <u>Polnoye sobranie sochinenii</u>, Vol. 11, pp. 85-86.

71 <u>Ibid</u>., Vol. Vl, p. 232.

"Young people especially need to have a zest for living and be in good spirits. Healthy sport -- gymnastics, swimming, hiking, all manner of physical exercise -- should be combined as much as possible with a variety of intellectual interests, study, analysis and investigation . . . That would give young people more than external theories and discussions about sex . . . Healthy bodies, healthy minds!"[72] Sport would also safeguard clean-limbed youngsters from such vices as drunkenness and smoking -- as the decree "On Curbing Tobacco-Smoking" was intended to do in 1919. When asked how young people should spend their spare time, Lenin once replied, "Young men and women of the Soviet land should live life beautifully and to the full both in public and in private life. Wrestling, work, study, sport, making merry, singing, dreaming -- these are things young people should make the most of."[73] Games-playing, then, was, in Lenin's view, conducive to moral as well as physical health; it was a valuable ingredient in character-training. One can imagine Lenin's ideal young people (not unlike the heroes of Kingsley's Westward Ho and Hughes's Tom Brown's Schooldays) drawn in glowing colours, adorned with every sort of athletic accomplishment and displaying the excellence of simple understanding and the urge to serve the proletarian dictatorship. The resolution passed by the Third All-Russia Congress of the Russian Young Communist League (October, 1920) -- at which Lenin spoke -- surely reflected his views on the functions of physical education: "The physical education of the younger generation is an essential element in the overall system of communist upbringing of young people, aimed at creating

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72 Zetkin, C., Vospominaniya o Vladimire Il'yiche Lenine, Part 11, Gospolitizdat, 1955, p. 84.

73 Quoted in Bezymensky, A., Vstrecha komsomol'tsev s V.I. Leninym, Gospolitizdat, 1956, p. 18.

harmoniously-developed people, creative citizens of communist society. Today, physical education also has direct practical aims: 1) preparing young people for work; and 2) preparing them for military defence of Soviet power."[74] This, the first clear-cut official statement on the aims of Soviet sport, makes no bones about the rational use of physical education for purposes of work and defence. It does, however, hint that, once the society is on its feet and socialism moving towards communism, utilitarian-instrumental aims will give way to that of self-realisation. Nonetheless, here (some years before Soviet industrialisation commenced) was a commitment to use sport for labour and military purposes.

On another occasion, Lenin indicated the powerful social force that sport might be in contributing to women's emancipation. "It is our urgent task to draw working women into sport . . . If we can achieve that and get them to make full use of the sun, water and fresh air for fortifying themselves, we shall bring an entire revolution in the Russian way of life."[75] Furthermore, Podvoisky writes that Lenin stressed to him the "huge significance of the task of Vsevobuch: correctly to train physical educationalists and so to attain through them a cultural, comradely mutual relationship between young men and women."[76] Lenin, therefore, saw in sport a convenient vehicle for drawing women into public activity and an area where they could relatively quickly achieve a measure of equality with men -- and be seen to do so.

Marx, as we have seen, spoke of military training as an element in physical education -- indeed, in education in general -- in his "Instructions

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74 Chudinov, I.D., (ed.), Osnovnye postanovleniya i instruktsii po voprosam fizicheskoi kul'tury i sportu, 1917-1957, Moscow, 1959, pp. 43-44.

75 Quoted in Podvoisky, N.I., Rabotnitsa i fizicheskaya kul'tura, Moscow, 1938, p. 3.

76 Podvoisky, N.I., "Lenin i fizicheskoye vospitanie," op. cit., p. 3.

to the Delegates of the Provisional General Council." Lenin, likewise, pointed to military training as a way to keep youth fit. In a comment on Engels's "Can Europe Disarm?", he spoke of the "need for the military training of young people and of gymnastics . . ."[77] Podvoisky writes that, in his discussions with Lenin on the nature of Soviet sport and physical education, Lenin "had stressed the importance of cavalry-training, skiing, cycling and water sports . . . and (at the height of the Civil War - JWR) the need to use pre-military training for labour as well as the aims of war."[78]

Lenin, therefore, implied that there was more to sport than mere physical enjoyment; it could, and indeed should, contribute to forming the all-round individual of communist society, to character-formation, especially among young people, to women's emancipation and to some -- not very explicit -- labour and military goals. The stress later put on the interdependence of sport and work, rather than on the enrichment of the personality, may well not have been where Lenin would have put it himself had he not had a war on his hands. It is evidently necessary to distinguish the immediately pre-revolutionary Lenin, say, of State and Revolution (the work in which he most emphasises free personal development[79]), from the Lenin in power worried about defence and productivity. Similarly, one must distinguish the rather vague forecasts about the future ideal society made by Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky in relation to the second stage of communist society or 'full communism' from their more practical remarks about its first or socialist stage. In the later 'interpretations' of Lenin, made during the rapid

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77 Lenin, V.I., Polnoye sobranie sochinenii, Vol. XXVIII, p. 478.

78 Podvoisky, Rabotnitsa i fizicheskaya kul'tura, Moscow, 1938, p. 114.

79 Free personal development will take place, wrote Lenin, as the pressure of work and state coercive functions decrease: "Socialism will shorten the working day, raise the people to a new life, create such conditions for the majority of the population as will enable everybody, without exception, to perform state functions, and this will lead to the complete withering away of every form of state in general." (See Lenin, V.I., "State and Revolution", in Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1963, p. 397.)

industrialisation period, the emphasis shifts to what Podvoisky, writing in 1940 on Lenin's views on physical education, calls "a scientific approach to military and labour methods" by means of sport and physical education, "making them accessible to the working people so as to attain higher labour-productivity."[80]

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80 Podvoisky, op. cit., p. 121.

## SUMMARY

Certain conclusions may be drawn from our survey of the pre-revolutionary period, relating the past Imperial pattern to the future Soviet pattern of sport and physical education. The amalgam of Russian, foreign bourgeois and Marxist-Leninist ideas and institutions, rather eclectically selected for application in Soviet policy-making, was to depend on short- or middle-term expediency as well as on Marxist ideology, as variously interpreted at different stages of Soviet history. The pattern of physical culture that was to emerge in Soviet times clearly reflected ideas and models deriving from a variety of sources.

(1) The heritage of institutions from tsarist Russia was considerable[81]. The Soviet authorities had, however, to discard the Russian Olympic Committee -- Soviet foreign policy and the country's weakness militating against participation in the 'bourgeois' Olympics until 1952, the Scouts and the Sokol -- because of their hostility or lack of political commitment to the Soviet cause, as well as many of the former middle-class sports-clubs and their journals.

(2) Foreign gymnastics systems imported into Russia in tsarist times were to come to constitute the basis of the Soviet physical-culture drive and of the system of physical education introduced in schools and colleges and in the armed forces. The Soviet programme of physical education, both in and out of school, was to be modelled on the gymnastics and calisthenics of Germany, the Scandinavian countries and the Czech lands. The Soviet author-

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81 The Lesgaft Higher Courses became the Lesgaft Institute of Physical Culture (see below p.192), the Moscow River Yacht Club -- the Red Stadium (see below p.186), the Office of the Chief Supervisor of Sport -- the sports section of Vsevobuch (see below p.182); the All-Russia Football Association and the Moscow Collegium of Referees continued without a change in name; many football-clubs of the tsarist period continued with the same players, premises, colours and, sometimes, the same name for several years.

ities propagate these schools' doctrines of the need for citizens to develop all-round physical fitness and culture as a condition for human happiness, a healthy society and a militarilly prepared nation.

(3) Bourgeois theorists' ideas about the harmonious and balanced development of body and mind were to become an underlying ideological theme in Soviet physical culture -- both because they accorded with socialist ideology and, perhaps more importantly, because they matched the technical and cultural needs of an industrialising society being built mainly by peasant labour. With the onset of full-scale industrialisation, however, the Soviet leaders rejected many of the other ideas associated with the notions of pre-revolutionary proponents of "a healthy mind in a healthy body". They rejected the strictures of their main Russian inspirer, Lesgaft, on competition, public displays, trophies, medals and the like; they espoused the views of Tolstoy, Chekhov and Kuprin on the need for national fitness, support for Russian and other national folk-games and the utilisation of sport for character-formation, yet they came to spurn Tolstoy's call for 'free-education' by self-maturation, and Chekhov's advocacy of uninhibited contests of strength (e.g., 15-round or longer boxing and wrestling contests), circus-strongman acts and 'narcissistic' body-building for men and women.

(4) The notions of such scientists as Sechyonov and Pavlov, which provided a scientific basis for rationalising physical recreation and employing 'active rest' to improve productivity, were to find a ready response in a state eager to use all possible means to industrialise rapidly. The extensive application of science, particularly knowledge of physiology and biomechanics, to training-methods for various competitive sports (especially once the Soviet Union began to compete internationally after World War 11) owed much to the

early work and traditions of people like Lesgaft and Pavlov. The religious aspects of the thought of 'founding fathers' like Tolstoy, Pavlov and Ushinsky were, of course, ignored.

(5) A Marxist-Leninist interpretation of culture, mental and physical, including a belief in the interdependence of the mental and physical states of human beings, provides the general framework within which physical and mental recreation is viewed in the U.S.S.R. It should, however, be noted that aphorisms drawn from and myths about Lenin in regard to physical culture have been taken up to justify Soviet policies at particular stages of development and need not necessarily be taken as creative Marxist thinking (indeed, they have sometimes replaced it).

## 111 DEVELOPMENTS 1917-1920: YEARS OF MILITARY TRAINING AND PHYSICAL CULTURE

### Background

When the Bolsheviks seized power, they found a country on the verge of economic collapse. Civil war and foreign intervention accelerated and intensified radical transformations in the economy and politics. The Bolsheviks were at war, and centralised control in the interests of war-production was an obvious recourse. At the end of June, 1918, came a decree on general nationalisation which heralded the period of ruthless centralisation now known as War (or Military) Communism.[1]

### Theorising and Experimenting

It was against the background, then, of war and cataclysmic events that the new, universal system of physical education that Bolshevik educationalists had been advocating before the Revolution had to be introduced. The first steps to be taken were by no means obvious, for there was no pattern to follow; the change-over from criticism of capitalist institutions and the sports structure of industrial states to practical action in an eighty-per cent peasant society in the throes of civil war, however, presented huge problems. What of the past was valid and useful? What had to be discarded? Were the schools of gymnastics inherited from Germany, Scandinavia and what are now the Czech lands and the organised sports of England utterly bourgeois

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1 For an authoritative treatment of the period 1917-1923, see Carr, E.H., A History of Soviet Russia, Penguin Books, 1970, Vols. 1-3: The Bolshevik Revolution.

and unworthy of a place in a new proletarian culture? Could Russian middle-class societies and sports movements like the Scouts and the Sokol be used and adapted -- or should they be disbanded and a fresh start made? Was the bourgeois legacy a cancer that had to be cut out of the Russian body to make it healthy or could the best of bourgeois practice be adapted to serve the needs of the struggling proletarian state? Was there any social value in attempts to achieve top-class results, to break records, and so on? These were the types of questions that were being debated, often furiously, in educational circles during this initial period.

The first few years were, naturally, a period of improvisation and experiment, with the many left groups eager to implement their theories. The régime was to take some measures (like, for example, the banning of the Scout, Sokol and Maccabee organisations and a number of bourgeois sports-clubs) that were later to be revoked or regretted, but which, at the time, were mainly dictated by the chaos and uncertainty and the 'besieged military camp' atmosphere. It was also to pass a number of decrees that, because of the conditions then obtaining, turned out to be little more than declarative. Essentially, however, physical education during the period of War Communism came to be geared to the needs of the war-effort, as a Soviet historian admits: "During the Civil War and foreign intervention, physical culture and sport were put to the service of universal military training and preparation for the fight against the enemies of the young Soviet Republic. Because of this, the administration of physical culture throughout the country was the responsibility of a military department."[2]

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2 Samoukov, F.I. (ed.), Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, p. 266.

Vsevobuch and the Militarisation of Sport

Compulsory military service to the new régime had been decreed on 22nd April, 1918; on 7th May, by a decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, a new government agency was set up: the Central Board of Universal Military Training (vseobshcheye voyennoye obuchenie) attached to the All-Russia G.H.Q. (Glavny shtab)[3]; sections of Vsevobuch were also created in military committees, the sections being responsible for coordinating work according to an overall programme. Understandably, given the period, it received a relatively high level of publicity and priority. The principal aim of Vsevobuch was "to supply the Red Army with contingents of trained conscripts as quickly as possible".[4] One means of achieving this was to carry out a crash programme for physical fitness; accordingly, Vsevobuch was given control of all sports-clubs and societies and made responsible for the physical training of all people of recruitable (18-40) and pre-recruitment (16-18) age. Only school-children were outside its scope: their physical training was the responsibility of the People's Commissariat of Education.

To implement its programme, therefore, Vsevobuch set up military committees at guberniya (province), uyezd (county) and gorod (city) levels, wherever the Bolsheviks were in sufficient control. Given the uncertain conditions of the time and the reluctance with which war-weary -- and sometimes politically hostile -- citizens greeted new military appeals, it is not certain to what extent the local committees were effective. Certainly, they lacked qualified

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3 Entsiklopedichesky slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu, Moscow, 1961, Vol. 1, p. 170.

4 Podvoisky, N.I., Kakaya fizicheskaya kul'tura nuzhna proletariatu i kem ona dolzhna sozdavat'sa?, Moscow, 1923, p. 26.

instructors, sports equipment and facilities. For its programme to be realised, Vsevobuch had to provide facilities and attract (as well as compel by way of military service) young people to engage in physical exercise. Therefore, the Central Board of Vsevobuch decreed that: "for the purpose of the swiftest broad involvement of the working population in physical, general-culture and political development which is being held back by the lack of clubs and gymnastics-facilities and by equipment inadequate for its great educative and formative mission, we order chiefs of local Vsevobuch organs to fit out clubs, gymnastics and sports installations by subbotniki[5] of young men shortly due for military service and all sporting forces, and also to use local resources in building and equipping clubs by means of mandatory labour."[6]

An inventory and report from the Driss uyezd section of Vsevobuch in Belorussia runs:

"Sports-grounds 1, tennis-rackets 2, old balls 5, new balls 4, foils 2, masks 1, javelins 1, discuses 1. Pre-military training is conducted 4 times a week."[7]

The 'militarisation' of sport led to the requisitioning of sports-equipment from the existing sports-clubs; the Belorussian report quoted mentions the requisitioning of equipment from the Sokol, Maccabee and Shevardeniya sports-clubs and from the Scouts.[8] This inevitably led to clashes with the club organisers and members, many of whom maintained that

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5 Subbotniki: days of unpaid voluntary work on social jobs carried out after normal paid work or on a rest day -- originally on Saturday (hence the derivation from the Russian word for Saturday - subbota).

6 K novoi armii (organ TsU Vsevobucha), 1920, No. 17-18, pp. 27-28.

7 Kulinkovich, K.A., "Razvitie fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta v Belorusskoi SSR", in Ocherki po istorii fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, p. 39.

8 Ibid., p. 37.

sport should be apolitical, and not a political or military weapon. As a result, many clubs looked upon as pockets of potential or actual counter-revolution, were assimilated (e.g., often the Sokol) or forcibly disbanded (e.g., often the Scouts clubs). It is maintained that "during the Civil War, in several regions temporarily under White-Guard control, the Scouts and Sokol-members are actively supporting the enemies of the Soviet republic."[9] Consequently, Vsevobuch was given the task, "relying on the active assistance of the Komsomol"[10], of conducting "a resolute fight for the complete elimination of bourgeois sports-organisations and of purging the sports and gymnastics clubs of all class enemies."[11] Military sports clubs were formed at factories,

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9 Vestnik militsionnoi armii, 1920, No. 10.

10 The Komsomol (Russian abbreviation of "Communist Youth League") is a youth organisation set up in 1918 to assist the Communist Party; membership is for young people between 14 and 26 years of age.

11 Vestnik militsionnoi armii, 1920, No. 10. That not all bourgeois clubs succumbed at once is evident from a record of the Petrograd football championships and cup competitions. A total of 14 teams contested the eleventh Spring Cup in 1918, all of them having been formed prior to 1917; they included Merkur, Kolomyagi, Tsar'skoye Selo, Sport, Unitas, Tosmen and Putilovsky. All these teams had competed in the ninth Spring Cup in 1916, while Sport and Merkur had taken part in the fourth Petersburg championships of 1904. Merkur won the Spring Cup, Kolomyagi - the eighteenth Petrograd league championships, and Tsar'skoye Selo - the Dacha Cup (instituted in 1912 and competed for by the winners of district preliminaries - Murzinka, Slavyanka, Marienburg, Luga, Gladiator and Tsar'skoye Selo). In 1919, the twelfth Spring Cup was won by Kolomyagi, the other teams including Unitas, Petrovsky, Sport, Lyubiteli, Detskoye Selo (thus renamed from Tsar'skoye Selo after the killing of the royal family), Triumf, Merkur and Volga. In the same year, Kolomyagi went to Moscow and beat a Vsevobuch Railwaymen's team 7:4. The same teams competed in the 1919 unfinished (interrupted by the Civil War) Petrograd championships. Kolomyagi won the 1920 thirteenth Spring Cup, beating Merkur 9:2 (in extra time!), and also the nineteenth Petrograd league championships (called the Petrograd Military Okrug Championships) in which Unitas, Cherepovets, Merkur, Petrovsky, Tosmen, Kronstadt and Novgorod also took part. Georges Duperont, who had been instrumental in introducing and popularising the game in Russia and who had been President of the All-Russia Football Association since 1915, now became Chairman of the Petrograd Football League and an okrug (area) sports inspector. (Kiselev, N. Ya. [ed.], 70 futbol'nykh let, Lenizdat, 1970, pp. 83-89).

railway-depots and mines all over the country -- such clubs as Klub Oktyab'rskoi Revolutsii, Raikomvod, Goznak, Pishcheviki, Burevestnik, Stroiteli and OPPV (Opytno-Pokazatel'naya Ploshchadka Vsevobucha). The Komsomol played a prominent part in the requisitioning, the forming of cells at pre-military training-centres and the conducting of political instruction. Its Second Congress, in October, 1919, passed a special resolution pledging an all-out attack on the Boy Scout movement and urging the government to disband the Scouts: "The Congress considers the Scouts a purely bourgeois system of spiritual and physical indoctrination of young people in an imperialistic spirit, and calls for the immediate dissolution of all extant Scout organisations in Soviet Russia."[12]

The importance of political education in sports groups was heightened by the presence of sports instructors, on whom the régime had to depend, who were tsarist-trained and politically suspect. Most Vsevobuch instructors were, in fact, former 'bourgeois' sports and physical training specialists. During 1918, there were 17,428 ex-N.C.O.'s of the tsarist army working as instructors in Vsevobuch.[13] It was feared that "hostile elements had penetrated into the organs of Vsevobuch and had tried to conduct counter-revolutionary work against the Soviet physical-culture movement."[14] On 24th September, 1919, the government passed a resolution obliging Vsevobuch to broaden its work, improve its quality and pay more serious attention to sport "as an important element in the military training of the working people."[15] An experienced political leader, Nikolai Podvoisky (who had been chairman of

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12 Chudinov, I.D. (ed.) Osnovnye postanovleniya, prikazy i instruktsii po voprosam fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta, 1917-1957, Moscow, 1959, p. 24.

13 Starovoitova, Z., Polpred zdorv'ya, Moscow, 1969, p. 40.

14 Samoukov, F.I., (ed.), Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1956, p. 84.

15 Ibid., p. 85.

the Military Revolutionary Committee in Petrograd during the October Revolution), was put in charge of Vsevobuch and the formation of Red Army reserves. Podvoisky immediately formulated new aims: "First, purge the Vsevobuch instructors of hostile, alien elements; second, make physical education and military training compulsory and universal and involve as many young workers and peasants as possible in physical education and shooting practice; third, link physical and military training with communist education and directly involve the local Soviets, Komsomol and trade unions in the military training of workers."[16]

At the end of 1918, according to Vsevobuch's own estimates, it had trained some 2 million people and formed 350 sports-groups in workplaces.[17] To mark its first anniversary, on 25th May, 1919, it held a gigantic parade on the Red Square in Moscow, reviewed by Lenin, that is today regarded as the forerunner of the great sporting parades that have become characteristic of Soviet festivals. After the military-sports parade, sports meetings were held in other parts of Moscow: at the Sokol Sports Club, the Zamoskvorech'ye Sports Club (the former Imperial Yacht Club on the then Sparrow Hills, later to become a Red Army sports centre) and the Hippodrome (racecourse).

In line with the policy of combining military drill and weapon-handling with political and general education and instruction in elementary hygiene, it was decided to coordinate the activities of Vsevobuch with those of the Commissariats of Education and of Health. In Podvoisky's opinion, it was impossible to bring the Civil War to a successful conclusion or to build socialism without a large-scale campaign to improve physical fitness and health.

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16 Podvoisky, N.I., O militsionnoi organizatsii vooruzhyonnykh sil Rossiiskoi Sovetskoi Federativnoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki, Moscow, 1919, p. 9.

17 Starovoitova, op. cit., p. 41.

Having inherited a country with an inclement climate, whose population was overwhelmingly illiterate (see Appendix XIII), where vital statistics (of infantile mortality, birth-rates, average life-expectancy, mortality rates, etc. -- see Appendix XII) tended to be worse than those of industrial states of Europe in 1900, where disease and starvation were common, and where most people had only the most rudimentary knowledge of hygiene, the Soviet leaders appreciated that it would take a radical economic and social transformation to alter the situation substantially. But time was short, and able-bodied and disciplined men were vital, first for the country's survival, then for its recovery from the ravages of war and revolution, for industrial recovery and defence against further probable-seeming attacks.

Regular participation in physical exercise was to be one -- relatively inexpensive but effective -- means of improving health-standards rapidly and a channel by which to educate people in hygiene, nutrition and exercise. One indication of the health-policy being pursued was the campaign during the Civil War under the slogans "Help the Country with a Tooth-Brush," "Help the Country by Washing in Cold Water," "Help the Country by Observing the Dry (i.e., Prohibition) Law," and "Physical Culture 24 Hours a Day". With the influx of masses of peasants into the cities (bringing with them rural habits), the significance of health through physical exercise took on a new dimension.

The ignorance which was the cause of so much disease, starvation and misery -- and which hampered both military effectiveness and labour-productivity -- was to be combatted by a far-reaching programme of physical exercise and sport. If the material facilities were lacking, then people were urged to make full use of "the sun, air, water and natural movement -- the best proletarian doctors."[18] The campaign could only catch on, in Podvoisky's

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18 Podvoisky, op. cit., p. 41.

opinion, if the emotional attraction of competitive sport were to be utilised to the utmost -- this at a time when 'competition' and 'sport' had become rather 'dirty' words; certainly, a number of educationalists regarded competitive sport as debasing physical culture and inculcating non-socialist habits. This was a view held, for example, by Lunarcharsky, the Commissar of Education; it had (as we have seen) been subscribed to previously by Lesgaft. Nonetheless, competitive sport and contests began to be organised from the lowest level upwards, culminating in the All-Russia Pre-Olympiads of 1920[19]. Physical culture, including sport, therefore, was to be a significant means of dispersing ignorance and encouraging civic responsibility.

The existing Vsevobuch training programme was extended from 96 hours to 576 hours in urban areas and to 436 hours in rural localities, spread over two years. The increase in hours was to be entirely devoted to sport: swimming, fencing, skiing, ice-skating and a variety of team-sports, particularly football, alongside gymnastics and athletics. The new programme also made provision for lectures in hygiene, anatomy and physiology.

The First All-Union Congress of Physical Culture, Sport and Pre-Military Training opened in Moscow on 3rd April, 1919. Discussion at the congress centred on four main problems: the physical education of young people, the organisation of military training, the training of instructors, and the creation of sports clubs. The congress adopted a resolution on the establishment of a Supreme Council of Physical Culture, attached to Vsevobuch, which should be in charge of all matters associated with recreation. The Supreme Council came into being in October, 1920 as an advisory body to the Central Board of Vsevobuch. These were the first steps leading to a coordination of

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19 See below, p.196.

work in the field of sport which, up to then, had been divided between the Commissariats for Health and for Education, Vsevobuch and a variety of public organisation, particularly the Komsomol. In addition, 12 oblast' (regional) and 52 guberniya[20] (provincial) physical-culture councils were set up; they were to be staffed by representatives of all bodies concerned with physical culture. Their duties were to supervise the fulfilment of directives from the Supreme Council, to provide physical education in schools and sports-clubs and to organise medical services for those participating in sport. The ambitious programme of the Congress was in few places, however, in those uncertain times, carried out to the full.

According to the official figures of the Central Board of Vsevobuch, on 1st January, 1921, there were 1,419 physical culture-groups with 143,563 members, of whom 5,500 (4%) were women. In addition, there existed 151 sports-clubs[21]. The total number of people trained by Vsevobuch over the three years 1917-1920 amounted to 4,475,000, the majority of whom were sent to join the Red Army; it also trained some 6,000 P.E.- instructors, the nucleus of the new grade of specialists who were gradually to oust the old tsarist-trained personnel[22]. Physical culture-parades and mass contests were inaugurated and new facilities (some 2,000 sports-grounds by 1921[23]), constructed, often with assistance from Komsomol-members. A start was made by Musvovites, for example, armed with picks, shovels and simply their bare hands, on the construction of a grand new sports stadium at the foot of Sparrow Hills -- to

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20 During the 1920's, the former tsarist territorial administrative units such as guberniya (province), uyezd (county) and volost' (parish) were abolished and new units such as okrug (area), oblast' (region) and raion (district) took their place.

21 The sports-clubs were mainly formed before the revolution and were organised on a territorial basis, whereas the physical culture-groups were post-revolutionary organisations based on workplaces.

22 Vestnik militsionnoi armii, 1921, No. 9.

23 Korol'kov, N.P., Sport i zashchita rodiny, Moscow, 1969, p. 5.

be named the International Red Stadium (eventually materialising, much later -- in 1956 -- as the Lenin Stadium). Podvoisky struck the keynote at the foundation-laying ceremony when he said, "The Civil War fronts are still ablaze, starvation and ruin hold the young Soviet republic in a vise, yet we are today starting our campaign for mass physical culture."[24]

Physical education in school and college

Despite preoccupation with the war and the 'militarisation' of sport, a great deal of discussion was taking place among educationalists about the place of sport in Soviet education and socialist life. Furthermore, many principles of the desired organisation of work and life were being enunciated in the form of decrees, as earnests of intention, though the poverty, disorganisation and lack of authority to enforce them made their immediate implementation impossible; among these, relevant here, were the introduction of the 8-hour day, the limiting of teenagers' working time to 6 hours a day, and the banning of child employment. Clearly, it was felt, without free time, workers and their children could not take part in any form of recreation. The first steps were, nevertheless, being taken to make physical culture an essential part of the school curriculum and to work towards the principle of the fully-developed individual.

An important landmark in education was a government declaration of 16th October, 1918, on the "Unified Labour School" -- the creation of a uniform school-system for the whole country, which was to be free, comprehensive, co-educational and separated from the Church. It was to be some time before all the stipulations of the new decree could be put into effect, but the principle

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24 Podvoisky, op. cit., p. 9.

had been defined: that all children were educable and should be educated. Without this, it was felt, no significant social progress could be made.

If all children were now to go to school, they were also to be given compulsory physical education. Already on 7th December, 1917, the Medical and Hygiene Department of the new Education Commission[25], headed by Lunarcharsky, recommended that "all schools should be concerned with the physical as well as the mental development of children and should introduce gymnastics, games, swimming and excursions."[26] The 'Fundamental Principles' of the Unified Labour School stated quite categorically that "gymnastics and sport develop feelings of responsible collective action and a spirit of mutual assistance as well as strength and skill."[27]

In the spring of 1918, on the initiative of the Medical and Hygiene Department referred to above, a campaign was launched to improve the physical fitness of children and students by providing summer holiday camps -- often on estates sequestered from the nobility. After the absorption of the Education Commission by the People's Commissariat of Education, the Medical and Hygiene Department was renamed the Department of School Hygiene, in which a number of leading doctors and teachers were to work under the supervision of Dr. Vera Bonch-Bruyevich (she died suddenly in the influenza epidemic of November, 1918). The Department began to prepare detailed recommendations on hygiene and physical education in schools, published regular bulletins (Byulleteni shkol'no-sanitarnovo otdela pri kommissariate narodnovo prosveshcheniya), and formulated

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25 The Education Commission and the People's Commissariat of Education of the Russian Federation both came into being in November, 1917, the former being concerned largely with administrative, the latter - with executive matters. On 10th July, 1918, administration of education passed to the People's Commissariat of Education and the Commission was disbanded.

26 Chudinov, op. cit., p. 41.

27 Izvestiya VTsIK, 16th October, 1918.

the basic principles of the rôle of physical education in schools:

"Physical education must create healthy, properly developed citizens who are capable of performing any task and defending themselves and others . . . It must promote initiative in young people and teach them to take the path of creative endeavour in life."[28]

The Department also started work on the training of P.E. instructors. In June, 1918, six-month courses were instituted for P.E. instructors in Moscow (at the Military Gymnastics and Fencing School), in Yaroslavl', Perm', Smolensk, and Simbirsk. Soon after, the first institutes of physical education were established on the basis of these courses, and suitable (confiscated) buildings allotted them: the sizable town estate of Count Razumovsky (who had fled the country) was handed over, in December, 1919, to the new Moscow Institute of Physical Culture (where it remains to this day); earlier, in October, Lesgaft's Higher Courses for P.E. Instructors in Petrograd had become the basis for the country's first Institute of Physical Culture, named after Lesgaft and, like the Moscow Institute, accorded higher-school status. A third higher educational institution concerned with courses for P.E. instructors was the Moscow Military School of Physical Education for Working People, which was formed in 1920 with a staff of over 200, principally to train instructors on 2-year courses for the army -- but also as an important centre of research into sport and physical education.

## Competitive Sport

Although competitive sport was naturally curtailed during the war years, it did exist -- and was actively encouraged by Vsevobuch and other bodies --

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28 Byulleten' shkol'no-sanitarnovo otdela pri kommissariate naradnovo prosveshcheniya, 1918, No. 2, p. 4.

as a means of attracting people to physical culture and better health, arousing their identification with a local club or town and encouraging the collective spirit that was felt to be part of the new ideology. Football and other team-games were especially encouraged, football being included in the programme at the pre-military training centres and recommended for all sports clubs. City football championships continued, as before the revolution, between 1918 and 1920 -- despite the chaotic conditions -- in Moscow, Petrograd, Minsk, Tver', Tula, Ivanovo-Vosnesensk, Nizhny Novgorod, Voronezh, Kursk, Oryol, Smolensk, Saratov and Vyatka[29]. In Moscow, itself, spring and autumn contests were held and Moscow teams travelled to Rzhev, Torzhok, Klin, Vladimir, Yaroslavl' and other smaller towns in order to popularise the game[30]. Petrograd teams played in Smolensk, Tver', Novgorod and Cherepovets[31].

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29 Moscow beat Petrograd 9:1 for the national title in 1918, but lost 2:0 and 3:2 in the following two years.

30 Fizkul'tura i sport, 1971, No. 3, p. 16.

31 Kiselev, N. Ya. (ed.), 70 futbol'nykh let, Leningrad, 1970, p. 89. Despite the Civil War, the traditional Petrograd-Moscow football rivalry continued throughout this period: in 1918, clubs from the two cities met nine times, in 1919 - six times. In 1918, Putilovsky played the Sokol'niki Ski Circle (Moscow), and the Zamoskvorech'ye Sports Club (M), Merkur played the Society of Physical Education (M), the Zamoskvorech'ye Sports Club and Novogireyevo (M), Unitas played the Sokol'niki Football Circle (M) and the Zamoskvoretsky Sports Club (M), and a Petrograd city team played the Zamoskvoretsky Sports Club (M) and a Moscow City team. After Petrograd had lost the last match 9:1, a local newspaper gave vent to the Petrograders' chagrin at losing so heavily to their great rival as follows: "The Moscow League's decision to arrange a meeting of the two city teams at two days' notice, despite Petrograd's request to postpone the match, entirely accounts for the favourable result for Moscow, while the illness of our goalkeeper, Polezhayev, enabled the Muscovites to beat us by such a dreadful score as 9:1." (Vestnik petrogradskoi futbol'noi ligi, 2nd October, 1918). The next year, Kolomyagi played the Sokol'niki Football Circle, the Vsevobuch Railwaymen's Team (M) and the Zamoskvoretsky (M) Sports Club; Tosmen played the Zamoskvoretsky Sports Club (M); and a Petrograd city team played Moscow (winning 2:0) and the Zamoskvoretsky Sports Club. It is interesting that all the names given for the Petrograd team-members are Russian in 1918 and 1919 (except one: Baumgart, in 1919). (Kiselev, op. cit., pp. 83-87).

Football, it would seem, was the most popular game of the period and one the authorities most wanted to encourage -- partly due to the mass excitement it evoked (it could thereby draw people into sport and, indirectly, hope to gain popular support for a régime that provided such spectacles), and partly for the moral code it was supposed to teach.

Other sports, particularly those with a military bias -- skiing, boxing, wrestling and fencing -- were included in the Vsevobuch programme. Skiing was given special priority, and a battalion of skiers -- the Northern Expeditionary Ski Battalion -- was despatched to fight on the Eastern Front against Admiral Kolchak, the self-styled 'Supreme Ruler of Russia', and commander of the White-Guard Army. Subsequently, between 1919 and 1920, as many as 75 ski-companies and reconnaissance-groups were formed; their reported military successes did much to boost the sport at home[32]. In the winter of 1919-1920, despite the desperate conditions of Civil War, 60 people took part in the Petrograd city championships, and, a year later, the first national ski championships were held in Moscow. Skiing, of course, had been widely popular before the revolution, two of the country's leading multi-sport clubs being the Moscow Ski Club (founded in 1895) and the Society for Amateur Skiers (founded in 1901). They were both permitted to continue as semi-independent organisations until the late 1920's.

Speed-skating, too, had had many followers before the revolution and still maintained its popularity. Even during hostilities, on 20th-21st January, 1918, 21 speed-skaters contested the championship of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic on Moscow's Maiden's Field. All four distances were won by Yakov Mel'nikov, one of the most renowned speed-skaters in the history of the

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32 Korol'kov, op. cit., p. 14.

sport: his time for the 10,000 metres (17 min. 48.7 sec.) recorded in the 1919 national championships stood for the next 20 years.

Moscow also held city boxing, weightlifting and French wrestling championships in November, 1918. Despite the starvation, the cold, a typhoid outbreak and the Civil War, the championships attracted a large crowd. As a newspaper of the time reported, "The success of the contest exceeded all expectations; the public thronged into the Blue Hall of Union House, and those too late to secure themselves entry-tickets formed a great crowd around the door of the overcrowded hall."[33]

It is sometimes claimed that 7th May, 1918, is the real date of the birth of Soviet athletics, when the first post-revolutionary sports-event took place: a cross-country run (4,500 metres) in Petrovsky Park, Moscow, won by Nikolai Bocharov of the Moscow Ski Club. If athletes had the advantage of pre-revolutionary stadiums and grounds, other sportsmen were not so fortunate. Moscow swimmers, for example, had to make do with the small swimming-pool at the Sandunov Steam-Baths for their contests[34].

Other sports competitions of this time included the first motor-bike race -- Moscow to Klin and back -- which took place in 1918, and the first national chess championship -- in 1920.

Apart from the competitions in individual sports, the authorities were preparing for massive physical culture festivals throughout the country, to which they gave the grand name of 'Pre-Olympiads'. These were to set the stage for a national festival of physical culture timed to coincide with the Second Congress of the Third International (19th July to 7th August, 1920). In

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33 Russky sport, 10th November, 1918.

34 Zholdak, V.E. (ed.), Stranitsy moskovskovo sporta, Moscow, 1969, p. 36.

honour of the latter event, some 18,000 people participated in a huge gymnastics and sports display at the new Red Stadium (formerly the Moscow River Yacht Club). The star feature of the programme was an 'international' football match between a Russian team and foreign delegates at the Congress. Podvoisky is said to have approached a young Scottish Temperance Society delegate, William Gallagher (later to become President of the British Communist Party) and asked him to pick a team from among the foreign delegates. The 'International Xl' included a Canadian - Dick Beech, an Irishman - P. Murphy, an Englishman - Tom Quelch, five Americans - J. Chaplin, Joe Fineberg, E. McAlpine, David Ramsey and the writer (and ex-Harvard footballer) John Reed (of Ten Days That Shook the World fame) and two Dutch delegates. The captain was William Gallagher. Understandably, the International Xl lost by a heavy margin to a representative Moscow team[35]. The winners received the valuable prizes of one jar of fruit and one bag of flour each (the beginnings of professionalism!).

Pre-Olympiads were held simultaneously in Omsk, Tashkent and Yekaterinburg (now Sverdlovsk). The Tashkent games, which were given the prestigious title of the 'First Central Asian Olympics', lasted for 10 days early in October, 1920.

As many as 3,000 people took part, mostly natives of Turkestan. The games included a variety of sports but, since the organised sports of Europe were mostly unknown, the participants largely confined themselves to their own national games (such as the equestrian games poiga, ulak, kyz-ku and ogdarysh and the local form of wrestling, kurash). At the final ceremony, 1,500 athletes put on a display of gymnastics and folk-dancing[36]. The significance

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35 Starovoitova, op. cit., pp. 91-94; the composition of the team was provided by the veteran American communist Joe Fineberg (who played in the match and subsequently settled in the Soviet Union), with whom, just before his death in 1963, the present writer worked in Moscow.

36 Sholomitsky, Y., "Fizicheskaya kul'tura i sport v sovetskom Uzbekistane", in Ocherki po istorii fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, p. 90.

of this sports festival in Turkestan for the Soviet nationalities policy of the time may be judged by the fact that this was the first time in the history of Central Asia that Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmenians, Kirghiz and other local peoples, as well as Russians, had competed in any sports event together. As was made clear later, the authorities regarded sport as an important means of integrating the diverse peoples of the old Russian Empire in the new Soviet state: "The integrative functions of sport are great. This has immense importance for our multi-national state. Sports-contests, festivals, spartakiads and other types of sporting competition have played an important part in cementing the friendship of Soviet peoples."[37]

In principle, the fate of the Civil War and foreign intervention was determined in November, 1920. The new state was now to enter a period of restoration and reconstruction. The end of the period of hostilities also signified the demise of Vsevobuch, since it had served its purpose. The military organisation of sporting activity was no longer necessary in peacetime, and new methods had to be found which would be more in tune with the new social conditions. Vsevobuch was finally disbanded in 1923 (although it was to reappear in September, 1941 and exist for the duration of World War II).

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37 Sport v SSSR, 1973, No. 5, p. 9.

## SUMMARY

(1) In conditions of Civil War, physical culture became tied to military training: although the organisation and administration of physical culture were transferred in the early 1920's to civilian bodies, the association between physical culture and the military was to remain very close for many years to come, an explicit function of physical training being to contribute to the military preparedness of the entire population.

(2) Despite preoccupation with war, a start was made in this period on the creation of a new physical culture-structure meeting the needs of the new political order. Many resolutions, however, remained on paper, conditions preventing their implementation. It was agreed that physical education should be compulsory in schools and colleges and physical culture was recognised by the revolutionary régime as an important ingredient in the formation of a well-balanced personality. Most significant of all, the authorities came to realise that physical culture, especially competitive sport and team-games, could be utilised in the pursuit of major social and political ends.

(3) In a country whose people had only rudimentary knowledge of hygiene and which still suffered regularly from the ravages of disease and starvation, physical culture was to be a means of bringing people into contact with medical and other scientific knowledge and of encouraging a concern for physical fitness.

(4) The political significance of the part which physical education could play by providing a painless training in discipline was not lost upon early Soviet educators and political leaders.

(5) Recreational activities made an appreciated contribution towards winning acceptance for the new régime and its ideology and developing a measure of association, team-spirit and unity among peoples as diverse as workers and soldiers in Moscow and Petrograd, recently-feudal peoples in Turkestan and nomads in Asia.

## IV DEVELOPMENTS, 1921-1929: YEARS OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

### 1. Background

The effects of the policy of 'War Communism', combined with the destruction and chaos of seven years of war soon showed themselves in every aspect of life. Late in February, 1921, Lenin submitted to the Party Central Committee a project for a new economic policy, later to be known as NEP. NEP signified, in essence, a major concession to the vast peasant majority as the price of retaining power. The State retained what Lenin called the 'commanding heights' of the economy, primarily the largest industrial installations, but permitted private trade and some private production. Until 1928, by which time the economy was more or less back on its feet, there was no basic change in this mixture of competing economies. The nationalised sector operated to a system that Lenin termed 'state capitalism'.[1]

### 2. Physical Culture: Background to a Controversy

Just as in other fields of endeavour, in sport this was a time of constant discussion. Controversy raged over its rôle in a workers' state and its organisational structure, with various groups contending for influence. The NEP period was to see a completely new structure, the involvement of trade unions in organisation, disputes over theory and practice involving the Komsomol, the Party, trade unions, the old Vsevobuch leaders, the 'hygienists', Proletkultists and other groups, and the promotion of international (largely 'proletarian') sporting contacts.

Basically, these were the years of physical culture rather than sport, the dividing-line between the two being the presence of an element of competition: "Sport begins where the struggle for victory begins."[2]

[1] For a thorough historian's analysis of the NEP period, see Carr, E.H., A History of Soviet Russia, Penguin Books, 1970, Vols. 4-7.

[2] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1971, No. 1, p. 1.

Competitive sport bred, in some people's minds, attitudes alien to socialist society. They frowned upon the 'record-breaking mania' of contemporary sport in the West, and they favoured non-commercialised forms of recreation that dispensed with grandstands and spectators. Doubts were cast on the social value of competitive sport - above all, on attempts to attain top-class results, which were considered an unjustified drive to break records based on false ambitions. They charged that competitive sport distorted the 'eternal ideals' of physical education, that, instead of being universal, it led to narrow specialisation and was detrimental to health; it encouraged commercialism, demoralisation and professionalism. Competitive sport, it was alleged, diverted attention from the basic aim of providing recreation for the masses; it turned them into passive spectators. Such were the views of those, often influential, persons who dominated the thinking on physical education and sport during the 1920's. In some ways, the antagonism toward competitive sport was a curious feature, since in economics, this was an era of competition. Economic competition, however, was more or less forced on the Bolsheviks by the circumstances, while in certain social fields (e.g., education and sport) they were able to try to implement their collectivist ideas.

One notion that all those working within a Marxian approach agreed upon, however, was acceptance of the view that all work in this, as in other fields, should be subordinate to the goal of the ultimate achievement of a Communist society. The question posed was: 'How can physical culture be organised and employed most effectively to help secure the goals of the proletarian state?' It was on the answers to this question that opinions differed because of conflicts of interests and ideologies.

3. Organisation

When the Civil War ended, a number of different administrative futures were open to sport: it could remain under the aegis of Vsevobuch and retain a quasi-military rôle; it could be supervised by a civilian agency – a

government body, Komsomol or trade unions; workers' clubs or other cultural organisations could take over responsibility for sport; it could have either a central agency or several autonomous regional centres. Because of the lack of clear guidance from the Party, the immediate result was, by today's standards, rather anarchic, with various groups jostling for position. We consider them in turn.

(a) Vsevobuch. The paramilitary organisation set up in wartime had given sport considerable impetus. Being vested with mandatory powers, it had accumulated the best resources and human reserves for the popularisation of sport, which had become a national issue with relatively high priority consideration. With the onset of NEP, however, the reconstruction of the economy began to push aside matters which, during the Civil War, had had special attention - and these included sport.

In an attempt to preserve the network of sports clubs and groups which it had established during the Civil War, Vsevobuch at first tried to combine them into local sports-centres. By the end of 1921, it had 325 raion (district) and 975 uchastok (sector) sports-centres and 188 separate sports clubs.[3] These ran into trouble with the authorities, however, because "they were not firmly enough associated with trade-union, Komsomol and Party organisations, and rarely conducted educational work among their members. . ."[4] Being relatively untutored politically by the standards now obtaining, they were unable to cope with "members of pre-revolutionary sports-societies who were creeping in and hampering the development of Soviet physical culture."[5] Without financial backing from the government to maintain such a large number of sports-centres and clubs, the leaders of Vsevobuch were forced to abandon the project and, instead, put forward the idea, in mid-1922, of a new, all-embracing, independent

[3] Starovoitova, Z., Polpred zdorov'ya, Moscow, 1969, p. 33.

[4] Samoukov, F.I. (ed.), Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1956, p. 96.

[5] Idem.

sports organisation - a Russian Association of Red Physical-Culture Organisations. The project envisaged the formation, under a RARPOO umbrella, of sports clubs by individual sports on a territorial principle. This was opposed most vigorously by the Komsomol on the grounds that "(a) it was inexpedient to create at this time a new youth organisation parallel to the Komsomol, and (b) the former bourgeois club-athletes, antipathetic to the Soviet régime, might infiltrate the sports-clubs."[6] Nonetheless, RARPOO did come into being, but had a short life, being dissolved in March, 1923, along with Vsevobuch.

Vsevobuch was, in fact, reorganised into a sports organisation for the armed forces; in the spring of 1923, it became the Vsevobuch Experimental and Display Centre (Opytno-pokazatel'naya ploshchadka Vsevobucha). Its influence in Moscow, the capital, may be judged from an article in Krasny Sport, "In a purely sporting sense, VEDC is undoubtedly the strongest of all Moscow's sports organisations; regular planning, from the lack of which other clubs usually suffer, and good team-work have enabled VEDC model-teams to attain exceptional success in every sport they take up."[7] For its headquarters it was given the premises of the Moscow Ski Club. In 1928, it was renamed the Central House of the Red Army (TsDKA, later TsDSA - the Central House of the Soviet Army - and today TsSKA - the Central Sports Club of the Army).

Vsevobuch also provided the nucleus for the organisation of other military (or 'civil defence') societies during the 1920's that had some connection with recreational activities. In 1923, the Society of Friends of the Air Force (Obshchestvo druzei Vozdushnovo flota) was set up, to be followed by the Voluntary Society of Friends of Chemical Defence and the Chemical Industry (Dobrovol'noye obshchestvo druzei khimicheskoi oborony i khimicheskoi promyshlennosti — Dobrokhim). In 1925, the two amalgamated

[6] Izvestiya fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1922, No. 8, pp. 11-12.

[7] Krasny sport, 1923, No. 1, p. 3.

to form the Society of Friends of the Aviation and Chemical Defence (Obshchestvo druzei aviakhimicheskoi oborony - Aviakhim). Subsequently, in 1927, on the suggestion of the Commissar of Defence, Voroshilov, all societies for the military training of civilians were combined in a single organisation, the Society for Aid to Defence and the Aviation and Chemical Industry (Obshchestvo sodeistviya oborone i aviatsionno-khimicheskoi promyshlennosti - Osoaviakhim). In their recreational activities, the societies concentrated on running various military sports-circles. Osoaviakhim, for instance, ran more than 15,000 rifle clubs and 4,000 shooting ranges in 1929. In the same year, the country had some 2,000 anti-chemical defence groups, which devoted a good deal of attention to para-military sports[8] (see Figure 1 on p.143).

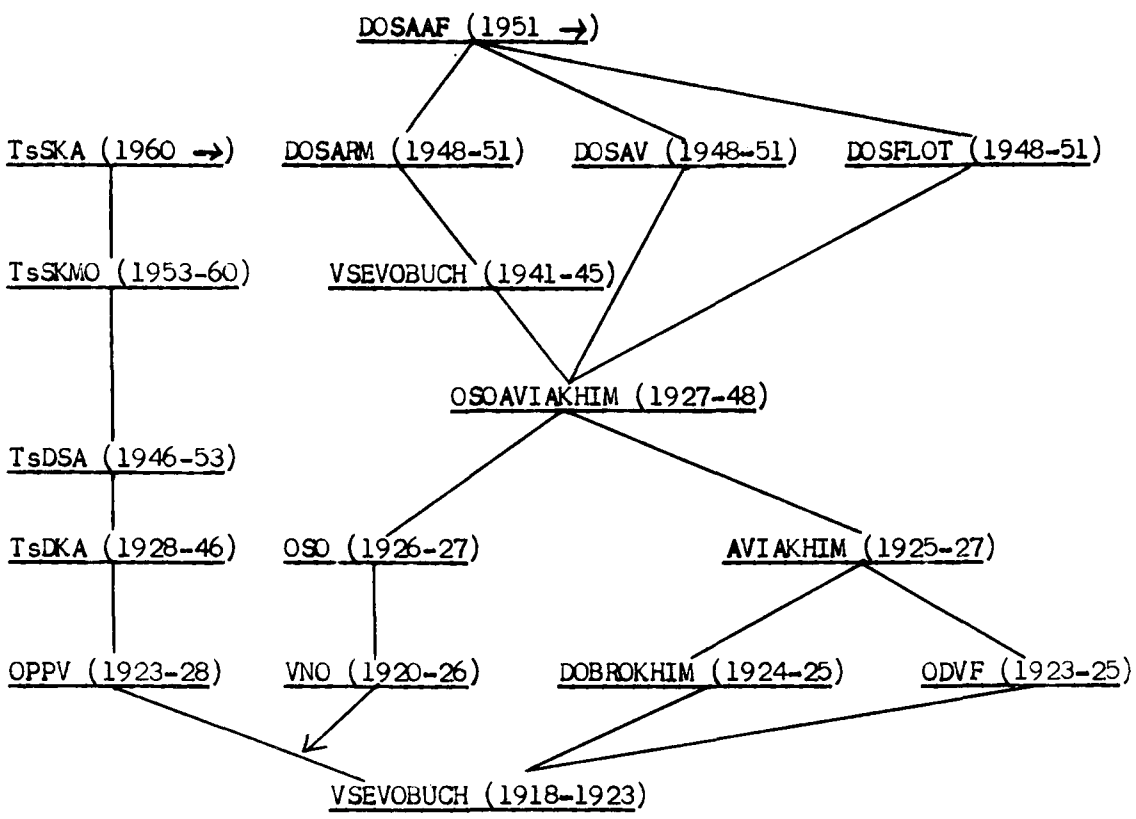
It is, nonetheless, probably true to say that, in the 'breathing space' between the Civil War and the industrialisation-drive, between Vsevobuch during 'War Communism' and the start of the G.T.O. fitness-campaign in 1931, sport had less association with the military than at any other time in Soviet history. The dismantling of the Vsevobuch apparatus and the handling of the administration of sport over to 'civilian' bodies were, perhaps, accompanied (and partly motivated) by a certain anti-militarising feeling both among ordinary people and among many leaders, particularly those influential in social spheres - people like Lunárcharsky, Semashko, Krupskaya, Zigmund and Bonch-Bruyevich.

(b) The Komsomol. The Communist Youth League had been concerned with sport during the Civil War and considered it one of the main spheres of its activity. In fact, its members had been responsible for much of the work done under Vsevobuch authority: they had set up clubs, got sport going at factories, built sports installations, themselves provided much of the grass-roots enthusiasm for sports participation, and spearheaded

[8] Korol'kov, N.P., Sport i zashchita rodiny, Moscow, 1969, p. 15.

Figure 1

Organisations Concerned Directly with Ensuring the Military Fitness of the Population, 1918-1974




Legend

VSEVOBUCH = Vseobshcheye Voyennoye Obuchenie (Universal Military Training)

VNO = Voyenno-nauchnoye obshchestvo (Military-Research Society)

DOBROKHIM = Dobrovol'noye obshchestvo druzei khimicheskoi oborony i khimicheskoi promyshlennosti (Voluntary Society of Friends of Chemical Defence and the Chemical Industry)

ODVF = Obshchestvo druzei Vozdushnovo flota (Society of Friends of the Air Force)

OSO = Obshchestvo sodeistviya oborone SSSR (Society for Aid to Defence of the USSR)

AVIAKHIM = Obshchestvo druzei aviakhimicheskoi oborony (Society of Friends of the Aviation and Chemical Defence)

OSOAVIAKHIM = Obshchestvo sodeistviya oborone i aviatsionno-khimicheskoi promyshlennosti (Society for Aid to Defence and the Aviation and Chemical Industry)

DOSARM = Dobrovol'noye obshchestvo sodeistviya Armii (Voluntary Society for Aid to the Army)

DOSAV = Dobrovol'noye obshchestvo sodeistviya Aviatsii (Voluntary Society for Aid to the Air Force)

DOSFLOT = Dobrovol'noye obshchestvo sodeistviya Flotu (Voluntary Society for Aid to the Navy)

DOSAAF = Dobrovol'noye obshchestvo sodeistviya Armii, Aviatsii i Flotu (Voluntary Society for Aid to the Army, Air Force and Navy)

OPPV = Opytno-pokazatel'naya ploshchadka Vsevobucha (Vsevobuch Experimental and Display Centre)

TsDKA = Tsentral'ny Dom Krasnoi Armii (Central House of the Red Army)

TsDSA = Tsentral'ny Dom Sovetskoi Armii (Central House of the Soviet Army)

TsSKMO = Tsentral'ny sportivny klub Ministerstva oborony (Central Sports Club of the Ministry of Defence)

TsSKA = Tsentral'ny sportivny klub Armii (Central Army Sports Club)

the political campaign against the old 'bourgeois' sports societies and movements - often with as much undiscriminating and destructive passion as the English Puritans during the English Civil War. At its Third Congress, in October, 1920, the Komsomol passed a resolution 'On the Militia Army and the Physical Education of Young People' which was the most clear-cut document yet on the socialist principles of physical education and sport. Besides making it obligatory on all of its members to assist in the work of Vsevobuch, the Komsomol laid down the following principles:

"The physical education of the younger generation is a necessary element in the overall communist upbringing of young people, intended to create a harmoniously-developed person, a creative citizen of communist society. . . It serves also the direct practical aims of (1) training young people for work, and (2) preparing people for the armed defence of their country."[9]

How important the Komsomol was to Vsevobuch's work may be appreciated from the fact that, at the end of 1920, some 30,000 Komsomol-members were acting as sports instructors under Vsevobuch authority in the Ukraine, and "constituted virtually 100 per cent of Ukrainian Komsomol membership." A further 153,318 Komsomol-members, including 17,546 girls, completed Vsevobuch courses.[10]

At its Fourth Congress, in the autumn of 1921, the Komsomol called once more for an all-out attack on the 'bourgeois' sports societies that were now reappearing in the more relaxed atmosphere of NEP. "They are harmful to Soviet power and divert young people from socio-political life."[11] A study of the state of sport in Belorussia at this time, stated that "in the town of Velizh, a branch of the Sokol sports society has been set

[9] Chudinov, I.D. (ed.), Osnovn ye postanovleniya, prikazy i instruktsii po voprosam fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta, 1917-1957, Moscow, 1959, pp. 43-44.

[10] Vestnik fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1923, No. 8-9, p. 2.

[11] Quoted in Samoukov, op. cit., p. 96.

up with 83 schoolchildren among its members. . . In Gorodok, a branch of Bogatyr' has started up. In Orsha, Bobruisk, Borisov and Slutsk, branches of the Jewish nationalist society Maccabee have become extremely active. The branches of this last-named society indoctrinate young people in a nationalistic spirit, propagate notions of cultural-national autonomy, and sow bourgeois habits. The Russian Association of Red Physical-Culture Organisations, which has begun to operate in Belorussia on the order of Vsevobuch, acts as a screen for the activity of these bourgeois societies."[12]

At the Fourth Congress, therefore, the Komsomol attacked the Vsevobuch-sponsored Association and called for a government sports council. It subsequently seized the initiative by forming its own sports societies open to all young people - but excluding members of the bourgeoisie. In Moscow, Kaluga, Vladimir and elsewhere, it formed the Muravei ('Ant') Sports Society, in Petrograd, Novgorod and the Ukraine it set up Spartak ('Spartacist') (not to be confused with the present Spartak, which did not come into being until 1935) and, in Belorussia, the Krasny Molodnyak ('Red Youth') society. These sports organisations were responsible to the guberniya, uyezd and city committees of the Komsomol. In a relatively short time, they gained a substantial membership: in Moscow, Muravei, at the end of 1923, had 180 groups embracing 10,000 members. By early 1923, Vitebsk province in Belorussia had 19 youth groups run by the Komsomol with a membership of 1,230 (including 423 girls) employing 23 permanent instructors.[13]

As at its previous (Second and Third) congresses, the Komsomol also attacked the Boy Scout organisations. For their unqualified condemnation of everything connected with the Scout movement, however, they were taken

[12] Kulinkovich, K.A., "Razvitie fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta v Belorusskoi SSR," in Ocherki po istorii fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, pp. 41-42.

[13] Ibid., p. 42.

to task by Nadezhda Krupskaya who, besides being Lenin's widow, commanded much authority in Soviet education. She advised the Komsomol to learn from the Scouts, "Scouting has something that irresistible attracts young people, gives them satisfaction, binds them to the organisation. This something may be discovered in its way of dealing with adolescents."[14] She listed its attributes as a careful study of young people's psychology, interests and needs, a utilisation of children's initiative, colourfulness, the attraction of ceremony and ritual, the clever use of children's group feelings, and the employment of lively forms of activity and especially games. "The RKSM, if it seriously intends to educate the younger generation and is to have even the slightest appreciation of the colossal tasks which confront this generation, and if it is not to confine itself to childish aping of grown-ups, must, as soon as possible, incorporate these methods into its own practice."[15]

Although the Boy Scout movement was to be banned, the Komsomol did heed Krupskaya's advice and, when forming the first Pioneer detachments (for children between 8 and 15), engaged former Scoutmasters "who accepted the principles of work of the Pioneer organisations."[16]

It must be borne in mind that, at this time, during the initial NEP period, the Komsomol was still relatively independent of Party control, particularly since the Party leadership was largely preoccupied with economic matters and internal dissentions of its own.

( C ) The Party. A new direction to the controversy over sports organisation came with the findings of a special commission of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) made known in March, 1923. A month later, the Twelfth Party Congress advocated that local sports clubs should be the responsibility of factories, farms, offices, colleges, etc.

[14] Krupskaya, N.K., RKSM i boiskautizm, Moscow, 1923, p. 17.

[15] Ibid, p. 42.

[16] Pedagogicheskaya entsiklopediya, Moscow, 1968, Vol. III, p. 853.

Either they were to be run like other workers' clubs for the benefit of the local community (but under trade-union control) or confined to the workers of a particular workplace and their families. This put an end to any schemes for organisational autonomy such as the RARPCO, since, the Party averred, this could lead to the isolation of sport from other social activities and would restrict its cultural side. This was in line with the Party's overall policy on independent centres at the time; the general rôle accorded such potentially autonomous interest-groups like the trade unions, collective farms and sports clubs was one of overall subordination to central goals defined by the Party. They were, therefore, submitted to Party control, which gradually eroded their independent power - in the case of trade unions, culminating in what a British economist has described as "the emasculation of organised trade unionism" by 1929, after which "the weight accorded to workers' groups until the demise of Stalin was virtually zero."[17]

The Party believed that it could best realise its objectives in sport if the sports groups were organised from workplaces, where it and its auxiliary organisations - the trade unions and the Komsomol - were strongest, and not through independent sports societies. At the same time, the Party could not concur with the idea that sport should be the exclusive domain of young people and the Komsomol. It maintained that, in a State that enforced the dictatorship of the proletariat, the trade unions were the broadest 'transmission belt' from the Party to the working people and that it was one of their fundamental duties to educate their members, to take care of their recreational needs and to develop their many-sided interests. It was therefore decided to hand over local sports organisations to the trade unions, including the recently-formed Komsomol societies (Muravei, Spartak, etc.), urging, at the same time, that the Komsomol should cooperate with the unions and marshal young workers at factories into sports sections so as to

[17] Kaser, M., Soviet Economics, World University Library, London, 1970, p. 41.

capitalise on their interest in sport and "strengthen the ties of the Komsomol with the mass of young people."[18]

The Supreme Council of Physical Culture, which had been attached to the now defunct Vsevobuch, was transferred, in June, 1923, to the All-Russia Central Executive Committee (VTsIK). It became a permanent coordinating body and its new and extensive duties were "to harmonise and coordinate the research, studies and organisational work in physical education and sport of the various government departments and organisations in the Russian Republic."[19] Similar councils were to be created in each republic, guberniya and uyezd; they were to supervise sport throughout the country, direct and approve physical-education programmes for students and members of sports groups, ratify the regulations of sports organisations, draw up a calendar of sporting events and see that they were carried out, and direct research and the publication of sports literature.

Since the bulk of sports groups were now to be organised not independently, but under the trade unions, the sports administration was to work directly with all ministries, government agencies and non-government bodies active in sport. This policy was apparent in the composition of the Supreme Council, which consisted of a chairman and a vice-chairman appointed by VTsIK and one representative each from the People's Commissariats for Defence, Education, Health, Internal Affairs and Labour, plus one each from the Komsomol Central Committee, the Trade Union Central Council and the Moscow City Soviet. The chairman of the Supreme Council was to be Nikolai Semashko, the incumbent People's Commissar for Health; he was to combine the two posts until 1930.

Concerned at the continuing bickering and ambiguity in organisation, however, the Party issued its first authoritative resolution on sport and

[18] Chudinov, op. cit., p. 71.

[19] Ibid., p. 72.

physical culture on 13th July, 1925: 'On the Tasks of the Party in Physical Culture'. From the point of view of organisation, the Central Committee instructed all Party organisations to ensure that its directives were followed. Their major tasks were three-fold:

i) politicisation: to ensure political leadership of the sports movement, to make sure it combined political education with sport and to prevent it being cut off from the mass trade-union and political organisations;

ii) leadership: to ensure that all sports groups were effectively under some sort of Party guidance and that no independent clubs should continue to exist; all sports associations, leagues and clubs that remained from before the revolution were to be disbanded;

iii) ally-creating: to make it a mass movement that embraced peasants and industrial workers, old and young, men and women, Russians and members of other ethnic groups.

(d) Trade Unions. After the 1923 Party Congress, the trade unions, by virtue of their being the largest mass workers' organisation, had to consider the organisation of workers' recreation an integral part of their work. They began to form sports clubs at workplaces and were authorised to take over all the Komsomol societies. Through their ability to enrol non-Party employees in their clubs, they had, by 1925, taken over from the Komsomol as principal organisers of sport. In that year, some 350,000 union members were enrolled in sports clubs, and 450,000 by 1928. By contrast, whereas, in October 1924, 31 per cent of all sports-participants were Komsomol-members, in 1926, only just over 10 per cent were, although 97 per cent (2,500,000) of those engaged in sport were young people.[20]

[20] Fizicheskoye dvizhenie v SSSR, Moscow, Vysshii sovet fizicheskoi kul'tury pri VTsSPS, 1925, p. 5.

There is little doubt that friction existed between the unions and the Komsomol over the organisation and functions of sport - particularly when it came to handing over Komsomol sports societies to local union bodies. The intensified activity of the unions in sport also led to them being accused of encroaching on the work and authority of the sports councils, with resultant bitterness between them: "With the transfer of all practical work to the unions, the councils have lost their staffs of voluntary workers who have left along with their clubs. The unions have walled themselves off from the councils so as to conduct work with their own organisations as they see fit. The councils are unable, with their very small staffs, to conduct supervisory work, and their attempts at administration by means of decrees and the issuing of methodological material are simply being ignored by union leaders."[21]

The network of sports councils, therefore, became more or less redundant, insofar as they had responsibility without sufficient authority to carry it out. Neither the Komsomol, nor the Party was entirely happy with this situation, and accused the unions of being 'Proletkul'tist',[22] ignoring Party directives (particularly the major one of 1925 on the aims of sport )and concentrating on the therapeutic side of physical education to the detriment of its recreative functions. "In many union organisations, the directives of the Party Central Committee are not being carried out satisfactorily. Certain union leaders, underestimating the educative significance of physical culture, continue to regard it merely as a means to better health. Sports groups continue to be subordinated to union club-boards and are put on the same level as drama, music and other club groups."[23]

[21] Sbornik materialov po fizicheskoi kul'ture Moskovskovo gubernskovo soveta fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1926, p. 3.

[22] The Proletkul't (abbreviation for 'Proletarian Cultural and Educational Organisation ') was formed after the February, 1917 Revolution with the intention of producing a proletarian culture as an indispensable part of a socialist revolution. It became widely influential after the October Revolution and, until 1919, remained independent of the Party; it was then subordinated to the Commissariat of Education, transferred to the unions in 1925, and eventually abolished in 1932.

[23] Vestnik fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1926, No. 5, p. 13.

At the Fifteenth Party Congress in November, 1926, the trade unions came in for more criticism over their handling of sport: "The Congress condemns the bookish, utilitarian approach to physical culture (equating it merely with hygiene and physical jerks) and the scornful attitude of a substantial part of club leaders towards competitive sport. The Congress points out that it is impermissable to impose upon workers the desires and values of the club-leaders."[24]

The reference to competitive sport is an indication of the strength of the Proletkult views within the trade unions. Although the organisation of sport at the lower levels was to remain on a 'production basis' (i.e., in union hands), the Congress resolved that, henceforth, sport at factory level should be reorganised: sports-sections were to be established that would concentrate on particular sports. It was felt that this would generate more popular interest and enable instructors to conduct more specialised work instead of the general 'labour gymnastics' or P.E. lessons they had mostly given up to then.

But the reorganisation brought a new problem in its wake, for the unions now came under mounting attack both from the Komsomol and the Party for a sin of which they have been intermittently accused ever since, right up to the present day: "In a number of trade-union sports organisations, now that sections for individual sports have been set up, all attention is being concentrated on a leading group of athletes who show top-class results; the physical education of the vast mass of young people is becoming secondary. Many athletes who have practical experience and some technical knowledge of training methods are being allotted to special small groups and kept away from the rank-and-file young sports enthusiasts."[25]
Signs of 'professionalism' were already apparent in football: in 1925, a 'Disqualification Commission' was formed with the task of "preventing dirty

[24] Chudinov, op. cit., p. 112.

[25] Vestnik fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1927, No. 3, p. 7.

play" and player-transfers were prohibited; the first footballer popularity-poll was held in 1926 (won by a goalkeeper, N. Sokolov, of Leningrad).[26] This 'élitism' incensed the Komsomol and led it to appeal, at its Eighth Congress in 1928, for an overhaul of the whole organisational structure of sport and the institution of a single national voluntary sports society. It pointed out that the Supreme Council and its various sports councils were quite incapable of establishing much order in the sports movement because they lacked the power to enforce directives.

The Party Central Committee recognised these shortcomings and passed a resolution (on 23rd September, 1929) calling for a radical change in this unsatisfactory state of affairs. The movement suffered from " a lack of scope in involving the vast mass of working people, a bias towards record-breakers, a lack of departmental coordination, an overlapping of functions and poor organisation in the countryside."[27] It therefore directed that the whole sports movement should come more under centralised state control; all the local sports councils were to be reorganised into direct state-administered bodies and the Supreme Council of Physical Culture attached to the All-Russia Central Executive Committee was to be replaced by a more powerful state-controlled body, the All-Union Council of Physical Culture.[28] It rejected the Komsomol proposal for a national voluntary sports society, but urged greater concerted effort from the unions and the Komsomol in drawing the mass of the population into sport. Although the Party directives brought the sports movement under greater centralised control, they did little to remove the ambiguity over responsibilities delegated to trade unions and Komsomol groups at workplaces, and disharmony in sports-organisation continued for some years to come.

[26] Kiselev, N.Y. (ed.), 70 futbol'nykh let, Lenizdat, 1970, pp. 102, 107.

[27] Chudinov, op. cit., p. 123.

[28] Ibid., p. 124.

The tightening-up and greater centralised control were, of course, features of overall Party policy at the end of the 1920's as the industrialisation programme, with its First Five-Year Plan and collectivisation campaign, got underway. During the NEP period, trade-union leaders, like those of the Komsomol, had had some degree of independence of Party control - even though most were Party-members. In fact, because the state had had to make substantial concessions to the peasants early in NEP and because many union leaders disagreed with Stalin over the method of capital-accumulation for the country's industrial development, the trade unions had had considerable freedom of action to pursue their own organisational interests. This continued until 1929, when a number of prominent trade-unionists were moved to minor posts.

(e) Dinamo Sports Club. The only two large sports-societies beyond the direct supervision of the Supreme Council of Physical Culture were Dinamo and the Red Army Club, both of which are products of this period. Dinamo was set up on 24th June, 1923, on the initiative of Felix Dzerzhinsky, then head of the internal security agency. It was initially confined to the staff of the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission for Combatting Counter-Revolution and Sabotage (the Cheka), which had been established immediately after the Revolution to look after internal security (in 1922, this became the GPU, and, in 1924, the OGPU), to border-guards and internal troops. As such, it had a specially strict training-programme for service personnel. Dzerzhinsky, who became Dinamo's first honorary president, insisted that sport was absolutely essential to develop "strength, dexterity, courage and endurance" among his men. The word 'dinamo' was significant, as the writer Maxim Gor'ky suggested, in expressing "energy, motion and force".[29] In addition to training service personnel, Dinamo gradually began to function as a normal sports society open to all service personnel of the internal security agency, border-guards and internal troops, members of their families and auxiliary staff.

[29] Quoted in Verkholashin, V., "Dinamo - eto sila v dvizhenii," in Sport i vek, Moscow, 1967, p. 136.

In a relatively short time, the society had sections in almost every large town in the country. By October, 1923, it had as many as 36 sections with over 3,000 members in the capital alone! Its sports groups cultivated gymnastics, shooting, boxing, wrestling, ju-jitsu, fencing, basketball and football.[30] Being the first of the great Soviet sports societies and having the security agency's resources behind it, it was able to command substantial sports facilities, including the first big sports centre to be built in Moscow, the Dinamo Stadium (which was the capital's biggest until the opening of the Lenin Stadium in 1956) and the Dinamo Stadium in Leningrad, built in 1929 (the city's first stadium to have stands). (Years later, in 1945, it was to be the first Soviet club to send a football-team to England.)

4. The Rôle of Physical Culture

A controversy even greater than that about organisation continued throughout the 1920's over the rôle physical culture, including sport, was to play in socialist society. Vsevobuch had turned sport into a means of producing physically fit men and women for the war-effort; however, it had come to the conclusion that competition was valuable in that it rallied popular support and excited interest in physical education as a whole. Towards the end of its existence, Vsevobuch came under mounting criticism for its alleged 'politicisation' and 'militarisation' of sport and neglect of its other functions. Its chairman, Podvoisky, conceded the one-sidedness of his organisation's approach to sport, pointed out that it had been due to the 'besieged camp' situation, and that Vsevobuch would alter its orientation: "Physical culture changes its essence depending on the aims of the class controlling that culture for its own benefit, and the nature of that class. . . There is no need to tie politics to sports-gymnastics, nor to pursue political aims under the guise of sports-gymnastics. For the

[30] Ibid., p. 124.

proletariat, the aims, tasks and direction of sports-gymnastics depend on the aims, tasks and condition of the class struggle."[31]

But the rôle of physical culture continued to be hotly debated by a variety of 'schools' and interest-groups, all with their own theories and practical solutions. Some of the main ones that exerted an influence on the Soviet sports movement during the 1920's and beyond are described below.

(a) The 'hygienists'

Some of Vsevobuch's keenest critics - for its alleged 'sportisation' (i.e., emphasis on competition in physical activity) and 'militarisation' of physical culture - were to be found among the scientists and medical personnel who had gathered round it and were later to work for the Scientific and Technical Committee attached to the Supreme Council of Physical Culture. They were mainly medical people: physiologists, anatomists, hygienists and health-workers who were concerned about the need to improve health-standards, eliminate disease and epidemics, reduce infantile mortality and the overall mortality-rate. One means they saw to make people aware of personal hygiene and bodily fitness was physical culture - which many of them contrasted sharply with 'sport'; to their minds, sport implied competition, games that were potentially injurious to mental and physical health. Such pursuits as weightlifting, boxing and gymnastics were, in their opinion, irrational and dangerous, and encouraged individualist rather than collectivist attitudes and values - and, as such, were contrary to the desired socialist ethic.

The 'hygienists' could certainly call on influential support; the chairman of the government-sponsored Supreme Council of Physical Culture, Nikolai Semashko, who was himself a doctor and concurrently also Commissar for Health, was in some ways sympathetic towards the 'hygienists', as, too, was the Commissar for Education, Lunacharsky. Semashko made his immediate aim

31 Podvoisky, N.I., Kakaya fizicheskaya kul'tura nuzhna proletariatu i kem ona dolzhna sozdavat'sya?, Moscow, 1923, p. 16.

explicit: "The fight to make the proletariat healthy must be the immediate task not merely of the worker-peasant state, but of each worker separately. On its success depend the solution of the economic tasks of the country's restoration (for human beings are a productive force), the organisation of the republic's defence and the development of proletarian culture."[32] By his widely-publicised slogan "Physical culture - 24 hours a day!" he meant that "people should work, rest and sleep properly, observe the rules of hygiene and strengthen their organisms."[33] To the accusations that he was bringing a "narrow medical approach to physical culture and sport" and that he was causing the "hygienisation of physical culture", he insisted that "One should not contrast physical culture to a 'medical approach', since it is a means to better health, just as one should not contrast hygiene to health, inasmuch as these are different names for one and the same thing."[34]

Semashko was, though, opposed to restricting physical education to narrow medical confines and to banning competitive games: "If you keep the populace on the semolina pudding of hygienic gymnastics, physical culture will not gain very wide publicity."[35] Competitive sport was, he believed, "the open gate to physical culture. . . It not only strengthens various organs, it helps man's mental development, teaches him attentiveness, punctuality and precision of movement, it develops grace of movement, and inculcates the will-power, strength and skill that distinguish Soviet people."[36] Moreover, although he wrote the following words in 1926 - i.e., before the full-scale campaign

[32] Semashko, N.A., Puti sovetskoi fizkul'tury, Moscow, Fizkul'turizdat, 1926, p. 14.

[33] Ibid., p. 59.

[34] Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1927, No. 5, p. 6.

[35] Semashko, N.A., "Fizicheskaya kul'tura i zdravookhranenie v SSSR", in Izbrannye proizvedeniya, Medgiz, Moscow, 1954, p. 264.

[36] Ibid.

for 'socialist emulation' had been started to accompany the industrialisation campaign—he clearly anticipated the régime's support for competition: "Competition should serve, ultimately, as a means of involving the masses in the building of socialism. That is how I look upon competitive sport and competition generally."[37]

All the same, there were others of the 'hygienist' school who did not share his 'broad' views. Several members of his staff at the Health Commissariat and lecturers at the institutes of physical education, including the principal of the State Institute of Physical Culture in Moscow, A.A. Zigmund, were firmly opposed to a whole number of sports and competitive games. Zigmund, who favoured the banning of such sports as football, athletics and boxing was also Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Committee attached to the Supreme Council of Physical Culture, and therefore carried a good deal of influence. The Committee was responsible for physical-education syllabuses in primary and secondary schools. As a specific subject, P.E. was excluded from many schools, since it was felt that it should be "an integral part of the educational process and not something tacked on superficially to the curriculum."[38] Zigmund wrote that the "existence of P.E. instructors is a sign of pedagogical illiteracy."[39]

'Hygienists' dominated the teaching of physical education at the Petrograd and Moscow P.E. institutes; in 1924, in fact, the Moscow Institute was, for a period, renamed the Central State Institute of Physical Culture

[37] Semashko, N.A., Puti sovetskoi fizkul'tury, op. cit., p. 22.

[38] Vestnik fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1925, No. 3, p. 2.

[39] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1925, No. 2, p. 17.

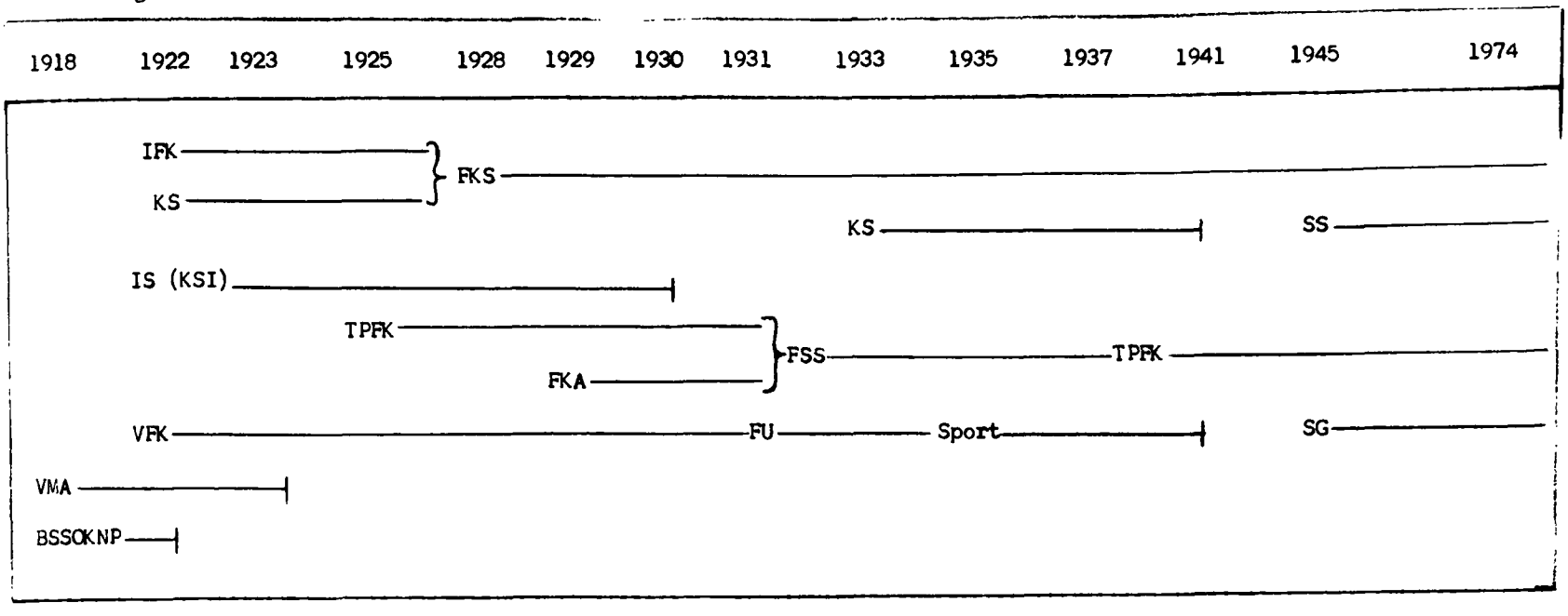
and Curative Pedology[40] in order to bring it more in line with the 'hygienists'' notion of the rôle of physical culture in Soviet society. The curriculum contained exclusively medical subjects and 'hygienic gymnastics', while games and sport were ignored.

One result of pressure from the 'hygienists' was the reduction in the number of contests that took place in the first half of the 1920's and the exclusion from those sports contests that did take place of certain 'harmful' sports. The First Trade-Union Games, in 1925, for example, excluded football, boxing, weightlifting and gymnastics from its programme, even though these were four of the most popular sporting pursuits in the country at the time. Boxing was outlawed in the same year in the Leningrad Uyezd by order of the Leningrad Gubernya Physical Culture Council.

One of the channels largely controlled by the 'hygienists' was the sporting press. As Figure II shows, sports-publishing in the late 1920's and early 1930's involved fairly frequent name-changings and broken publication-histories; these were partly a reflection of battles for influence within the physical-culture movement. The stress on physical culture and the secondary rôle of 'sport' - sometimes even avoidance of the word - are a typical feature of the 1920's and to a large degree reflect the influence of the 'hygienists'. In the 1930's, 'sport' came back into official grace: note the change, for example, of The Ukrainian Physical Culturist to Sport in 1935.

[40] Pedology, which was widely practised in Russia in the 1920's and early thirties, was considered to be the science of child-development, using experimental and observational techniques and taking into account both hereditary and environmental factors. Some pedologists saw it as "a scientific synthesis of all that comprises the essentials of individual disciplines concerned with the developing human being." (Basov, M.Y., Obshchie osnovy pedologii, Moscow, 1931, p. 18). Pedologists published an influential magazine Pedologiya (1928-32). In their published views on sport, some pedologists claimed that certain sports were harmful, physically and mentally, and encouraged selfish habits. The Party in 1936 declared pedology a 'pseudo-science' and proscribed its practice and teaching; its chief exponents, like those of the 'hygienist' and Proletkul't movements, disappeared during the great purge of 1936-38.

Figure II: Main Sports Periodicals, 1918-1974




Legend:

IFK = Izvestiya fizicheskoi kul'tury (Physical Culture News): monthly journal.

KS = Krasny Sport (Red Sport): daily newspaper.

SS = Sovetsky Sport (Soviet Sport): daily newspaper.

FKS = Fizkul'tura i sport (Physical Culture and Sport): monthly journal.

IS (KSI) = Izvestiya sporta (Sports News): monthly journal published by Krasny Sport Internatsional (Red Sport International)

TPFK = Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury (Theory and Practice of Physical Culture): monthly magazine published jointly by the Supreme Councils of Physical Culture of the USSR and RSFSR and the RSFSR Commissariat of Health.

FKA = Fizkul'takivist (Physical Culture Activist): monthly journal.

FSS = Fizkul'tura i sotsialisticheskoye stroitel'stvo (Physical Culture and Socialist Construction): monthly journal.

VFK = Vestnik fizicheskoi kul'tury (Physical Culture Herald): monthly journal published in the Ukraine.

FU = Fizkul'turnik Ukrainy (The Ukrainian Physical-Culturist): monthly journal published in the Ukraine.

Sport = Sport (Sport): monthly journal published in the Ukraine.

SG = Sportivnaya gazeta (Sporting Gazette): weekly journal published in the Ukraine.

VMA = Vestnik militsionnoi armii (Militia-Army Herald): weekly journal published by Vsevobuch.

BSSOKNP = Byulleten' shkol'no-sanitarnovo otdela pri Kommissariate narodnovo prosvesheheniya (Bulletin of the School-Sanitary Section of the People's Commissariat of Education): weekly.

A change in the fortunes of the 'hygienist' school came with Party intervention in sport in an elaborate declaration of 1925, which effectively rejected the 'hygienists' (see below, p.228).

Their prominence in trade-union sports clubs had, in the past, been more than once criticised in government documents, but the Party had never before put its considerable weight behind opposition to them. Their downfall was partly due to the changing political climate in the mid-1920's and the alleged connection of some of their leading exponents with Trotsky - whose star had been on the wane since 1924. In the 'witch-hunt' of 'Trotskyists' that occurred at the end of the decade, Dr. Zigmund (the Principal of the State Institute of Physical Culture) was labelled a Trotsky-supporter and removed from his post (he subsequently disappeared in the purges). A more immediate reason for the demotion by the Party of the 'hygienists' may well have been that the former was beginning to see competitive sport (with its record-breaking, individual heroes and spectator-potential) as a useful adjunct to its impending industrialisation-campaign and accompanying socialist-emulation movement.

But the 'hygienists' were not quickly silenced. It is some measure of the openness of some controversy in the Soviet Union in 1925 that, just four months after the Party had issued its pronouncement on the rôle of physical culture and sport, the First All-Union Methodological Conference on Physical Culture was held - and provided a forum for the voicing of 'hygienist' attitudes. It was attended by 306 delegates representing the Supreme Council of Physical Culture and its local councils, the Red Sport International (see Chap.IX, p.597), the Health and Education Commissariats, trade unions, the Red Army, the institutes of physical culture and the State Academic Council.[41] The major reports give some indication of trends at the conference: "Physical

[41] Izvestiya fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1925, No. 22, p. 2.

Culture as a Means of Combatting Industrial Disease" (Nenukov), "The Military Tasks of Soviet Physical Culture" (Kalpus and Baranov), "The Harmful Effects of Physical Exercise of a Competitive Nature on the Organism" (Gorinevsky). The main discussion, however, centred on Zigmund's report "On the Soviet System of Physical Culture" - which the conference approved (with some amendments). The report urged that Soviet physical culture should be aimed "at making the personal work and everyday life of the mass of workers and peasants healthy and at raising the general standard of culture of the masses." As well as personal hygiene and health measures at work, Zigmund recommended that people should make full use of "the forces of nature" for good health and for tempering the organism. He stressed the need for a "properly structured system of physical exercises that would take into consideration the socio-economic, biological and professional circumstances of those engaging in physical education." His list of 'approved' sports included athletics, swimming and rowing (against oneself and the clock, not against opponents); 'non-approved' sports included boxing, wrestling, football and fencing - all of which, by their very nature, implied competition. Furthermore, he rejected the "use of physical exercise as spectacles for mercenary ends, narrow specialisation and professional '<u>rekordsmenstvo</u>' [indulgence in record-setting and record-breaking]."[42] It was predominantly on the basis of these views that the final conference resolution read:

"Scientific work should primarily illumine and substantiate the principles of making the younger generation healthy, strengthening Pioneer detachments and trade-union members and revealing the most correct methods of training young people for labour and defence."[43] These principles were reaffirmed at the Second and Third conferences in 1927 and 1929—which

[42] <u>Idem</u>.

[43] <u>Pervaya vsesoyuznaya konferentsia nauchnykh rabotnikov po fizicheskoi kul'ture</u>, Moscow, 1926, p. 7.

provides further evidence that the 'hygienists' had managed to stand their ground at least until the end of the decade.

The strong link, however, between physical culture and hygiene has remained to this day. It is aptly expressed in another of Semashko's pithy slogans of the early 1920's: "Without medical supervision there can be no Soviet physical culture!" The call in the First Methodological Conference's resolution for "correct methods of training young people for labour and defence" actually anticipated by six years the introduction of the 'Ready for Labour and Defence' programme - which was, in fact, henceforth, to underlie the Soviet sports movement.

(b) Proletarian physical culture: 'theatricalisation' of sport

In the sphere of sport, the 'Proletkultists' demanded the rejection of competitive sport and all organised sports that derived from bourgeois society, as remnants of the decadent past and emanations of degenerate bourgeois culture. A fresh start had to be made through the 'revolutionary innovation of proletarian physical culture', which would take the form of 'labour gymnastics' and mass displays, pageants and excursions. Gymnasiums and their 'bourgeois' equipment would be replaced by various pieces of apparatus on which young proletarians could practise their 'labour movements'.

The 'Proletkultists', therefore, went much further than the 'hygienists' in condemning all kinds of games, sports and gymnastics 'tainted' by bourgeois society. In a book called New Games for New Children which they had published, the 'Proletkultists' advocated such new games as "Swelling the Ranks of Children's Communist Groups", "Rescue from the Fascists", "Agitators", "Helping the Proletarians", and "Smuggling Revolutionary Literature across the Frontier".[44]

One such novel proletarian 'game' was played on the Sparrow Hills in Moscow in the summer of 1924, with 6,000 participants. The game was called

[44] Kornil'eva-Radina, M.A. and Radin, Y.P., Novym detyam - novye igry, Moscow, Narkomzdrav RSFSR, 1927, p. 37.

simply "Indians, British and Reds", the Indians being led by a plumed chieftain, the British by 'Joseph Chamberlain' and the Reds by the 'Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council' (Trotsky). The plan of events was as follows:

> "(1) Life goes on peacefully in all countries, with people engaging in games and sports: Indians in primitive games, hunting, dancing and fighting; the British pursuing sports [note the negative connotation - JWR] and carrying out punitive expeditions; and the Reds simulating work in factories, engaging in proletarian recreation and workers' outdoor fêtes;
>
> (2) the British suddenly attack the Indians and conquer them;
>
> (3) the Reds receive an appeal for help, cross the sea and join the struggle;
>
> (4) the Indians join the Reds and, together, attack the British and defeat them;
>
> (5) victory festivals take place in a new communist world."[45]

Many other such theatrical spectacles were presented; the Sparrow Hills became a favourite site for proletarian pageants and mock battles. The Proletkult was, in fact, accused by some of a 'theatricalisation of sport'. Another 'proletarian event' took place in 1927 to mark the Tenth Anniversary of the Revolution; it was entitled 'The Pageant of Universal October' and was intended to portray pictures of world revolution. It was a strict rule that no one should simply be a spectator, but everyone should join in - as British miners, American cowboys, turbaned Indians, Polish cavalry, a religious procession of émigrés, huge Chinese dragons pulling rickshaws, Red Armymen, workers and peasants of the USSR - some 7,000 'performers' in all. The two sides, capitalists and workers, suddenly clash and a radio appeal is made to the workers of the world to come to the class front. Universal

[45] Starovoitova, op. cit., pp. 139-140.

October is approaching; one final onslaught on the citadels of capital and the announcement is made: 'Now the red banner is flying over the entire world. Salute the G.H.Q. of world revolution, the Communist International'."[46]

While the 'hygienists' admitted the possibility of the usefulness of some 'bourgeois' sports, the 'Proletkultists' made no such concessions. Thus, the 'hygienist' and ex-student of Lesgaft, V.V. Gorinevsky, described the game of lawn tennis as "ideal from the biological standpoint in encouraging harmonious development; I find it hard to say what organs and muscles are not in use in tennis."[47] The 'Proletkultist', S. Sysoyev, on the other hand, maintained that this game "for the white-pants brigade and the bourgeoisie exhibited no comradeship or teamwork - the very qualities that the Russian needs. Tennis is also an expensive summer game. . . It should not and cannot receive as much support in the USSR as other, mass games."[48]

Other 'Proletkultists' were particularly vociferous in their condemnation of competitive sport for the 'champion-mania' it bred; it was suited only to the 'record-chasing' bourgeois and the professionals.

The 'Proletkult' movement had been earlier admonished by Lenin, who had pointed out the need to draw on the cultural heritage of the past and to base further development on everything valuable that had been accumulated by mankind up to the Revolution. "What is important is not the invention of a new proletarian culture, but the development of the best forms, traditions and results of existing culture from the viewpoint of Marxist philosophy, and the living conditions and struggle of the proletariat in the epoch of

[46] Ibid., p. 142.

[47] "Diskussiya o laun-tennise", in Krasny Sport, 21 January, 1924.

[48] Idem.

its dictatorship."[49] Other critics maintained that there were no such separate entities as bourgeois and proletarian sports; there was, rather, a bourgeois and a proletarian attitude to sport, a bourgeois and proletarian spirit of competition. Sporting attainments were, they asserted, necessary for inspiring young people to fresh successes in sport - which were, in some way, a measure of the country's cultural and technical development. Lunacharsky called for a careful study of foreign sporting experience and the inclusion of everything worthwhile into Soviet sport, particularly boxing and rugby. In an open letter to the press, he wrote that "Training for boxing involves the entire organism, the nervous system, heart, blood-circulation, the respiratory system and, in every way, the muscles of the upper part of the body and the legs; it develops inventiveness and accuracy . . . stamina, self-control, fearlessness and courage more than any other sport. Even the fiercest bout teaches one to regard one's opponent as a comrade with whom one has common cause."[50] Further, in his book Thoughts On Sport, he lauded rugby as a "dzhentel'mensky boi ['a gentlemanly battle'] that encourages courageous qualities; it is a sport that should be widely practised."[51]

To many 'Proletkul'tists', the recourse to 'bourgeois' institutions such as sports seemed a compromise, a withdrawal from already conquered positions. They might have exerted more influence over the movement, however, if they had had a better-defined programme of proletarian physical culture to take the place of organised sports. As it was, a number of factories introduced 'production-gymnastics' for their workers and some trade-union clubs confined their activities to 'regenerative exercises', which tended to turn people, expecially the young, away from sport and came in for increasing criticism from the Komsomol and the Party.

[49] Leninsky sbornik, XXXV, Moscow, Partizdat, 1945, p. 148.

[50] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1929, No. 17, p. 18.

[51] Lunacharsky, A.V., Mysli o sporte, Moscow, 1930, p. 72.

Subsequently, several 'Proletkul'tist' notions were taken up and incorporated in Soviet sport, while their originators were rejected (and mostly liquidated after 1934). 'Production-gymnastics' were, for example, to be taken up on a mass scale with the onset of the First Five-Year Plan and are, today, a distinctive feature of Soviet physical education - though their purpose is more utilitarian than aesthetic, more geared to higher productivity than the proletarian bodily perfection that the 'Proletkul'tists' advocated. Furthermore, the attempted portrayal of proletarian grandeur and the Soviet messianic mission in sporting displays, pageants, children's games[52] and even art forms, so favoured by the 'Proletkul'tists', is as strong today as it ever was.

(c) Foreign systems

Now that the cobwebs of tsarist obscurantism had been swept away, some felt it possible to introduce into Russia some of the models for games that had been advocated by the leading thinkers of the bourgeois industrial revolutions (see above Chap. II , pp.141-142). After all, they reasoned, if Russia was to be an industrialised urban society, she would need a pattern of physical culture befitting such a society - and ready-made models already existed in the West. The former secretary of the Russian Olympic Committee, Georges Duperont, a former Frenchman who had taken Soviet nationality, advocated the French 'dynamic' system of gymnastics of Georges Demenie; others - the 'natural method of physical education' of another Frenchman - Jacques Ebert, who opposed specialisation and favoured the cultivation of several games in order to achieve all-round development.[53] Others favoured

[52] The present writer in 1964 attended a New Year ice-show for children (in the Moscow Palace of Sports) whose main theme was the rescue by Young Pioneers and Komsomols of a little Negro boy from the clutches of an evil 'capitalist-colonialist', suitably attired in black top-hat and tails.

[53] A translation of his book Sport Versus Physical Culture was published in Moscow in 1926.

the calisthenics schools of François Dellsarte and its contemporary exponent, Isadora Duncan. In fact, Lunacharsky invited Miss Duncan to Soviet Russia in 1921 and the Vsevobuch chief, Podvoisky, helped her to set up her own academy in Moscow. She took Soviet citizenship, married the poet Sergei Yesenin and undoubtedly had an influence on the formation of the Soviet calisthenics movement. She left the country, however, in 1923 and, although she returned briefly in 1924, found little further support for the educational principles incorporated in her calisthenics method.

## 5. The Party Intervention of 1925

The search for new solutions and new paths of development was apparent in all spheres of Soviet life. In sport, the lack of an agreed policy on its rôle in society had been obvious for several years and was beginning to have a stultifying effect on the rate of growth of the movement in general. The situation altered, however, with the intervention of the Party in its historic document issued on 13th July, 1925 (see p.210). Conscious of the growing importance of the sports movement, and the confusion about the functions of sport in Soviet society, the Party made clear its views on physical culture, including sport; the resolution stressed that:

"Physical culture must be considered not simply from the standpoint of public health and physical education, not only as an aspect of the cultural, economic and military training of young people (rifle-shooting, etc.). It should also be seen as a method of educating the masses (inasmuch as it develops willpower and builds up team-work, endurance, resourcefulness and other valuable qualities). It must be regarded, moreover, as a means of rallying the bulk of the workers and peasants to the various Party, Soviet and trade-union organisations, through which they can be drawn into social and political activity. . . Physical culture must be an inseparable part of overall political and cultural upbringing and education, and of public health."[54]

[54] Izvestiya tsentral'novo komiteta RKP (b), 20th July, 1925.

Sport, then, was to be a means for achieving

(a) better health and physical fitness;

(b) character-formation, as part of general education in producing a harmonious personality;

(c) military training;

(d) the identification of individuals with groups (Party, Soviet, trade-union) and their encouragement to be active socially and politically.

We have already seen that sport, having become the responsibility of the health commissariat, was employed as a means of inculcating standards of hygiene and regular exercise in predominantly socially-backward peasant population. Its therapeutic value was, for example, widely advertised in the intermittent three-day anti-T.B. campaigns of the late 1920's. It was not thought incongruous to put out a poster, ostensibly advertising sports, yet featuring a young man with a rifle and toothbrush above the slogan 'Clean Your Teeth, Clean Your Rifle!' But sport was not confined to improving physical health; it was regarded as important in combatting anti-social and anti-Soviet behaviour in town and country. If urban young people, especially, could be persuaded to take up sport and engage in regular physical exercise, they might develop healthy bodies and minds. Thus, the Ukrainian Party Central Committee issued a joint resolution (with the Komsomol) "On Intensifying Physical-Culture Work" on 16th February, 1926, expressing the hope that "physical culture would become a vehicle of the new life . . . a means of isolating young people from the bad influence of the street, home-made liquor and prostitution".[55] The rôle assigned to sport in the countryside was even more ambitious; it was "to play a considerable part in the campaign against drunkenness and uncivilised behaviour by attracting village youth to more sensible and cultured activities. . . In the fight

[55] Landar', A.M., "Fizicheskaya kul'tura—sostavnaya chast' kul'turnoi revolyutsii na Ukraine", Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1972, No. 12, p. 13.

to transform the village, physical culture was to be a vehicle of the new way of life in all measures undertaken by the Soviet authorities - in the fight against religion and natural calamities."[56] Sport, therefore, stood for "clean living", progress, good health and rationality and was regarded by the Party as one of the most suitable and effective instruments for implementing its social policies.

The far-reaching aims envisaged by the Party for sport may be illustrated by its early concern that physical culture should make some contribution to the social emancipation of women - an aim that had been taken up immediately after the Revolution by Vsevobuch. In a letter to Podvoisky through the medium of Pravda, the first women graduates from the Central Military School of Workers' Physical Culture showed that they were quite aware of the social significance of sport for them: "Your lectures encouraged and helped us to combat our passivity and prejudices. We saw in you a sincere defender and supporter of equal rights for women. You spoke to us as comrades and you stressed that above all we should develop our personalities, that baubles and bangles have no value in life, that it is a person's inner qualities, creative force, the ability to act sensibly that really count. Your talks inspired us to criticise the bread-and-butter miss. You understood how important physical culture is for women and you tried to impress its importance upon us women among whom there is so much passivity and conservatism, the results of age-old servitude, both economic and social."[57]

Next, the Party defined the forms of physical education; they were to include "physical exercise in the form of sport, games, gymnastics, public and personal hygiene in work and everyday life, the use of natural forces (sun, air, water), and correct régimes of work and relaxation." Moreover, properly controlled by medical and educational personnel, competitive activities

[56] Idem.

[57] Pravda, 22 June, 1922.

could be valuable in drawing more people into sport; it could also be used to raise levels of skill. Sporting achievements were, the Party asserted, an attractive inducement to others to raise their standards; furthermore, if the Soviet Union were to take part in international sport - and the resolution stated that "sporting contacts between worker-athletes of the Soviet Union and other countries help to fortify the international workers' front" - it required a mass basis on which to draw for its resources to attain a high level of performance. This aspect of the 1925 resolution was a rebuff to the 'hygienists', most of whom, as we have seen, opposed competitive sport.

This resolution, and the follow-up resolutions at the next Party conference in 1926 on deficiencies in trade-union sports work, illustrate two important factors of the NEP period. First, it had evidently taken the Party some eight years to get round to dealing with sport and working out a coordinated policy on it - as it had in literature and the arts, too. Second, control over sport was still by no means 'monolithic' and dominated by the Party; the 1925 resolution was essentially a consolidation-period measure intended to clarify and improve Party guidance over the sports movement. Rigid control by the Party was yet to come, organisationally. It was, however, now possible to develop sport, no longer based on compulsion of the Vsevobuch type, but based more on a voluntary desire for recreation.

In concentrating one's attention on the development of physical education and sport, there is an obvious danger of exaggerating their relative importance in society - and in Soviet policy-making. As an adjunct of overall culture, particularly health and education, and as an instrument of socialisation, sport was certainly assigned a specific social rôle in the Soviet scheme of reconstruction during the 1920's. It was neither ignored nor allowed to develop haphazardly (as had occurred in most other industrialising states) in the hands of individual enthusiasts, who often made the playing of their sport exclusive to a particular social group, stratum, class or sex.

On the other hand, Soviet sport (like other -- perhaps more crucial -- elements of the cultural revolution), because of the backward state of the economy and more pressing productive priority-goals, was by no means in the forefront of official thinking. (It was not until the USSR entered international competitions in the 1950's and set itself the goal of using international sports supremacy to demonstrate the advantages of the Soviet state-socialist way of development that sport care to occupy a position of any significance in Soviet social policies[58].) An idea of the relative importance ascribed to physical culture by the state in the 1920's may be gleaned from the following two measures:

Table 7: Cumulative Total of Publications on Physical Culture, 1918-1928

| Indicator | Publications | Print (total, mln. copies) | Volume of print (total, mln. printed sheets) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Books and pamphlets on physical culture | 877 | 6.8 | 13.8 |
| (% of all books and pamphlets published) | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.2 |

Source: Shishigin, M.V., "Sportivnaya pechat' -- aktivnoye sredstvo propagandy fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta," Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1973, No.5, p.13.

Table 8: Budgetary Expenditures on Physical Culture, 1924/25-1928/29

| Indicator | 1924/25 | 1925/26 | 1926/27 | 1927/28 | 1928/29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total outlays (mln. rub.) | 0.08 | 0.15 | 0.18 | 0.10 | 0.35 |
| (% of state budget) | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.04 |

Source: See Appendix ×.

Table 7 shows that only three books and brochures were on physical culture out of every five hundred published and only one five-hundredth of the paper used in non-periodical publishing between 1918 and 1928 went on sport. Table 8 shows that in not

58 Soviet sportsmen competed in no 'bourgeois' sports tournaments, except chess, prior to 1945.

~~Table 7 shows that books and brochures on physical culture and sport comprised only 0.6% of all such publishing and only 0.2% of the actual volume of material printed between 1918 and 1928 -- a relatively very small figure.~~ ~~Table 8 indicates that in not~~ one year between 1924 and 1929 did the percentage of budgetary expenditure on physical culture reach one-twentieth of one per cent. Thus, as far as state resources were concerned, the relative priority assigned to sport was very low. (Sport has, of course, a powerful impact on the public mind but costs very little and is therefore good value in public relations.)

6. Competitive Sport

Despite experimental false starts and shortcomings in the NEP period, the amount of actual sports activity was rapidly increasing. By 1925, the number of registered sports-club members in the country had increased five-fold compared with 1913 - from 50,000 (0.04% of the population) to 250,000 (0.2%) - and, by 1929, over 15-fold - to 759,000 (0.5%) (see Appendix III). What is more, over half the organised sports for men and just less than half for women that are today popular in the USSR had had their first national championships by 1929 (see Appendix VI).

(a) The First Workers' Spartakiad

The great sporting event of the decade was the First Workers' Spartakiad in 1928, dedicated to the inception of the First Five-Year Plan and the tenth anniversary of the Soviet sports movement. At the opening ceremony, a Party official explained its name and world-wide significance: "We take the word 'Spartakiad' from Spartacus - the hero of the ancient world and leader of the insurgent slaves. . . Both the Comintern Congress and the Spartakiad unite the working people fighting for socialism and communism. They are inseparable in the common struggle for revolution - the classical physical culture of sport and the revolutionary militant culture of Marxism-Leninism."[59]

[59] Pravda, 14 August, 1928.

The Spartakiad had been preceded in 1927 by summer sports-festivals in several cities, with some 3,000 athletes taking part. The main 1927 programme was played out in Moscow in August (for the summer games) and in Leningrad in February (for the winter games); in the two cities, 1,754 athletes participated, including guests from Finland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Germany and Latvia.[60]

The big Spartakiad of 1928 was held in Moscow during a fortnight in the summer. It was launched on 12th August by an impressive sports parade of 30,000 banner-carrying athletes marching in colourful formation through the Red Square to the strains of the 'International', on their way to Dinamo Stadium, where the games were to be held. As a popular spectacle for recruiting enthusiasts to the sports movement, it must have created a big impression.

It is not entirely clear exactly how many athletes took part, because some reports at the time put the figure at 4,000,[61] and more recent descriptions claim a variety of figures in the region of 7,000.[62]

Besides being a national sports festival, the games were intended to demonstrate proletarian internationalism in sport by being a universal workers' Olympics, as their name implied. Due to the strained relations between the Comintern sports organisation and the social-democratic Socialist Workers' Sport International - and the ban by the latter on its members taking part in the Spartakiad - the games were largely dominated by Soviet athletes.

60 Koz'mina, V.P., "Mezhdunarodnoye sportivnoye dvizhenie", in Ocherki po istorii fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1967, p. 193.

61 Pravda, 13 August, 1928; Fizicheskaya kul'tura i sport, 1928, No. 33, p. 32.

62 Entsiklopedichesky slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu, Moscow, 1961, Vol. I, p. 171, gives 7,125 as does Sholomitsky, Y.S., "Fizicheskaya kul'tura i sport v sovetskom Uzbekistane", in Ocherki po istorii fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, p. 95; but Samoukov, F.I. (ed.), Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, p. 276, and Stolbov, V.V., Chudinov, I.G., Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1970, p. 165, give the figure of 7,225.

Nevertheless, a substantial foreign contingent did take part: some 600 foreign athletes from 12 or 14 countries[63] - i.e., some 15 per cent of the total entry of 4,000.

The comprehensive sports programme of 21 sports (the 1928 'bourgeois' Olympics in Amsterdam included only 17 sports) covered athletics, gymnastics, swimming, diving, rowing, wrestling, boxing, weightlifting, fencing, cycling, football, basketball and shooting. Although most standards of performance were not yet up to world class, the games were a signal indication of how far the Soviet sports movement had come in a relatively short time.

Of the actual events, athletics attracted 1,281 entrants, including 165 from abroad; swimming had 500 competitors and wrestling 250, including wrestlers from Austria, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Latvia and Estonia. Moscow won the football final (beating the Ukraine 1-0); the Russian Republic predictably gained the highest number of points overall, followed by the Ukraine, Belorussia, Uzbekistan, Transcaucasia, Turkmenia, France, Sweden, Switzerland and Austria.

Though standards at the Spartakiad were not as high as those at the Amsterdam Olympic Games, it is claimed that "in virtually all events, the Spartakiad winners exceeded the records set at the 1925 Workers' Olympics held in Frankfurt"[64] (sponsored by the Socialist Workers' Sport International - from which Soviet athletes were barred). Due to the lack of proper training, sports-facilities and qualified instructors, it would, indeed, have been surprising if the Spartakiad results had set world records. Yet the scope of the programme (of the Amsterdam Olympics programme, only the marathon and the 3,000 metres steeplechase were missing) and participation led at least one foreign (communist) journalist to phrophesy that "in a few years from now,

63 Pravda, 13 August, 1928, gives 12 nations: Austria, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay; Fizicheskaya kul'tura i sport, No. 33, 1928, adds Algeria and Argentina.

64 Koz'mina, op. cit., p. 197.

there will remain only two great sporting nations: one bourgeois, the other proletarian - America and the USSR. And I am quite certain the time will come when America will have to give way."[65]

The winter counterpart to the Spartakiad took place at the end of 1928, with 638 participants in skiing, speed-skating (men and women), biathlon and special ski contests for border-guards, rural sportsmen and postmen. In some of these events, the Soviet Union did, in fact, have world-class performers: Yakov Mel'nikov, for example, had won the 5,000 metres speed-skating event at the Stockholm world championships in February, 1923.

(b) Gymnastics, football, basketball

The most popular sports between 1921 and 1929 were evidently gymnastics, football, basketball, athletics, skiing and speed-skating.[66] Gymnastics suffered in the early 1920's, through Proletkult influence, largely because it was associated with certain foreign sports-movements. Before 1925, it had largely been confined to the Ukraine and Georgia and the military academies. However, after the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Supreme Council of Physical Culture had put its weight behind the gymnastics movement at its 1925 conference, the sport began to take root in schools and trade-union sports groups. Regular gymnastics championships, however, were not conducted until after 1933.

65 Folkets Dagblad, 28 August, 1928.

66 Tarabrin, I.A. (ed.), Pyat'desyat shagov sportivnoi Rossii, Moscow, 1967, p. 187.

Football retained its place as the country's most popular sport in the summer months.[67] The game spread from the towns to the countryside (just the opposite trend to that in England), encouraged by state-directed tours of small towns and villages by established teams— mainly from Moscow and Leningrad—giving exhibition-matches; regular inter-city tournaments commenced. Although only four cities entered teams in the first football championships of 1922, the number rose to 16 in the following year. By 1928,

[67] In Petrograd, in 1921, Merkur won the football league and the Fourteenth Spring Cup, the other teams including Skoraya pomoshch' (the new name, for one year, of Sport), Kolomyagi, Petrovsky and Unitas. Petrograd teams travelled to other towns and played other clubs - e.g., against Zamoskvorech'ye Sports Club, Moscow Sokol'niki and the Society of Amateur Skiers (Moscow), Sport (Vyatka) and combined teams from Omsk, Vyatka, Tver', Novgorod, Smolensk, Rzhev and Luga. The fifteenth Spring Cup in 1922 was competed for by 16 teams, including Merkur, Gladiator, Kolomyagi, Unitas, Gavan', Sport, Tekhnologi and Petrovsky; the 21st city championship was won, like the Spring Cup, by Sport. The 1923 sixteenth Spring Cup was competed for by 24 teams including Kolomyagi, Sport, Petrovsky, Lyubiteli, Detskoye Selo, Petrovat, Pavlovsk and Volga; Kolomyagi won the cup, Merkur - the league. That factory-workers' teams were not yet up to the standard of the old clubs is evident from the fact that Detskoye Selo won 22-0 against Petrovat (a team from Petrograd Military Motorised Transport); the old Petrograd clubs also provided eight of the Russian team that successfully toured Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany and Estonia that year. The following year, 1924, most of the bourgeois clubs were renamed, though retaining their premises, teams and colours; the league championships were contested on a district basis, with the former Sport club representing Petrograd District and Kolomyagi - Leningrad uyezd. In 1925, the process of renaming the old clubs was complete: Sport now became Petrograd District 'A', Kolomyagi - Petrograd District 'B', Unitas - Vyborg District 'A', Merkur - Central District 'A', and Krechet - Central District 'B'; these district teams contested the 1925 and 1926 league championships with such recently-formed 'Soviet' clubs as Krasny Putilovets, Dinamo, Bol'shevik and the Miners' Association Team. By 1927, however, the old 'bourgeois' clubs had served their purpose in popularising the game and their district teams disappeared from the league; nonetheless, the players, equipment, club-colours and premises of some pre-revolutionary clubs were simply transferred to the 'new' Soviet proletarian clubs - e.g. Putilovsky became Krasny Putilovsky, Kolomyagi - Stadion imeni V.I. Lenina and Unitas - Pishchevkus. The 26th league championships were dominated by new names and so-called workers' teams: Pishchevkus, Profsoyuzy, Dinamo, Proletarsky Zavod, Krasny Putilovets, Klub imeni Lenina, Krasny Vyborzhets, Stroiteli and Stadion imeni V.I. Lenina; as many as 52 sports collectives took part, divided into eight groups with some 6-7 teams in each: the teams in the first group are listed above; the winners of the other groups were Pobeda Kommunizma, Krasnaya Gazeta, Klub imeni Yakovleva (from the Krasnaya Zarya factory), Krasny mayak (from the Krasnoye Znamya factory), Derevoobdelochny zavod, Pechatny dvor and Klub imeni Avrory. (Kiselev, N.Y. (ed), 70 futbol'nykh let, Lenizdat, 1970, pp. 89-114).

the number of registered footballers was 250,000.[68] In international competition, football was the only sport in which games took place between Soviet and other national teams; it provided by far the greatest number of international sporting contacts for the USSR. (How far Soviet football-teams met with success will be seen in Chap. X .)

Another team-game, basketball, received encouragement from an unexpected quarter: S. Sysoyev, the proletkul'tist (see p. 225), who was on the staff of the State Military Academy, was responsible for unifying and codifying the rules of this American-invented game. It was the women's basketball championship which was inaugurated first - in 1923, a year before the men's.

7. The Impact of Organised Sports on the National Republics

The value both of competitive sport and of grand sports festivals was appreciated, it would seem, in rallying support for the Party and in striving to unite the various nationalities in the republics. Tashkent, for example, was the venue of a second Central Asian Olympiad in 1921 with a considerably bigger programme than the First Games, held in October 1920, which had been mainly confined to local folk games. On this occasion, the sports included athletics, weightlifting, wrestling, basketball, gymnastics, football and chess. The athletics events even included the modern pentathlon and decathlon. To popularise organised sports, a Russian team was sent to give displays; an American immigrant, S.L. Jackson (who later became a Merited Boxing Coach of the USSR), gave demonstrations of boxing. This Olympiad was later followed by an All-Turkestan Olympiad (in 1924) and a First All-Uzbekistan Spartakiad (in 1927).[69]

[68] Fizkul'tura i sport v SSSR za 40 let, Moscow, 1958, p. 207. (It is an interesting observation on public interest in Soviet sports history - and on the state of the book trade - that when, in 1968, I borrowed this fairly weighty volume from a friend in Moscow, I was twice accosted on my way home in the street and the Metro and asked where the book could be obtained).

[69] Sholomitsky, Y.S., "Fizicheskaya kul'tura i sport v sovetskom Uzbekistane", in Ocherki po istorii fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, pp. 91-95.

Some 26,000 people were said to be members of the various sports clubs of Uzbekistan by the end of 1926. In Azerbaidzhan, by the end of 1929, there were over 600 sports sections with 15,000 members, of whom just less than half were from the native population.[70]

It was later recognised that, in their haste to use organised sport as a cohesive agent to bring peoples together, some officials had tried to import into Central Asia European games for which there existed no real popular (even urban) basis. "In the late 1920's and early 1930's, there were many attempts in Tadzhikistan to make tennis popular. Due to lack of consideration for national characteristics (and even ignoring national folk games) only a few city people took up the game."[71] The propagation of football occasionally had quite the opposite effect to that desired (i.e., identifying the people with the political system, distracting them and transforming their applause for sporting achievements into acclaim for the Soviet regime) - it being used for anti-Russian propaganda by local religious leaders: "Addressing the local population, the mullahs used to say: 'See, the Russians have brought you the head of the devil; see how it jumps and brings you misfortune'."[72] It is perhaps natural that the primitive origins of the game should have been harked back to by pre-industrial people unaccustomed to games that were highly-controlled and circumscribed by rules which ensured that the excitement of the struggle did not carry the players too far. In England, the home of modern football, these rules had made the game more conducive to the attainment of the educational aims of public-school masters and were to bring the game into line with the more civilised standards that had been developing in an industrialising society which had already become three-quarters urban by the late nineteenth century. In Soviet Central Asia, on the other hand, although the educational motives for

[70] Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1967, No. 7, p. 5.

[71] Yeshchin, D., Pustovalov, A., Natsional'ny vopros v fizkul'turnom dvizhenii, Moscow-Leningrad, 1938, p. 12.

[72] Ibid., p. 76.

introducing the game were not so dissimilar to those of English public-school headmasters, the population was mostly rural, illiterate and under the influence of a culture (Islam) whose values were different to those of Europe: in Central Asia, the shame and dishonour of losing even a mock battle contrasted strongly with the attitude of "it's the playing of the game that counts, not the winning" prevalent in English nineteenth-century public schools. Small wonder, therefore, that Tadzhiks and others did not take enthusiastically to the new games. (The Tadzhiks are to this day the least active in sport of the republican nationalities, along with the Turkmenians .)

8. Sport and Education

Like other areas of social action in the 1920's, education went through a period of experimentation, principally with progressive educational theories. The most characteristic feature was the 'single labour school', in which all children alike experienced instruction linked to work, in which curricula were made on the spot, textbooks were only a secondary aid to instruction, marks were abolished, corporal punishment was forbidden by law, and the children were encouraged to run things themselves - i.e., the collective decided matters. This had a political as well as a social purpose, since the state originally been concerned to undermine attitudes of passivity towards authority.

Schools experimented with a variety of methods: the 'project' and 'laboratory' methods, the Dalton Plan and Montessori system. Some educationalists, notably Shul'gin, even developed the doctrine of the withering-away of the school - the child of the future would acquire his education by participating in the life of society. The most popular Soviet-initiated method was that proposed by Pinkevich - the 'complex' method, whereby individual subjects were linked with practical activities. Thus, for example, in many schools, physical education was replaced by a study of hygiene and health, seen in their relation to a factory, a market, a bakery, and so on.

Such was the school P.E. syllabus drawn up by the Educational Research Section of the State Academic Council that was in operation in schools between 1923 and 1927 (it was known as the 'GUS Syllabus'). "This was a complex syllabus, not one by subject, in which various subjects, including physical education, were combined." [73]

Physical education, as a separate subject in its own right, received little encouragement from the new syllabus covering the years 1927-29 ('Syllabus of Physical Exercises for Labour Schools'). Although this was supposed to be a unified, compulsory syllabus for all the schools in the country, it did not meet with much success. Despite a number of resolutions and programmes, it was not until 1929 that P.E. actually became a compulsory subject in schools and colleges, with an allotted weekly quota of two hours.

That is not to say there were no schools where P.E. and games featured as independent subjects in the curriculum prior to 1929. Table 9 shows the increase in P.E. teaching over the period.

Table 9: Physical-Education Subject-Teaching In Schools, 1923, 1925 and 1929

| Indicator | 1923/24[a] | 1925/26[a] | 1929/30[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. All schools (thous.) | 91.837 | 103.276 | 133.197 |
| of total A: | | | |
| 1. teaching P.E. (thous.) | 0.823 | 3.7 | 32.1 |
| (% of total A) | 0.9 | 3.6 | 24.1 |
| 2. not teaching P.E. (thous.) | 91.014 | 99.6 | 101.1 |
| (% of total A) | 99.1 | 96.4 | 75.9 |
| B. All pupils (mln.) | 7.962 | 10.220 | 13.516 |
| of total B: | | | |
| 1. taking P.E. (mln.) | 0.320 | 1.845 | 5.220 |
| (% of total B) | 4.0 | 18.1 | 38.6 |
| 2. not taking P.E. (mln.) | 7.642 | 8.375 | 8.296 |
| (% of total B) | 96.0 | 81.9 | 61.4 |

[a] 1 September (of the first year of the pair)

Sources: Narodnoye obrazovanie v SSSR, "Prosveshchenie", Moscow, 1967, p.75; Pedagogicheskaya entsiklopediya, Moscow, 1968, vo.IV, p.488; Kul'turnoye stroitel'stvo SSSR, Gosstatizdat, Moscow, 1956, pp.80-81.

73 Samoukov, F.I. (ed.), Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, p.284.

As industrialisation got under way, a strict regimen was evolved for all Soviet schools, and a full programme of compulsory P.E. for all primary and secondary schools was introduced in 1933. What was often lacking in the 1920's were the material resources for pursuing any sports activity at school: a lack of playing-fields, gymnasiums, equipment, clothing - which often prevented the implementation of directives to include P.E. and games in the school timetable.

Nonetheless, the 1923 GUS syllabus and the 1927 P.E. syllabus did lay a basis for school physical education, particularly the preparation of detailed plans of each lesson by doctors and educationalists in a central research institute; during the 1930's, these were passed on to every school for compulsory application. The instructions given to P.E. teachers in the 1927 syllabus included the following aims for school P.E.: "To fortify and maintain health, to enhance the organism's resistance to illness, to counteract the 'industrial diseases' of school life, to cultivate dexterity, suppleness, speed, coordination, precision, the ability to use one's forces rationally, to develop a sense of balance, rhythm and attentiveness, to inculcate moral values and form good social habits."[74] These aims were to be pursued by employing "natural forms of movement which man has used throughout his evolution: walking, running, throwing, balancing, skiing, swimming, skating, sledding, elements of classical and folk dancing, climbing, excursions and nature rambles."[75] Little mention was made of using equipment, since hardly any existed. Besides P.E. lessons, exercises were recommended for out-of-school time, particularly early-morning exercises. In 1929, a daily morning broadcast began (and has continued to the present day) with 'keep-fit' lessons for the population at large, attempting to get people into the habit of doing at least a quarter of an hour's P.E. every morning before breakfast.

[74] Quoted in Fizicheskaya kul'tura v shkole, 1967, No. 9, p. 4.

[75] Ibid., p. 5.

No mention was made in either of the two P.E. syllabuses produced in the 1920's of team- and combat-sports like football, rugby, basketball, boxing and wrestling -- partly because facilities were lacking, but mainly because the educational body concerned with P.E. in schools and colleges was preoccupied with the bodily functions of games for improving health and opposed team- and combat-sports as violent and potentially injurious to health -- as products of 'bourgeois' society which encouraged a non-collectivist spirit.

9. Conclusions

(a) This was a decisive period for the future of Soviet society, with the death of Lenin and the acute struggle in many spheres of life, culminating in the defeat of the Trotskyite tendency, bureaucratisation, the decision on forcible collectivisation and the start of 'revolution from above' and open 'class war' in the countryside. By the end of the period, Stalin's pre-eminence was unchallenged and the whole country may be described as having been thrust into the straightjacket of industrialisation.

(b) The years of experimenting and searching in sport reflect a contradiction fundamental to the period: that between the subjective desires of the authorities to shape society according to ideological preconceptions and the objective lack of the material conditions for the implementation of ideals. There can be little doubt that, because they were not based on the reality of Russia's situation, some immediate aspirations for sport were utopian and unrealistic.

Despite acceptance of the most advanced ideas and the passing of resolutions and directives by responsible assemblages, despite the enormous sacrifices and efforts made by some, Russia remained a backward country economically and culturally -- a predominantly illiterate peasant nation. That, to some extent at least, explains the apparent hesitations, the disputes and controversies in many fields, including that of culture. The search for a way forward in sport was accompanied by conflict over its basic rôle and functions which, in turn, reflected deeper-going political and social conflicts.

(c) There existed during the NEP period a widespread idealistic adherence to the notion of a 'healthy mind in a healthy body', a feeling that physical culture could somehow be used, alongwith other policies, to combat socially and politically undesirable phenomena such as prostitution, drunkenness and delinquency. In one simplistic formulation of the sort rather popular at the time,

physical culture stood for progress, good personal and social health and rationality; it was therefore a useful instrument for combatting all anti-social and anti-Soviet phenomena (including religion). The importance assigned to this manifest function of sport was evident in the battle for influence waged by such groups as the 'hygienists' and 'pedologists'. The former waged a successful struggle to obtain control of the sporting press, institutes of physical culture and school P.E. and managed to impose restrictions on certain competitive sports, as well as to secure a close official administrative link between health-protection and physical culture (e.g., in the years 1923-30, Nikolai Semashko was both Chairman of the Supreme Council of Physical Culture [1923-31] and Commissar of Health [1918-30]).

(d) In a country that had made a sharp break with its past and was proceeding to tear down many of the previously revered trappings associated with its old nationalism and to eradicate the values that went with them, it was inevitably going to take time for new norms and values to fill the void. Further, in a deeply-divided multinational state, the new régime, in attempting social transformations that required both personal sacrifice and popular initiative, urgently needed to establish rational -- or, rather, supranational -- unity and community spirit. Sports festivals, as we have seen, were held in the 1920's in non-Russian areas like the Transcaucasus and Central Asia, often with the explicit political purpose of bringing the various nationalities of the region together with sportsmen from Russia, the Ukraine and Belorussia, of breaking down mutual distrust and hostility, and of rallying support for the Party and its policies -- indirectly through sport and directly by including in the festivals banners, parades and political speeches.

(e) Two of the Party's policies of which sport was intended to be an agent were (i) the promotion of the emancipation and mass employment of women -- particularly in Moslem areas (where women had been virtually excluded from all public life before 1920) and (ii) the countering of religion, particularly all-embracing faiths like Islam that impinged upon large areas of social life -- including sporting activities (which were often regarded by religious leaders as interfering with work and distracting men from serious spiritual concerns). Any enticement of Central Asian youth, particularly young women, into the sports-activities organised by the Soviet authorities was regarded as a breach in the 'feudal-bey' and religious order, as an encouragement of the progressive values

supposedly imparted by sport that were seen as confronting the 'irrational', 'superstitious', 'mystical' and 'subservient' aspects of religion.

(f) The Soviet authorities had the problem of deciding which, among the various folk-games and popular national sports, should be discouraged (or even proscribed) and which should be accepted as part of the new multinational physical culture, "socialist in content and national in form." Obviously, this was no easy matter. During this period, the authorities, in fact, seemed more content to persuade than coerce, compromising in one area in order to gain support in another.

(g) There were in this period real and substantial limitations on the possibility of promoting organised sport and physical education on a massive scale. These were of three types:

(i) lack of physical facilities;

(ii) opposition based on considerations of ideology or realpolitik within the Soviet apparatus;

(iii) popular resistance.

Resistance from below was due to a variety of factors, among which were:

(α) physical exhaustion and debilitation by war and want;

(β) suspicion of Soviet innovations among traditional strata;

(γ) incomprehension of and/or distaste for strictly rule-governed forms of recreation in a still largely pre-industrial population.

(h) The social and political constraints on the kulturkampf were certainly not merely to be found in the 'popular' resistance of a peasant or recently-peasant people to the changing of their age-old habits; they were to be found also in the growing exigences of a leadership, soon to be obsessed with industrialisation and economic plan-fulfilment, that could see relatively little use in mass sports-participation for its own sake, but could see advantages in developing a playing élite to entertain and distract the newly-urban workers through competitive sporting spectacles like football matches. This tendency was to develop more fully in the 1930's, but was already discernible in the mid-1920's after the keynote Party resolution on sport of 1925.

(i) As the political realities in the aftermath of revolution and, increasingly, official policy began to conflict with the aspirations in regard to socialist culture of certain revolutionary Marxist and health-oriented professional circles, the Party-leadership seems initially to have regarded sport as a relatively

harmless area for concessions -- and even to have tolerated open conflicts. Insofar as sport could provide an aesthetically satisfying, emotionally exciting and revolutionary stirring area for participation and spectacle, the Party evidently felt it preferable to have real or potential oppositionistsx focusing some of their energies in mass sports-pagenats and displays rather than in more 'intellectual spheres of political and economic import. Nonetheless, towards the end of the 1920's, as the Party established full and undisputed control over sports-policy (as over every signfficant area of policy), it subordinated all organised sporting activities to its own utilitarian requirements -- to training the population for labour and warfare and to bearing the rigours and inequalities of emergent Soviet society. At this stage, all opposition to Party policy in sport was stifled.

Other non-Party individuals and groups who found it difficult to find niches for themselves under the new régime may well have discovered in sport an area of interest that they could share with fellow 'misfits'. This applied to foreigners who had stayed on in Russia (many of whom became instrumental in popularising 'new' sports like boxing, football and calisthenics) and former functionaries of the tsarist régime (some of whom moved into the administration of sportts-groups -- like the former scout-masters who became Young-Pioneer leaders). Tsarist-trained intellectuals, too, uncertain about their status under and attitude to the Soviet régime could find in games like chess or, say, Isadora Duncan's calisthenics studio a personally rewarding outlet for self-expression and creativity in a society which was becoming highly disciplined. For the time being, while not countenancing opposition from such quarters to its policies, the Party seemed, with some exceptions, willing to tolerate and use such people to popularise and administer sporting activities throughout the USSR and to provide skilled entertainment in the major industrial centres.

# V SPORT AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF INDUSTRIALISATION 1929-1941: YEARS OF COMPETITIVE SPORT

## 1. Industrialisation, Collectivisation and Mass Repression

Towards the end of the NEP period, the economy was getting back on its feet: in the economic year 1925-26, industrial production had reached ninety per cent of its 1913 level.[1] By the end of 1925, a policy of industrialisation which emphasised the importance of the production of the means of production had been sanctioned by the fourteenth Party congress.[2] Smilga, the deputy president of Gosplan, made a firm declaration of principle in May, 1926: "We must orient ourselves on our own resources; we must act like a country which does not wish to turn into a colony, we must force the industrialisation of the economy. Because we are behind Europe and have started to re-equip later, we must firmly state that the path of increased development of industry is the shortest and the only path to the improvement of our national well-being."[3] The scene was thus set for the implementation of an industrialisation programme that was forcibly to hurl the whole of the country into a gigantic campaign to "build socialism", then to lead to the forcible collectivisation of agriculture and transform the USSR from a backward agricultural into an advanced industrial, if unbalanced, economy. The first Five-Year Plan went into operation on 1 October, 1928 on a scale and with planning that more resembled a military campaign than peace-time construction.

[1] See Carr, E.H., Davies, R.W., Foundations of a Planned Economy, 1926-1929, Macmillan, London, 1969, p. 271. This book gives a detailed background to the industrialisation controversy.

[2] See Ibid., p. 276.

[3] Quoted in Ibid., p. 277.

If the country was to industrialise rapidly, the Party soon leadership believed, it would have to collectivise its agriculture: "The conviction gained ground that nothing but collectivisation, which would bring agricultural production and the distribution of agricultural products under centralised public control, would in the long run feed towns and factories while industry developed its power and its productive capacity."[4] In the autumn of 1929, the "Party leadership came to the abrupt conclusion that the kolkhozes were the only viable solution, and one that must therefore at all costs be implemented on a national scale ... The regime then entered upon a trial of strength with the peasants, which was known as the period of 'mass collectivisation', and which was to last for nearly four years. This was a veritable civil war, fought by both sides with unyielding obduracy."[5]

With the launching of these twin processes, everything went into the straightjacket of industrialisation. The fear of military defeat - which had precipitated this industrial revolution - helped to create a society that became more and more totalitarian. By the early 1930's, the first members of a new Soviet-trained class of specialists had been educated: this was to replace the old, non-proletarian 'intelligentsia' and was 'uncontaminated' by tsarist or bourgeois-liberal ideas. Stalin's rise to supreme power came to a climax with the great purges of the second half of the 1930's, which carried off most of the policy-makers of the first decade of Soviet power: all the members of Lenin's

[4] Ibid., p. 270.

[5] Lewin, M., Russian Peasants and Soviet Power, Allen and Unwin, London, 1968, p. 19. This book is an authoritative study of collectivisation.

Politburo, the top leadership of the Red Army and the upper and middle levels of the Communist Party. In this period of mass repression, "millions perished and every member of the population was held under immediate threat".[6]

A social phenomenon that accompanied this repression was the growing portrayal of Stalin as a 'superman': "In the final stages of the 'cult of personality', he was built up with the most astonishing adulation as a genius not only in politics, but also in strategy, the sciences, philosophy and almost every field. His picture looked down from every hoarding, his bust was carried by Soviet alpinists to the top of every Soviet peak, he was elevated to be, with Marx, Engels and Lenin, the fourth of the great political geniuses of the epoch."[7] This 'cult of Stalin's personality' was reflected throughout Soviet society in many 'mini-cults' of leaders in all walks of life, by the development of 'stars' and even 'superstars' whom ordinary men and women look on from afar and on whose achievements they might dwell as they took part in the universal campaigns of 'socialist competition' or emulation at their ordinary jobs.

The implications for the sports movement of these socio-economic processes were extremely important, for it was in the 1930's that the pattern of Soviet sport as we know it today was principally formed and its main rôle and explicit functions in society were set. If the previous decade may be described as having been dominated by physical culture, the 1930's were to be a decade of competitive sport.

6 Conquest, R., The Great Terror, Pelican, London, 1968, p. 11. This book is a detailed study of the period of mass repression.

7 Ibid., pp. 106-107.

2. The Organisation of Sport

The Party Central Committed adopted a resolution on 23rd September, 1929 criticising the lack of coordination in the sports movement. It called for more centralised and direct government control. To these ends, two steps were taken.

(a) An All-Union Physical Culture Council. The first step was to set up, on 3rd April, 1930, the All-Union Physical Culture Council attached to the Central Executive Committee of the USSR.[8] The Council was, in fact, to have executive powers to decide all issues connected with the organisation of sport and to make proposals of a legislative nature to All-Union and Republican government bodies. In other words, the Council was really to be a Ministry for Sport. How powerful it was may be judged from its proposed functions (as listed in the Party resolution): "administration and control over the activity of Republican sports councils, all government and independent organisations (government departments, trade unions, cooperatives and voluntary societies (i.e., societies whose membership was open to the public at large - JWR)) that are responsible for organising sports activities; control over construction of major sports sites, research and study in training physical-education and sports specialists; command of all production activity concerned with sport; responsibility for popularising and propagandising sport, including the control of all sports publications and the organisation and conduct of congresses, festivals, and national and international competitions."[9]

[8] Chudinov, I.D. (ed.), Osnovnye postanovleniya, prikazy i instruktsii po voprosam fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta, 1917-1957, Moscow, 1959, p. 124.

[9] Ibid., pp. 124-125.

Unified coordination of the sports movement was completed with the transfer to the new Council of all local sports councils - from Republican down to district levels. From being mere consultative bodies since their inception in 1923, they were now to become executive government agencies.

(b) Primary sports clubs based on workplaces. The second step taken by the Party was to transfer all primary sports clubs to local workplaces. In the future, all local sports clubs were to be organised on a production basis, all the people belonging to a particular factory, office or college (and members of their families) being eligible only for membership of the sports 'collective' at their place of work. In fact, this arrangement was already in operation throughout most of the country: in 1928, sports circles (kruzhki) at workplaces had some 258,000 members, while clubs (kluby) organised on a territorial basis had a membership of only 127,000.[10] Now the latter clubs were to be abolished, membership of the sports groups was to be solely on a production, as opposed to territorial, basis, and the factory circles were to be renamed sports collectives (kollektivy).

Sport, therefore, now had, first, a powerful central organisational nucleus in the form of the All-Union Council - which was to exist with only relatively minor changes until 1959 - and, second, at the other end of the scale, active and politically-controllable sports groups directly at places of work and cultural and educational centres. Sport was brought into line with the standard Stalin pattern for all activities, becoming a hierarchical State functional organisation.

[10] Entsiklopedichesky slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1961, p. 266.

(c) Purges. As in other areas of activity during the 1930's, the old sports administration was, however, under constant attack from the sporting press; apparently, the transfer from Republican consultative councils to a centralised system with greatly enlarged powers had not removed all the phenomena that were perceived as defects by the Party. Inept leadership at lower levels, poor planning, lack of coordination (once more), wasteful expenditure, and concentration on small groups of proficient athletes at the expense of the masses were just some of the accusations made in the press. The Chairman of the All-Union Council, Nikolai Antipov, and his successor, Vasily Mantsev, constantly urged modifications in organisation and tried various permutations in the composition and structure of the Council to meet the criticism, which was mainly inspired by the difficult political period the country was going through. Both Antipov and Mantsev disappeared in the great purge of 1936-38; as, too, did Mantsev's successor, I.I. Kharchenko, who became Chairman when the Council was renamed the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sport Affairs in June, 1936. Among other notables in the field of physical education and sport to be purged was Professor S.M. Frumin, Principal of the Central State Institute of Physical Culture which, only a year before Frumin's fall from grace, had been given the honour of being named after Stalin.[11] Sport was, of course, no exception to the general purge which affected leaders in all walks of life. 'Traitors' had to be found to account for the defects; hence the criticism.

[11] On a visit to the Central Institute in early 1971, the present writer was told that Professor Frumin had, in fact, been rehabilitated; his name now appears on the honours board of the Museum within the Institute.

Despite the problems in administration, the trade-union primary sports-collectives involved more and more workers in sport - and sportsmen in work. The First Trade-Union Sports Conference, in November, 1930, called on members to subordinate sport to socialist construction. In factories, one of the most common wall-slogans was "Every Sportsman Should Be A Shock-Worker, Every Shock-Worker — a Sportsman". 'Production gymnastics' was introduced and, between 1931 and 1933, the sports-collectives claimed an increase in membership of up to 2 million.[12] In the subsequent years, up to the end of the decade, the number of registered athletes is claimed to have increased to nearly five and a half million, or over three per cent of the population (see Appendix III). How reliable the data are is hard to say, statistics of the purge-period being necessarily suspect.

(d) Voluntary Sports Societies. By the mid-1930's, the sports movement had become more complex, especially at workplace level; this was, of course, part of a general process of institutional bureaucratisation, Soviet-style, typical of the period. It was one thing getting employees to join trade-union sports-collectives, but it was quite another sustaining their interest by arranging contests with other workplace teams. There was the problem, too, of what to do about (and even how to discover) proficient athletes: how best to train them and arrange top-flight competition for them. Most of these issues did not fall adequately within the competence of the individual union sports-collective, yet they were mostly outside the responsibility of the government sports councils. It was therefore decided in 1935 to set up

[12] Entsiklopedichesky slovar'... Vol. I, p.267.

trade-union-based voluntary sports societies (dobrovol'nye sportivnye obshchestva). The enterprise collectives were to remain at work-place level as the primary links in the sports movement, but now they were to come under a specific trade-union sports society. In March,1935, the first society, Spartak, was formed. Actually, Spartak's history went back to 1922 when the Moscow Sports Club had formed a football team in the Krasnaya Presnya district; as the years went by, the team changed its name from Moscow Sports Club to Krasnaya Presnya (Red Presnya - a district in Moscow), Pishchevik (Food-Industry Worker), Dukat, Promkooperatsiya (Producers' Cooperation), and, finally, to Spartak. Although it was a non-trade-union society, it was like one in that it represented a specific occupational grouping–viz., at the time, members of producers' cooperatives. Shortly after that, sports societies of particular trade-unions in the Moscow Region were formed: Lokomotiv (representing railway workers), Burevestnik (Stormy Petrel - representing workers in state trade), Krasnoye Znamya (Red Banner - representing cotton-textile workers) and several others. Having decided that the Moscow experiment was worth extending to the country as a whole - like that of the Dinamo Society, which had been established by the security services in 1923 - the authorities began to set up sports societies throughout the country. By 1st January, 1937, they numbered 69 and, by late 1938, 99.[13]

The formation of the sports societies - which were to be an important link in the whole sports movement right up to the present - confirmed the production principle of primary organisation in that, since Soviet trade unions are organised on an industry-by-industry basis, so too were the sports societies. Thus, a railwayman and

[13] Idem.

any member of his family can join Lokomotiv, an automobile worker and his family can join Torpedo and a construction worker and his family can join Stroitel' (Builder) if they want to engage in sport. The primary sports collective remained at the workplace but it was no longer to stand alone. Instead, it was to serve as a basis from which district, regional, Republican and All-Union competitions were to draw participants to form top teams - a form of 'democratic centralist' hierarchy in sport.

Every society was to have its own rules, membership-cards, banner, badge and colours. It was to be financed out of trade-union dues and other funds and given the responsibility for building large sports amenities, acquiring equipment and sports-clothing for its members and maintaining a permanent staff of coaches, instructors and medical personnel. It was to have an organisation at each administrative level and be run at the top by a sports section of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. The sports societies were termed 'voluntary' in the sense that membership of them was open to any member of the appropriate trade union either on the basis of individual membership or via membership of a sports collective (unlike the sports collectives, whose membership was confined to employees at a particular workplace). They were not voluntary in the sense that their formation was a matter of choice, that staff were only unpaid, part-time volunteers or that they were run without government supervision. Members had the right to use the club's equipment and facilities free of charge, elect and be elected to its steering bodies.

(e) All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports Affairs. To mark the fact that 1936 was the year of the new Constitution, the year in which 'socialism' was proclaimed, the Party called for

yet another organisational restructuring in sport. This came on 21st June, 1936 when the Party announced that "in the interests of better satisfying the ever-growing demands of workers for sport and physical culture", it would "improve state control and supervision over activities in physical culture and sport".[14] It therefore altered the name of the All-Union Physical Culture Council to the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports Affairs and put it under the direct authority of the Council of People's Commissars - i.e., it brought sport under the closer scrutiny of government leaders. Apart from raising the official standing of sport, the new nomenclature indicated a shift of emphasis from pure physical culture to physical culture combined with competitive sport as a means of politically socialising the population to the new prevailing norms, with emphasis on its utilitarian, 'applied' functions in preparing people for labour and defence. The cloud that had hung over the word 'sport' (implying competition) since the early 1920's was now officially lifted - with a vengeance.

(f) All-Union League-and Cup-competition. One of the principal tasks of the sports societies was to act as a catalyst in raising standards through more rational organisation and competition: they were more direct 'transmission belts' to sportsmen than had previously existed and could control local activity. Contests were to be conducted on an intra- and inter-society and territorial basis. Each society had its local, regional, Republican, and All-Union championships for each sport it practiced. The selection of sport-society teams at all levels was based on these

[14] Chudinov, op. cit., p. 153.

competitions. This system of contests led to the creation of nation-wide sports leagues and cup competitions for such popular games as football, basketball and ice-hockey. Until 1935, All-Union championships (e.g., in football) had been contested by city teams; in 1936, however, the All-Union Football League and Cup competition were both instituted. Societies such as Dinamo, Spartak, Torpedo, Lokomotiv and Burevestnik had so-called 'teams of masters' in every major town, some of which competed in one of the various leagues. These leagues created new interest and mass appeal, especially in the most popular male team-game, football, and drew many thousands of spectators to view important matches. In football, there were four national divisions in 1936 and 1937, with 7-8 teams in each division; in 1938, the first division was enlarged to include 26 teams. The next year it was reduced to 14, at which it has more or less remained to this day.[15] Big-city and security-police teams, with their massive resources, tended to dominate the leagues, especially the First Division. In the Division 1 table of the Fourth USSR Championship in 1938, Moscow teams occupied six, and Dinamo teams five, of the top ten places. Moscow Spartak also won the Third USSR Cup Competition of 1938, competed for by 296 teams.[16]

[15] In 1974, there were three divisions: Division 1 had 16 teams, Division 2 had 22, and Division 3 had 125 teams divided into six geographical zones.

[16] Division 1 of the Fourth USSR Football Championships, 1938

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Spartak (Moscow) | 14 | Stalinets (Leningrad) |
| 2 | TsDKA | 15 | Sel'mash (Khar'kov) |
| 3 | Metallurg (Moscow) | 16 | Stalinets (Moscow) |
| 4 | Dinamo (Kiev) | 17 | Lokomotiv (Kiev) |
| 5 | Dinamo (Moscow) | 18 | Dinamo (Rostov) |
| 6 | Dinamo (Tbilisi) | 19 | Temp (Baku) |
| 7 | Dinamo (Leningrad) | 20 | Spartak (Leningrad) |
| 8 | Lokomotiv (Moscow) | 21 | Spartak (Khar'kov) |
| 9 | Torpedo (Moscow) | 22 | Zenit (Leningrad) |
| 10 | Dinamo (Odessa) | 23 | Pishchevik (Moscow) |
| 11 | Stakhanovets (Stalino) | 24 | Lokomotiv (Tbilisi) |
| 12 | Traktor (Stalingrad) | 25 | Kryl'ya Sovetov (Moscow) |
| 13 | Elektrik (Leningrad) | 26 | Burevestnik (Moscow) |

Source: Kiselev, N.A. (ed.), 70 futbol'nykh let, Lenizdat, 1970, p. 144

Acknowledgement of the importance of the Dinamo and Spartak sports societies - and of competitive sport in general - came with a government decision in June 1937 to award them the country's top distinction, the Order of Lenin. The previous year, some fifty athletes and sports-workers had been awarded medals and various orders.[17] This was the first time that individual sportsmen had featured in the 'honours list', which was some indication of the official "solicitude" (and public adulation) that heroes and shock-workers in sport - like individuals who excelled in other spheres - were accorded in the 'cult' period.

(g) The G.T.O. badge and the uniform rankings system. The formation of the voluntary sports societies and the increasing numbers of participants led to a review of the motivational provisions in sport. Thus, two important elements in the Soviet sports system to gave people clear-cut targets of achievement were instituted in the 1930's. The first, the 'Ready for Labour and Defence' (Gotov k trudu i oborone (G.T.O.)) programme, was intended to achieve two aims.

One aim was to extend the scope of sports participation, give everyone something to aim for - i.e., set modest targets whose attainment brought some official honorific recognition - and start to make regular participation in sport a normal feature of 'the socialist way of life'. The targets were to be not for a single sport, or even for sporting ability alone, but for all-round ability in a number of sports and knowledge of the rudiments of hygiene, first-aid and physical educational theory.

The second aim was to establish a mass base from which potential 'stars' could be drawn. Once the 'stars' were discovered, it

[17] Samoukov, F.I. (ed.), Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1956, p.292.

was necessary to categorise and institutionalise them according to their level of ability in a particular sport and to give them the incentive and amenities to realise their potential. For this purpose, a second element was introduced into the system: a uniform rankings system for individual sports, setting four levels of superior achievement.

(i) The G.T.O. badge for general physical competence. In March, 1931, acting on a proposal from the Komsomol, the All-Union Physical Culture Council resolved: "With the aim of stimulating independent activity among Soviet people, the Council is establishing an award for all-round physical ability ... (it is to take) the form of a 'Ready for Labour and Defence' badge and a certificate from the All-Union Physical Culture Council. ... By all-round physical ability, the Council has in mind the completion of a set programme of practical and theoretical tests."[18]

How broad the sports activity had to be may be judged from the number of separate activities and theoretical subjects included in the test: fifteen events - including running, jumping, grenade-throwing, skiing and swimming - and six subjects, including a knowledge of the fundamentals of the Soviet sports movement, military affairs, first-aid and hygiene. Recipients had to be members of a shock-brigade in industry or agriculture.

The inclusion of theoretical subjects and the stipulation of active participation in shock-work are typical of the industrialisation period, and the overt military bias was an indication of the Soviet preoccupation with defence at a time when an attack from the imperialists - who were, as was consistently stressed, implacably hostile to the Soviet regime - was presented as imminent.

[18] Chudinov, op. cit., p 137.

Shortly after the G.T.O. scheme was launched, it was decided that greater differentiation in the mass of sporting achievement was needed - so, from 1st January, 1933, a second and higher level of the G.T.O. was set, covering twenty-two sports activities (twenty-one for women) and three theoretical requirements. This became known as Stage 2 of the G.T.O. system and was a much stiffer test than Stage 1, being already on the way to singling out proficiency, inasmuch as Stage 2 implied a certain amount of systematic training and necessitated use of facilities to do so. It is hardly surprising that the first holders of the G.T.O. Stage 2 badge were officers of the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow.

The B.G.T.O. Badge. Insofar as the Komsomol was responsible for involving young people in the G.T.O. system and, in fact, had initiated the whole movement, it was natural that it should suggest a third element in the system - this time for schoolchildren. Early in 1934, the 'Be Ready for Labour and Defence' (B.G.T.O.) badge was instituted for schoolchildren by the All-Union Physical Culture Council to cover sixteen sports and theoretical subjects.

The introduction of the B.G.T.O. stage completed the system which now stretched in natural succession, with increasing difficulty, from the B.G.T.O., taken while at school, to the G.T.O Stage 1 and G.T.O. Stage 2. This comprehensive sports programme, which was to become the basis of a movement for mass participation in sport, was designed to involve millions of young men and women in 'sport in general' - i.e., to persuade them to make sport and some form of exercise a regular feature of their everyday lives. It was arranged to develop and test their speed, agility, strength, endurance and general military aptitude. Although the prize was no more than a silver lapel badge, it is apparent from the figures below that many young people were drawn into more than a passing acquaintance with sport.

Table 10: Numbers Passing G.T.O. Tests, 1931-37

| Year | B.G.T.O. | | G.T.O. 1 | | G.T.O. 2 | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (thous.) | (% of G.T.O. 1) | (thous.) | (% of G.T.O. 1) | (thous.) | (% of G.T.O.1) | (th.) |
| 1931 | - | - | 24 | 100 | - | - | 24 |
| 1932 | - | - | 465 | 100 | - | - | 465 |
| 1933 | - | - | 835 | 100 | - | - | 835 |
| 1934 | 10 | 0.78 | 1,280 | 100 | 0.1 | 0.01 | 1,290 |
| 1935 | 197.3 | 17.5 | 1,126 | 100 | 4.8 | 0.43 | 1,328 |
| 1936 | 245.0 | 37.4 | 655 | 100 | 15.5 | 2.4 | 916 |
| 1937 | 307.5 | 55.7 | 552 | 100 | 16.2 | 2.9 | 876 |

Source: Fizicheskaya kul'tura i sport v tsifrakh i faktakh, 1917-1961, Moscow, 1962, p. 51.

After the first flush of success, up to the end of 1935, the number of successful passes declined in the G.T.O. 1 category and in overall numbers. This is not attributable to any tightening-up of tests, since standards remained stable until 1st January, 1940, when the system was revised. There appear to be two possible explanations for the decline. First, the pioneer system contained flaws which had to be removed: it was too standardised and did not take into consideration geographical and ethnic differences (e.g., in the less climatically severe regions, it was not easy to fulfil the skiing norms, and nationalities who had had little contact with organised sports but were adept at their own national games found it hard to qualify at all); also the number of tests and range of sports were too great, not only making it difficult for athletes to cover the entire spectrum of sports, but also for them to find facilities to do so. Moreover, it was proving not as effective in providing potential talent for special training as was originally hoped, partly because it did not encourage the acquisition of a particular sport-speciality; this hampered training in the various individual sports. A second (and perhaps more probable) explanation for the decline after 1935 was the disorganising and demoralising effect on potential sportsmen of the purges, which developed on a particularly large scale in 1936.

The revised system introduced on 1st January, 1940, 'the All-Union Physical Culture Scheme "Ready for Labour and Defence of the USSR"', introduced a degree of flexibility, taking account of climatic and geographical conditions. The number of tests was reduced and sporting activities were split into two sections, one of which was general and compulsory, the other providing for concentration on a selected type of activity. The first section included running, jumping, swimming, shooting, gymnastics, skiing, a knowledge of fundamentals of the Soviet sports movement and personal hygiene. The latter consisted of tests of a particular aspect of physical fitness: thus, one could choose tests in activities that necessitated strength, endurance or speed. This dual system applied to all three categories of the G.T.O. programme. Finally, to stimulate keener competition, there were two levels of tests - a pass, incorporating the minimum norms, and a recognition of individual excellence (the 'otlichnik' badge), which involved both a harder test and higher norms. Soviet involvement in the war, in June, 1941, however, cut short the implementation of the new programme.

(ii ) The Uniform Rankings System for Individual Sports. In order to give some recognition to superior sporting achievement (the yardstick of foreign competition being largely unavailable) the All-Union Physical Culture Council in 1935 created a uniform system of classification of sports achievements. This, it hoped, would help coaches to spot gifted athletes and train them with specific targets in mind and would stimulate the best performers to aim for certain set superior standards in a particular sport. There were to be four rankings decided by times recorded in a particular event and/or success in competition, both national and international.

The idea of a ranking system was not entirely new. Four All-Russian rankings had been established for track and field athletes back in 1918, for cyclists in 1924, swimmers in 1927 and gymnasts in 1934. An even higher honorary title, Merited Master of Sport of the USSR, had been decreed by the TsIK on 27th May, 1934.[19] Pravda reported at the time that the explicit purpose of the new title was to stimulate better results and allocate the best amenities to top sportsmen.[20] It did add the rider, however, that the ultimate intention was to use these 'stars' to inspire and impart their skill and experience to the millions of ordinary sportsmen: "The Soviet government has instituted the title of Merited Master of Sport. There can be no doubt that this will play an exceptional part in lifting the sports movement to an even higher level. It is the task of sports groups to surround the Master with care and attention, and to create conditions for him constantly to grow and improve himself, thus being able to impart his experience and knowledge to the millions of sportsmen."[21]

It was only, however, in 1935, that the All-Union Physical Culture Council ratified a new project instituting uniform Master, First, Second and Third rankings in a range of sports. Over the next two years, the standards for the First, Second and Third rankings were drawn up and were put into operation in 1937 for

[19] This paralleled the introduction of the 'Merited' title in other fields: 'Merited Artist' and 'Merited Teacher' were both introduced in 1936. Alongwith the titles went an increment in the recipient's monthly salary - 10 roubles in the case of teachers, and 20 roubles in the case of sportsmen. (See Pedagogicheskaya Entsiklopediya, Vol. II, Moscow, 1965, p 103.)

[20] Pravda, 29th May, 1934.

[21] Idem.

the following ten sports: athletics, boxing, fencing, gymnastics, shooting, speed-skating, swimming, tennis, weightlifting and wrestling. The Master of Sport title was to be awarded to athletes setting good All-Union records, winning a Soviet championship or gaining the First ranking in several sports.

Although the rankings system did not have long to prove itself before war came, it did show that a steadily increasing number of proficient athletes was emerging.

Table 11: Number of Ranked Sportsmen (34 sports) in 1940

| Third Ranking (No.) | Second Ranking (No.) | First Ranking (No.) | Masters (No.) | Total | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | (No.) | % of all sportsmen | % of G.T.O. -holders |
| 76,892 | 18,798 | 6,420 | 884 | 102,994 | 1.8 | 12.3 |

Sources: Fizicheskaya kul'tura i sport v tsifrakh i faktakh, 1917-1961, Moscow, 1962, pp.56, 75;

Makartsev, N.A., Stranitsy istorii sovetskovo sporta, Moscow, 1967, p.35.

(iv) Massovost' and masterstvo and abuses of amateur status.

The decision taken in the mid-thirties to stratify in sport, to distinguish a more or less professional group of sportsmen from the main body, was in keeping with the country's social development and its concomitant official values: in industry and agriculture, reward and prestige went to the peredoviki, the workers and teams that attained the best results. The individual, whether factory manager, collective-farm chairman or Party leader, rose high or fell low on the basis of performance, of results shown. The masses were to be inspired by the efforts of people with whom they could identify, persons whose faces could be seen in the newspapers, on street hoardings and on factory and farm boards of honour. These were people not greatly different from themselves in looks, speech, dress and manners. Moreover, if Soviet Russia were to be seen to lead the

world, this had to be in the social as well as the economic sphere, in culture, education, health - and in sport.

Yet, to produce the most talented athletes with the paucity of sports facilities available (see pp.268-269), it was necessary to give them intensive coaching and reward them accordingly. This, inevitably, has resulted ever since in disputes within the sports movement as to the right balance between massovost' (mass participation) and masterstvo (mastery). Just how much special treatment should the master-sportsmen get? Should they be given time off from work for training? How should they be rewarded? In a socialist state that declared itself free of the commercialism and professionalism of capitalist societies, there inevitably arose the dilemma for Party and government of wanting to see excellence in sport and the prestige that winning or doing well internationally brought to the country; yet, on the other hand, there is evidence of a desire to curb the excesses that tend to go hand in hand with professionalism, particularly exacerbated by the 'natural' striving of workplaces, societies, clubs and individuals to sponsor their own teams by all possible means in order to bring glory and rewards to their own particular association.

The warning signals were hoisted high from the very start. On 27th October, 1935, the authoritative newspaper Krasny sport warned: "We are not against prize-giving as such, but we are against abuses and perversions ... We have definitely established the importance of certificates and medals, and they should be the major, if not the only, proper sports honours and awards."[22]

Yet, with the putting into operation of the ranking system in 1937 and the call, in the same year, for the formation of select

[22] Krasny sport, 27th. October, 1935.

teams in various parts of the country for the new (1936) leagues in such sports as football, boxing, shooting and wrestling, it was, perhaps, inevitable that these sportsmen should be taken out of production and permitted virtually full-time training facilities. Nonetheless, a resolution by the Moscow Committee on Physical Culture and Sports Affairs, issued in January, 1937, specifically prohibited payments to athletes.[23] Officially, only coaches, sports officials and other such paid administrators were to make sport their full-time vocation. Yet, despite frequent warnings and the adoption of new regulations to guide sports societies in the distribution of funds, illegal assistance to athletes persisted. Two years later, Krasny sport once more condemned the practice: "Half-trained sportsmen should not receive extra money for fictional 'work', they should not receive subsidies and all manner of gifts for success in competition. That is a bourgeois practice that has crept into Soviet sport."[24]

With so much stress on records and winning, other abuses began to creep in. The pressures for winning sometimes resulted in attempts to win at all costs. In a Division 1 'derby' match in Leningrad on 24th July, 1937, between Leningrad Dinamo and Moscow Dinamo, three Leningrad players were seriously injured and the fans rioted. The match has gone down as one of the roughest in Soviet football history. Since then, every major football match has had a 'wall' of soldiers ringing the ground between the fans and the pitch.[25] Sports societies not infrequently competed with one another for top talent and even 'bought' and transferred the best players in blatant disregard of the transfer regulations - which do not appear ever to have been

[23] Chudinov, op. cit., p.168.

[24] Krasny sport, 5th January, 1939.

[25] Kiselev, op. cit., p.140.

rigorously enforced. The authorities did something to punish and prevent the worst abuses. I.I. Kharchenko, then Chairman of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports Affairs, roundly condemned the practice: "In the race for records and best results, several departments use absolutely impermissible means. Buying-up and enticing have somehow become the basic job of sports 'entrepreneurs'. An athlete only has to give a moderate performance and he becomes an object of buying and selling. Selling goes on all over: in Gor'ky, Voronezh, Rostov and Taganrog."[26]

Reports in the press confirmed Kharchenko's strictures: "Sports businessmen have appeared from somewhere in the course of the turbulent growth of Soviet sport. In order to enhance their club's prestige, they have replaced hard work in increasing the proficiency and training of first-rate athletes with primitive and quite underhand methods. Why train when you can 'buy' the finished product? Why create when you can entice? So we have sports societies which have hardly existed for more than a few weeks, before they suddenly come up with record-breakers, champions and Masters of Sport. This system has spread far and wide. Things are so bad that you have to pay even the rank-and-file players, the 'miniature masters', to remain in the ranks."[27]

The disputes and abuses attendant upon professionalism everywhere continued and, in 1939, the new Chairman of the All-Union Committee, Vasily Snegov, warned that he would "severely prosecute all attempts to entice players from other teams".[28]

Even more than their counterparts in industry, the sports stars began to receive large sums of money, priorities in respect ~~of~~

[26] Krasny sport, 27th June, 1936.

[27] Ibid., 11th January, 1937.

[28] Ibid., 10th October, 1939.

apartments and scarce commodities for establishing records and winning championships. A former Soviet sports official who defected during the war has written that the sportswoman Nina Dumbadze received a special bonus for setting an All-Union record and a 25,000 r. bonus for breaking the European women's discus record. "My friends and the former USSR record-breakers of the early 1930's, M. Shamanova, G. and S. Znamensky, Dyachkov and Malin lived well on bonuses and rewards from sport alone. Masha Shamanova once received a radiogram as a bonus - then a priceless commodity."[29]

Seen in its wider context, this was part of a general process of élite-creation in society at a time when the cult of Stalin's personality was at its height. All these practices were largely started in the mid-1930's (and most continue to the present day , although, officially, money-prize awards were discontinued in the late 1940's when the USSR joined the International Olympic Committee). It would be hard to imagine a system for developing talent in Soviet conditions that would not harbour the danger of abuse. The biggest problem has remained that of keeping a 'reasonable' balance between mass participation and the development of a professional élite.

## 3. Facilities for Sport and Physical Culture

One of the circumstances giving rise to the problems mentioned above was that of allocation of the limited available sports facilities among all those who wanted to practice the sports. Although the economic results of the industrialisation programme enabled absolutely more government funds to be allotted to physical culture, the paucity of inherited amenities and the neglect and destruction

[29] Legostaev, F., Fizicheskoye vospitanie i sport v SSSR, Munich, 1951, p. 25.

of the war years meant that it would be a long time before facilities would be adequate to meet even part of the needs of sports-enthusiasts. As with other countries that made a late start in industrial development (in contrast to Britain, in which each of the many sports in which she was a pioneer have developed separately, independently and far from simultaneously with the others), the predominant feature of sports facilities became the multi-sport centre.[30]

(a) Budgetary Expenditures. Data on government spending on physical culture and comparative figures for other social and cultural measures give some idea of the steady rise in government allocations to physical culture and its comparative standing with other items of government expenditure. (Appendix X, from which the data below are taken, provides fuller information for the period 1923-70.)

Table 12: Expenditure on Some Social and Cultural Measures, 1924-37

| Field of Expenditure | 1924-25 | | 1928-29 | | 1934 | | 1937 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | mln. rub. | % of Budget | mln. rub. | % of Budget | mln. rub. | % of Budget | mln. rub. | % of Budget |
| Total State Budget Expenditure | 306 | 100 | 878 | 100 | 5340 | 100 | 10620 | 100 |
| Social and Cultural Measures | 53 | 17 | 263 | 30 | 1173 | 21 | 3089 | 29 |
| Education | 54 | 12 | 112 | 13 | 721 | 13 | 1661 | 16 |
| Health | 14 | 5 | 63 | 7 | 350 | 7 | 801 | 8 |
| Physical Culture | 0.08 | 0.03 | 0.4 | 0.04 | 4.1 | 0.08 | 22 | 0.21 |
| Labour-Protection and Social Security | 3 | 1 | 87 | 10 | 97 | 2 | 604 | 6 |

Source: Plotnikov, K.N., Ocherki istorii byudzheta sovetskovo gosudarstva, Moscow, 1955, pp. 93, 132, 149.

The share of budgetary expenditure that goes to physical culture does not rise significantly until 1934 and then goes on doing so

30 The Russian word stadion (stadium) usually denotes a multi-sport centre or complex (e.g., the Lenin 'Stadium' in Luzhniki, Moscow, has facilities for swimming, tennis, basketball, gorodki, ice-hockey, etc.)

until 1937. Thereafter, although physical culture is not separated out from health, expenditure on it is likely to have dropped - like the share in budgetary expenditure of all social and cultural measures - because of the Soviet concentration, after 1937 (particularly after the signing of the Munich Agreement by Britain, France, Germany and Italy in September, 1938), on building up industries related to the potential war effort. It should be noted that physical culture received financial support other than in the form of budgetary allocations; it was financed also by trade unions, enterprises, collective farms, etc. (see pp. 438-449).

(b) Amenity-provision. A large portion of government and trade-union sports expenditure went on the construction of sports-centres, courts for basketball, volleyball and tennis, football-pitches, gymnasiums and on the provision of sports-equipment. This was the era of the designing of giant stadiums in the form of vast amphitheatures - e.g., the Kirov Stadium in Leningrad, with seating for 150,000 spectators, the Bagirov Stadium in Baku for 80,000 spectators and the projected Stalin Izmailovsky Stadium in Moscow for 250,000 spectators (which was never built). It is not surprising, however, that the sports with the greatest following tended to be those which required little and unsophisticated equipment. Chess, for example, is available to all ages and sexes, and independent of the weather. All the same, an effort was made to match the increasing demand with some sort of adequate supply. Between 1931 and 1940, the provision of sports-facilities roughly quadrupled, as the following figures indicate.

Table 13: Amenity-Provisions for Sport: 1931, 1935 and 1940

| Amenity | 1931 | 1935 | 1940 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sports-centres (stadiony i kompleksnye ploshchadki) | 2,882 | 4,550 | 7,858 |
| Gymnasiums (sportivno-gimnasticheskie zaly) | 717 | 2,300 | 6,684 |
| Football pitches | 2,721 | 6,133 | 9,172 |
| Volleyball courts | 7,366 | 13,559 | 25,137 |
| Basketball courts | 999 | 2,868 | 5,439 |
| Tennis courts | 381 | 779 | 1,270 |
| Aquatic and skiing centres (vodnye i lyzhnye stantsii) | 369 | 800 | ... |
| Houses of Physical Culture (doma fizkul'tury) | 70 | 200 | ... |

Sources: Mil'shtein, O. A., "Fizicheskaya kul'tura i sport na sluzhbe okhrany i ukrepleniya zdorov'ya sovetskovo naroda v period stroitel'stva i pobedy sotsializma (1917-1937)", in Ocherki po istorii fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1967, p.32;

Makartsev, N. A., Stranitsy istorii sovetskovo sporta Moscow, 1967, pp. 64, 65, 114.

No definitions of what constituted a sports-centre, aquatic and skiing centre, House of Physical Culture and so on are given in the statistics, but it is evident that many of these facilities were little more than a multi-purpose outdoor grit area where a variety of games could be played. An aquatic centre was a section of river or sea used for various aquatic sports, a House of Physical Culture - a multi-sport indoor club, while basketball- and volleyball-courts and football-pitches ranged from fairly primitive dust-bowls containing nets, basket-poles or football-posts, as in many villages and urban backyards, to well-equipped indoor and stadium-located courts and pitches in the major cities.

A further breakdown of these figures for the Union Republics throws some light on the distribution of facilities nationally. Unfortunately, a complete picture is obscured by the non-availability

of figures for some republics in 1940. It would also appear that Republican statisticians were unsure about the definitions of sports facilities, for Armenia had the lowest 1940 figure (0.2) for sports-centres per thousand of population, yet highest by far for gymnasiums (10.2) and for playing-grounds and football pitches (72) (see Appendix VII). It is also worthy of note that some of the relatively backward Republics, like those in Central Asia, seem to have been almost as well equipped in 1940 as the most advanced - evidence either of their having ambitious statisticians or of implementation of the proclaimed government policy of bringing the culturally and economically lagging non-Russian groups up to the level of the most advanced - probably a mixture of both.

4. Sports Activities

(a) Events and Tournaments. The 1930's were the period par excellence for competition at all levels - spartakiads (from individual farms to All-Union festivals), league and cup competitions, and All-Union championships for a variety of sports. Medals, certificates, banners and special prizes were awarded to factories with the largest number of enrolled sportsmen, to individuals, towns, villages, teams and so on. Thus, for example, the first All-Union review-tournament (konkurs-smotr) took place in 1935 for a wide variety of sports, and prizes were awarded to the sports collective of the Yakhrom Plant in the Moscow Region, the collective of the Novoekonomichesky Mine in the Ukraine and the Kursk Machine-and-Tractor-Station sports club.

(i) Spartakiads and Mass Events. Spartakiads featuring a programme of sporting contests were especially important from the political point of view in identifying the new working class with

their particular employment and residential group. Certainly, the political and social significance of competitive sport was not lost on Party leaders in the early industrialisation era. Contests were also, of course, a means of propagandising sport among the population at large.

Sports-contests took a number of forms; one of the most important, and one that was to become the basis of all future competitions, was the intra- and inter-workplace spartakiad. The biggest such sports festivals were the Urals-Kuzbas Spartakiad of 1932, held in Sverdlovsk and dedicated to the commissioning of the first stage of the Urals-Kuzbas Combine, the Trade-Union Summer Spartakiad of 1932, held in Leningrad, and the Spartakiad of Students in Heavy-Industry Colleges, held in Moscow in 1934.

The now traditional May Day sports display in the Red Square was first held in 1931; in that year, it involved some 40,000 participants, in the next year—70,000, and in the next—105,000; concurrently, in Leningrad, some 96,000 athletes of all ages marched through the city in 1933.[31] Sports-parades, marathons and displays in the streets and squares of large cities were becoming increasingly common as a means of advertising sport, encouraging emulation and civic pride. As just one example, in 1936, a green fibre carpet was one day rolled across part of Red Square, and a football match played between two Moscow Spartak teams. On 16 July, 1939, the government decreed that 18 July was to be 'Physical Culturist's Day'. After that year, the Day was marked annually on the second Saturday in August (when, traditionally, such big occasions as the Football Cup Final or opening of the Spartakiad of the Peoples of the USSR take place).

[31] Zholdak, V. I. (ed.), Stranitsy moskovskovo sporta, Moscow, 1969, p. 53.

In athletics, inter-city tournaments became common, as did mass district or town cross-country runs in which whole families were urged to take part. Some 1,500 people, for instance, took part in the Voroshilov Cross Country Run in Moscow in 1930 and 3,000 in a similar run at Krasnoye Selo near Leningrad.[32] Marathons took place through the streets of Moscow - e.g.,the annual bul'varka (a run round the inner-ring road, then known as the Bul'varnoye kol'tso - now the Sadovoye kol'tso) became a popular festive event for spectators and runners alike. Newspapers began to sponsor events that have since become traditional — e.g.,the evening Vechernyaya Moskva sponsored an annual marathon and ice-hockey tourney, the Moscow Moskovskaya Pravda - a road cycle-race, and Pravda - an international marathon race.

(ii) Gymnastics. Gymnastics came into its own in the middle of the decade: by 1940, it was fourth among sports in registered number of participants for both sexes.[33] It received official encouragement at the First All-Union Conference on Gymnastics in 1933, which resolved to make gymnastics the basis both of the whole sports movement and of physical education in primary, secondary and higher schools. The working man and woman were constantly urged to acquire the dignity, grace, deportment and bodily grandeur worthy of the free citizen of the first workers' state. Gymnastics was to be used, too, as a cultural medium to draw athletes into the orbit of a culture which was a novelty to the

[32] Ibid., p. 73

[33] How far popularity of a sport, like gymnastics or chess, was autonomous is uncertain. What is certain is that the extent of the practice of a sport was greatly determined by the Party, which effectively controlled all the mass media, the organisation of sport and provision of facilities. That is not to say that non-approved but genuinely popular sports and pastimes were outlawed; horseracing, cards and dominoes, for example, were tolerated (and, in the case of horseracing, even encouraged) by a government willing at least temporarily not to pursue long-term social goals in the interest of popular contentment for the sake of not prejudicing the attainment of pressing short-term economic goals.

vast majority of them; thus, gymnastics was often linked with the ballet and other forms of cultural expression. The aesthetic value of human movements engendered in gymnastics was, it was urged, synonymous with that which emanates from art at its best; a new and dynamic cultural force was presented as emerging through the symbolic media of gymnastics, calisthenics, the dance, mass formation-displays (as in the Spartakiads) and other sporting activities. It was argued that both sport and art were means of modifying and enriching man's experiences, and that gymnastics enabled a person to discover and develop in himself cultural resources that had lain dormant.

(iii) Football, volleyball, Rugby and Skiing. The most popular team sport of the decade was volleyball, a game that required few facilities (virtually all courts were outdoor) and which both men and women could play. Football continued to be the most popular spectator sport in summer.[34] The number of teams increased rapidly. In 1931, for example, as many as 124 football clubs with over 400 teams and 5,000 - 6,000 players registered for the Leningrad football championships - almost as many teams and players as in the whole of the Russian Empire in 1914.[35] By 1939, as many as 2,000 teams entered for the cup competition (established three years before).[36] The next year, a record total of 2,150 teams entered the qualifying cup rounds.

[34] Women also took up football (and ice-hockey); there were enough women's teams to form a women's league in 1940. This did not, however, survive the war. Grass-hockey was another sport that women played, the first All-Union women's championships being won by the Komsomol team in 1935. (Sport v SSSR, 1970, No. 8, p. 31).

[35] Kiselev, op cit., p. 74.

[36] It was won by Moscow Spartak, which beat Leningrad Zenit 3-1 in the final.

Attempts were made to popularise other organised team sports, sometimes capitalising on similar national folk-games, but not always with much success. Rugby, for instance, was introduced into several secondary schools and colleges in 1926, and again in 1932. It was not until 1934, however, that two teams were assembled in Moscow for exhibition matches. In October, 1935, the first inter-city rugby tournament took place between Moscow and Minsk (which the former won 6-0). Two years later, an un-official All-Union championship was played with the two best Moscow teams competing against a team from Minsk and one from Gor'ky. However, facilities were rather primitive and the game did not attain sufficient popular support at the time to warrant the authorities continuing their efforts to implant it in the Soviet Union. It was not until the late 1950's that Soviet teams once more began to be formed.[37]

Altogether, the players of team-games (including chess) constituted 21.3 per cent of the total number of registered sportsmen in 1937; in the years to come, this percentage was to rise to 27 in 1949 and 40.4 in 1964.[38]

In winter, skiing was the obvious favourite. Some 800 skiers competed for the trade-union championships in 1938, and, to celebrate the twenty-third anniversary of the Red Army, 120,000 competitors took part in a cross-country ski-run in the winter of 1940-41.

(b) Sports and Military Preparedness. The association between several sports and the armed forces was patently obvious during the 1930's, especially in the immediate pre-war years.

[37] Sport v SSSR, 1968, No.5, p.18.

[38] Makartsev, N. A., Stranitsy istorii sovetskovo sporta, Moscow, 1967, p.30.

In October, 1929, the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR issued an order that obliged every serviceman to include sport as an important part of his training. "The skill of a sniper, machine-gunner, scout, signaller, engineer, diver and flyer depends equally on his special technical and his physical training." It demanded that servicemen should "pursue a sport regularly and that the Red Army should become a mass school of physical education".[39] Outside the army, an army reserve was unofficially forming around paramilitary sports groups, mostly under the patronage of the Central House of the Red Army (TsDKA) and Osoaviakhim. The latter had, in 1930, more than 15,000 rifle circles with over 4,000 shooting-ranges at their disposal; these were important because "the training of snipers began in these circles; they were later to distinguish themselves in battles at Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol, and in the Finnish-Soviet conflict.[40] Rifle and sniping contests were held between Moscow and Leningrad."[41]

The G.T.O. system is, as its name implies, of special relevance to the army, since it embodies a national fitness programme that includes such direct military training as tossing a hand grenade and rifle-shooting. As mentioned above (p.260), the first people to obtain G.T.O.2 badges were twelve students and officers at the Frunze Military Academy - who received special mention in an order of the High Command (10 May, 1934) as citizens who "set an example to the entire personnel of the Red Army".[42] By January, 1935, 85 per cent of all servicemen had passed their G.T.O.1 tests.[43]

[39] Chudinov, op. cit., p 117.

[40] The battles around Lake Khasan in the Soviet Far East and the Khalkhim-Gol River in Mongolia were against the Japanese in 1938 and 1939; the Soviet-Finnish war lasted throughout the winter of 1939-40.

[41] Korol'kov, N. P., Sport i zashchita rodiny, Moscow, 1969, p.15.

[42] Ibid., p. 17.

[43] Ibid., p. 18.

Some sports were completely dominated by the army which, in some cases, had a monopoly of the facilities. Parachute-jumping, gliding, mountain-climbing, horse-riding, fencing, shooting and skiing all had an exceptionally large proportion of servicemen-practitioners. In 1933, for example, three soldiers, led by Ivan Lukin, commander of a detachment in the Turkestan military district, scaled the highest Soviet mountain (for the first time) - Stalin Peak (formerly Garmo Peak and, latterly, Communism Peak) in the Pamirs, which is 7,495 metres (24,590 feet) high. Three years later, another army group made the first winter crossing of the Pamirs (410 kilometres - at a temperature of -45°C). Army teams won the All-Union weightlifting, skiing and ice-hockey championships in 1939. In just a few years, this sports training was to have vital application in World War II - in which, it was claimed, "sportsmen were the heart of the ski units".[44]

Among <u>combat-sports</u>, fencing, wrestling and boxing were popular, the first securing a high place in number of participants because it had both male and female adherents and was particularly encouraged by the armed forces. A new unarmed combat sport was introduced in 1938 by order of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports Affairs. It was called <u>sambo</u> - an abbreviation of the Russian <u>samozashchita bez oruzhiya</u> (Self-defence without weapons) and was based partly on ju-jitsu and partly on various national styles of wrestling. Unarmed combat had long been popular

[44] <u>Ibid</u>., p.20. Writing in 1936, the former organiser of the Red Army and current exile, Lev Trotsky, emphasised the important part various paramilitary sports had played within the army and the population as a whole: "All sorts of athletic sports developed tumultuously in the army and around it. Among the workers, officials and students, the badge of distinction for marksmanship enjoyed great popularity. In the winter months, skis gave the regiments a hitherto unknown mobility. Startling successes were achieved in the sphere of parachute-jumping, gliding and aviation. The arctic flights and flights into the stratosphere are known to everybody. These high points speak for a whole mountain chain of achievements." (Trotsky, L., <u>The Revolution Betrayed</u>, Faber & Faber, London, 1937, p. 195). Obviously, Trotsky here is harking back to the "good old days" of the Soviet 'workers' state' and the organisation (the Red Army) essentially created by himself.

both in the army and Dinamo clubs and had been included in the G.T.O.2 programme in 1932. It was not until 1938, however, that official rules were published and All-Union sambo championships established.

Horse-racing came back into official favour; the various racecourses ('hippodromes') were re-opened or returned to their original horseracing purposes, and new All-Union races were held in 1938. It had, of course, been repressed since the Revolution because it had been regarded as encouraging the vice of gambling and passive spectatorship. Now, with the accent on spectacle and pageantry, possibly as a concession to popular demand, horseracing was re-admitted into the fold of tolerated, if not fervently encouraged, sports - along with state facilities for totalisator betting and programmes that gave the horses' form and betting odds. Horseracing had, too, a military usefulness, most of the stud farms being run by the army; that probably influenced the official encouragement of the sport in view of the deteriorating international situation.

Motor-cycling and motor-racing were held back by the lack of production of racing-cars and motor-cycles. The All-Union Committee had taken over motor-racing and set up the USSR Motor Sports Club in 1935, which inaugurated All-Union rallies. It also ordered the manufacture in 1938-39 of the first prototypes of Soviet sports- and racing-cars; previously, sports-drivers had adapted saloon cars or used foreign racing cars. Nevertheless, the sports administration came in for criticism for their alleged neglect of these sports, which were regarded as important for the country's defence. Kharchenko admitted that the thirty existing motor-car clubs were inefficient and had trained only 6,000 drivers in the whole of 1936.

He promised that steps would be taken immediately to remedy the situation, one of which was to make the driving test obligatory, from 1st May, 1937, for all candidates for the G.T.O.2 test.[45] Criticism continued, however, and opened the way to all manner of other accusations which may have contributed to Kharchenko's downfall in July, 1937 (alternatively, it may be, of course, that the impending downfall evoked the criticisms). It was not until after the war that both sports were to develop at all widely.

Chess was, according to figures on participation by sport in 1940, the most 'popular' sport, or at least the one with most registered players. Other figures bear out the popularity of the game: in 1936, the enormous total of 700,000 people are said to have played at some stage in the trade-union championships and, in 1940, the country had a total of 950,000 registered chess-players.[46] Soviet chess-masters were good enough to compete against 'bourgeois' masters and the Party gave permission for the leading Soviet player, Botvinnik, to compete in several foreign tournaments after 1933.

(c) Achievements: Peak Prewar Performances. How high Soviet standards were generally at this time is not easy to judge, since Soviet sportsmen did not compete in many 'bourgeois' international events (like the 1936 Olympic Games held in Berlin) and did not belong to any international federations or committees.[47] It is

[45] Krasny sport, 11th March, 1937.

[46] Sport v SSSR, 1968, No.6, p. 31.

[47] It has been asserted (by Legostaev, op. cit., p. 28) that Soviet participation in bourgeois sport, after being discussed, was rejected in 1939. Nevertheless, gold rubles are said to have been released for subscription to foreign sports magazines; a Soviet magazine, Sport za rubezhom (Sport Abroad) began publication in 1939 (with a circulation of only 1,000 copies). Despite it being reserved 'for special use only', it did not survive beyond the fifth issue.

the Soviet claim, however, that a number of athletes were of world class and that several Soviet records exceeded existing world records; they were not, of course, ratified by world sports bodies, since the Soviet Union was not a party to these organisations.

One source asserts that, as far back as 1934, six world marks had been improved on - in weightlifting, swimming and speed-skating. In athletics, between 1938 and 1940, it was estimated that "Soviet women athletes were overall in second place, and the men in fourth place in unofficial world rankings".[48] Nina Dumbadze from Georgia threw the discus 49m. 54cm. - a world record; Nikolai Ozolin pole-vaulted 4m. 30cm., V. Alekseyev threw the javelin 69m. 65cm. - all then European records. In the field events, two other Soviet women achieved results very close to official world records: K. Kapteva threw 45m. 38cm. in the javelin, and T. Sevrukova — 49m. 54cm. in the shot. Altogether, by 1st January, 1939, as many as 44 unofficial world records were said to have been set - over half of them (23), significantly, in weightlifting; the remainder were in shooting (9), athletics (9), swimming (2) and in speed-skating (1).[49]

There is little doubt that standards were rising quite rapidly and that the rankings system and the decision to train a group of what were effectively professional sportsmen and sportswomen had largely been instrumental in bringing this about. Given a different international climate, the USSR might well have proved to be in a state to test its strength against the world's top sporting nations before the war.

[48] Tarabrin, I. A. (ed.), Pyat'desyat shagov sportivnoi Rossii, Moscow, 1967, p. 178.

[49] Samoukov, op. cit., p.300. The director of the Museum of the History of Physical Culture and Sport of the USSR at the Lenin Stadium, Zoya Romanova, herself a former vice-chairman of the All-Union Committee, told the present writer that Soviet athletes had by 1940 established 49 unofficial world records.

It was on the base of mass participation that the outstanding achievements were said to have been obtained. By 1940, the sports movement had grown to 5,332,400 sportsmen (from 759,000 in 1929 and 4,700,000 in 1934), the bulk of whom were members of primary sports collectives (see Appendix III). In the Russian Republic, there were 33,682 collectives with 1,600,000 members (1.4 per cent of the population), in the Ukraine - 14,500 collectives with 809,000 members (2 per cent) and, in Belorussia - 3,925 collectives with 154,000 members (1.7 per cent).[50]

In the national Republics, sport was, as we have pointed out, a means of creating and encouraging a sense of Soviet national identity and unity. Although standard organised sports, team-games and gymnastics were encouraged in the non-Russian Republics, there was also a concerted attempt - in line with the then general cultural and educational policy of developing ethnic cultures within a Soviet framework - to sustain and organise a number of national games. But not all. The Soviet sports movement, like all aspects of culture, was to be "national in form and socialist in content". It was to include "only those types of national sport which can enrich the already existing physical culture".[51]

5. Physical Education

(a) Schools. This was a period in which significant changes took place in the schools (and) in the provisions for the training of physical educationalists. After the decision to create a fully centralised school system in 1931, a set of new syllabuses for all subjects came into force on 1st January, 1932 which was to operate in a

[50] Compiled from statistics provided in Malaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya, Vol. VIII (3rd. edition), Moscow, 1960, p. 838, and Samoukov, op. cit., p. 306.

[51] Elashvili, V. I. Znachenie etnograficheskikh materialov po narodnomu sportu, Moscow, 1964, pp. 7-8.

uniform curriculum throughout the comprehensive school system. A new physical education programme was therefore issued - influenced considerably by the introduction of the B.G.T.O. system in that year and by two Party resolutions: the first "On Primary and Secondary Schools" passed on 5th September, 1931, and the second "On Curricula and Timetables in the Primary and Secondary School" passed on 25th August, 1932.[52] In these resolutions, the Central Committee of the Party strongly attacked the 'complex' ("project") method of combining individual subjects in the school curriculum.

(i) New physical-education curricula. The new physical-education syllabus laid down the guidelines for every physical-education lesson, which was to be distinct from lessons in other school subjects proper. Like its predecessor, the new physical-education syllabus stressed the health side of physical education, but added two new elements: elementary knowledge of (i) sports theory and (ii) first-aid. As before, no specific sports were mentioned by name, nor was gymnastics recommended. Instead, the syllabus described the motor skills that were to be developed - walking, running, swimming, balancing, climbing, jumping, throwing, combat-exercises and dancing, along with some theoretical knowledge of hygiene and sports. Children were to be trained to pass their standards for the B.G.T.O. test. They had to meet one standard in form 1 (at the age of seven), two in form 2, eight in form 3 and nine in forms 4-7. The time allotted to physical education was to be two-and-a-half hours in forms 1-4 and three hours in forms 5-10, spread over the then 10-day school 'week'.

[52] Quoted in Fizkul'tura v shkole, 1967, No. 9, p. 5.

With the encouragement of competition and organised sports in the country at large, the physical-education syllabus was formalised in the second half of the 1930's in order to incorporate intra-school competition. In the new syllabus set for 1937, gymnastics was included for the first time and made the basis of the physical-education lesson: exercises were prescribed, using the rings, parallel-bars, horse and horizontal bars; some elements of acrobatics were also recommended. No longer was the material classified according to basic motor movements, but now according to specific formal sports: gymnastics, athletics, skiing, team-games, swimming, and so on. The time devoted to physical education was, however, reduced to one hour per week for all classes, with no time allowed separately for games - as a concommitant of the growing stress on formal academic lessons.

With war clouds gathering, another syllabus was introduced in 1940 which inserted military training (drilling, hand-to-hand fighting, etc.) into the curriculum for the senior forms. Furthermore, schools were instructed that, besides giving children an all-round introduction to a wide range of sports, they were to encourage them to pursue one sport in particular, which was to be an optional choice for each school. Although this demand fitted in well with the trend in sport in the country as a whole, it was, of course, wishful thinking to imagine that a physical-education instructor could attain much in the way of specialist training in just one hour a week.

(ii) Sports-Amenities. What most prevented the new syllabuses from being effective was the inadequacy of resources to realise the aims: both equipment and qualified instructors were in very short supply (see Appendix VII). The figures below give some picture of the very poor provision of equipment and instructors for schools and colleges.

Table 14: Schools and Colleges with Sports-Amenities in 1936

| Type of Sports-Amenity | Schools with Amenity | |
|---|---|---|
| | (Number) | (%) |
| Sports-centres | 18 | 0.01 |
| Football-pitches | 520 | 0.30 |
| Basketball-courts | 974 | 0.54 |
| Volleyball-courts | 4,930 | 3.00 |
| Gymnasiums | 764 | 0.42 |

Compiled from Makartsev, N. A., Stranitsy istorii sovetskovo sporta, Moscow, 1967, p. 116; Pedagogicheskaya entsiklopediya, Vol. IV, Moscow, 1968, p. 67.

Table 15: Physical-Education Specialists in 1940

| Number with Secondary Education | Number with Higher Education | Others | Total Number |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5,983 | 2,809 | 18,523 | 27,315 |

Source: Fizicheskaya kul'tura v shkole, 1967, No. 10, p. 23.

Despite the large sums that were being channelled into physical education, it is clear that the vast majority of primary and secondary schools had neither sports-facilities nor trained instructors. Only one school in 235, for example, had a gymnasium, and only one in 346 had any kind of playing-field for its use. More importantly, few schools had a qualified physical-education instructor. Even if all the qualified physical-education instructors had worked in schools, there would still not have been enough for every two-hundredth school to have one. In fact, nearly all worked in sports-collectives and trade-union sports societies. Given the dearth of equipment and instructors, the stress had had to be put on extra-curricular children's activities. On 21st April, 1932, the Party had issued a decree "On the Work of the Pioneer Organisation" in which it stressed the

responsibility of the Pioneers for providing sporting facilities and contests.[53] Since most children of school age were members of the Pioneer organisation, it may be assumed that many children had an opportunity to pursue sports activity with the Pioneers. Further, a number of sports societies set up junior sections and permitted their junior members to use club equipment; it should be recalled, too, that any society-member had the right to bring members of his family into the society. Thus, the Dinamo Society created a Junior Dinamo section ('Yuny Dinamovets') and Spartak - a Junior Spartak section ('Yuny Spartak'). Where individual sports were organised, it was common to arrange children's teams (for football, volleyball, athletics, swimming and rowing) alongside the adult. In some towns, special children's clubs (called 'sports schools' - detskie sportivnye shkoly) were instituted for the most promising junior athletes; the children would attend the clubs after the day's schooling. By 1939, there were 300 such schools. Some 800,000 schoolchildren pursued a sport in the sports collective of their school; in the same year, about one-and-a-half million children passed their B.G.T.O. test.[54]

(b) Physical-culture institutes. The situation with regard to facilities and clubs was somewhat better in higher educational institutions. Inter-collegiate competitions helped to fire students' sports enthusiasm, and all students were exhorted to acquire their G.T.O. badge.

Meanwhile, three new physical-culture institutes were set up with higher-educational status - in Tbilisi, Kiev and Stalingrad.

[53] Chudinov, op. cit., p. 142.

[54] Samoukov, op. cit., p. 301.

Departments of physical education were opened in teacher-training colleges, and special research institutes were founded in Tbilisi and Leningrad (1931), Moscow (1932) and Khar'kov (1934) - joining the already established Leningrad Lesgaft Institute of Physical Culture, the Frunze Military Academy and the Stalin Central State Institute of Physical Culture (nowadays the Central State Order of Lenin Institute of Physical Culture).

6. Production-Gymnastics

One of the major areas of research engaged in by the above-mentioned institutes was physical culture and production - i.e., how to utilise physical exercise rationally to improve productivity, cut down absenteeism through sickness and injury, reduce fatigue and spread hygienic habits among the millions of new workers who only recently had lived in bug-infested wooden cottages in the villages.

In the early years of Soviet power, a council had been set up[55] to conduct research into the 'Scientific Organisation of Labour' ('Nauchnaya organizatsiya truda' - NOT) which, though not mainly concerned with recreation, did investigate the part 'active rest' and exercise might play at workplaces. The implications of physical recreation for higher productivity had been emphasised by pre-revolutionary scientists like Lesgaft and Sechenov, whose work now received much wider publicity. Further, in 1925, the Party pronouncement on the rôle of sport in socialist society (see p.210) had spread the limits wide: "Physical culture should not be confined merely to physical exercises in the form of sport, gymnastics,

[55] The Council for the Scientific Organisation of Labour (SovNOT) was formed in September, 1923 by order of the USSR Council of People's Commissars.

motor activities and so on; it should embrace both the public and personal hygiene of work and everyday life, the use of the forces of nature, and a proper régime of work and leisure."[56]

With the start of full-scale industrialisation, attempts were made to employ physical culture and sport for directly utilitarian purposes, to link physical culture with factory-work to the benefit of the latter. On 5th February, 1931, the People's Commissar of Labour issued a decree calling on all organisations and enterprises throughout the country to introduce physical exercises at workplaces "as a measure to make labour and everyday life healthier, to combat industrial disease and to raise productivity. The implementation of this measure should be planned separately for various branches of industry and for enterprises of various branches."[57]

As a result, experiments were begun to observe closely the results of various methods of incorporating physical education into production. The All-Union Physical Culture Council created a special commission to study the effects of physical exercises on work and the Moscow and Leningrad Physical-Culture Institutes were put in charge of the research; they, in turn, set up special 'Production Faculties' to specialise exclusively in this work. They carried out surveys first at 27 undertakings (in 1932) and then at 100 more (in 1932-34) with the participation of some 70,000 employees. The experiment appears to have been a success: it was claimed that 'production-gymnastics' not only improved efficiency, but reduced the incidence of industrial disease and waste. Labour-productivity at the Leningrad factory Skorokhod was up by 6.2 per cent, at the Moscow Krasny Treugolnik by 2.8 per cent, at Tryokhgornaya Manufaktura by 2.1 per cent, at the Anisimov Weaving Mill by 4.3 per cent, and

56 Izvestiya Tsentral'novo Komiteta RKP (b), 20th July 1925.

57 Pravda, 5th February, 1931.

at the Khar'kov Tractor Plant by 6.3 per cent. In a leader, Pravda wrote "It has been proved in practice what an enormous benefit physical culture can be in improving productivity and in implementing cultured methods of work in production."[58]

Despite the apparent success, the idea was not taken up at once (it was only after the war that physical exercises at all enterprises were again to be officially recommended). One reason for the lack of response was that factory-managements had often proved hostile to the recommendations of the zealous research-brigades-which they viewed as a threat to the vital task of fulfilling the plan. When every minute counted in working towards the set targets, time taken out for physical exercise was regarded as time wasted. Workers, too, did not always take kindly to the idea of an invigorating exercise-session in the middle of their already exhausting labour—particularly if it interfered with their chance of earning a bonus. In many cases, the physical-education break was dropped as soon as the research-brigade moved on.[59]

7. Summary

(1) With the embarking of the USSR onto a course of rapid industrialisation, the pattern of sport for the new society began to take shape. By the end of the 1930's, the basic organisational pattern had already been set - with its sports societies, primary sports-collectives, sports schools, formal physical-education syllabus, G.T.O. programmes, and uniform ranking system. The Soviet society of the 1930's differed from that of the preceding period in seeing the flourishing of all manner of competitive sports (football, basketball, volleyball) with mass spectator appeal and

[58] Ibid., 24th July, 1934.

[59] Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, No. 11, 1967, p. 53.

the official encouragement of leagues, stadiums, cups, championships, popularity-polls, cults of sporting heroes - all the appendages of a sub-system consciously designed to provide general recreation for the fast-growing urban populace .

(2) One of the most profound social consequences of industrialisation was the very rapid shift of people from country to town.[60] Millions of people, uprooted from centuries-old traditions, were pitched into new and strange environments and found themselves building vast ironworks and blast-furnaces in previously uninhabited wastes like Magnitogorsk, oil-refineries and pipelines in the Caucasus or railways across the deserts of Turkestan, working on the new collective farms - or in labour-camps in Siberia. This social upheaval was bound to have a reflection in the nature of and requirements for sporting activity. Besides pouring into factories, the newcomers to industry joined factory-clubs and looked to them for the recreation they had previously enjoyed in an open-air rural setting. Since urban living-conditions were spartan and deteriorating,[61] sports served many townsmen as an escape from the drudgery of their domestic and work environments.

60 It has been calculated that a shift of labour comparable to that which took place in the USSR in the twelve years between 1928 and 1940 had taken from thirty to fifty years in the countries of Western Europe and North America that had industrialised earlier (see Black, C. E., "Soviet Society: A Comparative View", in Kassof, A. (ed.), Prospects for Soviet Society, Praeger, New York, 1968, p. 32.). The transformation of the population is reflected in the rapid annual rate of increase in the population of cities of over 50,000 (see Appendices XI A, B and C for data on urbanisation). Moscow, for example, increased in population from just over one million in 1920 to over two million in 1926, nearly three million in 1931 and over four million in 1939 (Moskva: arkhitekturny putevoditel', Moscow, 1960, p. 6).

61 In 1926, the average housing space per person had only been 8.2 and, by 1940, it was down to about 6.4 square metres (Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1970g., "Statistika", Moscow, 1971, pp. 7, 546).

(3) The integrating functions of sport for a new urban community took on an altogether new dimension after 1928. The authorities based most sports clubs directly on the workplace and gave full rein to 'professional' teams representing factories or trade unions with which the workers could identify themselves. The state also provided sports amphitheatres in the fast-growing towns which, by their titanic scale, their architectural forcefulness and national decor, furthered a sense of grandeur, excitement and mass unity that, coupled with the spectacle presented, could evoke feelings among participants and spectators of civic pride and patriotism. At the same time, not unlike the Olympic Games of ancient Greece, the circuses of ancient Rome, the bull-fighting festivals in the giant bowl-like stadiums of Latin America, Spain and Portugal (or even the exotically-named and styled picture-theatres of Britain), these helped distract the masses from the hard and exacting life beyond the stadiums. The many sports-parades and pageants which constituted a background to the sporting competitions of the 1930's were intended, too, to create and reinforce this group feeling and demonstrate to people (abroad as well as at home) how happy and carefree life was under socialism in the USSR—"under the sun of the Stalin Constitution", as it was said after 1936. It is significant that physical-culture rallies often accompanied major political events or festivals (May Day, Constitution Day and the Anniversary of the October Revolution). In this way, sport became a means of linking members of the public with politics, the Party and, of course, Stalin (his portrait, in hundreds of copies, deputising for his person - since he preferred to cultivate the image of himself as a remote godhead).

(4) At a time when, it seemed, everything went into the melting pot of industrialisation, sport had the utilitarian function of furthering, directly and indirectly, the success of the economic plan, of helping to raise labour-productivity by encouraging in the new, recently peasant, labour-force the cultivation of such characteristics as cleanliness, sobriety, punctuality, resourcefulness, discipline, collectivism, efficiency and patriotism. Physical exercise and sport, therefore, received attention mostly because of their interdependence with work. Specialised work in the factory or on the construction-site was a far cry from that on the land or in handicraft-production. Whatever the effectiveness of using sport and physical exercise to develop desired moral and physical qualities may actually be, there can be no doubt that the Soviet authorities believed in it and encouraged it with precisely these aims in mind: hence the G.T.O.-based national fitness campaign and the attempts to introduce daily physical exercises or 'production-exercises' directly into the workplace - and into the home, by means of daily radio physical-education broadcasts (begun in 1929).

(5) Sport became, in effect, professionalised. Athletes were enjoined to treat their performance as part of their plan-fulfilment. Excellence in sport became the equivalent of the achievements of the shock-worker in industry and a reinforcing example of endeavour to the rank-and-file. This had two purposes. At home, the proficient athlete was to inspire emulation from the mass of workers and engender local pride among spectators. Its international significance sprang partly from the implications of Stalin's doctrine of the possibility of building socialism in one country - a doctrine that revived in a new form the whole cult

of Russian messianism: backward Russia would lead the world. Moscow - the third Rome. Skilled athletes possibly capable of world-class performance were encouraged and given every inducement to perfect their skills - even though they still had few opportunities to compete against 'bourgeois' sportsmen. It was claimed, however, that already these 'stars' were, in some sports, achieving performances not far below the best in the world. The declared method of attaining world standards was to set targets for emulation and base masterstvo firmly on massovost' - the latter, officially, taking priority.

(6) A relatively close link was re-established between sport and the military. It stemmed partly from the leaders' conviction of the need for a state surrounded by unfriendly powers with a different social and political system to be strong militarily and constantly on the alert. This conviction became widespread in the 'besieged fortress' atmosphere of the 1930's, encouraged in part by the rise of fascism in Europe and by the deliberate playing up of the danger from without (and from the 'enemy agents' within) to justify the hardships and sacrifice which the intensive industrialisation campaign entailed. Sport openly became a means of providing pre-military training and achieving a relatively high standard of national fitness for defence. Several sports with potential military applications - e.g., skiing, shooting, gliding and mountain-climbing - came to be dominated by servicemen. The two largest and most successful sports clubs in the country were those run by the army and the security forces, the Central House of the Red Army (TsDKA) and Dinamo. And, after 1931, the 'Ready for Labour and Defence' sports-system was expressly intended to train people, through sport, for work and military preparedness.

(7) A comparison between the USSR and Nazi Germany in the 1930's, between the Stalin and Hitler dictatorships in their manipulation of sport for military purposes is tempting (for both régimes displayed certain similar attitudes towards sport) and to some extent instructive: the flag-brandishing sporting parades and displays with distinctly military overtones, the use of sports-events for explicit political purposes (the delivery of political speeches), central direction and control of sport, national fitness campaigns closely allied to military and patriotic aims and the dream of a disciplined athletic youth movement. But there are dangers in the comparison: the Soviet use of sport for military purposes was explicitly (as in the title of the 'Ready for Labour and Defence' system) and actually <u>defence</u> of the motherland, while the German was explicitly <u>aggressive</u> and linked to territorial aggrandizement through military conquest.[62] The main Soviet emphasis in sport was on the training of better workers (rather than better soldiers); the priority was Labour first, Defence second in the <u>G.T.O.</u> system. The Soviet leaders were dealing with a still predominantly rural population and were concerned with transforming a relatively raw labour-force engaged in a gigantic industrialisation campaign. The principal objective of German policies towards sport was to produce strongly chauvinist 'warriors';[63] the Nazi leaders were not dealing with a socially backward rural population in the throes of industrialisation.

[62] Adolf Hitler wrote "Give the German nation six million bodies with flawless athletic training, all glowing with fanatical love of their country and inculcated with the highest offensive spirit, and in less than two years if necessary a national state will have created an army." (Hitler, A., <u>Mein Kampf</u>, London, 1969, p. 497).

[63] The 'non-political' sports movement of the Weimar republic was certainly a willing assistant in this. It produced leaders who called war the noblest sport, and eventually, with all flags flying, it crossed over and supported the Nazis, who had promised

it greater influence over the education of the young. The Third Reich's Director of Sport wrote that "Manly sacrifices for people and country will always be the summit of National Socialist physical training." (R. von Tschammer und Osten, Politische Leibeserziehung, Vol. 12, 1942, p. 14.)

## VI WORLD WAR II, 1941-1945: THE SUPREME TEST OF PHYSICAL TRAINING

### 1. Background

The Soviet involvement in World War II lasted from June, 1941 to August,1945.[1] Hitler's armies had struck deep into the country to the very outskirts of Moscow and Leningrad, to the Volga and the Caucasus, before they were finally driven out. They left behind them great areas of devastation in the west of the country, including most of the Ukraine and much of European Russia. Loss of life was officially estimated at over 20 millions. Material damage was extensive - 17,000 towns, 70,000 villages, 31,000 factories, 84,000 schools and 40,000 miles of railway track.[2] In reporting six years after the war, at the 19th Party Congress, Malenkov was to state that "the war retarded our industrial development for eight or nine years, that is, approximately two five-year plans."[3]

The war was a critical test of the principles that lay behind the 'Ready for Labour and Defence' sports system and, to some extent, of the utilitarian functions which sport had been assigned during the 1930s. The war brought home to many people that sport and physical fitness did actually perform a social function that far exceeded in significance the subjective satisfaction they had gained from it at the time. The cross-country-running, skiing, hurdling, shooting, combat-sports and grenade-throwing all now proved highly relevant both to soldiers at the battlefront and to partisans behind enemy lines. It is, of course, impossible to measure the contribution made by the mass

[1] For a detailed treatment of this period, see Werth, A., Russia at War, 1941-1945, Pan, 1964.

[2] Quoted in Dobb, M., Soviet Economic Development since 1917, Routledge, London, 1966, p. 313.

[3] Malenkov, G., Report to the Nineteenth Party Congress, FLPH, Moscow, 1952, p. 52.

sports movement to preparing Soviet people for their war-effort. There is no doubt, however, that it was useful to have reserves of people who were physically fit, who could endure long months of fatigue, thirst and hunger, and who had been trained in the sort of discipline and moral qualities valuable in war. As Marshal Konev, Commander of the Second Ukrainian Front, wrote in a letter to the editorial board of Fizkul'tura i sport in the first months of the war, "Only physically fit people can stand the strain of heavy fighting, can march long distances under perpetual bombardment and quite often have to start fighting at the end of a long march. We owe it primarily to the sports organisations that Soviet people were trained and had had imparted to them such qualities as courage, persistence, will-power, endurance and patriotism. The soldier needs such qualities in the war we are fighting. The same qualities will be very much needed in peacetime, too."[4]

The war reinforced a patriotism that was to inspire the performance of Soviet athletes abroad for many years to come and which, indeed, to a large extent, had its real origins in the 'Great Patriotic War' - as the Soviet leaders significantly called their part of World War II. This particularly Soviet brand of patriotism was later to be rather awkwardly but poignantly recalled in this account by the twice Olympic sculling champion Yuri Tyukalov: "I am reminded [by J.V. Stalin] of the legend of Anteus who became invincible once he touched the soil of his motherland. . . I recall the 1952 Olympics and the sculling race. Everyone thought that the Australian, Wood, was bound to win the single sculls. Yet I beat him. My 'swallow' flew towards the finishing line as if on wings, and Wood could do nothing about it. And yet, in theory, he should have won.

"Back in February, 1942, Wood was living in Australia, and I was living under the Leningrad blockade. Wood had eggs and bacon for

4 Fizkul'tura i sport, 1941, No. 12, p.2.

breakfast washed down with orange juice; my mother and I received 125 grammes of bread a day. In February, 1942, Wood was relaxing in the sun. At any rate, he didn't have bombs falling all around him or shells smashing his house to smithereens. When he woke up every morning, he didn't have the worry of whether he would live to see the evening. He had it 'O.K.' In that same February, in our room, my uncle's corpse lay on the table, and those of my dead aunt and cousin on the bed. We didn't have the strength to take them out and bury them. Our windows had been blown out by a blast and the flat was freezing cold. I don't know how we managed to survive. . . But my father somehow smuggled some mutton to my mother and me. It saved us.

"I mean no offence to Wood. He is a fine sportsman. I make the comparison with one aim in mind: to show that succulent steaks and a comfortable life are not the only recipe for victory. Patriotism is also needed. For me, a Soviet sportsman and citizen of Leningrad, it was incomparably higher than for Wood. And that is the reason I won."[5]

The story is simpliste, but it does contain a clue to the sort of patriotic motivation behind Soviet participation in sport both at home and abroad to which the war undoubtedly contributed.

2. The Re-Formation of Vsevobuch

The entire sports movement was put on a war footing from June, 1941. Vsevobuch was resurrected and attached to the People's Commissariat of Defence; all the sports committees, societies, collectives, government sports departments and physical-culture institutes were subordinated to it. Sports-programmes and P.E. in schools were switched over to the acquisition of military skills. Students and lecturers (316 of them) of the Lesgaft Institute, for example, formed 13 partisan detachments

[5] Korol'kov, N.P., Sport i zashchita rodiny, Moscow, 1969, pp. 21-22.

which were active behind the lines in German-occupied territory - for which the Institute was awarded, in 1944, the Order of the Red Banner.[6] When a special services independent motorised task-force (Otdel'naya motostrelkovaya brigada osobovo naznacheniya - OMSBON) was set up in June, 1941, the Stalin Central State Institute of Physical Culture in Moscow was approached for its lecturers and students to form the basis of its cadre of skiers, drivers, marksmen and flyers. The Institute was evacuated to Sverdlovsk in the Urals and there trained skiers, drivers, swimmers, grenade-thorowers and specialists in armed and unarmed combat.

In September, 1941, the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports Affairs decreed that "the implementation of the Law on universal military training for all citizens capable of handling a weapon requires all physical-culture organisations to make a really big effort to step up physical training."[7] As a result, over 13,000 skiing-instructors were given 'crash' training-courses during one winter, 1941-42, in Siberia, the Urals and other areas. In Kazakhstan, more than 31,000 during the war became instructors in hand-to-hand fighting and paramilitary sports.[8]

3. Contests during Hostilities

In order to boost morale, sports-contests continued despite the desperate situation. As a retort to those who thought the Soviet Union was on its knees, Feodosy Vanin set a new (unofficial) world record for the marathon (20 km.) on 23 September, 1942. In the same year, some five-and-a-half million people are said to have taken part in ski-races and cross-country runs organised jointly by the Komsomol and the trade unions;

6 Fizkul'tura i sport, 1970, No. 5, p. 2.

7 Chudinov, I.D. (ed.), Osnovnye postanovleniya, prikazy i instruktsii po voprosam fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta, 1917-1957, Moscow, 1959, p. 175.

8 Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoi kul'tury, 1970, No. 5, p. 5.

the number increased to over seven million in 1944; altogether, some 30 million people are said to have taken part in such races during the war.[9] The All-Union athletics championships that had begun in 1936, though interrupted in 1941 and 1942, were resumed in the town of Gor'ky in 1943. As an example of a morale-boosting sports-event, on 6 May, 1942, a football match took place in besieged Leningrad between Dinamo and a Leningrad Garrison team; a commentary on the match was broadcast throughout the Soviet Union and all along the battlefront. "Despite the bombardment and shell-explosions around the stadium, the match continued to the end in the presence of a large number of spectators."[10] Two further matches took place, on 31 May and 7 June, between Dinamo and a Nevsky Factory team. A 'Blitz-Turnir' was held on 11 October between Leningrad Garrison 'A' and 'B' teams and a student team (the Garrison 'A' team, despite drawing in the Final, won the tourney by winning an 11 x 100 metre relay-race, held prior to the match).[11]

In 1943, Moscow held Soviet speed-skating championships in February, Sverdlovsk - skiing championships, with 140 participants, in March, Chelyabinsk - fencing, combat-sport and shooting championships in September, Gor'ky - wrestling championships in November (after a 3-year lapse) and boxing championships in December.[12]

The G.T.O. system underwent a change of orientation so as to encourage purely military training; in 1942, by order of the All-Union

[9] Tarabrin, I.A., Pyat'desyat shagov sportivnoi Rossii, Moscow, 1967, p. 178.

[10] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1970, p. 16. A former English sailor, Len Wincott, then living in Leningrad, who witnessed the match told the present writer that about ten thousand spectators were present.

[11] Kiselev, N.V. (ed.), 70 futbol'nykh let, Lenizdat, 1970, p. 160.

[12] Fizkul'tura i sport, 1970, No. 5, p. 17.

Committee, it was to include "a knowledge of topography, first aid, rifle-handling, running and jumping in full dress, river-crossing, bayonet-drill and hand-grenade-tossing from a prone position."[13]

In education, the People's Commissariat of Education of the Russian Federation issued an order in July, 1941, introducing "military-physical education in senior classes"[14] (3, 4 and 5 hours a week for forms 8, 9 and 10 respectively) and, on 24 October, 1942, the USSR Council of People's Commissars passed a resolution "On the Introduction of Military-Physical Training for Pupils at Incomplete Secondary and Secondary Schools and Tekhnikums."[15] And in July, 1943, one of the Soviet Union's most important Sports Societies was formed, The "Labour Reserves" All-Union Voluntary Sports Society, to represent pupils and staff in the trade, railway and factory schools and colleges which had been established in 1940. Its wartime function was "to provide tempered fighters for the war."[16] Right at the end of the war, partly as a mark of recognition of the contribution of physical fitness through sport to the military victory, three new physical-culture institutes were established: the Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture in Yerevan, the Kazakh State Institute of Physical Culture in Alma Ata, and the Lithuanian State Institute of Physical Culture in Kaunas.

On the debit side, the war caused immense material and human damage to Soviet sport, which no doubt set it back many years. Many of the country's leading sportsmen were killed - such popular heroes as the marathon champion Babarykin, the sprinter Puzhny, the record-holder in the walk, Shkodin, and Kaplinsky, who had established a new Soviet record in speed-skating just one year before his death in 1942. The famous

13 Samoukov, F.I., Istoriya fizicheskoi kul'tury, Moscow, 1964, p. 312.

14 Chudinov, op. cit., p. 170.

15 Ibid., p. 181.

16 Ivonin, V.A. (ed.), Sputnik fizkul'turnova rabotnika, Moscow, 1972, p. 15.

woman ski champion Lyubov' Kulakova was executed by the Nazis after operating as a partisan five months behind the lines. Athletes were, of course, by virtue of their assumed superior stamina, strength, skill and moral qualities, often assigned dangerous missions such as partisan work, and were therefore particularly exposed.

4. The Decline in Sports-Facilities

The set-back in sports-facilities was the harder, bearing in mind that they were, prior to the war, only beginning to approach an adequate level.

Table 16. Sports-Facilities during the War

| Amenity | 1940 | 1945 |
|---|---|---|
| | number | number |
| Sports-centres | 7,858 | 6,401 |
| Gymnasiums | 6,684 | 4,694 |
| Football-pitches | 9,172 | 3,741 |
| Volleyball-courts | 25,137 | 23,725 |
| Basketball-courts | 5,439 | 2,744 |
| Tennis-courts | 1,270 | 272 |

Sources: Fizicheskaya kul'tura v shkole, 1967, No. 10, p. 36; Makartsev, N.A., Stranitsy istorii sovetskovo sporta, Moscow, 1967, p. 114.

The figures do not tell the whole story of destruction, since re-building was started in some places in 1943 as soon as Nazi-occupied territory was liberated, and no indication of the sophistication of facilities is provided in the statistics. It is reasonable to assume that, being mostly open-air playing grounds, they were on the whole rather primitive. The least complex, volleyball-courts - necessitating

only a rough clearing and a net - appeared not to suffer as much as the rather more sophisticated football-pitches, basketball- and tennis-courts.

5. Summary

The war years cannot simply be seen as a wasted interlude that retarded the sports movement. They had certain consequences, some intangible, but nonetheless quite far-reaching, whose effect was to be evident for many years ahead.

(1) The war convinced the authorities that they had been absolutely right to 'functionalise' sport and make countrywide physical fitness a prime target through, primarily, (a) the G.T.O. and B.G.T.O. programmes and (b) a production-principle organisational structure.

(2) It reinforced belief in a military bias in physical training and sport. It was, after all, "the most hardy, courageous and resourceful people who had received their physical tempering in the circles run by Osoaviakhim, the gliding-schools and boxing-rings who made the greatest contribution to victory."[17] (After the war, the rôle of army and military organisations like Dinamo and DOSAAF was to be increased and these organisations made the organisational pillars of the whole sports movement. A national physical-fitness programme was to be the principal goal, and sports with explicit military utility were to become compulsory in all educational establishments and sports societies.)

(3) The emotional effect of the war on Soviet people was capitalised on by the holding of sports-festivals named after eminent athletes who had died in the war. Even though virtually everyone had lost a close relative (many children had, of course, lost their fathers), a national grief could be evoked at the loss of a popular sporting hero. The names and memories of these were now to be invoked both for keeping the memory of the war alive in people's minds and for drawing people to sport: "Sports-contests for prizes dedicated to the memory of outstanding

[17] Korol'kov, op. cit., p. 23.

athletes and heroes of the Great Patriotic War are of special significance. They are very important educationally both for the sportsmen and for the spectators."[18]

(4) Victory in the war gave the Soviet people a sense of pride in their achievements. a feeling that the period of pre-war industrialisation and sacrifice had been justified. Now they could take on the world in another peaceful form of combat, in sport, and test their potential. But the war had been won at a price; many people felt - and they were told this by their leaders - that they had borne the brunt of German might and had made untold sacrifices to free the world from the blight of fascism. The resultant feelings of patriotism and urge to avenge the honour of those that had fallen were to be an evident part of the motivation for victory in foreign competition after the war.

[18] Kharabuga, G.D., Sovetskaya sistema fizicheskovo vospitaniya, Leningrad, 1970, p. 13.