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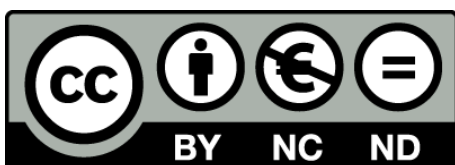
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Promoting Authority Through Sport by States and Societies of Eastern Europe

Jenifer Parks

Summary

The topic of authority and sport opens many avenues for research on Eastern Europe. Much scholarship on the region has examined the use of sport by authoritarian regimes to promote state-building, unity, and regime authority. Through a case study of the drive to host the 1980 Olympic Games, this article explores the ways that Soviet sports administrators used international sport to promote the authority abroad of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc during the Cold War. . While Olympic successes did enhance the reputation of the Soviet Union abroad, the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on the eve of the Moscow Olympiad, damaged Soviet authority internationally, demonstrating the limits of sports to mitigate the effects of international conflict. Recent scholarship on the region has also highlighted the limits of state control over sport and the use of sport by non-state actors to advance their own local, regional, and national agendas separate from and in some cases in direct opposition to regime goals. Considering the ways in which various actors, groups, institutions, and states of Eastern and East Central Europe have attempted to use sports in order to promote their power internally and externally, the topic of authority and sport provides many avenues for exploring power dynamics in the history of Eastern and East Central Europe.

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Part I: Topic Overview

The theme of authority and sport opens up many avenues of intellectual and research possibilities. One way to approach the topic of authority and sport is to consider the methods through which institutions and authorities have exerted power over the organization of sports.¹ A second way to approach the topic of authority and sport is to consider the ways in which various actors, groups, institutions, and states have at-

¹ See Sport and Institutions in this volume.

tempted to use sports in order to promote their power internally and externally. As opposed to examining how power can be exerted over sport, this method of inquiry looks at the promotion of legitimacy and influence through sport. Authority can be exercised through sport internally by state actors to consolidate and unify the citizens and subjects of their territories. At the same time non-state actors can use sport to exert influence on the regime. Similarly, sport can be utilized by states and other high-level international actors to project their authority abroad, while non-state and non-institutional actors can use sport to challenge established authorities on the international stage. This article examines these avenues of exercising authority through sport based on the existing literature and a case study on the Soviet Union's participation in the Olympic Games.

Part II: Literature Review

Promoting and Contesting State Authority Internally Through Sport

Much scholarship on sports in Eastern and East-Central Europe has focused on the role of state actors in using sport as a tool to promote their internal power and legitimacy, because the countries of the region have been dominated by authoritarian regimes, whether it be the multi-ethnic empires of the nineteenth century or the dictatorial empires of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. According to Max Weber, authority of regimes can come from the interests of the ruled, custom, or personal devotion to the ruling regime and authority can be based on three basic types of rule held to be 'legitimate' by both rulers and ruled. In this definition of authority Weber is concerned with the exercise of "imperative coordination" or control by an individual (or organization, or government, etc.) over others, and as such he excludes "skill in sport" as a means of exercising authority although it does constitute for Weber a "kind of influence."² If one were to extend the definition of authority to include the use of symbolic capital to promote legitimacy, sport becomes a key arena for the exercise of authority as symbolic power. Pierre Bourdieu defines "symbolic capital" as "any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value."³ Furthermore, according to Bourdieu, the state is in a privileged position to use symbolic capital, like sports, to promote its own authority and legitimacy. As Bourdieu wrote, "It follows that the state, which possesses the means of imposition and inculcation of the durable princi-

2 WEBER: Three Types of Legitimate Rule, pp. 1-11.

3 BOURDIEU: Rethinking the State, p. 8.

ples of vision and division that conform to its own structure, is the site par excellence of the concentration and exercise of symbolic power.”⁴

East European and East-Central European countries sought to emulate state and national development in Western Europe where modern states have used sport to exercise control over citizens and subjects, to generate national unity, to promote state control over society and central power over ethnically, religiously, socio-economically diverse populations. Richard Crampton asserts that “the twentieth century was the age of the state”, highlighting the role of sport in nation-building.⁵ As Erik Jensen notes in his work on the Weimar Republic, these states saw sports as a way to build national health, and large gymnastics festivals were organized to promote physical activity among the population as well as to display national unity and culture.⁶ After World War II, the emerging socialist sports systems were meant to build a healthy and happy citizenry through mass participation in sports. In the early Soviet period, sport and athletes were seen as important tools for promoting a mobilized and disciplined citizenry necessary for the tasks of “building socialism” and defending the new nation.⁷ Peter Bankov compares the “Sport for All” initiative of the 1980s across the Eastern Bloc, highlighting the significance of sport for building national and socialist authority both within and between bloc countries.⁸ In their interdisciplinary volume on sports in Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Arié Malz, Stefan Rohdewald, and Stefan Wiederkehr, brought together a series of articles that demonstrate how sports was used in Eastern European regimes to legitimize communist parties and their ideology.⁹ Scholarship on sport in the GDR has demonstrated the use of sport as a tool for legitimizing a regime’s authority as well as a means of social integration.¹⁰ All of these works emphasize the role of the state in promoting its own internal authority through sport.

While sport has been used effectively by ruling regimes to promote unity, control, and legitimacy internally; local, regional, national, and transnational groups, institutions, and movements have also embraced sports as a way to participate in the established order, to undermine central authority, and/or promote their own visions of society and the nation. Bourdieu recognizes limits of the use of symbolic power as it can become a contested “field of power, defined as the space of play within which the holders of capital (of different species) struggle in particular for power over the state, i.e., over the statist capital granting power over the different species of capital and

4 BOURDIEU: *Rethinking the State*, p. 9.

5 CRAMPTON: Foreword, pp. 672–680.

6 JENSEN: *Body by Weimar*.

7 KIAER: *The Swimming Vtorova Sisters*, p. 90.

8 BANKOV: *Sport for All*, pp. 780–795.

9 MALZ/ROHDEWALD/WIEDERKEHR: *Sport zwischen Ost und West*.

10 REINHART/KRÜGER: *Funktionen des Sports*, pp. 43–77; HÜSER: *Moderner Sport und Geschichte*, pp. 223–263. See also WILKINSON JOHNSON: *Sports, Mass Mobilization, and the Everyday Culture of Socialism in East Germany*.

over their reproduction (particularly through the school system)".¹¹ Sport in this sense can be seen as both a "species of capital" as well as a mode of "reproduction" of that capital through the organization of sporting events, building of stadiums, and media presentations of sport. "Cultural and linguistic unification", according to Bourdieu, is accomplished by "rising to universality, a particular culture or language [and causing] all others to fall into particularity. [...] foster[ing] both the monopolization of the universal by the few and the dispossession of all others ..."¹² The same could be said of sport. As the state imposes its control over sport as a symbolic venue of power, it dispossesses those who subscribe to alternate ideas. In this sense, support for a local or national team can be an expression of dispossession from the officially sanctioned message, and local or regional organizers can use sport to promote loyalties and allegiances in competition with and/or in opposition to central powers.

Research on sport in East and East Central Europe demonstrates the limits of using sport to promote regime authority as the outcomes of the matches and especially the reactions of the spectators can be unpredictable, could convey the wrong message, or not convey the preferred message satisfactorily. Richard Crampton has noted that sporting events in Eastern Europe became sites of spontaneous public display and outbursts under Nazi and later Soviet hegemony.¹³ In his work on Soviet soccer, Robert Edelman explores how sport can undermine state authority by providing a less controlled venue for expressing dissatisfaction with state-imposed activities through spontaneous outbursts of sporting fandom.¹⁴ Sport can also undermine central authority by providing a venue for alternative or oppositional sources of legitimacy to be promoted. Edelman and others have demonstrated that soccer competitions in the Soviet Union generated revenues and prestige for local clubs and their managers, providing an avenue for local administrators to exert their authority outside of and in some cases in opposition to the central state and party organs.¹⁵

While state-funding of sports competitions, exhibitions, and celebrations can help build unity and inculcate support for the state and its institutions, sport can also be used to promote local, regional, and national identities, undermining allegiance to the ruling regime. Claire Nolte's study of the Czech Sokol movement demonstrates how sports provided space for national construction under the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire.¹⁶ Such cultural movements provided a venue for the expression and promotion of the authority of the nation separate from and sometimes in conflict with the imperial state. A recent edited volume on sport in Soviet society "investigate[s] physical culture and sport as means of social discipline, as a space for the con-

11 BOURDIEU: *Rethinking the State*, pp. 4–5.

12 BOURDIEU: *Rethinking the State*, p. 8.

13 CRAMPTON: Foreword, p. 675–676.

14 EDELMAN: *Spartak Moscow*. See also EDELMAN: *A Small Way of Saying 'No'*.

15 EDELMAN: *Serious Fun*, pp. 160–162; 177–178.

16 NOLTE: *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914*.

struction of new social hierarchies, as constitutive elements of collective or national self-images and as a medium for the state to project an image of itself”, while at the same time revealing within Soviet sport “not only disciplinary and integrating but also destabilizing and subversive functions”.¹⁷ Examinations of physical space and media representations of sport in the Soviet Union reveal a “contested area” in which participants often had their own reasons for participating and spectators received the state’s message according to their own desires, needs, and agendas not always in keeping with the goals of the leadership.¹⁸ Studies of memory and sports in the Soviet Union expose the limits of sport as a vehicle for promoting national unity and the authority of the Soviet Union, demonstrating that sport can generate local, regional, and even class identities separate from the collective identity promoted by the regime, “underscor[ing] the limits of state control over emotions, which must be enlisted if any regime is to be able to rely upon the support of its citizens”.¹⁹ For example, Vilma Cingiene and Skaiste Laskiene argue in their article on Lithuanian basketball during the Cold War that, while not the only source of national identity, basketball was an important vector for maintaining national identity separate from and in opposition to Soviet dominance, providing iconic national heroes outside of Soviet and Communist Party ideology.²⁰

While sport has certainly been a site for state control and popular resistance, recent scholarship has sought to move beyond top-down models of dictatorship and dichotomies of state repression and popular resistance to explore the relationship between rulers and ruled in communist regimes more thoroughly. While much initiative came from ruling Communist-Party circles, subjects and citizens of the Soviet Union and the “People’s Democracies” of Eastern Europe actively participated in state-building projects, including sporting events. Participation in sports or mass physical culture promoted the authority of the new state by mobilizing the citizenry and those that took part “actively produced Soviet ideology, rather than simply being its victims”.²¹ Mary Fulbrook introduces the “notion of participatory dictatorship” to describe the GDR, suggesting that alongside repressive measures, people in the GDR also “actively and often voluntarily carried the ever changing social and political system of the GDR”.²² While local and regional clubs as well as individual fans could and did promote their own authority through sport in opposition to the state, groups and individuals also at times reinforced state power by participating in official, state-organized competitions and couching their demands for autonomy in official language and ideology. In his article on Dynamo Kiev fans in 1966, Manfred Zeller demon-

17 KATZER: Foreward, p. 11.

18 O’MAHONEY: Sites and Media, p. 16.

19 MCREYNOLDS: Milieus and Memory, pp. 127–132.

20 CINGIENE/LASKIENE: A Revitalized Dream, pp. 762–779.

21 KIAER: The Swimming Vtorova Sisters, p. 90.

22 FULBROOK: The People’s State, p. 12.

strates how Soviet fans complicate dichotomies such as “oppression and resistance” or “state and people” through their “described opposition to the ‘people’s team’ Spartak and other teams from Moscow, and identification with a police squad that otherwise should have represented the ‘oppressive’ state order.”²³ Similarly, Zeller shows that by the very act of writing letters to various Soviet institutions, Soviet soccer fans participated in a very Soviet act and defined their fan community as Soviet in its ideals of “proper conduct” of a citizen (*kul’turnost’*) and “strategies of interaction with authorities.”²⁴ In the multi-ethnic, and multinational Soviet Union, sports fandom became “a multi-ethnic, transnational cultural practice that connected people of different national backgrounds” while at the same time promoting regional and national identities.²⁵ Such studies have revealed a complex interaction between communist states and citizens in the realm of sport as a means of cultivating internal authority.

Promoting Authority Externally Through Sport

In addition to the use of sport to promote internal authority, sport has also been used to project power and legitimacy externally. According to Weber “authority” necessitates some “immediate relation of command and obedience.”²⁶ However, when one considers international actors, such an “immediate relation of command and obedience” is impossible, so authority can be extended to include those actions which affect directly or indirectly some degree of obedience or acceptance of legitimacy by the international community. International sports can also be seen as a mode of symbolic power, eliciting recognition, sympathy, and/or admiration for a regime from an international audience. Just as with the case of using sport as a tool to secure internal obedience, unity, and legitimacy, when used as a mechanism to project power and legitimacy externally, sport is a source of authority that can be tapped by both states and societies.

Much of the literature on Eastern and East Central European participation in international sport emphasizes the relationship between sports and politics and the use of sport by communist regimes to demonstrate the superiority of the socialist system through dominance on the playing field and establishing a socialist bloc in international sports organizations.²⁷ While acknowledging heavy state involvement in using sport to fight the Cold War, many studies show that participation in international

23 ZELLER: “Our Own Internationale”, p. 62.

24 ZELLER: “Our Own Internationale”, p. 63.

25 ZELLER: “Our Own Internationale”, p. 72, 67.

26 WEBER: *Social and Economic Organization*.

27 PEPPARD/RIORDAN: *Playing Politics*; RIORDAN: *Rewriting Soviet Sports History*, pp. 247–258; RIORDAN: *Sport, Politics, and Communism*; GUTTMANN: “The Games Must Go On”; GUTTMANN: *The Olympics*; HILL: *Olympic Politics*; HOBERMAN: *The Olympic Crisis*; HOBERMAN: *Sport and Political Ideology*; WAGG/ANDREWS (eds.): *East Plays West*.

sports also opened up the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies to western influence and could invite criticism of the state-run sports systems. Literature on sport during the Cold War has tended to contrast the state-run, Soviet-style sports regimes of the East with the "free" institutions of the West. While western observers admired the sporting successes of socialist countries, they often criticized the socialist sports systems as dehumanizing. Barbara Carol Cole's 2000 dissertation highlights the polarized view of East German sports in the West where focus on doping and Stasi repression was used to discredit anything in the GDR while sporting successes internationally were used by the GDR to glorify its sports system.²⁸ For the Soviet case, Perestroika era memoirs and press articles provide some documentation of widespread doping and the work of Mikhail Prozumenshchikov has thrown light on the role of the KGB in coordinating and supervising Soviet athletes in order to guard the image of the Soviet Union internationally.²⁹ Similarly, communist training methods produced strong female athletes who won many international competitions, but the perceived mannishness of women from the Eastern Bloc became a source of ridicule and suspicion in the West.³⁰

Studies of sport and authority in Eastern and East Central Europe also demonstrate how communist regimes claimed that their international successes were based on extensive state backing of sport for the masses, when, in reality, more attention was paid to elite sport as a way to showcase the successes of the socialist system. State propaganda promoted the socialist system's scientific knowledge, training skills, and progressive social system which, it argued, allowed for sporting excellence.³¹ Despite the importance of sport in building popular participation and legitimacy for communist regimes, studies demonstrate that elite, international sport remained the priority of Eastern European socialist regimes.³² In his study of the Sport for All initiative, Peter Bankov notes that mass sport never got the same attention and resources as elite international sports and Olympic training in countries throughout the socialist bloc.³³ Similar revelations have been voiced regarding the Soviet sports system.³⁴ Perestroika era revelations from sports insiders, primarily trainers and athletes, revealed the growing chasm between the purported purposes of Soviet sport, namely to inspire ordinary Soviet citizens to participate in sports in order to build healthy, more productive workers and a happier society, and the realities of an exploitative, elite training program.³⁵ Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and with it the state-run sports

28 COLE: East German Sports System.

29 RIORDAN: Rewriting Soviet Sports History; PROZUMENSHCHIKOV: Bol'shoi Sport.

30 BEAMISH/RITCHIE: Totalitarian Regimes, pp. 11–26.

31 JENSEN: Body by Weimar.

32 WILKINSON JOHNSON: Sports, Mass Mobilization, and the Everyday Culture, p. 32.

33 BANKOV: Sport for All, pp. 792–793.

34 RIORDAN: Rewriting Sports History, p. 247.

35 EDELMAN: Professionalization of Soviet Sport, p. 247.

system, ex-Olympians found it hard to make a living under new circumstances and sports facilities, already underdeveloped through lack of funding, had fallen into disuse.³⁶ At the same time, with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, sports in the region has become exposed to the market pressures which have impacted sports in the west for decades. Scholars have noted the dramatic decrease in funding for sports in former Eastern Bloc countries due to the absence of state funding and organization.³⁷

Scholarship on Soviet participation in international sports also reveals how participation in international organizations, while designed to demonstrate Soviet socialist authority against a Western, bourgeois opponent, could also serve as a conduit for Western ideas and values to enter Soviet society. In a 1998 edited volume, Andre Gounot explores the Red Sport International which was organized to cultivate authority for international socialism and the nascent Soviet Union through socialist sports organizations and international competitions. RSI represented a challenge to the western-bourgeois concept of the modern nation-state and its dissolution in the 1930s marked the acceptance by the Soviet Union of the western standard of international recognition and authority.³⁸ Barbara Jean Keys' work on international sport in the 1930s has shown that while modern western sport in some ways became modified or "Sovietized" as it was adapted to fit the Soviet context, the price for participating in western sport was the "opening [of] Soviet culture to internationalist currents often subversive of broader regime goals."³⁹ Similarly, in my own work, I argue that the Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympic Games, while undertaken out of a desire to "catch up and overtake the west", meant accepting the legitimacy of western sports and submitting to international standards.⁴⁰

New avenues for exploring the role of authority in sport are offered by increased accessibility of information on Soviet bloc countries and closer attention to the relationship between the Soviet sports administrators and their socialist neighbors. Recent scholarship acknowledges the attempt by the Soviet leadership to use sports as a means of solidifying their control over the Eastern Bloc as well as project the authority of socialist sport. During the Cold War, national sports movements were banned or limited and only official sports clubs, schools, and organizations sponsored by state authorities tied to Soviet influence were allowed as a way to build the authority of the state and the socialist system. In her dissertation on Polish women and sport, Nameeta Mathur acknowledges the role of the Soviet Union in developing sport for women in Poland.⁴¹ According to Mathur, "Polish women's physical culture in Stalinist

36 RIORDAN: *Rewriting Sports History*, p. 254.

37 COLLINS: *Epilogue*, p. 836.

38 GOUNOT: *Revolutionary Demands*, p. 201.

39 KEYS: *Soviet Sport*, p. 416.

40 PARKS: *Verbal Gymnastics*. See also PARKS: *Red Sport, Red Tape*.

41 MATHUR: *Women and Physical Culture*.

Poland was patterned after the Soviet Union [...] Unlike the Soviet sportswomen who had received significant state attention from the very beginning of the interwar period, Polish female athletes were only just benefiting from the radical political, economic, social and cultural transformations within their country under the steady importation of Stalinist-style socialist ideals and practices.⁴² Vassil Girginov acknowledges that the existence of the Eastern Bloc and the limited sovereignty of Eastern Europe during the Cold War has meant that little study has been made of nationalism in the region.⁴³ While much of the literature on sport in the Cold War has accepted that this authority over sport in the Eastern Bloc emanated from the Soviet Union, scholarship on the GDR sports system has shown that individual member states often used their control over sport to build their own authority to counter Soviet influence.⁴⁴ Similarly, Markku Jokisipilä considers how the Olympic Games became an arena for struggle between East and West during the Cold War, and how the prominent defeats of the Soviet hockey team in international play compromised the authority of the Soviet Union as well as increased the authority of the Czech team after Prague Spring as well as the United States in their “Miracle on Ice” in 1980 in Lake Placid. Jörg Ganzenmüller discusses how international meets between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union in hockey became the scenes of political protest, drawing into question the authority of the Soviet Union in the Eastern Bloc and providing an avenue for Czechoslovakia to promote its internal authority in opposition to the Soviet leadership and its external authority through expression of independence from the socialist bloc.⁴⁵ The refusal of Romania to observe the Eastern bloc boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics provides another example of a bloc country exercising its own authority at the expense of the bloc. Bloc countries also sought to influence Third-World countries with the exportation of sporting expertise and technical support. While these programs of sporting cooperation served to promote the authority of socialism in the developing world, they could also be used to promote individual countries internationally.⁴⁶ The Soviet Union was never able to fully replace local, regional, and national authority with their state-run socialist sport model, and after the break-up of the Soviet Union sport provided an important vector for the articulation of national authority in the newly independent states.⁴⁷

42 MATHUR: *Women and Physical Culture*, p. 209.

43 GIRGINOV: *Eastern European Sport*, p. 697.

44 COLE: *East German Sports System*.

45 SEEGER: Review, <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=34272>.

46 COLLINS: *Epilogue*, p. 835.

47 CINGIENE/LASKIENE: *A Revitalized Dream*, pp. 762–779.

Part III: Case Study: The Use of the Olympic Games to promote International Authority for the Soviet Union during the Cold War

From its entry into the Olympic Games in 1952, the Soviet Union used a variety of methods and approaches to promote Soviet authority internationally through sport. Participation and success in international competitions, including the Olympic Games, provided a venue for challenging the West and demonstrating the superiority of the Soviet state-run sports system. Membership and coordination of other socialist states within international sports organizations helped to promote a unified socialist line within international sports organizations, influencing sports regulations from within to increase socialist international victories and enhance the authority of the socialist system. Sports exchanges provided another avenue for promoting external authority for the Soviet Union. Exchanges with other socialist countries were meant to promote socialist solidarity and to solidify Soviet control over the Communist Bloc. Sports exchanges with western nations advanced the image of a friendly super-power, equal to if not superior to the United States in sports. Sports exchanges with the developing world were used to win friends and client states abroad in the cultural Cold War. Finally, hosting sports competitions could show off Soviet sporting prowess, generate friendly feelings toward the Soviet Union, and display an image of the Soviet Union as a modern world power with an advanced economic and social system on par with the West. This case study will examine how Soviet administrators sought to promote Soviet authority during the Cold War through participation in and ultimately hosting of the Olympic Games.

Promoting Soviet Authority through Olympic Participation

During the postwar period, Soviet administrators sought to cultivate authority within the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as well as other International Federations. Winning internationally was always a key goal of Soviet participation in mainstream sports and was seen as the key to promoting the authority of the Soviet Union as a world power and the authority of the socialist sport system as a whole. Under Stalin, winning was in many ways the only priority. After World War II, as members of the All-Union Committee for Physical Culture and Sport (Sports Committee) began to push for the Soviet Union to compete in the Olympic Games they couched their request to compete on the grounds that success by Soviet athletes could enhance the international image of the Soviet Union and its socialist system. When chairman of the Sports Committee Nikolai Romanov met with Soviet leaders after a second place finish by Soviet athletes at the 1946 European wrestling championships, Stalin reportedly pulled Romanov aside, chastising, “If you’re not ready, then there’s no need

to participate.”⁴⁸ Failing to convince the Soviet leadership to send a team to the 1948 Olympics in London, Romanov was finally able to get support to send a team to the 1952 Helsinki Games, convincing the Soviet leadership that a Soviet team could achieve “full team victory” according to an unofficial point system observed in the international press.⁴⁹ Even though the Soviet team came in a close second to the United States in the medal count, Soviet athletes and trainers were reprimanded by the Soviet leadership for failing to win first.⁵⁰ Despite the disappointment with many of the performances at Helsinki, however, the Soviet Olympic debut was sufficiently successful to secure Romanov’s position and guarantee continued participation in international competition for Soviet athletes.

The relative success of Soviet athletes in Helsinki also promoted the authority of the Soviet Union as a sports power equal to the United States. Coming in a very close second place to the United States with seventy-one medals in 1952, the Soviet national team went on to ‘win’ almost every Olympic Games in which they competed until the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Second place finishes at the 1968 Games in both the Winter and Summer prompted a reorganization of the Sports Committee and long, drawn-out meetings to discuss how each sporting federation would do better next time.⁵¹ The Soviet Union managed to out-medal its chief sporting rival and Cold War opponent in the overall medal count in all but two of their meetings in the Summer Olympics between 1952 and 1980, receiving 98 medals in 1956 to the United States’ 74, and at the Montreal Games of 1976, Soviet athletes took home 125 medals, while the United States won only 94. With the U.S.-led boycott of the 1980 Summer Games, the Soviet Union racked up an impressive 195 medals before the home crowd in Moscow, including 80 gold.

While successful performances in the Olympic Games impressed international audiences, perennial rumors about the Soviet Union’s state-run sports system drew considerable criticism in the western press. Soviet sports administrators combated such criticism by claiming that the Soviet system “had no special training which would run contrary to Olympic Rules.”⁵² They also sought to change rules in the IOC and IFs to ensure Soviet athletic success and shift the balance of sporting power toward the Soviet Union. Soviet administrators sought to increase the socialist presence

48 PARKS: Verbal Gymnastics, p. 31; ROMANOV: Trudnye dorogi, p. 64.

49 PARKS: Verbal Gymnastics, p. 39.

50 RIORDAN: Rewriting Sports History, p. 251.

51 PARKS: Red Sport, Red Tape, pp. 216–218. See also GARE, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3579, ll. 1–115: Minutes of the Meeting of the Presidium of the Central Soviet of the Union of Sports Organizations and Societies on the Results of Participation of Soviet Athletes in the Winter Olympic Games, 28 March 1968, and GARE, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 41, ll. 1–310: Minutes of the Meeting of Leading Physical Culture Workers of the Country on the Results of Participation of Soviet Athletes in 1968 OG and Tasks for Development of Mass Sport and Raising of Sports Mastery, 2–4 April 1969.

52 ABC Box 113, Andrianov to Brundage, October 30, 1954.

in the IOC and IFs in order to gain more voting power within international sports organizations.⁵³ They used this increased authority within the organizations to help pass rule changes and other proposals that would increase the number of medal opportunities in sports where Soviet athletes excelled while trying to prevent more sports where the United States tended to dominate. Expanding the sports program of the Olympic Games to include more sports for women also became a priority and a way to secure more medal opportunities for Soviet athletes.⁵⁴

Sports administrators also promoted Soviet authority internationally through hosting sports events within the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union first sought entrance into the Olympic Movement, their bid for recognition was aided by the impression made on Lord Burghley of Great Britain who attended a sports parade in Moscow in 1947.⁵⁵ Similarly, sports administrators helped to improve the opinion of IOC President Avery Brundage toward Soviet sports when he attended the All-Union Day of the Athlete festival in 1954, which he remembered as “the greatest of all festivals of sport and physical culture”.⁵⁶ The Soviet Sports Committee considered holding international competitions inside the Soviet Union as an important tool for enhancing Soviet sports authority abroad, because it provided opportunities for foreign sports leaders to see Soviet achievements in sport firsthand. Securing approval to host world championships and other high-profile sports events figured prominently in the instructions for Soviet representatives to international sports federations.⁵⁷

Projecting Soviet Authority through Hosting the Olympic Games

All these various Soviet initiatives for building authority culminated with hosting the Olympic Games in Moscow. In pushing their bid for the 1980 Games, Soviet sports administrators utilized the full spectrum of tactics they had perfected during their twenty years of active participation in the Olympic Movement. To gain support from the international sports community, the bid committee enlisted the aid of Soviet diplomatic staff abroad to distribute information and to arrange private meetings with important sports figures.⁵⁸ In meetings with foreign sports leaders, Soviet admin-

53 PARKS: *Nothing but Trouble*, p. 1562.

54 PARKS: *Red Sport, Red Tape*, p. 110. See also GARE, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 464, l. 17: Draft Decree of the Plenum of the USSR NOC, 9 December 1955.

55 PARKS: *Verbal Gymnastics*, p. 34.

56 PARKS: *Verbal Gymnastics*, p. 27. See also ABC, Box 50: Brundage to Andrianov, November 15, 1955.

57 GARE, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 464, l. 17: Draft Decree of the Plenum of the USSR NOC, 9 December 1955.

58 GARE, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 1942, l. 101: Decree of the Sport Committee, On Preparations for the IOC Session in Connection with Raising the Candidacy of Moscow for the XXII Olympic Games in 1980, 9 October 1974.

istrators emphasized the large role of the Soviet Union in the development of world sport and the successes of Soviet athletes in the world arena.⁵⁹ Every IF meeting and every international sports event became a venue for assessing the opinions of foreign sports leaders regarding Moscow's hosting the Games.⁶⁰ According to the Sports Committee, on the eve of the Vienna session where the host city for 1980 was chosen, most IOC members and all twenty-one International Federations governing Olympic sports had intimated their support for Moscow.⁶¹

To garner support for Moscow's bid for the 1980 Games, Soviet administrators also invited prominent members of the IOC and other international sports organizations to the Soviet Union to see first-hand what Moscow had to offer.⁶² From 1972 through 1974, fifty members of the IOC visited the USSR, including IOC President Lord Killanin, all the executive board members, and presidents and/or technical experts from the federations of all the Olympic sports.⁶³ Hosting major sports competitions also allowed sports administrators to show off their organizational abilities to influential international guests. Soviet Sports Committee Chairman Sergei Pavlov discussed plans to hold the men's and women's European championships in academic rowing in Moscow, requesting up to 25,000 rubles from the Sports Committee budget to host the event, plus additional funds to finance receptions and gifts for participants and journalists to gain their support for a Moscow Olympiad.⁶⁴

After losing out to Montreal to host the 1976 Olympics, Moscow finally won the right to host the Olympic Games at the IOC session in Vienna in 1974. In the end Moscow won the voting with thirty-nine votes to Los Angeles' twenty. At the first meeting of the Organizing Committee, Novikov attributed Moscow's winning the 1980 bid to the "enormous authority of the Soviet Union" which had been built through the success of Soviet athletes and the efforts of sports bureaucrats to build a reputation within the IOC and other International Federations.⁶⁵

59 RGANI, f. 5, op. 66, d. 157, l. 30: Pavlov to Central Committee, Report of Delegation to Sweden and Finland, 26 March 1973.

60 GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 1035, l. 165: Report On Work Of Representative of the USSR Z. P. Firsov and translator B. I. Fomenko at Meeting of Bureau of FINA, 17–20 November 1971.

61 GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 1942, l. 102: Decree of the Sport Committee, On Preparations for the IOC Session in Connection with Raising the Candidacy of Moscow for the XXII Olympic Games in 1980, 9 October 1974.

62 PROZUMENSHCHIKOV: *Bol'shoi sport*, p. 203. Prozumenshchikov makes a point of "noblemen" that were invited to visit Moscow, including Lord Killanin, the Duke of Edinburgh, and Franz Joseph II of Liechtenstein.

63 GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 1942, ll. 101–102: Decree of the Sport Committee, On Preparations for the IOC Session in Connection with Raising the Candidacy of Moscow for the XXII Olympic Games in 1980, 9 October 1974.

64 RGANI, f. 5, op. 66, d. 157, ll. 35–36: Pavlov to Central Committee, 12 April 1974.

65 GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 21: Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee, 7 March 1975.

Hosting the Games offered an opportunity to demonstrate to a global audience the Soviet way of life, but welcoming the world to Moscow also meant that millions of foreign observers would see first-hand the level of development in Soviet society that in reality was far less modern than its western rivals. Acknowledging that hosting the Games presented serious urban-planning issues even to the most developed cities and greatest world capitals, the president of the Moscow Organizing Committee (Orgcom), Ignatii Novikov, insisted that along with challenges, the Games provided the host city with the opportunity to display their achievements in social development, cultural and spiritual life, as well as scientific and technological development and “the economic potential of the country”.⁶⁶ Novikov spoke candidly about the “colossal” task of hosting the Olympic Games. In addition to housing, medical, transport and cultural services, they would have to provide security to 10–23,000 participants, including around 10,000 athletes, trainers and officials, 850 International Olympic Committee (IOC) members, International Federation (IF) representatives, foreign guests and judges, about 3,000 delegates participating in various sports congresses, and 6–7,000 foreign journalists. On top of those numbers, Novikov noted that they could expect at least one million tourists.⁶⁷

The 1980 Orgcom had the added pressure of hosting the Games for the first time in a socialist country. Novikov insisted that the 1980 Games would help realize Soviet directives to “transform Moscow into an exemplary communist city”.⁶⁸ In order to demonstrate to the world the greatness of the Soviet system, the conduct of the Games had to meet the highest possible standards.⁶⁹ Relatively few Soviet citizens had the opportunity to travel abroad, so of the thousands of hotel and restaurant staffers and other service personnel required for the Games, few could draw upon firsthand knowledge of what this work entailed in order to live up to western standards. Even domestic tourism was not well developed in the Soviet Union, so dozens of hotels, restaurants, and cafes would have to be built from the ground up. As a closed society, accustomed to tightly controlling the movement of people, Soviet authorities would have to decide how to handle the millions of visitors coming to Moscow, both from abroad and from other parts of the country. Furthermore, the closed economy meant that Soviet state-owned banks would have to work out how to provide currency exchange services for the sudden influx of foreigners, not to mention the millions of rubles worth of foreign currency needed to pay for imported equipment and foreign contracts. In addition to facilities, The Orgcom would need personnel to act as everything from chauffeurs to guides, to security workers, to translators. Students, the mili-

66 GARE, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 22: Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975.

67 GARE, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 24.

68 GARE, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 21.

69 GARE, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 26.

tary, the police, and volunteers were identified as recruitment targets, with the main qualifications defined as loyalty, knowledge of foreign languages, education, and physical attributes.⁷⁰ Hosting the Olympic Games in Moscow presented a unique challenge to modernize Moscow's infrastructure and promote the right impression of Moscow and of the Soviet way of life to foreign visitors.

Not only did the Orgcom have to ensure that Moscow was ready, the Soviet organizers also had to make sure that as many nations as possible would attend the Games. After several African nations boycotted the Montreal Olympics in 1976 over continued links between British Commonwealth countries and apartheid South Africa, Soviet overtures to Third-World nations increased to prevent a similar boycott of the Moscow Games. In the run up to Moscow-80, Soviet sports administrators secured assurances from developing countries that they would attend the Moscow Games. In return, the Soviet Union promised aid to these nations in the form of sporting equipment, expertise, trainers, and money to finance sports facilities.⁷¹ In the years leading up to 1980, the IOC processed applications for recognition from a dozen countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Middle East, and several developing countries had indicated their intention to participate in Moscow.⁷²

Limitations of Sport in Promoting External Authority

Outside the control of the Orgcom, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan inspired fifty nations to boycott the 1980 Olympic Games, demonstrating the limitations of using sport to promote external authority. On 27 December 1979, Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan, and in January U.S. President Jimmy Carter threatened to lead a boycott of the Moscow Olympiad if the Soviet Union did not withdraw its troops by mid-February. Carter officially announced the boycott one month later, and the House of Representatives and the Senate passed a resolution not to send athletes to the Games. In mid-April the USOC announced its decision to support the Carter Administration's boycott, and the government warned its athletes that they could lose their passports if they traveled to the Games.

Despite the boycott, Moscow still welcomed eighty nations to the Games, where 5,179 athletes competed in 203 events. Furthermore, athletes from U.S. allies, including Great Britain, France, Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal, Australia, and New Zealand, attended the Games. Some of these countries sent smaller delegations and marched under the Olympic instead of

70 GARE, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 38, ll. 83–84: Work Plan of I.I. Kholod for Studying the Experience in the Preparation and Staging of the Olympic Games (questions of cadres), approved by Novikov, 9 July 1976.

71 PARKS: Welcoming the Third World, pp. 22–26.

72 PARKS: Welcoming the Third World, p. 28.

their national flags, but the presence of their athletes significantly reduced the impact of Carter's boycott. In addition, several developing nations competed in the Olympic Games for the first time, including Angola, Vietnam, Botswana, Laos, Nicaragua, Seychelles, Mozambique, and Cyprus, further weakening the impact of Carter's boycott.

In light of this, the Moscow Games were a qualified success in building the authority of the Soviet Union. The IOC representatives appreciated the "high organizational level" the Orgcom achieved. The newly elected IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch applauded the "magnificent organization" of the Moscow Olympiad.⁷³ Director of the IOC, Monique Berlioux praised the "diligence and hard work which made the Games of the XXII Olympiad the success they were".⁷⁴ This praise for the superior organization of the Games coupled with the unprecedented success of Soviet athletes in the competition meant that the 1980 Moscow Olympiad can be seen as a pinnacle of achievement in promoting the authority of the Soviet Union through sports. Despite the organizational success of the 1980 Games, the invasion of Afghanistan and ensuing renewed Cold War damaged Soviet authority in the eyes of the West. That authority was damaged further by the refusal to participate in 1984 Games in Los Angeles. Furthermore, the long war in Afghanistan made the Soviet Union look more like an imperial power, weakening its authority in the developing world as well.

Part IV: Directions for Further Research

This case study has explored how the Soviet state sought to cultivate international authority through Olympic participation during the Cold War. As such, it opens questions for possible directions for future research on the topic of authority and sport in Eastern and East Central Europe. During the Cold War, the states of Eastern Europe were ruled by socialist and communist party leaders with varying degrees of loyalty and subservience to the Soviet Union. More research in this area could yield a much more robust picture of how the state bodies of Eastern Europe sought to control and promote the authority of the socialist sports system internationally during the Cold War. Sports can provide an avenue to explore the relative authority between Soviet republics and the central party and state organs, between central Soviet organs and parallel organs in the Eastern Bloc, inter-republican ties, and Soviet republican-level institutions with the state and party apparatuses in Eastern Europe. Did particular sports play a similar role as Lithuanian basketball, enhancing non-Soviet or non-Communist Party authority in other republics and other countries of the eastern

73 IOC Archives / COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1980–1993: Samaranch to Novikov, telegram, 14 January 1981.

74 IOC Archives / COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1980–1993: Berlioux to Novikov, 12 January 1982.

bloc? How did sports influence cooperation and competition between different countries within the bloc and the relative authority of members within the bloc? To what extent did Soviet republics and Eastern European people's democracies use sports exchanges to promote their own national authority internationally?

Finally, further research on sport and authority in Eastern Europe can help to further break down the dichotomy of state and society. Like fascist governments earlier, state authorities during the Cold War sought extensive control over all aspects of society including sport. Yet even within the state-dominated, Cold-War context, study of sport and authority in Eastern Europe can serve to challenge the category of the state and can expose limits of state control over socialist societies. How did various state and party institutions, such as the Komsomol, trade unions, police, and military structures, influence sport in socialist societies? How can the study of sport help us to understand the roles of these institutions in communist states more broadly? Future scholarship could also explore how involvement with sports influenced the personal and political authority of administrators, coaches, athletes, and their families. Expanding the concept of authority beyond power and control to include social prestige and political advancement could help us to understand whether internal authority in socialist societies was determined solely by the state and one's relation to the ruling party, or whether there existed networks and spheres of authority outside the formal channels of party and state official hierarchies. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe invites investigation of authority and sport in post-communist societies. How has the transition to a market economy impacted state authority over sport? Has privatization and democratization opened new avenues for non-state actors to exert authority over and through sport? To what extent has the decline in state funding of sports affected the role of sport in building national identity, unity, and prestige in the states of East and East Central Europe?

Abbreviations

ABC	Avery Brundage Collection. University of Illinois Archives Record Series 26/20/37
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation), Moscow
IOC	International Olympic Committee Archives, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland
RGANI	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii (Russian State Archive of Contemporary History), Moscow

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