

RED SPORT, RED TAPE: THE OLYMPIC GAMES, THE SOVIET SPORTS  
BUREAUCRACY, AND THE COLD WAR, 1952-1980

Jenifer Parks

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
Department of History

Chapel Hill  
2009

Approved by:

Donald J. Raleigh

Louise McReynolds

Chad Bryant

Jeffrey W. Jones

David M. Griffiths

©2009  
Jenifer Parks  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## **ABSTRACT**

JENIFER PARKS: Red Sport, Red Tape: The Olympic Games, the Soviet Sports  
Bureaucracy, and the Cold War, 1952-1980  
(Under the direction of Donald J. Raleigh)

Based on archival sources only accessible since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, this dissertation is the first historical analysis of the Soviet sports bureaucracy spanning the period from the USSR's Olympic debut in 1952 on the eve of Stalin's death through the 1980 Games held in Moscow. Since their entrance into the Olympic Games, Soviet athletes have been a dominant force in the world sporting community. This dissertation finds that behind the high-profile performances of Soviet elite athletes, a legion of sports bureaucrats worked within both the Soviet party-state bureaucracy and international sports organizations to increase Soviet chances of success and make Soviet administrators a respected voice in international sports. Challenging fundamental ideas about how sport should be governed, these communist bureaucrats carved out an unexpected place for themselves and for other representatives of the socialist world. Moreover, the USSR became a driving force behind the evolution of the Olympic Games and changing priorities in Olympic philosophy, spearheading major expansions in membership, sports outreach to the developing world, and women's sports. Capitalizing on shared values between communist and Olympic ideals, Soviet sports representatives helped make spreading peace and friendship through sport a top priority of the Olympic Movement.

Back home in the USSR, the activities of sports administrators illuminate how decisions were made within the Soviet party-state. As architects of Soviet initiatives in international sports, sports bureaucrats recommended policy and exerted significant influence within the Soviet Union. Although valued for their expertise on sporting matters, the personal ties they established with international sports leaders, and their knowledge of the internal politics of international sporting federations, their decision-making authority remained circumscribed by the extent to which their proposals found support from top Communist Party leaders. Through a combination of ideological drive, political savvy, and professional pragmatism, Soviet representatives realized Soviet propaganda and foreign policy goals in international sports and cultivated the friendly side of Soviet power during the Cold War. State administrators on all levels displayed activism and ingenuity, but their efforts remained limited by the authoritarian, hierarchical governing style of the top leadership.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of people and organizations I wish to thank, without whom I would not completed this project. First of all, I would like to thank my advisor Don Raleigh, whose support, encouragement, and critiques were essential. Other members of my committee, Louise McReynolds, Chad Bryant, Jeff Jones, and David Griffiths also provided crucial feedback and suggestions. Robert Edelman provided me with his encouragement, expertise, and Russian contacts for which I am very grateful. Other faculty members at UNC have also been enthusiastic supporters of my work, especially Lloyd Kramer and Jerma Jackson. Eleanora Magomedova in the Slavic Literature and Languages Department helped me bring my language skills up to snuff. Violent Lentz made sure all my paperwork was turned in on time and that all my graduation requirements were fulfilled.

During my graduate career, I have benefitted immensely from intellectual interchange with my fellow graduate students at UNC, as well as many friends and colleagues I met while researching. In particular I would like to thank my "partner," Marko Dumancic for always asking the most challenging questions and guiding my way through the Moscow archives. I would like to thank all my fellow Russianists at UNC—Jon Wallace, Sharon Kowalsky, Rosa Magnusdottir, Marko Dumancic, Mike Paulauskas, Emily Baran, Gleb Turpinsky, Nick Ganson, Jack Langer, Adrienne Jacobs, Edward Geist, Aaron Hale-Dorral, Dan Giblin, Mary Mellon, and Andrew Ringlee—who have offered valuable advice and camaraderie to me over the years. Members of my writing

group, Philipp Stelzel and Tom Goldstein, read drafts of several chapters and offered their constructive criticism and suggestions for which I'm very grateful.

Several organizations provided funding for my research. At UNC, the University Center for International Studies (now Global Initiatives) awarded me pre-dissertation funding in 2005, a Mowry grant from the History Department provided summer funding for research in the United States, and a Doris C. Quinn fellowship from the History Department in 2008-09 allowed me to complete the writing of my dissertation. The Olympic Studies Center at the International Olympic Committee Headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland provided me with a Postgraduate Research Grant to comb the IOC archives. I would especially like to express my appreciation to Ruth Beck-Perrenoud, Nuria Puig and all the archivists and support staff at the OSC for their help navigating the IOC holdings. My research in Moscow was funded by a Fulbright-Hays Dissertation Research Abroad fellowship, and I would like to thank Ed Roslof and the staff at the Russian Fulbright office for their in-country administrative support.

In Moscow, many individuals helped me navigate the Russian archives and libraries. Irina Markovna Bykhovskaia at the Central State University of Physical Culture and Sport not only arranged for me to visit the university library and museum archives, but welcomed me into her home and her guidance and friendship have been very important to me. The curator and staff at the sports university museum allowed me access to their small but rich collection of documents. I would like to thank the staff at GARF, RGANI, and RGASPI for their professionalism. I am especially grateful to the reading room managers, Nina Ivanovna Abdulaeva at GARF and Liudmila Ivanovna Stepanich at RGANI, who were especially generous with their time and energy.

Research in Moscow was much more enjoyable and productive because of weekly "meetings" at Bilingua, conversations in the GARF cafeteria, and other social gatherings with a remarkable cohort of scholars. I thank Martin Beisswenger, Liudmila Novikova, Jennifer Amos, Daniel Berman, Christine Evans, Nicole Eaton, Susan and Steve Smith-Peter, Allison K. Smith, Betsy Jones Hemenway, and Paula Michaels for their friendship and support. My landlord in Moscow, Mikhail Kristoff, provided a wonderful apartment in the center of Moscow and happily negotiated internet access and other utility issues during my stay.

Back home in Chapel Hill, I have benefitted from the friendship, camaraderie, and intellectual discussions with friends and colleagues too numerous to name.

Portions of chapter 1 were previously published in "Verbal Gymnastics: Sports, Bureaucracy, and the Soviet Union's Entrance into the Olympic Games, 1946-1952," in Stephen Wagg and David Andrews, eds., *East Plays West: Sport and the Cold War* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 27-44 and have been reprinted here by permission of Taylor & Francis Books (UK). Other portions of the dissertation were presented at the Southern Conference on Slavic Studies, the AAASS, and the UNC History Departmental Research Colloquium. I'm grateful for all the comments and feedback I received from participants in those events.

Thanks to my parents John and Sharon Parks and my sister Elizabeth, who have always encouraged me to excel in all my endeavors. Finally, I can't express how much the love and support of my husband, Scot Ninnemann, have meant to me. This dissertation quite literally would never have been written without him.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter .....	Page
INTRODUCTION .....	1
Historiography, Method and Theory.....	6
Sources .....	14
Organization.....	16
1. VERBAL GYMNASTICS: THE SOVIET UNION ENTERS THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT.....	18
The Soviet Union and the Olympics before World War II.....	19
Postwar Organization of Sports .....	28
"A Most Embarrassing Controversy:" Amateurism and Anxiety in the IOC.....	30
"If You Are Not Ready:" Internal Retreat and the Need for Total Victory.....	35
"Who Do We Know in Russia?" The Soviet Union Joins the Olympic Family .....	45
"Not Just Another Event:" The Soviet Union's Olympic Debut .....	69
Conclusion .....	73
2. LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD: COMMUNIST SPORT, OLYMPIC SPORT, AND SOVIET SPORTING POLITICS .....	82
Setting the Agenda: The Soviet Union, the IOC, and the "Struggle for Peace" .....	85
The Soviet Union's Man in the IOC: Konstantin Aleksandrovich Andrianov and Soviet International Sports Relations.....	91



	"Eliminating Deficiencies" in International Sports Relations .....	99
	Increasing Soviet Authority in International Federations .....	105
	Weathering "A Difficult Situation" at the 1956 Summer Games .....	113
	"What's Undemocratic about the IOC?" Reorganizing the IOC .....	115
	Conclusion .....	124
3.	HUMAN RESOURCES: SOVIET SPORTS ADMINISTRATORS ABROAD AND INTERNATIONAL SPORTS EXCHANGES UNDER KHRUSHCHEV, 1953-1964 .....	128
	Reorganization of the Sports Committee and a New Raison d'Être for the Soviet NOC .....	133
	Expansion of Sports Ties Under Khrushchev and the New Soviet Bureaucrat .....	138
	International Experience and Internal Authority .....	143
	Sportsmen Behaving Badly.....	155
	The Unraveling of the Socialist Bloc in International Sports .....	161
	Limitations and Successes of Soviet Sports Ties in Asia .....	173
	Soviet Sports Diplomacy in the Developing World .....	187
	Conclusion .....	189
4.	GETTING THINGS DONE: SOVIET BUREAUCRATS' EXPANDING ROLE IN THE IOC AND MOSCOW'S BID TO HOST THE GAMES .....	192
	"We Consider It Premature:" The Sports Committee's Push to Host the Olympic Games .....	196
	International Tensions, Olympic Failures, and Domestic Dissent.....	211
	"Perhaps on Another Occasion:" Moscow's Failed Bid for the 1976 Games .....	221
	"The USSR Once Again Invites the Olympic Games:" The Campaign for 1980 .....	237

	"Sports, Peace, and Friendship:" The 1973 World Student Games .....	247
	The "Final Stage" of the Campaign: The 1974 Vienna IOC Session .....	255
	Conclusion .....	259
5.	"AN EXEMPLARY COMMUNIST CITY:" PREPARING MOSCOW FOR THE 1980 OLYMPIC GAMES .....	262
	Olympiad-80: The Organizing Committee of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow.....	264
	The Orgcom's "Colossal" Task .....	273
	Building a "City of Sport:" Construction of Olympic Facilities .....	279
	Learning from Past Experience.....	283
	The Olympic Games and Modernization .....	291
	Financing the Games.....	299
	Coordination and Bureaucratic "Control" in the Organizing Committee.....	307
	The Working World of the Organizing Committee .....	316
	Conclusion .....	321
6.	A JOB WELL DONE? WELCOMING THE WORLD TO THE 1980 MOSCOW OLYMPIAD .....	325
	Mostly Business as Usual in the Sports Committee .....	328
	Mobilizing the Socialist Bloc for the 1980 Games .....	331
	"In the Name of Peace, for the Glory of Sports:" Promoting the Games.....	333
	International Relations of the Orgcom.....	343
	"Fruitful Collaboration" with the IOC .....	346
	The Orgcom and the Western Press.....	354

The Orgcom and Soviet Foreign Policy.....	358
The White House's "Dark Deed:" The U.S.-Led Boycott of the 1980 Games .....	379
CONCLUSION.....	389
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	402

## Introduction

In 1951 International Olympic Committee (IOC) member from Hungary Ferenc Mezö insisted, "The Olympic Gold Medal cannot sparkle in full splendor unless decorating the breast of the best, the most deserving athlete. The future Olympic Games can only be of value if the prominent young people of the Soviet Union, one of the greatest sports powers, take part."<sup>1</sup> Written at a time when the Soviet Union sought to compete in the Olympic Games for the first time, Mezö's words are rife with meaning. As an IOC member from Hungary, Mezö was probably seen by his western contemporaries as a pawn who used his position in the IOC to help further consolidate Soviet influence. At the same time, Mezö's words encapsulate the idealism of the Olympic Movement that seeks to bring the nations of the world together in a spirit of peace and "a respect for universal fundamental ethical principles" of "friendship, solidarity and fair play."<sup>2</sup> In the immediate aftermath of World War II, this ideal did not address the dilemma facing Soviet leaders and members of the IOC as they negotiated the Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympic Games. Vice-President of the IOC Avery Brundage and other members feared that the Soviet Union's entrance would compromise Olympic ideals of amateurism and freedom from political influence. Some even doubted the ability of communists to represent the interests of the Olympic Movement. "As you

---

<sup>1</sup> Ferenc Mezö, "Olympic Peace—World Peace," *Bulletin du Comité International Olympique* 29 (1951): 24.

<sup>2</sup> *The Olympic Charter*, Fundamental Principles, p. 9, available from <http://www.olympic.org>.

know," Brundage wrote to IOC President Sigfried Edström in 1948, "I have kept my fingers crossed on the efforts to bring [the Soviet Union] into the Olympic family. Not understanding fair play, good sportsmanship and amateurism, I am sure they will bring with them nothing but trouble."<sup>3</sup> Olympic idealism, however, provided the common ground necessary to welcome the Soviet Union into the Olympic Games despite rising Cold War tensions.

Through analysis of archival materials of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sport of the Soviet Union (Sports Committee), the Communist Party, and the IOC, this dissertation traces the activities of the Soviet Sports Committee from the years leading up to the Soviet Union's Olympic debut in 1952 through the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow. Despite entering the international arena rather late and doing so as lesser partners to their western European and American counterparts, Soviet representatives, over the course of only a few decades, became a dominant and respected voice within international sports circles. Challenging the fundamental ideas about how sport should be governed, these communist bureaucrats carved out an unexpected place for themselves and for other representatives of the socialist world. The USSR became a driving force behind the evolution of the Olympic Games and changing priorities in Olympic philosophy, spearheading major expansions in membership, sports outreach to the developing world, and women's sports. Capitalizing on shared values between communist and Olympic ideals, Soviet sports representatives helped make spreading peace and friendship through sport a top priority of the Olympic Movement.

---

<sup>3</sup> Brundage to Edstrom, September 27, 1948, Avery Brundage Collection, University of Illinois Archives Record Series 26/20/37 (hereafter ABC), Box 43.

Placed under the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Agitprop), international sports became an important propaganda tool both for domestic and foreign consumption. The overall strategy of Soviet international sports ties had been formulated within the sports bureaucracy in the early 1950s; however, the increasing openness of Soviet foreign policy in the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years gave an official stamp of approval to sports administrators' efforts. Soviet sports administrators pushed the leadership to enter the Olympic Games despite the increasing anti-western and isolationist domestic and foreign policy during Stalin's last years in power, and the Sports Committee continually called upon Moscow to host the Games. N. S. Khrushchev's (1953-64) promotion of peaceful coexistence provided a new impetus for Soviet international sports, dramatically expanding the number of athletes, trainers, and sports officials traveling abroad and lending more authority to those in the Sports Committee overseeing international sports. The rise to power of Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev in 1964 and the movement toward détente with the west in the 1970s marked the heyday of the Soviet Olympic program. During this time, the Central Committee gave its approval for a bid to host the Olympic Games in Moscow while improved relations between east and west generated international interest and support for a Moscow Olympiad. This helped enhance the international and domestic authority of the Sports Committee, the Soviet Olympic Committee, and, later, the Organizing Committee of the 1980 Games. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan damaged this authority and demonstrated its limits.

Back home in the USSR, the activities of sports administrators illuminate how decisions were made within the Soviet party-state. As representatives of the Soviet

Union in international sports organizations, sports bureaucrats exerted influence within the Soviet Union through the information they gathered at conferences and competitions abroad, the personal ties they established with international sports leaders, and their knowledge of the internal politics of international federations. This upward flow of information served as a source of influence for state functionaries as well as a marker of their skills and experience that could earn them a promotion within the Soviet administrative apparatus. However, the decision-making authority for Soviet bureaucrats remained circumscribed by the extent to which their recommendations found support from top Party leaders. Through a combination of ideological drive, political savvy, and professional pragmatism, Soviet representatives realized Soviet propaganda and foreign policy goals in international sports. Their success internationally translated into increased authority within the Soviet party-state power structure so that, by the summer of 1980, when Moscow welcomed the world to the XXII Olympiad, Soviet leaders relied upon the accumulated knowledge and expertise of its sport administrators to ensure that the first Olympic Games hosted by a socialist nation would be the biggest and the best. Displaying a significant degree of maneuverability and autonomy and an ability to advance their own priorities, the Sports Committee's leading personalities represented a new kind of Soviet bureaucrat who emerged in the late years of Stalinism and helped to shape Soviet political practices throughout the period of my research.

Furthermore, using the Soviet Olympic program as a means to examine the dynamics of politics and decision-making after Stalin to determine how the "rules of the game" evolved with changing circumstances, this dissertation shows that with the rise to power of Brezhnev and his greater reliance on consensus building and technical

expertise, formal avenues of power and authority became more pronounced and official bureaucratic language and procedures became more important sources of influence for state officials. While official reports and memoranda did not completely replace informal communiqués and private phone calls as a means for getting things done in the Soviet Union, the work of the Sports Committee became more routine and systematic, meaning that much work could be done through established procedures without resorting to back channels. Professionalization of the Sports bureaucracy and increased job security for its workers transformed the sports administration into something more akin to the ideal modern bureaucracy proposed by Max Weber than the traditional patrimonial bureaucracy it was often assumed to be. State administrators on all levels displayed activism and ingenuity, but their efforts remained limited by the authoritarian, hierarchical governing style of the top Party leadership.

### **Historiography, Method and Theory**

Although sports in the Soviet Union have received more attention from historians in recent years, they remain understudied. Robert Edelman's 1993 book on Soviet sports explores the role of popular sports in Soviet society but does not provide a close examination of Olympic sport. Barbara Jean Keys's 2006 monograph examines Soviet sports in the context of 1930s mass culture, highlighting the interplay between nationalism and internationalism in international sports.<sup>4</sup> James Riordan's work stresses

---

<sup>4</sup> See for example, Robert Edelman, *Serious Fun: A History of Spectator Sports in the USSR* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and Barbara Jean Keys, *Globalizing Sport: National Rivalry and International Community in the 1930s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). Recent articles include Barbara Keys, "Soviet Sport and Transnational Mass Culture in the 1930s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3 (2003): 413-34; and Robert Edelman, "A Small Way of Saying 'No': Moscow Working Men, Spartak Soccer, and the Communist Party, 1900-1945," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 5 (2002): 1441-74.



the role of Soviet sport in international politics, and western literature on the Olympics also emphasizes the relationship between sports and politics.<sup>5</sup> My dissertation seeks to understand the political nature of Olympic sport in a new way, by examining the relationship between international sport and internal Soviet politics. My analysis focuses on political practices, which I define as the formal and informal network of rules and relationships through which bureaucrats understood, enacted, and shaped their roles within both international sport and internal, party-state power structures.<sup>6</sup>

By taking a fresh approach to studying the interplay between sport and politics, my work contributes to a debate across fields on the role of sport both in promoting globalization and in fueling nationalism.<sup>7</sup> Barbara Jean Keys's work addresses this question in the Soviet context suggesting that, while modern western sport in some ways became modified or "Sovietized" as it was adapted to fit Soviet context, the price for participating in western sport was the "opening [of] Soviet culture to internationalist

---

<sup>5</sup> See Victor Peppard and James Riordan, *Playing Politics: Soviet Sport Diplomacy to 1992* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1992); James Riordan, "Rewriting Soviet Sports History," *Journal of Sport History* 20, no. 3 (1993): 247-58; and *Sport, Politics, and Communism* (Manchester, England and New York: Manchester University Press, 1991); Allen Guttmann, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002); Christopher Hill, *Olympic Politics* (Manchester and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992); John Hoberman, *The Olympic Crisis: Sport, Politics and the Moral Order* (New Rochelle, NY: A.D. Caratzas, 1986); and *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984); Alfred E. Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games: A History of the Power Brokers, Events, and Controversies that Shaped the Games* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1999); Barrie Houlihan, *Sport and International Politics* (Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf: 1994); and Derick L. Hulme, Jr., *The Political Olympics: Moscow, Afghanistan, and the 1980 U.S. Boycott* (New York, Westport, Conn., and London: Praeger, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Tucker postulated the concept of political culture as a cultural approach to politics, where politics constitute "an activity related to the larger culture of society." In isolating bureaucrats, I seek to understand their particular role within the larger whole of Soviet society's culture of politics. In Tucker's words, "Instead of treating political culture as an attribute of a political system, we would then view the political system of a society in cultural terms, i.e., as a complex of real and ideal culture patterns, including political roles and their interrelations, political structures, and so on." See Robert Tucker, "Culture, Political Culture, and Communist Society," *Political Science Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (1973): 173-90.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Keys, *Globalizing Sport* and Lincoln Allison, ed. *The Global Politics of Sport: The Role of Global Institutions in Sport* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2005).

currents often subversive of broader regime goals."<sup>8</sup> By asking to what extent participation in the Olympics opened Soviet internal politics to internationalist currents, my work, instead of focusing solely on the ways in which politics played a role in the sporting world, asks how sports in turn influenced internal political practices. Jeffrey Hill suggests that historians can contribute to the interdisciplinary debate on the relationship between sports and politics by looking at "sport and politics at a level both within and below that of formal institutions."<sup>9</sup> This is precisely what this dissertation does by examining the role of state actors in organizing and promoting Soviet international sports. In order to be successful, Soviet sports organizations had to obey international rules and uphold international standards. Soviet administrators had to be well-versed in these rules and standards and, in this way, acted as envoys of the IOC and the International Federations (IFs) that governed international sport in the Soviet Union even as they worked to shape those organizations' rules to enhance Soviet successes.

The break-up of the USSR and the concomitant opening of previously inaccessible archives have given historians a unique opportunity to examine the internal politics of the Soviet Union. Along with opportunities, however, the fall of communism and the end of the Soviet Union have also offered new challenges to historians. An enduring bias against political history has remained an obstacle to well researched, archival-based analyses of politics, and attempts to explore the intersection between politics and society in the USSR have been few.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, the unexpected

---

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Jean Keys, "Soviet Sport," 416.

<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Hill, "Introduction: Sport and Politics," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3 (2003): 355-61.

<sup>10</sup> Until the 1990s, arguments between proponents of the "totalitarian model" and their "revisionist" opponents dominated scholarship on the Soviet Union. For an interesting discussion on how access to

collapse of the Soviet "system" spurred many scholars, social scientists especially, to discover the cause of the system's dissolution.<sup>11</sup> Theories abound over what caused the country's demise, but little is known about the nature and functioning of the "system" that "failed." In search of answers, historians looked back to the foundational periods of the Soviet experiment, and our knowledge of these formative years from the Revolution of 1917 through the 1930s and Stalin's purges has been greatly enhanced by access to archival sources.<sup>12</sup> Yet very little work has been done on later periods of Soviet history.<sup>13</sup> Examining the Soviet Olympic program from 1952 through 1980, this project further opens the critical years after Stalin to historical inquiry.

Seeking to move into the relatively uncharted territory of postwar Soviet history, my dissertation builds upon an emerging body of work in the "new" Soviet political history. Sheila Fitzpatrick describes this field of inquiry as archival-based research informed by cultural theory and methodology, concentrating on political practices.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, our knowledge of the Soviet 1920s, 30s, and even 40s has been greatly enhanced by recent scholarship on political practices such as denunciation, patronage, and

---

archival holdings has not helped to move the field beyond the totalitarian-revisionist debate see Stephen Kotkin, "The State—Is It Us? Memoirs, Archives, and Kremlinologists," *The Russian Review* 61, no. 1 (2002): 35-51.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Michael Cox, ed., *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse: Sovietology, the Death of Communism, and the New Russia* (London and New York: Cassell, 1998); Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994); and Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> For a brief discussion of the pervasiveness of "1930s Studies," see Michael David-Fox, "From the Editors: 1930s Studies," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 1 (2003): 1-4.

<sup>13</sup> A rare but significant example of an in-depth, archival based, institutional study that covers the periods after Stalin is Paul R. Josephson, *New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, The Siberian City of Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Politics as Practice: Thoughts on a New Soviet Political History," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 1 (2004): 27-54.

petitioning.<sup>15</sup> While authors have used this methodology to explore the interactions between state and society, I examine the dynamics of political practices of the party-state apparatus itself as I analyze the role of sports administrators working within it.

Scholars have also begun to use similar approaches to overtly political topics. In their book on postwar Stalinism, Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk draw upon Max Weber's bureaucratic theory to analyze the evolution of political ritual and practice among the top levels of Soviet leadership.<sup>16</sup> According to Weber's definition, bureaucracy is "ordered by rules" in which bureaucrats enjoy "strictly limited" authority. Bureaucrats advance based on "thorough and expert training" and their work is controlled by "the files" or written documentation. The bureaucracy is, according to Weber, a hierarchical world based on "levels of grade authority" and functions according to "general rules which are more or less stable." Bureaucracy could only be "fully

---

<sup>15</sup> Golfo Alexopoulos, *Stalin's Outcasts: Aliens, Citizens, and the Soviet State, 1926-36* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); "Suplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 1 (1996): 78-105; "Signals from Below: Soviet Letters of Denunciation of the 1930s," *The Journal of Modern History*, 68, no. 4 (1996): 831-66; Peter Holquist, "Information Is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Our Work," *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no. 4 (1997): 415-50; Vladimir A. Kozlov, "Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance: A Study of Denunciations and Their Bureaucratic Handling from Soviet Police Archives, 1944-1953," *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 4 (1996): 867-98. See also in *Contemporary European History* Michael David-Fox, "From Illusory 'Society' to Intellectual 'Public': VOKS, International Travel and Party-Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period," *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (2002): 7-32; Kiril Tomoff, "'Most Respected Comrade . . .': Patrons, Clients, Brokers and Unofficial Networks in the Stalinist Music World," *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (2002): 33-65; Vera Tolz, "'Cultural Bosses' as Patrons and Clients: the Functioning of the Soviet Creative Unions in the Postwar Period," *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (2002): 87-105; Barbara Walker, "Kruzhok Culture: the Meaning of Patronage in the Early Soviet Literary World," *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (2002): 107-23. See also Ethan Pollack, *Stalin and the Soviet Science Wars* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006); Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006).

<sup>16</sup> Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945-1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

developed," in Weber's view "in the modern state."<sup>17</sup> Gorlizki and Khlevniuk describe Stalin's leadership during this period as a "neo-patrimonial" attempt to combine regular, rational-legal forms of administration in lower levels of the hierarchy with informal, repressive forms of control based on personal loyalty within his inner circle. While decisions in the Central Committee and Politburo more and more often were made by Stalin's personal entourage in meetings at his dacha or over late-night phone calls, work in the Council of Ministers and the state bureaucracy became more routinized and systematic.

Historians of music and science have applied similar methods to their specific sub-disciplines. In his study of patronage in the music world under Stalin, Kiril Tomoff complicates the picture drawn by Gorlizki and Khlevniuk by juxtaposing "unofficial networks" and "informal interactions" with "official" bureaucratic procedures, exposing the ways in which these different realms of political practice intersect and reinforce each other.<sup>18</sup> Recent work by historians of Soviet science have gone even further with what Fitzpatrick terms a "rules of the game" approach to understanding the interaction between science and politics, or more specifically between scientists and politicians.<sup>19</sup> By looking at lower levels of administration, these authors further call into question the extent to which party politics under Stalin were repressive, since "Personal contacts with party-

---

<sup>17</sup> H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 196-99, 203, quoted in Karl W. Ryavec, *Russian Bureaucracy: Power and Pathology* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 4. See also Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>18</sup> Tomoff, "Most Respected Comrade," 36.

<sup>19</sup> Alexei Kojevnikov, "Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work: Science and the Games of Intraparty Democracy circa 1948," *The Russian Review* 57, no. 1 (1998): 25-52; Nikolai Krementsov, *Stalinist Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

state leaders became a major instrument of influence upon decision-makers and gave scientific administrators an opportunity to exercise their influence for their own ends."<sup>20</sup>

My dissertation takes this scholarship in new directions, applying the study of political practices to the Soviet Olympic sports bureaucracy. Pierre Bourdieu claimed that "an adequate analysis of political discourse must be based on a systematic reconstruction of the field within which such discourse is produced and received . . . and its relation to the broader social space."<sup>21</sup> This dissertation adopts such an approach in order to "reconstruct" the political world of the sports bureaucracy through its formal and informal policies and practices. Karl Ryavec acknowledges common examples of informalism in Russian and Soviet administration, including "dual channels or agencies for performing the same function, *blat* (unauthorized use of personal contacts), *shturmovshchina* (rushing to complete work), and the *tolkach* (the illegal 'facilitator' and 'solver' of problems and glitches)." While maintaining that these informal behaviors are not necessarily "abnormal," Ryavec describes the overall pattern of administration in imperial Russia and the Soviet Union as "highly informalistic, personalistic, and with a tendency toward corrupt and self-aggrandizing behavior by bureaucrats."<sup>22</sup> Other scholars have also highlighted strains of continuity between Russian and Soviet state

---

<sup>20</sup> Krementsov, *Stalinist Science*, 283.

<sup>21</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. with an introduction by John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 29.

<sup>22</sup> Ryavec, *Russian Bureaucracy: Power and Pathology* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 5-6.

bureaucracies, giving more attention to the progressive, albeit slow and incomplete, professionalization of bureaucracy in Russia and the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup>

This dissertation complicates popular and scholarly perceptions of Soviet bureaucracy and of Soviet bureaucrats by focusing on the role of sports administrators in making Soviet participation in the Olympic Games successful. In previous studies of the Soviet Union, bureaucrats have been accused of being incompetent, self-interested careerists focused on their own security with little regard for the people whose lives they impacted.<sup>24</sup> Alternatively, they have been depicted as incompetent and lazy functionaries who had to be threatened and coerced, or bribed into doing their jobs. They have been shown as making a "big deal" with the regime, trading their loyalty to the regime for a car and a large apartment and access to goods (both luxuries and staples).<sup>25</sup> They have been shown denouncing their superiors to advance their own careers.<sup>26</sup> They have done everything in their power to protect their own precious hides, positions, and possessions, standing as a bulwark against any attempts from above or below for meaningful reform,

---

<sup>23</sup> See Walter McKenzie Pinter and Don Karl Rowney eds., *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); and W. Bruce Lincoln, *In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats, 1825-1851* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982). Dominic Lieven dates the beginning of professionalization of the tsarist bureaucracy to the mid-nineteenth century, concluding that in terms of their training and education and the fact that merit was "the single most important fact in ensuring one's rise to the top of the Russian civil service," the late tsarist bureaucratic elite "in some respects . . . approached the Weberian ideal type." See his *Russia's Rulers Under the Old Regime* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 292.

<sup>24</sup> See for example, Steven L. Solnick, *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> See Vera Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middle Class Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge, Eng. and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

<sup>26</sup> See Kozlov, "Denunciation," 879-82.

preventing the normal functioning of society and government.<sup>27</sup> These images of the bureaucrat are not unique to the Soviet Union, nor are they without foundation in reality. However, they only begin to explore the true role of bureaucrats in the Soviet experience. By examining the work of state bureaucrats in organizing the high-profile and successful project of participation in the Olympic Games, my work demonstrates that, alongside the incompetent functionaries, there worked a group of dedicated, professional sports administrators who took very seriously their responsibilities to spread Olympic ideals both within the Soviet Union and abroad just as they played an active role in promoting Soviet political and propaganda goals in international sports. Stephen F. Cohen identifies three basic layers of Communist Party hierarchy: the Politburo and Central Committee Secretariat; the *nomenklatura* class; the rank-and-file party members.<sup>28</sup> Evan Mawdsley and Stephen White define the Soviet ruling "elite" as the membership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).<sup>29</sup> My dissertation focuses on sports administrators who occupied positions on all levels of the Soviet party-state hierarchy, from Central Committee members, to mid-level officials occupying high-level state and party posts who were not members of the Central Committee, to lower-level rank-and-file party members or administrators without party affiliation who occupied state offices.

---

<sup>27</sup> See Karl W. Ryavec, *Russian Bureaucracy* and Sergei Khrushchev, "The Military-Industrial Complex, 1953-1964," in William Taubman, ed., *Nikita Khrushchev* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000): 242-74.

<sup>28</sup> Stephen F. Cohen, "Was the Soviet System Reformable?" *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (2004): 472.

<sup>29</sup> Evan Mawdsley and Stephen White, *The Soviet Elite from Lenin to Gorbachev: the Central Committee and its Members, 1917-1991* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), vi-vii.



## Sources

My study of Soviet political culture and practices draws upon archival records housed in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, GARF) ; the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'noi i politicheskoi istorii*, RGASPI); and the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii*, RGANI). GARF holds the Soviet Sports Committee archives including a special collection dedicated to the 1980 Olympic Organizing Committee records. Correspondence between the Sports Committee and members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, as well as other documents pertaining to international sports relations, are stored in RGASPI and RGANI. The materials found in GARF, RGASPI, and RGANI include correspondence between the Sport Committee and members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, correspondence between the Sports Committee and other Soviet bureaucracies, summary reports describing the conditions at Olympic training camps, minutes of closed meetings between the chairman of the Sports Committee and members of the Politburo, minutes of official committee-wide conferences, reports by Sports Committee administrators to the Central Committee and/or individual Politburo members, as well as interdepartmental reports and memos. While the Russian archives afforded me wide access to many important documents, I did not have access to Politburo records for the period of my study. Nor was I able to find any documentation to confirm the suspected systematic use of steroids and other performance enhancing drugs in the Soviet sports administration.

Most of the documents cited come from my own research in the Russian archives, but I have also utilized two published sources. The first chapter was written before I had the opportunity to visit Moscow and is based on a collection of sources from GARF and RGASP compiled by Aksel' Vartanian, a Russian sports journalist and respected authority on Russian and Soviet soccer.<sup>30</sup> Because Vartanian did not always take great care in providing full citations of the documents he analyzed, I was not always able to determine the location of the originals with certainty. The second published source of documentary evidence is a book published by Mikhail Prozumenshchikov.<sup>31</sup> As deputy director of RGANI, Prozumenshchikov had access to some collections (*fondy*) that were not available to me.

In order to assess how Sports Committee members dealt with competing Soviet and Olympic visions of international sport in organizing the Soviet Olympic program and maintaining Soviet influence within the IOC, I also consider relevant IOC material and correspondence. Avery Brundage served as IOC president from 1952 until 1972, and his personal papers, housed in the Avery Brundage Collection at the University of Illinois archives at Urbana/ Champaign, constitute a major source of IOC material. In addition to this rich resource, the IOC maintains its own archive at its headquarters in Lausanne,

---

<sup>30</sup> On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soviet Olympic debut, Vartanian published a collection of archival documents concerning the Soviet Union's decision to enter the Olympics in a Russian sports on-line newspaper entitled *Sport-ekspress* (Sports Express) under the title "*Sekretnyi arkhiv Akselia Vartaniana*" (The Secret Archive of Aksel' Vartanian). Aksel' Vartanian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv Akselia Vartaniana," Parts 1-7, *Sport-ekspress*, 2002, available from <http://www.sport-express.ru>. Vartanian has published several books and articles on Soviet sport, particularly soccer, including Aksel' Vartanian, *Sto let rossiskomu futbolu* (Moscow, 1997) and Aksel' Vartanian, "Draki pri sotsializme," *Sportekspress futbol*, 27 (1999): 32-35. In the author's note to his AHA article, Robert Edelman acknowledges Vartanian, stating, "I am especially indebted to Aksel' Vartanian, whose vast knowledge of Soviet soccer is unsurpassed. He, too, has been a crucial guide to the archives." Edelman, "Small Way of Saying 'No'," 1473.

<sup>31</sup> M. Iu. Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport i bol'shaia politika* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004).

Switzerland, where the papers and correspondence of Lord Killanin, IOC president from 1972-1980, are kept.

## **Organization**

The dissertation is organized chronologically, beginning with the Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympic Games in 1952 and ending with the 1980 Moscow Olympiad. Chapter 1 offers a comprehensive look at the Soviet Union's Olympic debut in 1952, focusing on the role of the Sports Committee in the decision to enter the Games, in the procurement of approval from the IOC, and in the preparation of the first Soviet Olympic team between 1945 and 1952, the years of postwar Stalinism. The second chapter looks at how Soviet administrators responded to tensions between Olympic and Soviet sports ideologies in order to attain Soviet political goals within the International Olympic Committee and other international sports organizations. Chapter 3 explores the impact on the Sports Committee of expanded international sports ties during the Khrushchev period, determining how travel abroad by the administrators themselves affected the work of the Sports Committee and how sports exchanges influenced changing relationships and expectations within the Soviet bureaucracy during this period. Tracing the evolving role of Soviet representatives in international sports, chapter 4 analyses the Soviet decision to bid to host the Olympic Games in Moscow. The dissertation's final two chapters provide an examination of the role of the Sports Committee and the Moscow Organizing Committee in organizing the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow. The dissertation concludes by analyzing the extent to which the event fulfilled the goals and intentions behind their organization as well as what impact the U.S.-led boycott may have had on

the assessment of the Games. The conclusion also sums up the evolution of Soviet political practices in the Olympic sports program from 1952 to 1980 and offers a brief epilogue that discusses changes in the "rules of the game" after the 1980 Olympics with the rise to power of Gorbachev and the advent of perestroika.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Verbal Gymnastics: The Soviet Union Enters the Olympic Movement**

While the Olympic ideal promoted peace and understanding among nations, Soviet leaders in 1952 saw Olympic participation as an opportunity to show the world the superior technique and training achieved by the Soviet system and, by implication, the value of the Soviet way of life. Furthermore, by entering the Olympic Games, the Soviet Union broke with the communist interpretation of sport that favored mass, collective physical culture over individual, elitist, competitive sport. The Soviet leadership proclaimed that international sporting successes grew out of widespread sporting participation, yet allotted the scarce resources available for physical culture almost entirely to the training of world-class athletes. While Soviet propaganda touted the achievements of a system of mass physical education that fostered a happy, healthy citizenry, the system largely produced a new privileged elite of world and Olympic champions that was used as a tool for promoting the superiority of the Soviet system both at home and abroad. In the aftermath of World War II and during the evolving Cold War, neither the Olympic ideal of international cooperation nor the Soviet ideal of collective, mass sport fully reflected the reality faced by Soviet leaders and members of the IOC as they negotiated the Soviet Union's participation in the Olympic Games.

In this chapter, I consider the evolution of attitudes surrounding the Soviet Olympic project as well as the changing relations between the Soviet organizers and the IOC that allowed for the Soviet entrance into the Games. At the same time, this chapter

points to unresolved ideological, political, and economic differences that dictated the terms on which the Soviet Union could enter the international sporting arena.

Correspondence on both sides of the Iron Curtain betrayed attitudes of confrontation, superiority, and suspicion between competing ideologies. At the same time, both the Soviet Union and the IOC gave lip service to the Olympic ideals of fair play and international understanding. Soviet and foreign press coverage of Olympic sport promoted an image of cooperation that did little to ease real political tensions, but nonetheless provided an opportunity to bridge the gap between east and west through sport. Comparing Soviet internal correspondence with western sources reveals an unlikely affinity of bureaucratic expediency between Soviet organizers and members of the IOC, underlying a Cold-War-induced ideological conflict. Furthermore, this chapter shows that the Soviet sports bureaucracy played an essential role in realizing the ambitious project of entering the Olympic Games.

## **The Soviet Union and the Olympics before World War II**

On 25 November 1892, a French aristocrat, the Baron Pierre de Coubertin, introduced to a gathering of French and foreign dignitaries the idea of reviving the Olympic Games of Ancient Greece. Founded on commonly held ideas of nineteenth-century western liberalism, this new Olympic Movement idealized individual liberty within the context of the modern nation-state. Although Coubertin hoped to build a better world through the internationalization of sport, his idealism masked attitudes of superiority toward the "lower classes" characteristic of his socioeconomic milieu.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Allen Guttman, *The Olympics*, 2.

Olympic historian John Hoberman compares Coubertin's Olympic Movement to other "idealistic internationalist" movements of the late nineteenth century such as the Red Cross International, the Esperanto movement, Scouting organizations, and the International Council of Women. As Hoberman observes, these organizations possessed "a core repertory of behaviors and attitudes" including

a rhetoric of universal membership, a Eurocentric orientation that limits universal participation, an insistence on political neutrality, the empowering role of wealth, social prominence and aristocratic affiliations, a professed interest in peacemaking or pacifism, a complex and problematic relationship between national and international loyalties.<sup>2</sup>

Founded in the decades leading up to World War I and motivated by "deep feelings among Europeans that were rooted in anxieties about war and peace," these movements represented for their conservative organizers' apolitical and universal remedies to increasing international tensions.<sup>3</sup>

Russian representatives participated in the founding of the International Olympic Committee at a meeting in Paris in 1894, but Russian athletes competed in the Olympic Games only in 1908 and 1912. The intervening years saw a proliferation of private sporting clubs in Russia's cities. Unlike the aristocratic proclivities of their western European neighbors, sports represented for Russians at the turn of the century a place where members of every social stratum could interact and play together and in this way contributed to the formation of a nascent Russian national identity that stretched across

---

<sup>2</sup> John Hoberman, "Toward a Theory of Olympic Internationalism," *Journal of Sports History* 22, no. 1 (1995): 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 11, 12.

class lines.<sup>4</sup> In tsarist Russia, industrialists and merchants first developed organized sports as part of a larger process of industrialization of Russian society and provided "an opportunity to socialize their members into the changing business environment."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, poor results in Russia's early Olympic experience exposed Russia's "backwardness" and spurred increased interest domestically in promoting sports and physical education. World War I and the need for physically fit soldiers further highlighted the importance of physical training to the education of a strong national body. These key aspects of early Russian competitive sport—nationalism and militarism—would also become the hallmarks of the Soviet sports system. Moreover, Soviet participation in international competitive sport would also find its rationale in Stalin's industrialization drive of the 1930s.

Physical education and sport were important to the new society being forged in the Soviet Union. The concept of physical culture as a means to promote health and hygiene dominated sports ideology in the USSR during most of the 1920s. Favoring the creation of a new "proletarian" style of sports that promoted cooperation, Soviet physical culture advocates disapproved of competition, believing it to be harmful to the mind and body.<sup>6</sup> The sports system established in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 30s drew inspiration from a variety of sources, both tsarist and socialist, domestic and foreign. Russian physical culturalists of the nineteenth century provided a theoretical foundation.

---

<sup>4</sup> Louise McReynolds, "Olympic Politics in Tsarist Russia: The Development of a Nationalist Identity," in *Problemy vsemirnoi istorii*, ed. B.V. Anan'ich, R. Sh. Ganelin, and V.M. Panaiekh (St. Petersburg: Vilanin, 2000), 260.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 257.

<sup>6</sup> Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society: Development of Sport and Physical Education in Russia and the USSR*. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 95 and Hoberman, *Political Ideology*, 171-73.



Pyotr Lesgaft, a biologist, anatomist, educationalist and social reformer founded physical education as a discipline in tsarist Russia.<sup>7</sup> He also embraced a scientific notion of physical education, encouraging instructors to be schooled in chemistry and physics and mechanics in order to properly train the "human mechanism."<sup>8</sup> Ironically, Lesgaft's legacy in Soviet sport mirrored the ideals and principles of the late nineteenth-century bourgeoisie: self-discipline, social awareness through physical education, women's social emancipation through liberation of the female body, and in general the "harmonious development" of the individual through sport.<sup>9</sup> Also, Lesgaft espoused the idea that physical education would develop "a sense of justice, of comradeship, of fair play."<sup>10</sup> These ideas hold much in common with the ideals of Olympism and were part of the Soviet sport ideological legacy inherited from the prerevolutionary period. Ivan Pavlov's theory of conditioned reflexes lent a scientific focus to Soviet sports training.

Lenin provided both an ideological theory of physical education, based on the idea of training the mind and the body to develop the whole person and allow everyone to attain complete self-realization, as well as a personal example of his daily exercise regime to preserve his mental alertness while in prison or exile.<sup>11</sup> Lenin's ideas about the importance of physical education for the moral training and character building of individuals and society were not unlike the ideas of Coubertin or Avery Brundage.<sup>12</sup> This

---

<sup>7</sup> Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 47.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 61-62.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 63.

propaganda project of international sports also has foundation in Leninist theory. As James Riordan writes, "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."<sup>13</sup>

Early Soviet sports theorists also perceived international competitive sports, including the Olympic Games, as elitist and "bourgeois." This class-based view of Olympic sport was not without foundation. Promoting upper-class notions of leisure and sport, Olympic founders distinguished between elite, amateur sport, and professional, worker or lower-class sport. While the IOC did not maintain the Victorian definition of amateurism that sought "to exclude the 'lower orders' from the play of the leisure class," economic constraints tended to limit participation to those able to afford the expense of international travel.<sup>14</sup> To counteract what they saw as an attempt to prevent workers from competing, Soviet leaders rejected the Olympic Movement and formed the Red Sport International (*Sportintern*) to promote revolutionary class consciousness abroad through athletic meets with communist sporting organizations.<sup>15</sup>

In the 1930s, Soviet leaders developed a more utilitarian attitude toward sports and physical culture as a means to mobilize and socialize the population to build industry and prepare for the possibility of war, and competitive sports began to gain favor as part of Stalin's industrialization drive. Soviet athletes became analogous to the Stakhanovite

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>14</sup> Guttmann, *The Olympics*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Barbara Jean Keys, "The Dictatorship of Sport: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Mass Culture in the 1930s," (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 2001), 191.

"labor heroes" who were rewarded for meeting and surpassing the production goals established by the five-year plans, receiving awards and prestige for sporting achievements and serving as role models for Soviet youth.<sup>16</sup> Also as part of the industrialization drive, the Central Committee took steps to bring physical education and sport under centralized control. In June 1936, the Central Committee set up the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports Affairs under the direct authority of the Council of People's Commissars. Essentially taking on the role of ministry of sport, the committee was responsible for

administration and control over the activity of Republican sports councils, all government and independent organizations (government departments, trade unions, cooperatives and voluntary societies) that are responsible for organizing sports activities; control over construction of major sports specialists; command of all production activity concerned with sport; responsibility for popularizing and propagandizing sport, including the control of all sports publications and the organization and conduct of congresses, festivals, and national and international competitions.<sup>17</sup>

About the same time, all local sports clubs, inherited from the prerevolutionary period, had been transferred to sport "collectives" at places of work and trade-union-based voluntary sport societies were set up. The first was *Spartak* for the producers' cooperatives, followed by *Lokomotiv* for railway workers, *Burevestnik* (Stormy Petrel) for state trade workers, *Krasnoe Znamia* (Red Banner) for cotton-textile workers, *Torpedo* for auto workers, *Stroitel'* (Builder) for construction workers, etc. These societies were spread around the country with branches in every republic.<sup>18</sup> Physical

---

<sup>16</sup> John Hoberman, *Political Ideology*, 192 and Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 132-33.

<sup>17</sup> I.D. Chudinov ed., *Osnovnye postanovleniia, prikazy i instruktsii po voprosam fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta, 1917-1957* (Moscow: Fizkul'tura i sport, 1959) 124-25. Quoted in Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 123.

<sup>18</sup> Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 125.

exercise was supposed to produce healthy, strong workers to fuel industry and workplace collectives served a dual role as feeder organizations from which the trade union societies drew talented athletes for top teams.

Also in the mid-1930s, nationwide sports leagues and cup competitions developed in soccer, basketball, and ice hockey. These competitions were contested by sport society "teams of masters" and were generally dominated by large city teams and teams of the security police. In June 1937, *Spartak* and *Dinamo* athletes were awarded the Order of Lenin, signaling official endorsement of competitive sport and the promotion of top athletes to the status of "shock workers" in other spheres like industrial output.<sup>19</sup>

Another major development in Soviet sport during the 1930s was the institution of a uniform badge and ranking system, entitled Ready for Labor and Defense (*Gotov k trudi i oborone*, GTO), established in 1930. The GTO program recognized proficiency in fifteen different events, knowledge of the sports movement, military affairs, first-aid and hygiene, and membership in either an industrial or agricultural shock brigade. The goal behind the system was to mobilize the population and give incentives for individuals to participate in sports as a part of the "socialist way of life."

Just as the competitive sports system that emerged in late nineteenth-century Russia developed as a means of socializing workers into a modern, urban, industrial society, the emerging sports system in the Soviet Union of the 1930s had similar goals, except that the Soviet state and Communist Party organs played the role of middle-class

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 127-28.

factory owners and merchants of the late imperial period.<sup>20</sup> During the 1930s, giant stadiums were built or planned in major cities. Multi-sport facilities were also a priority during this time as a way to make up quickly for the dearth of sporting venues.<sup>21</sup> These large outdoor stadiums were designed to evoke a sense of "grandeur, excitement, and mass unity" to develop civic pride and patriotism.<sup>22</sup> These great amphitheaters, and the large-scale sports parades and pageants staged in them, were also meant to demonstrate the benefits of life under socialism and, like the Roman circuses, to distract workers from the privations of daily life.<sup>23</sup> Despite the attention to mass participation and mobilization and lip service to the ideals of building group solidarity and social cohesion, since the goals of sport in both tsarist Russia and the Soviet 1930s were so similar, the values and mentality that underpinned the sports system in both cases (e.g. individual excellence, hard work, good hygiene, self-control, etc.) were markedly middle-class.

By the early 1930s, the Soviet Union became less of a pariah on the world stage, signing the Kellogg-Briand Pact, establishing diplomatic ties with the United States, and joining the League of Nations. As part of their international "coming out," the Soviet leadership encouraged more contacts with mainstream western sports organizations. Presumably to increase the Soviet Union's prestige and influence in Europe, Soviet leaders encouraged sports organizers to take advantage of the mass appeal of sporting matches and to support the "progressive" (i.e. socialist) elements in national sports

---

<sup>20</sup> For more on the role of the bourgeoisie in the development of sports in late-imperial Russia see Louise McReynolds, "Olympic Politics in Tsarist Russia," 257. See also McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 135.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 150.

federations.<sup>24</sup> A 1933 mandate to "catch up and overtake bourgeois records" strengthened the move toward integration with western sports, and sports organizers began to implement European tactics and training methods.<sup>25</sup> A second tier GTO badge was added in 1933. This second stage had stiffer requirements and was instituted to establish a mass base from which top athletes could be singled out for specialized training. The GTO system was accompanied by a uniform rankings system for individual sports and both helped to regularize and systematize sports.<sup>26</sup> These developments, along with the honorific titles of Master of Sport and, after 1934, the Merited Master of Sport, helped to encourage the spotting and nurturing of sports stars to entice more Soviet citizens into participation in sport and to win records abroad.<sup>27</sup> Numerous sporting exchanges with European nations followed between 1933 and 1938 when the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sport (Sports Committee) applied for permission to join several international sports federations.<sup>28</sup> Progress toward joining the international sporting world was immediately halted when the Politburo of the Central Committee denied the petition.

Participation in the Olympic Games was not on the Soviet Union's agenda in the years leading to war. Soviet officials hesitated to join international sports organizations because they wanted to choose the countries they would compete against and feared that joining sports federations would obligate them to compete against all member countries.

---

<sup>24</sup> Keys, "Dictatorship of Sport," 207-8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>26</sup> Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 128-30.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>28</sup> Keys, "Dictatorship of Sport," 224, 244.

The Soviet leadership also hesitated to compete in events where Soviet athletes did not excel.<sup>29</sup> On the eve of World War II, the Soviet leadership severely curtailed international competition as sports officials, athletes, and trainers became victims of the "great terror" when the secret police killed, imprisoned, and exiled millions of Soviet citizens. Convinced that they needed to prepare Soviet citizens to defend the motherland for the threat of war, Soviet leaders placed all sports organizations, institutes, and societies under the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense military training organization *Vsevoluch* and required all physical education in schools to focus on military preparedness.<sup>30</sup> As the country moved to a military footing, the Soviet Olympic debut would have to wait until after the war.

### **Postwar Organization of Soviet Sports**

To understand the complexity of interactions among the political leadership and the sports leadership in the Soviet Union, it is helpful to look at how sport was organized and what individuals played key roles in the organization of sport. Appointed by the Secretariat of the Communist Party Central Committee, the chairman of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sport (hereafter the Sports Committee) oversaw all sporting activity. The Sports Committee comprised departments overseeing each sport and a department for international sporting relations. In addition, each of the fifteen constituent republics of the USSR had a committee that mirrored the role of the Sports Committee but was subordinated to it. At the local level, voluntary sport societies had

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>30</sup> Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 155.

been established in the 1930s under the supervision of trade unions, the NKVD (Soviet security Police), and the Red Army. This structure appears to have been revived after the war.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the Soviet Communist Youth Organization (Komsomol) oversaw youth sports and physical education in schools. As preparations for the Olympics began, however, the government established new training camps that seemed to fall under the direct purview of the Sports Committee.

Nikolai Romanov served as committee chairman from 1945-1948 and again from 1951-1952. During the interim, Arakadii Apollonov was chairman, and Romanov served as vice-chairman. The National Olympic Committee (NOC) of the USSR, formed in 1951, was in theory a separate, independent body, as required by IOC regulations. However, the NOC president, Konstantin Andrianov, and corresponding secretary, Petr Sobolev, also held positions within the Sports Committee; Andrianov was vice-chairman, and Sobolev headed the department of international sporting activity. As members of the NOC, they served as liaisons between the Soviet authorities and the IOC, but their influence over internal policy seems to have come from their positions in the Sports Committee. They signed their correspondence with their Sports Committee titles when communicating with the Central Committee or other sports organizations within the Soviet Union but used their NOC titles when communicating with the IOC. As head of the propaganda and agitation section of the Central Committee, Andrei Zhdanov, and later Mikhail Suslov, served as the main contacts for the Sports Committee, but the secretary of the Central Committee in charge of hiring party cadres, Georgii Malenkov,

---

<sup>31</sup> Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 125.



appointed the Sports Committee chairman.<sup>32</sup> These men played key roles in the Soviet Union's decision to join the Olympic Games.

### **"A Most Embarrassing Controversy": Amateurism and Anxiety in the IOC**

Soviet sports scholars have suggested that prewar forays into international competition and Soviet involvement in the Allied victory over Nazi Germany led the Soviet Union to enter the International Olympic Movement after the war. While the spirit of unity engendered by the combined defeat of Nazism encouraged the IOC to invite the Soviet Union's participation, the road to the Soviet Olympic debut was far more complex in the early postwar years. In 1945, the Allied armies in Berlin held competitions, but rising postwar tensions hindered these sporting contests. IOC regulations demanding that athletes be amateurs and that IOC members act independently of political interference also made Soviet participation a divisive issue.

Still, many in international sporting circles sought to bring the Soviet Union into the mainstream in the early postwar years. In such an effort to reach out to the USSR, Sigfried Edström, president of the IOC and the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF), complained to IOC Vice President Avery Brundage in late 1946 that sporting contact between Soviet soccer teams and Norwegian players had been stopped by the international soccer federation (FIFA), and expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would join FIFA and IAAF, and compete in the 1948 Olympic Games.<sup>33</sup> Other members of the IOC also made overtures to the Soviet sports administrators. Lord

---

<sup>32</sup> Zhdanov, Suslov, and Malenkov were members of the Politburo of the Central Committee.

<sup>33</sup> Edstrom to Brundage, 31 October 1946, ABC Box 42.

Burghley, IOC member from Great Britain, visited the Soviet Union in 1947 to learn about the sports system and to encourage the country's participation in the London Games of 1948.<sup>34</sup> On his visit, Burghley attended an elaborate physical culture parade featuring more than twenty thousand athletes. Staged for the second time since World War II, the festivities surrounding Physical Culture Day impressed the English visitor and served as a powerful tool to garner support for Soviet sports internationally.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, if the IOC was to live up to the Olympic ideals of internationalism and maintain its prestige, as Brundage admitted, "it [was] necessary that National Olympic Committees be organized in all countries as soon as possible."<sup>36</sup> However, with the reputation of the IOC at stake, Edström and Brundage were under pressure from both sides. On the one hand, "young athletes all over Europe [were] crazy to have the Russian athletes participate."<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, articles had begun to appear in the western press about the state-run sporting system in the USSR, which gave material advantages to athletes who broke records and showed superior results in competition.<sup>38</sup>

This news fueled a debate already raging within the IOC over amateurism. Swedish members of the IAAF wanted to change the federation's amateur rules to allow athletes to receive compensation for "broken time" to make up for wages lost due to

---

<sup>34</sup> Arthur E. Porrit of the British Olympic Association to Brundage, 24 July 1947, ABC Box 130.

<sup>35</sup> Vartanian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 2 September 2002; Nikolai Romanov, *Trudnye dorogi k Olimpiu*, (Moscow: Fizkultura i sport, 1987), 42.

<sup>36</sup> Report to IOC by Sydney Dawes, Miguel Moenck and Avery Brundage, 25 April 1949, ABC Box 76.

<sup>37</sup> Edstrom to Brundage, 4 December 1946, ABC Box 42.

<sup>38</sup> Edstrom to Brundage, 7 December 1945, ABC Box 42.

missed work days resulting from travel to sporting competitions.<sup>39</sup> Stating that the IOC "will never tolerate" them, Brundage adamantly opposed such payments.<sup>40</sup> Before the 1948 Winter Games, Brundage also took on the American Hockey Association, asserting that the organization's athletes were "tainted by professionals" and served commercial interests.<sup>41</sup> The revelations over the Soviet state-run athletic system, coming at a time when amateurism was the issue of the day, made the Soviet Olympic entrance highly contestable for Brundage and the IOC.

We are endeavoring to keep the Olympic Games pure and undefiled, we are barring ski teachers, the Swedish Association has cleaned house and eliminated its professional runners, and if we allow nationally subsidized Russian athletes . . . to participate there will be a storm of righteous disapproval from all over the world.<sup>42</sup>

Brundage feared a backlash from critics if the Soviet Union were allowed to compete.

In 1947, a special IOC committee headed by Brundage defined an amateur as "one whose connection with sport is and always has been solely for pleasure and for physical, mental and social benefits he derives therefrom and to whom sport is nothing more than recreation without material gain of any kind, direct or indirect."<sup>43</sup> This definition seemed incompatible with the Soviet system where, according to Edström, "athletes who are intended for participation in international sport matches are concentrated in training camps. They are freed from their jobs, are well paid by the

---

<sup>39</sup> "Men from 45 Olympic Nations Expected to Attend Amateur Congress—US Among Opponents to Swedish Proposal," *New York Times*, 6 June 1946, 29.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> "Brundage Expects Decision on Hockey to be Far-Reaching," *New York Times*, 25 January 1948, 1(S).

<sup>42</sup> Brundage to Edstrom, 26 April 1946, ABC Box 42.

<sup>43</sup> Sydney Dawes report of IOC meeting with international federations, 26-27 June 1947, ABC Box 75.

governments and receive—with their families—more and special food."<sup>44</sup> The first hurdle to overcome was the Soviet practice of offering monetary rewards to athletes who broke international records. Since acceptance of such rewards would render the record-breaking athlete ineligible for Olympic competition according to the movement's regulations, the Soviet Union ceased giving out cash prizes to athletes in July 1947.<sup>45</sup> The IOC, however, remained convinced that Soviet athletes were professionals paid by the state and worried that athletes from Eastern Europe would have similar state support.<sup>46</sup>

Excluding the Soviet Union, however, would also compromise the Olympic ideals that sought to have the best amateur athletes from all over the world compete. As the *New York Times* reported regarding Soviet monetary rewards, "all the Russian record breakers would be Olympic ineligible and the USSR could be represented only by second-raters. That has all the makings of a plot of the fascist-reactionaries."<sup>47</sup> Perceiving astutely that a decision either way could damage the IOC's reputation, Brundage implored Edström,

I urge you to use the utmost care in dealing with the countries behind the Iron Curtain. As you say, we cannot refuse to recognize any country because of its political beliefs or because of the nature of its government. We can, however, make our position, that we will not tolerate politics in any of our activities, clear. We cannot keep them out but we can be prepared to be just as tough as they are in

---

<sup>44</sup> Edstrom to Brundage, 12 November 1947, ABC Box 149.

<sup>45</sup> Riordan, "Rewriting Sports History," 248.

<sup>46</sup> Brundage to Mayer, 10 February 1951, ABC Box 46.

<sup>47</sup> Arthur Daley, "Sports of the Times," *New York Times*, 15 October 1945, pg. 16. Quoted in Brundage to Edstrom, 29 October 1945, ABC Box 42.

enforcing our rules and regulations. One rotten apple can do a great deal of damage to the rest of the barrel."<sup>48</sup>

Before the Soviet Union formed a National Olympic Committee (NOC) and petitioned the IOC for recognition in 1951, Brundage could avoid dealing with the challenge to the Olympic amateur ideal and focus instead on the more clearly defined rules of the IOC. No country lacking a National Olympic Committee would be invited to participate in the Olympic Games.<sup>49</sup> Unable to reconcile the Soviet Union's possible entrance with the Olympic amateur ideal, Brundage found refuge in the IOC's bureaucratic process.

Having invited the Soviet Union informally to join the Olympic Games, Edström now made several attempts to persuade Nikolai Romanov, chairman of the Soviet Sports Committee, that the Soviet Union would be welcomed into membership in the IAAF and allowed to participate in the Olympic Games only if it followed the rules of both organizations and formed a National Olympic Committee.<sup>50</sup> Brundage and Edström also worried that the Soviet Union might cause embarrassment to the IOC by sending a delegation to Helsinki without official recognition. Reminding Edström of the Soviet Union's unexpected appearance at the 1946 European Track and Field Championships in Oslo, Brundage stated, "It would not surprise me if they tried the same stunt at Helsinki in 1952. . . . Not only the IOC but also our Finnish friends must be prepared for this contingency in order to avoid finding ourselves in the middle of a most embarrassing and dangerous controversy."<sup>51</sup> The many missives Edström sent to Romanov went

---

<sup>48</sup> Brundage to Edstrom, 30 October 1947, ABC Box 42.

<sup>49</sup> "The Position of Soviet Russia," *Bulletin du Comité International Olympique*, 25 (1947): 26.

<sup>50</sup> Edstrom to N. Romanov, 25 November 1946, ABC Box 42.

<sup>51</sup> Brundage to Edstrom, 12 July 1950, ABC Box 149. Edstrom had invited the Soviet Union to become a member of the International Amateur Athletic Association and to participate in the competition, but he

unanswered, creating further anxiety for the IOC president and vice-president. Hearing nothing from their Soviet contact, Edström and Brundage worried that Soviet leaders were taking steps to enter the Olympics without the IOC's knowledge. Romanov's silence, however, had more to do with indecision within the Soviet party-state bureaucracy than with a deliberate plot to embarrass the IOC.

### **"If You Are Not Ready:" Internal Retreat and the Need for Total Victory**

Romanov and the other Soviet sports leaders had to balance demands from the international sporting organizations and the IOC with conditions placed upon them by the Soviet leadership if the Olympic project were to be realized. How could they make the Soviet-style sports system conform to international standards while promoting the ideological and political goals of Stalin and the Central Committee? Soviet sports administrators promoted the Olympic Games as an opportunity to prove the superiority of socialist sporting methods and the Soviet system, but the Politburo remained unreceptive to Olympic participation in the immediate postwar years. As sports organizers sought permission to prepare a team for the 1948 London Games, Soviet leaders pursued an anti-western internal policy that made international competition of any kind hard to justify.

Soviet sports administrators defended Olympic participation by highlighting their athletes' ability to act as ambassadors for socialism and to bring glory to the Soviet Union, but their correspondence reveals their distance from Politburo priorities. In 1947, Nikolai Romanov asked permission of Politburo member Andrei Zhdanov to prepare a Soviet team for the 1948 Olympic Games. Stressing the huge popularity of the Games

---

received no reply prior to the arrival of the Soviet contingent in Oslo. Edstrom to N. Romanov, 25 November 1946, ABC Box 42.

throughout the world, the increasing number of countries joining the Olympics, and the idealized message of the Olympic Movement, Romanov argued, "Considering . . . that the Olympic Games are a symbol of peace, the participation of the Soviet Union in the 1948 Games becomes particularly desirable."<sup>52</sup> He also suggested that the country's athletes had a good chance of winning in a wide range of events, insofar as sports had developed so much under the Soviet government.<sup>53</sup>

Romanov must have expected a favorable reaction to his petition since he informed the president of the Council of Ministers of the Georgian Republic of the Sports Committee's intention to set up a winter-sports training camp in his republic.<sup>54</sup> But Romanov wrote these letters during a period of increasing xenophobia. Zhdanov initiated an ideological campaign against "kowtowing to the west," and the Stalinist leadership purged from their posts, arrested, and imprisoned people for having ties with the west or affinities for western culture. Student athletes were expelled from prominent sports institutes, and sports educators, scientists, and other officials were arrested during this time.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the Sports Committee journal *Fizicheskaia kul'tura i sport* (Physical Culture and Sport), reiterated Soviet opposition to the Olympic Games on the grounds that they were run by capitalists and aristocrats who wished to exclude workers from

---

<sup>52</sup> Romanov to Zhdanov, early 1947, GARF, f7576, op. 1, d. 623, ll. 2-7; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 2 September 2002.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Romanov to Z. N. Chkhubianishvili, 1 June 1947, N. Romanov to Z.N. Chkhubianishvili, 12 June 1947, GARF, f7576, op. 1, d. 623, l. 1; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 2 September 2002.

<sup>55</sup> For some idea of the scope of such purges in the sports bureaucracy see Riordan, "Rewriting Sports History," 250.

competing.<sup>56</sup> The timing of the article implies that it might have been a response to Romanov and his support of the Olympics. Its publication also suggests a degree of autonomy on the part of Romanov as his ideas were not completely in line with the general atmosphere in 1947. Romanov must have perceived the danger of his position as three of his prewar predecessors had fallen victim to purges during 1936-39, and his actions must be considered in light of the Soviet domestic climate.<sup>57</sup> It appears that his call for Soviet athletes to take on a greater role in international sport may not have been predicated by a decision of the Central Committee.

Yet, Romanov proceeded with caution as he petitioned for a team to compete in the 1948 London Games, convinced that only the guarantee of a first place victory would induce the Soviet leadership to send athletes to compete abroad. According to Romanov, Stalin believed that even the second place finish of Soviet wrestlers' at the 1946 European Championships discredited the Soviet Union and chastised Romanov for sending a team to the competition saying, "if you are not ready, then there's no need to participate."<sup>58</sup> Following Stalin's cue, Romanov couched his request to send a team to the 1948 Olympics in terms of "total team victory." Reporting to Zhdanov in 1947 that competing nations observed an unofficial point system based on the first six places in each event, Romanov wrote, "it appears most expedient to send a full representation of Soviet athletes in every event of the Olympic program." Since Soviet athletes could reasonably hope only for second, third, or fourth place in events such as track and field, boxing, and

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 249. Riordan does not cite the date of the article only that it appeared soon after a rumor began to circulate that the Soviet Union would participate in the 1948 Games.

<sup>57</sup> Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 124.

<sup>58</sup> Romanov, *Trudnye dorogi*, 64.



swimming where the United States held prominence, Romanov conceded that the Soviet Union could not surpass the United States in medals, but he nonetheless asserted that by competing in every sport on the program and placing in the top six in those sports, the Soviet team could secure full team victory based on the "unofficial" points system.<sup>59</sup>

Believing that sports training in the USSR was not as developed as in Europe and the United States, Romanov deemed the incorporation of western methods necessary for the international success of Soviet athletes. In order to prepare a successful Olympic team, he proposed holding international meets to compare Soviet athletes to their foreign competitors and recommended sending a group of sports experts to several European countries, specifically to Sweden, Norway, and Czechoslovakia, and to the United States to study sports training methods.<sup>60</sup> Romanov's prescriptions could indicate an attempt to gain additional resources for the Sports Committee. As the country struggled to rebuild after an extremely destructive war and a brutal postwar famine, Romanov could highlight the potential for international prestige the Olympics offered in order to justify expenditures for the Sports Committee's work. On the other hand, Romanov likely questioned his capacity to predict Soviet athletes' ability to win internationally without prior head-to-head competition with foreign athletes.

Romanov hoped his suggestions would be implemented in time to enter the 1948 Olympic Games. Instead, 1948 began a period of uncertainty and ambiguity for the Soviet sports program as Soviet leaders reorganized the Sports Committee and imposed a ban on international competition. After a mixed performance by Soviet speed skaters at

---

<sup>59</sup> Romanov to Zhdanov, 1947, GARF, f. 7576, op. 1, d. 623, ll. 2-7; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 2 September 2002.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

the 1948 World Championships in Helsinki, Nikolai Apollonov replaced Romanov as the Sports Committee chairman. The events surrounding Romanov's demotion are significant. Before the 1948 competition, Romanov cautioned the Politburo not to send a team because he doubted the athletes' chances for a successful performance. The skaters then sent a letter to the Central Committee and the Soviet Council of Ministers denouncing Romanov's position and requesting that they be allowed to compete. Romanov maintained his objections, but the team competed anyway.<sup>61</sup> It is not clear who decided to send the team, but after the competition Romanov shouldered the blame for its performance and was soon replaced by Apollonov. Romanov, however, remained active in the Sports Committee's work. According to his memoir, soon after his removal as chairman, Romanov received a phone call from Politburo member Georgii Malenkov informing him that Stalin wanted him to remain in the Sports Committee and, on 2 February 1949, he was appointed vice-chairman upon Apollonov's recommendation.<sup>62</sup>

Under Apollonov, the Sports Committee shifted its emphasis away from international competition toward developing a mass participatory sports program. At the same time, however, the committee remained interested in training developments abroad. Apollonov proposed on 7 July 1948 that the Central Committee allow a group of forty-one sports experts to attend an "Olympic Congress" of international sports organizations.<sup>63</sup> "Because Olympic competitions bring together the strongest athletes of

---

<sup>61</sup> Romanov, *Trudnye dorogi*, 66-69.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 71. See also D. Shepilov and K. Kalashnikov to G. M. Malenkov, 28 March 1949, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 264, l. 35. The documentary evidence supports Romanov's version of events. According to the Sport Committee meeting minutes for 1950, Romanov led the discussion every time international sports ties were discussed, see GARF, f. 7576, op. 1, d. 755a, ll. 1-24.

<sup>63</sup> Apollonov to Mikhail Suslov, 7 July 1948, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 99, ll. 1-2; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 2 September 2002.

the world and are of great interest from the point of view of the study of foreign sport," Apollonov wrote, "the Sports Committee believes it necessary . . . to study sporting techniques, training methods, and other technical and organizational questions pertaining to the competitions."<sup>64</sup> In the end, the contingent arrived ten days after the start of the congress and comprised only ten experts. Gleb Baklanov, who coordinated physical training for the military at this time, headed the delegation. According to him, the deputy chairman of the Sports Committee, D.V. Postnikov, detained the group and questioned them about the purpose of their delegation. Ultimately, Postnikov let them go after receiving a phone call. Baklanov did not give the name of the caller but implied that it was high-ranking Soviet official.<sup>65</sup> Whether this episode is an example of miscommunication or indecision on the part of the Soviet leadership is hard to say, but Baklanov believed it meant that someone did not want them to go.<sup>66</sup> In his report to the Central Committee, Baklanov made clear that his delegation also intended to forge ties with international sport federations. Noting that his group's late arrival denied it the opportunity to meet with members of international federations, he nonetheless estimated Soviet chances for success in the 1952 competition based upon what little information he gathered.<sup>67</sup> Despite Baklanov's predictions, the Soviet leaders gave no indication at the time that they intended to participate in the next Olympics, scheduled for 1952.

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Gleb Baklanov, *Tochka opory* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1971), 216.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Baklanov to Central Committee of the Communist Party USSR, 25 August 1948, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 99, ll. 44-59; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 2 September 2002.

Baklanov's experience exemplifies contradictory impulses within the Soviet leadership of the time to gain knowledge and expertise from western countries while isolating its people from foreign influences. The defeat of Soviet speed skaters in the 1948 World Championships may have heightened the leadership's fears of taking on foreign competitors, but increased isolation of Soviet athletics could also reflect changes within the party leadership. Mikhail Suslov had taken over as agitation and propaganda secretary of the Central Committee in 1947. After Zhdanov's death in August 1948, Malenkov and Lavrentii Beria orchestrated a purge of Zhdanov's former associates in the Leningrad party apparatus. Robert Edelman notes in his study of Soviet soccer that Soviet teams ceased to play foreign opponents between 1948 and 1950, asserting that Malenkov, Beria, and Suslov exerted more control over sports than Zhdanov had.<sup>68</sup> Romanov also acknowledges that international meets occurred rarely during this time.<sup>69</sup> Between 1948 and 1950, even socialist sporting contacts, common since the late 1920s, occurred less frequently.<sup>70</sup> For example, the Soviet track team ceased to compete in the *l'Humanite* (Humanity) competition organized by the French Communist Party in which the USSR had taken part, with the exception of the war years, since 1935.<sup>71</sup> The increased isolation of Soviet athletes during this period is remarkable, but it certainly parallels similar developments in other areas.

---

<sup>68</sup> Edelman, *Serious Fun*, 96.

<sup>69</sup> Romanov, *Trudnye dorogi*, 152. The documentary evidence supports Romanov's impressions. Whereas international sports delegations were barely mentioned in the Sports Committee meeting minutes for 1948, the minutes for 1951 mention hardly anything else. See GARF, f. 7576, op. 1, d. 654 and 826.

<sup>70</sup> Edelman, *Serious Fun*, 96.

<sup>71</sup> "Pobeda sovetskikh legoatletov," *Fizkul'tura i sport*, April 1951, 1.

Adding to the confusion, the Central Committee issued a resolution in December 1948, charging all sports committees to "spread sport to every corner of the land, to raise the level of skill and, on that basis, to help Soviet athletes win world supremacy in major sports in the immediate future."<sup>72</sup> The wording of the resolution suggests that the Central Committee held Olympic dominance as the ultimate goal, but the Soviet press offered a different reading. Part of the ambiguity of this resolution concerns the dual purpose of the Soviet sports system—*massovost'* (mass participation in sports) versus *masterstvo* (sporting mastery). The party resolution of 1948 encouraged both expanding sports participation throughout the country and breaking world records. In practice, however, training of elite athletes and promotion of widespread participation often came into conflict. Romanov tells us in his memoir that the Sports Committee became heavily involved in expanding sports education and local sports organizations between 1949 and 1951, founding pedagogical departments, increasing the number of physical culture collectives, and expanding sports curriculum in schools.<sup>73</sup> During this time, the Soviet press emphasized the need to create sports clubs in every village and to expand the number of young people achieving physical fitness minimums.<sup>74</sup> Certainly, the next generation of sports stars would have to come from somewhere, but expansion of local-level sports no doubt drained the resources allotted to the Sports Committee, thereby limiting the funds available for international travel to competitions. Until Romanov's

---

<sup>72</sup> This statement became a battle cry in sports reporting after the resolution. I have used James Riordan's translation. See Riordan, *Playing Politics*, 62. Riordan maintains that the resolution was issued in 1949, but Apollonov gives the date as December 27, 1948. Arakadii Apollonov, "Stalinskaia zabota o protsvetanii fizicheskoi kul'tury v SSSR," *Fizkul'tura i sport*, December 1949, 4.

<sup>73</sup> Romanov, *Trudnye dorogi*, 84-89.

<sup>74</sup> See for example, Nikolai Apollonov, "[?] zadachi sovetskogo sporta," *Fizkul'tura i sport*, June 1948. (The first word of the article's title was ripped out of the copy I examined.)

reinstatement as chairman of the Sports Committee in 1951, preparations for Olympic competition appear to have been a low priority for the Central Committee. As a result, when Olympic training began in earnest in 1951, the Sports Committee had to resort to Soviet-style *shturmovshchina* or a rushed, sporadic production spurt.

During Apollonov's tenure, the Sports Committee leadership received considerable criticism from within its ranks, and from other departments and organizations, over the lack of Soviet participation in international sports. Communist youth organization (Komsomol) secretary N. Mikhailov complained that the Central Committee needed to replace the Sports Committee leadership because "the current staff, for all practical purposes, was doing nothing." According to Mikhailov, Apollonov was perpetually on vacation, leaving the day-to-day running of the committee to Vice-Chairman Vershinskii.<sup>75</sup> In June 1949, Mikhailov again denounced the Sports Committee leadership for refusing to send boxers to the European championships. Characterizing Apollonov as "afraid of responsibility, trying to get out of deciding questions relation to participation of Soviet sportsmen in official European and international competitions," Mikhailov argued that the failure of Soviet athletes to compete abroad "damaged the prestige of Soviet sport" and "brought harm to our Soviet state."<sup>76</sup> Agitprop workers agreed with Mikhailov's assessment. Considering the failure to develop international sports ties as a reflection of poor documentation and oversight by

---

<sup>75</sup> N. Mikhailov to G. M. Malenkov, 24 January 1949, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 264, l. 31.

<sup>76</sup> N. Mikhailov to G.M. Malenkov, 4 June 1949, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 264, l. 41.

the Sports Committee leadership, they gave Apollonov one month to submit a "suitable plan" for training Soviet athletes for international competitions in 1950.<sup>77</sup>

Complaints against Apollonov went beyond his failure to send Soviet athletes abroad. At a meeting of the Party Organization of the Sports Committee in February 1950, members condemned him for everything from lack of proper "criticism" and "self-criticism" to his "bureaucratic leadership style."<sup>78</sup> Many attendees at the meeting complained about the working conditions in the Sports Committee. Some blamed Apollonov for failing to secure better office space for the committee, and others bemoaned the lack of training and support available for young workers "to raise their business qualifications" and gain promotions.<sup>79</sup> Many questioned the Sports Committee's priorities, citing the planned sports schools and institutes that remained unfinished and the lack of development of physical culture in villages, trade unions, and republican sports ministries.<sup>80</sup> Apollonov had sent a proposal to reorganize the Sports Committee, creating separate departments for each sport and requested additional funds to "establish the necessary material conditions" for Sports Committee workers in order to improve training and attract "the most highly-qualified specialists." Apollonov also asked for additional facilities for training bases and a new building for the State Central Order of Lenin Institute for Physical Culture, but these measures were apparently not enough to please his critics.<sup>81</sup> In July 1950, Sushkov reported further criticism of Apollonov from

---

<sup>77</sup> Kalashnikov and Sushkov to G.M. Malenkov, 22 August 1949, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 264, l. 51.

<sup>78</sup> Kalashnikov and Sushkov to M.A. Suslov, 28 November 1950, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 447, ll. 14-15.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., l. 16, 15.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., l. 16.

<sup>81</sup> Apollonov to the Council of Ministers, 7 February 1950, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 447, ll. 18, 23.

within the Sports Committee. According to this report, several Sports Committee workers condemned Apollonov's handling of international sports relations. Sushkov noted that Apollonov did not enjoy authority among masters of sport and many leading physical culture workers."<sup>82</sup>

### **"Who Do We Know in Russia?" The Soviet Union Joins the "Olympic Family"**

While Soviet leaders pursued an internal policy of isolationism, the 1948 London Games took place as the Soviet Union began to consolidate its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe by intensifying its political and ideological control over the region.<sup>83</sup> Promoting a united communist front in a global confrontation with the west, Soviet leaders hoped to exert influence on international sports organizations through a coordinated effort with East European representatives. This goal came into direct conflict with the prevailing effort of the IOC to combat nationalism within the Olympic family. The Soviet Union did not introduce a highly nationalistic atmosphere into IOC debates but, rather, the Soviet Union's entrance in the early years of the Cold War took this already present trend to a new ideological level.

Gleb Baklanov, leader of the group sent to observe the 1948 London Games, reported to the Central Committee that his delegation's late arrival complicated the position of the representatives from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Hungary in their meetings with international federations because they did not know the Soviet stance.

---

<sup>82</sup> A. Sushkov to Secretary of the Central Committee P.K. Ponamarenko, 15 July 1950, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 447, ll. 119-21.

<sup>83</sup> Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 110-11.



For this reason, Baklanov admitted, "a single front of democratic sporting interests was not established."<sup>84</sup> During this time, *Fizkul'tura i sport* frequently featured sporting contacts between the USSR and athletes from the "peoples' democracies." To compete against the west meant to achieve international prestige for eastern bloc athletes and their socialist system, yet this aim was anathema to the IOC's goals of independence for its members from state control.

As much as Brundage and the other IOC members may have wanted to deny it, nationalism was nothing new to the Olympic Movement. As athletes represented their nation, marched under their nation's flag, and heard their nation's anthem played when they won a medal, the Games were imbued with nationalism. Still, Brundage blamed the Soviet Union and its East European neighbors for bringing politics and nationalism into the Olympic Games in the postwar period.

Officially, IOC members represent the interests of the Olympic Movement to their native countries and do not serve as their nations' representatives to the IOC. Fearing an unwelcome intrusion of state interests, the IOC sought to maintain its independence from state politics by choosing carefully its representatives in communist countries.

Concerned that East European NOCs were falling under the control of government ministries, Brundage wrote to Edström in late 1947, "Even without the Russians, every appearance of delegates from satellite countries since the war has been marred by political discussion. It looks like we're in for a bitter struggle to maintain our freedom."<sup>85</sup>

Brundage voiced similar unease to IOC secretary Otto Mayer, writing "it is essential that

---

<sup>84</sup> Baklanov to Central Committee of the Communist Party USSR, 25 August 1948, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 99, ll. 44-59; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 2 September 2002.

<sup>85</sup> Brundage to Edstrom, 15 November 1947, ABC Box 149.

we use the utmost care in selecting our representatives to these nations, which are really no longer independent."<sup>86</sup> The real problem, however, was that the IOC was traditionally self-perpetuated through social networks that did not extend to the Soviet Union.

Brundage explained the dilemma: "Members of the IOC must place the interests of the Olympic Movement first and 'must not accept from these (national) associations any mandate which will in any way bind them as members of the committee or interfere with the independence of their vote.' Aside from all this who do we know in Russia?"<sup>87</sup>

Edström too agonized over this question declaring, "The greatest trouble will be to find men that we can have present in the IOC. I do not feel inclined to go so far as to admit communists there."<sup>88</sup>

While members of the IOC railed against nationalism, the Soviet sports organizers and sports press seemed less concerned with the intrusion of political interests than they were over commercial interests. The Soviet press characterized western (especially American) sport as a "commercial enterprise"<sup>89</sup> in which athletes were "property of one or another clique of sporting bosses."<sup>90</sup> The Soviet press rejected the claim of the "bourgeois press" that amateur athletics existed in American universities, countering with the argument that the top college athletes in the USA were actually "bought for big money" through scholarships and therefore served the interests of big business.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> Brundage to Mayer, 19 January 19 1952, ABC Box 46.

<sup>87</sup> Brundage to Edstrom, 6 April 1947, ABC Box 42.

<sup>88</sup> Edstrom to Brundage, 3 September 1947, ABC Box 42.

<sup>89</sup> "Kommertsiiia i sport," *Fizkul'tura i sport*, January 1952, 38.

<sup>90</sup> "Dva ideala," *Fizkul'tura i sport*, July 1948, 10.

<sup>91</sup> "Sportsmeny liubiteli," *Fizkul'tura i sport*, May 1951, 39.

Encapsulating the true spirit of Olympism, Soviet sport, in contrast, allowed everyone an equal chance to participate and "fosters, among the young, collectivism, orderliness, camaraderie, and a feeling of great and genuine Soviet friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union."<sup>92</sup>

Although the primary aim of such reports was to spread antiwestern propaganda, the Soviet media's critique of the IOC had some basis. In a memo to the Central Committee, the head of the international sporting section of the Soviet Sports Committee, Petr Sobolev, described the members of the IOC as reactionaries and fascists who admired Hitler's regime and ignored representatives of "democratic" countries.<sup>93</sup> The Soviet press portrayed the IOC as an exclusive gentlemen's club with discriminatory practices. A March 1951 article depicted the IOC members as a company of men of "aristocratic origin" in their eighties and nineties.<sup>94</sup> Unlike many of his colleagues, Brundage lacked a European aristocratic pedigree, but he represented the American equivalent, having risen to a position of wealth and prominence through business. The self-made man betrayed the "gentlemen's club" mentality of the IOC when, in a circular letter to IOC members, he waxed nostalgic over the days when "the care exercised in the selection of the individuals who composed the IOC produced members who, no matter where they came from or what their language, were of the same general type and they

---

<sup>92</sup> "Sistema rastleniia," *Fizkul'tura i sport*, November 1949, 29.

<sup>93</sup> Democratic was the term used in the Soviet Union to refer to Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe. Sobolev to Central Committee, 8 December 1950, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 137, d. 237; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 16 September 2002. See also GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 699, ll. 6-11.

<sup>94</sup> "Olimpiiskie igry 1952," *Fizkul'tura i sport*, March 1951, 39. It is interesting to note that this article about the upcoming Olympic Games in Helsinki in 1952 made no mention that the Soviet Union was considering participation.

were soon welded into what has so often been called the 'Olympic Family.'<sup>95</sup> Indeed, much of Brundage and Edström's objection to the Soviet Union's participation reflected a personal disdain for what they perceived as boorishness and ignorance of commonly held values and modes of conduct. When his many missives to the Soviet Union went unanswered by Romanov, Edström complained, "Perhaps he does not care, but probably he does not know that one should answer a letter."<sup>96</sup> The Soviet sports leaders were obviously not of "the same general type" as the current IOC members.

Further evidence of this personal contempt for their Soviet counterparts can be seen in Edström and Brundage's correspondence regarding Karl Ritter von Halt, a mutual friend and former IOC member from Germany who was arrested and imprisoned by the Soviet authorities for his membership in the Nazi Party.<sup>97</sup> Though the two were usually careful to separate their personal notes from their professional correspondence, Edström demonstrated the difficulty of this when he wrote to Brundage, "It is too sad about Karl. I have had no answer as yet from Nikolai Romanov. The Russians evidently do not like to write letters."<sup>98</sup> It is clear from this that Edström, however inadvertently, did make a connection between Soviet foreign policy actions and the Russian character. Brundage too portrayed an elitist attitude toward Romanov and his cohort when he wrote, "What disturbs me is how we are going to know whether or not their athletes are amateurs if and

---

<sup>95</sup> Brundage to members of the IOC, 30 January 1954, ABC Box 70.

<sup>96</sup> Edstrom to Brundage, 4 December 1946, ABC Box 42.

<sup>97</sup> Edstrom to Brundage, 23 November 1946, ABC Box 42. Brundage and Edstrom refer to their friend, Karl von Halt, in much of their correspondence between 1946 and 1950. At one point Halt was feared dead, but Edstrom received a letter from him in 1950 confirming that he was alive. Edstrom to Brundage, 14 June 1950, ABC Box 43.

<sup>98</sup> Edstrom to Brundage, 10 July 1947, ABC Box 42.

when they are elected to membership. They may not even know what an amateur is."<sup>99</sup> He later reiterated his reservations stating, "As you know, I have kept my fingers crossed on the efforts to bring them [the Soviets] into the Olympic family. Not understanding fair play, good sportsmanship and amateurism, I am sure they will bring with them nothing but trouble."<sup>100</sup> More than a desire to uphold the ideals and rules of the IOC, these statements reveal prejudice against the Soviet representatives as people who did not share his background and values. While Brundage may have been able to bracket his political objections to communism, he found it more difficult to overcome his personal bias against the representatives of the workers' state.

On 14 December 1950, the Sports Committee submitted to the Central Committee a request to form a Soviet Olympic Committee under the leadership of Konstantin Andrianov.<sup>101</sup> Andrianov seemed a strong candidate for the position. As the former chairman of the Moscow city sports committee and the vice chairman of the national Sports Committee since 1941, he had traveled abroad to Bulgaria, England, France, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Holland, and Hungary. He also had the proper class and party credentials as a former mill operator and regional Komsomol secretary, and he had just completed a degree at the Higher Party School.<sup>102</sup> In a report on the IOC included with the request, the following excerpt was marked in the margin and underlined.

On 5 September 1950 the Executive Board meeting of the IOC in Lausanne received a delegation from the German OC (West Germany). The EB informed the delegation of their readiness, finally, to recognize the German OC at the next

---

<sup>99</sup> Brundage to Edstrom, 16 May 1947, ABC Box 42.

<sup>100</sup> Brundage to Edstrom, 27 September 1948, ABC Box 43.

<sup>101</sup> Apollonov to Grigor'ian, 14 December 1950, RGANI, f. 17, op. 137, d. 237, ll. 125-26.

<sup>102</sup> Report on Konstantin Aleksandrovich Andrianov, 10 May 1950, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 137, d. 237, l. 27.

session in Vienna 1951 and discuss the question of letting West Germany into the Olympic Games.<sup>103</sup>

It seems that developments in the divided Germany helped force the Central Committee's hand, but the prospect of competing in the 1952 Olympics also influenced the decision.

On April 18, Romanov reminded the Central Committee that the Vienna session of the IOC would take place in May and that if the Soviet Union had not formed an NOC by that time, Soviet athletes could not compete in the Helsinki Games the following year.<sup>104</sup>

That same day a joint declaration from the Central Committee and Council of Ministers authorized the Sports Committee to form a National Olympic Committee.<sup>105</sup> Finally, on 23 April 1951, Petr Sobolev sent a telegram to the IOC requesting recognition of the newly formed Soviet National Olympic Committee.<sup>106</sup>

The IOC discussed the matter in May. Reiterating his concerns over the professional status of Soviet athletes, Brundage presented a full dossier of the reports he had circulated previously on the condition of sports in the USSR. Another committee member suggested that the Soviet NOC be required to present its rules and regulations in order to make sure they conformed to those of the IOC. Lord Burghley of Great Britain, who had encouraged Soviet participation on his visit to Moscow in 1947, proved to be the leading supporter of the Soviet NOCs recognition. Arguing that they had never asked

---

<sup>103</sup> Report on the IOC sent to Central Committee 8 December 1950, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 137, d. 237, l. 157.

<sup>104</sup> N. Romanov to V. G. Grigor'ian, 18 April 1951, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 137, d. 237, l. 164.

<sup>105</sup> Handwritten note, 11 May 1951, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 137, d. 237, l. 125 and Handwritten note, 25 April 1951, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 137, d. 557, l. 20.

<sup>106</sup> Sobolev to Edstrom, telegram, 23 April 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 16 September 2002. See also GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 667, ll. 6-7.

this of other nations, he spoke out against investigating Soviet sports regulations.<sup>107</sup>

Sobolev's telegram illustrates a keen awareness on the part of Soviet sports administrators of the issues at stake. Earlier attempts by the Soviet Union to gain membership in international federations had included requests for representation on the governing body, that Russian be made one of the official languages, and that "fascist Spain" be excluded from membership.<sup>108</sup> The telegram requesting recognition by the IOC presented no such demands, but stated simply, "We inform you that an Olympic Committee was created in the USSR. This Olympic Committee examined the rules of the IOC and declares them accepted."<sup>109</sup> Ultimately, the IOC members decided to rely on Sobolev's assurances, and the question over the amateur status of Soviet athletes remained unanswered. At its session in May, the IOC recognized the Soviet Union's Olympic Committee by a vote of thirty-one in favor with three abstentions.

Once the Soviet NOC was recognized, the IOC members considered the nomination of Andrianov as a member of the IOC. Oddly enough, there was no discussion over Andrianov's independence from government control or his ability to represent the ideals of the IOC in the Soviet Union.<sup>110</sup> When his nomination was put up for debate, the only objection was that he did not speak either of the official languages of the IOC. Once again Lord Burghley came to the Soviet delegate's defense, declaring that

---

<sup>107</sup> 45me Session du CIO, Vienna, 7 May 1951, ABC Box 90.

<sup>108</sup> N. Romanov and B. Chesnokov to International Amateur Wrestling Federation, 29 January 1947, and N. Romanov and A. Morosov to International Amateur Athletic Federation, 29 January 1947, ABC Box 42. See also, Apollonov to Suslov, June 1948, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 2 September 2002.

<sup>109</sup> Sobolev to Edstrom, telegram, 23 April 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 16 September 2002. See also GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 667, ll. 6-7.

<sup>110</sup> 45me Session du CIO, Vienna, 7 May 1951, ABC Box 90.

Andrianov was a true sportsman and "that is much more important for us than knowledge of languages."<sup>111</sup> This represents a change in priorities from 1947 when Edström wrote to Brundage, "But then comes the most difficult question. Whom shall we appoint as our representative in Russia?"<sup>112</sup> The ease with which the IOC recognized Soviet membership and ratified Andrianov's nomination may seem unexpected, but it reveals the importance of personal ties for securing a positive vote within the IOC. Andrianov's election can be seen as a delayed reward for previous efforts to win Burghley's support during his visit to the Soviet Union in 1947. The spectacular physical culture parade he attended in 1947 no doubt made an impression on Burghley and encouraged his advocacy for Soviet Olympic participation. The changing international environment may have also played a role. By 1951, the Soviet Union had detonated an atomic bomb, Mao Zedong's Communist Party had come to power in China, Eastern Europe had become a part of the Soviet bloc, and the Korean War had begun. These events likely enhanced anxieties about war and peace that had fueled the IOC's foundation, and its members surely realized that accepting the Soviet Union's bid under these circumstances could give the Olympic Games credibility as a vehicle for international understanding.

### **"Thanks to Great Comrade Stalin:" Soviet Bureaucracy, the Politburo, and Olympic Preparations**

The election of Andrianov to the IOC and the recognition of the Soviet NOC cleared one hurdle to Olympic participation. Also, by August 1951, the chief promoter of

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Edstrom to Brundage, 11 March 1947, ABC Box 42.



the Olympics, Romanov, again headed the Sports Committee.<sup>113</sup> The Soviet leadership, however, continued to withhold permission for a team to be sent to the Games. As debate raged within the Sports Committee over the strength of the Soviet Olympic training program, invitations to compete in both the Winter Games in Oslo and the Helsinki Summer Games remained unanswered. At the same time, budget constraints and continued avoidance of foreign sporting contacts further jeopardized the Olympic project. Just as personal contacts and the regulatory nature of the IOC helped the Sports Committee secure a voice in the IOC, bureaucratic skill and connections within the Politburo helped Romanov and Andrianov to navigate the obstacles facing them and to assemble an Olympic team. A close reading of their correspondence in the months leading up to the Soviet Olympic debut helps to illuminate the relative authority of officials in the sports bureaucracy.

Following his reinstatement in 1951, Romanov spearheaded Olympic preparations and distinguished himself in his ability to balance relations with the IOC and the Politburo. Romanov also relied heavily on Andrianov and other leaders within the Sports Committee to maintain control over Olympic training measures. In June 1951, the official invitation to participate in the 1952 Winter Games set off a flurry of in-house

---

<sup>113</sup> The exact date of Romanov's reinstatement as chairman of the Sports Committee is unclear. Romanov signed the 18 April 1951 letter to Grigor'ian as acting chairman. See note 106. In August 1951, Romanov received a report as chairman on the status of Soviet skaters. Scientific-sporting Administration to Romanov, 21 August 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002. Romanov states in his memoir that his replacement Apollonov "was recalled to his previous post" in December 1950, and that he was reinstated "within a short time." Romanov, *Trudnye dorogi*, 72. James Riordan has offered different dates for Romanov's service as chairman of the Sport Committee. In his earlier work, Riordan asserted that Romanov returned to his post after Stalin's death in 1953. See Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 166. He later placed Romanov's return to the post in 1952. See Riordan, *Rewriting Sports History*, 249. The documentary evidence shows that by August 1951, Romanov was again the chairman of the committee. I found no record of Apollonov's dismissal, but it is probably safe to assume he was dismissed because of his poor performance.

memos and reports deliberating the Soviet athletes' chances for success.<sup>114</sup> A report from the scientific-sporting administration stated that Soviet skaters and skiers could expect to win their competitions.<sup>115</sup> The Sports Committee, however, wanted a more precise idea of Soviet chances as Vice Chairman of the Sports Committee Andrianov communicated in a memorandum on "measures of preparing for the possibility of participation of Soviet athletes in the 1952 Olympic Games."<sup>116</sup> With the decision to compete in either the Winter or Summer Games still up in the air,<sup>117</sup> Andrianov called on various departments in the sports apparatus to compare their athletes' achievements to those of foreign athletes to assess the state of Olympic training.<sup>118</sup> Setting 1 November 1951 as the deadline, Andrianov hoped to gather all necessary information so that a decision could be reached regarding Olympic participation.

Following Andrianov's memorandum, trainers and department heads tried to make their voices heard through letters to Romanov, Suslov, and even to Stalin's personal secretary, his son Vasilii Iosifovich, defending their athletes' preparedness and thereby their personal efforts to train them successfully. For instance, the head of the Department of Skating, Z. V. Kuchmenko, admonished Romanov to reconsider sending skaters to the Olympics because of a "full possibility of a successful appearance in the upcoming

---

<sup>114</sup> President and General Secretary of the Oslo Organizing Committee to NOC USSR, telegram, June 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

<sup>115</sup> Scientific-sporting Administration to Romanov, report, 21 August 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

<sup>116</sup> Andrianov to Sports Committee, memorandum, October 1951, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 658, ll. 64-65; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

<sup>117</sup> Frenckell to Andrianov, 22 November 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 20 September 2002.

<sup>118</sup> Andrianov to Sports Committee, memorandum, October 1951, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 658, ll. 64-65; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

Olympic Games."<sup>119</sup> He proclaimed that his skaters had earned the chance to participate in the elite international arena and that the time had come to realize the Central Committee resolution of 1948. Acknowledging that each sporting competition "is invested with great political significance," Kuchmenko punctuated his request with the remark that the "success of Soviet athletes raises the authority and power of the Soviet state even higher."<sup>120</sup> Employing such language and referencing the resolution of the Central Committee, Kuchmenko covered his bases and demonstrated that he had accomplished the task with which he had been charged. The head of the Department of International Sporting Affairs, Sobolev, also petitioned Romanov on behalf of Soviet hockey players maintaining "there is no doubt the Soviet team will take one of the top places in the Olympics."<sup>121</sup> He insisted that the hockey team had the opportunity to win first place or at least second or third place, thereby increasing the likelihood of the Soviet Union taking the top team spot. Sobolev emphasized the importance of winning a full team victory, ending his letter with a renewed appeal to prepare not only a hockey team, but also skaters and skiers to ensure that victory. Sobolev, like Kuchmenko, situated his project within the overall objectives of the Soviet leadership.

While winter sports organizers argued vociferously for the potential success of their athletes, Romanov maintained his stance, recommending that no team be sent because their assurances were not enough to guarantee Soviet domination of the Games.

He wrote to Georgii Malenkov on 12 January 1952, "Participation in the Winter

---

<sup>119</sup> Kuchmenko to Romanov, 23 November 1951, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 659, ll. 123-27; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Sobolev to Romanov, 17 December 1951, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 659, ll. 167-69; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

Olympics carries particular significance by which Soviet sportsmen must, without fail, attain first place in the series of events of the competition, and since there is no firm certainty of this kind, we believe that participation in the Olympic Games is pointless."<sup>122</sup> Afterward, the leaders of the All-Union Hockey Section and the All-Union Trainer Soviet for Hockey along with the coaches of four hockey teams went over Romanov's head to Propaganda Minister Mikhail Suslov and urged him to reconsider sending a hockey team to Oslo. The head of the All-Union Skiing Section, the state skiing trainer, and the vice-chairman of the Department of International Sporting Relations sent Suslov a similar plea on 14 January. Both letters invoked the party resolution of 1948 referring to the "historic decision of the Central Committee." In addition, the authors of these letters used almost identical wording to declare that not sending their respective athletes would be an egregious political mistake.<sup>123</sup> In writing these letters, the skiing and hockey trainers appealed to Romanov's superior in the Politburo, asserting that the Sports Committee had misjudged their teams' chances. It seems from the formulaic nature of their petitions that these coaches and trainers employed a recognized set of phrases to promote their desire to support their athletes and defend their positions within the sports apparatus. It also could suggest a coordinated effort to undermine Romanov's authority. These appeals got

---

<sup>122</sup> Romanov to Malenkov, report, 12 January 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002. Vartanian states that this report was to Suslov, but the document itself quoted by Vartanian indicates the report was sent to Malenkov. Because the wording of this report is similar to a later one sent by Romanov to Suslov, it seems logical that Romanov was the author of the January 12 report. In his reference to the later report, Vartanian states that Suslov underlined in red a certain sentence. This suggests that the reports could have been sent to Suslov who then forwarded them to Malenkov. It seems clear, however, that Romanov authored both reports.

<sup>123</sup> Korotkov, Tarasov, Babrov, Egorov, and Chernyshev to Suslov, 14 January 1952, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, l. 9; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002. Andreev, Khimichev, and Senkevich to Suslov, January 1952, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, l. 1; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

Suslov's attention: he asked Romanov and two members of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda to reexamine this question.<sup>124</sup>

Unlike the World Skating Championships in 1948 when Romanov's objections to competing were overruled, when trainers and athletes questioned Romanov's stance on the 1952 Winter Olympics Suslov gave Romanov the opportunity to defend his position. Romanov rebuffed the skating and skiing administrators, reasserting his belief that victory could not be assured.<sup>125</sup> Romanov's second refusal to reconsider the Winter Olympic bid elicited a final entreaty from his underlings, and this time they went right to the top. In a letter to Stalin's son and personal secretary, chairman of the Department of International Sporting Relations Sobolev and his vice-chairman Senkevich argued that Romanov's estimation of Soviet chances was wrong. They also identified new reasons to reverse the Sports Committee's decision.

1) The USSR can successfully fight for first place, but even in the event of taking only third place, it would be only slightly behind the winner. 2) Our team may win a minimum of two or three medals and a maximum of five to seven. 3) Winning second or third place for first-timers would be considered good since no novices have ever achieved such results. 4) Refusal to participate in the Winter Olympics would be widely used in the bourgeois press to promote hostility toward the Soviet Union. Therefore, refusal to participate will cause us even more harm than an unsuccessful performance.<sup>126</sup>

Sobolev and Senkevich made a surprisingly bold move.<sup>127</sup> Speaking out against Romanov, they asserted that the goal of securing full team victory was unnecessary. That

---

<sup>124</sup> Suslov to Romanov, Stepanov, and Sushkov, 15 January 1952, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, l. 8; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

<sup>125</sup> Romanov to Suslov, 17 January 1952, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, ll. 5-6; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

<sup>126</sup> Sobolev and Senkevich to V. I. Stalin, January 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

<sup>127</sup> Vartanian suggests that Andrianov was behind this letter, but his evidence for this assessment is unclear.

they were willing to declare openly their disagreement with the fundamental rationale for Olympic Participation betrays a striking degree of maneuverability within the Stalinist system. Emphasizing the potential benefits of winning only second or third place, Sobolev and Senkevich acknowledged the relative weakness of Soviet winter sports and undermined their own efforts. Romanov does not mention these letters in his memoir, but makes a point of defending his decision. Citing the lack of international competition and the underdevelopment of winter sports vis-à-vis summer events, Romanov contends that the Sports Committee decided to forego the Winter Games to better prepare for the summer ones. These appeals by the winter sports administrators could reflect an effort to maintain the committee's attention and resources.<sup>128</sup> That this last petition went unheeded suggests that Romanov gauged the opinions within the Politburo more accurately and enjoyed the support of important members of the Soviet leadership.

The limits imposed on international competition left Romanov and the sports administrators in a desperate situation as they tried to prepare a winning team for the 1952 Summer Olympic Games. In August 1951, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol Nikolai Mikhailov complained in a letter to Malenkov of the serious deficiency in studying foreign training methods and the lack of adequate guides and reference books. Calling for the incorporation of western training methods into the Soviet sports system, he proposed that the Department of International Relations of the Sports Committee be strengthened and that trainers be sent to Sweden, Norway, Finland, Hungary, England, Italy, and France to study their training methods and athletic achievements. He also asked that the Sports Committee be allowed to publish foreign

---

<sup>128</sup> Romanov, *Trudnye dorogi*, 152-53.

sports literature and that the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) help the committee to gather information from countries preparing for the Olympic Games.<sup>129</sup> The sports administrators' continued petitions for international contacts might also have been attempts to direct the leadership's attention away from the development of mass collective sporting and back to their project—preparing elite athletes of the Olympic Games.

The sports administrators' recommendations to adopt western methods still ran contrary to the primary ideological message of the period. While sports administrators clamored for opportunities to learn from the west, the Soviet sports press emphasized that other countries were learning from Soviet-style athletics. In March 1951, *Fizkul'tura i sport* featured a group of East European athletes who visited the Soviet Union on a training excursion. The sycophantic words of one skater from Czechoslovakia make plain the "true" source of sporting expertise. "Experienced Soviet trainers showed us the Soviet technique of speed skating. It is much better than what Czechoslovakian skaters inherited from bourgeois sports. The school of Soviet sports is, indisputably, the best in the world."<sup>130</sup> The message for the masses was clear: the Soviet Union was bringing progress to its eastern neighbors through its superior training methods. In his study of the Soviet scientific administration, Nikolai Kremmentsov identifies a similar trend of "Soviet patriotism," promoting Soviet over western science, and demonstrates how scientists adopted this rhetoric in their appeals to the Soviet leadership.<sup>131</sup> By contrast, the sports

---

<sup>129</sup> Mikhailov to Malenkov, 28 August 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 30 September 2002.

<sup>130</sup> "Kazhdyi den' byl prazdnikom dlia nas!" *Fizkul'tura i sport*, March 1951, 33.

<sup>131</sup> Nikolai Kremmentsov, *Stalinist Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 140, 143-49.

administrators and trainers continued to highlight shortcomings in Soviet sports training and the need for western expertise in their correspondence. The gap between public language and private correspondence in the years leading up to Olympic participation exposes the irony of adopting foreign methods to show the world the superiority of the Soviet system.

Soviet sports leaders struggled with the question of international experience almost to the eve of the Soviet Olympic debut. On 30 April 1952, less than two months before the opening of the Games in Helsinki, Romanov wrote to Malenkov requesting that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) provide information to the Sport Committee about the Olympic training of foreign athletes, specifically those from the United States, England, Switzerland, and France.<sup>132</sup> This request strongly suggests that the dearth of foreign sporting contacts continued in the months leading up to the Helsinki Olympics, forcing Romanov to obtain through the MID what his committee had been unable to get through international competition and trainer exchanges. Working under political and ideological constraints, these trainers and bureaucrats maintained their call for more international meets, tried to find out as much as possible about foreign sporting activities, and did everything they could to train their athletes.

Romanov's position proved more significant as preparations began in earnest for the Helsinki Games and his committee responded to demands from the Politburo, trainers, and international sporting bodies. Romanov's staff faced the difficulty of coordinating the efforts of various departments within the Sports Committee as they tried to keep up with all the details of training. Back in October 1951, Andrianov had sent out

---

<sup>132</sup> Romanov to Malenkov, 30 April 1952, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, ll. 113-16; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 30 September 2002.



a memo to several departments requesting information on training progress.<sup>133</sup> From the head of the economic administration of the committee, he ordered a detailed report of training camps, including equipment and dietary considerations. From the heads of the educational-sporting administration and the administration of sporting games, Andrianov wanted a list of Olympic participants and trainers by type of sport, a list of potential judges for the Games, inventory and uniform needs, and a plan for athletes' training by sport. These departments, along with the heads of the Central Scientific-Research Institute of Physical Culture and the Department of International Sporting Relations, were to draw up the comparison reports of Soviet and foreign athletes mentioned above. Andrianov's memo demonstrates his administrative skill in coordinating the various departments vying for the resources of the Sports Committee.

As president of the Soviet NOC, Andrianov was forced to balance the demands of this position with his subordinate one as vice-chairman of the Soviet Sports Committee, and this dual role placed particular pressure on him. As the primary contact for the IOC and Olympic organizing committees, he often fielded questions regarding training measures and plans to participate, but the high level of centralization of the Soviet bureaucracy meant that he needed approval from his superiors before making any statements to foreigners. In October 1951, the head of the press service of the Organizing Committee of the 1952 Winter Games in Oslo asked Andrianov whether the Soviet Union intended to participate.<sup>134</sup> Then, in November, the president of the Organizing Committee in Helsinki, Erik von Frenckell, wanted to know if a decision had been made

---

<sup>133</sup> Andrianov to Sports Committee, memorandum, October 1951, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 658, ll. 64-65, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

<sup>134</sup> Walter Firp to Andrianov, 8 October 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 23 September 2002.

about the Summer Games.<sup>135</sup> The following month, Andrianov gave Frenckell preliminary acceptance of his invitation to participate in the Helsinki Games but delayed reporting any final decision until just before their opening.<sup>136</sup> He hesitated because he was not given leave to send a definitive answer. In a letter dated 2 June 1952, Andrianov requested instructions from the MVD on how to answer an urgent demand from Frenckell on whether the Soviet Union would participate in the Helsinki Games.<sup>137</sup> Frenckell no doubt addressed the letter to Andrianov as president of the NOC, but Andrianov's letter to the MVD was signed vice-chairman of the Sports Committee, suggesting that any influence Andrianov wielded came from his position in the Sports Committee and confirming that the IOC's representative in the Soviet Union was under the control of the Soviet government.

In the months leading up to the Helsinki Games, Romanov convinced his superiors in the Politburo to augment the Sports Committee's budget and to fund Olympic training. In February 1952, Politburo member Mikhail Suslov authorized the ministries and departments to release all Olympic athletes from work and school with pay for the six months leading up to the Games and to send doctors and nurses to the training camps. In addition, Suslov endorsed an increase in the number of athletes by two hundred and the hiring of another fifty-five employees in the central organ of the Sports Committee.<sup>138</sup> Then in May, Romanov appealed to Malenkov for an increase in the daily food

---

<sup>135</sup> Frenckell to Andrianov, 22 November 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 30 September 2002.

<sup>136</sup> Frenckell to Andrianov, December 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 30 September 2002.

<sup>137</sup> Andrianov to Plakhin, Vice Minister of European Affairs, 2 June 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 21 October 2002. GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 741.

<sup>138</sup> Minutes of meeting with Suslov, 9 February 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 7 October 2002. See also RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, ll. 24-43.

expenditure from fifty to sixty-five rubles for athletes in the most draining sports—including boxing, soccer, swimming, and long-distance running, among others.<sup>139</sup> This request elicited opposition from the minister of finance who wanted the expense to be lowered, but ultimately Romanov procured sixty-five rubles per day for each athlete.<sup>140</sup> As things turned out, Romanov did not secure this massive expenditure on food and drink solely to "guarantee the normal conditions of training for the Olympic Games" as he claimed, but he did have the image of the Soviet Union in mind.<sup>141</sup> At a special reception in the Olympic village housing the eastern bloc delegations, Romanov and Soviet sports officials treated a group of U.S. athletes and trainers to a lavish dinner replete with steak, wine, vodka, and caviar and served by waiters and waitresses in formal attire.<sup>142</sup> By May, Romanov and the Soviet leaders were preparing not only for success on the field but also for propaganda victories outside of the sporting events. Seen in this light, Romanov's petitions for more resources show that he was intimately involved in decisions surrounding the Olympics.

While training progressed in the Olympic camps, the Sports Committee remained busy answering questions, hearing complaints, and solving problems brought to its attention by the trainers on the ground. The committee members found themselves further hampered by interference from other departments and ministries outside of sports

---

<sup>139</sup> Romanov to Malenkov, 20 May 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 30 September 2002. See also Romanov to Suslov, 20 May 1952, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, ll. 119-20.

<sup>140</sup> A. G. Zverev to Suslov, undated, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, l. 123; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 30 September 2002. See also Stepanov and P. Romanov to Suslov, 3 June 1952, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, l. 126.

<sup>141</sup> Romanov to Malenkov, 20 May 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 30 September 2002.

<sup>142</sup> "Soviet Hospitality Goes Unreturned," *New York Times*, July 28, 1952, 20.

and by formalities imposed upon them by International Federations. Since the goal was to compete in every sport, each difficulty encountered threatened the entire Olympic debut. For instance, the head of the Department of Water Sports, Nikolai Adamovich, complained from the parasailing camp on the Baltic that the Soviet Ministry of State Security (MGB—precursor to the KGB) and the MGB of Estonia refused access for all parasailors to train on the Baltic Sea.<sup>143</sup> Then, in May 1952, he informed the committee that the necessary forms had not been sent to join the international federation for water sports, and that his yachtsmen did not have proof of recognition by the Soviet body for yachting.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, one month before the Games, Andrianov received a note from the Helsinki Organizing Committee reminding him that the Soviet Union had not yet officially joined the International Equestrian Federation.<sup>145</sup> Later Adamovich reported that several of his yachtsmen had not received any salary and threatened to go home if the problem with their pay was not resolved.<sup>146</sup> These letters and reports reveal the immensity of the task before the Sports Committee in overseeing the work of hundreds of people under its direction.

As the central authority over sports, the Sports Committee oversaw every aspect of the training regimen especially when it came to questions of personnel, equipment, and diet (*pitanie*). While the Russian word *pitanie* encompasses a variety of items concerning

---

<sup>143</sup> Adamovich to Sports Committee, undated, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 7 October 2002 (GARF, f. 7576, op. 20, d. 1).

<sup>144</sup> Adamovich to Sports Committee, 8 May 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 7 October 2002.

<sup>145</sup> Balkama to NOC USSR, 16 June 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 7 October 2002.

<sup>146</sup> Vartanian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 7 October 2002. Vartanian does not provide particulars on this report, but cites it as part of a summary report compiled at the yachting training camp. See also Romanov to Malenkov, 28 April 1952, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, ll. 108-10.

nutrition and diet, the documents demonstrate that, in the context of Olympic training, the word also meant special "vitamins" and "tablets"—in other words, drugs. Andrianov received a report in May from the track and field training base near Kiev requesting authorization for a "special supplement in tablet form" for the marathoners and race walkers and permission to try stimulants.<sup>147</sup> The report indicates that researchers had already submitted data on these new tablets to the committee. Later that month, the Presidium of the Scientific-Methods Council of the Sports Committee issued a protocol advising the manufacture of "special concentrations" for the nourishment of the marathoners so that they will become accustomed to the new concentrations during training.<sup>148</sup> Responding to the pressure to produce a full team victory, the Sports Committee authorized the use of experimental drugs on Soviet athletes less than two months before the opening of the Games.

Soviet scientists were not alone in their development of performance-enhancing drugs. At an international conference on sports and health held in Norway in February 1952, the Norwegian director of public health called for a united effort against "the use of dope in the amateur sports world."<sup>149</sup> After the games, American scientists denied that doping took place in the Helsinki Games, claiming that modern scientific training and diet accounted for the surprising numbers of world records set during the event. Despite this denial from their chief rival's science personnel, Soviet athletes endured speculation

---

<sup>147</sup> Report to Andrianov, 5 May 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 7 October 2002.

<sup>148</sup> Protocol of the Presidium of the Scientific-methods Council, 25 May 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 7 October 2002.

<sup>149</sup> "Fight Against Doping of Amateur Athletes Asked as Health-Sports Conference Starts," *New York Times*, 26 February 1952, 30.

that they had been sniffing an unknown substance before their events.<sup>150</sup> Whether the Soviet scientists learned the advantages of doping from studying western methods is unclear, but by including experimental drugs into the Olympic-training program, the Sports Committee was in step with the international sports community.

Problems with equipment added to the Sports Committee's headaches over personnel issues, paperwork, and the use of experimental performance enhancers. If not satisfied by the committee's answers to their grievances, sports underlings sometimes looked for help outside the sports administration. The vice-chairman of training camps, Cherkarev, complained that he had received sample shooting targets of a design that differed significantly from the targets they had been using and needed to produce the new targets immediately.<sup>151</sup> After months of training with targets of the wrong design, there was not much to be done in the two weeks remaining before the start of the Olympics, but Cherkarev covered his bases, pointing out that the Sports Committee had ignored his plea.<sup>152</sup> Vartanian tells us that similar gripes over equipment came in from the trainers for yachting, equestrian events, pentathlon, and fencing. These trainers hoped that their contacts could pressure Romanov to rethink the priorities of the Sports Committee and attend to their equipment needs.

The Sports Committee found itself caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place. While having to deal with logistical problems and complaints from the training camps, Romanov and his staff had to convince the Politburo that the Soviet team would

---

<sup>150</sup> "Science Takes Bow For Many Records," *New York Times*, 2 August 1952, 8.

<sup>151</sup> Cherkarev to Semichastnoi, 27 June 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 7 October 2002.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

win the competition. In the end, the Soviet Union's chances of victory came down to an elaborate game of numbers. While the IOC does not recognize rankings by country, the international community observes an unofficial point system by which to calculate national rankings. By this system, teams receive a certain number of points for the top six places in each event. In asking for assurance of victory, the Soviet leaders wanted a prediction based on this unofficial point system. Romanov predicted that the Soviet team would win eight events and the USA seven in the Helsinki Games.<sup>153</sup> The rest they would split equally. Prospects for success, however, seemed less certain the following month, judging from the minutes of a conference held by Romanov with sports leaders, trainers, and athletes.<sup>154</sup> During the conference, athletes and trainers offered their personal testimonies to the Soviet team's potential. One of the cycling coaches guaranteed that "thanks to the concern for our athletes on the part of the Soviet government, party, and great Comrade Stalin we have been given all the conditions for excellent preparation for the upcoming competition."<sup>155</sup> Among assurances of the strength and preparedness of the team, were requests for high-quality equipment from the cyclists and information on how their events would be conducted from the pentathletes. By this time the decision had been made, and any further discussion of possible results was purely academic. Romanov and the Sports Committee could do nothing at this point but cross their fingers and wait for the results.

---

<sup>153</sup> Romanov to Suslov, report, 10 May 1952, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, ll. 148-70; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 21 October 2002.

<sup>154</sup> Minutes of Sports Committee Conference, 5 June 1952, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 21 October 2002.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

## **"Not Just Another Event:" The Soviet Union's Olympic Debut**

The Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympic Games turned them into a competition dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union. As president of the United States Olympic Committee, Brundage met a potential head-to-head competition between American and Soviet athletes with trepidation. He worried that Soviet success would damage the United States' reputation abroad in much the same way the Soviet leaders feared a U.S. victory. Believing that state funding gave the Soviet athletes an unfair advantage over U.S. athletes who relied on "the generosity of the sport loving public" for funding,<sup>156</sup> Brundage wrote to President Harry Truman in the months leading up to the Helsinki Games to request the president's endorsement of the Olympic Committee's fundraising efforts. As he put it, "Now that Russia and the countries behind the Iron Curtain are all sending large government subsidized teams to the Olympic Games, it is more than ever important that we send the strongest team possible."<sup>157</sup> Truman echoed Brundage's sentiments: "This competition is not just another event. It requires the finest American athletes we can send, it requires the fullest support Americans can give. The eyes of the world will be upon us."<sup>158</sup>

The Soviet sports organizers shared Brundage's apprehension over their image abroad. As the Helsinki Olympics drew near, Romanov wrote to Politburo member Malenkov, "Considering the enormous responsibility placed upon the performance of Soviet athletes, the committee asks that you help us resolve several questions." Romanov

---

<sup>156</sup> Brundage to Truman, 27 October 1951, ABC Box 332.

<sup>157</sup> Brundage to President Truman, 5 June 1952, ABC Box 332.

<sup>158</sup> Truman to Brundage, 10 November 1951, ABC Box 332.



reported that the "bourgeois press" believed that this Olympics would surpass all previous ones and had suggested that the USSR's team was one of "the teams to watch." He also informed Malenkov of the huge influx of foreign tourists expected. According to Romanov, the organizers had sold 50,000 tickets and expected to sell 30,000 more, and they anticipated up to 2,000 foreign correspondents to attend with more than 200 from the United States. Realizing that participation in such a conspicuous event as the Olympic Games could also open the Soviet Union up to unfavorable publicity, Romanov asked in the same letter to Malenkov that all information related to international sport be released by TASS (the Soviet news agency) solely with the agreement of the Central Committee Department for Agitation and Propaganda (Agitprop). His stated reason was to "keep secret" and "avoid divulgence" of materials related to the Soviet athletes' training.<sup>159</sup> His statements further indicate that he wanted control of the Soviet Union's image to rest with the Central Committee and not with western journalists.

While Romanov worked to "avoid divulgence" of Soviet preparations, western press agents pressured Andrianov for information on the Soviet athletes' training. In a letter dated 21 February 1952, Reuters correspondent Andrew John Steiger requested an interview with Andrianov, listing a number of questions his agency would like Andrianov to answer regarding Soviet Olympic preparations. Steiger's questions covered everything from the existence of special training camps to what the athletes were planning to eat and to whether the Soviet delegation would stay with the other participants in the Olympic

---

<sup>159</sup> Romanov to Malenkov, 30 April 1952, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 571, ll. 113-16; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 30 September 2002.

Village.<sup>160</sup> Since he was not free to give a simple "yes, we will participate" to the Olympic organizers, Andrianov surely could not have answered detailed questions about the Soviet Olympic plans from a western journalist. The head of the Sports Committee's international section prepared an answer to Steiger, but the letter was never sent.<sup>161</sup>

Characteristic of a closed society, Soviet administrators hesitated to inform the foreign press and Olympic organizers about their training regimen. This silence, however, was broken periodically with well-organized, strategically timed displays of hospitality designed to further increase the Soviet Union's international prestige. While publicly denouncing the IOC for its bourgeois elitism, Andrianov and the newly recognized Soviet Olympic Committee tried to win IOC president Edström over with vodka and caviar.<sup>162</sup> The elaborate banquet staged by Soviet organizers during the Helsinki Games represents a similar effort to garner respect for the Soviet system.<sup>163</sup> The image of the IOC and western sports as elitist was therefore not just a critique used to denounce the west in Soviet propaganda, but represented an attitude among the Soviet sports administrators that influenced their interchange with IOC members. The Soviet leaders hoped to win friends abroad by catering to the social attitudes of the international sports community.

In both the air of secrecy and the displays of generosity, Romanov and the Sports Committee served as the primary conduit of information and the guardians of the Soviet

---

<sup>160</sup> Steiger to Andrianov, 21 February 1952, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 699, ll. 29-31; Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 30 September 2002. See also GARF f. 7576, op. 2, d. 742, ll. 4-12.

<sup>161</sup> NOC USSR to Steiger, February 1952, GARF f. 7576, op. 2, d. 742, ll. 5-6.

<sup>162</sup> Edstrom to Andrianov 29 May 1951, Vartan'ian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv" 16 September 2002.

<sup>163</sup> See note 130 above.

Union's image. Romanov again found himself in this uncomfortable position as the Games progressed in Helsinki. To encourage the Soviet and eastern bloc athletes, the Soviet officials in Finland constructed a scoreboard in the eastern bloc Olympic village keeping a running tally of the unofficial points as each event ended. Just before the end of the Games, however, the Soviet side took down the scoreboard.<sup>164</sup> The reason for this becomes clear as one looks at discrepancies in the unofficial point totals of the United States and the Soviet Union. At the end of the Olympic Games in Helsinki, *Pravda* (Truth), the official newspaper of the Communist Party, proclaimed victory without reference to point totals.<sup>165</sup> On the same day, the *New York Times* claimed a win for the USA based on a score of 614 to 553 1/2.<sup>166</sup> Upon his return to Soviet Union, Romanov told the members of the Politburo that, while the United States had won more medals in the Games, the Soviet Union tied with the USA in number of points with 494. This revised total appeared in the *New York Times* on August 7.<sup>167</sup> Part of the disparity comes from the use of two different point systems. Romanov calculated his results assigning seven points for first place, five for second, four for third, etc., but the United States' system gave ten points for first place. Hours after Romanov's appearance before the Politburo, Malenkov called to confirm the totals. Malenkov put to rest any fears Romanov might have had over his fate by telling him to "Relax. Go home. Rest."<sup>168</sup>

---

<sup>164</sup> "Olympic Arithmetic," *New York Times*, 3 August 1952, sec. 4, p. 2E.

<sup>165</sup> "Na olimpiiskikh igrakh," *Pravda*, 4 August 1952, 4.

<sup>166</sup> "Unofficial Scores," *New York Times*, 4 August 1952, 19.

<sup>167</sup> Harrison Salisbury, "Russians Recount then Recant," *New York Times*, 7 August 1952, 16.

<sup>168</sup> Romanov, *Trudnye dorogi*, 283.

After the Games, criticism for poor performance in certain events fell on athletes and trainers and not on Romanov and the Sports Committee.<sup>169</sup> Satisfied with the assurance that the United States had not won outright, the Politburo declared its first Olympic Games an adequate success, and Romanov's point tally became the official word for the next fifty years.<sup>170</sup> In October 2002, however, Aksel' Vartanian recalculated the points and found that even by Romanov's point system, the United States came out on top with a score of 495 to 487.<sup>171</sup> The fact that his point totals remained unchallenged for fifty years indicates the security of Romanov's position and the influence he enjoyed in the Politburo.

## **Conclusion**

While the Olympic ideal promoted peace and understanding among nations, the Soviet leaders saw Olympic participation as an opportunity to show the world the superior technique and training achieved by the Soviet system of mass, collective physical culture. Burdened by a leadership that was hesitant to open up to the west by sending athletes and trainers abroad, the sports administrators mustered all the resources at their disposal and sought to convince Soviet leaders to send their athletes to the Olympic Games. The trainers and sports administrators on all levels demonstrated a degree of maneuverability within the Stalinist system to achieve their own ends, but Romanov as chairman of the Sports Committee held the most influence with the top

---

<sup>169</sup> Harry Schwartz, "Moscow Berates Olympics Losers," *New York Times*, 20 September 1952, 1.

<sup>170</sup> "The 50-th anniversary of the Helsinki Olympics," *On-line Pravda*, 19 July 2002, available from <http://english.pravda.ru>.

<sup>171</sup> Vartanian, "Sekretnyi arkhiv," 21 October 2002.

Kremlin leaders. When lower-level administrators questioned his decisions, Romanov's contacts in the Politburo supported him by implementing his recommendations.

Romanov corresponded frequently with Georgii Malenkov and Mikhail Suslov, but the reader may wonder, as the author does, at the conspicuous absence of Stalin's name in these documents. Stalin appears in the Olympic story in Romanov's memoir account, but even in these recollections, Romanov's direct encounters with Stalin are few. Most often, Romanov learned what Stalin wanted through Malenkov. Previous scholars of the postwar period have suggested that Stalin seemed less actively involved with state administration after the war due to failing health.<sup>172</sup> Describing the four years leading up to Stalin's death in 1953 as "a peculiarly opaque and ominous period of Soviet history," David Holloway indicates that Stalin's stance on important issues became less clear during this time.<sup>173</sup> Yet Ethan Pollack has documented Stalin's personal involvement in academic ideological debates of the time.<sup>174</sup> Stalin's absence from the Olympic correspondence could indicate that he was less concerned with matters of sport than he was with science and ideology. It also points to Stalin's preference to rule not through clear orders outlined in memoranda but through hints and vague expectations handed down through informal communication networks that "[bound] his co-leaders in a system of collective responsibility."<sup>175</sup> With the help of Malenkov, Stalin placed Romanov in his

---

<sup>172</sup> See, for example Timothy Dunmore, *Stalinist Reconstruction and the Confirmation of a New Elite, 1945-1953* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 132.

<sup>173</sup> David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-56* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 274.

<sup>174</sup> Ethan Pollack, *Soviet Science Wars*.

<sup>175</sup> Yoram Gorlizki, "Stalin's Cabinet: The Politburo and Decision Making in the Postwar Years," in *The Stalin Years: A Reader*, ed. Christopher Read (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 200.

position of authority, relayed to him the expectation of total victory, and then let Romanov figure out how to realize the goal.

Other historians of postwar Stalinism have suggested that Stalin's personal control waned as competing factions within the Politburo gained more authority over Soviet politics.<sup>176</sup> Viewed from this perspective, vacillations in the Soviet leadership's attitude toward Olympic participation could reflect factional politics within the Politburo. These scholars identify as primary the rivalry between Andrei Zhdanov and Georgii Malenkov and the secret police chief Lavrentii Beria. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the Olympic project stalled between 1947 and 1948 because of opposition from Zhdanov. The Central Committee released its resolution on physical culture in December 1948, once Malenkov and Suslov began to oversee the Sports Committee's activities. This factional explanation seems most compelling, however, when one considers the possible involvement of Beria in overseeing sports. Because of the unusual organization of Soviet sports, the Komsomol, the secret police bureau, and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions all oversaw various sports clubs. The secret police ran the best funded sports club, Dinamo. Robert Edelman highlights Beria's personal interest in sports and shows how his support of Dinamo resulted in purges of other sports clubs.<sup>177</sup> Edelman also points out an affinity among Dinamo organizers for the discipline and pageantry of Olympic style sports festivals. Furthermore, Dinamo provided most of the athletes for

---

<sup>176</sup> See William O. McCagg, Jr., *Stalin Embattled, 1943-48* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978) and Werner G. Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Politics: The Fall of Zhdanov and the Defeat of Moderation, 1946-1953* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982).

<sup>177</sup> Edelman, "Small Way of Saying 'No'," 1469.

the 1952 Olympic debut.<sup>178</sup> All this points to Beria as the crucial—yet mostly invisible—proponent of Olympism in the Politburo.

While such studies may be useful in identifying the aims of Soviet leaders, discussion of factions among members of Stalin's inner circle do not reveal much about how administrators and party leaders related to one another to formulate and implement policies. For example, a pat view of factional politics does not explain why Romanov remained heavily involved with the Sports Committee even after his replacement by Apollonov. Furthermore, if Beria were the instigator of Olympic preparations, why did Olympic training get off the ground only in 1951 under Romanov's direction rather than in 1948 when Apollonov, deputy security chief and head of the Dinamo sports club, served as the Sports Committee chairman?

New studies of Soviet academies, bureaucracies, and other administrative units provide much more insight into how changing dynamics within the Politburo affected the articulation and implementation of policy in the Soviet Union. Nikolai Krementsov, in his monograph on Stalinist science, sums up the tenuous relationships between party and state bureaucracies.

Personal contacts with party-state leaders became a major instrument of influence upon decision-makers and gave scientific administrators an opportunity to exercise their influence for their own ends. At the same time, however, these personal contacts with particular patrons at the top level of the party apparatus made scientific development very sensitive to the outcomes of the constant bureaucratic intrigues, inner-party struggles, and reorganizations."<sup>179</sup>

---

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 1460-62.

<sup>179</sup> Krementsov, *Stalinist Science*, 283.

The result, according to Krementsov, was a "special symbiosis between the scientific community and the party-state control apparatus."<sup>180</sup> As Soviet scientists relied on support from top party officials to meet their research goals, the most successful rose through the party apparatus becoming hybrids of a sort, both members of the scientific community as well as party functionaries.

A similar process can be seen within the Sports Committee, particularly in the case of Romanov. Romanov rose to prominence in the Komsomol, so his appointment to the chairmanship of the Sports Committee that was technically under the auspices of the Council of Ministers made him a kind of state-party crossbreed. Krementsov suggests that the "Cold War gave Stalinist science its final form and enduring character."<sup>181</sup> The form science took in late 1940s and early 1950s remained "frozen" until the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991. Could the same be said of the Olympic sports program? Romanov and Andrianov outlasted their apparent patrons in the Soviet party-state apparatus. Romanov served as chairman of the Sports Committee until 1962, and Andrianov served as president of the Soviet NOC through the 1970s when he resigned to work in the 1980 Moscow Olympic Organizing Committee.

Perhaps these men represent a new kind of Soviet bureaucrat whose skills and personality presaged the style of governing of Stalin's successors. In her landmark study, Elena Zubkova characterized the postwar period in Soviet society as a time of hopes and disappointments. According to Zubkova, new people rose to important positions during and just after the war, bringing a high level of professionalism, initiative, and willingness

---

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 285.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 289.



to take risks in their new roles. As these new cadres sought solutions to the many problems facing the USSR, Soviet leaders, fearing a loss of control, answered initiative with interference and repression.<sup>182</sup> Romanov's experience supports this view. Although Romanov continually reaffirmed his superiors' overall goals, he often told the Politburo what needed to be done to achieve them. According to Vladislav Zubok, Soviet leaders had begun to lose interest in international organizations by March 1946 fearing that the United States would see their continued participation as evidence that the Soviet Union was ready to concede to a U.S.-led postwar order.<sup>183</sup> Yet Romanov argued that the Soviet Union should capitalize on the influence its victory over the Nazis had provided. When IOC members approached Romanov about the Soviet Union's possible entry into the Olympic Movement, he argued to his superiors that it should join quickly and take full advantage not only of the position of the Soviet Union but of the popularity of the Olympics to carve a place within that movement for Soviet interests. Down the hierarchy of the Sports Committee were other bureaucrats who also demonstrated varying degrees of autonomy, finding ways to advance their own projects by relating them to their superiors' priorities. This suggests that the system "worked" because individuals were willing and able to step up and make things happen while operating in a difficult, repressive, and often dangerous environment. The years of the Soviet Union's first steps into international sport could be seen as the beginning of a new era rather than the last years under Stalin.

---

<sup>182</sup> Elena Zubkova, *Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957*, trans. Hugh Ragsdale (Armonk, NY and London, 1998).

<sup>183</sup> Vladislav M. Zubok, *Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 51-52.

Central planning was both an asset and an obstacle to getting things done in the Soviet Union under Stalin. Whether one defines it as totalitarian or not, the USSR was a highly centralized state whose leaders often governed by utilizing the system's uncanny ability to mobilize people and resources. The Olympic preparations are a case in point. Having set itself the goal of competing successfully in as many events as possible, the party-state mustered more athletes and expanded the Sports Committee personnel, thereby increasing the number of people working on Olympic preparations. With a centrally planned economy, the Soviet state pooled its resources to organize a successful team. When party leaders hesitated to expose their athletes to foreign influences, centralization of resources allowed the Soviet Union to assemble the best athletes and make an impressive debut despite faulty equipment and lack of international competitive experience. This centralization of power and resources also affected the way administrators did their jobs. They had to get permission before they could act. When their targets proved to be inadequate for training, the pentathlon coaches brought the problem to the attention of the Sports Committee and, failing to get satisfaction there, moved on to other influential men in the party apparatus. This reliance on the party hierarchy resulted in long periods of delay and inactivity punctuated by spurts of productivity and last minute measures, *shturmovshchina*. The Olympic project succeeded because individuals took initiative and convinced the leadership to authorize the expense.

Romanov displayed great political skill in his dealings with the Politburo, but his approach to the IOC was no less successful. Securing his vice-chairman, Andrianov, as a member of the IOC allowed Romanov the space necessary to negotiate between the pressures from the Soviet leadership and the international sporting community. Key to

Romanov and Andrianov's success in dealings with the IOC was their ability to adopt the language of Olympism and their keen sense of the importance of personal connections in the IOC political culture. This bureaucratic skill to co-opt ideological language and to cultivate personal patronage was perfected in the Soviet party-state system and transferred easily to the Olympic venue.

In a sense, the Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympic Games represented an important development in the Cold War by providing a venue for peaceful contact and exchange to balance the highly charged climate of international politics. The Soviet Union was not kept out of the Games despite the fundamental political differences it accentuated within the IOC because all in the IOC could agree on the image and language of Olympism. John Hoberman supports this idea postulating that, in the face of division, the IOC adopted a "language in which Olympic officials and communist functionaries feel supremely comfortable." With "formulas like 'the Olympic Spirit' or 'the humane ideals of sport'" this "language-by-committee [seeks to] mitigate conflict. But such language also serves as a screen behind which the voice of conscience is sacrificed to a myth of global consensus."<sup>184</sup>

This can be seen in the way the IOC handled the Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympic Movement. Accepting without further question the Soviet officials' assurances to follow the rules, the IOC and its Soviet representatives did at least give the illusion of working together for peace. Over the next two decades, Soviet sports representatives would strengthen their position in international sports circles by promoting mutual

---

<sup>184</sup> Hoberman, *Olympic Crisis*, 7.

understanding, peace, and friendship as the key elements of Olympic ideology and, increasingly, the key goal of Soviet involvement in the Olympic Movement.

## Chapter 2

### **Leveling the Playing Field: Communist Sport, Olympic Sport, and Soviet Sporting Politics, 1950-1962**

On 18 July 1954, the Soviet Union observed its yearly celebration of "youth, strength, health and beauty," the All-Union Day of the Athlete, with special style and fanfare. For this year, Nikolai Romanov, chairman of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sport (Sports Committee), and Konstantin Andrianov, president of the Soviet National Olympic Committee, welcomed President Avery Brundage of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to their carefully organized festival of youth and athletics. The images from the event that remained etched in Brundage's mind for years to come included "mass demonstrations with wands, large balls, ribbons or hoops," seventy or eighty high-bar routines performed in unison in a line across the field, and an eight-story human pyramid that resembled "a living bouquet of beautiful flowers." Several events were even presented against a twenty-five foot high "solid wall of water . . . extending the full length of the stadium." Brundage would later declare that this carnival of sport, which lasted five hours, "far surpassed in magnitude and beauty anything of its kind."<sup>1</sup> Romanov and Andrianov had hoped to enhance the Soviet Union's reputation within the International Olympic Committee through meticulously choreographed displays of athleticism and artistry performed by 34,000 Soviet athletes to a crowd of equal size at Moscow's formidable Dinamo stadium. Their gamble worked as

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in John Hoberman, *The Olympic Crisis*, 55.

Brundage, a conservative, anti-Communist, self-made businessman from Middle America, became a leading voice in praise of the Soviet sports system. How did the Sports Committee and the Soviet National Olympic Committee (NOC) use Olympic sports to expand Soviet influence in the world while maintaining a positive relationship with the International Olympic Committee (IOC)?

The IOC eagerly welcomed the Soviet Union into the Games in order to promote the Olympic ideals of international cooperation, but the Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympic Movement intensified key debates within Olympism over amateurism and political interference in sport. Soviet representatives were on the defensive from the start, but they deflected accusations that Soviet athletes were state-funded by assuring the IOC members that they would uphold Olympic ideals. They also changed the tone of discussions within the purportedly apolitical organization, denouncing western countries for discriminating against athletes from the new "peoples' democracies" of Eastern Europe and, later, from former colonial possessions. Soviet representatives such as Andrianov believed that the IOC's apolitical stance was a mask for maintaining the influence of capitalist nations within the Olympic Movement. To counter the "Anglo-American" bloc they perceived in the IOC and International Federations (IFs) that governed each particular sport, they sought to pack these organizations with more representatives from socialist countries and to get more Soviet representatives elected to leadership positions. Yet Andrianov and his colleagues used the apolitical tenets of these associations to achieve Soviet political goals, while couching their call to expand Olympism to new countries in terms of giving everyone the right to participate in sports, and using the idea of spreading peace and friendship to new nations to support their push.

The period of leadership transition after Stalin's death was a crucial time in which Soviet sports administrators and party leaders refined the goals and practices of the country's international sports ties. In the 1950s, Soviet representatives to international sports organizations promoted two interconnected and mutually fulfilling aims: building the authority of the Soviet Union and of their representatives in international sports and achieving "democratization" of the international sports movement. Building Soviet authority in international sports organizations meant more than getting socialist representatives into the various IFs and the IOC. It also required that their representatives convince colleagues in these international organizations that they were not only knowledgeable sports professionals within the Soviet Union but also dedicated enthusiasts for spreading the ideals of amateur, competitive sports throughout the world. To Soviet sports administrators, "democratization" meant transforming the IOC and IFs from Eurocentric gentlemen's clubs into egalitarian, truly international bodies including representatives from all regions of the world, especially from those sympathetic to the Soviet project.

Seeking to shed light on the sports administration and the role sportsmen-bureaucrats played in the Soviet Union's participation in international sports organizations, this chapter looks at how Soviet administrators responded to tensions between Olympic and Soviet sports ideologies in order to attain Soviet political goals within the International Olympic Committee and other international sports organizations. The Soviet retreat from international organizations in the early post-war years contrasts markedly from the Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympic Games and International Federations beginning in 1951 and their ever-increasing participation in international

organizations after Stalin's death in 1953. This suggests a crucial difference between Stalin's personal attitude toward international questions and the members of his inner circle who became architects of Soviet foreign policy after his death. While Stalin reacted to a more aggressive and belligerent United States with withdrawal and retreat, Khrushchev saw increased interaction with international circles and even the United States as a way to cement the Soviet Union's status as a superpower able to challenge the United States not only militarily but also culturally and morally as a proponent of peace, freedom, and international cooperation. Once the attitudes in the top leadership had changed, the bureaucratic personnel necessary to making peaceful existence a reality were already on board, having been pushing that agenda in their own sphere of activity for almost a decade.<sup>2</sup>

### **Setting the Agenda: The Soviet Union, the IOC, and the "Struggle of Peace"**

As the Sports Committee and Soviet leadership seriously considered participating in the Olympic Games in the early 1950s, they associated work in international sports with the growing Cold War conflict between the United States and USSR. As a result, representatives to international sports organization were expected to push Soviet political and propaganda aims. At the same time, the Soviet side relied on the experience of their representatives to International Federations to formulate strategies for Soviet involvement in international sports. Early reports from Soviet representatives to IF meetings provided

---

<sup>2</sup> Here I'm borrowing the concept behind Lincoln's Enlightened Bureaucrats where he argues that much of the spirit as well as content of the Great Reforms of the 1860s had already been articulated and hammered out by Russian civil servants in the 1840s under the repressive regime of Nicholas I. Like their Russian counterparts of the mid-nineteenth century, Soviet bureaucrats of the 1950s needed only a receptive audience in the Kremlin to put into practice ideas that had already been percolating in lower levels of the party-state apparatus.



insight for the Sports Committee leadership about the inner workings of those organizations and how they might be used to increase Soviet prestige abroad. These early forays into international sports convinced Sports Committee leaders to adjust their approach in international sports organizations, as overtly political action could be counterproductive.

In the late years of Stalinism, the ideological platform of propaganda chief Andrei Zhdanov and the activities of the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) guided Soviet work in international federations. Soviet leaders established the Cominform in 1947 at a meeting of communist leaders in Europe as a means to counter the growing influence of the United States on the continent, represented by the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan unveiled earlier that year. At the founding meeting of the Cominform, Zhdanov declared that the world had been divided into two irreconcilable camps and that "communists must be the leading force in the effort to enlist all anti-Fascist, peace-loving elements in the struggle against the new American expansionist plans for the enslavement of Europe."<sup>3</sup> Condemning the "imperialist and anti-democratic" United States, Zhdanov painted the Soviet Union as the leading defender of peace and democracy to an international audience.<sup>4</sup> Soviet leaders threw their weight behind a number of international initiatives as tools to further the peaceful communist propaganda message.

One such initiative, the Stockholm Appeal of the World Peace Council, became an important vehicle for convincing the international community of the Soviet Union's

---

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in "Soviet Bloc Peace Defense Laws," *The American Journal of International Law* 46, no. 3 (1952): 538.

<sup>4</sup> Politburo Member Andrei Zhdanov, "Speech at the Inauguration of the Cominform," late September 1947, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Strategy and Tactics of World Communism*, 216-17, 223-24, 229, quoted in Michael H. Hunt, *The World Transformed: 1945 to the Present A Documentary Reader* (Boston, New York: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2004), 34.

peaceful intentions, and the Central Committee wanted their representatives to secure signatures for the appeal from the International Federations. Initiated by French communist physicist Frédéric Joliot-Curie, the Stockholm Appeal called for unilateral nuclear disarmament. Most noncommunist western observers saw the World Peace Council as a front organization to advance Soviet power in Europe. Soviet sports administrators received lukewarm, if not outright hostile, reactions from international sports leaders when they campaigned for signatures on the peace appeal. While some sympathized with their socialist colleagues, others worried that Soviet representatives looked to turn their organizations into instruments of Soviet foreign policy. In a report to the Sports Committee on the International Amateur Boxing Association (AIBA) Congress in Denmark on 18 July 1950, the head of the Sports Committee personnel department, L. M. Sviridov, who led the delegation, emphasized the "positive significance" of their attendance.<sup>5</sup> He explained that their participation and that of the "peoples' democracies" "sparked interest in and sympathy for us from a number of delegations, lowered Anglo-American influence . . . [and] raised the significance of Soviet sport and its role in the international sports movement."<sup>6</sup> Sviridov's report demonstrates the revolutionary nature of Soviet involvement in international sports, suggesting that Soviet proposals to exclude Spanish and Yugoslav boxing federations from the AIBA, to sign the Stockholm Appeal, and to recognize Russian as an official language of the association "doubtless gave to the congress a different character than that

---

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Work of Soviet Representatives to the International Amateur Boxing Association Congress, Denmark, 18 July 1950, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 592, l. 29.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

assumed by its organizers."<sup>7</sup> At this point, the Soviet Union had yet to organize a National Olympic Committee (NOC), and this kind of blatant approach to using international sports organizations to support Soviet international Cold-War propaganda would be softened during the 1950s as Soviet sports organizations moved away from Cominform-facilitated sports ties to become more closely integrated into the mainstream international sports movement.

The apparent aggression from Soviet representatives masked feelings of inferiority. Perceiving the Anglo-American bloc within the IOC as hostile to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, members of the Sports Committee made "democratization" of international sports a top priority. In a June 1951 report to the Central Committee, Chairman of the Sports Committee Nikolai Romanov acknowledged the need to galvanize the efforts of Soviet and other socialist representatives in the IOC and International Federations. Based on the experience of the Soviet delegation to the 45<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Vienna, Austria, in May 1951, Romanov concluded that the membership regarded the formation of a Soviet NOC positively and that the Soviet delegate, Konstantin Andrianov, had fulfilled his directives in Vienna. Romanov also suggested that, "through suitable work," Andrianov could effect changes to the Olympic rules despite the overall conservative outlook of most IOC members.<sup>8</sup> Romanov noted that other members of the IOC also resented increasing American influence on IOC politics, proposing to "utilize this difference of opinion for their own interests" and to support the candidacy of IOC and Executive Board member Lord Burghley for president

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> N. N. Romanov to V. G. Grigor'ian, 21 June 1951, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 137, d. 558, l. 69.

of the organization over Avery Brundage.<sup>9</sup> Romanov ended his report declaring that the Sports Committee would strengthen the activities of Soviet sports organizations in the international sports movement.

Romanov included in his missive to the Central Committee another one written in late 1950 by Petr Sobolev that appraised the political and social make-up of the IOC, describing the "fascist" and "reactionary" views of several prominent members. Sobolev noted that the president of the IOC, Edström, was a Swedish "capitalist", a reactionary and a supporter of the former Nazi regime who spoke out against every proposal to democratize the international sports movement. According to Sobolev, Vice President Avery Brundage "is the leader of the reactionary bloc in the international Olympic Movement," and was likely to take over the post of president of the IOC.<sup>10</sup> Yet, "despite the strength of reactionary actors in the IOC," Sobolev argued, "[the organization] could and should be used by representatives of the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies as one means of drawing athletes of all countries into the struggle for peace throughout the world."<sup>11</sup>

Romanov sent a copy of the same report to V. M. Molotov, vice chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, so Romanov's letters can be seen as the definitive articulation of Soviet goals in the Olympic Movement. In making his appeal to the Central Committee, Romanov repeated much of the language of Sobolev's report discussed above, demonstrating Romanov's reliance on his subordinates for information

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Short Report on the IOC, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 699, ll. 4-5. This report is undated but a copy of it dated 8 December 1950 was submitted to the Central Committee on 14 December 1950, see RGASPI, f. 17, op. 137, d. 237, ll. 155-57.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., l. 11.

and recommendations regarding international sports. Additionally, Romanov's document echoes Sobolev's call to use the IOC to spread peace: "Since it is written in the rules of the IOC that it unites athletes regardless of skin color, race, or political affiliation, and since many members of the IOC expressed a desire for peace in their speeches, it is necessary to use that organization in the struggle for peace."<sup>12</sup> It is significant that Romanov and Sobolev, though motivated by the Central Committee resolution of December 1947 "to win world supremacy in sport," determined it necessary to reinforce the Olympic ideal of peace among nations and to highlight the Soviet role in the cause of peace. In this way, Romanov and the Soviet NOC recast Soviet aims to fit within the discourse of the Olympic Movement. Soviet sports administrators exploited the rhetoric of peace, common to both Olympism and Soviet communist ideology, to justify the Soviet presence in the Olympic Movement to both the Central Committee and the IOC.

In another report to V. G. Grigor'ian, staff member in the Central Committee Department of Agitation and Propaganda (Agitprop), Romanov connected the drive for peace with "democratization." He explained the significance of wider participation by Soviet representatives in International Federations not only in terms of ensuring that they could compete in all events scheduled for the Helsinki Games, but also to "allow the widening influence of Soviet sports organizations in the international sports movement, popularization abroad of Soviet sports achievements, and study of the experience of top-level foreign athletes by Soviet masters of sport."<sup>13</sup> He observed that the Soviet representatives had already made considerable strides in international sports, and that

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> N. N. Romanov to V. G. Grigor'ian, 15 November 1951, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 137, d. 557, l. 62.

getting into more IFs would not only promote participation in the Olympic Games but, according to Romanov, also would provide "the opportunity to further invigorate the [Soviet] drive for democratization of the international sports movement."<sup>14</sup>

### **The Soviet Union's Man in the IOC: Konstantin Aleksandrovich Andrianov and Soviet International Sports Relations**

As the centerpiece of the international sports movement, the IOC played a crucial part in the Soviet approach to international sports organizations. Likewise, Andrianov, as a Soviet member of the IOC, served as a model for other Soviet sports representatives on how to get things done in those organizations. Andrianov joined the IOC at a time when debate raged in the organization over the definition of amateurism and what some perceived as the increasing interference of political interests in the work of the committee. Andrianov proved very adept at reading the political atmosphere within the IOC, couching his aims in terms that seemed likely to garner support, and employing a series of strategies to convince Brundage and other IOC members of his authority as a sports administrator in the Soviet Union. Key to Andrianov's influence in the Olympic Movement was his ability to adopt the language of Olympism and adapt to the political traditions and practices of the IOC and other international sports organizations. At times, Andrianov served as a rule watchdog, reminding IOC members of the IOC Charter and By-Laws and exposing actions that seemed to go against IOC regulations. Andrianov also cultivated a wide array of personal relationships and networks with other IOC members, and when questions arose over what was happening "behind the Iron Curtain," Andrianov ensured that IOC members would look to him for answers.

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., I. 64.

One of the main examples of what the Soviet representatives saw as a discriminatory attitude toward socialist sport was the IOC's stance on amateurism articulated by Avery Brundage, which they thought advantaged American college athletes. Soviet reactions to the amateurism debate consisted of more than mere subterfuge; Soviet sports administrators genuinely viewed the question of amateur versus professional quite differently from Brundage and his supporters. The Soviet view was comparable to that of European social democracies such as Sweden that worried that the Brundage-sponsored stance on amateurism would prevent their athletes from competing in events. In 1946, Swedish representatives to the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) proposed to change the organization's amateurism rules to allow compensation to athletes for "broken time," time off work to participate in competitions.<sup>15</sup> Knowing that Brundage opposed such payments, Andrianov saw the issue as an opportunity to reach out to Swedish and other Scandinavian sports leaders to counter Brundage's growing influence in the IOC. In an October 1950 meeting with President Erikson of the Swedish Sports Union, Andrianov decried the extravagant scholarships given to American college athletes, declaring "America has the most professionals of all." Andrianov pledged to try again to achieve broken-time payments for athletes.<sup>16</sup>

Andrianov's exchange with Erikson not only provides insight into the differing views on amateurism held by the Soviets and the Americans, but shows the role played in

---

<sup>15</sup> "Men from 45 Olympic Nations Expected to Attend Amateur Congress—US Among Opponents to Swedish Proposal," *New York Times*, 6 June 1946, 29.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of Meeting of Vice-Chairman of the Sports Committee with President of the Swedish Sports Union Erikson, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 592, l. 72.

international sports by personal interactions outside official meetings, congresses, and sessions. It also demonstrates the Soviet strategy of exploiting divisions already present within international sports organizations to make their entry into the Olympic Movement smoother. Knowing that their state-run sports system was a point of concern for Brundage and others within the IOC, Andrianov cultivated support and cooperation from Erikson on an issue of great importance to both Swedish and Soviet athletes. Broken-time payments were not necessary for Soviet athletes whose material needs were satisfied by the state, but, by backing the Swedish proposal, Andrianov saw that he could develop a friendly relationship with Erikson and draw upon that personal connection to gain his support for Soviet proposals on issues of more importance to Soviet sports interests and perhaps deflect attention away from the issue of Soviet state-sponsored athletes.

Andrianov also successfully established a personal connection with Brundage as a way to overcome the fundamental ideological differences between the two and present himself as a sports authority and keen promoter of Olympism. Upon entering his first IOC meeting, Andrianov assured his fellow members that he would "cooperate sincerely with the IOC for the good of the Olympic Movement in his country and for world peace."<sup>17</sup> Brundage's attitude toward the Soviet IOC members gradually improved after "the many courtesies extended to me during my recent visit to the USSR" where he witnessed "undoubtedly the greatest gymnastic display [he had] ever seen."<sup>18</sup> His visit to the USSR in 1954 impressed Brundage and helped convince him of the expertise and organizational ability of his Soviet counterparts. Brundage put great stock in personal

---

<sup>17</sup> 45me Session du CIO, Vienna, 7 May 1951, ABC Box 90.

<sup>18</sup> Brundage to Andrianov, 2 September 1954, ABC Box 50.



assurances and first-hand knowledge, and Andrianov furnished him with reports of Soviet sporting excellence that reaffirmed what he saw on his visit to Moscow.

Andrianov also promoted his personal authority and that of the Soviet NOC as the only official source of information regarding Soviet training methods. "Erroneous" allegations of payments to record holders could be countered through official announcements by the USSR NOC. Andrianov noted that relying exclusively on information received through official Soviet sports channels was extremely important for the IOC since "information from unofficial sources could only bring damage to the prestige of the International Olympic Committee."<sup>19</sup> With such statements, Andrianov reinforced his credibility as a sports official in the Soviet Union as well as identifying himself as the IOC's representative within the Soviet Union and a protector of Olympic interests. Andrianov further enhanced his credentials as an active promoter of Olympism at the 51st IOC Session Paris in June 1955 where he succeeded in getting the phrase "to encourage and consolidate friendship between the sportsmen of all countries" added to article 9 of the *Olympic Charter*.<sup>20</sup> In proposing the change, Andrianov insisted that aims of the Olympic founder, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, should be "clearly worded in the fundamental documents of the International Olympic Committee," but the wording also encapsulated one of the official messages of Soviet sport.<sup>21</sup>

Andrianov used his growing influence to further "democratize" international sports. Immediately upon his election to the IOC, Andrianov began to push for greater

---

<sup>19</sup> Andrianov to Otto Mayer, Chancellor of the IOC, 20 December 1952, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondance 1951-1966, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of the 51<sup>st</sup> Session of the IOC, 14-18 June 1955, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>21</sup> Andrianov to Brundage, 26 February 1955, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondance 1951-1966, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

representation in the Olympic Movement by countries within the Soviet sphere of influence, supporting the bids for IOC recognition by the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). During his first IOC meeting as a member, Andrianov spoke out vociferously over whether or not to give official recognition to the East German NOC. Andrianov stressed Olympic principles of international cooperation, democracy, and freedom as he promoted separate German NOCs, arguing that recognizing only one committee and thereby placing the East German athletes "under the domination of the committee of the west" would effectively "ignore a region of 22 million inhabitants."<sup>22</sup>

Establishing Soviet authority abroad had direct implications for political maneuvering within the Soviet Union, and the way Andrianov pushed Soviet political agendas in the apolitical IOC evoked criticism from other Soviet administrators. In a report to the Central Committee, the editor of *Sovetskii sport*, N. Liubomirov, accused Andrianov of "serious mistakes" in his approach to securing permission from the IOC for the athletes from the PRC and the GDR to compete in the Helsinki Games. Liubomirov complained that Andrianov refused to let him publish an article criticizing the IOC's stance on China and East Germany, stating that "sharp criticism in newspapers could 'offend and bring criticism upon Mr. Edström,' who gave Comrade Andrianov his word as a gentleman that he would settle everything."<sup>23</sup> According to Liubomirov, Andrianov had "showed complete political shortsightedness, took the side of bourgeois sports leaders, misled public opinion, and lost an opportunity for the Soviet press to fight

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. See also, Hill, *Olympic Politics*, 35.

<sup>23</sup> Report of N. Liubomirov, September 1952, RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 649, l. 95.

actively in their pages for appropriate and timely resolution of the problem of the GDR and PRC in the XV Olympic Games."<sup>24</sup> Liubomirov couched his criticism of Andrianov within the overall goals of Soviet sports organizations in international sporting politics. When his report went unanswered he followed it up with a letter to the head of the Communist Youth League (Komsomol), N. A. Mikhailov, in early March 1953. "In my view," Liubomirov continued, "Andrianov's behavior . . . brought great damage to the campaign to strengthen the position of the Soviet Union and peoples' democracies in the international sports movement."<sup>25</sup> In his campaign against Andrianov, Liubomirov employed a common practice of postwar Stalinist politics: making personal appeals to higher party authorities to settle professional disagreements.

In his response to Liubomirov's accusations, Andrianov reveals that he had better knowledge of the delicate diplomacy required in trying to achieve Soviet aims in international sports organizations and of the nuances of internal Soviet bureaucratic politics. Recounting his work in regard to the GDR and PRC athletes, Andrianov shifted the blame for the GDR not being recognized by the IOC at their Helsinki session to the GDR representatives, K. Edel and A. Strauss, who, he said, "were extremely inexperienced to solve such a critical problem."<sup>26</sup> With regard to Liubomirov's article, Andrianov expressed resentment over Liubomirov's going outside the established hierarchy in his own letter to P. K. Romanov in Agitprop, asserting, "if he [Liubomirov]

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>26</sup> Excerpts from Andrianov to V. M. Molotov, G. M. Malenkov, V. G. Grigorian, 21 June 1951, RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 649, l. 102.

disagreed with [my] opinion, he had ample opportunity to resolve that question through the leadership of the Committee or through appeal."<sup>27</sup>

In his six-page letter, Andrianov countered every accusation laid at his door regarding his work in the IOC, stressing that he had agreed on a course of action with the Central Committee on each issue. On the question of China's recognition, Andrianov noted that the Chinese representative demonstrated "that he was completely unprepared for the decision, not knowing the rules and regulations of the IOC." By emphasizing the lack of preparation on the part of the Chinese representative, Andrianov further highlighted his own political savvy and intimate knowledge of how decisions are made within the IOC. Andrianov argued that he had scored a "a huge victory," by helping to secure the opportunity for his "Chinese comrades" to meet with IF delegates, "telling them about the new China."<sup>28</sup>

In defending himself against Liubomirov, Andrianov articulated his understanding of his work in the IOC. Noting that socialist representatives accounted for only six votes in the seventy-member organization, Andrianov insisted that Soviet representatives and those from the "people's democracies" could only bring about "fundamental rulings" by working with "bourgeois" members who recognized the "eminent authority" of Soviet sports. He also upheld his "correct" approach in exploiting the "differences of opinion" existing in the IOC to win over members "who do not want the dictates of the pro-American group" in support of Soviet proposals.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Andrianov to P. K. Romanov, 26 March 1953, RGANI f. 5, op. 16, d. 649, l. 99.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., l. 100.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., l. 100-101.

Andrianov concluded that he and the other Soviet representative to the IOC, Aleksei Romanov, bolstered the status of Soviet sport despite the counter activity of the pro-American group in the IOC. Including copies of his previous reports, he drew P. K. Romanov's attention to the fact that these documents showed that Soviet representatives "objectively and properly informed the Sports Committee" of all aspects of the discussion regarding the PRC and GDR questions. He dismissed Liubomirov's charge as an "irresponsible document that demonstrates the thoughtlessness of its author in resolving serious problems."<sup>30</sup>

Andrianov successfully defended himself against Liubomirov's accusations by demonstrating his superior knowledge of the East German and Chinese questions and the proper way to approach their discussion in the IOC to achieve the results desired by the Soviet leadership. He also backed up his letter of defense with an additional sixteen pages of documentation including agendas from the IOC sessions where the GDR and PRC questions were discussed and the reports submitted to the Sports Committee and Central Committee of his work at those sessions. This documentation proved significant as P. K. Romanov and his Agitprop colleague V. Stepanov noted Liubomirov's lack of "any kind of materials supporting the contents [of his report]" when they relayed the matter to the Central Committee Secretariat.<sup>31</sup> Following an inquiry, Romanov and Stepanov concluded that Liubomirov based his allegations on his "personal impressions" since he was "unfamiliar" with Andrianov's directives. It is clear from the above exchange that Andrianov enjoyed support from the Central Committee for his approach

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> P. K. Romanov and V. Stepanov to the Central Committee, 31 March 1953, RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 649, l. 118.

to the IOC. The Central Committee relied upon Andrianov's expertise and based its directives on his observations and recommendations which, unlike Liubomirov's, were not merely his "personal impressions" but informed opinions based on clearly documented evidence of his dealings in the IOC.

### **"Eliminating Deficiencies" in International Sports Relations**

Not all Sports Committee administrators could deflect criticism when the international work of Soviet representatives came under scrutiny by Communist Party leaders. As Stalin's health eroded in the last years of his life, his closest lieutenants began the process of change from a Stalinist, patrimonial leadership to a collective one. This political transition, ending with Nikita Khrushchev out-maneuvering his colleagues to become the new top party leader, brought a shift in foreign policy priorities from confrontation to peaceful coexistence. This new course encouraged cultural exchanges with western nations, giving more significance to international sports ties. At the same time, it brought closer attention to the Sports Committee. The new course in foreign policy began only in 1955, but renewed interest in international sports can be seen even before Stalin's death, further suggesting that the "collective leadership" of Stalin's inner circle had already begun to take control and that they largely agreed on the importance of foreign sports exchanges.

In a letter to Georgii Malenkov dated 6 January 1953, N. A. Mikhailov, secretary of the Central Committee, complained that by failing to appeal the decision of the International Skating Union (ISU) not to consider Soviet records for certification in a timely manner, Romanov, Andrianov, and Vice Chairman of the USSR NOC M. M.

Pesliak "underestimated the political significance of the problem of international sports relations." According to Mikhailov, the leadership of the Sports Committee should convene a meeting of the committee to discuss its "serious mistakes" and "take decisive measures for improving its work in the realm of international sports relations."<sup>32</sup> Once Mikhailov brought the issue of Soviet skating records to the attention of the Central Committee, the Sports Committee sent protests to the ISU against the "intentional delay" in certifying Soviet speed skating records and against "actions putting in doubt [the validity] of those world records," calling for the ISU to certify the records and publish about it in the press.<sup>33</sup>

Mikhailov followed up his complaint over Soviet records with a full investigation into how the Department of International Sports Relations (*Upravlenie mezhdunarodnykh sportivnykh svyazei*, UMSS) handled international correspondence. In a missive to Mikhailov, P.K. Romanov and F. Mulikov of Agitprop noted a number of "deficiencies" in the work of the international sports section of the Sports Committee. For example, their investigation found that Sports Committee lacked proper "control on the timely preparation and mailing of documents, letters, and telegrams to International Federations." P. K. Romanov and F. Mulikov "invited" Pesliak and Sobolev to a meeting to hear the problems found with their department's work. At the same time, they recommended to the Secretariat that Sports Committee leaders be directed to "eliminate

---

<sup>32</sup> Mikhailov to Malenkov, 6 January 1953, RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 649, l. 19.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

the deficiencies" and make sure that correspondence with foreign sports organizations was handled more efficiently.<sup>34</sup>

After the death of Stalin in 1953, the Sports Committee was placed under the aegis of the Ministry of Health. Though perhaps inspired by the inefficiencies unearthed by the Central Committee's investigation into the workflow of the Sports Committee, this move seems to have done little more than alter the titles of the leading figures of the Sports Committee, leaving the general structure and responsibilities of the committee largely intact. Nikolai Romanov, now a deputy minister of health, remained the chairman of the physical culture and sport section now entitled the Chief Administration for Physical Culture and Sport under the Ministry of Health (*Glavnoe upravlenie fizkul'tury i sport pri Ministerstve zdavookhraneniia*, GUFKS),<sup>35</sup> and Andrianov and Mikhail Pesliak both stayed on as vice chairmen of the new body. One interesting feature of the new arrangement was that secretaries of the Komsomol and Trade Unions were also included in the GUFKS, giving those organizations a formal place in the sports leadership. Pesliak remained in charge of UMSS, and he along with Andrianov remained the key administrators overseeing Soviet involvement in international sports organizations. This structure lasted less than a year, and the Sports Committee was reinstated in February 1954.<sup>36</sup>

Charged with the task of "eliminating deficiencies" in their work, Pesliak and the UMSS revamped the role of the Soviet National Olympic Committee in overseeing the

---

<sup>34</sup> P. Romanov and F. Mulikov to N. A. Mikhailov, 9 January 1953, RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 649, ll. 61-63.

<sup>35</sup> Order of the Ministry of Health No. 740, 8 September 1953, "On the Organization of the Soviet of the Ministry of Health for Physical Culture and Sport," GARF, f. 7576, op. 1, d. 951, l. 13.

<sup>36</sup> Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 168.



Soviet sports section personnel responsible for achieving democratization of International Federations. Soviet representatives to IFs needed to be well-versed in the major issues and activities within their particular federation, but the Presidium of the Soviet NOC, working in tandem with the international section of the Sports Committee, needed to consider the general landscape of international sports, formulating overall strategies, and coordinating the efforts of Soviet IF representatives with those of the Soviet IOC members.

At its August 1955 Plenum, the Soviet NOC approved the make-up and functions of several commissions in order to improve the organization by coopting qualified members of the Soviet sports community into the activities of the NOC. The basic tasks of the new International Sports Relations Commission were to oversee relations with international sport organizations, including proposals for attending meetings, international sport exchanges, reports from IF meetings, and plans for holding official IF events in the USSR.<sup>37</sup> The make-up of this and other commissions was to be approved by the Presidium of the USSR NOC and the commissions were to work according to the plan approved by the NOC Presidium. The commissions were also to bring recommendations to the presidium based on their meetings and report to the Presidium on all work done in the commissions. In this way, the Soviet NOC designed an institutional structure for overseeing the activities of Soviet representatives in international sports organizations, answering the need to improve their international work with bureaucratic reorganization.

---

<sup>37</sup> Draft Appendix on Commissions of the USSR NOC for the Plenary Meeting of the USSR NOC, 26 August 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 464, l. 26.

In its December 1955 plenum the USSR NOC accepted a draft decree (*postanovlenie*) based on a report by M. M. Pesliak "on measures for improving the work of Soviet sports organizations in international sports organizations." This decree expresses the expectations Soviet administrators had for the work of their representatives in IFs and demonstrates the role of the Soviet NOC in setting the course Soviet national sports federations were to take in international organizations. Underscoring the "great deficiencies" in international sports relations, Pesliak and the Soviet NOC declared that the all-union sports sections, the Soviet counterparts to the IFs overseeing the work of each sport, were not giving enough attention to democratizing the international sports movement. Pesliak asserted that International Federations "inhibited" the rights of several national organizations while maintaining "privileged conditions" for others. He decried continued discrimination against sports organizations of the People's Republic of China and the German Democratic Republic as well as colonial and newly independent states. He also cited "serious impediments" to the development of certain sports and the low level of participation of women in international competitions as further evidence that Soviet representatives needed to do more within IFs to further the movement to democratize international sport. Decrying the failure of sports sections to "check" the work of their representatives in international sports organizations by discussing IF questions in their meetings, Pesliak suggested that the cause of such "deficiencies" was their lack of "concrete plans for participating in the activities of international sports organizations." He pushed the all-union sports sections to "take measures" to improve that part of their work.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Draft Decree of the Plenum of the USSR NOC, 9 December 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 464, ll. 15-16.

The NOC decree of December 1955 also outlined additional bureaucratic measures for ensuring that the all-union sports sections took international sports relations with the proper seriousness. The decree established deadlines for all proposals to participate in IF meetings and required Soviet representatives to report on their participation in those meetings before the all-union sections. Based on these documents, the presidiums of the all-union sports sections were to evaluate their representatives and recommend to the Sports Committee "more effective comrade[s]" to replace those representatives who were doing "unsatisfactory work."<sup>39</sup> The decree also proposed that the activities of Soviet sports sections in democratizing international sports organizations be widely publicized in the Soviet sports press. In this way, the Soviet NOC established a system of accountability to achieve the goal of democratizing the international sports movement and to address the problems outlined by the Central Committee.

In his December 1955 decree, Pesliak spelled out the other aspects of "democratization." Stressing that Soviet successes on the field naturally should have led to more leadership positions for Soviet representatives in international organizations, Pesliak pointed out that Soviet and other socialist countries' sports organizations in a number of IFs did not enjoy the degree of influence warranted by the achievements and level of development of sports in these countries. For example, Soviet athletes were world champions in gymnastics and European champions in academic rowing, yet their representatives to the gymnastics and rowing federations were not elected to leadership positions. He blamed this failure to achieve leadership positions on the poor work of Soviet sporting sections in international circles. Soviet sports section leaders did not

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., I. 19.

propose changes to the IF rules and technical regulations, or for organizing and judging competitions in world and European championships. Soviet representatives were to democratize their respective IFs by securing membership in IFs for the People's Republic of China and other people's republics and achieving the election to leadership positions of representatives of the USSR, China, and the people's democracies. The first step, however, was to get Soviet representatives elected to the executive boards of the gymnastics, rowing, canoeing, cycling, sailing, equestrian, modern pentathlon, and the Union of European Football federations.<sup>40</sup>

### **Increasing Soviet Authority in International Federations**

As Soviet representatives to International Federations tried to implement their plans to democratize international sports, they addressed the various aspects of democratization that Pesliak outlined in his December 1955 decree. They also employed the same strategies as Andrianov to cultivate Soviet authority in international sports circles. Modeling their work on Andrianov's experience and activities in the IOC, Soviet representatives began to gain traction in international sports organizations.

Soviet IF representatives used similar methods to secure official recognition for more socialist countries in the various international sports organizations. In their report to the UMSS on the Sixteenth Congress of the International Skating Union (ISU) in June 1955, Soviet representatives emphasized the importance of cultivating personal connections within international sports federations to gain more influence for Soviet and other socialist members. For example, the delegation leader, Tolmachev, "organized a

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 1. 18.

luncheon" with the president and general secretary of the ISU to discuss upcoming elections in the organization.<sup>41</sup> Soviet representatives agreed to support President Cox and General Secretary Gesler for reelection to their offices if they would endorse a number of Soviet proposals and "conduct work" among the ISU members to elect Soviet, Hungarian, and Czechoslovak representatives to the leadership and technical committees of the organization. Tolmachev duly met with the Hungarian, Czechoslovak, and East German delegations to ensure that they would support Cox's candidacy.<sup>42</sup> Cox proved willing to utilize Soviet influence among East European delegates to his advantage, but Tolmachev and the Soviet representatives were sensitive to how their work with other socialist countries might be interpreted by ISU members. Not wanting to jeopardize their growing influence in the ISU, Tolmachev insisted in meetings with Hungarian, Czechoslovak and GDR representatives that they not vote "unanimously" on mere technical questions lacking "fundamental significance" to prevent the appearance of voting as an East European bloc that could alienate nonsocialist members of the organization.<sup>43</sup>

Personal meetings became a major part of Soviet dealings with international sports federations, because they helped the country's representatives cultivate personal authority within various organizations. To secure the necessary votes for Soviet candidates to leadership organs or even to pass Soviet-backed proposals within IFs, Soviet representatives needed to promote themselves as leaders in the development of

---

<sup>41</sup> Report of Soviet Delegation to XXVI Congress of the International Skating Union /ISU/, June 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1045, l. 37.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., l. 38.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

their sport. This required not only that the Soviet Union be seen as a dominant sporting force, but that its individual representatives develop a positive reputation within international federations. For example, when the Soviet representative to the International Fencing Congress (FIE), Popov, was not elected to the executive commission of that federation, he explained that his candidature failed "because he was not well known" by congress members.<sup>44</sup>

But cultivating "authority" was not merely a matter of showing how active one was in the work of this or that federation. The Soviet representatives also made a point to find out the informal networks of power in their particular sport and were attuned to the subtle status cues that influenced decision-making in the IF. In his same report from the Fencing Congress, Popov noted the significance of the "financial security" of their delegation, complaining about how "unpleasant" it was for him and his fellow delegation members to give the address of their "third class" hotel while the majority of the other members stayed in "first class" accommodations.<sup>45</sup> Of course, this statement could be seen as a ploy by Soviet bureaucrats to get better accommodations during their travels abroad, but it also reflects the real snobbery that existed in international sports organizations. It also suggests that playing up a sense of inferiority was an approach that held credence with party leaders. The old boy network still operated, and Soviet representatives determined that they needed to demonstrate to the current IF membership that the Soviets were "of the same general type" as the old guard in international sports in order to be taken seriously.

---

<sup>44</sup> Report of Soviet Delegation to International Fencing Congress (FIE) in Italy, May 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1045, l. 34.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

In the thinking of Soviet sports administrators, success on the field and active participation in international sports organizations were inextricably linked and contributed to their chief goal of elevating Soviet authority in international sports federations. At the above-mentioned Fencing Congress, Popov spoke with the Italian representative, Doctor Bertolli, who "rather pointedly" suggested that Soviet athletes should participate in the 1955 World Championships.<sup>46</sup> Sending teams to international competitions not only demonstrated the sporting superiority of Soviet athletes, but also helped democratize "bourgeois" sport by opening a space for Soviet and other socialist sports representatives to gain influence within conservative international organizations. The work of Soviet representatives in IFs was designed to ensure greater success for their athletes, and sporting success internationally in turn reinforced Soviet influence in international sports federations.

The Soviet representative to the International Football Federation (FIFA), Granatkin, also attributed Soviet participation in international competitions to the work of the country's representatives to international sports organizations in his report on the meeting of the Executive Committee of that organization in Brussels, 17-18 September 1955. Granatkin noted that FIFA Executive Committee members Andreevich and Royce praised "the beneficial work" by the Soviet representative to a FIFA seminar on judging in Switzerland and commented on the "noticeably improved play" of the Soviet soccer teams, especially the USSR national team. From this, Granatkin concluded "that

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

successful performances" of Soviet soccer teams and "regular participation" at FIFA meetings helped build Soviet authority in the organization.<sup>47</sup>

Seeing an Anglo-American bias in judging at international competitions, Soviet sports administrators pushed to get more judges from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe appointed as part of their drive to democratize international sport. A report on activities of Soviet representatives at IF congresses in Melbourne lauded the "active participation" of Soviet representatives "in the organization and holding of Olympic competitions in Melbourne," praising the Soviet Judging Collegium (*Kollegiia*) for training more judges to international standards which, according to the report, allowed for "more objective refereeing and the creation of better conditions for the performance of our [Soviet] athletes."<sup>48</sup> The Soviets believed that as long as referees from western Europe and America supervised most of the international competitions, their athletes would not stand a fair chance. Yet this push for more "objective judging" was not simply an attempt to get more judges who would evaluate competitions in the Soviet Union's favor, but also involved training more Soviet and other socialist judges to get them qualified to judge international competitions. To achieve sporting dominance, Soviet officials, trainers, and athletes had to obey international rules and uphold international standards. Soviet administrators had to be well-versed in these rules and standards and, in this way, acted as envoys of the IOC and IFs to the Soviet Union even as they worked to shape those organizations' rules to enhance Soviet successes. Submitting to

---

<sup>47</sup> Report of Soviet Delegation to Executive Committee of International Football Federation /FIFA/ in Brussels, 17-18 September 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1045, l. 84.

<sup>48</sup> Report of Participation of Soviet Representatives in the work Leadership Organs and Congresses of IFs in Melbourne, November-December 1956, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1160, l. 285.



international standards for referees and sports officials meant that Soviet bureaucrats would be evaluated by foreign standards, opening internal Soviet politics to outside influences.

In the drive to "democratize" international sports, reworking the rules and regulations set by the various international federations to govern sports went hand and in hand with getting more qualified Soviet and East European judges. At their 1955 plenum, the Soviet NOC members agreed to improve the constitutions and regulations of IFs, recommending that Soviet all-union sections consider and propose changes and additions to the existing rules governing those organizations. In addition to recommendations of changes to the international calendar of competition and measures for preventing sports injuries, the resolution called for widening the program of the Olympic Games to include new sports for women and volleyball for men and women and drawing up proposals for improving conditions of sports competitions (judging, scoring systems, and evaluation of technical results).<sup>49</sup> Because of the Cold War, beating the United States in international competitions became especially important, so part of the work of Soviet representatives in international sport consisted of actively promoting the expansion of sports where Soviet athletes excelled while trying to curtail competitions where U.S. athletes tended to dominate.

In a report on the Soviet delegation to the European Committee and meeting of the European Congress of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) in November 1955, Soviet representative K. V. Krupin proposed that a group be set up to look over the regulations of the IAAF and recommend changes to them and to the

---

<sup>49</sup> Draft Decree of the Plenum of the USSR NOC, 9 December 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 464, l. 17.

structure of its leading organs. Upon receipt of this report, Sports Committee Vice-Chairman M. M. Pesliak instructed V. M. Chubarov, then general secretary of the Soviet NOC, to prepare a proposal to the IAAF for inclusion on the agenda of the next congress.<sup>50</sup> This illustrates the reliance on the experience and expertise of IF representatives in formulating the Soviet approach to work within international sports organizations. Suggestions made by Soviet representatives to individual IFs often found their way into reports from the Sports Committee to the Central Committee and were in this way transformed from specific measures to an overall strategy.

The Soviet Sports Committee also considered holding international competitions inside the Soviet Union as an important tool in their democratization drive, because it provided opportunities for foreign sports leaders to see Soviet achievements in sport firsthand, thereby enhancing Soviet sports authority abroad. These visits were often given extensive coverage in the Soviet press, lending them domestic propaganda value as well. The draft decree on improving the work of USSR representatives to international sports organizations carried at the USSR NOC Plenum in 1955 listed inviting IF representatives to the Soviet Union and hosting competitions and international meetings as key strategies for strengthening relations with international sports federations.<sup>51</sup> At the modern pentathlon (UIPM) congress, "participants listened with great interest to Soviet representatives" on the plans for modern pentathlon competition at the III International Friendly Sports Youth Games in Moscow, and the UIPM membership voted unanimously

---

<sup>50</sup> Report of Soviet delegation to European Committee and meeting of European Congress of International Amateur Athletics Federation /IAAF/, 12-14 November 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1045, ll. 100-107.

<sup>51</sup> Draft Decree of the Plenum of the USSR NOC, 9 December 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 464, l. 17.

to approve holding that competition.<sup>52</sup> The Soviets conceived of the Youth Games as a way to further Soviet prestige by upholding Olympic ideals and excelling at their dissemination. The Soviet Olympic Committee proclaimed that these games would be held "in full correspondence with the rules and regulations of the International Federations and the Olympic Spirit, serving the development of ties and strengthening friendship between nations."<sup>53</sup>

The Sports Committee relied upon its representatives to gauge the receptiveness within IFs to the Soviet push to democratize the IOC. D. Smolin reported to the Sports Committee on his activities in meetings of the International Wrestling Federation (FILA) in July and August 1955 in Monte Carlo. According to Smolin, the president of FILA, Kulon, acknowledged that the leaders of several IFs seriously opposed IOC practices such as lifetime membership. Kulon also noted that several federation leaders felt that IFs should have full-fledged participation in all IOC meetings. Unequipped to deal with questions related to the IOC, Smolin suggested that Soviet representatives in IFs be given "precise instructions on matters relating to the IOC."<sup>54</sup> Information gathered by Soviet representatives to international federations remained crucial to Sports Committee personnel as they considered their approach to international sports. Smolin's report helped to convince Andrianov and the UMSS administrators that support for a broad

---

<sup>52</sup> Report of participation of Soviet reps in work of leadership organs and congresses of IFs in Melbourne, November-December 1956, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1160, l. 267.

<sup>53</sup> Decree of the USSR NOC On Preparation and Holding of the Third International Friendly Sports Games of Youth 1957, GARF, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 464, l. 46.

<sup>54</sup> Report on Joint meeting of Bureau and Technical Commission of International Wrestling Federation /FILA/ 28-30 July and 1 August 1955 in Monte Carlo, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1045, ll. 61-62.

movement to democratize international sports organizations could be garnered by backing broader representation by IFs in the IOC.

### **Weathering "A Difficult Situation" at the 1956 Summer Games**

The Melbourne Summer Games took place during a volatile time in international relations. A month earlier, Soviet troops had marched into Budapest to squelch the Hungarian Revolution. Meanwhile, Britain, France, and Israel became embroiled in a struggle with Egypt over access to the Suez Canal. These crises sparked protest and debate within the IOC, but its firm belief that politics should not interfere with its work or the Olympic Games gave Soviet representatives reason to believe that their authority in the IOC would continue to grow.

In the view of Soviet representatives, the 52<sup>nd</sup> IOC Session "took place in difficult circumstances" with "reactionary" sports administrators from Holland, Switzerland, and Spain exploiting the "recent events in Hungary" as an excuse to withdraw their athletes from the Olympic Games and "anti-Soviet organizations" sending letters to the IOC demanding that Soviet athletes be banned from the Melbourne Games. At the same time, they noted that representatives from Arab countries, including Egypt and Syria, called on the IOC to ban teams from England, Israel, and France because of their "aggressive actions" against Egypt.<sup>55</sup> Fearing these boycotts could damage its reputation, the IOC adopted a unanimous resolution expressing its "sorrow and regret" as "an organization concerned solely with sport" over the decision by "a small number of nations" to pull out

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., ll. 262-63.

of the Games for reasons "not in keeping with the Olympic ideal."<sup>56</sup> Despite the calls for solidarity in protesting the Soviet invasion of Hungary, the majority of IOC members sided with the Soviet representatives who decried the intrusion of politics into the Olympics. This resolution exemplifies the tactic used by Soviet representatives in the IOC of exploiting the apolitical stance of the IOC and the concern among its members over bad press in their efforts to solidify their position within the organization.

Participation of Soviet representatives in IF congresses held during the Summer Games in Melbourne in November 1956 provides insight into the difficulties faced by Soviet administrators as they sought to increase the representation of Soviet and East European sports bodies in leadership organs of international organizations. Despite the "difficult situation" noted at the IOC session in Melbourne, Soviet and East European representatives "were able to reach decisions that would considerably strengthen their position and influence in the IOC." In their report to the Central Committee, the UMSS declared the election of Bulgarian representative Stoichev to the Executive Board of the IOC of particular significance.<sup>57</sup> Noting that Soviet representatives "fulfilled the major part of the directives given to them," the UMSS also noted remaining problems in the IF congresses. The report recommended Soviet representatives needed to "learn the lessons" from the IF meetings in Melbourne where Soviet influence in leading organs "weakened quite a bit."<sup>58</sup> In organizations where the Soviet representatives were not well

---

<sup>56</sup> Meeting Minutes of the 52<sup>nd</sup> IOC Session, Melbourne, 19-21 November and 4 December, 1956, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>57</sup> Report of Participation of Soviet Representatives in the work Leadership Organs and Congresses of IFs in Melbourne, November-December 1956, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1160, l. 263.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. ll. 285-86.

known by other members or where there was a pronounced anti-Soviet or pro-American bloc, Soviet representatives had a harder time winning elections to leadership positions.

### **"What's Undemocratic about the IOC?" Reorganizing the IOC**

Furthering the drive to democratize international sports, the Soviet Olympic Committee, at a meeting with the representatives of sports organizations of socialist countries held in Moscow in March 1959, unveiled a proposal to overhaul the way the IOC was governed. Sports Committee head Nikolai Romanov explained the need for the proposal, posing the rhetorical question "What is undemocratic and reactionary in the activities of the IOC?"<sup>59</sup> Citing such specific issues as the IOC's refusal to recognize the National Olympic Committees of the People's Republic of China, North Korea, and East Germany, Romanov declared that the IOC betrayed a "disloyal, and even hostile position" toward socialist countries. He also maintained that IOC leaders continually tried to ensure "advantageous" conditions for American and other capitalist athletes competing in the Olympic Games. According to Romanov, the IOC had a "discriminatory attitude" toward various sports, developing countries, and women's events. Worst of all, in the opinion of the Soviet representatives, the IOC as an organization did not truly represent the Olympic Movement because it did not allow National Olympic Committees and International Federations to participate directly in the work of the IOC itself. Romanov blamed the members from "capitalist countries who were representatives of reactionary ruling imperialist circles" for the IOCs

---

<sup>59</sup> Agenda and Minutes of meeting of Representatives of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries, Moscow, 10-11 March 1959, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 445, l. 18.

shortcomings.<sup>60</sup> Romanov quoted the *Olympic Charter* that stated that the Olympic Games should "create international trust and good will and help create the best and most peaceful world," as damning evidence against the current atmosphere in the IOC which, according to him, reflected a "reactionary political line [that] prevents the strengthening and development of friendship between all countries."<sup>61</sup>

In April 1959, Andrianov sent the Soviet NOC's plan for reorganizing the IOC to Avery Brundage, now IOC president. Hoping to transform the IOC from a relatively small group of 64 members into a "broad representative international organization, consisting of 210-215 persons," the Soviet proposal specified that each National Olympic Committee and International Federation recognized by the IOC be given a representative in the IOC itself.<sup>62</sup> Brundage acknowledged receipt of the proposal, but did not show great enthusiasm for the suggestions it contained. As he wrote:

It is, as you must know, too late to place this on the agenda for our coming 55th Session in Munich. . . .  
The changes you suggest, I am sure you realize, would require a reversal of policy and a complete change of Olympic rules and regulations. This naturally must be studied most carefully by all concerned.<sup>63</sup>

Brundage's response could be viewed as a veiled warning that the proposal would never be adopted, or at the very least, that the process of consideration of the proposal would drag on for some time.

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., l. 21

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., l. 22.

<sup>62</sup> Andrianov to Brundage, 29 April, 1959, copy to Otto Mayer, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1951-1966, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>63</sup> Brundage to USSR NOC, 9 May 1959, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1951-1966, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Brundage had long been an avid proponent for maintaining the IOC's traditional makeup. New members were nominated by existing members, making IOC membership a closed system, traditionally perpetuating itself through social networks that did not extend to the Soviet Union or other socialist countries. In a circular letter to IOC members, Brundage waxed nostalgic over the days when "the care exercised in the selection of the individuals who composed the IOC produced members who, no matter where they came from or what their language, were of the same general type and they were soon welded into what has so often been called the 'Olympic Family.'"<sup>64</sup> The Soviet Olympic Committee members must have known he would be hard to win over.

To Brundage, the traditional selection process was crucial to the IOC's autonomy as it reinforced the sense among members that they were representatives of the Olympic Movement to their countries and should not see themselves as delegates of their home nation. At its 1955 Session in Paris, the IOC had taken steps to buttress its selection process by requiring that new members make a formal declaration upon their election, to "make them aware of their responsibilities and of the obligations which they undertake in accepting the position of member of the IOC."<sup>65</sup> A. Siperco, the newly elected representative from Romania, became the first to join the IOC under this new system, affirming before the session his resolve "to remain free from all political, confessional or commercial influence, and to respect the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter, as they were created and handed down by Baron Pierre de Coubertin."<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Brundage to members of the IOC, 30 January 1954, ABC Box 70.

<sup>65</sup> Meeting Minutes of the 50<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Paris, June 1955, IOC Archives, Lausanne Switzerland.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.



Although IOC members maintained that such measures were necessary to ensure the IOC independence against the intrusion of political interests, their actions regarding new member selection betray their conservative leanings. For example, Brundage spoke of the "serious battle" in Cuba where the government had established a Department of Sport, placed the brother-in-law of the president of Cuba at its head and then "tried to take over the NOC." Yet, earlier in the same session, the IOC elected Prince Gholam Reza Pahlavi to its membership after being told, he "was educated in Switzerland and practices several sports. He is the President of his country's Olympic Committee, and is the brother of the Shah of Iran."<sup>67</sup> While the circumstances in Cuba reflected a growing phenomenon of NOCs "organized by outsiders who often have no accurate knowledge of the Olympic Movement," Prince Pahlavi represented a gentleman of "the same general type" as many of IOC members. Far from suggesting possible political interference, his royal pedigree coupled with his European education reassured IOC members that he was like them and therefore could be trusted as an ambassador of Olympism to Iran.

Brundage's comments at the Paris IOC meeting on the wording of Olympic Rule 25 regarding National Olympic Committees reflect a hesitancy to recognize new NOCs, based upon ethnocentric assumptions about the nonwestern world. Arguing that the IOC needed "protection" from NOCs being organized by "outsiders" who have not been properly educated in Olympic ideals, Brundage noted, "this rule is not written for the nations which are familiar with the Olympic Movement and know very well the Olympic spirit. The rules which we are discussing are particularly intended for remote countries not experienced in Olympic affairs, such as Liberia, Rhodesia, Nicaragua, Indochina,

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

Bolivia, and many others."<sup>68</sup> Before new NOCs could be recognized, Brundage advocated, "We should really, of course, send a representative of the IOC to all these countries in order to teach them the Olympic philosophy before they are recognized and someday I hope this can be done."<sup>69</sup> Such statements, no doubt, reinforced the perception of Soviet Olympic Committee members of bias within the IOC, but they saw it as emanating from a discreet group within the organization that could be overcome through force of numbers. In reality, it seems to have been a much more widespread phenomenon and the Soviet proposal helped to heighten fears among IOC members that they were losing control of their organization.

At its next meeting in February 1960, the Executive Board decided that the proposal be put on the agenda of its meetings with IFs and NOCs in Athens in 1961.<sup>70</sup> In the meantime, Andrianov tried to overcome Brundage's personal reservations about the proposal and convince him of its crucial importance to the future of the IOC, emphasizing the "urgent" need for change in the IOC that he argued had been "brought to the agenda by life itself."<sup>71</sup> Andrianov and the Soviet Olympic Committee declared, "Life is marching forward and it is a matter of honor for all those who believe sincerely in the development of world sport and of the Olympic Movement to keep abreast with the times and not to lag behind."<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Agenda of Meeting of the Executive Commission of the IOC, San Francisco, 12 February 1960, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>71</sup> Andrianov to Brundage, 12 December 1959, ABC Box 50.

<sup>72</sup> The USSR NOC to Brundage, April 1959, ABC Box 149.

In his replies to Andrianov, Brundage conceded the possibility that things "could be improved" in the IOC but maintained his opposition to the Soviet proposal. Brundage made his opinion of the proposal quite clear in a letter to Andrianov as well as in a circular letter to IOC members, IFs, and NOCs in early 1960. In these letters he warned that "adoption of [the Soviet] proposal would destroy most of the fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement" and would "disturb the IOC's independence and impartiality."<sup>73</sup> In other words, the Soviet proposal would deprive the members of the IOC of the opportunity to exercise the necessary "care" in selecting their members and would mean a loss of control over the make-up of the organization traditionally enjoyed by the Executive Board.

During the 1960 Rome Games, Andrianov and N. Romanov met privately with Brundage to discuss the Soviet reorganization proposal. At this meeting, the Soviet representatives again tried to press upon Brundage the urgent need for radical change in the IOC, apparently warning him of "the possibility that, [if the IOC did not change its ways,] National Olympic Committees would no longer respect the IOC and see it as archaic and ancient"<sup>74</sup> and that "NOCs and IFs might overturn the IOC and form a more efficient and effective organization."<sup>75</sup> It is unclear what effect this kind of language had

---

<sup>73</sup> Brundage to Andrianov, 2 January 1960, ABC Box 50 and Report to the Members of the IOC, the International Federations and the Olympic Committees on the proposal of the Olympic Committee of the USSR for a reorganization of the International Olympic Committee, IOC Archives/ Konstantin Andrianov Biography and Correspondence 1951-84, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>74</sup> Material from the Meeting of Representatives of Leading Organs of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries, 25-30 October, Budapest, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 559, l. 2.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., l. 39.

on Brundage since his notes on the meeting state simply, "I don't think anyone's views were changed."<sup>76</sup>

Soviet administrators spent the intervening time between their submission of the proposal and its eventual appearance on the agenda for the IOC session in June 1961 drumming up support among IFs and NOCs. They knew that the success of their proposal depended upon the support of these organizations to put pressure on the IOC. A report on the Soviet proposal discussed at a meeting of the Presidium of the Soviet NOC in January 1960 noted that "considering Brundage's negative attitude," Soviet representatives needed to make sure that the proposal be discussed at all Olympic meetings, not just in the Executive Board and the IOC, so that they could get more support from the NOCs and IFs.<sup>77</sup> At a meeting of sports representatives from socialist countries held in Budapest in October 1961, socialist sports administrators agreed to "establish wide contacts with NOCs of various countries at upcoming meetings with the goal of achieving their support." Likewise, socialist representatives to international sports organizations were to conduct work with leaders of those federations to get their backing for Soviet proposals.<sup>78</sup>

At the IOC meetings in Athens in 1961, Soviet representatives made their case for reorganizing the IOC. At the EB meeting with IF representatives, the Soviet delegation emphasized the need for IFs and NOCs, "those organizations who are really doing all the development of sport and organization of the Olympics," to be given wide representation

---

<sup>76</sup> Conference with Messrs. Romanov and Andrianov in Rome during the Games of the XVII Olympiad, 1960, ABC Box 50.

<sup>77</sup> Meeting of the Presidium of the USSR NOC, 28 January 1960, GARF, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3483, l. 71.

<sup>78</sup> Material from the Meeting of Representatives of Leading Organs of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries, 25-30 October, Budapest, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 559, l. 42.

in the IOC.<sup>79</sup> In his presentation before the meeting of National Olympic Committees with the IOC Executive Board, N. Romanov declared that President Brundage treated the NOCs like "poor relatives."<sup>80</sup>

At the IOC session in Athens, the entire IOC debated the Soviet proposal, during which Brundage said it was "wrong to pretend, as alleged in the Russian proposals, that the IOC ignores the NOCs and the IFs," naming a number of IOC members who were either IF representatives or leaders in their countries' NOCs.<sup>81</sup> The Soviet proposal failed with only seven votes in favor with thirty-five against. Despite the efforts of Soviet and East European representatives to International Federations, when push came to shove, the IFs refused to back the Soviet reorganization proposal because it would have given the numerous NOCs more voting strength. The IFs apparently thought their ability to influence the IOC and its Executive Board was much greater while the IOC remained small. The practice of effecting change through personal networks of dozens of IF representatives played much more to their favor than a large body made up of hundreds of national representatives.

The failure of their proposal forced Soviet sports officials to reassess their campaign to "democratize" international sports. They concluded that to insist upon their reorganization plan would antagonize "the majority of members of the IOC and in actuality raise the question of replacing the current IOC with a different international

---

<sup>79</sup> Theses for Presentation at Meeting of EB of the IOC with IFs, Athens, June 1961, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 689, ll. 43-44.

<sup>80</sup> Presentation of the Soviet Delegation to the Meeting of the EB of the IOC with NOCs, Athens, 17 June 1961, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 689, ll. 32-42.

<sup>81</sup> Meeting Minutes of the 58<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, 19-21 June 1961, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

organization."<sup>82</sup> Instead, Sports Committee workers suggested that the Soviet Union pursue a new path of "gradual democratization of the IOC, which would realistically match up to the capabilities of the IOC and make full use of those opportunities."<sup>83</sup> Soviet sports leaders redirected their efforts toward the active promotion of candidatures from socialist and developing countries and toward increasing the influence of IFs and NOCs by other means. For example, the minutes of the IOC session in Moscow in 1962 show that, while there was no renewal of the Soviet proposal to reorganize the IOC, Andrianov and A. Romanov proposed such changes to the Olympic Charter that made explicit the desirability to have more IOC members from International Federations and National Olympic Committees and promoted more frequent and substantive cooperation between IFs and NOCs and the IOC.<sup>84</sup>

Despite the failure of most of their proposals at the Moscow session, Soviet administrators spotlighted a number of successes in their overall strategy to democratize the IOC. Notable Soviet victories at the 59<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Moscow included the passing of the Soviet proposal to ensure geographic representation on the IOC Executive Board and the election of Andrianov to that board. The Soviet proposal to expand the membership of the EB failed by only one vote, and this was cited as further evidence that

---

<sup>82</sup> Proposal On the Future Activities of Sports Organizations of the USSR in the IOC, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 689, l. 74. It is not clear who wrote this report or for whom, but considering the content and its location among other materials related to the 59<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Athens, it is reasonable to assume that the report was written by workers in the International Sports Relations Section of the Sports Committee and that the intended audience was the Sports Committee leadership and probably the Central Committee.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Meeting Minutes of the 59<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, 5-8 June 1962, Moscow, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Soviet pull within the IOC was finally on the rise in a very tangible way.<sup>85</sup> The significance of Andrianov's election to the IOC Executive Board cannot be overstated as it gave him full access to the real decision-making process in the IOC, since most IOC sessions simply ratified suggestions from the Executive Board.

Perhaps even more importantly, the Soviet representatives succeeded in getting the IOC to make expanding the Olympic Movement to new states of Asia and Africa a priority. For the Soviet Union, these newly emerging states represented potential allies who would support Soviet goals in the IOC. Sports Committee chairman N. Romanov asserted that the IOC had an attitude toward newly independent states similar to that of the United Nations, "where imperialists prevent the liquidation of the colonial regime." Romanov argued that Brundage feared to "open wide the door [of the Olympics] to athletes of free countries of Africa" because if their representatives were elected to the IOC, they would no doubt join socialist representatives against the "reactionary majority," and "the IOC would no longer be an instrument of political interests of the Americans and other imperialist circles."<sup>86</sup> At the IOC session in Athens, the IOC adopted a Soviet proposal to set up a program for promoting the development of the Olympic Movement in Asia and Africa.

## **Conclusion**

In many respects, Brundage was right to expect "nothing but trouble" from the Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympic Movement. As the IOC came to terms with

---

<sup>85</sup> Report on Participation of Soviet Sports Organizations in work of International Sports Associations, 20 August 1962, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 827, ll. 20-26.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., l. 40.

Soviet participation, it redefined the purpose and priorities of the Olympic Games in an emerging Cold War context. The old way of doing things and the gentlemen's club mentality of the IOC appeared more and more outdated in the face of the Soviet Union's apparently progressive and aggressive movements to open the Olympics to more and more countries. By co-opting the language of Olympism and making "strengthening friendship" the central feature of Olympic ideology, the Soviet Olympic Committee members demonstrated that it would no longer be business as usual in the IOC or the IFs. Rather, Soviet representatives would be an active force within the Olympic Movement, furthering their influence by becoming the strongest, most vocal proponents of their newly redefined Olympic ideals. Early successes in expanding the representation of Soviet and East European representatives in international sports organizations inspired the Soviet NOC in 1959 to put forth a radical proposal for reorganizing the IOC by greatly expanding its membership and making its Executive Board more geographically representative. This proposal ultimately failed to gain enough support to pass, but it did help convince the IOC that changes needed to be made if it was to maintain its importance as the leader of amateur sports and its legitimacy as an organization committed to spreading peace and friendship among nations. In this area, the goals of international sport and Soviet external politics matched up nicely, but the Sports Committee workers needed support in the IFs and the IOC to accomplish the tasks put before them, appealing to other socialist countries as well as with capitalist countries, businessmen, and noncommunist or even anticommunist sports leaders. They tried to put together a strong bloc to get proposals passed while maintaining the appearance that their actions and alliances were in keeping with the overall vision of the international sports



movement. The solution was to promote spreading peace and friendship as the core of that vision, to paint themselves as the true proponents of that vision, and to deflect the blows launched at them by gaining personal "authority." Internally, it was Andrianov and the Soviet Olympic Committee officials who masterminded this multifaceted push to level the playing field for socialist countries within the IOC.

Soviet sports bureaucrats also strengthened their authority within the Soviet Union through their work in international sports organizations. Throughout the period from the first calls to democratize international sports in 1950 to the reformulation of democratization in light of their failed reorganization proposal, Soviet Olympic Committee administrators refined their approach to international sports organizations. International representatives were the eyes and ears of the Soviet leadership. Through their participation in international sports congresses, Soviet representatives became experts on their particular organizations' internal politics and proposed to their superiors in the Sports Committee the best way to safeguard Soviet interests in those organizations. Sports Committee leaders then incorporated these recommendations into the plans they submitted to the Central Committee for approval.

There is no doubt that Soviet sports administrators hoped to expand Soviet influence throughout the world through their involvement in the Olympic Movement. Yet, when Soviet sports bureaucrats complained that the IOC and many IFs were led by conservative blocs, they had a point: there *was* a prevailing prejudice against the Soviet Union and other representatives from Eastern Europe. There was also significant reluctance to open the doors of the Olympics to newly independent countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Part of this was a fear of communism, but part was also an

Orientalist idea that these fledgling nations would not understand the principles of the Olympic Movement without being educated in the Olympic ideals. Also, when the Soviet Union began to extend sports aid to developing nations, it couched these efforts in the language of Olympism. In this way, what it exported was not communism, or even the Marxist-Leninist version of communism, but a Soviet approach to sport, wrapped in the ideals of the Olympic Movement "to encourage and consolidate friendship between the sportsmen of all countries."<sup>87</sup> Victory remained a key goal, but by couching their aims within Olympic ideology, sports administrators signaled a subtle shift in emphasis in the Soviet approach to international sports to spreading peace and friendship. This became increasingly significant under Khrushchev's peaceful coexistence and, later, détente.

---

<sup>87</sup> Minutes of the 50<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Paris, 14-18 June 1955, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Human Resources: Soviet Sports Administrators Abroad and International Sports Exchanges under Khrushchev, 1953-1964**

As Stalin lay dying of a cerebral hemorrhage in March 1953, the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee met to decide who would become his successor. Out of this crisis, KGB chief Lavrentii Beria, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Georgii Malenkov, and First Secretary of the Central Committee Nikita Khrushchev emerged to take on "collective leadership" of the country. Eager to be rid of their rival, Malenkov and Khrushchev conspired to try and execute Beria. Khrushchev and Malenkov ruled jointly from June 1953 through January 1955, until Khrushchev mustered enough support from other party leaders to force Malenkov out of the government in February 1955. Khrushchev fought off one more challenge to his power in 1957, when members of the "Anti-Party Group" attempted to depose him. From June 1957 until October 1964, Khrushchev ruled supreme in the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev's term in power produced myriad changes in the Soviet Union. Hundreds of Soviet citizens moved out of communal apartments into individual flats, saw their wages go up and their work hours go down, and reaped the benefits of an emerging consumer culture. Thousands of political prisoners received amnesty, work camps were dismantled, and rehabilitated "enemies of the people" returned en masse to pick up their former lives. Khrushchev's public denouncement of Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Communist Party Congress in 1956 gave official sanction to freer expression among

Soviet intellectuals. Many intellectuals and Soviet elites welcomed the end to arbitrary, Stalinist rule and came to support the denunciation of the great leader because they saw in it the "promise of stability" of their positions and their livelihoods. Khrushchev's foreign policy initiative of "peaceful coexistence" ushered in an era of expanded international ties. Many ordinary Soviet citizens embraced the movement toward reduced tensions with the west and took advantage of the new opportunities for travel and cultural exchange it promoted. Seeing this new course as an opportunity to indulge their curiosity about the west, they soaked up western cultural products and embraced expanded opportunities for travel.

But there was a negative side to the changes of the Khrushchev era. Common people never completely "understood nor approved of the sharp reversal from praise and deification to the denunciation of the 'great leader and teacher'."<sup>1</sup> Reactions to Khrushchev were mixed, just as Khrushchev's policies were uneven. Many Soviet citizens longed for stability and peace of mind, and Soviet state administrators often found Khrushchev's style unnerving. Khrushchev's push for a shift of resources from the military to domestic consumer industry, though motivated by a real sense of obligation to relieve the plight of ordinary Soviet citizens, ran up against entrenched interests in the military-industrial complex who "[began] to work their will, guided by selfish motives that are far removed from the real interests of the state."<sup>2</sup> Khrushchev's agricultural policy failed to invigorate agricultural production, and labor protests sparked in 1962 by

---

<sup>1</sup> Iurii Aksiutin, "Popular Responses to Khrushchev," in William Taubman, ed., *Nikita Khrushchev* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 190-91.

<sup>2</sup> Sergei Khrushchev, "The Military-Industrial Complex, 1953-1964," in William Taubman, ed., *Nikita Khrushchev* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 244, 252-53.

the regime's efforts to raise food prices resulted in bloody repression. As writers pushed the boundaries of the cultural thaw, Soviet authorities arrested or otherwise silenced those whose criticism went too far. Khrushchev's uneven foreign policy and tendency toward brinkmanship led to a number of international crises. Revolution in Hungary left thousands dead at the hands of Hungarian security forces and Soviet soldiers. Pressure from his East German comrades inspired Khrushchev to construct the Berlin Wall in 1961 to divide the city. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 threatened to end in nuclear war between the superpowers, convincing Khrushchev to abandon his failed attempt at nuclear diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> Also, Soviet relations with the People's Republic of China soured when Chairman Mao and his colleagues felt Khrushchev betrayed basic tenants of Marxism, embracing ideological heresy and abandoning the worldwide socialist movement by pursuing warmer ties with the United States.

The Khrushchev period was also marked by notable successes in the goal for superpower status. On 4 October 1957, Soviet scientists launched Sputnik with a Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), marking the beginning of the space race and a significant development in the arms race. On 12 April 1961, Iurii Gagarin became the first man in space, signaling another important first for the Soviet Union in the race to the moon. Moreover, during this period, Soviet athletes secured their status as the dominant sports power, winning the most medals at every Olympic Summer and Winter Games held between 1956 and 1964.

In August 1960, Khrushchev sent a message of good will and good luck to all the participants of the Summer Olympic Games held in Rome that year. In his letter,

---

<sup>3</sup> Oleg Troyanovsky, "The Making of Soviet Foreign Policy," in William Taubman, ed., *Nikita Khrushchev* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 217.

Khrushchev highlighted the significance of international sports exchanges to his foreign policy of peaceful coexistence. As he wrote, "Encounters by athletes of the different countries contributes to rapprochement and mutual understanding of peoples. Thus they play an important role in strengthening universal peace. The Soviet government attaches great significance to such encounters and lends every possible support to them. We are assured that the XVIIth Olympic Games will be a new step on the road to strengthening confidence and friendship between the peoples of all countries."<sup>4</sup>

Under Khrushchev, Soviet administrators projected an image abroad in international sports circles of peace-loving, sports enthusiasts looking to expand the Olympic Movement to Eastern Europe and later the developing world. Emphasizing the commonalities between their own goals and Olympic ideals, Soviet representatives strove to increase the socialist presence and influence in international sports organizations, promoting themselves as key partners for the International Olympic Committee and International Federations. At the same time, Soviet allies in Eastern Europe began to resist Soviet control and the Peoples' Republic of China challenged Soviet leadership of the socialist world. Growing tensions and cleavages within the socialist bloc even began to play out themselves in international sports, complicating the jobs of Soviet sports administrators. The demands of the Soviet leadership and international sports organizations coupled with growing pressures from within the socialist camp required an increasingly sophisticated set of diplomatic skills on the part of Soviet representatives to maintain Soviet influence and prestige.

---

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union to Participants in the XVII Olympic Games, 22 August 1960, GARF, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3504, l. 1.

Existing historiography considers how these sports exchanges served as a conduit of ideas between the USSR and the west. Barbara Jean Keys argues that participating in international sport opened "Soviet culture to internationalist currents often subversive of broader regime goals."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Yale Richmond contends that Soviet cultural exchanges, especially with the United States, contributed significantly to the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union by exposing the Soviet Union to western ideas that highlighted its internal contradictions.<sup>6</sup> The expansion of international sports ties between Stalin's death in 1953 and Khrushchev's ouster in 1964 certainly opened the Soviet sports bureaucracy to the internationalist currents of the sports movement during this period. As Soviet sports officials participated more widely in Olympic and IF meetings and congresses, they found themselves ensconced in a new world of international sporting politics, and as they adapted to the constraints of these international rules and practices in order to achieve the nationalist goals of the Soviet leadership, Soviet sports bureaucrats themselves became conduits of international trends.

More broadly, sports exchanges were a catalyst for evolving relationships and expectations within the Soviet bureaucracy. As international sporting ties became more common and seen as worthwhile, Soviet leaders began to value a new and different set of skills in its sports administrators. Through leadership transitions and changing international conditions, they reshaped their roles within the party-state apparatus, cultivating their own personal authority and status as experts. In so doing, they contributed to the professionalization of the Soviet bureaucracy.

---

<sup>5</sup> Keys, *Globalizing Sport*, 160. See also Keys, "Soviet Sport," 416.

<sup>6</sup> Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

## **Reorganization of the Sports Committee and a New Raison d'Être for the Soviet NOC**

Khrushchev's attempt to decentralize administrative power and bring the state apparatus under tighter party scrutiny was an especially significant change for bureaucrats. Elena Zubkova argues that, in pursuing reform of the Soviet bureaucracy, "Khrushchev placed his bet on quick returns from reorganization, on measures that would lead to an immediate and substantial result."<sup>7</sup> Conceived as a means to mobilize the grass roots of the party membership to eliminate bureaucratic abuses, Khrushchev's moves garnered resentment from entrenched interests that resisted his reforms. Another reason behind this anti-bureaucratic drive was to undermine Malenkov's base of support in the economic ministries.<sup>8</sup>

As part of Khrushchev's decentralization, in 1959, the Central Committee disbanded the Sports Committee and created in its place a broad body encompassing representatives from both state and public sports societies. The Central Committee called this new entity the Central Soviet of the Union of Sports Organizations and Societies. Once the apparatus had been reorganized, former Sports Committee administrators—especially the Soviet NOC—took a hard look at how they ran the sports system and how best to achieve their obligations. Khrushchev's admonitions to the Soviet populace to engage in more self-policing and take more responsibility found echoes in Sports Committee discourse. While the Stalin years placed emphasis on criticism and self-

---

<sup>7</sup> Elena Zubkova, "The Rivalry with Malenkov," in William Taubman, ed., *Nikita Khrushchev* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 83.

<sup>8</sup> William J. Thompson, "Industrial Management and Economic Reform under Khrushchev," in William Taubman, ed., *Nikita Khrushchev* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 140.



criticism as a means to "eliminate deficiencies" in bureaucrats' work, "personal responsibility" became an important addition to the bureaucratic lexicon and the Sports Committee had to demonstrate accountability for their activities.

The 1959 reorganization opened up debate within the Olympic Committee over what the committee's role should be within the new structure and how the reorganization would affect its work. Because NOCs were to be independent organizations not under the political or economic control of any other organization or body, according to IOC rules, the new USSR NOC constitution made no mention of its relationship to the Central Soviet. In reality, the Soviet Olympic Committee was under the leadership of the Central Soviet just like any other sports organization in the country.<sup>9</sup> In its official charter, however, the status of the Olympic Committee was left ambiguous. It never constituted a distinct department of the Central Soviet but comprised representatives from Soviet sports federations, city and regional sports committees, former athletes, and other sports administrators from various agencies and organizations. In this sense it was partially independent. However, the president and secretary of the NOC occupied posts in the Central Soviet apparatus, the NOC was funded by the central sports administration, and members of the committee received salaries from the sports apparatus through their full-time positions. This ambiguity inspired the varied views on what the NOC should be doing. Andrianov quite prudently made sure that on paper the committee functioned as an independent body.

As members of the USSR NOC debated what role, if any, the Olympic Committee should have in the day-to-day operations of physical culture and training of

---

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the Plenum of the USSR NOC, 7 January 1960, GARF, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3482, ll. 63-64.

athletes, they highlighted the need to avoid "duplicating" work already being done in the sports federations and other organs of the Central Soviet. While Tolmachev, the head of the Soviet figure skating federation, argued that the Olympic Committee could take over from the Scientific Method Council the task of preparing national teams, the head of the USSR boxing federation, Nikiforov-Denisov, maintained that expanding Soviet influence and representation in international federations should be the primary work of the NOC.<sup>10</sup> Head of the USSR Volleyball Federation Savvin agreed that the Olympic Committee should focus on external relations, asserting that, if the NOC interfered with the preparation of athletes, it would create a "parallelism," duplicating work that was already being done effectively by experts and specialists well-versed in training theory and methodology.<sup>11</sup> IOC member Aleksei Romanov emphasized that the Olympic Committee had suffered from a basic lack of direction since its inception. He noted that many Presidium members failed to show up to meetings. Remarking that this might be because they didn't find the meetings "interesting," A. O. Romanov argued that the USSR NOC needed to do more to motivate its membership to take an active role in the work of the committee.<sup>12</sup> Agreeing that the NOC should avoid duplicating functions handled by other departments, Andrianov declared that the NOC's "chief task" should be to make international sports organizations "correspond to the spirit of the age" and use those organizations to support the country's struggle for peace."<sup>13</sup> In other words, the USSR NOC should concern itself with ideological and propaganda matters to "present itself in

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., II. 14, 23.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., I. 33.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 62.

the best light" and leave the "practical activities" of preparing athletes to the sports federations and the Scientific Methodology Council.<sup>14</sup>

Ultimately, the reorganization had little effect on the functioning of the Department of International Sports Relations (UMSS) other than serving as partial inspiration for its drive to democratize the IOC. Despite the added layer of bureaucracy, the Central Soviet functioned much like its predecessor, the Presidium of the Sports Committee. Sport leaders continued to report to the propaganda section of the Central Committee and the overall focus of the international activities of the sports administration remained largely the same. Expressing relief that, one year after the decision to reorganize the physical culture movement, they did not "have to wait another year" to decide what direction the Olympic Committee's work should take under the new system, Petr Sobolev told the 1960 Plenum of the USSR NOC that the primary focus of their work should be directed toward expanding international sports relations, democratization of the IOC and IFs, and publicizing more widely in the domestic and foreign press the activities of the USSR NOC for fighting discrimination in sport and promoting the Olympic ideals abroad.<sup>15</sup> Tolmachev linked the activities of the NOC with peaceful coexistence, arguing that Soviet representatives needed to actively expose the "revanchist and reactionary" forces that were "condemning any measures taken to reduce international tensions and to combat the continued state of Cold War."<sup>16</sup> De-Stalinization

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., ll. 61-62.

<sup>15</sup> Minutes of the Plenum of the USSR NOC, 7 January 1960, GARF, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3482, l. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., l. 6.

in the Sports Committee seemingly equated to an official sanction and expansion of the international sports ties that the UMSS had been promoting since the early 1950s.

There is evidence that the reorganization in 1959 impacted the system of preparing elite athletes for international competition. Daniel Tarschys uses the sports bureaucracy to argue that the basic tension in Soviet bureaucracy was caused by high ambitions at the top level and lethargy at the grassroots, and the "main concern of the Soviet elite [was] not to curb undesired activity but to produce activity that [was] desired but non-existent."<sup>17</sup> Assessing the 1959 reorganization, Tarschys argues that the Union of Sport Organizations and Societies was set up specifically to encourage regional, republican, and provincial administrations to become more involved in promoting physical culture and sport by building more sports facilities and providing more resources for ordinary Soviet citizens to participate in sports on the local level.<sup>18</sup> This certainly fit within the overall focus on popular mobilization that was a hallmark of Khrushchev's leadership style as well as Khrushchev's priorities for improving the quality of village life and agricultural production. Expansion of *massovost'* (mass sport) in physical culture was seen as a tool for increasing worker production, especially in the provinces and villages. The reorganization was also designed to encourage the Komsomol and the All-Union Council of Professional Unions (Profsoiuz) sports organizations to take a more active role in sports matters. Nikolai Romanov transferred out of the Central Soviet to chair Profsoiuz, taking the trade union's work in physical culture very seriously,

---

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Tarschys, "Management by Duplication: Some Observations on Soviet Bureaucracy," *Nordic journal of Soviet and East European Studies* 3, no. 2 (1986): 42.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

complaining to the Central Committee that the Central Soviet was trying to cut the trade unions out of the sports movement in the country.<sup>19</sup>

### **Expansion of Sports Ties Under Khrushchev and the New Soviet Bureaucrat**

Despite Stalin's unenthusiastic attitude toward international sports, Sports Committee bureaucrats in the 1940s recognized the political implications of their work. As early as 1944, the head of the international division of the Sports Committee, K. I. Nepomniashchii, posited that sporting exchanges should fulfill "concrete diplomatic tasks," that one must not consider sport exchanges as "entertainment," but as "important, difficult, and extremely critical work" for which the "most suitable representative is a specially trained, responsible worker" of the Sports Committee.<sup>20</sup> Nepomniashchii listed the key diplomatic skills that all Soviet sports representatives should possess. According to him, delegation leaders should not only understand the political climate and the priorities of Soviet foreign relations with the country being visited, but should know foreign languages and be able to work comfortably in a foreign environment.<sup>21</sup> These skills became increasingly vital to Soviet representatives to international sports organizations and often helped workers to rise through the ranks of the Sports Committee.

After Stalin's death, foreign contacts became more numerous and close working relationships with foreign sports leaders, regarded with suspicion under Stalin, became an

---

<sup>19</sup> N. Romanov to Central Committee, 16 May 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, ll. 107-8.

<sup>20</sup> K.I. Nepomniashchii to V.V. Snegov, 4 January 1944, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 248, ll. 152, 155-56.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

asset and a key qualification of Soviet IF and IOC representatives. Stalin's successors valued international experience and knowledge of foreign languages in sports administrators. Athletes and trainers who developed personal friendships with members of foreign delegations aroused mistrust, but higher level sports representatives were expected to establish effective relationships outside of formal meetings with their foreign counterparts because such personal contacts would increase their authority within international organizations. Working within international sports circles, Soviet representatives became attuned to the value of personal ties in getting things done internationally. Private meetings with international sports federations helped Soviet representatives to cultivate personal authority within various organizations as Soviet practices of exploiting informal networks translated well onto the international scene.

In order to achieve Soviet goals, the USSR chose its delegates carefully. As N. Romanov explained to a meeting of sports leaders from socialist countries in 1959:

Our representatives should not only be good specialists, but also politically mature people, who skillfully advance the proper political line in federations. . . . They must not be merely specialists in their sport, but must know how to solve problems in a way that wins support from representatives of foreign sport [for Soviet proposals]. . . ."<sup>22</sup>

"Politically mature" meant more than simply being a party member. For example, during preparations for the 1964 Summer Games in Tokyo, only fifty of the eight-four Soviet members of international sports organizations belonged to the Communist Party.<sup>23</sup>

Rather, Soviet representatives had to be "mature" in international sports politics, able to

---

<sup>22</sup> Agenda and Minutes of Meeting of Representatives of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries, Moscow, 12 March 1959, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 446, ll. 3, 27.

<sup>23</sup> Oral Report of Central Soviet of Sports Organizations and Societies on Preparation of Soviet Athletes for XVIII Olympic Games in Tokyo, June 1964, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 254, l. 35.

promote Soviet proposals in international organizations, eliciting support and maintaining good relationships with the other members. To do so, Soviet representatives had to be knowledgeable and respected in their sport, understand Soviet goals, present them in a constructive manner that harmonized with the international organization's values, and show initiative and tenacity in pursuing desired outcomes—in other words, they needed to be effective diplomats.

The Soviet sports leadership valued these skills so highly that sometimes they chose to give up positions of influence within a particular organization for the short term until a representative with these qualifications could be found. In a meeting of Soviet sports leaders in 1962, Nikolai Romanov praised some Soviet IF representatives for being "active conduits of [Soviet] politics" and enjoying a high level of authority in international organizations, while criticizing others for "perform[ing] their work inactively, without initiative, limiting themselves to the formal fulfillment of their responsibilities."<sup>24</sup> International Federation representatives who "did not live up to their responsibilities" or "made mistakes" were "recalled from their posts" and "replaced by other comrades" who showed more initiative in advancing Soviet positions internationally.<sup>25</sup> When the Soviet representative to the international athletics federation, Kalinin, failed to live up to expectations, Romanov criticized him for behavior "unworthy of a representative of Soviet track and field. He was ineffective, and we don't like toadies. The [athletics] section decided to recall him, and he has not traveled to any

---

<sup>24</sup> Report on Participation of Soviet Sports Organizations in work of International Sports Associations, 20 August 1962, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 827, l. 16.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

meetings for two years."<sup>26</sup> Even though the president of that federation refused to accept a replacement for their delegate, the Central Soviet decided it was better to have no representative than one who could not advance Soviet interests effectively.

Learning the working languages of international organizations also played a key role in raising the authority of individual Soviet representatives by facilitating communication with IF leaders in private meetings and negotiations. Therefore, a 1955 Soviet NOC decree called for Soviet representatives to study foreign languages.<sup>27</sup> The same year, in a report to Andrianov, the vice chairman of the Department of International Sports Relations (UMSS), B. Seregin, requested permission to organize language courses in French and English for his department's workers through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His rationale for this was to train sports administrators in foreign languages "necessary for their daily work, and also for travel abroad as part of Soviet sports delegations."<sup>28</sup> In their reports from international meetings, Soviet representatives themselves highlighted the need for IF delegates to learn foreign languages.<sup>29</sup>

Because it was not always possible to find effective representatives who also spoke foreign languages, interpreters became key members of international sports delegations. In July 1964, when the Soviet representative to the International Amateur Basketball Federation (FIBA) attended a meeting of representatives of national basketball associations from Europe and the Mediterranean without an interpreter, N. Semashko

---

<sup>26</sup> Agenda and Minutes of Meeting of Representatives of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries, Moscow, 12 March 1959, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 446, l. 36.

<sup>27</sup> Draft Decree of the Plenum of the USSR NOC, 9 December 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 464, l. 19.

<sup>28</sup> Report by B. Seregin to K. Andrianov, 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1036, l. 207.

<sup>29</sup> See for example, Report of Soviet Delegation to Meeting of Executive Commission of International Gymnastics Federation, 29 March-1 April 1956, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1160, l. 98.



complained that they lost the opportunity to hold private meetings with delegates and that the absence of an interpreter made it difficult for them to fulfill their assigned tasks.<sup>30</sup> At the FIBA congress in October that same year, N. Semashko again noted the importance of interpreters "on whom the success of our delegations greatly depends."<sup>31</sup> Not only did interpreters need to be fluent in a particular foreign language, but they also needed to be competent enough in sports terminology and the political priorities of the Soviet leadership to facilitate discussion. For example, the Sports Committee representatives attached to the East German delegation to the USSR Sports Parade in 1954, praised interpreter Nina Bykova for her ability to conduct meetings involving political issues and "general questions of the physical culture movement" despite her lack of specialized education in sports.<sup>32</sup> In his report on working with the English delegation, I. Shramkov praised interpreter M. A. Nagorna for her "great tact and great sense of responsibility."<sup>33</sup> Reporting on the work of interpreters assigned to the Romanian delegation, G. I. Eliseev recommended that for future events interpreters be allowed to stay in the same hotels as their guests because the demands of such events required them to work sixteen to eighteen hours a day, leaving them no time to rest and recuperate.<sup>34</sup> By contrast, the

---

<sup>30</sup> Report on Participation of Soviet Representatives in IX Session of the Conference of Delegates of National Basketball Federations of Europe and the Mediterranean, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 1103, ll. 65-66.

<sup>31</sup> Report by N. V. Semashko and interpreter on the FIBA Congress, 15 and 21 October 1964, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 1103, l. 94.

<sup>32</sup> Report of Work with the Sports Delegation from GDR during the 1954 Sports Parade, 27 July 1954, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 926, l. 118.

<sup>33</sup> Report of Work with the English Delegation during the 1954 Sports Parade, 2 August 1954, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 926, l. 29.

<sup>34</sup> Report of Stay of Romanian Sports Delegation in USSR, 15-28 July 1954, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 926, l. 122.

interpreter assigned to the Czechoslovak delegation drew criticism for upsetting the Czechoslovak guests by abandoning her post on three separate occasions.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to language ability, being an effective interpreter required the same set of skills outlined by Nepomniashchii in 1944: "high overall cultural and educational level, political and worldly tact, [the ability] to conduct oneself in an unfamiliar and alien environment, displaying an outward polish."<sup>36</sup> And while Nepomniashchii expressed concern over the political reliability of interpreters back in 1944, by the 1950s, the increasing demand for their diplomatic skills made interpreters natural candidates for advancement. V. M. Chubarov, for example, began work in the Sports Committee as a rank-and-file clerk/interpreter, but soon became general secretary of the Soviet NOC, and eventually head of UMSS before leaving the Sports Committee to work with the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries in 1962.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Sports Committee as a translator A. F. Ivushkina advanced to become head of the International Sports Organizations section of UMSS.

### **International Experience and Internal Authority**

According to a joint Central Committee and Soviet of Ministers decree "On the Leadership of the Physical Culture Movement in the Country" dated 9 January 1959, the goal of international relations in sport was to "strengthen friendship and cultural

---

<sup>35</sup> Report of Meetings with Czechoslovak Representatives during the 1954 Sports Parade, 28 July 1954, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 926, l. 107.

<sup>36</sup> K. I. Nepomniashchii to V. V. Snegov, 4 January 1944, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 248, ll. 152, 156.

<sup>37</sup> He remained involved with Soviet sports, however, serving as a vice chairman of the NOC.

cooperation of the Soviet Union with foreign countries."<sup>38</sup> This was to be accomplished through a wide variety of foreign sports exchanges and contacts including participation in world championships and Olympic Games, exchanges of physical education specialists, sending Soviet sports specialists to developing countries, participating in international scientific congresses and meetings, exchanging training literature and films, lending help to foreign countries in the training of sports personnel, building sports arenas and playing fields, developing sports equipment, and, "last but not least," participating in meetings of international sports organizations. Underscoring the dramatic growth in sports exchanges, M. Pesliak, vice chairman of the Central Soviet maintained that "the exchange of sports delegations ha[d] become one of the most important channels of international relations."<sup>39</sup>

Because of the greater strategic emphasis placed on international sports delegations, the Sports Committee/ Central Soviet's Department of International Sports Relations, responsible for overseeing international sports relations, needed to keep tabs on their representatives and delegation leaders. As outlined by the plan for the Sports Committee in 1956, the UMSS worked in tandem with Soviet sports sections to determine who would lead delegations travelling abroad and with the USSR NOC and all-union sports sections to coordinate the actions of Soviet representatives to the IOC and IFs. As discussed in chapter 2, the main goal in international sports relations during the 1950s was "democratization" of the international sports movement, and the UMSS

---

<sup>38</sup> Minutes of the Plenum of the Central Soviet of the Union of Sports Organizations and Societies, 7 July 1961, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 83, l. 111.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., l. 112. Pesliak reported that the Soviet Union hosted 67 foreign sports delegations in 1952, compared with 407 in 1960. The Soviet Union sent 399 Soviet delegations abroad in 1960, compared to only 44 in 1952.

joined with the Soviet Olympic Committee, various sports departments of the Sports Committee, and the all-union sports sections to advocate the expansion of the Olympic Movement. But the UMSS also involved itself in various aspects of Soviet sports propaganda, including overseeing the study of foreign sports and drawing attention to Soviet international sports results and achievements. In this way the UMSS served as a hub of information on international sports and played a key role in determining the strategies and plans of action for achieving Soviet goals in international sport.<sup>40</sup>

Because of the growing importance of sports ties, the Sports Committee instituted measures to better control the results of those ties. Reports on international sports delegations submitted by delegation leaders upon return to the USSR constituted a chief source of power for the UMSS because of the information they contained. UMSS staff collected and summarized these findings in their own reports to the Central Soviet leadership and the Central Committee. In his proposal on Soviet participation in international sports exchanges in 1964, the head of the UMSS, E. I. Valuev, asserted that reports from international federation meetings should contain profiles of the leading personalities within those organizations including their "political views and business characteristics." In addition, such reports should cover not only the results of competitions and decisions made at federation meetings, but also details about any "political work" done by the delegation outside of their meetings or events and "what [Soviet] representatives visited" during their trip.<sup>41</sup> Because of the importance of this

---

<sup>40</sup> Work Plan of the Sports Committee, 14 January-10 September 1956, GARF, f. 7576, op. 1, d. 1135, ll. 11-12.

<sup>41</sup> Report for 1st Quarter 1964 On Participation of Soviet Representatives in Meetings of International Associations and on Participation of Soviet Athletes in World and European Championships and European Cup, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 1102, l. 7.

information, UMSS workers often criticized delegation leaders for poor reporting and made proposals for what they should include. No detail was considered too small, and each delegation leader was obliged to take into account the full spectrum of purposes of international trips. The UMSS staff wanted to gather accurate and detailed information about each trip, and did not want to rely on what delegation participants deemed worthy of mention. The Sports Committee leaders wanted to ensure that they remained the clearing house for the collective knowledge gained through sports exchanges because that information was crucial to Sports Committee influence on the Central Committee.

Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, the Sports Committee (and later the Central Soviet) worked to enhance their control over the flow of information on international sports. This effort helped transform the way the Sports Committee dealt with other Soviet bureaucracies. In the early postwar years, restrictions on international travel meant that the Sports Committee relied to a great extent on the Ministry of International Affairs (MID) and USSR embassy staff abroad to gather information on international sports. Under Khrushchev, contacts in the MID and in USSR embassies continued to form an important source of information for the Sports Committee, particularly in countries where sports ties were nonexistent or less developed. For example, in the lead up to the Tokyo Games of 1964, a member of the Soviet embassy in Washington, D.C., K. P. Zotov, met with Edward Rosenblum, a leader of the Amateur Sports Union, in order to gain information about training of U.S. athletes for Tokyo. In his correspondence with the Central Soviet, Zotov noted that Rosenblum had promised to

send athletic journals, a schedule of planned competitions, and an introduction to the Amateur Sports Union president.<sup>42</sup>

At times, however, embassy officials could prove troublesome for the Sports Committee as they maintained their own channels of power within the party-state bureaucracy and vied with the Sports Committee for influence on the Central Committee. For example, in 1954 when Soviet Ambassador to France S. A. Vinograd suggested that only five Soviet athletes compete in the annual race sponsored by the French Communist Party newspaper *l'Humanite* instead of the fifteen recommended by the Sports Committee, Nikolai Romanov wrote a letter to the Central Committee warning that the Soviet team could not guarantee a first-place victory unless they sent a full fifteen-man delegation. He also argued that Vinograd's assertion that French fans and press received the Soviet team poorly was unfounded, noting that all reports from the event demonstrated that Soviet athletes had been given a "benevolent and amicable" reception by the French public.<sup>43</sup> For their part, Soviet delegation leaders would document the assistance or lack thereof offered by Soviet embassy personnel to Soviet sports delegations. When no one from the Soviet embassy in Finland attended the closing day of the world skating championships as "the flag of the Soviet Union was raised and the

---

<sup>42</sup> Notes from Diary of Attaché K. P. Zotov, Embassy of the USSR in the USA, Washington DC, 31 January 1964, Olympic Games 1964, t. 1, Tokyo, 1964, State University of Physical Culture Museum, Moscow, Russia.

<sup>43</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 21, d. 623, ll. 56-57, cited in Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 77. According to Prozumenshchikov, Romanov and the Sports Committee sent similar reports to the Central Committee fairly frequently rebutting embassy reports and asserting the authority of the Sports Committee in matters of sport.

national anthem [heard]," A. Krivtsov, the delegation leader, noted it in his report on the trip.<sup>44</sup>

During the 1950s, the number and purpose of sports delegations expanded dramatically. By the 1960s, not only the Central Soviet but Soviet republics as well as sports sections of the committees overseeing youth organizations and workers unions, the Komsomol and Profsoiuz respectively, organized a growing number of sports exchanges. At the same time, sports delegations became more significant as areas of cultural exchange outside of formal sports competitions. Soviet bureaus began to include tourists and other non-sports related specialists in major sports delegations. For example, in 1963 the Central Soviet requested to send sports cinematographers to a film festival in Cortina D'Ampezzo, the site of the next year's Olympic Games, to "see foreign films and exchange experience with foreign sports film specialists."<sup>45</sup> Iurii Mashin, who replaced N. N. Romanov as chairman of the Central Soviet in 1962, justified the request by pointing out that the delegation was already in the plan for cultural cooperation for 1963 and had been approved by the Ministry of Culture who would pay all expenses for the trip. By 1963 such requests were fairly routine and did not require a lot of convincing for the Central Committee to sign off on them, demonstrating that the Central Soviet had expanded its role to work with other administrations in organizing sport exchanges.

Adding tourists to sports delegations meant that there were more people that the UMSS was responsible for when planning, sending, and especially reporting on sports delegations. This made it more difficult for the Central Soviet to maintain control over

---

<sup>44</sup> A. Krivtsov to the Central Committee, P.K. Romanov, 31 May 1953, RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 649, l. 128.

<sup>45</sup> Iu. Mashin to the Central Committee, 26 January 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 51.

the individuals (whether athletes, trainers, or even delegation leaders) sent to competitions and sports meetings abroad. For example, in their meeting in July 1961, the Central Soviet tried to ensure that it reviewed all exchanges of sports delegations, approve make-up of teams, and review plans for working with foreign delegations visiting the USSR so that "each international meet would be an object of close attention by all of our leading sports organs."<sup>46</sup>

When disagreements arose between the various organizations and administrations that dealt with sports, the Central Committee was called upon to intercede. For example, in 1963, N. Romanov in his new role as secretary of Profsoiuz, arguing that a variety of state and public organs should be involved in the development of physical culture, sport, and tourism, complained that the Central Soviet was trying to "isolate Profsoiuz" from that "important part of worker education."<sup>47</sup> Ever mindful of the upcoming Olympic Games in 1964, Agitprop workers Udaltsov and Zubkov proposed to the Central Committee that Romanov's complaint be discussed after the Summer Games in Tokyo.<sup>48</sup> Agitprop personnel, understandably, looked for information from a variety of sources in making recommendations regarding international sports relations to the Central Committee and Politburo. Reports from the KGB and USSR embassies abroad supplemented the Sports Committee proposals, placing Agitprop workers in a better position to act as a mediator at times between the different Soviet apparatuses.

---

<sup>46</sup> Minutes of the Plenum of the Central Soviet of the Union of Sports Organizations and Societies, 7 July 1961, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 83, l. 119.

<sup>47</sup> N. Romanov to Central Committee, 16 May 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, ll. 107-8.

<sup>48</sup> Udaltsov and Zubkov to Central Committee, 29 May 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 113.



Central Committee involvement sometime became necessary when sports clubs resisted losing their best players and coaches to the national team. For example, in April 1964 the Central Soviet requested the Central Committee to order the Ministry of Defense to allow the head trainer for the Central Army Sports Club (TsSKA) soccer team, V. D. Solov'ev, to act as head trainer for the Soviet Olympic soccer team for the 1964 Games in Tokyo. Vice Minister of Defense A. A. Grechko opposed this move because the TsSKA team had not made it to the national championship matches during periods of Solov'ev's absence.<sup>49</sup> Robert Edelman and others have demonstrated that, in the case of soccer, the national season and championships took precedence over international competitions because domestic competitions generated revenues and prestige for local clubs and their managers.<sup>50</sup> Grechko no doubt feared that if Solov'ev were to coach the national team in the months leading up to the Tokyo Games, his absence would interfere with the Central Army team's performance in the national soccer championships. In this case, international prestige took precedence, and the Central Committee agreed to force the Ministry of Defense to allow Solov'ev to coach the Olympic Team in keeping with a Central Committee decree from 21 March 1963 requiring the Ministry of Defense to offer "concrete aid to the Central Soviet in preparation for the upcoming Olympic Games."<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> V. Snastin, I. Udal'tsov, and I. Zubkov to Central Committee, April 1964, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 73, l. 19.

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of attendance numbers and the influence of local sports "patrons" see Edelman, *Serious Fun*, 160-62; 177-78.

<sup>51</sup> V. Snastin, I. Udal'tsov, and I. Zubkov to Central Committee, April 1964, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 73, l. 19. Despite securing Solov'ev as head coach, the Soviet national team failed to place at the Olympic Games in Tokyo. The Central Army Club, however, won third place in the national championships under their new coach V. A. Nikolaev.

The central role of the Sports Committee in international sports relations became especially important in Olympic years (1956, 1960, and 1964). Because the Olympic Games provided an opportunity to fulfill all the goals of sport exchange at one time, Olympic delegations tended to be large, including not only many athletes and trainers, but hundreds of support staff, doctors, nurses, cooks, tourists, and numerous bureaucrats from the All-Union Sports Committee as well as republican and regional sports leaders. It was up to the UMSS and the Soviet NOC to oversee the entire delegation and ensure that the make-up and activities of the Soviet delegation were in keeping with the Soviet leadership's goals.

Olympic years also brought a deluge of requests and proposals from foreign commercial and tour companies eager to provide their services to the Soviet delegation. Such requests added to the workload of the Soviet NOC and UMSS, but also contributed to their authority within the Soviet Union as other administrations and even the Central Committee looked to the Sports Committee workers to sort through the wealth of invitations and determine which ones to send up the ladder for approval by the party leadership. When an Indian tourist firm Genie and Company wrote to the state-run tourist agency, Intourist, to offer its services in arranging pre- and post-Olympic Games excursions and sports meets for Soviet athletes, Intourist referred the request to the Sports Committee. Chubarov as head of UMSS responded that the Sports Committee had no plans to send their athletes as tourists to India, and if Indian sports sections wanted to invite Soviet athletes to competitions, they needed to do so through the appropriate Soviet sports sections.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> A. S. Chikin to I. A. Sepura, Vice Head of the Foreign Department of Intourist, 7 July 1956, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 1157, l. 117.

As the size of Soviet tourist contingents grew, a close working relationship developed between the Sports Committee and Intourist. In 1963, for example, the head of the Central and South European department of Intourist, L.F. Khordokov, travelled to Innsbruck to negotiate the housing and services for the Soviet tourist delegation to the 1964 Winter Games with an Austrian tour firm Ruefa. In negotiating the living conditions, ground transportation, and event tickets for the Soviet tourist group, Khordokov acted on behalf of the Sports Committee and the Soviet NOC, submitting his detailed report to his Intourist supervisor, who in turn, sent it to the Sports Committee. Mashin relayed the report to the head of the UMSS, Valuev, who forwarded it to V. I. Savvin, the general secretary of the USSR NOC, to incorporate into the overall plan for the Soviet delegation.

Even though Olympic delegations included many members from outside the core sports administration, the Sports Committee relied on its own to guarantee a successful performance by Soviet athletes that would further build the international prestige of the Soviet Union abroad. In December 1963, Mashin insisted that "permanent representatives of Soviet sports federations and judges, chosen by the international federations," be sent to Innsbruck to work on behalf of the IFs in organizing competitions, fulfilling all the tasks "that will have great significance for Soviet athletes" such as distribution of athletes, judging of events, overseeing protests, disqualifications, etc.<sup>53</sup> These individuals were to be sent to "fulfill other responsibilities for guaranteeing the work of the Soviet sports delegation in Austria" in addition to participating in the 61<sup>st</sup> IOC Session and associated IF congresses. Andrianov, A. Romanov, and V. I. Savvin

---

<sup>53</sup> Enclosure to Memo of the Central Soviet from 17 December 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 201.

would also be sent as "official representatives" of the USSR NOC.<sup>54</sup> The Central Committee members who reviewed the request paid special attention to who would cover the expenses of sending these representatives to Innsbruck. The Olympic organizers would cover most of the expenses of three judges, including round-trip transportation for one of the judges, while the UMSS budget for 1964 covered the remaining expenses.<sup>55</sup>

The growing significance of the Olympic competitions, however, at times strained relations with other administrations and even within the sports apparatus. This can be seen especially in the months leading up to the Games as various sections of the Sports Committee and other Soviet bureaus clamored for information about how preparations were going and for control of certain aspects of that preparation that fell within their purview. Since the ultimate responsibility for Soviet performances in Olympic competition rested with the Sports Committee, the Presidium and UMSS tried as much as possible to remain the clearing house for all information related to Olympic preparations. This became increasingly difficult as Soviet delegations grew and the Sports Committee had to call upon help from other organs.

The Sports Committee managed to maintain control over logistical questions related to participation in the Olympics including the make-up of the delegation, entries to competitions, housing of the Soviet delegation, and participation in IF and IOC congresses because these questions were handled through the Olympic Organizing Committee for each particular games, and organizing committees as a rule would work only with official representatives of the National Olympic Committees. In most cases,

---

<sup>54</sup> Khomenkov to Central Committee, 17 December 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 200.

<sup>55</sup> V. Snastin and Zubkov to Central Committee, 4 January 1964, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 203.

the negotiations between a participating country and the organizers would be done by the Olympic attaché who would be nominated by the NOC and approved by the IOC to serve as the official liaison. In practice, the organizing committee would host guests from various countries in the years and months leading up to the games, and the Soviet Sports Committee wrote into its plan for international sports relations several visits to the host country by its own representatives to observe the preparations and negotiate the terms of Soviet participation. An example of how important firsthand knowledge was to the Central Soviet leadership can be found in a request for the chairman, Mashin, to personally lead a Soviet delegation to Austria to observe preparations for the 1964 Winter Games to be held in Innsbruck. Because the trip provided an opportunity to establish "personal contacts" with the organizers, planned visits to officials and negotiations related to "several measures of protocol," the Central Soviet requested that Mashin lead the delegation. The request also called for 210 rubles to be given to the delegation leader for giving "small memorial souvenirs" to their hosts.<sup>56</sup>

Tensions sometimes arose within the Sports Committee itself over the makeup of Soviet delegations to observe Olympic preparations. For example, on the question of who to send as the Olympic attaché to Innsbruck, Austria, to negotiate Soviet participation in the upcoming 1964 Winter Games there, Mashin asked the Soviet embassy in Austria to nominate one of its staff members to fill the position. This decision angered Soviet NOC President Andrianov who exclaimed, "That's not right! The Olympic attaché should be approved by the Presidium of the National Olympic

---

<sup>56</sup> Central Soviet SSOO to Central Committee CPSU, 17 December 1962, RGANI, op. 55, d. 12, l. 26.

Committee."<sup>57</sup> Having worked closely with the former Sports Committee chairman Nikolai Romanov since the beginning of Soviet Olympic involvement, Andrianov no doubt wanted to affirm the central importance of his team and himself personally in any decisions related to the Olympic Games.

### **Sportsmen Behaving Badly**

Sports delegations served a variety of purposes. As Anne Gorsuch and Diane Koenker point out in their edited volume on Russian and East European tourism, in the Soviet context, "*turizm* was meant to involve work, the enhancement of one's intellectual and physical capital, not leisure."<sup>58</sup> Though this distinction blurred by the 1970s, for Soviet sports delegations and even the tourist delegations that began to accompany them to the Olympic Games, this "work" involved not only enhancing their moral and intellectual development through self-conscious sightseeing, but often practical considerations as well. Becoming familiar with western training methods and obtaining the latest sporting technical equipment became important functions of sports delegations. Demonstrating the successes of the Soviet way of life through one's behavior abroad also marked a significant vocational function of tourism under Khrushchev.

Because many Soviet citizens were new to international travel, UMSS workers and delegation leaders strove to ensure that their athletes gave the right impression abroad. Soviet tourist bureaus expressed anxiety over the appearance of Soviet tourists,

---

<sup>57</sup> Telegram, Edgar Fried to V. Savvin, 22 March 1963, Olympic Games 1964, Innsbruck, 1963, No. 37-2, State University of Physical Culture Museum, Moscow, Russia.

<sup>58</sup> Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, "Introduction," in Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds., *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 3.

fearing that their unfashionable clothes and uncouth behavior would make them (and Soviet society by implication) objects of ridicule abroad.<sup>59</sup> For this reason, tourists needed to be educated in proper manners and customs of dress appropriate to international travel. The same held true for those in Soviet sports. Not only athletes and trainers, but higher level administrators and especially translators had to appear cultured and sophisticated in order to mix well in international circles. At the same time, hospitality, often in the form of sharing a bottle of vodka and tins of caviar, cultivated authority when mixing with sporting dignitaries. These strategies came into conflict when sports officials drew criticism from their coworkers and superiors for unsanctioned "vypivki," or drinking parties.

The Sports Committee personnel's role as the primary organizers of Olympic delegations brought them under tremendous scrutiny by observers from other Soviet bureaucracies. As a result, Sports Committee personnel themselves could be disciplined for poor behavior when traveling abroad or hosting international delegations. For example, the vice chairmen of the Sports Committee in March 1953 fired Petr Sobolev and Vladimir Chubarov along with another International Relations Department employee for organizing a drinking bout at a Moscow hotel hosting a Hungarian sports delegation and billing it to the Hungarian delegation. They also decided to instruct the Party Organization of the Sports Committee to consider expelling Chubarov and Sobolev.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Anne E. Gorsuch, "Time Travelers: Soviet Tourists to Eastern Europe," in Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds., *Turizm: the Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 222-23.

<sup>60</sup> Agenda for Meeting of the Vice-Chairmen of the All-Union Committee for Physical Culture and Sport, GARF, f. 7576, op. 1, d. 952, l. 25.

Despite this incident, both men had been reinstated by 1954.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, A. Krivtsov's report on Soviet participation in the 1953 world speed skating championships in Helsinki noted the "failings and great lack of experience," "lack of tact in conversations with foreigners," and "superfluous garrulity" of the secretary of the Soviet delegation, Vorob'ev.<sup>62</sup>

Sports Committee personnel were answerable to the Soviet leadership for the behavior of athletes competing abroad, and therefore the Sports Committee took seriously the "political" and "moral" education of elite athletes. According to Pesliak, in a 1961 report to the Central Soviet, cadres sent abroad must "represent disciplined and cultured sportsmen, those young men and women who may rightly represent our Soviet state abroad."<sup>63</sup> Pesliak pointed out that, overall, Soviet delegations abroad do "adequately represent our motherland" and Soviet sport as a whole, "contribute to the strengthening of friendship and mutual understanding between peoples," and to "strengthening the authority" of the Soviet Union. Foreign delegations to the Soviet Union likewise were to be given the best possible impression of Soviet society through efforts to "spread truthful, good information about the life of the Soviet people, information that would help . . . win friends of the Soviet Union abroad."<sup>64</sup> This goal was realized at the Winter Games in 1960 where Soviet athletes "conducted themselves with discipline, tact and self-control,"

---

<sup>61</sup> List of Foreign Representatives and Individuals Working with Delegations to the Sports Parade, July 1954, GARF, f. 7576, op. 2, d. 926, ll. 13, 18.

<sup>62</sup> A. Krivtsov to the Central Committee, P. K. Romanov, 31 May 1953, RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 649, l. 128.

<sup>63</sup> Minutes of the Plenum of the Central Soviet of the Union of Sports Organizations and Societies, 7 July 1961, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 83, l. 114.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., l. 116.



and trainers and athletes "established good comradely contact with foreign athletes and trainers."<sup>65</sup>

By contrast, bad behavior by athletes could damage the reputation of the Soviet Union abroad and, with so many delegations being sent abroad, the Central Soviet found it more difficult to maintain controls over the "quality" of athletes representing the Soviet Union in international sports events. In the abovementioned report, Pesliak also highlighted a number of examples of undisciplined behavior by a few participants in Soviet sports delegations, including taking part in commercial transactions and the "exchange of souvenirs" rather than of mutual understanding.<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately, the dramatic increase in trips abroad meant that the necessary preparation of delegation leaders and participants was not always undertaken and that the athletes' private behavior and attitudes, as well as their discipline or even at times their "sports results" were not considered in their selection to sports delegations. For these reasons, Pesliak continued, "we must pay attention to the thorough preparation of our athletes" in sports and political training as well as in "rules and norms of behavior."<sup>67</sup>

The awakening of consumerism in the Soviet Union during the Khrushchev years also meant that trips abroad provided opportunities to obtain coveted foreign goods and cultural products, and sports delegations were no exception. The consumer drive and lagging resources to satisfy the Soviet consumer caused tension as delegation leaders, the

---

<sup>65</sup> Report of participation of Soviet athletes in VIII Winter Games in Squaw Valley, 1960, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 40, l. 65.

<sup>66</sup> Minutes of the Plenum of the Central Soviet of the Union of Sports Organizations and Societies, 7 July 1961, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 83, l. 116.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., l. 114.

KGB, the Central Committee, and the Sports Committee strove to combat black market trading and "speculation" among athletes (as well as trainers and Sports Committee personnel) traveling abroad. The state tourist company Intourist shared these concerns not only because of the negative impressions that under-the-table trading could impart on foreign visitors but also because of the hard currency revenues this illegal trade would divert from the official tourist business.<sup>68</sup> While Intourist could officially recognize and work toward "economic" goals, for Soviet sports delegations, the commercial possibilities of international travel remained unofficial, often illegal, and were regarded with distrust and disdain by party and state authorities.

Foreign travel itself was one of the "perks" available to elite athletes. As Anne Gorsuch points out, foreign travel was expensive, and workers seldom had the wages to cover the cost of a trip abroad (1,122 rubles to Romania in 1959, 1,376 to GDR, and to the United States, over 6,000 rubles) since workers in 1955 made just over 9,500 a year. Time off for travel was also scarce, as ordinary workers generally had only twelve days of vacation a year.<sup>69</sup> These hardships were not a problem for Soviet athletes, however, who were given the necessary time off work and school for training and competition and whose travel was financed by the Sports Committee or their local, regional, or republican sports bureau.

Despite the added attention to political education by the Central Soviet, the behavior problems of athletes abroad continued. In their report to the Central Committee,

---

<sup>68</sup> Shawn Salmon, "Marketing Socialism: Intourist in the Late 1950s and Early 1960s," in Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds., *Turizm: the Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 187.

<sup>69</sup> Gorsuch, "Time Travelers," 210-11.

workers in the Central Committee Department of Agitation and Propaganda (Agitprop) complained that the Central Soviet, Komsomol, and Profsoiuz failed to do enough to "improve the moral and political education of high level athletes" whose behavior "reflected badly on the prestige of the Soviet Union." Grumbling that several athletes engaged in "drunkenness," "money grubbing," "speculation," and "greediness," Agitprop workers cited as an example an athlete from Saratov who received a 700-ruble prize and "drank it all away in Moscow."<sup>70</sup> International sports delegations provided athletes with numerous opportunities for what Agitprop referred to as "speculation," and delegation members routinely took items that could be bought cheaply in the Soviet Union such as watches and cameras to sell abroad. Athletes also brought back to the USSR hard-to-find items such as tape-recorders, electrical appliances, and ladies stockings to sell on the black market.<sup>71</sup> For example, a group water polo players smuggled in forty pair of women's shoes and another athlete about three hundred raincoats.<sup>72</sup> A high-profile, international scandal erupted when Soviet track and field athlete Nina Ponomareva was arrested and tried for shoplifting during a trip to London.<sup>73</sup> Like sports delegation leaders, tourist trip leaders had to submit detailed reports about the behavior of the

---

<sup>70</sup> Udal'stov and I. Zubkov to Central Committee, April 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, ll. 115-20.

<sup>71</sup> RGANI f. 5, op. 60, d. 36, l. 45 cited in Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 38. Gorsuch also talks about Soviet citizens bringing personal items to sell abroad and lists watches and cameras as the most prominent items. Gorsuch, "Time Travelers," 219. One may wonder why foreign consumers would buy Soviet-made items, but perhaps the prospect of a cheap watch outweighed any concerns over its quality. Westerners might have bought such items as curiosities. Gorsuch suggests that these items were more readily available in the Soviet Union than other items, so an enterprising Soviet traveler could smuggle out a fairly large number of cameras or watches and use the proceeds to bring popular but hard to get items like women's stockings and radios back to sell on the black market.

<sup>72</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 60, d. 36, l. 45 cited in Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 38.

<sup>73</sup> Peter Beck, "Britain and the Cold War's 'Cultural Olympics': Responding to the Political Drive of Soviet Sport," 1945-58, *Contemporary British History* 19, no. 2 (2005): 180.

tourists (or athletes) under their charge. KGB agents traveled with groups to better observe and control the behavior of Soviet citizens abroad.<sup>74</sup> The same held true for sports delegations, and KGB informants found that Soviet athletes were not only guilty of speculation and public drunkenness abroad, but they "accepted gifts from foreigners," "established dubious contacts with foreigners," and became "objects of enemy intelligence."<sup>75</sup>

Trainers were also often cited for bad behavior, and even behavioral slips within the Soviet Union could cause concern. For example, the Sports Committee vice-chairman reprimanded state trainer for skiing V. M. Naumov for a drinking binge on his mission to Zlatoust.<sup>76</sup> "Unacceptable behavior" by trainers was taken especially seriously because of the influence trainers had on the "moral" and "political" education of athletes. The above KGB report suggested that the Soviet training system was to blame for such misconduct noting that athletes "spend long periods at training camps and competitions in other cities, torn away from their collectives," suggesting that this isolation from the collective encouraged anti-social behavior among the athletes.<sup>77</sup> In the view of the KGB and Agitprop, responsibility for the behavior of problem athletes belonged to the trainers whose qualifications and proper education was up to the Central Soviet administrators.

### **The Unraveling of the Socialist Bloc in International Sports**

---

<sup>74</sup> Gorsuch, "Time Travelers," 208-9.

<sup>75</sup> V. Semichastnyi to Central Committee, 27 April 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, ll. 122-23.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Vice-Chairmen of the Sports Committee, 1955, GARF, f. 7576, op. 1, d. 1075, l. 3.

<sup>77</sup> V. Semichastnyi to Central Committee, 27 April 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, ll. 122-23.

Many leaders in Eastern Europe embraced Khrushchev's new course of limited cultural thaw and peaceful coexistence. As a result, unrest marked the Khrushchev years in the Soviet bloc. Even before Khrushchev consolidated power, cracks in the East European bloc began to show. In June 1953, East Berlin workers staged a demonstration against the East German regime, and Soviet troops still stationed in the divided city stepped in to restore order. In response to West Germany's joining NATO in November 1954, Khrushchev formed the Warsaw Treaty Organization in May 1955. Yet after Khrushchev's rapprochement with Yugoslavia and his acceptance of Josip Broz Tito's national path to socialism, other members of the Soviet bloc began to pursue directions independent of Moscow. Almost immediately after the release abroad of Khrushchev's secret speech to the Twentieth Communist Party Congress, reform-minded party leaders in Poland embarked on their own "Polish road to socialism," but the Polish Communist Party leader Władysław Gomułka managed to avoid Soviet military intervention by pledging to retain one-party rule and not leave the Warsaw Pact. In Hungary in October 1956, however, student protests led to a full-scale revolution that toppled the Stalinist government and left thousands dead. After the new leader, Imre Nagy, announced his intention to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact and establish free elections, the Politburo sent Soviet troops to remove the new leadership and restore a Soviet-backed government. These events drew tremendous sympathy from many Soviet citizens for the Hungarians and discredited the Soviet leadership. The Hungarian Revolution and Soviet military response also undermined the policy of peaceful coexistence and helped to delineate the boundaries of the cultural thaw and de-Stalinization.

Because of growing anti-Soviet sentiment among the East European populations, diplomacy proved essential in maintaining constructive relations with other socialist countries. From the late 1950s through the 1960s Soviet and East European representatives successfully expanded their membership and influence in international sports. But partnership with other socialist countries was a multifaceted arrangement. In addition to the propaganda value of demonstrating in the Soviet and socialist press the many gifts that Soviet sports organizations bestowed and the coordinated effort among socialist nations to accomplish Soviet goals in international sports, sports ties with socialist countries provided an extended laboratory for developing innovative methods of training and preparing world-class athletes. Participants in a 1962 meeting of sports organizations of socialist countries held in Moscow expanded exchanges between socialist countries on training methods and sports science. According to the recommendation approved at the meeting, "the future development of scientific cooperation between socialist countries in the realm of physical culture and sport will contribute to the mutual cultural enrichment, further improvement of the socialist system of physical education and more successful solving of practical problems of the physical culture movement in each country."<sup>78</sup> The recommendations included exchanges of scientific workers, trainers and sport specialists, joint research projects, and plans to hold a conference on sports training in Moscow in 1962. Soviet representatives called for a coordinated effort regarding the participation of socialist countries in the international physical education organization, specifically a combined endeavor to prevent the

---

<sup>78</sup> Material of the Meeting of Representatives of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries on Questions of Scientific and Methodological Work in the Realm of Physical Culture and Sport, Moscow, 6-9 February 1962, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 820, l. 2.

international organization from holding its executive meeting in West Berlin. As with most meetings of socialist sports leaders, Soviet sports administrators took the lead in drawing up the agenda, giving the keynote speeches, and drafting the final resolution. These meetings reinforced Soviet leadership over a coordinated socialist bloc in international sports. However, this meeting on scientific exchange likewise shows the practical benefits to socialist countries of being a part of that bloc. Through exchanges of scientific and training personnel, all the socialist countries could learn from one another, share experience and expertise, and in this way, promote the international prestige, not only of the Soviet Union or the socialist world as a whole, but also of each individual socialist country. These exchanges no doubt greatly benefited the smaller and poorer countries of the socialist bloc whose sports systems were less robust than those of the Soviet Union or the GDR. On the other hand, the Soviet Union, through the cultivation of exchanges with socialist countries, could serve as a clearing house of scientific training methods and incorporate all of the collective knowledge gained into its own sports system.

In promoting a united socialist front in international sports, Soviet representatives, such as Andrianov, exploited the tension within the IOC between the desire to avoid political entanglements and the need to demonstrate adherence to Olympic rules and traditions. Andrianov's handling of the "German question," the debate over whether or not to give official recognition to the East German NOC, demonstrates this approach. The IOC had already decided to recognize the committee from the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1952, and some members believed it was the IOC's duty to assist in German reunification in accordance with the Olympic goal of bringing youth together

through sport. Others argued that an East German committee should not be admitted since the international community had not recognized the German Democratic Republic (GDR) as a state. Upon entering his first IOC meeting, Andrianov assured his fellow members that he would "cooperate sincerely with the IOC for the good of the Olympic Movement in his country and for world peace."<sup>79</sup> Yet, during the same meeting, Andrianov argued vociferously, backed by members from Eastern Europe, that for the IOC to recognize only the committee from the western zone of Germany would deny half the country the opportunity to participate in the Games.<sup>80</sup> He proposed that both committees be accepted and that the IOC work to ensure that a unified team from Germany include athletes from both zones.<sup>81</sup> The IOC and the Olympic Games could not escape the highly charged Cold War polarity between east and west, but Andrianov stressed Olympic principles of international cooperation, democracy, and freedom as he promoted separate German NOCs.

In the Soviet sports press, articles about the GDR typically celebrated the sporting successes of East German athletes and acknowledged the positive role of the "rich experience of Soviet sport and invaluable help of [their] friends, Soviet athletes, in building a democratic sports movement."<sup>82</sup> The Soviet press, not surprisingly, contrasted West German sports leaders who, along with American militarists, wanted to start a new war with GDR sports leaders and athletes who wished to form a "united, peace-loving, democratic Germany with united, democratic sports organizations" and "want to live in

---

<sup>79</sup> 45me Session du CIO, Vienna, 7 May 1951, ABC Box 90.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. See also, Hill, *Olympic Politics*, 35.

<sup>82</sup> *Fizkul'tura i sport*, November 1954, 28.



peace and friendship with all peace-loving peoples."<sup>83</sup> Such articles paint a picture of how sport exchanges with the GDR worked. Soviet athletes and other sports personnel lent their expertise to help the East Germans build their sports system which, in turn, would help build a united socialist Germany. That the above article seems to have been written by a German only helps reinforce the importance of Soviet patronage to the GDR.

Soviet sports administrators portrayed themselves as patrons and advocates for socialist nations in international sports organizations. In their internal correspondence and in meetings with representatives from other socialist states, Soviet administrators argued against rules and actions within IFs that constituted discrimination against socialist athletes, especially of the GDR but also against the Peoples' Republic of China, North Korea, and others. In their correspondence with international sports organizations, Soviet representatives decried a variety of discriminatory actions against socialist countries. For example, when GDR athletes were initially denied visas to compete in the Melbourne Games, Andrianov asked Brundage to appeal to the Australian authorities on behalf of the GDR athletes.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, when the Indonesian hosts refused visas to Israeli athletes to the IV Asian Games in 1962, Andrianov expanded the discussion by raising issues of "discrimination" and "political interference" in the Olympic Movement more broadly, citing many examples of discrimination against GDR and other socialist athletes by western host nations such as "France, Great Britain, the USA, and some other countries that practice open political discrimination of sportsmen from the GDR."<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>84</sup> Andrianov to Brundage, 14 March 1956, ABC Box 50.

<sup>85</sup> Andrianov to Brundage, 10 April 1963, ABC Box 50.

Despite their public position of blaming western sports leaders for the failure of the GDR NOC's recognition bid, GDR leaders and sports representatives themselves sometimes hampered their own bid for recognition. Recounting his work in regard to the GDR and PRC athletes, Andrianov ascribed the failure to secure IOC recognition to the GDR's own representatives, K. Edel and A. Strauss, who, he informed the Central Committee, "were extremely inexperienced to solve such a critical issue."<sup>86</sup> In Andrianov's view, Edel and Strauss lacked the necessary political skills to negotiate a solution to the "German Question" with the western dominated IOC.

Andrianov again supported the East German bid for recognition at the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOC in Athens in 1954. Brundage claimed that the East German press had published critical articles about the IOC, but Andrianov defended the GDR NOC. Suggesting that Edel, the GDR committee president, wished to attend the Athens session to apologize for the unfavorable articles, Andrianov blamed the Greek authorities for denying Edel a visa. Suspicions about the committee's independence from the GDR government convinced the IOC members to postpone the decision. The following year, the new president of the East German committee, Heinz Schoebel, assured Brundage of his organization's independence from the government. Afterward, the NOC of the GDR was given provisional recognition at the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the IOC in Paris. In his biography of Brundage, Allen Guttman suggested that the change of attitude was due to Schoebel's identity as "a man more conversant with the folkways of aristocrats and millionaires."<sup>87</sup> This reinforces Andrianov's view of Edel as "inexperienced," in contrast

---

<sup>86</sup> Excerpts from Andrianov to V. M. Molotov, G. M. Malenkov, V. G. Grigorian, 21 June 1951, RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 649, l. 102.

<sup>87</sup> Guttman, *The Games Must Go On*, 154.

to Schoebel who, like Andrianov, had the political savvy necessary for negotiating successfully with Brundage. In a flowery letter to Brundage stressing the GDR NOC's "efforts to disseminate the Olympic principles and ideals of peace and friendship among sportsmen all over the country," Andrianov recommended that the president of the committee, H. Schoebel, be elected to the IOC.<sup>88</sup> Expressing hope that the two Germanies would eventually reunite and spare the IOC "the difficulties that arise from having to deal with two German sections," Brundage admitted to Andrianov that he had a "very good opinion of Herr Schoebel," but that the IOC could not accept a third member from Germany, according to IOC rules.<sup>89</sup> Despite the replacement of Edel with Schoebel, Andrianov and his East German colleagues remained unable to secure full acceptance of the GDR NOC as an independent entity with its own IOC member.

Nor did the replacement of Edel with Schoebel mean that Andrianov had the full cooperation and support of the GDR representatives for settling the IOC's "German Question" on terms dictated by the Soviet Union. Oleg Troyanovsky argues that East German leaders actively pushed Khrushchev to take a forceful stand on West Berlin and the fear that West Germany might acquire access to atomic weapons also compelled Khrushchev to take a harder line on the German question that resulted in construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.<sup>90</sup>

GDR sports representatives displayed similar hard-line attitudes in international sports organizations. In his report on the IOC Executive Board (EB) meeting in

---

<sup>88</sup> Andrianov to Brundage, 22 March 1958, ABC Box 50.

<sup>89</sup> Brundage to Andrianov, 10 April 1958, ABC Box 50.

<sup>90</sup> Troyanovsky, "Soviet Foreign Policy," 216-17. See also Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

Lausanne in February 1963, Andrianov alluded to the "inconsistency of behavior of the GDR NOC representatives Schoebel and Verendt" who, apparently working with directives from the Social Democratic Party and government officials, insisted upon getting the IOC to allow two independent teams compete in the Olympic Games; upon allowing the formation of a combined team only in the event that the FRG change its stance on eliminating sports ties with the GDR; and upon holding certain competitions of one team in West Berlin.<sup>91</sup> Andrianov had been cultivating a close working relationship with Avery Brundage, supporting Brundage in his efforts to maintain a unified German team in the Olympic Games. The actions of Schoebel and Verendt demonstrated that the GDR representatives pursued their own course in negotiating the terms of East German participation in the Olympic Movement and sports ties between the FRG and GDR.

The lack of coordination with their East German colleagues reflected a broader breakdown of the socialist consensus in international sports that Soviet administrators had cultivated in the postwar decade. At a meeting of the Presidium of the Soviet Olympic Committee in October 1960, sports leaders complained of a lack of cooperation from other socialist representatives. For example, L.C. Khomenkov grumbled that socialist countries sent different representatives to the International Amateur Athletics Federation meeting in Rome than they had to the previous meeting in Prague, noting that none of the socialist representatives supported the Soviet proposal to exclude supporters of Chiang Kai-Shek from the federation.<sup>92</sup> M. M. Gromov also expressed dissatisfaction

---

<sup>91</sup> Report on Meeting of the Executive Board of the IOC and the Executive Board with International Federations, Lausanne, 7-8 February 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 66. Andrianov had been elected to the Executive Board at the 59<sup>th</sup> IOC Session held in Moscow in 1962.

<sup>92</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Presidium of the Olympic Committee of the USSR, 7 October 1960, GARF, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3483, l. 1.

that a different group of socialist representatives attended IF meetings in Rome than had taken part in the meeting of sports leaders from socialist countries in Moscow. For this reason, according to Gromov, those representatives in Rome were not "active" enough, failing to lend their support to Soviet proposals at the Rome meetings. A. Iu.

Kistiakovskii, in his report on the International Amateur Swimming Federation (FINA) meeting in Rome, bemoaned the lack of "close enough contacts between representatives of socialist countries," which were apparent in sports competitions.<sup>93</sup> N. A. Nikiforov-Denisov noted that it was sometimes necessary in his federation the International Amateur Basketball Association (AIBA), to decide on "one voice," so the OC USSR and the UMSS should ensure that "all fraternal countries" participate in those meetings.<sup>94</sup> A. N. Lentz, reporting on the International Federation of Amateur Wrestling (FILA) congress in Rome, also emphasized the need for "one and the same [socialist representatives]" to participate in all meetings and congresses and to "maintain one line [of action]" in those meetings. In their report on the 57<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Rome, the Soviet representatives documented "occasions of conflicting actions with representatives from fraternal [socialist] sports organizations."<sup>95</sup>

Soviet sports administrators not only expressed frustration over the actions of their socialist colleagues in international sports organizations, but in the late 1950s and early 1960s, bilateral sports ties with socialist countries were becoming scenes of popular outlets of anti-Soviet feelings. In a report prepared for the meeting of sports leaders of

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., l. 2.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., l. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Draft Report, On Results of Participation of Representatives of Soviet Sports Organizations in the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOC and Congresses of International Sports Unions, Rome, 7 October 1960, GARF, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3483, l. 10.

socialist countries in October 1961, the UMSS listed numerous occasions where sports matches between Soviet and other socialist teams were "used for kindling nationalist and chauvinistic feelings among the [host country] population."<sup>96</sup> For example, according to the report, "so called fans" in the GDR and Poland yelled "fascist" slogans such as "Russian swine," "Ivan go home!," and "beat the Russians."<sup>97</sup> The report listed other examples of "hooliganish" outbursts in Bulgaria and Poland, including throwing bottles and stones at, yelling at, and sometimes physically assaulting Soviet athletes. The document cited incidents, in the PRC and North Korea, where "unqualified" and "non-objective" judges robbed Soviet teams of victory and other occasions where "undisciplined behavior" by Romanian, North Korean, and Bulgarian athletes sent Soviet soccer players home with grave and serious injuries.<sup>98</sup>

Soviet sports leaders believed that their socialist colleagues were not doing enough to anticipate and prevent anti-Soviet demonstrations and feared that allowing such events to continue would damage Soviet prestige internationally. They did not consider these episodes to be isolated incidents and attributed them to a failure on the part of their socialist comrades to educate their athletes in the "spirit of internationalism, friendship, and comradeship" and prevent matches from taking place that could possibly lead to anti-Soviet outbursts. As the report stated,

In our opinion, one of the reasons for the negative phenomena indicated is that our friends do not take into account when sport encounters and competitions could be used by hostile elements for anti-Soviet purposes, for purposes of kindling hatred for the USSR and kindling nationalistic and chauvinistic feelings.

---

<sup>96</sup> Report on Serious Occurrences at Sports Competitions in Socialist Countries, 1961, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 688, l. 161.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., l. 162.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., l. 163.

Sometimes our friends, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, now and then allow actions that seek to compromise Soviet athletes and show the superiority of the athletes of their country.<sup>99</sup>

The document also blamed the local press where such occurrences took place for becoming "mouthpieces" for "enemy elements."<sup>100</sup> It suggested several measures for preventing anti-Soviet manifestations from taking place in the future, appealing to socialist sports leaders to do everything they could to prevent sporting matches from becoming vehicles for nationalist and anti-Soviet sentiments.

In addition to calling on other socialist sports leaders to exercise more control over sports meets with Soviet teams in their countries, Soviet administrators tried to control the volatile international situation by curtailing their athletes' sports appearances within the socialist bloc. The above report called on the Central Soviet to reduce the number of meets in various sports with some socialist countries, especially team sports such as football, hockey, basketball, and volleyball with some socialist countries, and to eliminate competitions in those sports in others. The report also called for abolishing international competitions in the socialist bloc in boxing and wrestling altogether.<sup>101</sup> Soviet organizers had curtailed socialist sports ties before. At a meeting of socialist sports leaders in 1959, N. Romanov reminded delegates when they had cancelled certain sports events during "Soviet friendship month," because holding the events "promoted not friendship, but something else entirely."<sup>102</sup> Sports ties with socialist countries, which

---

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., I. 162.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., II. 163-64.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., I. 165.

<sup>102</sup> Agenda and Minutes of Meeting of Representatives of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries, Moscow, 12 March 1959, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 446, I. 38.

in the 1940s and early 1950s had been a key part of building a solid pro-Soviet bloc internationally, had become a liability.

On top of all this, the continued failure to achieve recognition by the IOC and various IFs of the GDR and Peoples' Republic of China, coupled with attempts by those countries to challenge the Soviet Union's preeminence in the socialist bloc, put additional pressure on Soviet sports administrators to maintain Soviet authority in international sports. In a handwritten report dated December 1962, head of the International Relations section of the Sports Committee A. S. Chikin put forward a new strategy with regard to East Germany. He challenged the current approach of boycotting competitions where GDR athletes were "discriminated" against as "not expedient," because it would play into the hands of capitalist countries, who could use their absence as a pretext for excluding Soviet and other socialist athletes from other meets. Understanding that boycotts would also risk negative articles in the western press, isolation from leading circles within international sports organizations, and even expensive economic sanctions from various IFs, Chikin suggested that the Soviet Union compete even in countries where GDR athletes could not obtain visas. Rather than refuse to participate out of socialist solidarity, he maintained that Soviet teams should attend such events but also register formal protests against what they saw as discriminatory actions on the part of the host country.<sup>103</sup>

### **Limitations and Successes of Soviet Sports Ties in Asia**

---

<sup>103</sup> Report on International Sports Relations by A. S. Chikin, December 1962, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 827, l. 40.



As the Soviet Union sought to expand its influence and court potential allies in the developing world, sports ties with Asia and Africa became a key focus of Soviet policy in those regions. In order to successfully expand the Soviet-endorsed Olympic Movement, sports bureaucrats working abroad had to balance pressures from their socialist comrades with the demands of international sports organizations. This balancing act can be seen clearly in the case of Soviet relations with the Peoples' Republic of China. In their proposals to International Federations, Soviet and other socialist representatives called for removing restrictions on competitions with non-member nations. They argued that such rules constituted "discrimination" of athletes from nonmember countries and flouted the Olympic ideal of allowing everyone the opportunity to compete in sports. At the same time, Soviet delegates continued to push for full recognition of the PRC Olympic Committee and sports sections in international sports organizations. PRC sports administrators proved to be even more problematic than their GDR comrades in pursuing Chinese policies that did not match and at times ran counter to the Soviet-sponsored unified socialist line.

Andrianov found the Chinese sports representatives especially intransigent on the question of whether to recognize the Olympic Committee from the PRC, an issue commonly referred to in IOC parlance as the problem of the "two Chinas." The IOC had recognized the Olympic committee of Taiwan under the name of the Republic of China. Delegates from the PRC considered Taiwan a part of the Peoples' Republic of China and objected to the IOC treating it as a separate nation. Unlike the GDR and North Korea, PRC representatives refused to even consider a unified team with Taiwan and made Taiwan's expulsion from the IOC a prerequisite for PRC membership. On the question of

China's recognition by the IOC, Andrianov noted that the Chinese representative "was completely unprepared, not knowing the rules and regulations of the IOC."<sup>104</sup> At the meeting of socialist sports leaders before the 50<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Paris in 1955, Andrianov discouraged the Chinese representatives from opposing the "two Chinas" at the upcoming session because the language of their protest was too "political" to gain favor with Brundage. At the session, Andrianov told the Chinese IOC member Dong Shouyi that he might be forced to leave the meeting if he brought up politics.<sup>105</sup> When Dong began to speak, Andrianov warned him, "We socialist nations occupy a very small minority, if you provoke something it will be bad for us."<sup>106</sup> At a meeting of socialist sports leaders after the session, following an argument over the question of the "two Chinas," Andrianov again emphasized the awkwardness of the Chinese position, which he saw as a stubborn refusal to play by the IOC rules in order to promote overall socialist issues stating, "In the past the Soviet Union had no status in the IOC and international sports. Our position improved only because of our achievements in sports. I hope China can also do this!"<sup>107</sup> Andrianov believed the Chinese delegates made the situation unnecessarily complicated for all socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, because they refused to adapt to the political culture of the IOC in the way that he and other socialist representatives had in order to promote a Soviet-led socialist agenda. In the

---

<sup>104</sup> Report of N. Liubomirov, September 1952, RGANI, f. 5, op. 16, d. 649, l. 100.

<sup>105</sup> Susan Brownell, "'Sport and Politics don't mix': China's Relationship with the IOC During the Cold War," in *East Plays West: Sport and the Cold War*, Stephen Wagg and David Andrews, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 259.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

view of the Chinese interpreter to the 51<sup>st</sup> IOC Session in Cortina d'Ampezzo, He Zhenliang, "The meeting gave one the feeling that it was tightly controlled by the West in all respects, while the Soviet Union and East European countries each had their own plans and were not prepared to stand up for what was right, and there was no room for reason."<sup>108</sup> Following a few years of heated debate between Dong and Brundage in which Brundage derided the Chinese IOC member for bringing up "political questions" at IOC sessions and Dong accused Brundage of being "a faithful minion of the US imperialists bent on creating two Chinas," Dong resigned from the IOC and China withdrew from eleven IFs, effectively disassociating itself from the Olympic Movement as a whole for the next twenty years.<sup>109</sup> After this episode, Soviet representatives pushed for the IOC and IFs to renew their recognition of the PRC, but without the cooperation of their Chinese comrades.

Romanov acknowledged that the failure to achieve recognition of the PRC in various International Federations placed the Soviet Union in a tough situation. In a meeting of sports leaders from socialist countries in 1959, he noted that socialist representatives to IFs at this time needed to concentrate on removing restrictions in each federation against member countries competing against nonmembers. He even went so far as to say that, rather than trying to get socialists elected president to such organizations, they should focus their efforts on selecting "good people, able to uphold our line and defend our tasks."<sup>110</sup> Simply building a socialist presence within leadership

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>110</sup> Agenda and Minutes of the Meeting of Representatives of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries, Moscow, 12 March 1959, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 446, ll. 28-30.

organs of the federations was no longer enough. They needed "serious people" who could toe the line and solve problems.<sup>111</sup> In this case, being unable to compete widely with PRC teams in sports where the PRC was not a member of the international organization was a major concern. Romanov felt that the socialist bloc should recruit representatives who could get federation rules changed to allow for uninhibited matches between socialist countries and Communist China. Despite their efforts, however, prohibitions on sports meets with nonmember countries remained in place in many federations.

Under pressure from IFs such as the International Swimming Federation (FINA) and threats of economic sanctions and disqualifications from key events such as world and European Championships, Soviet sports administrators began to consider other options. For example, the Sports Committee convinced the Central Committee that maintaining Soviet influence in FINA and providing Soviet athletes ample opportunities to compete internationally in swimming (a sport US athletes continued to dominate) was more important than solidarity with their sports comrades in China. Until this time, the Soviet Union maintained sports ties with the Peoples Republic of China, despite the fact that the PRC had not yet gained membership in the IOC or most International Federations. Having failed to effect the necessary rule changes in several federations, Soviet sports administrators had begun to see ties with an increasingly stubborn China as a liability to Soviet prestige and authority in international sports. For example, in a meeting of the USSR NOC Presidium in 1960, M. M. Pesliak noted that Soviet swimmers should hold only joint training matches with Chinese athletes because sports

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., I. 36.

competitions would go against FINA rules and "place [the Soviet Union] in a position of isolation, that is we would be excluded from the federation."<sup>112</sup> Pesliak advised expanding sports ties with China only in sports where member countries were allowed by federation rules to hold competitions with non-member countries.

In the above mentioned report from December 1962, A. S. Chikin developed these ideas into an overall approach to competitions with China. Chikin serves as an excellent example of a mid-level bureaucrat assessing a particular situation and recommending changes in policy. This entailed prioritizing contradictory directives from the Central Committee to maintain close sports ties with socialist countries, to expand the Soviet presence in Asia through sports leadership, to increase the authority of the Soviet Union's representatives in International Federations, and to ensure every opportunity for Soviet athletes to win more medals and international prestige. Chikin proposed to limit sports ties with the PRC only to minor sports and to stop holding meets with Chinese athletes "in those sports where we have the opportunity to win and demonstrate the advantages of Soviet culture and socialist construction."<sup>113</sup> Chikin argued that Soviet representatives had to be "delicate" in their negotiations with the Chinese sports leaders, recognizing the need for caution and tact in dealing with them. As he continued,

Under these circumstances, it is necessary to consider holding delicate negotiations with athletes from the PRC regarding our refusal to invite Chinese athletes to international competitions held in the USSR and socialist countries in those sports where matches between member countries and non-members are forbidden and where, therefore, participants from member countries of the

---

<sup>112</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Presidium of the Olympic Committee of the USSR, 7 October 1960, GARF, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3483, ll. 4-5.

<sup>113</sup> Report on International Sports Relations by A.S. Chikin, December 1962, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 827, l. 38.

International Federations could decline to compete in those same competitions with Chinese athletes.<sup>114</sup>

Chikin proposed to hold only low-profile, head-to-head matches with PRC teams and to make sure nothing was published about such secret matches in the press. Chikin obviously hoped that, by holding limited competitions with China, the Soviet Union could maintain friendly sports ties with the PRC without risking sanctions, and the accompanying loss of Soviet prestige within international sports organizations. Despite the increasingly bitter struggle with the PRC over who would be the leader of the socialist world in Asia, Soviet sports representatives had worked too long and too hard to establish their authoritative presence in the IFs to let China's stubbornness rob them of the degree of influence they have achieved in international sport.

The growing tension with the PRC threatened to derail Soviet efforts to use the Olympic Movement to expand Soviet influence in Asia. When the Indonesian government refused visas to athletes from Taiwan and Israel to compete in the IV Asian Games in Jakarta in the fall of 1962, several countries threatened to boycott those games and the IOC withdrew its backing of them.<sup>115</sup> At the EB IOC meeting in February 1963, Andrianov tried to get the "Indonesian question" taken off the agenda, but other members of the Executive Board voted five to one to revoke IOC recognition of the Indonesian NOC indefinitely. During the EB meetings, Andrianov tried to deflect attention from the events in Jakarta by pointing out that incidents of political discrimination had occurred at other events as well. In private meetings with IF leaders, Andrianov and other Soviet

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, l. 40.

<sup>115</sup> Report of the EB IOC meeting and meeting of the EB with IFs, 7-8 February 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 57.

representatives fought for a joint EB and IF declaration against political interference in sports. At the same time he pressed for adopting such a declaration, however, Andrianov maintained that the measures taken by the EB against Indonesia were too harsh and made hastily. He also insisted that the example of Indonesia be excluded from the draft declaration.<sup>116</sup>

In late 1962, Indonesia also organized the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) as a forum for newly developing socialist nations to compete with one another. Soviet leaders felt compelled to participate in this endeavor in order to maintain the Soviet presence in Asia, but rather than risk sanctions from the IOC or IFs, the Sports Committee recommended to send only teams "not connected with the IOC or IFs."<sup>117</sup> In his report, Mashin acknowledged that Indonesia had no intention of taking steps to get its recognition reinstated, "complicating the position of Soviet representatives in the IOC and IFs."<sup>118</sup> However, Mashin insisted that Soviet representatives needed to continue to get Indonesia back into the Olympic Movement as part of "the struggle against a schism in the international sports movement."<sup>119</sup>

The delicate nature of Soviet participation in GANEFO can be seen by the men chosen to attend the conference where organization of the games was discussed. In addition to E. Valuev, vice-chairman of the Central Soviet, and E. Savvin, general secretary of the Soviet NOC, the vice-manager of the ideological department of the Central Committee, I. Zubkov, also attended the conference. According to their report,

---

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., l. 62.

<sup>117</sup> Iu. Mashin to Central Committee, 13 May 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 128.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., l. 130.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

the conference had a part sporting and part political character as most delegates were embassy workers and not from sports organizations. In his speech at the conference the Indonesian President Sukarno declared that the IOC was "an instrument of imperialism and colonialism, and the Olympic Games were an arena of political discrimination against new emerging forces."<sup>120</sup> Soviet sports leaders could not back out of the GANEFO Games, which they saw as growing out of their campaign to "democratize" the IOC and IFs from within, but they also wanted to ensure that competing in these rival games would not prevent them from participating fully in world championships and the Olympic Games. Soviet representatives took steps to make sure that the documents of GANEFO stated that the event would correspond to Olympic ideals and principles.

As controversy mounted surrounding the GANEFO Games, Andrianov and the Central Soviet proposed a number of measures to the Central Committee for ensuring that the GANEFO Games would not harm Soviet prestige. Iu. Mashin informed Agitprop that Brundage had written all IOC members, "sharply" criticizing the events in Jakarta and calling for an extraordinary meeting of the IOC Executive Board to discuss the IV Asian Games as well as the GANEFO Games. According to Mashin, the letter represented Brundage's deliberate attempt to press for wide sanctions against socialist and developing countries participating in GANEFO in order to weaken the position of "progressive forces" in international sports organizations and "to undermine the sporting power of the Soviet Union and socialist countries on the eve of the upcoming Olympic Games in 1964."<sup>121</sup> Mashin warned that Brundage's actions could lead to the expulsion of many

---

<sup>120</sup> Report on Participation in the International Conference on the Preparation and Holding of GANEFO Games, May 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 133.

<sup>121</sup> Mashin to Central Committee, 13 December 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 193.



nations from international federations and a "schism" within the Olympic Movement. Mashin argued that Soviet representatives must work among IOC members to prevent this "dangerous" threat to Olympic unity. Soviet and socialist members, Mashin maintained, had an "opportunity to exert serious influence" on IOC members' attitudes toward GANEFO and the games by convincing them that the GANEFO Games were above all international meetings of youth and not exclusively sporting competitions, that they would include a large cultural program, and that the rules of GANEFO demonstrated their belief in Olympic ideals.<sup>122</sup>

In addition to convincing IOC members of the harmless nature of the GANEFO Games, Mashin saw a need to safeguard the Soviet position in international sports while remaining an active force in GANEFO. He called for Soviet and socialist representatives to international sports organizations to act in concert to prevent "reactionary elements" from securing sanctions on any countries participating in the GANEFO Games. He also argued the need to publish articles in the Soviet youth and sports press "characterizing the GANEFO Games as a major international sports and cultural event, bringing great success and supplementing the efforts of the IOC and existing international sports organizations to spread and develop physical education and sports in all countries, especially in the young states of Africa and Asia."<sup>123</sup> Far from a rival organization to the IOC, Soviet authorities perceived and promoted GANEFO as a complementary organization and criticized "reactionary elements" within the IOC for trying to

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., I. 194.

"artificially aggravate the situation around GANEFO" that threatened to divide the international sports movement.<sup>124</sup>

In his answer to Brundage, Andrianov defended the success of the IV Asian Games, denouncing the Executive Board's decision to suspend the Indonesian NOC. Citing tension within the IOC caused by the Indonesian withdrawal and the possibility of a boycott of the 1964 Olympic Games, Andrianov proclaimed that the reason for the "tense atmosphere" was "not political interference from the outside but a hasty decision of the Executive Board itself."<sup>125</sup> His explanation of the events in Jakarta and the formation of GANEFO was consistent with the one outlined by Mashin in his December 1963 letter to the Central Committee where he argued that the hasty action of the EB to expel the Indonesian NOC constituted a national insult and was the precipitating factor in the formation of GANEFO.<sup>126</sup> Shifting the guilt from the Indonesian authorities, to whom the Soviet Union had been sending money and weapons to build up its influence in the Far East, Andrianov blamed the IOC's Executive Board for not upholding Olympic ideals.<sup>127</sup> As a member of the EB, Andrianov furthered his image as an influential figure in the Olympic Movement, upholding Olympic ideals, and deflecting attention away from Soviet foreign policy endeavors.

The question of sanctions against Indonesia gave Andrianov a chance to further solidify his authority within the IOC as Brundage and other members of the Executive

---

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Andrianov to Brundage, 10 April 10 1963, ABC Box 50.

<sup>126</sup> Mashin to Central Committee, 13 December 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 194.

<sup>127</sup> Adam Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-73*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 709.

Board asked him to step in and offer "assistance" and deliver to the Indonesian NOC the text of a letter that could be acceptable to both sides.<sup>128</sup> After the EB meetings in Lausanne in June 1963, Andrianov concluded that all the EB members now saw sanctions against Indonesia as a mistake and looked for ways to get Indonesia back into the Olympic Movement. "At the same time, several members of the EB insist upon the preservation of the IOC's prestige and receipt from Indonesia of a letter of apology for breaking IOC rules during the IV Asian Games."<sup>129</sup> During their correspondence over the Asian Games, Brundage offered both acknowledgement of, and a challenge to, Andrianov's claim as a promoter of Olympism replying, "It is unfortunate that the Russian sportsmen who were responsible for the fine facilities provided for the Games did not teach the Indonesians some of the basic principles of international Olympic sport."<sup>130</sup> Three months later, however, Brundage apologized for the press coverage of the decision on Indonesia that had placed Andrianov in a "very embarrassing position." He expressed his confidence that "the USSR is in a strong position to control the situation, which is largely inspired by China."<sup>131</sup>

While Brundage considered his Soviet colleagues to be in a good position to exert influence on Indonesia and GANEFO on behalf of the IOC, Soviet administrators found it increasingly difficult to manage the effects of GANEFO on Soviet prestige. In his request to send K. A. Akhmetov, the Soviet representative and vice president of

---

<sup>128</sup> Report of Soviet Representatives to Meetings of the EB IOC and EB with IFs in Lausanne, June 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 164.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., l. 177.

<sup>130</sup> Brundage to Andrianov, 16 May 1963, ABC Box 50.

<sup>131</sup> Brundage to Andrianov, 31 August 1963, ABC Box 50.

GANEFO, to the Executive Board meeting of GANEFO, Mashin supported Brundage's view that China was trying to exert undue influence over the organization, revealing the competition for influence in Asia between the Soviet Union and the PRC. According to Mashin, China tried in 1963 to exclude the Soviet Union and East European socialist countries from the GANEFO and to allow membership only to countries of Asia and Africa. This attempt failed, but the Chinese delegates in GANEFO continued to try to establish GANEFO as a rival organization to the IOC and existing IFs. Mashin maintained that China used "divisive tactics" in an attempt to maintain Chinese control over the organization, promoting a "racial hierarchy" by appealing to Indonesia that was temporarily excluded from the IOC. He believed that Indonesia's reentry into the IOC and plans to participate in the Olympic Games constituted a "sensitive blow" to the Chinese plans to divide international sports and form a new international organization under "her own aegis." Mashin cautioned that the Soviet Union needed to work against the Chinese attempt to make GANEFO into a rival organization and to fight to gain recognition of the games as an "equal part of international sporting life."<sup>132</sup>

In dealing with the GANEFO situation, Soviet administrators put themselves squarely in support of the IOC and the established IFs, fulfilling to a great extent Brundage's hopes that his Soviet colleagues would work to "control" the situation in the IOC's interests. In the directives proposed for Akhmetov's delegation to the meeting of the GANEFO executive board, Mashin made the number one objective "to create peaceful, friendly and professional conditions, speaking against possible attempts to bring

---

<sup>132</sup> Iu. Mashin to Central Committee, 10 July 1964, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 73, ll. 69-70.

to discussion questions of a divisive character."<sup>133</sup> Yet Soviet administrators also recognized the need to couch their position on GANEFO within the goals of the Soviet leadership, within the anti-colonial and anti-imperial rhetoric that held increasing sway on developing countries of Africa and Asia, and also within the stated ideals of the Olympic Movement. As Mashin wrote,

Insofar as the international sports movement is a means of strengthening friendship and mutual understanding between youth of the world, a means of struggle for world peace and world coexistence that corresponds to the spirit of the Bandung Conference<sup>134</sup> and Olympic ideals, countries and organizations joining GANEFO should campaign for the unity of the international sports movement.<sup>135</sup>

By promoting the incorporation of GANEFO into the mainstream sports movement, Soviet administrators attempted to demonstrate solidarity with the newly emerging states of Asia and Africa, to combat increasing Chinese influence over those regions, and to retain the authority and influence of Soviet and socialist nations within the IOC and International Federations. Mashin also proposed that Soviet representatives to GANEFO make an effort to "raise the international significance" of the GANEFO Games by working with IFs to gain recognition of world records set at the games, to improve the quality of judging, and to increase the overall sporting level of the competitions.<sup>136</sup> Such

---

<sup>133</sup> Directive Instructions for Soviet Representatives to the meeting of the Executive Board of GANEFO, 7 August 1964, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 73, l. 73.

<sup>134</sup> Held 18-24 April 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia, the Bandung Conference was a large-scale meeting of African and Asian states, many newly independent, that had as its stated aim opposition to colonialism and neocolonialism in all its forms. While the conference's condemnation included the Soviet Union's treatment of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Soviet administrators apparently endorsed the overall anti-colonial sentiment of the conference no doubt in order to win support among newly independent states in the developing world.

<sup>135</sup> Directive Instructions for Soviet Representatives to the meeting of the Executive Board of GANEFO, 7 August 1964, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 73, l. 73.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

an effort on the part of Soviet representatives not only served Soviet propaganda goals, but also the goals of the IOC to spread Olympic concepts of international sport by spreading knowledge of the rules and practices of holding international sports competitions.

### **Soviet Sports Diplomacy in the Developing World**

While Soviet administrators found it difficult to maintain their dominant position in socialist sports circles and in Asia where China vied for influence, they were able to achieve a degree of success in promoting the Soviet Union as a friend of the newly independent countries in Africa. Certain members of the IOC Executive Board, especially Avery Brundage, worried that expanding the Olympic Movement in Africa would bring into the Movement new countries "with only a vague notion of sports matters and of what Olympism means."<sup>137</sup> Yet Andrianov used his status as an Executive Board member to help the vice president of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC)<sup>138</sup> be accepted into the Executive Board meeting to inform the members of the racial discrimination taking place in South Africa.<sup>139</sup> Through the help of Andrianov, the question of barring South Africa from the 1964 Games was brought before the IOC session in 1963 in Baden-Baden and a strongly worded resolution was adopted at that session warning South Africa that they would be banned from the

---

<sup>137</sup> Minutes of the IOC Executive Board Meeting, Lausanne, February 1963, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>138</sup> SANROC was formed in response to warnings from the IOC that South Africa would be barred from competing in the 1964 Olympic Games if measures were not taken to eliminate racial discrimination in South African sports.

<sup>139</sup> Report of Soviet Representatives to Meetings of the EB IOC and EB with IFs in Lausanne, June 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 168.

Olympic Games unless the South African government changed the policy of racial discrimination in sport by 31 December 1963.<sup>140</sup>

In addition to pursuing the international isolation of South African sports, Andrianov served as a leading voice within the IOC for expanding the Olympic Movement in Africa. Instrumental in the formation of a special commission of the IOC to provide sports aid to Africa, Andrianov noted the leading role taken by Soviet sports organizations in sending trainers and teams, sports inventory, and training literature to African countries.<sup>141</sup> By the late fifties and early sixties, Soviet sports administrators began to shift the focus of their international exchanges from capitalist and socialist nations to developing countries of Asia, Africa, and to some extent Latin America. For example, in their report to the Central Committee regarding invitations to the III Spartakiad in 1963, the Central Soviet proposed to invite a larger number of sports personnel from the developing world than they had to previous Spartakiads in 1956 and 1959 when "great significance was given to leaders of International Federations and national sports organizations of capitalist countries."<sup>142</sup> In the report, Mashin even suggested that Moscow pay part of the travel expenses for "weakly developed" countries that requested such assistance.<sup>143</sup>

Gaining recognition for newly independent countries of Asia and Africa also constituted a core aspect of the Soviet led initiative to "democratize" international sports

---

<sup>140</sup> Minutes of the 60<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, 16-20 October 1963, Baden-Baden, Germany, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>141</sup> Report of Soviet Representatives to Meetings of the EB IOC and EB with Ifs in Lausanne, June 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 11, l. 167. See also, Iu. Mashin to Central Committee, 25 April 1963, Ibid., l. 126.

<sup>142</sup> Mashin to Central Committee, 9 May 1963, RGANI, f. 5, op. 55, d. 12, l. 112.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., l. 113.

and the IOC, and was one aspect of that larger campaign that began to show significant results by the early 1960s. In their presentation before Agitprop regarding preparation for the 1964 Summer Games in Tokyo, the Central Soviet noted that the number of NOCs from Africa and Asia had expanded from three African and eighteen Asian in 1952 to twenty-two and twenty-six respectively in 1964.<sup>144</sup> Yet the Central Soviet and the Soviet NOC still regarded as one of their chief tasks at the IOC meetings in 1964 in Tokyo expanding IOC membership of socialist countries and "young states of Asia and Africa," noting that at the time there were only eight IOC members from socialist countries, five from Africa, and seven from Asia.<sup>145</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Under Khrushchev, the men responsible for maintaining sports relations helped redefine their roles within the Soviet sports bureaucracy and determined the skills required of the men and women chosen to participate in sporting delegations abroad. Increased attention to international sports ties after the death of Stalin heightened the need for qualified administrators to organize and lead international delegations, and travel abroad brought Soviet athletes, trainers, interpreters, and sports bureaucrats in contact with a variety of foreign circumstances. While the Stalinist leadership looked for political reliability above all, Stalin's successors valued international experience, knowledge of foreign languages, and ties with foreigners. Soviet leaders continued to regard trainers and athletes who had close ties with foreigners with suspicion, but they

---

<sup>144</sup> Oral Report of Central Soviet of Sports Organizations and Societies on Preparation of Soviet Athletes for XVIII Olympic Games in Tokyo, June 1964, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 254, l. 13.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., l. 35.



began to value such connections among delegation leaders, IF representatives and especially interpreters. In this world of peaceful coexistence, knowledge of foreign languages and sports regulations along with the ability to cultivate personal connections across cultures became equally as important as ideological purity and patriotism for delegation members, because these skills helped to advance the Soviet position. Whereas Stalin's people fought against "cosmopolitans" during its cautious forays into international sports, the ideal representative of the Soviet Union under Khrushchev was in many ways a true "cosmopolitan," someone educated, cultured, and knowledgeable about the world.

This changing role of sports administrators illustrates the potential for bureaucrats to gain respect and influence as valued "experts" in the post-Stalin era. The Soviet leadership's reliance on them for both information and policy recommendations, combined with their successes in advancing Soviet interests in international sports organizations, demonstrates the state bureaucracy's capacity for influencing decision-making and priority-setting, both within the Soviet Union and in the international organizations in which they participated.

As international sports ties opened the Soviet Union to western influence, pressures from East European and Asian socialist countries impacted Soviet sports politics, fragmenting the socialist bloc and ironically driving the Soviet Union closer to western cultural influences and established international sports circles. When problems arose over the PRC and Indonesia, IOC leaders looked to the Soviet sports administrators to uphold the Olympic ideals and protect IOC interests. Soviet representatives also took an active role in developing Olympic sports among African nations. These trends of

closer partnership with western sports leaders and the shift of focus to Africa became significant and institutionalized over the course of the 1960s as Moscow began its push to host its own Olympic Games.

## Chapter 4

### **Getting Things Done: Soviet Bureaucrats' Expanding Role in the IOC and Moscow's Bid to Host the Games**

Khrushchev's colleagues ousted him in October 1964. As testament to the changes that he and his fellow Politburo members had enacted, he was not arrested or publicly denounced and executed. Instead, they quietly voted him out, sending him into internal exile, where he lived out his years peacefully, working on his memoirs. Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev replaced Khrushchev as General Secretary of the Communist Party, and Aleksei Nikolaevich Kosygin became Chairman of the Council of Ministers. When Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev assumed the position of General Secretary and launched his reform platform of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*, he described the Brezhnev years (1964-82) as a time of stagnation, and this label stuck until the economic crises of the 1990s in Russia caused many to look back on the Brezhnev era as a time of stability and "confidence in tomorrow." In the mid-1960s, after Khrushchev's disorienting domestic reforms and international nuclear brinkmanship, Brezhnev offered a degree of peace and security. The establishment of détente with the west resulted in arms control agreements, expanded trade and cultural exchange between the United States and the USSR, and the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, recognizing the postwar European boundaries and committing both countries to recognize human rights. Yet this period also saw the implementation of the Brezhnev Doctrine after the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Asserting the right to intervene wherever socialist regimes were threatened, Warsaw Pact

countries used their military might to abort the Czechoslovakian reform program. At the same time, the KGB cracked down on the growing dissident movement at home.

In trying to comprehend these ambiguities, scholars have suggested a number of theories on how the Soviet Union was governed under Brezhnev. Noting similarities between the institutional interest groups in the Soviet Union and the relations between trade unions, corporate bosses, and politicians in the United States, some Sovietologists in the 1970s saw Brezhnev as a broker between competing interests striving to achieve compromise and agreement.<sup>1</sup> George Breslauer also emphasizes Brezhnev's reliance on consensus-building and technocracy as his strategy for rule.<sup>2</sup> Other scholars postulated that the capitalist and socialist systems were both moving toward each other as both systems struggled to balance social welfare with economic production in the modern industrialized world. Pointing to rising levels of urbanization, education, and professionalization, proponents of this convergence theory, saw an increasingly "modern" society taking shape in the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> Ian Thatcher, for instance, describes the Brezhnev years as a "golden age of the Soviet system."<sup>4</sup>

In a volume reassessing the Brezhnev period, Edwin Bacon links the search for compromise, characteristic of Brezhnev's time in power, with the idea of a "social contract" between state and society, whereby the regime built consensus and stability

---

<sup>1</sup> Edwin Bacon, "Reconsidering Brezhnev," in Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle, eds., *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 16. See also H.G. Skilling and F. Griffiths, eds., *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

<sup>2</sup> George Breslauer. *Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Soviet Politics* (London and Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> Bacon, "Reconsidering Brezhnev," 17.

<sup>4</sup> Ian D. Thatcher, "Brezhnev as Leader," in Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle, eds., *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 33.

through increased consumer spending in exchange for silence among Soviet citizens over civil and political freedoms. Bacon suggests that Brezhnev's attitude toward domestic and foreign policy fell under the rubric of "the main thing is that there is peace."<sup>5</sup> Other scholars have noted that Brezhnev's version of peace papered over growing cleavages in Soviet society and silenced productive dialogue as it quashed dissent. In his book on *Akademgorodok*, Paul Josephson argues that the relatively free, creative, and democratic atmosphere research in the Siberian city of science came to a halt in 1968 following the Soviet military reaction to the Prague Spring as the Brezhnev leadership, disturbed by developments in Czechoslovakia and fearing subversion among the Soviet scientific intelligentsia, reinstituted bureaucratic obstacles and control.<sup>6</sup> Samuel Baron contends that renewed populist policies instituted under Brezhnev to placate the population with artificially high wages and price decreases helped curb social volatility, but Vladimir Kozlov counters in his *Mass Uprisings in the USSR* that the conservative shift under Brezhnev also sowed the seeds of apathy and disillusionment among the Soviet population.<sup>7</sup> In other words, mass uprisings became markedly fewer under Brezhnev because the people lost faith in the system and especially in the ideological underpinnings of the system that increasingly became seen as window dressing for a corrupt regime.

---

<sup>55</sup> Bacon, "Reconsidering Brezhnev," 17. Bacon here is quoting Soviet ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin who used this phrase to describe Brezhnev's idea of relations with the United States. See A.F. Dobrynin, *Sugobo doveritel'no: Posol v Vashingtone pri shesti prezidentakh SShA, 1962-1986* (Moscow: Avtor, 1997), 121.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Josephson, *New Atlantis Revisited*.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel H. Baron, *Bloody Saturday in the Soviet Union: Novocherkassk, 1962* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Vladimir Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years*, The New Russian History Series (Armonk, N.Y.: ME Sharpe, 2002).

Lending credence to the idea that Brezhnev's leadership ushered in a period of reactionary and conservative entrenchment, Brezhnev instituted a number of measures to reverse what he and others saw as disruptive and ill-conceived reforms of his predecessor. After Brezhnev assumed his position as General Secretary, a *Pravda* editorial from 17 October 1964 blamed the need for political change on Khrushchev's "harebrained schemes." Responding especially to pressure from state and party bureaucrats, Brezhnev recentralized government bureaus and established a "stability of cadres" policy that guaranteed job security for many in administrative posts.<sup>8</sup> As Brezhnev's tenure in office wore on, these cadres aged in office, contributing to the stagnation of the Soviet bureaucracy, both imagined and real. The reliance on consensus building and privileging of technical expertise that went along with this policy, however, provided an opportunity for mid-level administrators to act without as much interference from the Central Committee, although they still had to acquire support from the party leadership.

Brezhnev's tenure also marked a turning point in another scheme, promoted since at least 1954 by Sports Committee administrators, to host the Olympic Games in Moscow—perhaps not harebrained, but certainly ambitious. Historian Mikhail Prozumenshchikov argues that Leonid Ill'ich, an avid sports enthusiast, had been the most sympathetic ear in the Kremlin supporting the idea of hosting the Games since the mid-1950s.<sup>9</sup> Sports bureaucrats had long promoted the importance of Olympic competition to the spread of peace and mutual understanding, and détente provided a further impetus for

---

<sup>8</sup> Edwin Bacon points out that the "stability of cadres" policy had limits and that Brezhnev did not hesitate to remove any challengers to his own position. Bacon, "Reconsidering Brezhnev," 11.

<sup>9</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198.

their campaign to show the friendly side of Soviet power. Yet Moscow's candidacy did not materialize until after repeated calls from the Sports Committee and the Soviet NOC. Pushing the Central Committee into bidding for the Olympic Games and demonstrating flexibility and skillfulness in drumming up support for Moscow's bid among the international sports community, the Sports Committee during the early Brezhnev years took advantage of the change in leadership to realize a project it found important.

### **"We Consider It Premature:" The Sports Committee's Push to Host the Olympic Games**

Soviet sports administrators first sought permission to host the Olympic Games under Khrushchev's leadership in 1956. Brezhnev had just become a candidate member of the Politburo, and the Sports Committee leadership must have seen him as a would-be patron of Olympic sports, because it addressed its report to him, requesting that the Central Committee discuss hosting the Games.<sup>10</sup> The Central Committee, however, put off its decision until 1958 when the Sports Committee again asked for permission to bid for the 1964 Games. Doubting the USSR's readiness to host the Games, and not wishing to be obligated to invite athletes from countries with which the USSR had no diplomatic ties, the Central Committee decided it was "inexpedient" to submit Moscow's candidacy at that time.<sup>11</sup> Instead, it instructed Soviet sports representatives to support Tokyo's bid for the 1964 Olympics as a way of "eliciting favorable reactions and sympathy toward the Soviet Union from athletes and sports figures of Asian and African countries."<sup>12</sup> The

---

<sup>10</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 19. (RGANI, f. 4, op. 16, d. 29, l. 115-16).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>12</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 193 (RGANI, f. 5, op. 47, d. 322, l. 71).

timing of the requests was also inauspicious, the first coming on the heels of the Soviet invasion of Hungary and the Suez Canal crisis and the second at a time when the party leadership sought to build the Soviet nuclear arsenal and force the western powers to the negotiating table by provoking a crisis over West Berlin.<sup>13</sup>

Not to be deterred, Soviet sports administrators continued to build support within the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for a Moscow Olympiad even as they followed the leadership's instructions to promote Tokyo's bid for the 1964 Games. At the same time, the Sports Committee drafted a proposal to radically alter the organization of the IOC.<sup>14</sup> The timing of this push to "democratize" the IOC, coupled with repeated requests to submit a bid to host the Olympic Games, strongly suggests that the former was geared at least in part toward making conditions in the IOC more favorable to Moscow winning a chance to host the Games. At the 11 March 1959 meeting with representatives of sports organizations from socialist countries, Mikhail Pesliak explained that the USSR gave its backing to Tokyo's bid for the 1964 Games in order to make a favorable impression on Asian Olympic Committees. Nikolai Romanov noted that Moscow had intended to bid for the 1964 Games, but decided to endorse Tokyo's candidacy instead, "considering the interests and desires of Asian countries." He suggested that this tactic could help Moscow secure the bid for the 1968 Games.<sup>15</sup> Pesliak also pointed out that the IOC observed an "unwritten rule" to hold the Games alternatively in a European city and non-European city. Since the 1960 Games had been

---

<sup>13</sup> Zubok, *Failed Empire*, 132.

<sup>14</sup> See chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>15</sup> Agendas and Minutes of the Meetings of Representatives of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries in Moscow, 10-11 March 1959, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 445, ll. 85-86.



in Rome, Soviet representatives could not reasonably expect the IOC to pick Moscow to host the Games in 1964, assuming, of course, that the IOC considered Moscow a European city. In any case, they did not seem to want to take that chance and chose instead to push their socialist comrades to support Tokyo as host of the 1964 Games. Pesliak again mentioned Soviet support of Tokyo's bid, "despite our own hopes of holding the 1964 Olympic Games in Moscow" in a letter to the Japanese Olympic Committee and elicited Japanese assistance in fighting a proposal to reduce the number of events on the program of the Olympic Games.<sup>16</sup>

Discussion of Moscow's hosting the Games was not limited to the Central Committee or to the leadership of the Sports Committee. At the January 1960 Plenum of the USSR NOC, the head of the Soviet figure skating federation, Tolmachev, suggested that a Soviet candidacy would advance a "very important political principle in the international Olympic Movement" that would "be of great significance in the struggle for peace among peoples."<sup>17</sup> The Sports Committee maintained hope that it would get permission to submit Moscow's candidacy for the 1968 Games, preparing a article for *Sovetskii sport* explaining Moscow's qualifications to host the Games and suggesting that the 1968 Games could be organized in the Soviet Union. In approving this text for publication, the Central Committee deleted reference to the 1968 Games, noting "we consider it premature to make such an announcement at this time."<sup>18</sup> In their report to the Central Committee, however, Agitprop workers agreed that "holding the 1960 Games

---

<sup>16</sup> M. Pesliak to the Japanese National Olympic Committee, March 1961, ABC Box 149.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of the Plenum of the USSR NOC, 7 January 1960, GARF, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3482, l. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 193 (RGANI, f. 5, op. 47, d. 322, l. 71). See also *Sovetskii sport*, 17 May 1959.

in Rome and the 1964 Games in another European city would exclude . . . Moscow as the host for staging the Olympiad in 1968."<sup>19</sup> The party leadership had not ruled out a bid for the 1968 Games at this time, but it refrained from making a final decision or a public announcement in the Soviet press.

Further evidence that Soviet sports administrators aimed to host the 1968 Games comes from their role in determining the location of the 1962 and 1963 IOC sessions. According to Prozumenshchikov, Soviet representatives wanted to host the 1962 IOC session in Moscow in order to secure Moscow as the host city for the 1968 Olympic Games. When Moscow beat out Nairobi as host of the 1962 Session, the Kenyan NOC requested that Moscow give up the session in favor of Nairobi. Prozumenshchikov maintains that Soviet leaders agreed to offer the 1962 Session to Nairobi only after finding out that the choice of city to host the 1968 Games would take place in 1963.<sup>20</sup> Other observers at the time shared this view. Quoting the assistant executive director of the USOC, Art Lentz, the *San Francisco Examiner* sports editor Curley Grieve reported that Moscow was "in the driver's seat" and would likely win the bid for the 1968 Summer Games. Lentz also claimed that the Soviet representatives wanted to move the 1963 IOC session to Moscow to help secure the 1968 Games.<sup>21</sup>

While the initial idea of exchanging the 1963 IOC session for the 1962 session came from the Kenyan NOC, archival evidence also shows that Moscow agreed in order to better influence the selection of the host city for 1968. R. S. Alexander of the Kenyan

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 195.

<sup>21</sup> Curley Grieve, "Sports Parade: Olympics in Moscow May 'Lift' Iron Curtain, *San Francisco Examiner*, n.d., ABC Box 149.

Olympic Committee wrote to the USSR OC asking Moscow to surrender the 1962 IOC session in favor of Nairobi "as a gesture to demonstrate [their] interest in [Africa]."<sup>22</sup>

Shortly after receiving confirmation from IOC Chancellor Otto Mayer that the host city for 1968 would be chosen at the 1963 IOC session,<sup>23</sup> Soviet administrators decided to seek permission from the Central Committee to agree to the Kenyan NOC's request.<sup>24</sup>

Andrianov wrote to Brundage noting the Soviet NOCs willingness to surrender the hosting of the 1962 IOC session to Nairobi because "one of the most important tasks of the present time for the IOC . . . is to draw sportsmen from countries of Africa and Asia into the world Olympic Movement."<sup>25</sup> It seems likely that the Soviet sports administrators saw the request by the Kenyan NOC as an opportunity to both support the development of Olympic sport in Africa and to gain the home field advantage by hosting the IOC session where the fate of the 1968 Games would be decided.

When IOC members resisted the attempt to switch the sessions, Soviet administrators supported Nairobi's bid for the 1963 IOC session instead,<sup>26</sup> and the IOC voted to accept Nairobi to host the 1963 Session in the third round of voting.<sup>27</sup> In an address to the Plenum of the Central Soviet on 7 July 1961, Pesliak argued that despite the "warm" reception of the idea by many members, it was decided to hold the 1962

---

<sup>22</sup> R.S. Alexander to President of the USSR NOC, 7 April 1961, ABC Box 149.

<sup>23</sup> IOC to USSROC, telegram, 5 May 1961, ABC Box 149.

<sup>24</sup> Agenda No. 11, Meeting of the Commission for the Study of Current Questions of the Central Soviet of the Union of Sports Organizations and Societies, 11 May 1961, GARF f. 9570, op. 1, d. 94, l. 108.

<sup>25</sup> Andrianov to Brundage, n.d., 1961, ABC Box 50.

<sup>26</sup> Recommendations on the Future Activities of Sports Organizations of the USSR in the IOC, n.d., GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 689, ll. 83-84.

<sup>27</sup> Minutes of the 58<sup>th</sup> IOC Session at Athens, 19-21 June 1961, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Session in Moscow and the 1963 Session in Nairobi.<sup>28</sup> Putting a positive spin on this, he suggested that the IOC voted to keep the 1962 session in Moscow and award the 1963 session to Nairobi precisely because it wanted to see Moscow selected as the host city for the 1968 Games. Because the selection for the host city was to be made in 1963, Pesliak observed "that decision must be made in a country that is not a contender for organization of the 1968 Olympiad."<sup>29</sup>

In another curious turn of events, the IOC did not hold its 1963 session in Nairobi as planned but at the last minute moved it to Baden-Baden. Concerned that the Nairobi government would deny entry into the country to representatives of South Africa due to its Apartheid system, Avery Brundage even threatened to expel Kenya from the Olympic Movement.<sup>30</sup> Kenyan ministers conceded to allow a multiracial South African delegation to attend the session, but the IOC Executive Board had already agreed to move the session to Baden-Baden.<sup>31</sup> Despite the obvious interest within the Sports Committee and some favorable attitudes from the Central Committee, Moscow never put together a bid for the 1968 Games, presumably because the Central Committee withheld its permission. Ultimately, the IOC met in Baden-Baden, the Kenyan NOC retained IOC recognition, and Mexico City won the right to host the 1968 Olympiad in the third round of voting.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Minutes of the V Plenum of the Central Soviet of the Union of Sports Organizations and Societies, 7 July 1961, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 83, l. 139.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., l. 140.

<sup>30</sup> Christopher Hill, *Olympic Politics*, 207.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the 60<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Baden-Baden, 16-20 October 1963, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland. It is unclear why the meeting was moved to Baden-Baden. As late as the June 1963 meeting of the IOC Executive Board, the IOC still planned to meet in Nairobi and wanted to use the session as a opportunity to meet with African sports leaders regarding the development of Olympic sport in Africa. See

Even though the drive to host the Olympic Games appears to have stalled in the early 1960s, the Central Soviet used the IOC session in 1962 to further advance the authority of the Soviet Union in international sports circles. Hosting IOC members in the Soviet Union had been an effective tool for generating good feeling about the USSR in 1947 when the Sports Committee had invited Lord Burghley to attend the second postwar Physical Culture Day Parade, and again in 1954 when Avery Brundage attended the festival and became enamored of the superb organization of the synchronized gymnastics displays he witnessed.<sup>33</sup> The 1962 IOC session provided an opportunity for Soviet sports administrators to show off their organizational skills and Soviet sports facilities to all IOC members as well as to those representatives to International Federations who also attended meetings during the session. The UMSS headed by Pesliak and the OC USSR chaired by Andrianov carried out most of the planning for the session, but the Moscow City Soviet arranged housing, transportation, and cultural events for the foreign guests.<sup>34</sup> To impress their visitors, the Central Soviet arranged for souvenirs to be given to all the foreign participants, a concert at the Kremlin theatre, and a performance of Swan Lake at the Bolshoi.<sup>35</sup> Participants were also invited to take part in excursions around Moscow and in a three-day trip to Leningrad, arranged by the Moscow and Leningrad city soviets.<sup>36</sup> In addition, Khomenkov headed a commission responsible for organizing a

---

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board of the IOC, 5 June 1963, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>33</sup> See chapter 1 for more on Burghley's reaction and chapter 2 for the 1954 festival.

<sup>34</sup> Record of the Meeting of the Presidium of the Central Soviet, 12 April, 1962, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 120, ll. 47-48.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

sports festival to coincide with the 59<sup>th</sup> IOC Session replete with a formal welcome of the IOC members with children to give them flowers.<sup>37</sup>

Arranging meetings of foreign sports dignitaries with Soviet and party leaders constituted another important opportunity for the Soviet sports administrators to boost their credentials among IOC members. The plan for the session included a visit by IOC members to the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, a reception for the members of the IOC Executive Board at the Council of Ministers, and a luncheon for three hundred session participants, diplomats, and others.<sup>38</sup> Following the IOC session in Moscow, the Central Soviet also arranged a meeting between Avery Brundage and Nikita Khrushchev at which they discussed many issues surrounding sports and the Olympic Games. In the meeting, Avery Brundage remarked on the success of the IOC session in Moscow, describing it as "very well organized by our Soviet friends."<sup>39</sup> He also mentioned the "great results" by Soviet gymnasts in the Olympic Games, acknowledging that Soviet gymnasts were "among the strongest athletes in the world."<sup>40</sup> Brundage also expressed admiration for the "decorum" and "discipline" of Soviet athletes. Brundage and Khrushchev found many points of agreement, especially on the philosophy of sport and physical culture. They both agreed that physical culture helped to teach discipline in young people and that sport was of universal value in "the harmonious development of

---

<sup>37</sup> Decree of the Presidium of the Central Soviet, 12 May 1962, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 132, ll. 76, 78.

<sup>38</sup> Record of the Meeting of the Presidium of the Central Soviet, 12 April, 1962, GARF f. 9570, op. 1, d. 120, ll. 47-48.

<sup>39</sup> Notes of Meeting of N. S. Khrushchev with the President of the IOC Brundage, 12 June, 1962, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 822, l. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., l. 4.

the person," acknowledging the similarities between western and communist philosophies of sport.<sup>41</sup>

Soviet administrators saw the meeting between Khrushchev and Brundage as a chance to win over Brundage, whom they had always considered a prime opponent in the IOC. Khrushchev opened the meeting relating to Brundage his personal experience with sport, recounting how he played soccer in the 1910s while living among miners.<sup>42</sup> Then Khrushchev and Brundage exchanged stories about how they both hurt their arms playing sports at an early age, Khrushchev while playing soccer, and Brundage at a track and field competition in St. Petersburg in 1912.<sup>43</sup> These similarities provided a useful common ground between the leader of the Soviet Union and the IOC president. Given their years of experience in dealing with Brundage, it is hard to imagine that Andrianov and Pesliak, both present at the meeting, had not coached Khrushchev in some way. Khrushchev also appealed to Brundage's self-esteem and self-satisfaction by insisting that "the physical culture community sees an experienced and good leader in you. Our physical culture leaders, as I understand, respect you and note your objectivity."<sup>44</sup> This comment came across as less than sincere, as Brundage pointed out that he had been labeled at various times "a Nazi, fascist, capitalist, imperialist, and communist."<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Brundage's ideas about how his Soviet colleagues regarded him were much closer

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., ll. 5, 6.

<sup>42</sup> Notes of Meeting of N. S. Khrushchev with the President of the IOC Brundage, 12 June, 1962, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 822, l. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., l. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

to the truth. Khrushchev's response that "our relation to you demonstrates that we do not consider you a fascist" reflects the continued effort by Soviet officials to work with Brundage and win over his support.<sup>46</sup> Reaching out to Brundage on a personal level paid off in some respects as Brundage expressed satisfaction at seeing the "great interest that [Khrushchev] displayed toward sport."<sup>47</sup> Khrushchev further assured Brundage that "we support the Olympic Movement in every way and consider it our duty to lend aid to the development of sport in the country."<sup>48</sup>

The 59<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Moscow also made it possible for Leonid Brezhnev to assert his personal support for the Olympic Games and their role in spreading peace and friendship among nations. As discussed above, the Central Soviet organized a visit by IOC members with Brezhnev as the head of the Supreme Soviet.<sup>49</sup> Brezhnev also gave a welcome speech to the IOC members at the opening ceremony of the session.<sup>50</sup> In his presentation, Brezhnev expressed appreciation to the IOC for selecting Moscow to host the meeting in "recognition of the contribution made by our country's athletes and their organizations to the international Olympic Movement" and described the honor as "a great pleasure for us."<sup>51</sup> Brezhnev discussed how the Soviet Union promoted the ideals of the Olympic Movement by developing "people's incredible physical and moral

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., l. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., l. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Record of the Meeting of the Presidium of the Central Soviet, 12 April 1962, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 120, l. 47.

<sup>50</sup> "Moscow Session," *Olympic Review* 80 (1962): 46.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.



qualities."<sup>52</sup> He also stressed that "the appeal of the International Olympic Committee for consolidating peace and international cooperation, like its work organizing major friendly meetings of athletes of all continents—the Olympic Games—enjoys the greatest appreciation and support in the Soviet Union."<sup>53</sup> In this way, Brezhnev connected the Olympic ideal of physical and moral development of the individual to the Soviet domestic agenda to improve the standard of living through agricultural and industrial development. He argued that the Olympic goal of bringing together the peoples of the world in peaceful interaction through sport was also the foundation of Soviet foreign policy. He ended his speech by wishing the IOC future success in "the wonderful cause of putting the Olympic ideals into practice, in the organization of the Olympic Games, and in their transformation into mass displays of friendship and of joyful, peace-loving youth of the whole world, free of any discrimination."<sup>54</sup>

IOC members reacted positively to the speech, but it became the subject of some controversy after the session. When the IOC originally published the speech in *Olympic Review*, Otto Mayer, the IOC chancellor and editor of the journal, left out part of the speech. This led to correspondence between Andrianov, Brundage, and Mayer. In the end, Mayer took full responsibility for the mistake and offered his personal apologies, insisting "it is absolutely stupid of me and I wish you to believe that I did not do it on purpose."<sup>55</sup> Andrianov responded that they would "take [his] apology under

---

<sup>52</sup> "Moscow Session: Speech by Mr. Brezhnev, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR," *Olympic Review* 81 (1963): 41.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Mayer to Andrianov, 19 November 1962, ABC Box 149.

consideration."<sup>56</sup> Mayer published the speech in its entirety in the next issue of *Olympic Review*.<sup>57</sup>

The meeting with Khrushchev and the speech by Brezhnev must be seen as attempts by Soviet sports administrators to help pave the way for an eventual Moscow Olympiad, demonstrating to the IOC and to Brundage that the entire Soviet leadership was committed to the cause of Olympism. In both cases, the Soviet leaders highlighted the affinity between Olympism and the Marxist-Leninist philosophy of sport. They insisted upon the Soviet Union's great contributions to the Olympic Movement and the enthusiastic support that the Games enjoyed throughout the country. Finally, both Khrushchev and Brezhnev used the opportunity to emphasize the peaceful nature of Soviet foreign policy and how, in that way, the USSR and the IOC were fellow travelers in the goal of building friendship and mutual understanding between nations. Though neither referred specifically to a possible Moscow Olympiad, what better way to cement the relationship between the USSR and the International Olympic Committee than to stage the Olympic Games in the Soviet capital?

Even if hosting the Games was not a top priority of the Central Committee at this time, Mashin's Central Soviet continued to push for a Moscow Olympiad. In December 1965 the soviet again requested that the Central Committee consider putting forth Moscow as a candidate for hosting the 1972 Summer Games. The petition emphasized the "authority of the Soviet Union and Soviet sports abroad and also the experience in

---

<sup>56</sup> Andrianov to Mayer, 17 December 1962, IOC Archives/ Konstantin Andrianov Biography and Correspondence 1951-84, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>57</sup> "Moscow Session, Speech by Mr. Brezhnev, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR," *Olympic Review* 81 (1963): 41.

staging large-scale international sports competitions in the USSR."<sup>58</sup> Noting that the bid had to be submitted to the IOC by January 1, the Central Soviet estimated that the Games would cost 62 million rubles, including 1.3 million rubles in foreign currency.<sup>59</sup> The request likewise asserted that any city hosting the Games had to guarantee entry into the country of participants and officials from all NOCs recognized by the IOC. Four countries caused particular concern on this score: Taiwan, whose athletes would have to be invited since Taiwan had an NOC recognized by the IOC; the People's Republic of China (PRC), which could not be invited given its exclusion from the IOC in 1958; and the African countries of Rhodesia and South Africa. The authors of the request pointed out that, although these latter two countries were recognized by the IOC, they had been excluded from the Tokyo Games and would likely be banned from the Olympics in the future due to their racist sports policies.<sup>60</sup> This supports Prozumenshchikov's point that having to invite teams from countries with which the Soviet Union had no diplomatic ties was a major obstacle to getting permission to bid for the Games. However, by citing the authority of the Soviet Union and its experience in hosting important competitions in the past as the two chief reasons for a Moscow candidacy, Mashin and the Central Soviet downplayed the significance of political considerations in comparison to the potential propaganda success of staging the Olympics in Moscow.

The Central Soviet and the National Olympic Committee took the initiative in requesting permission to host the Games, but the Moscow City Soviet of Workers'

---

<sup>58</sup> Mashin to Central Committee, 8 December 1965, RGANI, f. 5, op. 33, d. 228, l. 147.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., l. 148.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

Deputies would need to submit the official request to the IOC since the IOC chose host *cities* for the Games and not host countries. The Central Soviet drafted supporting letters from the Executive Committee of the Moscow City Soviet and the Soviet National Olympic Committee, and these letters reveal the sports administrators' understanding of the city selection process and how bids should be framed. The draft letter from V. Promyslov, head of the executive committee of the Moscow City Soviet, to Avery Brundage stated Moscow's desire to "make our contribution in the Olympic Movement," assuring Brundage that Moscow had the necessary sports facilities and experience hosting international competitions, and declaring that the "Olympic Games can take place in Moscow with the single goal of the future development of the Olympic Movement."<sup>61</sup> The OC USSR declared that it had "reviewed the proposal of the executive committee of the Moscow City Soviet of Worker's Deputies" and "would be pleased to welcome the IOC members as their honored guests." The NOC letter also promised Brundage that the Games would be held "in correspondence with the IOC Charter and to the full satisfaction of the IOC."<sup>62</sup> These letters made four key points of interest to the IOC: that IOC members would be given their rightful honored role in the Games' ceremonies, that the Games would be staged according to IOC rules, that the bid was being made out of a sincere desire to contribute to the noble goals of the Olympic Movement, and that Moscow had the capacity to host the Games on a logistical level. Years of experience in the IOC meant that sports administrators, Andrianov in particular, knew what issues would be most important to the IOC, namely adherence to IOC rules and support of

---

<sup>61</sup> Draft letter from Moscow Executive Committee to Avery Brundage, 8 December 1965, *ibid.*, II. 150-51.

<sup>62</sup> Draft letter from the OC USSR to Brundage, 8 December 1965, *ibid.*, I. 152.

Olympic ideals. The language of the invitation letter portrayed deference to the IOC, humbly asking the IOC members "to entrust Moscow with the staging of such an illustrious international sports event as the Olympic Games in our time."<sup>63</sup>

Trying to be thorough in its request to the Central Committee, the Central Soviet provided drafts of all the necessary letters and obtained preliminary agreement from the Moscow city committee of the Communist Party and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) to support the bid. This followed a common pattern for Central Soviet and Sports Committee requests whereby the sports administration enlisted the support of other bodies before submitting a formal request to the Central Committee. Failure to do so could result in the Central Committee sending the request back until buy-in from other departments had been secured. Andrianov's team also appealed to the Central Committee's concerns about the political implications of inviting unfriendly nations to the USSR, but despite their careful drafting and attempts to address both sets of concerns, the Central Committee denied the request to bid for the 1972 Games, asserting that the question "called for additional and more detailed study."<sup>64</sup> The Central Committee demonstrated unwillingness in 1965 to throw its weight behind the Central Soviet's desire to host the Olympic Games. This episode sheds light on a distinctive feature of the Soviet style of administration, shared by its imperial Russian ancestor. Mid-level bureaucrats had freedom to develop plans and draw up proposals for initiatives they thought important or necessary, but until they gained the support of the Central Committee (or the tsar), big plans basically went nowhere.

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Iakovlev and Zubkov to the Central Committee, 27 December 1965, *ibid.*, I. 154.

## **International Tensions, Olympic Failures, and Domestic Dissent**

Despite the enthusiasm of the Central Soviet to bring the Olympic Games to Moscow and the coming to power of Brezhnev, the period after 1964 was a volatile one both domestically and internationally, and events both inside and outside the world of sports may have contributed to the hesitancy of the Central Committee to approve a bid to host the Games in 1972. Inside the Soviet Union, the leadership eroded the brief period of intellectual and cultural thaw initiated by Khrushchev's anti-Stalinist campaign. The public denouncement and trial in 1966 of writers Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, sentenced to hard labor for publishing "anti-Soviet" material abroad, marked the beginning of the Soviet dissident movement and the Brezhnev regime's attempts to silence this growing disaffected stratum of the intelligentsia. Meanwhile, developments in the Middle East exacerbated Soviet anti-Israeli policies, as Soviet Arab client states engaged in a combined attack on the state of Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967. As part of the fall-out from this brief engagement, Soviet authorities cracked down on Jewish immigration, invigorating an anti-Soviet movement among pro-Israeli organizations around the world. As will be seen later, this development would prove problematic for Soviet sports administrators as they promoted Moscow's bid to host the Olympic Games.

Dissent grew in Soviet society under the Brezhnev leadership, not only among the intelligentsia, but among national and religious groups as well. Growing ranks of disaffected youth also engaged in "hooliganistic" activities of drinking and petty crime. Top-level athletes did not escape this growing trend in Soviet society. While Soviet authorities had complained before about the poor moral education of athletes, evidenced

by their bad behavior abroad, and had taken measures to improve the image of Soviet athletes, drinking and debauchery among athletes continued to plague Soviet authorities.<sup>65</sup>

One particularly disturbing episode illustrates the extent of the problem and the limited ability of authorities to stop transgressions by athletes. In June 1965, a member of the Central Army Club gymnastics team and winner of the silver medal in the 1964 Olympic men's all-around, V. N. Lisitskii, attempted to rape a local school-girl following a drinking party he hosted in his hotel room after winning the USSR gymnastics championship in Kharbarovsk.<sup>66</sup> According to official reports, after the others left the party, Lisitskii tried to rape the seventeen-year-old and, when she blocked his advances, he locked her in the hotel room. She escaped out the window, but fell while climbing down a water pipe descending from the third-story room, sustaining serious injuries that left her hospitalized.<sup>67</sup> For Mashin and the Central Soviet leadership, this incident was just one of many "amoral episodes" that had recently been reported by athletes from the Central Army Club, other sports societies, and even by members of national teams for several sports.<sup>68</sup>

The Central Soviet tried to make an example out of this case, revoking Lisitskii's title of Master of Sport, disqualifying him from competition, and removing him from the national team for gymnastics. Trainers and other athletes who participated in the drinking party with Lisitskii were similarly punished, and the Central Army Sports Club

---

<sup>65</sup> For more on this subject see chapter 3.

<sup>66</sup> Kharbarovsk is located about thirty kilometers from the Chinese border in southeastern Siberia.

<sup>67</sup> See RGANI, f. 5, op. 33, d. 228, ll. 50-55.

<sup>68</sup> Mashin to Central Committee, 27 September 1965, RGANI, f. 5, op. 33, d. 228, l. 53.

leadership was instructed to conduct a thorough investigation of its "political-educational work" in the organization.<sup>69</sup> The Central Soviet also issued a directive to all sports organizations on the republican and local levels "to take measures to eliminate serious deficiencies in political-educational work and work decisively to struggle against drunkenness, hooliganism, and rudeness."<sup>70</sup> If trainers and republican and regional administrators chose to tolerate and even participate in such incidents, the Central Soviet's only recourse was removing offenders from national teams, denying them the perks that went along with success in elite sports.

Soviet foreign policy in the late 1960s also hampered the Central Soviet's efforts to host the Games. The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia following Alexander Dubcek's reform movement to introduce "socialism with a human face" known as the Prague Spring temporarily damaged the image of the Soviet Union abroad and fueled anti-Soviet sentiments both inside the Soviet Union and among its socialist allies. The military intervention also threatened to further undermine the efforts of Soviet sports representatives to build a socialist bloc within the IOC and international sports organizations. In September 1968, the Czechoslovak member of the IOC, F. Kroutil, appealed to Andrianov and A. Romanov as fellow IOC members and colleagues to convince the Soviet government to end the occupation. In calling for help from his Soviet comrades, Kroutil cautioned that such intervention could be detrimental to the image and authority of socialist countries, questioning, "How will your sportsmen and athletes of other socialist countries that take part in the occupation of our country be

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., I. 54.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. See also, Decree of the Central Soviet for Agenda no. 9, 21 August 1965, point VI, On inappropriate behavior of Lisitskii, RGANI, f. 5, op. 33, d. 228, ll. 56-57.



received at the Olympic Games?" Kroutil concluded that only the withdrawal of troops could repair the "breach of our friendship and protect the majesty and peaceful character of the Olympic Games in Mexico" scheduled for October that year.<sup>71</sup>

The invasion of Czechoslovakia threatened to damage the authority of the Soviet Union among western European countries even more so. At the meeting of the NOCs of Europe held in France in September 1968, the Italian NOC representatives proposed adoption of a resolution condemning the invasion. To ease the volatile situation at the meeting, Soviet representatives L. Kazanskii and V. Savvin held a series of bilateral meetings with French, Czechoslovak, and Italian representatives, urging them not to discuss the events in Czechoslovakia. Kazanskii and Savvin also enlisted the aid of their Czechoslovak colleague Kroutil to convince other countries not to make an issue of the invasion, despite his personal opposition to the Soviet military intervention. At the meeting, Kroutil read a letter on behalf of the Czechoslovak NOC and the Czechoslovak Sports Union declaring their intention to participate in the Mexico Games, but he also expressed appreciation to other foreign sports organizations for speaking out in support of Czechoslovakia "during these days." As a result of Soviet efforts, the resolution was not discussed and "all attempts to use [the events in Czechoslovakia] against the Soviet Union sports organizations or socialist countries" were thwarted.<sup>72</sup> Kazanskii and Savvin recommended that the Soviet Union invite one or two Czechoslovak sports delegations to the USSR to "normalize contacts" between the two countries. They also suggested that the results of the European NOC meetings be reported to the Soviet representatives

---

<sup>71</sup> Mashin to Central Committee, 3 September 1968, RGANI, f. 5, op. 60, d. 36, ll. 52-55.

<sup>72</sup> Report of Meeting of NOCs of Europe, September 1968, France, RGANI, f. 5, op. 60, d. 36, l. 64.

attending the IF congresses during the Mexico Games, "bringing to their attention the importance of realizing their directives, and also of exhibiting flexibility and skill and using their personal contacts with foreign leaders to prevent reactionary elements in international sport from taking advantage of the situation to mount an anti-Soviet challenge."<sup>73</sup> In stressing the need for flexibility, Kazanskii and Savvin highlighted their own success in handling a potentially volatile situation, but they also outlined key attributes that the most successful Soviet sports representatives had demonstrated over the years. Unable to change the Soviet government's military policies, sports administrators could only try to mitigate the damage to Soviet prestige posed by the invasion.

Kazanskii and Savvin also feared that Soviet actions could hurt the chances of hosting the Olympics in Moscow. Aware that any bid to host the Games would need the support of their socialist colleagues in the IOC and among the international sporting world at large, they recommended Moscow as the host for the European regional Games and for the Olympic Congress scheduled for 1970.<sup>74</sup> They also noted that participation of Soviet representatives at the IF meetings in Mexico could build support from IFs at their congresses. Kazanskii and Savvin did not specify what proposals required backing, but given the continued appeals on behalf of Soviet sports organizations to put forth Moscow's candidacy for the Olympic Games, this must be considered an important motivation in their thinking.

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., ll. 69-70.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., l. 69.

Other international developments might also have influenced the Central Committee to delay a Moscow Olympic bid. Tensions between the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China had been growing throughout the 1960s, erupting into border clashes between March and August 1969. The year 1968 witnessed an upsurge of youth unrest around the world, and student protests in Mexico ten days before the start of the Summer Games in Mexico City threatened to mar the Olympic festival. On 2 October, the Mexican police and military broke up student demonstrations in the Tlatelolco Plaza of Mexico City by shooting at the unarmed crowd, killing at least forty.<sup>75</sup> The IOC Executive Board discussed the demonstrations at their Mexico City meeting held during the Games. Once the Organizing Committee had obtained assurances from the Mexican government that the Games "could be staged peacefully without any danger for athletes and spectators," the EB agreed that the Games would go on as planned.<sup>76</sup>

More significant for Soviet sports than the Tlatelolco massacre, the 1968 Mexico City Games marked the first time since 1952 that the Soviet Union came in second to the United States in both the medal count and the unofficial team point total at the Summer Games. The Soviet delegation to the 1968 Winter Games in Grenoble also came in second behind Norway. After the Winter Games concluded, the Presidium of the Central Soviet held a meeting with representatives from each sport to make recommendations for how to avoid similar results at the Summer Games in Mexico City and to ensure the future development of winter sports. During the meeting, sports officials cited lack of

---

<sup>75</sup> "Mexico's 1968 Massacre: What Really Happened?" All Things Considered, 1 December 2008, available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97546687>.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of the EB IOC Session, 30 September-6 October, 1968, Mexico City, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

facilities and equipment, poor oversight of preparing of the national teams, and lack of personal commitment by athletes and their trainers as reasons for the unsuccessful performances. As a result of their deliberations, the Presidium disciplined a number of trainers and sport federation officials, preventing some from working with the national teams in the future.<sup>77</sup>

The reorganization of the sports administration in 1959 had left workers in the Central Soviet with less control over training, and many used the 1968 defeat to push for a re-centralization of the sports apparatus. In addition to the complaints listed above, a number of individuals cited "poor organization" among sports societies as the real hindrance to putting together a winning Olympic delegation.<sup>78</sup> There was a marked increase in attention to developing sports on the local level after the reorganization, and this also may have drawn attention and possibly resources away from training elite athletes. Whether the reorganization was the reason behind the poor performances in 1968 is debatable, but those defeats convinced the Central Committee to reassert control over the sports administration. The former head of the Komsomol Sergei Pavlovich Pavlov assumed leadership of the Central Soviet in June 1968, following a report by the head of the propaganda department V. Stepakov that preparing the Soviet team for the Mexico City Games "evoke[d] considerable anxiety."<sup>79</sup> Stepakov noted a number of "mistakes" and "deficiencies" in training athletes, poor methods and lack of discipline among trainers and athletes, poorly equipped training facilities, and "weak control by the

---

<sup>77</sup> 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, GARF, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3579, ll. 1-115.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> V. Stepakov to Central Committee, 30 May 1968, RGANI, f. 5, op. 60, d. 36, l. 10.

Central Soviet over the work of trainers and athletes."<sup>80</sup> He cited a number of sports where athletes' results had not improved sufficiently and "special anxiety" in swimming and track and field. Based on his observations, Stepakov concluded that victory by the Soviet team in the medal count seemed impossible. Therefore, the Central Soviet needed to "mobilize all of its resources" to improve the discipline and organization and "responsibility" of athletes and trainers in the final stage of preparing for the Games.<sup>81</sup>

Pavlov came to the sports administration with considerable credentials. He was first secretary of the Komsomol and deputy to the Russian and USSR Supreme Soviets where he served as a member of the Foreign Affairs Commission, leading delegations to Austria, Guinea, Cuba, Finland, Bulgaria, and East Germany between 1959 and 1963. Pavlov even studied at the Moscow Institute of Physical Culture from 1950 to 1952, giving him training in sports administration.<sup>82</sup> By replacing Mashin with Pavlov four months before the Summer Games, the Central Committee clearly hoped that he would bring the necessary discipline and organization to the sports bureaucracy that they saw lacking under Mashin. In October, during the Mexico City Games, Soviet leaders disbanded the unwieldy and less effective Central Soviet of the Union of Sports Organizations and Societies. After the Soviet team lost to the United States as feared, Sergei Pavlov led a meeting of the newly reconstituted Sports Committee to discuss why. This meeting differed from the one held after the Grenoble Games in key ways. While the previous meeting involved only the top leadership of the Central Soviet, members of

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., I. 11.

<sup>82</sup> Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society*, 405.

the propaganda department of the Central Committee, representatives of the Council of Ministers and of the secretariat of the Central Soviet of Trade Unions attended this one. Also, each speaker signed the minutes of the meeting at the beginning or end of his presentation.<sup>83</sup> This was a novel control measure, no doubt instituted to instill a sense of personal responsibility among Sports Committee and sports federation administrators for the development of top-class athletes in their respective sports.

The reaction of Soviet fans to the 1968 Mexico City Games reveals a growing chasm between Soviet officialdom and society. After the second-place finish of the Soviet delegation to Mexico City, central state, party, and Sports Committee publications did not publish the team point totals as had been customary since 1952. But Soviet sports fans complained to the *Sovetskii sport* editorial board about the "oversight." The chief editor of *Sovetskii sport* noted that most of the letters they received were of a "benevolent nature," expressing a sincere curiosity to know how various teams performed during the competitions.<sup>84</sup> A number of the letters intimated correctly that the table of medals and points had been left out deliberately to cover up the Soviet Union's loss to the Americans. Many of these letters insisted that journalism should be objective and that sports fans had a right to know the results even if the Soviet Union lost.<sup>85</sup> Another member of the editorial board V. I. Panov labeled one letter as "anti-Soviet" because its author declared it "impossible to receive information in the Soviet Union. . . . Indeed the Americans are

---

<sup>83</sup> 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, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 41, ll. 1-310.

<sup>84</sup> Secret Collection of Letters from Readers of *Sovetskii sport* on Results of the XIX Olympiad, 2 November 1968, GARF, f. 9570, op. 2, d. 3585, l. 2.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 4-5.

everywhere ahead. . . . where there's capitalism, there's also sport."<sup>86</sup> These letters reveal a small but engaged set of Soviet Olympic enthusiasts who followed the Games not just to see their national team dominate, but also with the sincere interest of sports fans who enjoyed a good competition. Also, hiding the point totals risked alienating these Soviet citizens who believed at least in part in the message of peace and friendly competition promoted by the Sports Committee. These letters could also be an example of dissent, as the authors used this relatively "safe" venue to assert opposition to the regime.

While Soviet sports fans voiced concern that their newspapers withheld results from them, the KGB warned the Central Committee about other disturbing developments at the Mexico City Games. In an October 1968 report, Yuri Andropov, then vice chairman of KGB, described the presence of "active nationalistic propaganda among athletes, tourists, and journalists of Jewish nationality" instigated by the American and Israeli embassies and the Jewish community in Mexico, who had invited a number of Soviet Jews to a special reception.<sup>87</sup> He drew attention to the circulation of "Zionist literature" among the Soviet delegation and to Baltic émigrés who attempted to lure the Estonian men's choir members into defecting. Andropov also observed that "provocative literature" about the Czechoslovakian invasion had been circulated, but he stressed that relations between the Czechoslovak and Soviet delegations "continue to normalize."<sup>88</sup> Increased agitation among the Soviet delegation coupled with the growing dissident movement and continued social unrest at home help to account for the Central

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., I. 5.

<sup>87</sup> KGB to Central Committee, 28 October 1968, RGANI, f. 5, op. 60, d. 36, I. 158.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

Committee's reluctance to host the Olympic Games and its resorting to repressive bureaucratic measures to crack down on dissent both real and imagined.

### **"Perhaps on Another Occasion:" Moscow's Failed Bid for the 1976 Games**

After toying with the idea of bidding for the 1964 Games, testing the waters to secure the 1968 Games, and being refused formal permission from the Central Committee to bid for the 1972 Games, the Sports Committee finally secured the backing of the Central Committee to submit Moscow as a candidate for the XXI Olympic Games in 1976. The Sports Committee personnel, the Soviet Olympic Committee, and Soviet IOC members made every effort to win the right for Moscow to host the 1976 Games, working all their international connections, schmoozing with powerful individuals in the sporting world, and sending battalions of sports officials all over the world to cultivate support for Moscow.

In September 1969 the Central Committee resolved to submit Moscow's candidacy for the 1976 Olympic Games, and the Sports Committee and Soviet Olympic Committee wasted no time in putting together a number of commissions and full plan of measures for promoting Moscow's candidacy. At their meeting on 19 November 1969, the Sports Committee decided that Andrianov would supervise an effort to promote Moscow's candidacy among socialist countries, developing countries, capitalist countries, Scandinavian countries, International Federations, and IOC members. An international commission headed by G. I. Eliseev, working with the head of UMSS, V. I. Koval, and the executive secretary of the Soviet NOC, V. I. Savvin, would travel to a number of countries and international sporting events to negotiate support for Moscow's bid. G. M.



Rogul'skii led the commission for construction and material supplies, and V. A. Ivonin served as chairman of the commission for sports facilities. All three commissions included representatives from numerous other Soviet agencies and departments, including the Moscow City Soviet, TASS, the Chief Administration of Sports Production (Glavsportprom), Profsoiuz, and leaders of Soviet sports federations. According to the plan drawn up by the Sports Committee, the international commission dealt primarily with propaganda: staging press conferences, publishing pamphlets, producing a film to show at the IOC session, authoring press releases, and campaigning for Moscow in international sports circles.<sup>89</sup> Though not mentioned in the plan, the other two commissions were responsible for much of the content of the official bid that would necessarily include a breakdown of available sports facilities, planned construction projects, and testimonials by various sports federations that Moscow could stage the Games according to IF standards for each sport.

Andrianov worked with the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Moscow City Soviet of Workers' Deputies V. F. Promyslov to notify the IOC of Moscow's bid and to oversee the drafting and presentation of it at the IOC session in 1970. Andrianov informed Avery Brundage of Moscow's intention to bid for the Games in a telegram received on 26 November 1969, stating that the Soviet Olympic Committee unanimously supported this "initiative of the Moscow City Council."<sup>90</sup> In his letter to Avery Brundage announcing Moscow's candidacy, Promyslov promised that Moscow would welcome "all

---

<sup>89</sup> Plan for Promoting the Candidacy of Moscow for Organization of the Games of the XXI Olympiad 1976, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 11, ll. 111-17.

<sup>90</sup> Konstantin Andrianov to Avery Brundage, telegram, 26 November 1969, ABC Box 194. See also Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201.

participants, officials, service personnel sent by any country and National Olympic Committee recognized by the IOC, as well as representatives of the international sports federations, press, radio, television, and all those involved with organizing the Olympics."<sup>91</sup>

Once they had given official notice of their intentions, the bid commissions set to work to ensure the IOC would select Moscow. In the lead up to the 1970 IOC session in Amsterdam where the host city for 1976 would be chosen, Andrianov and Pavlov met with their East European counterparts to orchestrate a united front to promote Moscow's bid. On 9 March 1970, Pavlov communicated to the Central Committee the results of his delegation to the World Skiing Championships held in Czechoslovakia. He reported that the head of the Czechoslovak Union of Physical Culture promised to secure support for Moscow's bid by the Czechoslovak NOC and suggested holding a meeting with IOC members from socialist countries to "clarify a plan of action" for the IOC session in Amsterdam and noted the "importance of distributing the effort to exert influence on IOC members from capitalist and developing countries from all IOC members from socialist countries." He assured the Soviet delegation that the Bulgarian IOC member Stoichev was "undertaking similar work with those IOC members on whom he has personal influence."<sup>92</sup> The networks of contacts and associates that each socialist IOC member had been cultivating for the past three decades were now mobilized in the joint goal of securing enough votes for Moscow to win the right to host the 1976 Olympic Summer Games.

---

<sup>91</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198.

<sup>92</sup> Pavlov to the Central Committee, 9 March 1970, RGANI, f. 5, op. 62, d. 48, ll. 23-24.

Despite growing popular anti-Soviet sentiment in Eastern Europe, Andrianov and Pavlov's socialist colleagues took an active role in helping to shape the campaign agenda for achieving a Moscow Olympiad. For example, Manfred Ewald of the East German NOC expressed concern over hostile western press reports, especially regarding the telecommunications capabilities in Moscow. He felt that these reports could have a negative effect on those who "for political or other reasons" would oppose Moscow's candidacy. Ewald proposed inviting a group of journalists from capitalist and developing countries to "show the achievement of the USSR in sport" to improve public opinion toward Moscow. He also believed the Soviet press needed to publish material highlighting the "modernizing of communications and information systems in connection with the Olympic Games."<sup>93</sup>

At a meeting in Lausanne in February 1970, Soviet sports administrators sounded out the European NOCs and IOC members about their opinion of the Moscow bid for the 1976 Games. Brundage expressed sympathy toward Moscow's candidacy, noting his first-hand visit to the USSR that proved Moscow's ability to guarantee "good organization of the Games." According to Andrianov, the Marquis d'Exeter (formerly Lord Burghley), despite being anti-communist, regarded Moscow's hosting the Games as "an important victory of the Olympic Movement" because it would bring a number of athletes, journalists, and tourists to the USSR.<sup>94</sup> Promises of support also came from IOC members from France, Ireland, Switzerland, and Italy, including future IOC presidents Lord Killanin and Juan Antonio Samaranch. Even West Germany apparently favored

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., I. 24.

<sup>94</sup> Report on Results of the Meeting of NOCs of Europe and the EB IOC, 5 March 1970, RGANI, f. 5, op. 62, d. 48, ll. 27-29. See also Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201.

Moscow's hosting the Games. Willi Daume, the West German NOC president, told Soviet representatives in private meetings and in "strictest confidence" that he had met with Brandt and secured the West German chancellor's permission to vote for Moscow.<sup>95</sup>

Andrianov and company also used these meetings to generate support among non-European IOC members. Soviet sports leaders had hoped to put forth Moscow as a candidate for the 1968 Games but, lacking support from the Central Committee, supported Mexico's bid instead in order to curry favor in Latin America.<sup>96</sup> Soviet representatives to international sports organizations had made a concerted effort to develop sports ties with countries of the developing world, and Andrianov personally had done a lot of work in developing the Olympic Solidarity program that provided funds for building sports facilities and supporting physical education programs, especially in Africa. The Mexico IOC member pledged his support for Moscow, thanking the Soviet representatives for their help in securing the Games for Mexico City in 1968. The Nigerian IOC member called on all African countries to back Moscow in recognition of Soviet help to Africa. V. Ali of Pakistan also promised to endorse Moscow's bid.<sup>97</sup> These efforts to make friends in the developing world paid off in Soviet efforts to secure the 1976 Olympic Games for Moscow.

In the report on his delegation's work at meetings of the NOCs of Europe and the IOC Executive Board in February 1970, Andrianov underscored the importance of personal contacts and private meetings in Moscow's campaign to win the right to host the

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> According to Prozumenshchikov, the promise of support from Mexico was pay-back for information provided to the Mexican president by the KGB when the Games were threatened by a potential boycott. See footnote 72, Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 228.

<sup>97</sup> RGANI, f. 5, op. 62, d. 48, l. 28. See also Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201.

1976 Olympic games. Outside of formal meetings, according to Andrianov, his delegation held "personal negotiations" with thirty-three IOC members, of whom twenty-three promised to support Moscow. As part of the delegation's work to promote Moscow's bid, Promyslov also "established personal contacts" with Executive Board members. Andrianov noted that those twenty-three "positive responses" did not guarantee that members from capitalist countries would vote for Moscow during the secret ballot. Soviet representatives still had not been able to make personal contact with forty-one members, especially from Asia, Latin America, and some countries of Europe in order to "determine their attitude toward the Moscow bid."<sup>98</sup> Andrianov's report also gives insight into the bid process, mentioning that several EB members warned the Soviet contingent that winning the bid would be difficult because many IOC members considered Moscow's proposal too late, as Los Angeles and Montreal had spent two years "working" among IOC members, securing promises of support for their candidacies. But Andrianov assured his comrades that many members thought Moscow had a "serious chance" to win the bid.<sup>99</sup>

Two months before the Amsterdam meeting, Soviet representatives ramped up their campaign to win the bid for 1976. In March 1970, the Secretariat of the Central Committee approved a "Plan of Informational-Propagandistic Measures for Nominating Moscow to Host the XXI Summer Olympic Games." This plan included tasks for several departments, including the MID, the Central Committee, the Komsomol, and several

---

<sup>98</sup> Report on Results of the Meeting of NOCs of Europe and the EB IOC, 5 March 1970, RGANI, f. 5, op. 62, d. 48, l. 29.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., See also Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201.

newspaper editorial boards.<sup>100</sup> The same month, Pavlov and Andrianov officiated at a meeting of IOC members from East European socialist countries where Andrianov laid out the tasks for socialist representatives at the Amsterdam session. At the meeting, Czechoslovak and Polish IOC members met with U.S. ambassadors to sound them out on Denver's bid for the Winter Games, saying that they didn't think Los Angeles would get the 1976 Games. Similarly, Heinz Schoebel of East Germany reported that Canadian members were more interested in securing Vancouver as host for the Winter Games than Montreal's bid for the Summer Olympics. According to their socialist comrades, Moscow's bid depended a great deal on appearing prepared, including demonstrating adequate sports facilities, tourist accommodations, transport, political guarantees, economic assurances, and souvenirs for IOC members.<sup>101</sup>

Foreign press reports served as an important barometer of international opinion, and Soviet administrators used them to inform their goals and strategies. The international press identified problems in Moscow that tourists and journalists encountered at recent sports events. For example, in February 1970 at the European championships for figure skating held in Leningrad, foreign journalists had trouble getting telephone connections with their editors and many complained that they could not find an open restaurant to dine in after the competitions. "All these facts," argued Andrianov, "demonstrate that our opponents use any of our mistakes or errors to show that the Games in Moscow would be worse than in a western city." He insisted that "counter propaganda" must dispel such negative reports while the Sports Committee

---

<sup>100</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201.

<sup>101</sup> Pavlov to Central Committee, 20 March 1970, RGANI, f. 5, op. 62, d. 48, l. 32.

worked to eliminate technical problems during international competitions, improving the quality of communications and services for foreign visitors, especially members of the media.<sup>102</sup> Meanwhile, the Sports Committee kept track of western press coverage of the bid, which often listed Moscow as the favorite to win the right to host the 1976 Games.<sup>103</sup>

In the lead up to the vote of host city for the 1976 Summer Games, Promyslov sent numerous assurances to Brundage that Moscow would comply with all Olympic rules if given the chance to host the Games. For example, in May 1970 Promyslov answered Brundage's questions about television rights, noting that "all the items that you mentioned in your letter will be accepted by the Moscow City Soviet in case the Olympic Games that year will be given to our city."<sup>104</sup> Brundage and the IOC felt pressure from Jewish organizations who wrote to convince the IOC not to accept Moscow's candidacy. Those opposed to Moscow alluded to the Soviet Union's human rights record, especially regarding its Jewish citizenry and refusal to allow free immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel. Citing Soviet ill-treatment of its Jewish citizens, one interested individual asked that the IOC consider the "humanitarian importance in selecting the Olympic bid" and deny Moscow the Games.<sup>105</sup> In a telegram to the IOC session in Amsterdam, the Washington Committee for Soviet Jewry called for the "rejection of the USSR as a site for the 1976 Olympics" because the Soviet Union denied visas to 10,000 Soviet Jews "in

---

<sup>102</sup> Report on Several Results of Participating in the Work of the Meeting of NOCs of Europe and the EB IOC, 5 March 1970, RGANI, f. 5, op. 62, d. 48, l. 29. See also Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201.

<sup>103</sup> Pavlov to Central Committee, 8 April 1970, RGANI, f. 5, op. 62, d. 48, l. 36.

<sup>104</sup> V. Promyslov to A. Brundage, 10 May 1970, ABC Box 194.

<sup>105</sup> Arnold Gilman to the International Olympic Committee, 9 May 1970, ABC Box 194.

violation of all humane principles."<sup>106</sup> Another letter protested the consideration of Moscow as Olympic host city "as long as the USSR is holding its three million Jewish citizens in captivity and will not let them leave!"<sup>107</sup> Milton H. Lincoff, M.D., likewise urged IOC members to vote against Moscow's bid because of the USSR's refusal to allow Soviet Jews to immigrate.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, Mrs. Stanley Bush protested Moscow's bid "because of Soviet Jewish oppression," noting that "denying free exit is in violation of UN Declaration of Human Rights."<sup>109</sup>

Putting a bid together also entailed a great deal of coordination within and among Soviet sports federations, the Sports Committee, and other Soviet organs. The official bid booklet testifies to the many different individuals and departments involved in putting forward a convincing case that Moscow was ready to host the Games. The bid pamphlet opens by attesting to the investment and support for the Games by the Moscow City Soviet, the USSR NOC, and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, all of which guaranteed that "the Games of the XXI Olympiad would be conducted in full accordance with the lofty principles of the Olympic Movement and according to the rules and regulations of the International Olympic Committee."<sup>110</sup> The pamphlet enumerates the reasons Moscow should get the bid, listing Russian and Soviet contributions to the Olympic Movement, including the Russian member of the original IOC in 1894 and past Soviet champions

---

<sup>106</sup> Washing Committee for Soviet Jewry to the International Olympic Committee, telegram, 1970, ABC Box 194.

<sup>107</sup> S. Franklin to Avery Brundage, 3 May 1970, ABC Box 194.

<sup>108</sup> Milton H. Lincoff, M.D. to the International Olympic Committee, 1 May 1970, ABC Box 194.

<sup>109</sup> Mrs. Stanely Bush to International Olympic Committee, telegram, 4 May 1970, ABC Box 194.

<sup>110</sup> "Moscow—Candidate for the Games of the XXI Olympiad in 1976," ABC Box 194.



with world-wide appeal. The pamphlet highlights Soviet involvement in over fifty international sports federations and the many large-scale sporting events that Moscow had hosted in the past, such as the 1956 Spartakiad that had impressed Avery Brundage as "a triumph and assertion of the Olympic ideas" as well as world and European championships in a number of sports.<sup>111</sup>

In some ways the bid reads like any standard article on Soviet sports, providing a laundry list of the many "successes" of Soviet sports, but it also reflects the sheer enormity of the coordination necessary to bring the Olympics to Moscow as well as the many individual efforts required to make a successful bid: from individual top-tier athletes who handed in champion performances over the years to Soviet sports federation personnel responsible for pulling together championship events for their particular sports, to the Sports Committee personnel who had to secure permission from party and state authorities and assume responsibility for the outcomes of all events and handle the many foreign guests and the press coverage of the events both inside the Soviet Union and abroad. The bid concludes with a list of all the sports facilities already available for Olympic competition and a list of the construction plans for additional sports facilities and the Olympic Village. The bid committee included guarantees by the Soviet sports federations for all twenty-one sports on the Olympic program attesting to having the resources and expertise necessary to oversee construction or renovation of facilities for their particular sport to the standards and expectations of their respective international federations. These guarantees were in some ways formulaic, but they were not identical. Each one incorporated specific information and details pertinent to its sport that reflected

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

the concerns of each international federation. Judging from his marginalia, Brundage seemed most interested in how far each sports hall, field, or stadium was from the proposed Olympic Village. These detailed reports from the USSR sports federation demonstrate the depth of knowledgeable administrators in the Soviet sports world and gives a sense of the organizational capacity needed to stage the Olympics in Moscow. As will be seen in chapter 5, once Moscow won the bid for 1980, the enormous task of hosting the Games was both facilitated and impeded by Soviet centralization.

Finally, a delegation travelled to Amsterdam to present Moscow's candidacy to the IOC session in May 1970. The group brought a film, an exhibit on Soviet sports, models of sporting arenas, books, and an album entitled "Moscow—1976," all designed to show Moscow in its best light.<sup>112</sup> In his speech to the IOC session, Promyslov declared "the sincere desire of the entire population of our city to welcome the participants to this major sports festival of our times." He described the excellent facilities Moscow could offer, emphasizing its "modern, well-appointed hotels," restaurants and cafes, parks, and "132-kilometer-long Metro," among other things. Promyslov listed the sports facilities already built as well as plans for constructing new sports venues. Promyslov assured IOC members that "all Olympic structures [would] be fitted with modern means of tabulating results and informing the audience," and that a special Press Center would be built to accommodate the media. He also briefly described the plans to build an Olympic Village at Moscow's Izmailova Park with an adjacent Institute of Physical Culture, replete with sports training facilities for the Olympic

---

<sup>112</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201. See also Plan of Measures in Connection with Raising the Candidacy of Moscow for Organization of the Games of the XXI Olympiad 1976, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 11, ll. 114-17.

competitors. Promyslov called attention to the cultural offerings of Moscow's theaters, concert halls, and museums that would be available for the recreation of the IOC and Olympic athletes.<sup>113</sup>

Promyslov's 1970 speech also underscored Soviet sensitivity to Cold War politics and a desire to downplay their significance for Moscow's hosting of an Olympiad. In his presentation, Promyslov emphasized that the Games, if awarded to Moscow, would be held in "full conformity with the rules and statutes of the International Olympic Committee."<sup>114</sup> The focus on strict accordance with IOC rules would also become an oft-repeated mantra in the lead up to the 1980 Games, used to counter increasing criticism and doubts about the ability of a socialist nation to host a fair Olympiad. Soviet administrators called for similar assurances from Munich's 1972 Organizing Committee that those Games would also be held in conformity with Olympic rules, especially regarding discrimination and allowing entry of all athletes into West Germany to participate in the Olympics.

As chairman of the Sports Committee, Sergei Pavlov highlighted the Soviet Union's contributions to international sports and Moscow's experience in hosting large sports competitions over the years in his speech to the 1970 Amsterdam session of the IOC. Noting that the Soviet Union belonged to 50 international sports federations and maintained sporting relations with 72 countries around the world, Pavlov reported that 2,000 Soviet athletes had competed in the Olympic Summer and Winter Games, with 83

---

<sup>113</sup> Speech by V. Promyslov, ABC Box 194.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

of them setting Olympic records and 130 Muscovites among them winning gold.<sup>115</sup>

Pavlov also listed the many European and World championships that had been staged in Moscow in recent years. In addition to these events, Pavlov pointed out that Moscow hosted the quadrennial Tournament of Peoples of the USSR with 10,000 competitors.

Most of Pavlov's speech, however, focused on Moscow's preparedness to uphold and advance Olympic ideals. Describing the Olympics as a movement "to facilitate the comprehensive development of man, and the strengthening of friendship and peace through sport," Pavlov referenced the movement's founder Pierre de Coubertin, and confirmed the Soviet Union's "greatest respect for the progressive ideas of the Olympic Movement, which play an important part in the world sports movement, in strengthening international understanding, peace, and friendship."<sup>116</sup> If the IOC were "to act fairly and farsightedly" and allow Moscow to host the Games, Pavlov continued, it would "open a fresh page in the history of the Olympics," by entrusting them to an East European nation for the first time. Pavlov concluded that, in return, all sporting organizations of the Soviet Union would "spare no effort to see that the Games in Moscow facilitate the further advancement of the sports movement and become a bright festival of sport, peace, and friendship."<sup>117</sup> Pavlov's focus on the peace-building aspects of Olympic ideology continued a core strategy of Soviet sports representatives since the 1940s to couch their proposals within Olympic philosophy and language, painting the USSR as a key promoter of Olympism. Because promoting peace and friendship was a key component

---

<sup>115</sup> Speech by S. Pavlov, ABC box 194.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

of peaceful coexistence under Khrushchev and détente under Brezhnev, Moscow's bid to host the Olympic Games could be seen as the culmination of a process of melding Soviet and Olympic ideals, and in this way, Pavlov's allusions to the "progressive" and peace-loving goals of Soviet sports organizations must be seen as sincere in so much as they represent an intersection of IOC and Soviet leadership goals.

Konstantin Andrianov made the final speech proposing Moscow's readiness to host the XXI Games in 1976, emphasizing the role of the Olympic Games, and of Moscow's potential as host city to encourage the wide, mass participation in sport and the further spreading of the Olympic ideal throughout the world. He highlighted the "broad development" of sport in the USSR, which made it accessible to "everyone—from children to people of old age."<sup>118</sup> Andrianov reminded the IOC members of their personal visits to the Soviet Union where they experienced first-hand the staging of mass sports competitions like the Tournament of the Peoples of the USSR, appealing to their personal memories as testament to Moscow's ability to host the Games. Noting that many of the IOC members present had attended the 1962 IOC session in Moscow, Andrianov asked "when will Moscow become an Olympic City?" Citing the absence of any "political, economic, or sport reasons to prevent the success of the Games in Moscow," Andrianov emphasized the ability of a Moscow Olympiad "inspired by the lofty idea of uniting the youth of all the world at the great sports festival," to contribute to the "development of Olympic ideas throughout the world" and to "facilitate a fresh upsurge of sport." Like Promyslov, however, Andrianov also made sure to point out Moscow's intention "to strictly observe the requirements of the Olympic Charter of the

---

<sup>118</sup> Speech by K. Andrianov, ABC Box 194.

IOC" and stage the Games "in accordance with the most exacting requirements of the IOC and international sports federations, and in conformity with the program approved by the IOC." Having spent the past two decades trying to effect changes in IOC rules, to expand the Olympic sports program, and to restructure the organization along more pluralist lines, Andrianov's assurances can be read as an attempt to reassure skeptics among the IOC members who might doubt Soviet aims and fear Soviet organizers' intention to stage a socialist sports festival with disregard for IOC traditions. Even while giving these assurances, however, Andrianov stressed the aspects of Olympic philosophy that coincided with Marxist-Leninist ideas of mass sports participation and promotion of physical education for all.

Despite the careful planning and tireless efforts of Soviet sports administrators, Moscow lost the bid to host the 1976 Games to Montreal by a vote of forty-one to twenty-eight.<sup>119</sup> Like the lead up to the Soviet Union's first Olympic Games in 1952, the bid for 1976 displayed *shturmovshchina*: a frantic, last-minute production spurt. In his *Bol'shoi sport*, Prozumenshchikov argues that such an approach was characteristic of "Moscow where the bureaucratic machine always worked sluggishly and clumsily."<sup>120</sup> However, once given permission by the Central Committee, the Sports Committee bureaucratic machine worked quickly and relatively effectively. Largely as a result of the delayed decision of the Central Committee, Soviet organizers had barely six months to plan and carry out their campaign. Presumably, given more time to work among the IOC membership, the Soviet bid committee could have won the vote. Indeed, important IOC

---

<sup>119</sup> Minutes of the 70th Session of the IOC in Amsterdam, 12-16 May 1970, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>120</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201.

members remained favorably disposed to Moscow's hosting future Games. In a May 1970 letter to Promyslov, Brundage expressed his regret that "despite [their] great enthusiasm and impressive presentation" Moscow was not chosen to host the 1976 Games, and voiced his hope that "the intense Olympic spirit" of the Soviet Union would not be diminished and that "perhaps on another occasion it will be possible to stage the Games in Moscow."<sup>121</sup>

Immediate reactions to Moscow's failed bid reveal a lack of agreement on how to proceed after losing the vote for 1976. The Sports Committee deflected blame for failing to win the 1976 bid by citing the conservative and "bourgeois" proclivities of many members of the IOC, twenty-two of whom were royalty. In their report to the Central Committee, the Sports Committee also chastised Andrianov and Aleksei Romanov for not only failing "to present the real distribution of forces within the IOC," but also for being too trusting, believing the "hypocritical, untrustworthy" Avery Brundage.<sup>122</sup> This criticism of Andrianov was unfair, given his clear report in March that Moscow could not be assured that capitalist members of the IOC would support its bid.<sup>123</sup> The Sports Committee also proposed publishing a series of articles in *Sovetskii sport* and the weekly Soviet newspaper *Literaturnaia gazeta* denouncing the IOC's attitude and renewing calls for its immediate reorganization along more "democratic" lines. The Central Committee declined to launch an attack against the composition of the IOC, recommending instead

---

<sup>121</sup> Avery Brundage to V. Promyslov, 30 May 1970, ABC Box 194.

<sup>122</sup> RGANI, f. 4, op. 20, d. 699, l. 193, quoted in Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201. Not having access to this particular *fond*, I had to rely on Prozumenshchikov's account of the fallout from the failed bid. I assume from established practice, that this comes from a meeting of the Sports Committee leadership, but I cannot speculate on who in particular expressed these views since I have not read the original document.

<sup>123</sup> See note 98 above.

to continue to "objectively push for the resolution of problems in the Olympic Movement."<sup>124</sup> According to a *London Times* report, Sergei Pavlov, in an interview with *Izvestiia*, slammed the IOC for its politically-motivated decision and argued that the IOC Charter needed to be revised. Promyslov, on the other hand, noted in the same interview that Moscow should not be discounted from bidding for a future Olympic Games.<sup>125</sup> The *Sunday Times* reported that Soviet Olympic officials denounced the IOC's decision, stating that it "does not promote a true strengthening of the international Olympic Movement, and does not conform with its main principles or with common sense."<sup>126</sup> Yet the head of the international department of the Central Committee B. N. Ponamarev recommended a sober approach, arguing against publishing negative articles in connection with Moscow failed bid.<sup>127</sup> Further evidence of lack of agreement on a course of action after losing the 1976 bid comes from a meeting of socialist sports leaders, where no mention was made of Moscow as a candidate for the 1980 Games. Rather, the report stated that those present agreed to continue consultations on host candidacies for 1980 "considering the political expediency and interests of the countries of socialist cooperation."<sup>128</sup>

### **"The USSR Once Again Invites the Olympic Games:" The Campaign for 1980**

---

<sup>124</sup> RGANI, f. 4, op. 20, d. 699, l. 193, quoted in Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201.

<sup>125</sup> "IOC Charter Criticism," *The Times*, 21 May 1970, ABC Box 194.

<sup>126</sup> "Russia angry with IOC," *Sunday Times*, 7 June 1970, ABC Box 194.

<sup>127</sup> RGANI, f. 4, op. 20, d. 699, l. 193, quoted in Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 198-201.

<sup>128</sup> Report on the Meeting of Socialist Country Sports Leaders in Bulgaria, December 1970, RGANI, f. 5, op. 62, d. 49, l. 22.



Over a year after losing the bid to host the 1976 Olympics, Soviet administrators submitted Moscow's candidacy for the 1980 Games. On 19 November 1971, V. Promyslov, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Moscow City Soviet, sent an official invitation to the IOC for holding the Games of the XXII Olympiad in the Soviet capital. "Considering the genuine desire of the population our country's capital to organize the Olympic Games and prompted by the desire to make a worthy contribution to developing the modern Olympic Movement," Promyslov wrote, "the City Soviet will make every effort to ensure the success of the Games both in sporting competitions and in hosting participants, officials, and guests."<sup>129</sup> Noting the large number of sports facilities available and experience in organizing major international events, Promyslov assured Brundage that all participants, officials, delegations, and representatives of IFs, international press, radio and television, etc. would be given free entry visas to the USSR. He also promised that the Games in Moscow would be held "in complete conformity with the Olympic Charter."<sup>130</sup> Konstantin Andrianov followed up Promyslov's invitation with assurances from the Soviet NOC that Moscow was well-qualified to host the Games.<sup>131</sup> Avery Brundage replied to Promyslov and Andrianov in December 1971, thanking them for offering to stage the 1980 Games in Moscow and remarking that the decision would not be made until the 1974 IOC session.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup> V. Promyslov to Avery Brundage, 19 November 1971, ABC Box 195.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> K. Andrianov to Avery Brundage, 22 November 1971, ABC Box 195.

<sup>132</sup> Avery Brundage to V. Promyslov, 23 December 1971 and Avery Brundage to K. Andrianov, 23 December 1971, ABC Box 195.

Once a decision had been made to put forward Moscow's candidacy for 1980, the Soviet press wasted no time in publicizing it. An article appeared in the October edition of *Sport in the USSR* announcing the decision to bid for the 1980 Games and indicating that a number of "eminent leaders of international sport" had already pledged their support to Moscow. The article expressed a sense of betrayal at Moscow's not having been chosen to host 1976, insisting that "it was only after behind the scenes scheming, contrived by certain businessmen with nothing to do with sport, that Moscow did not become the Olympic capital." The article mentioned that, despite the disappointment of not getting the 1976 Games and "conscious of its role for peace in the world and for the development of sport, imbued in the ideas of friendship and mutual understanding, the capital of the USSR once again invites the Olympic Games."<sup>133</sup>

The article makes a number of things clear. First, the USSR was determined to rise above Cold War politics and again bid for the Olympic Games despite its earlier failure. It was not Soviet officials, but "certain businessmen" and "behind-the-scenes scheming" that were to blame for Moscow's failed bid. Kicking off the campaign for winning the 1980 Games, the article cited the support of important international sports dignitaries such as Edgar Fried of the Austrian NOC, and A. Touny, Prince Takeda, H. Schoebel, and Willi Daume, IOC members for Romania, Japan, East Germany, and West Germany respectively. The article sought to inspire support from other figures in international sports circles. By highlighting that Moscow wanted to host the Games in order to fulfill its role in the spreading of peace, friendship, and mutual understanding

---

<sup>133</sup> "Moscow Invites the Olympic Games," *Sport in the USSR*, October 1971, translation in ABC Box 149.

through sport, the article deflected possible criticism that the Games would be a tool for the aggrandizement of the Soviet Union and communism.

After the failed bid in 1970, two important changes took place in the IOC that directly impacted the efforts of Soviet administrators to secure the 1980 Games. At its session in September 1971 in Luxembourg, the IOC elected Vitalii Georgievich Smirnov to join its ranks following the retirement of A. O. Romanov, who was elected as an honorary member in recognition of his years of service to the organization.<sup>134</sup> By replacing the sixty-seven year old Romanov with thirty-six year old Smirnov, the Soviet leadership and the Sports Committee clearly wanted to inject new blood into the bid for 1980. Earlier that year, Smirnov had replaced Igor Kazanskii on the program commission of the IOC, giving the Soviet Union a more active voice on that commission.<sup>135</sup> He likewise was chosen to head working groups of socialist representatives under the name of "Olympic Games 1972" for both the Sapporo Winter Games and the Munich Summer Games.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, at the Munich session of the IOC in August 1972, Lord Killanin, an Irish nobleman who had served as vice president of the IOC since 1968, replaced Avery Brundage as president.<sup>137</sup> In June 1974, V. Ivonin met with Killanin to discuss the possibility of securing a permanent place on the Executive Board for a Soviet representative. Since Andrianov's tenure would be drawing to a close

---

<sup>134</sup> Minutes of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the IOC, Luxembourg, September 1971, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>135</sup> M. Berlioux to K. Andrianov, 14 March 1971, IOC Archives/ Konstantin Andrianov Biography and Correspondence 1951-84, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>136</sup> Decree of the Collegium of the Sports Committee, 29 October 1971, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 751, l. 33.

<sup>137</sup> Minutes of the 73<sup>rd</sup> IOC Session at Munich, August and September 1972, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

that October, Soviet sports leaders wanted to ensure that Vitalii Smirnov would take his place on the board. According to Ivonin, Killanin was receptive to the idea of Smirnov's becoming a member.<sup>138</sup>

By 1971, the international situation had also shifted in favor of a Moscow Olympiad. The new chancellor of West Germany Willy Brandt had ushered in his policy of improved relations with East Germany known as *Ostpolitik* in 1970. Following Brandt's lead, Leonid Brezhnev and Richard Nixon began to pursue détente between the two superpowers. The two leaders held their first summit in May 1972 and began work to limit their nuclear arsenals with the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) that same year. Both *Ostpolitik* and détente impacted the Moscow bid in significant ways. Perhaps most importantly, it provided the necessary background for Soviet sports leaders to forge a close working relationship with their West German colleagues. As hosts of the 1972 Summer Games, the Munich organizers would prove to be a crucial source of information and experience for the Moscow Organizing Committee. Also, the president of the Munich Organizing Committee (Orgcom) and the West German NOC Willi Daume held a great deal of sway within the IOC, therefore cultivating close ties with him that could help Moscow win the selection process.

Increasingly difficult relations with their comrades in East Germany served to push Soviet administrators closer to their West German colleagues. A Sports Committee report on international relations in early 1969 complained that the GDR seemed to be holding back on agreements for sports exchanges with the USSR. According to the report, GDR representative insisted they "were not trying to hide their technical

---

<sup>138</sup> V. Ivonin to Central Committee, 12 July 1974, RGANI, f. 5, op. 67, d. 130, l. 5.

achievements," while fulfilling only 50 percent of the plan for technical exchange.<sup>139</sup> At a meeting of socialist sports representatives in early 1971, Pavlov complained that GDR representatives had a tendency to take unilateral action on sports issues and at times went against the agreed upon position.<sup>140</sup> GDR representatives even suggested that socialist countries refuse to participate in the cultural program and youth camps of the Munich Games, but socialist countries agreed at their December 1970 meeting to join in "to exert more active influence on the population of the FRG."<sup>141</sup> As hosts of the 1972 Games and potential hosts for 1980, the FRG and USSR sports leaders recognized their mutual interest in working together. Soviet organizers had nothing to gain from disrupting the Munich Games, and the actions of GDR representatives threatened to undermine the socialist cooperation that was crucial to putting forth a successful bid for the 1980 Games.

Learning from their past mistakes, Soviet administrators began their 1980 bid early, leaving plenty of time to generate support for Moscow among NOCs, IFs, and IOC members. In pushing their bid for the 1980 Games, Soviet administrators utilized the full spectrum of tactics they had perfected during their twenty years of active participation in the Olympic Movement. Soviet IOC members and IF representatives formed a permanent commission of socialist sports leaders to further coordinate their activities

---

<sup>139</sup> Report of International Sports Relations of the Sports Committee for the First Quarter 1969, RGANI, f. 5, op. 61, d. 45, l. 140.

<sup>140</sup> Pavlov to Central Committee, 19 January 1971, RGANI, f. 5, op. 63, d. 102, l. 11.

<sup>141</sup> Report on the Meeting of Representatives of Central Committees of Filial Parties of Socialist Countries, 30 November 1970, RGANI, f. 5, op. 62, d. 48, l. 185. See also Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 184.

bolstering Moscow's candidacy.<sup>142</sup> The bid committee organized "individual work" with IOC members and IF leaders, enlisting the aid of Soviet diplomatic staff abroad to distribute information and to arrange meetings with important sports figures.<sup>143</sup> In the spring of 1973, a Soviet delegation to Finland and Sweden held negotiations with Swedish sports leaders, establishing that the Swedes were positively disposed toward Moscow's candidacy, complimenting the large role of Soviet sports in the development of world sport and the successes of Soviet athletes in the world arena.<sup>144</sup>

Soviet representatives participated even more vigorously in the kind of "behind the scenes scheming" they felt had been so successfully utilized by their opponents during the 1976 campaign. 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 and securing promises of support from IOC members. In his report on the meeting of the Bureau of FINA in Singapore in November 1971, Firsov noted how Soviet representatives held meetings with Singaporeans to ask for their support in "creating favorable public opinion at all international meets and especially those held on the Asian continent to guarantee full support of Moscow." They held similar meetings with a number of FINA personalities, including representatives from Mexico, West Germany, Peru, Yugoslavia, and Canada. All those with whom they met, according to Firsov, "proclaimed with certainty that this time justice would win out" and the IOC

---

<sup>142</sup> 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, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 1942, l. 101.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Pavlov to Central Committee, Report of Delegation to Sweden and Finland, 26 March 1973, RGANI, f. 5, op. 66, d. 157, l. 30.

would select Moscow to host the Games.<sup>145</sup> Similarly, at the International Canoeing Federation (ICF) meeting in May 1974 in Madrid, the Soviet representative Lukatin confirmed that the members of the Bureau of the ICF voted unanimously to support Moscow.<sup>146</sup> According to a Sports Committee decree on the final stages of the bid campaign, 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. Several IFs—boxing, wrestling, modern pentathlon, track and field, cycling, and academic rowing—had even carried resolutions to push for Moscow.<sup>147</sup>

Gaining support for the 1980 bid meant balancing the demands of the IOC with those of IFs and NOCs. While support from IFs and NOCs was important, ultimately it was the members of the IOC that would decide which city would host the Games. This meant that if Soviet IF representatives faced a conflict between federation and IOC interests, they might have to side with the IOC against their own federations as a tactical measure in support of larger Soviet goals. For example, the Soviet representative to the ICF, V. N. Lukatin, lost standing and authority in the canoeing federation at its meeting in October 1974. Because Moscow hoped to be selected to host the 1980 Games, Lukatin took an unpopular position within the canoeing federation, defending the IOC's decision to exclude the water slalom from the Olympic program. Lukatin's stance angered several

---

<sup>145</sup> 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, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 1035, l. 165.

<sup>146</sup> Report of Participation of V. N. Lukatin in the Meeting of the Bureau of the International Canoeing Federation, 10-13 May 1974, Madrid, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2262, ll. 82-83.

<sup>147</sup> 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, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 1942, l. 102.

of the federation members, including the Austrian representative Ebner who proposed to withdraw its backing of Moscow if they did not hold the slalom. Lukatin responded to criticism for his lack of enthusiasm for the slalom saying, "I think that we as an international federation should implement the decisions made by the higher organization of the IOC."<sup>148</sup> This decision to support the IOC over his IF cost Lukatin the election for vice-president of the federation.<sup>149</sup>

To garner support for Moscow's bid for the 1980 Games, Soviet administrators invited prominent members of the IOC and other international sports organizations to the Soviet Union to see first-hand what Moscow had to offer.<sup>150</sup> From 1972 through 1974, fifty members of the IOC visited the USSR, including Lord Killanin, all the executive board members, and presidents and/or technical experts from the federations of all the Olympic sports.<sup>151</sup> Hosting major sports competitions also allowed sports administrators to show off their organizational abilities to influential international guests. Sergei Pavlov discussed plans to hold the men's and women's European championships in academic rowing in Moscow, noting the need to hold "the usual events" that cost money "including official receptions, souvenirs for participants" plus the taking of "special propaganda measures to ensure that the championships were given the proper social and political

---

<sup>148</sup> Report of Participation of V. N. Lukatin in the Meeting of the Bureau of the International Canoeing Federation, 14-21 October 1974, the Congress of the ICF 18 October 1974, and Meeting of the Representatives of Socialist Countries 15 October 1974 before the World Championships in Mexico, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2262, 123.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., l. 124.

<sup>150</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 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.

<sup>151</sup> 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, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 1942, ll. 101-102.



resonance" as well as to win over the leaders of IFs and national federations of rowing to supporting Moscow to host the 1980 Games. Pavlov asked for up to 25,000 rubles to be covered out of the Sports Committee budget, plus additional funds to finance receptions and gifts for participants and journalists.<sup>152</sup>

Soviet administrators also cultivated a strong working relationship with the IOC staff in Lausanne, especially the director of the IOC Monique Berlioux. Officially the director of the IOC since 1971, Berlioux exerted a great deal of influence organizing IOC meetings, managing all IOC correspondence and the IOC budget, negotiating TV contracts, editing the *Olympic Review*, and serving as spokesperson on Olympic matters.<sup>153</sup> Between their failed bid in 1970 and winning the Games in 1974, the Soviet Olympic Committee invited Berlioux to the Soviet Union on two occasions, and she remarked quite favorably on the hospitality shown her during those visits.<sup>154</sup> Her correspondence also shows a growing rapport between Berlioux and the Soviet administrators, and especially between Berlioux and the Soviet translators who developed a closer relationship with her than Andrianov and Smirnov. No doubt the ability to communicate directly helped Soviet personnel who spoke English or French cultivate a strong working relationship with the IOC staff, and with Berlioux in particular. For example, after her visit in 1971, Berlioux wrote to both Savvin and Smolina to thank them for their hospitality during her visit. She addressed her note to Savvin with "Dear

---

<sup>152</sup> Pavlov to Central Committee, 12 April 1974, RGANI, f. 5, op. 66, d. 157, ll. 35-36.

<sup>153</sup> Berlioux had assumed the duties of director in 1969, but was finally given the title only in 1971. For more on Berlioux's influence in the IOC see Joanna Davenport, "Monique Berlioux: Her Association with Three IOC Presidents," *Journal of Olympic History* 4, no. 3 (1996): 10-18.

<sup>154</sup> See M. Berlioux to V. Savvin, 2 March 1971, M. Berlioux to G. Smolina, 2 March 1971, M. Berlioux to K. Andrianov, 17 April 1973, and M. Berlioux to S. Pavlov, 29 August 1973, IOC Archives/ Konstantin Andrianov Biography and Correspondence 1951-84, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Mr. Savvin" and wished continued success to the Soviet NOC as a whole for "the good work that your fellow countrymen have been doing for the Olympic Movement."<sup>155</sup> She made her note to Smolina much more personal, addressing it "Dear Genia" and promising not to forget to send the books she promised. She also wrote the note to Smolina in her native French, allowing her to express her thoughts more genuinely when thanking Smolina for being "so kind as to devote all [her] time" while Berlioux was in Moscow. Smolina had been promoted to the position of senior assistant in the UMSS in 1963, and it is testament to the trust the Sports Committee leadership had in her abilities that she was assigned to be Berlioux's personal translator/ guide during her stay.<sup>156</sup>

### **"Sports, Peace, and Friendship:" The 1973 World Student Games**

As part of their campaign to win the 1980 Olympic Games, Soviet sports organizers invited the International Federation of University Sports (FISU) to stage the Universiad-73 World Student Summer Games in Moscow. By offering to hold these games the year before the IOC session that would vote on the host city for 1980, Soviet sports administrators hoped to impress the IOC with their ability to stage a large-scale international sports festival. In his report to the IOC Executive Board on preparations for the Universiad, Andrianov emphasized the size of the competition, with ten sports on the program, an estimated 4,300 athletes, officials, coaches, and judges, and potentially 10,000 tourists who wanted to attend the event. Andrianov noted the housing facilities

---

<sup>155</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Savvin, 2 March 1971, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1967-1976, IOC Archives, Lausanne.

<sup>156</sup> Record of the Meeting of the Commission for Considering Current Questions, 8 February 1964, GARF, f. 9570, op. 1, d. 229, l. 32.

available in Moscow for such an event, including the Moscow State University dorms for participants, and the hotels Metropol, National, and Ukraine available for honored guests and accredited journalists. He also promised that over five hundred guides with facility in thirty languages would be on hand to aid guests of the Universiad. The "best sports facilities" would be used by the athletes, such as Lenin Stadium, the Soviet Army Club Palace of Sport, and the Brothers Znamensky Sports Center. Andrianov further assured the Executive Board that the organizing committee had made a priority of ensuring that the sports centers had all the latest modern equipment and that the press center had all the necessary modern communications required by the one-thousand journalists expected, including "an automatic phone system equipped with earphones and installed in the press boxes at the competition sites."<sup>157</sup> Finally, Andrianov's report alluded to the propaganda aims of the event and their commonalities with the goals of the Olympic Games.

Asserting that the FISU expected the Universiad-73 to "be the greatest event of the international student sports movement," Andrianov bragged that the Organizing Committee was making every effort to hold the games at the "highest technical level, in full compliance with the rules of the International Sports Federations and in the true spirit of the FISU regulations."<sup>158</sup> The language Andrianov used to promote the Universiad mirrors in many ways the statements of Soviet officials regarding Moscow's Olympic bid, and the motto chosen for the student games, "Sports, Peace, and Friendship," summed up the central tenant of Soviet Olympic propaganda since the 1950s.

---

<sup>157</sup> Minutes of the IOC Executive Board at Lausanne, June 1973, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

Despite Andrianov's promotion of the event, some members of the IOC still doubted Moscow's ability to host a major sporting event, and this gave the Universiad added significance in proving them wrong. The main concern Soviet administrators had over Moscow's chances of winning the 1980 Games had to do with convincing the majority of IOC members that Moscow had the technical capacity not only to host the Games but also to broadcast them widely. Killanin admitted in a private meeting with Andrianov that questions over telecommunications capabilities could hurt Moscow's chances. He also told Andrianov that even though he believed that Moscow's hosting the 1980 Games was a foregone conclusion, "you have enemies" who will use "any weakness on your part as propaganda against Moscow."<sup>159</sup> Killanin's warning reflected the view of Andrianov and his colleagues in the Soviet sports administration, who refused to ease up on their campaign to host the Games.

Prior to the Vienna IOC session where the selection of host city for the 1980 Games would take place, Soviet sports administrators showed sensitivity in regard to how the international press depicted the Soviet Union and its capability to organize big sports festivals. Staged in Moscow with the purpose of impressing the Olympic community with Moscow's ability to host a large international sports festival, the Universiad had the unanticipated consequence of inciting negative press and accusations of discrimination against Israeli athletes and fans by Moscow police during the event. In October 1974, Berlioux and Smirnov exchanged letters regarding the press coverage of the Universiad. Berlioux apparently included such reports in a monthly "Press Analysis" circulated among IOC members. In a 1973 letter to Berlioux, Smirnov promised to send

---

<sup>159</sup> Report of Meetings of EB of IOC and Tripartite Commission for Olympic Congress in Lausanne, June 1973, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 1854, ll. 51-52.

translations of the journal *Sport in the USSR* to be reprinted in IOC publications and other Soviet publications for the IOC library. Soviet sports leaders intended for these publications to counter stories appearing in the western press "slandering" the USSR's hosting of the 1973 Universiad. To answer negative accounts of this event, Smirnov listed articles from the international press that provided "objective" evaluations of the event.<sup>160</sup> Smirnov tried to convince the IOC director that negative reports of the Universiad coming across her desk were biased and not representative of the "general opinion" internationally of the student games. He even told her that certain newspapers based in Moscow had "openly declared" that they would not publish positive accounts of the World Student Games in Moscow.<sup>161</sup>

Maintaining a friendly relationship with the IOC president, executive board members, and with the IOC staff in Lausanne were also seen as essential to ensuring that the vote for the 1980 Games would go to Moscow. Part of this entailed giving souvenirs and gifts to woo important international sports representatives. For example, when Smirnov and his interpreter Marina Baturinskaia visited Lausanne in December 1973, they gave a beautiful samovar and Russian caviar to IOC Director Monique Berlioux. The attention bestowed on IOC staff is significant because, as non-members of the IOC, these individuals had no official say in who received the right to host the Games. However, IOC staff and Berlioux in particular held tremendous sway over how the international press portrayed the bid process and the candidate cities. By cultivating a friendly relationship with Berlioux, Soviet officials sought to make her receptive to their

---

<sup>160</sup> V. Smirnov to M. Berlioux, 3 October 1973, NOCs USSR Correspondence 1967-1976, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

propaganda efforts, and their efforts seem to have met with success. In her note thanking Smirnov for the gifts he brought, Berlioux suggested that he write an article for the *Olympic Review*, which she would edit, about Moscow's candidacy and Olympism in the USSR because such an article "could be good publicity in view of your candidacy."

Berlioux's willingness to help Smirnov and the Moscow bid committee to publish their official position and rationale for hosting the Games proved useful as they presented their candidacy to the Olympic community.<sup>162</sup> Indeed, the December 1973 visit by Smirnov and Marina Baturinskaia to Lausanne may have been designed to ensure that the IOC directorate disseminated favorable information to IOC members and other recipients of the *Olympic Review*. Even before the visit, however, Berlioux thanked Smirnov for information he had sent and remarked that she was "grateful" for the cooperation she saw developing between herself and Smirnov. She observed that they had "rejected a number of articles that we thought too violent and biased" in their "Press Analysis of the University Games" and that their final list resembled the one that he had enclosed, further emphasizing the common interests of the IOC and the Soviet Olympic Committee in downplaying negative press.<sup>163</sup>

Despite Smirnov's courting of Berlioux, negative press surrounding the 1973 Universiad continued to plague both the IOC and the Moscow Olympic Committee. The IOC office received substantial, apparently coordinated, correspondence decrying the treatment of Israelis at the Moscow Universiad and registering their objection to

---

<sup>162</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, 14 December 1973, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1967-1976, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>163</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, 2 November 1973, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1967-1976, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Moscow's hosting the 1980 Games. Among those sending letters were representatives of various Jewish organizations including the Association of Jewish Youth in London, the Society for Humanity and Social Reform International British Branch in Sussex, a Jewish community center in Bayonne, New Jersey. Killanin and Berlioux dutifully forwarded all such correspondence to Andrianov for his information and response.<sup>164</sup>

Fearing that the negative reactions to the Universiad could impact the selection of host city for the 1980 Games, Killanin appealed to Andrianov for his help in dealing with the situation. Having received no response to his 29 August 1973 letter asking Andrianov to investigate the charges being leveled at Moscow authorities after the World Student Games, Killanin wrote again to Andrianov in March 1974 insisting it "is essential to clear the air prior to Vienna." Killanin maintained that his lack of information made it difficult for him to respond to questions about the Jewish/ Israeli situation at the Universiad that came up "at every press conference." Killanin pleaded with Andrianov to discuss the matter with Pavlov and Smirnov and "brief" him on it at their upcoming meeting in Paris.<sup>165</sup> Among the issues reported from the Universiad events was one incident where Jewish ticket holders were refused seating at the Israeli basketball match, which were filled with military personnel. According to another complaint, five Israeli journalists had been denied entry into the USSR for the competitions. Killanin also reported that there had been catcalls directed at the Israeli team during the opening ceremonies. Killanin requested that Andrianov investigate these breeches of protocol and

---

<sup>164</sup> See M. Berlioux to K. Andrianov, 1 April 1974; M. Berlioux to K. Andrianov, 22 July 1974; and M. Berlioux to K. Andrianov, 14 August 1974, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1967-1976, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>165</sup> M. Killanin to K. Andrianov, 28 March 1974, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1967-1976, Lausanne, Switzerland.

alleged acts of discrimination, but he apparently received no response from the Soviet Olympic authorities. Smirnov's exchange with Berlioux regarding negative press of the event appears more meaningful in light of this correspondence from Killanin.

The IOC Executive Board in fact had discussed the results of the Universiad and corresponding World Student Games at the meeting in Varna in September and October 1973, where Andrianov briefly answered criticism of the event. Andrianov claimed that the World Student Games had been a success and that they were held in "strict accordance with Olympic Rules." He noted that all participants were allowed entry, including Israeli and South Korean teams, and that the athlete village had been closed to the press due to increased security measures inspired by the tragic events at the Munich Olympiad in 1972. Lord Killanin agreed that the Universiad was a great success, but cited complaints appearing in the press about anti-Semitism during the games. Insisting that Jewish citizens of the USSR were free to emigrate but that most preferred to remain in the Soviet Union, Andrianov claimed that reports that Israeli journalists had been denied entry were false, and that the men in question were not members of the press and "had not followed the normal channels." Customs restrictions brought up by Willi Daume were, according to Andrianov, instituted to prevent arms smuggling. Andrianov also explained the presence of Yassir Arafat at the Universiad, assuring Executive Board members that he had been invited by the Soviet government and not by the Soviet NOC or the International University Sports Federation (FISU) hosting the event.<sup>166</sup> In responding to the concerns raised by incidents at the Universiad, Andrianov and other Soviet sports administrators had few good options. The presence of Israeli athletes in the

---

<sup>166</sup> Minutes of the Executive Board of the IOC, Varna, Bulgaria, September-October 1973, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.



Soviet Union sparked a variety of responses and touched upon long-standing social, cultural, and political tensions within the country that no amount of bureaucratic activity could overcome. All they could really do was manage as best they could the bad press generated by the event and continue to assure the IOC that, if Moscow were to win the bid to host the 1980 Games, all Israeli athletes, officials, and journalists would be allowed entry into the country and afforded all the privileges guaranteed to all recognized National Olympic Committees.

The attempt to control reporting of the Universiad and win over the international press in support of Moscow's bid became a key part of Moscow's strategy for promoting their candidacy, especially since foreign journalists complained about the facilities and services available in Moscow. Because of the tremendous importance of foreign press reports to Moscow's image abroad, the 1980 Moscow bid committee appealed directly to journalists, inviting them to Moscow where they could experience Moscow hospitality directly. Soviet sports organizations hosted a large group of foreign journalists in Moscow before the IOC session in Vienna in order to give them a good impression of Moscow's readiness to host the Games.<sup>167</sup> Reporting on the success of the event, Pavlov remarked that many had been opposed to Moscow's candidacy but "changed the tone of their coverage after the visit."<sup>168</sup> He credited the success of this propaganda action in helping ensure "objective and full publication on the pages of foreign press the Olympic capabilities of Moscow" in the lead up to the IOC session in Vienna.<sup>169</sup> Ian Woodridge, a

---

<sup>167</sup> Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 204.

<sup>168</sup> Pavlov to Central Committee, August 1974, RGANI, f. 5, op. 67, d. 130, l. 8.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 11.

Kiev based journalist for the British newspaper the *Daily Mail*, reported that Moscow bestowed VIP treatment on twenty-three sports writers from around the world on their June 1974 trip to the Soviet Union in hopes that they would write favorably in support of Moscow's Olympic bid.<sup>170</sup>

The IOC and Soviet sports leaders had a shared interest in Moscow's image in the press, and they worked together to ensure that positive reports balanced negative ones. In sending press clippings about the Soviet Union's bid to Andrianov, M. Berlioux stated that she did not intend to publish these in the IOC's monthly press analysis, but merely wanted to make sure Andrianov had seen them. In this vein, Soviet sports officials took pains to assure the public in interviews that "every athlete or spectator that wishes to come" to the Moscow Games would be guaranteed entry, including Israelis. They also insisted that financing of the Games would be guaranteed and that guests would have freedom to travel throughout the Soviet Union.<sup>171</sup> Whether these guarantees were sincere or not is debatable, but it was important that Pavlov and other Soviet officials expressed these sentiments and that their words were reported widely in the press.

### **The "Final Stage" of the Campaign: The 1974 Vienna IOC Session**

Having unexpectedly lost the bid for the 1976 Games to Montreal, Soviet representatives no doubt approached the 1974 Vienna IOC session with caution, as they could not afford a repeat of the 1970 Session in Amsterdam. In early October 1974, the Sports Committee issued a special decree summarizing the work that had gone behind the

---

<sup>170</sup> M. Berlioux to K. Andrianov, 2 September 1974, NOCs USSR Correspondence 1967-1973, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

bid for 1980 and issuing instructions for the "final stage" of the campaign. The decree discussed all the measures taken by Sports Committee personnel, the Moscow City Soviet, and other Soviet agencies and departments to secure the Games for Moscow. As in 1970, the Sports Committee published a number of propaganda brochures, assembled exhibitions, and produced a film to supplement the bid presentation in Vienna.<sup>172</sup> The Sports Committee and Moscow City Soviet had also petitioned Gosplan to include sports facilities and other capital construction projects in the next five-year plan in case Moscow won the right to host the Games.<sup>173</sup> Asserting that the session would entail a "difficult struggle" for the right to host the 1980 Games, the decree noted that the team from Los Angeles had a "major propaganda campaign" of their own and had the means to resort to "bribery and buying of votes."<sup>174</sup> Given the "importance of properly managing work with IOC members, IF leaders and representatives of the press," the Sports Committee sent a delegation of twenty-one to Vienna for the session led by Pavlov, Promyslov, Smirnov, Andrianov, and the head of the Tallinn City Soviet with secret directives for their work during the session.<sup>175</sup> The decree did not include the directives, so I can only speculate about their contents.

The presentation of Thomas Bradley, mayor of Los Angeles, reinforces one of the key issues that explained continued opposition to Moscow. In his speech introducing Los Angeles's bid, Mayor Bradley noted that the city could "guarantee free movement not

---

<sup>172</sup> 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, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 1942, ll. 102-103.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., l. 103.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., ll. 103-105.

only within the city but within the whole of the United States for all participants, officials, press, etc."<sup>176</sup> At their February 1974 meeting, the IOC Executive Board discussed this point and agreed to remove the reference to "freedom of movement" from the "Questionnaire for candidate cities staging the Games" at the suggestion of Andrianov who maintained that it was beyond the capacity of the Organizing Committee to guarantee freedom of movement throughout the host country. Andrianov insisted that the questionnaire should cover the freedom of entry and movement within Olympic areas for "all accredited persons." President Killanin mused that this was only a problem for the Soviet Union, but agreed that "people should not be allowed to wander through a country uninhibited." The Executive Board agreed to remove the words "and movement" from that question on the official questionnaire.<sup>177</sup> Even though Soviet press reports and Soviet sports administrators had made considerable efforts to convince the international sports community that entry into the Soviet Union for athletes, journalists, officials, and tourists would pose no problem during the Games if Moscow were awarded the bid, Bradley's mention of "free movement" indicates that there were lingering doubts among IOC members on that score that the LA bid committee hoped to exploit.

There is no mention in the official minutes of the Soviet delegates of promising freedom of movement. Instead, the minutes note Promyslov's assurances that all the necessary financial backing was available and Andrianov's promise that Moscow had first-class sports facilities and would offer the athletes "warm hospitality."<sup>178</sup> When the

---

<sup>176</sup> Minutes of the 75<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Vienna, 21-24 October 1974, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>177</sup> Minutes of the Executive Board of the IOC, Lausanne, February 1974, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>178</sup> Minutes of the 75<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Vienna, 21-24 October 1974, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

floor was opened up for questions, members asked about currency exchange facilities, housing for journalists, and the availability of international newspapers for visitors and athletes staying in the Olympic Village and hotels. All these issues relate to the Soviet Union's status as a closed society and reflect anxiety among IOC members over how that might impact the Olympic Games. The Soviet delegation reassured the IOC membership that a Moscow Olympiad would be staged in accordance with all the rules and traditions they had become accustomed to in Games past.

When the floor was opened to questions and comments from the IF representatives, the ground work that Soviet representatives had been laying in building support for their candidacy paid off. The IFs present expressed confidence that Moscow would provide excellent facilities and venues for their respective events. The federations of canoeing, rowing, and swimming kept their promises to support Moscow's bid. Only two federations, archery and weightlifting, expressed reluctance to give their approval of Moscow's facilities. In each case, lack of communication from the Moscow organizers caused concern rather than doubt about Moscow's capabilities. When Mrs. Frith of the archery federation bemoaned lack of a satisfactory response to her questions regarding archery facilities, Pavlov assured her that an archery stadium would be built. Regarding weightlifting, Pavlov explained to the general secretary, Mr. State, that plans for an eight-thousand seat hall for the weightlifting competitions would be sent to him as soon as possible.<sup>179</sup> Aside from these two examples, all of the other IFs stated that either Moscow had the necessary facilities or that they were satisfied with Moscow's plans for renovating existing facilities or constructing new ones. This near-unanimous support of

---

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

Moscow from the IFs must be seen as the result of the Sports Committee's long-term strategy, articulated first in the late 1940s, to cultivate authority for Soviet and socialist representatives within international sports organizations.

On 23 October 1974, the IOC membership selected Moscow to host the Games of the XXII Olympiad. Before a vote was taken, however, Lord Killanin asked the membership to agree not to release the exact number of votes received by Los Angeles and Moscow.<sup>180</sup> The reason for this change in practice is unclear, but Killanin reminded the members present of the "importance of the decision which they were going to make" and expressed his hope that they would vote "according to which city would best serve Olympism."<sup>181</sup> In the end Moscow won the voting with thirty-nine votes to Los Angeles' twenty. The IOC members apparently believed that Moscow had answered all doubts and should be given a chance to demonstrate its ability to serve the Movement. The other major reason that Moscow won the 1980 Games is that Moscow had been promoting a Moscow Olympics for nearly six years and, having barely lost out in 1970, the IOC considered it "Moscow's time" to host the Games.

## **Conclusion**

At the meeting of the Organizing Committee, Novikov attributed Moscow's winning the 1980 bid to the "enormous authority of the Soviet Union" and the respect for Soviet sports successes in the international community. He also praised the "Leninist Central Committee" of the Communist Party and the leadership of "Leonid Il'ich" and his

---

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

"program of peace" that he announced at the Twenty-fourth Congress of the Communist Party in 1974.<sup>182</sup> While the dominance of Soviet athletes certainly played a role, it is more accurate to say that Moscow won the 1980 bid thanks to the efforts of a legion of bureaucrats who had spent the last twenty years cultivating a network of sports leaders, sympathetic to the Soviet Union, propagandizing the successes of Soviet sports, schmoozing with important and influential sports figures, and building authority within the IOC and the wide array of International Federations.

Novikov was correct, however, to give some of the credit to Brezhnev. Until he came to power, the Sports Committee's repeated calls to host the Olympic Games in Moscow went unheeded. Brezhnev took a personal interest in sport, and lent his support for hosting the Games. Also, without *détente* with the west initiated by the General Secretary, Moscow might never have been given the opportunity to stage the Games. The bid for 1980 came at a high point in east-west relations, and this provided the critical backdrop for Moscow's campaign to win support. Furthermore, Brezhnev's "stability of cadres" policy left Sports Committee bureaucrats free to pursue their plans. Bruce Lincoln argues in his landmark study of the Russian bureaucracy in the Great Reform period that, despite the changes in the abilities of ministers and their increasingly professional and administrative skills, the "enlightened bureaucrats" who rose to prominence under Nicholas I could not cope with the reform period. Limited by the tsar's refusal to give up power and by their own education and experience that prevented them from thinking outside the bounds of the old system, the reformers were bound by the

---

<sup>182</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee, 7 March 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 21.

system.<sup>183</sup> This in some ways holds true for the Soviet sports administrators who managed to outlive Stalin and maintain their sense of where the sports system should be heading until a more sympathetic leadership emerged and with it a more flexible foreign and domestic policy that gave less ambiguous support to international sports relations. Like the "enlightened bureaucrats" under Nicholas I, Soviet sports administrators had to wait for their own "tsar liberator" to free the state bureaucracy from the constraints of party controls. Brezhnev's coming to power paved the way for the idea of a Moscow Olympiad to become a reality.

---

<sup>183</sup> Lincoln, *Enlightened Bureaucrats*.



## **Chapter 5**

### **"An Exemplary Communist City:" Preparing Moscow for the 1980 Olympic Games**

Given the stagnation of the late Brezhnev era, Soviet sports administrators certainly had their work cut out for them. To successfully host the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow, they not only needed to evaluate the technical requirements for over two hundred different sporting events, construct and renovate dozens of sports facilities, and modernize their hospitality and telecommunications infrastructure, but also to coordinate this work among dozens of departments and officials throughout the party-state apparatus. Furthermore, before any of this work could start, they had to create an entirely new bureaucratic entity to oversee these undertakings and ensure their successful completion. Since the paramount goal of the project was to make a good impression on the world, the preparations and the staging of the Games had to run like clockwork. The Sports Committee had a proven record of being able to put on a well-choreographed athletic display, but the enormity of the task before the Moscow Olympic organizers was something wholly different. Moreover, the Soviet system often manifested its shortcomings in competing with the west, organizationally or otherwise.

Hosting the Games was harder for a socialist country for a variety of reasons. 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 a robust hospitality infrastructure 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. 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. The Moscow Organizing Committee recognized these obstacles and took measures to overcome them to make the Games happen.

Comparing the organization behind the Olympic Games with another ambitious project launched around the same time provides a useful means of evaluating the possibilities and limits of bureaucratic initiative in Brezhnev's Soviet Union. In his dissertation on the construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway (BAM), Christopher Ward argues that corruption, poor working conditions, and gross inefficiencies related to the construction of the railroad exposed foreign visitors to the problems of the socialist system it was meant to promote. Likewise workers on the BAM project embarrassed the Soviet leadership by their poor behavior abroad.<sup>1</sup> The 1980 Olympic Organizing Committee escaped both of these problems and, on the whole, their efforts enhanced the Soviet image abroad, especially in the capitalist world. Foreign delegations coming to see preparations for the Moscow Games experienced not corruption and inefficiency but helpful guides who met them at the airport with gifts, escorted them to a ballet at the Bolshoi Theater and a visit to the Kremlin, and

---

<sup>1</sup> Christopher J. Ward, "'Path to the Future' or The Road to Nowhere?: A Political and Social Examination of the Construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway (BAM), 1974-1984," Ph.D. Diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002, 69-70.

accompanied them to building sites where construction on state-of-the-art stadiums and sports fields was progressing on-schedule. Seen in this light, the buildup to the 1980 Olympics (and Soviet sport in general) provided an important counter image to the Soviet construction of BAM. Olympic events were located in the largest Soviet cities, meaning that visitors from abroad could be offered the best services available in the Soviet Union. The central location also meant that resources were more readily available to Olympic construction projects than they were to BAM, located so far from Moscow. Plus, there were many powerful Soviet patron-advocates of the Olympics outside of the Kremlin who had a firm stake in making the Games a resounding success. Intense international scrutiny from the IOC and International Federations also helped make Olympic preparations a priority. Reflecting more than just a higher level of priority or funding for sports as compared to the BAM project, the success of Soviet Olympic endeavors speaks to the professionalism and managerial skill of all strata of sports administrators who, due to their experience staging large-scale sports events, were familiar with western expectations and how to meet them.

### **Olympiad-80: The Organizing Committee of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow**

Securing the bid to host the 1980 Olympic Games inspired another reorganization of the sports administration. Whereas previous reorganizations had little effect on the Sports Committee leadership or the international sports relations department, setting up the Olympiad-80 Organizing Committee fundamentally changed the daily operations of the Sports Committee and marked the beginning of a qualitatively different kind of endeavor than the Sports Committee workers and leaders had engaged in before. In

addition to Sports Committee personnel, the Organizing Committee included workers and administrators from a wide variety of Soviet and party bureaus, organs, and agencies.

In many ways, the committee represented a new kind of organization in the Soviet Union. According to IOC rules, the Orgcom had to possess juridical status, so while the Soviet NOC could simply gloss over its imaginary independence from the government, the Orgcom had to acquire real legal status as an independent body.<sup>2</sup> This did not impact the Orgcom's authority to oversee Games preparation, however, because it still had the full backing of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers. In fact, the Orgcom's juridical status did not preclude it from being a department of the state. According to Soviet law, the most important criteria for being a juridical entity was economic accountability, relying on independent financial assets rather than state coffers.<sup>3</sup> The Orgcom certainly depended in part on state funding, but its juridical status gave it the freedom to conclude lucrative contracts with foreign firms to raise significant funds, especially in foreign currency. The head of the committee, Ignatii Trofimovich Novikov, also highlighted the need for Orgcom members to work independently and with "initiative," because the Orgcom was an "independent public organization" not under any higher state organ. The Orgcom reported directly to the Politburo of the Central Committee that approved the make-up of the Orgcom.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> V. Smirnov to M. Berlioux, 12 September 1977, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of how the question of juridical entity related to another Soviet agency, TASS, see W. E. Butler, "Immunity of Soviet Juridical Persons," *The Modern Law Review* 35, 2 (March, 1972): 189-93.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 33, 36.

Hosting the Olympics required coordination between many different party and state bureaus and departments, and appointing a high-level government official, Ignatii Novikov, as Orgcom head cut a layer of bureaucracy out of the hierarchy. Very much a member of the Brezhnev generation of Party leaders who came to prominence after the Revolution of 1917, Novikov's career mirrors that of Brezhnev himself. Before his appointment to the Moscow Organizing Committee, Novikov worked his way up the party and state hierarchy. Born only a few weeks after Leonid Il'ich, Novikov also hailed from Brezhnev's home town of Kamenskoe (now Dneprodzerzhensk). A party member since 1926, Novikov came from a working class background. Beginning his career in 1919 as a miner in Ukraine, Novikov graduated from the Dneprodzerzhinskii Metallurgical Institute in 1932, just as Brezhnev had. Working as head of the shop floor and chief power engineer at the Voroshilovsk factory, Novikov later served as director of electric stations and chief mechanic of the Chimkentskii lead factory until he became a factory director in Saratov. By 1958, Novikov had become a deputy minister of electric stations and the head of construction of electric stations in the USSR. In 1962, he became the Minister of Energy and Electrification, deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers USSR and the chairman of the State Construction Agency (Gosstroii). Novikov became a full member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1961, making him a full-fledged member of the Soviet bureaucratic elite, the *nomenklatura*.

Having chairmen and vice-chairmen of other ministries and agencies as part of the Presidium of the Orgcom also strengthened the authority of the committee and gave it direct access to competing networks of bureaucracy, reducing the tensions that such a large project could evoke. The sheer number of departments, agencies, and ministries

that had to work together to ensure the Games could be staged successfully is underscored by attendance at a meeting with Novikov in August 1975. Twenty-six separate entities were represented to discuss financing the Games, including the State Planning Committee (Gosudarstvennyi planovyi komitet, Gosplan), the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Foreign Trade, the State Bank (Gosbank), and the state Foreign Trade Bank (Vneshtorgbank).<sup>5</sup>

While Novikov's rank as deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers provided the Organizing Committee with a degree of authority and influence on other bureaus, Novikov deferred many of the decisions to his vice-presidents, especially those who came from the ranks of the Sports Committee. According to the Orgcom report to the IOC session during the Innsbruck Winter Games, Novikov retained direct control only over the department of cadres.<sup>6</sup> Experienced administrators from the Sports Committee were chosen as vice-presidents of the Orgcom overseeing the departments that dealt with issues directly affecting the staging of the Games. Georgii Mikhailovich Rogul'skii—who had been overseeing the training of Olympic teams, construction of training bases, sports training technology and sports science—took charge of the Mass Production and Technical Department as well as the Material and Technical Supplies Department. In practice, this meant that Rogul'skii was responsible for ensuring that all sports facilities met the technical requirements for staging competitions. Vitalii Smirnov, who had been vice-chairman of the Sports Committee and an IOC member since 1972, was the vice-

---

<sup>5</sup> Agenda No. 3, Meeting with Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, President of Orgcom Olympiada-80, Novikov, 27 August 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 9, l. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Report of Orgcom Olympiada-80 for the 77<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Innsbruck, 3 February 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 34, l. 19.

president in charge of overseeing the Department of Sports Methodology, the Facilities Department, and the Planning and Finance Department. Vladimir Ivanovich Koval', the former head of the UMSS department of the Sports Committee, was put in charge of overseeing the international and propaganda departments.<sup>7</sup>

In practical terms, this arrangement meant that many of the most pressing issues of the 1980 Games preparations fell to these three individuals. For example, as part of the Orgcom delegation to Innsbruck to participate in the 77<sup>th</sup> IOC Session and observe the activities of the Innsbruck Organizing Committee, Smirnov and Rogul'skii were instructed to prepare reports on the work of the delegation and give "concrete" proposals based on analysis of the Innsbruck experience for preparing and staging the Olympic Games.<sup>8</sup> Rogul'skii and Smirnov's reports would then form the basis not only for a report to the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers, but also for instructions directing the activities of Orgcom departments and commissions.<sup>9</sup> Koval' had the right of first signature on agreements and contracts concluded by the Orgcom with foreign organizations and firms, giving him tremendous authority over the financing of the Games.<sup>10</sup> Smirnov, Rogul'skii, and Koval' also authored, in communication with commission leaders, the work plan of the Orgcom apparatus for its first year of operation.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Report of Orgcom Olympiada-80 for the 77<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Innsbruck, 3 February 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 34, l. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Record of Meeting of the Executive Bureau of the Orgcom, 19 February 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 39, l. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>11</sup> Record of Meeting of Orgcom 1980, 7 March 1975, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 9.

Two bodies composed the leadership of the Orgcom: the Presidium and the Executive Bureau. The Presidium of the Orgcom was made up of a chairman, Novikov; four vice-chairmen, head of the Moscow City Soviet V. F. Promyslov, Sports Committee and Soviet NOC chairman, S. P. Pavlov; deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Estonian SSR, A. K. Gren; and deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR, V. I. Kochemasov. Other members of the Presidium included B. P. Goncharov a division head from the Central Committee and V. I. Koval', G. M. Rogul'skii, and V. G. Smirnov from the Sports Committee. The Presidium would be in charge of Orgcom's day-to-day operations. The Executive Bureau would oversee education and training of Orgcom workers; fulfillment of all Orgcom decisions; control of the activities of various ministries, agencies, institutions and organizations; as well as relations with the IOC and other international organizations. From the very beginning, Smirnov, Rogul'skii, and Koval' were key members of the team, being members of both the Presidium and the Executive Bureau as well as vice-presidents of the Organizing Committee.<sup>12</sup>

The organizing committee also marked the rise to prominence of Vitalii Smirnov both within the Sports Committee and among the various other administrations and agencies involved in hosting the Olympic Games. As vice-president of the USSR NOC, vice-president of the Sports Committee, and member of the IOC, Smirnov was a logical choice as first vice-president of the Moscow Organizing Committee. Among the Orgcom vice-presidents, Smirnov enjoyed elevated status, and many key decisions fell to him. His purview included all interaction with IOC, IF, and NOC members; relations with sports leaders from various foreign countries; exchange of information and experience

---

<sup>12</sup> Record of Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 3-4.



with previous organizing committees; and negotiations with foreign firms offering their services or sponsorship of various aspects of the Games. Along with Mariia L'vovna, Smirnov prepared the financial plan for Moscow and Tallinn, site of the Olympic yachting competitions, giving him significant responsibility.<sup>13</sup>

Another worker from the Sport Committee, A. A. Gres'ko, also assumed a great deal of responsibility for preparing for 1980 as executive secretary of the Orgcom overseeing the General Section.<sup>14</sup> Gres'ko left his position as deputy head of the UMSS—head of the Olympic Movement section in the Sports Committee—to assume his position in the Orgcom.<sup>15</sup> In March 1977, Novikov made Gresko a member of the Executive Bureau, formalizing his role as one of the leaders of the Orgcom.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the Orgcom administration, much of the work of organizing the Games was done by commissions, as delineated by the Organizing Committee at its March 1975 meeting. These commissions included members of agencies and departments outside of the Orgcom as a means of coordinating work with other parts of the Soviet bureaucracy. For example, the head of the construction administration for the Moscow City Soviet took charge of the Commission on Urban Planning and Contracting. Medical services fell under the deputy minister of health, while questions of finance went to the deputy minister of finance. The deputy minister of culture oversaw cultural

---

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 43.

<sup>14</sup> Report of Orgcom Olympiada-80 for the 77<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Innsbruck, 3 February 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 34, l. 19.

<sup>15</sup> Record of Meeting of the Collegium of the Sports Committee, 4 June 1975, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2274, l. 135.

<sup>16</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Executive Bureau, 28 March 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 127, l. 42.

services. Because of their continuing roles as vice-chairmen of the Sports Committee, Smirnov, Rogul'skii and Koval' also led commissions for organizing competitions, sports facilities and technical supplies, and international relations respectively. Each commission leader submitted proposals for the membership and work plans of his commission, to be approved by the Presidium of the Organizing Committee.<sup>17</sup> While the Politburo of the Central Committee endorsed the make-up of the Orgcom leadership, the Orgcom itself made staffing decisions for its various departments and commissions.

As the responsibilities of the Organizing Committee grew, its leaders endeavored to build a well-trained and qualified staff. By 1977, the Orgcom apparatus had grown to 282 people. Of those, over 70 percent held higher education degrees, eight were doctoral candidates, and 20 percent knew one or more foreign languages. The Orgcom boasted two members of the IOC, two vice-presidents and three members of executive or technical committees in International Federations. The percentage of party membership among the apparatus had also risen over 50 percent by that time.<sup>18</sup> According to Novikov, the Orgcom planned to expand its staff to 800 in 1978, 2,500 by 1979, and 13,500 in 1980.<sup>19</sup>

A look at the previous employment of Orgcom vice-chairmen and department heads points to a degree of professionalization in the Soviet bureaucracy, since they seem to have been appointed based on their areas of expertise. Five of the executive members of the Orgcom had been employed by the Sports Committee: Smirnov, Koval', Rogul'skii,

---

<sup>17</sup> Record of Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> Copy of Report to the Council of Ministers on Preparation for 1980 Olympic Games Moscow, 27 January 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 119, l. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Novikov to Central Committee, 13 December 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 216, l. 32.

sports program department head V. S. Rodichenko, and protocol department head S. N. Novozhilov. First Vice-President I. F. Denisov came to the Orgcom from the Ministry of Construction of Heavy Industry, while First Vice-President V. I. Popov worked previously for the Ministry of Culture. Head of construction for the Games and vice-president of the Orgcom I. K. Koziulia had previously been the first deputy of the Ministry of Rural Construction. V. G. Shevchenko had been chief editor of the Novosti press agency and an international lawyer before heading up the propaganda department of the Orgcom. Technical department head V. A. Polishchuk was a former department chief in Ministry of Instrument Making, Automation Equipment, and Control Systems (Minpribor) and radio engineer in the Committee of Science and Technology. Other department heads were recruited from the Komsomol, Intourist, Gosplan and Profsoiuz.<sup>20</sup>

The Orgcom attracted ambitious state and party functionaries, looking to use their work with the Orgcom as a springboard for future career advancement. Of the twenty-one vice-chairmen and department heads, all were members of the Communist Party, and all boasted a higher education. Seventeen were of Russian nationality, two Ukrainian, one Jewish, and one did not have a nationality listed. Twelve of the members of the Orgcom executive were under fifty years old. Only one member, Koziulia was over seventy. The median age was forty-five. The Orgcom thus provided an opportunity for younger, second-tier state and party administrators to move out of the shadow of their aging superiors.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> List of Vice-Presidents and Department Chiefs of the Orgcom "Olympiad-80," GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 494, l. 304.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

## **The Orgcom's "Colossal" Task**

Minutes from the first meeting of the Organizing Committee reveal the central role that Sports Committee personnel would have throughout the preparations for the 1980 Games. Orgcom President Novikov opened the meeting with a brief history of the Olympics of ancient Greece, the modern Olympic Movement, and the great role the Soviet Union had played in transforming the Games from a "personal possession of privileged society" into "popular, mass, public events." He also highlighted how the Soviet Union had helped to spread the Olympics to other countries.<sup>22</sup> These words were no doubt put together by Sports Committee personnel, and Novikov's use of them to generate enthusiasm and interest among the many different agencies and ministries represented in the Orgcom gave primacy to the Olympic ideals and sports concerns embedded in holding the Games.

Acknowledging that hosting the Games presented serious urban-planning problems even to the greatest world capitals, Novikov insisted that, along with challenges, the Games provided the host city with the opportunity to display its achievements in the social realm, and cultural and spiritual life, as well as scientific and technological development and "the country's economic potential."<sup>23</sup> Despite his stress on the benefits of hosting the Games, Novikov spoke candidly about the enormity of the task facing the Orgcom. In addition to housing, medical, transport, and cultural services, it would have to provide security to 10-23,000 participants, including 10,000 athletes, trainers and officials, 850 IOC members, IF representatives, foreign guests and judges,

---

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 18-19.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., l. 22.

about 3,000 delegates participating in various sports congresses, and 6-7,000 foreign journalists. On top of those numbers, Novikov noted that the committee could expect at least one million tourists. The Orgcom would have to organize an international sports camp of up to three thousand people for twenty to thirty days and transportation to and from the USSR for participants, guests, and foreign tourists.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to accommodating visitors, the Organizing Committee would be responsible for guaranteeing the construction or refurbishing of twenty-five sports facilities, including fourteen indoor arenas. The Orgcom had to oversee television, radio, telephone, teletype, post and other means of communication with all continents and countries. It would have to organize the torch relay through various European countries from Greece to Moscow and prepare cultural programs, exhibitions, and other performances for participants and guests. On top of this, it also had to organize a series of meetings and congresses for the IOC, IFs, and NOCs.<sup>25</sup>

These responsibilities would challenge any committee that signed on to host the Olympic Games, but 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."<sup>26</sup> In order to demonstrate to the world the greatness of the Soviet system, conducting the Games had to meet the highest possible standards.<sup>27</sup> Hosting the Games offered an opportunity to demonstrate to a global audience the Soviet way of life, but welcoming the

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., I. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., I. 25.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., I. 21.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., I. 26.

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. Such a large influx of visitors also presented special difficulties to a closed society more accustomed to hosting small, tightly controlled foreign delegations and tourist groups than accommodating many large delegations and individual tourists simultaneously.

One of the first tasks of the Organizing Committee was drafting the official joint Central Committee and Council of Ministers decree on the measures for preparing and staging the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow. Again, a Sports Committee administrator oversaw this process. Rogul'skii edited the document and sent it out to all ministries, agencies, organizations, and institutions as well as republican Councils of Ministers for their final approval. Other Presidium and commission members were assigned to estimate funding sources and revenue, review construction and tourism plans, and work with the Republican Councils of Ministers to plan the construction and improvements to the country's thoroughfares needed for the Games. The Moscow City Soviet was charged with supervising and delegating the building of Olympic venues in Moscow.<sup>28</sup> Novikov instructed Smirnov and Executive Bureau member Rakovskii to study the telecommunications needs for the Games, outlining the capital investment and foreign currency needed to equip Olympic sites.<sup>29</sup> The Orgcom leadership took care to ensure that all relevant details found their way into the joint Sovmin and Central Committee decree as well as the Soviet five-year economic plan for 1976-1980, because doing so

---

<sup>28</sup> Record of the Presidium of the Organizing Committee, 9 June 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 5, ll. 36-37.

<sup>29</sup> Record of Meeting with the Vice Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, President of Orgcom Olympiada-80, Novikov, 5 June 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 9, ll. 1-2.

would give the committee leverage later on if any of the departments involved did not fulfill the tasks officially entrusted to them.

Novikov displayed a genuine understanding that the task of hosting the Games required more than decrees from the Central Committee to get the job done. Every task of the Orgcom had to be accomplished on the highest "organizational and ideological-political level" to serve the goals of the Soviet leadership as well as the expectations of the international sports community. This idea was ever present in the many orders, directives, and discussions relating to the organization of the Games, and the political significance of every task was highlighted alongside the logistical necessity. Novikov argued that the Orgcom needed to conduct "propaganda work" among the country's leadership "to make plain the importance and enormity of the task" before them.<sup>30</sup> He also suggested that the committee gather ministers, leaders of agencies, and central institutes to convince all organizations of what must be done in Moscow and Tallinn. Novikov highlighted the personal responsibility of each member of the Orgcom to work out an individual plan and "participate actively in the resolution of all problems."<sup>31</sup> He made clear that no member of the Orgcom was off the hook if it was going to accomplish the "colossal" tasks before it.<sup>32</sup>

When questions arose regarding preparations for the Games or when conflicts flared up between the Organizing Committee and other state and party bureaus, Novikov relied upon the knowledge and experience of his Sports Committee personnel to decide

---

<sup>30</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 49.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., l. 49-50.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., l. 50.

the best course. For example, when the Moscow City Soviet balked at the cost of constructing a covered section on Lenin Stadium for VIP seating, Smirnov's and others' assurances that such a covered section was absolutely crucial in keeping with Olympic traditions and practices won out. Smirnov argued that the canopy needed to be regarded "not as an ornament but as a necessary technical provision" since the Grand Sports Arena (as the stadium was now called) would house the opening and closing ceremonies as well as the most popular sports finals, including track and field and soccer. Up to two billion viewers would see the stadium through world-wide television broadcast of the Games. Arguing that the Moscow City Soviet's decision not to build a canopy would be "a step backward" from the Montreal Games, Central Committee member M. V. Gramov insisted that the question of comfort in the Grand Sports Arena held "political significance." Orgcom Presidium member V. Bogatikov argued that, by not building a canopy over the stadium, they risked "wrecking" the most important events of the Games in the case of inclement weather.<sup>33</sup> Novikov instructed Gosstroï to submit plans with various types of canopies to the Council of Ministers for a final decision.<sup>34</sup>

On a separate occasion, Orgcom Vice-President Promyslov proposed to build one facility for swimming and diving events with seating for 10-12,000 rather than two separate facilities each seating 10,500, citing that Munich and Montreal held competitions in one building and arguing that building two separate halls would raise the cost of construction and complicate the architectural plans.<sup>35</sup> Drawing on their expertise

---

<sup>33</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Presidium, 30 June 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 122, ll. 54-55.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., l. 55.

<sup>35</sup> V. F. Promyslov to I. T. Novikov, 28 February 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 141, l. 89.



and experience, Orgcom workers convinced Novikov of the soundness of their original plan. In arguing against housing swimming and diving in one building, sports program department head Rodichenko noted that they planned to hold those events "practically simultaneously" in Moscow and that one building could not accommodate the expected number of athletes. Rodichenko also noted that Montreal had drawn criticism from FINA, officials, and spectators for holding the diving competitions as late as eleven or twelve at night. Finally, Rodichenko explained that FINA had already approved the plan for building two venues, and he suggested that the ticket sales for both events would compensate for the added expense of building separate facilities.<sup>36</sup> Rodichenko achieved a compromise in this case not only because he could demonstrate clearly the reasons for holding the two competitions in two buildings, but also because he received backing from Smirnov, Koziulia and NOC president Pavlov.<sup>37</sup> Whereas Promyslov focused only on the question of cost, Rodichenko displayed his knowledge of all concerns, including the wishes of FINA and the needs of the athletes, officials, and spectators involved. The fact that Soviet athletes were much more competitive in diving than swimming, where US and East German athletes tended to dominate, may also have influenced their decision to provide a venue for diving separate from the swimming competitions. In the end, the swimming and diving competitions were held in one building, but with two separate pools. The facility, the swimming arena of the Olympiiski Sports Complex on Prospect Mir, included a pool for swimming competitions with seating capacity of thirteen thousand separated by a glass partition from the diving pool that had a five-thousand-seat

---

<sup>36</sup> V. S. Rodichenko and A. I. Romashko to I. T. Novikov, 22 March 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 141, ll. 92-93.

<sup>37</sup> V. Rodichenko to I. Novikov, 22 March 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 141, l. 90.

capacity, allowing the organizers to hold swimming and diving competitions simultaneously.<sup>38</sup>

### **Building a "City of Sport:" Construction of Olympic Facilities**

At the first meeting of the Organizing Committee, Novikov enumerated the number and kind of buildings that needed to be constructed for the Games. He noted that Moscow currently had facilities for twelve sports, but several of these needed reconstruction or renovation. To meet the IOC's standards, they would have to build six sports halls, two closed swimming pools, a cycling track, an equestrian sports complex, and the facilities for sailing competitions in Tallinn. The Games required an Olympic Village to accommodate twelve thousand participants in Moscow and another for six hundred in Tallinn. Both cities needed new hotels to accommodate tourists and guests. In 1975, Moscow had a total of forty-two thousand beds and Tallinn only two thousand. Novikov also stated that they needed to build student dorms for another seventy thousand foreign guests.<sup>39</sup>

A look at the major construction projects and their estimated cost gives an idea of what Novikov had in mind when he spoke of the "colossal" task of hosting the Olympic Games. The centerpiece of the Olympic Games was the Grand Sports Arena at Luzhniki. The brainchild of V. P. Polikarpov who imagined a "city of sport," the Central Stadium was designed as part of a whole complex, replete with a stadium, smaller sports hall,

---

<sup>38</sup> *Official Report of the Games of the XXII Olympiad*, Vol. 2 "Organization," part 1, 72, available from [http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports\\_frmst.htm](http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports_frmst.htm).

<sup>39</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 27-28.

swimming pool, and sports grounds. It would provide a training base for Soviet elite athletes, a staging ground for important domestic and international competitions, and a multi-use sports complex where ordinary Muscovites could engage in physical exercise.<sup>40</sup> Built in 1956, the Luzhniki complex housed all the Soviet Spartakiads before its reconstruction for the 1980 Olympics. The Orgcom placed primary importance on the Luzhniki complex because it would host the opening and closing ceremonies and the most popular events of the Games, including soccer finals in the Grand Arena, gymnastics in the Minor Arena, and water polo in the swimming pool.

Even though Moscow already had a number of sports facilities available for use during the Games, the city's sports facilities on the whole lacked the seating capacity to accommodate the number of spectators expected at Olympic events or hoped for by the IFs. In 1975, the Orgcom proposed to renovate the Grand Arena at Luzhniki to increase its seating capacity to 100,000, and the Minor Arena would need to hold 15,000. The cost of improvements on the complex cost an estimated 25 million rubles.<sup>41</sup> In addition to the Luzhniki complex, the Orgcom estimated they would need to construct seven major sports halls, accommodating 44,000 spectators at an estimated cost of 71 million rubles.<sup>42</sup> Because these facilities needed to meet western standards, the Orgcom sent a delegation to the United States to study designing and constructing large stadiums and to

---

<sup>40</sup> About Luzhniki, "Let there be a city of sports!," Olympic Complex "Luzhniki," available at <http://www.luzhniki.ru/eng/luzh.aspx?id=1>.

<sup>41</sup> Decree of the Presidium of the Orgcom, 12 June 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 4, l. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., ll. 1-3.

incorporate the American experience into its design and construction of Olympic venues.<sup>43</sup>

Once plans were finalized, the Orgcom leadership had to ensure that the construction of Olympic sites progressed on schedule. In a progress report to the Council of Ministers in January 1976, Novikov expressed concern over the rate of construction of Olympic facilities. According to Novikov, ninety-eight facilities needed to be built or renovated for the Games, seventy-eight of those in Moscow alone. Novikov complained that everything from drawing up plans, to surveying, to preparing sites for construction was falling behind schedule, even on the twenty-three basic Olympic venues. He emphasized the need to show progress on these venues in order to demonstrate to the IOC that everything was going well. In ten months, the Chief Architecture and Planning Department (GlavAPU) had fulfilled only 66 percent of their capacity, and only 49 percent of the overall construction plan for Olympic venues had been met in the same period. All this demonstrated, according to Novikov, that ministries, agencies, and the Moscow Executive Committee were not doing their part to ensure that the buildings were completed. Novikov complained that other ministries failed to provide enough human and material resources for Olympic construction projects, singling out the leaders of those units by name, who had been slow in fulfilling their tasks.<sup>44</sup>

In order to complete construction of Olympic venues and tourist facilities, the Orgcom also had to attract thousands of skilled workers to Moscow. In a meeting with

---

<sup>43</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Executive Bureau, 1 September 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 39, ll. 47-48.

<sup>44</sup> Copy of Report to Council of Ministers on course of preparation for 1980 OG Moscow, 27 January 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 119, ll. 3, 11.

Novikov to discuss construction projects for the Games, Agitprop chief B. P. Goncharov groused that the country's "working potential" was not being used to its fullest, noting that around 19,000 soldiers, 10,000 Moscow city workers, and 7,000 workers from regional governments had been gathered for Olympic construction, but that many were abandoning their posts because of poor working conditions. Goncharov argued that the Orgcom had failed to provide the high wages, proper housing, and services it had promised. He insisted that they needed to treat Olympic construction workers better to keep them on the job.<sup>45</sup> Novikov agreed for different reasons. He informed the meeting that the Orgcom received many requests from foreign communist and workers' parties asking to show journalists and representatives Olympic facilities, but the Orgcom had dragged its feet for fear of how foreign visitors would describe the progress.<sup>46</sup> Novikov realized what Christopher Ward observed in his research on the BAM project: that using large-scale construction projects as propaganda for the successes of socialism could backfire if working conditions and daily lives of workers were not exemplary.<sup>47</sup> Just as foreign socialist workers participating in BAM began to doubt the efficacy of the Soviet example, socialist observers visiting incomplete Olympic constructions and seeing thousands of workers without proper housing and food services could leave with a negative impression of Soviet socialism and, perhaps more importantly, might disparage the Olympic project and the Soviet Union in their domestic press.

---

<sup>45</sup> Minutes of meeting with I. T. Novikov, 13 January 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 242, l. 38.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., l. 39.

<sup>47</sup> Ward, "The 'Path to the Future'," 69-70.

## **Learning from Past Experience**

In order to meet the demands of the Soviet leadership and the expectations of the international sports community, all Olympic construction had to be done according to western standards, and for this reason, the Orgcom relied heavily on the previous experience of previous Olympic host countries. Even though Moscow already had a number of sports facilities available for use during the Games, most of them lacked the seating capacity expected for Olympic events, so the Orgcom sent a delegation to the United States to study and incorporate the American experience in building stadiums with large-capacity seating.<sup>48</sup> In addition to the many sports venues, Moscow needed new hotels to accommodate tourists and guests. For example, in 1975, Moscow only had forty-two thousand beds available.<sup>49</sup> While best practices on training could be gleaned from a few individuals, the know-how to house, feed and serve millions of Olympic visitors could not be gotten from letters and reports. Moscow organizers had to see the Games in action to fully understand what was expected and to evaluate whether Moscow was measuring up so, over the course of 1975 alone, the Orgcom sent four delegations of twenty people each to West Germany to meet with the Munich Organizing Committee and four delegations of nineteen people to Canada to observe the preparations for the Montreal Games. The Orgcom also hosted twelve specialists from Munich and Montreal to answer questions and otherwise advise the Moscow Orgcom.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Record of Meeting of Executive Bureau Orgcom, 1 September 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 39, ll. 47-48.

<sup>49</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 27-28.

<sup>50</sup> Decree of the Presidium of the Orgcom Moscow, 1 April 1976, On the Results of Establishment of International Relations for 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, l. 40.

Members of the Munich Organizing Committee became important sources of information for the Moscow Orgcom, regarding the expectations of the international sports community not encapsulated in the official rules and regulations of the IOC and IFs. The notes from a meeting with Klaus Willing of the Munich Organizing Committee are instructive of the delicate and potentially expensive business of making the International Federations happy with the Games preparation. As Willing pointed out to representatives of the Moscow Orgcom, once the IOC approves a host city, it is the IFs who are most influential in overseeing the preparation, program, and facilities for Olympic competitions. For this reason, special care needed to be taken to impress the IF personnel with how preparations were going in Moscow. Not only did sports venues need to fulfill IF regulations, but housing and hospitality accommodations for IF personnel and international judges should meet the highest possible standards possible in order to "win the Olympic Games from a technical and organizational point of view."<sup>51</sup>

According to Willing, the Moscow Orgcom needed to address the informal expectations of IF personnel that were not spelled out in the official rules and regulations in order to make the most of their visits. Willing urged the Moscow committee to establish "personal contacts" with IF representatives by inviting the presidents and general secretaries of all Olympic sports organizations to visit Moscow as soon as possible. The Orgcom needed to treat IF visitors as valued guests, providing them with first-class tickets with open dates, getting the pilots to greet them on their flights, leaving gifts in their hotel rooms, and arranging private cars and drivers for the duration of their

---

<sup>51</sup> Meeting with K. Willing from the Munich Organizing Committee, December 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 11, l. 7.

stay.<sup>52</sup> Willing also recommended that Orgcom designate a specific individual to each IF who would serve as their main contact, greeting them upon their arrival and accompanying them in all negotiations and cultural activities, but at the same time avoiding any impression that IF representatives were being monitored. Willing suggested that this would give the IF leaders a sense that there was someone they could trust in the Orgcom.<sup>53</sup> Wives of IF delegates should also be assigned a personal hostess to oversee their program of stay. Finally, the Orgcom should stage pictures at the airport upon the arrival of international visitors and a press conferences at the end of their stay where they could report on how preparations are going.<sup>54</sup>

Willing also provided the Orgcom members with a list of IF leading personalities and with recommendations about how to approach their visits to Moscow. Willing found president of the AIBA Nikiforov-Denisov to be a "severe and at times even a rude person."<sup>55</sup> Of course, the Moscow Orgcom did not need to work for Nikiforov-Denisov's support since he was a Soviet representative. Willing suggested that the FIFA president Avelanzh from Brazil should be received at a high level and no mention should be made of recent problems that occurred during a match with Chile. He also suggested that, according to protocol, Avelanzh should be a guest of the Orgcom and not the USSR soccer federation, but he recommended that, since the USSR soccer federation had been fined by FIFA, that body should discuss all questions related to the Olympic soccer

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., ll. 8, 20.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., ll. 4-5.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 11.



competition to mend its relationship with the international organization.<sup>56</sup> According to Willing, the Volleyball federation president, Steit could be a useful ally to the Orgcom because he was a "communist," a "friend of the eastern bloc," Cuba, and China. Steit enjoyed enormous authority in heavy athletics because he "invented" the event and spoke between seven and nine languages.<sup>57</sup> However, according to Willing, Steit had lost support among leaders of the General Assembly of International Federations (AGFI) because he "traveled much but worked little."<sup>58</sup> This exchange provides insight into the world of IF politics that proved valuable to Orgcom members as they endeavored to retain the support of IF leaders for the Moscow Games.

Willing also raised some issues peculiar to Moscow that the Orgcom needed to address. Remarking that public opinion in "the west" regarded the 1980 Games as a "Russian Olympiad," Willing suggested that the Orgcom take steps to convince western observers that the Games would live up to European standards. Willing insisted that Orgcom personnel needed to learn foreign languages since so many decisions were made in private meetings, it would be better if Orgcom leaders could negotiate without the aid of interpreters. The Orgcom leadership had already recognized the need for their workers to be skilled in foreign languages, and the Presidium arranged for foreign language instructors to train personnel and administer exams.<sup>59</sup> Willing also noted that European public opinion held that it was hard to change one's itinerary in Moscow and allowed no

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., l. 13.

<sup>57</sup> Meeting with K. Willing from the Munich Organizing Committee, December 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 11, l. 15.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., ll. 14-15.

<sup>59</sup> Order No. 13 of the Sports Committee and Moscow Organizing Committee, 28 November 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 10, l. 43.

opportunity for free movement around the city. For this reason, he encouraged the Orgcom to allow IF representatives to choose for themselves what they wanted to do. He also noted that meetings with the press and with the Moscow mayor or other government officials should be arranged, preferably at the Kremlin.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, western journalists needed to be assured that they could move freely in Moscow during the Games.<sup>61</sup>

Following Willing's recommendations, Smirnov instructed Prokopov, Rodichenko, and Glubinskii to draw up a plan for working with presidents, general secretaries, technical delegates and other representatives of IFs, getting their input with the planning, building, and reconstruction of sports facilities and other stages of preparation for the Games. He also charged Prokopov and Shkiliu to work out a program for reception and services for IOC members, IF representatives, and other specialists coming to the USSR by invitation of the Orgcom, incorporating Willing's information about international expectations. Smirnov ordered Orgcom members to work with specialists in the Munich Organizing Committee to acquire "all documents and materials necessary for the preparation for the Olympic Games in Moscow." Finally, propaganda head Shevchenko was to oversee publicity surrounding visits by foreign guests to see preparations for the Games.<sup>62</sup>

An Orgcom delegation traveled to Innsbruck in 1976 to observe an Olympic Winter Games in action, establish international contacts, hold meetings with foreign companies, and promote Soviet interests among the IOC and other international sports

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>62</sup> Instruction of Orgcom, 29 December 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 11, l. 3.

figures, especially Willi Daume of the Federal Republic of Germany. Over the years, Daume became a key advisor to the Orgcom and a close friend to Sports Committee Chairman Sergei Pavlov. At Innsbruck, Daume advised his Soviet colleagues to put together a full timetable for all the tasks necessary for organizing the Games and to establish the strictest possible control over their fulfillment. He also suggested that they negotiate with the IFs regarding their needs early on. Daume expressed concern over Moscow's capability to host official guests and tourists because of its lack of experience in tourist services. He recommended taking special care to make journalists happy with their housing and working conditions, to win over representatives of the press, radio, and television, because so much of world public opinion about the Games would depend on international press coverage.<sup>63</sup>

A delegation of thirty Orgcom workers and thirty-four specialists traveled to Montreal to observe technical aspects of the Olympic Games in 1976 and to learn from their experience. The delegation noted that journalists had complained that their housing arrangements were too far away from the press center and most Olympic venues. The journalists also felt that security measures restricting access to the Olympic Village had interfered with their work. The Orgcom delegation noted that Montreal residents seemed indifferent to the Olympics being held in their city, suggesting that the Moscow organizers should do more to promote the Games among Soviet citizens.<sup>64</sup> By contrast, the technical delegation observed that the Montreal Organizing Committee had done a

---

<sup>63</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Presidium Olympiada-80, 1 April 1976, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, l. 25.

<sup>64</sup> Report on Delegation of Technical Observers to the 1976 Montreal Games, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 34, l. 73.

good job of receiving important guests. There were reportedly no serious security violations involving members of the Olympic Family, except the purported kidnapping of a teenage Soviet athlete.<sup>65</sup> The Soviet delegation criticized security at the Games, asserting that the show of force of police and the army "obviously calculated for a psychological effect" dampened the atmosphere of the "sports celebration of the world's youth."<sup>66</sup> The Soviet delegation also perceived that, despite the numbers of security personnel, they were often ineffective, "provocational attacks and outrages" that interfered with the competitions and "discredited" the Olympic events. The Soviet observers also mused that the Montreal organizers concept of a "modest Games" did not come to pass and instead the Montreal organizing committee spent \$250-300 million on the Games.<sup>67</sup>

Sending delegations to learn from the experience of previous Olympic organizers dominated the work of the Moscow Orgcom early on, but the Orgcom leadership wanted to ensure that its delegates abroad made the best possible use of the knowledge they accumulated. The Presidium criticized many Orgcom members for making extraneous trips, not giving enough attention to existing records on foreign experience, and wasting time abroad elucidating issues that were already known from written materials. They were also criticized for being slow in reporting on their trips, in carrying out recommendations based on negotiations with representatives of foreign firms and

---

<sup>65</sup> When Soviet diver Nemtsov failed to show up at the Olympic Village following the diving competition, Soviet representatives accused Canadian security forces of kidnapping him. See <http://www.montrealolympics.com/worral.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> Report on Delegation of Technical Observers to the 1976 Montreal Games, GAR,F f. 9610, op. 1, d. 34, l. 76.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., ll. 76-77.

organizations, and in answering foreign correspondence.<sup>68</sup> The Presidium determined that Orgcom department heads needed to better train delegations going abroad and institute measures for controlling the distribution of information gathered from observing other organizing committees.<sup>69</sup>

To disseminate the information gathered by Orgcom observers in Montreal, the Executive Bureau held a special meeting to review the delegation's report and invited personnel from the Orgcom apparatus and commissions to take part in the discussion.<sup>70</sup> The leaders of the Montreal delegation also attended meetings of various Orgcom commissions to discuss their observations and explain the work plans they drew up based on Montreal's experience.<sup>71</sup> In October 1976, the Executive Bureau strengthened "control" over the dissemination and analysis of information from Montreal and other previous Olympic Games throughout the Orgcom departments and commissions. Deciding that protocol department head Novozhilov and Zhukov from the international department "showed little initiative for the effective use of the experience gained by Orgcom sections, commissions, interested ministries, and agencies" and "weakly engaged in familiarizing staff of the Orgcom and other organizations involved in preparations for the Olympics with the existing informational materials from Munich, Innsbruck, and Montreal," the Executive Bureau instructed department and section heads to prepare materials on incorporating experience from previous Olympiads for the November

---

<sup>68</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Presidium Olympiada-80, 1 April 1976, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, l. 41.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., l. 42.

<sup>70</sup> Record of Meeting of the Executive Bureau of the Orgcom, 11 August 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 39, l. 34.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

meeting of the Orgcom leadership. Vice chairmen of the Orgcom were also to "systematically hear reports" from department heads on how their sections were utilizing previous experience in their work.<sup>72</sup>

The Executive Bureau of the Orgcom also tried to strengthen control over its international delegations, achieving "more well-defined coordination with planning and carrying out international relations of subunits of the Orgcom." The international department under Prokopov was to give more practical help to subunits on how to incorporate the experience of previous Olympics, to clarify the division of functions with the protocol department for receiving foreign delegations, and to set up with the cadres department a team of qualified specialists to translate foreign information and materials. The translation needs of the Orgcom were significant given the volume of correspondence and informational materials being exchanged with the IOC, IFs, NOCs, and previous Olympic organizing committees, so the Orgcom had to poach qualified translators from other ministries and agencies. Leaders of Orgcom subunits were also supposed to exert more control over the preparing workers traveling abroad to negotiate with foreign organizations and firms.<sup>73</sup>

### **The Olympic Games and Modernization**

Because the eyes of the world would be on Moscow, modernization became a prominent theme in the Organizing Committee discourse. Sports arenas were not just reconstructed or renovated, they were "modernized," and the Orgcom wanted to ensure that all technology for the Games was "modern." The Organizing Committee conceived

---

<sup>72</sup> Report of Meeting of the Orgcom Executive Bureau, 4 October 1976, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 39, ll. 50-51.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., ll. 64-65.

of the 1980 Games not only as an important showcase of sporting achievements but as "a showcase for scientific and engineering achievements."<sup>74</sup> However, the attempts to bring Moscow's facilities and services up to date exposed several key areas where the Soviet Union lagged behind its western rivals.

One of the prime examples of this impulse to "modernize" the staging of the Games was the Automated Control System, ACS-Olympiad, that served as a computerized information hub for everything from competition results to press accreditation, participant registration, and even Orgcom payroll. The main computers were housed at the ACS-Olympiad building at Luzhniki, and this complex was connected to five regional computer centers that gathered data from the various competition sites and relayed it to the main center for tabulation and reporting of results. Members of the Orgcom were keenly aware that Soviet computing technology was not up to western standards and could be a source of embarrassment. When one member of the Orgcom commented at an August 1975 meeting that it would be impossible to develop the Automatic Control System based on Soviet computers and that therefore foreign computers should be purchased, Novikov questioned what foreign observers would think about the state of Soviet technology if they saw only imported computers.<sup>75</sup>

Promyslov echoed Novikov's concern for prestige when pushing to modernize service facilities. Calling the Olympics "a task for the prestige of our whole country," Promyslov insisted that it was not enough to build cafeterias and restaurants, but it was equally important to pay close attention to how they should be outfitted. Fearing that

---

<sup>74</sup>*Official Report of the Games of the XXII Olympiad*, Vol. 2 "Organization," part 1, p. 138, available from [http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports\\_frmst.htm](http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports_frmst.htm).

<sup>75</sup> Minutes of Meeting of the Orgcom, 4 August 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 68-69.

poor facilities would cause embarrassment, he shared a personal experience he had when taking representatives of a West German firm to a specialty grocery store, Eliseev's on Gorkii street. According to Promyslov, the foreign guests remarked that the cash registers in Eliseev's looked like they had been purchased in 1905. Promyslov noted the difference between Soviet registers, which could only calculate two purchases at a time, and Swedish machines that could process many items at once. Promyslov wondered what would happen if a shopper had forty or fifty items to purchase, "how many times must [you] return to the cash register to make that many purchases!"<sup>76</sup>

Similar issues were raised over foreign currency exchange. Novikov argued that the existing Soviet currency exchange system was too slow and involved to serve the needs of thousands of foreign visitors coming for the Games, explaining, "here you have to fill out a form, then stand in line for two hours, and then three hours later receive the money."<sup>77</sup> To this someone from the hall suggested that exchange points should be organized in the various hotels to serve the Olympic Games.<sup>78</sup>

Novikov recognized the need for two levels of service: one for Soviet citizens and one for foreigners. Insisting that "our [Soviet] people could not be housed in hotels," he noted that with students on vacation, student cafeterias could feed visitors from within the Soviet Union. "Foreigners," he insisted, "could not be sent to student dorms."<sup>79</sup> It could be that Novikov was worried about Soviet visitors having too many possibilities to interact with foreigners, but based on the discussion of Soviet prestige and Promyslov's

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., II. 80-81.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., I. 107.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., I. 108.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., I. 92.



comments about cash registers, it seems that Novikov was most concerned that student dorms and cafeterias were not of sufficient quality to make the desired impression on foreign guests. Killanin and the IOC shared these concerns over the quality of tourist accommodations and services. In a letter to Smirnov dated 26 November 1976, Killanin wrote, "I believe there will be a large problem in regard to training of staff. This is world-wide and is an area where visitors are most critical."<sup>80</sup>

In addition to facilities, The Orgcom would need personnel to act as everything from chauffeurs to guides, to security workers, to translators. Students, the military, the police, and volunteers were identified as recruitment targets, with the main qualifications defined as loyalty, knowledge of foreign languages, education, and physical attributes.<sup>81</sup> Novikov called for cadres to be trained in the treatment and service of foreigners, including foreign language training.<sup>82</sup> In a meeting with various Orgcom managers in January 1978, Novikov expressed anxiety over the need to train ninety-seven thousand students and workers from various ministries and departments as service personnel, and that they had not decided "where to train them, who to train, or when to train them." Not only would service staff need to be trained in foreign languages, service and public relations, but they would need political education as well.<sup>83</sup> Topics of instruction included seminars on the Communist Party, the Olympic Movement, the historical,

---

<sup>80</sup> Lord Killanin to V. Smirnov, 26 November 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>81</sup> Work Plan of I. I. Kholod for Studying the Experience in Preparing and Staging the Olympic Games (questions of cadres), approved by Novikov, 9 July 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 38, ll. 83-84.

<sup>82</sup> Minutes of meeting with I. T. Novikov, 13 January 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 242, l. 114.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., l. 42.

revolutionary and architectural monuments of Moscow, the national characteristics of representatives of various countries, and Marxism-Leninism.<sup>84</sup>

To Novikov the construction of Olympic venues, hotels, and other facilities played a key role in promoting the right impression of Moscow and of the Soviet way of life to foreign visitors, and the Organizing Committee needed to take special care that Olympic construction be carefully planned and carried out perfectly. As he stated,

this grand-scale political event must be prepared and carried out at the highest political level, and not as publicized by several journalists and other individuals, who come, see nothing good, and somewhere or another see a drunk, photograph him and later tell the world that we have drunks lying about. For this reason, we must decisively solve construction projects first of all.<sup>85</sup>

Ultimately, Olympic construction by itself could not cover up the less attractive elements in Soviet society, and the Orgcom reverted to other means to provide additional assurance that visitors got the correct impression of the Soviet quality of life, taking steps to limit the domestic traffic in and out of Moscow during the Games and to increase the availability of goods for that period.<sup>86</sup> In the lead up to the Games, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) took action to "cleanse Moscow of chronic alcoholics and drug addicts" by sending them outside of the city. According to an MVD bulletin, 900 such persons were sent out of Moscow in August 1979.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Report, On course of Fulfillment of Decree of Central Committee and Council of Ministers from 23 December 1975, Preparation and Training of Service Personnel during the OG 1980, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 255, l. 3.

<sup>85</sup> Minutes of meeting with I. T. Novikov, 13 January 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 242, l. 112.

<sup>86</sup> Record of meeting with Vice-President of the Orgcom, G. M. Rogul'skii, 6 April 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 244, ll. 20-22.

<sup>87</sup> MVD Bulletin for June-August 1979, 5 October 1979, RGANI, f. 5, op. 76, d. 205, l. 60.

Linking construction problems for the Olympic Games to the overall priorities of the Soviet leadership, Novikov argued that the Orgcom must eliminate the many mistakes that typically take place in construction projects and make sure that Olympic preparations did not negatively impact the way of life of the Soviet people.<sup>88</sup> However, Olympic construction projects did sometimes impact peoples' lives. To accommodate a campground for tourists at Mikhalovo, the Orgcom relocated an entire village of eleven houses and thirty-six people. The relocation was scheduled for January 1978 but, at that time, furnaces were not yet installed in the new homes. Novikov called for bringing together everyone who was working on the resettlement to make sure they complete the "important project."<sup>89</sup>

The Sports Committee also had to balance the need to keep up with modern sports technology with the cost of developing Soviet made equipment and products, and the prospect of hosting the Olympic Games provided an additional layer of authority in the person of Ignatii Novikov that lower-level bureaucrats and other professionals could appeal to in defense of their own projects and interests. In April 1976, the Sports Committee discussed the merits of developing domestic pole vaulting poles using fiberglass. In February 1976, a chemist, E. N. Popov, denounced the head of Glavsportprom, V. V. Sumochkin, for "damaging to Soviet prestige" by not developing quality, Soviet-made sports equipment out of fiberglass, and instead buying fiberglass products from capitalist countries. Popov, appealed to the Central Committee to instruct the Sports Committee to bring domestic production of fiberglass sports equipment up to

---

<sup>88</sup> Minutes of meeting with I. T. Novikov, 13 January 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 242, l. 112.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., l. 33.

the "international standard."<sup>90</sup> In sending a copy of his letter to Novikov, Popov underscored the "great importance of producing various products for technical sports" due to the upcoming Olympic Games.<sup>91</sup> Pavlov responded to Novikov that developing a domestic industry in fiberglass pole vaulting poles would be "inexpedient" because it would cost 200-230,000 rubles, while current demand for such products was only a thousand per year. The Sports Committee found that it would be more cost effective to purchase the poles from an East German company.<sup>92</sup>

Some athletes saw the upcoming Moscow Games as an opportunity to call attention not only to inferior equipment, but also to what they thought were unfair practices. In February 1978, a group of anonymous members of the Soviet cycling team complained that a lack of quality cycles, spare parts, and tires prevented them from achieving the highest sporting results, appealing to the Central Committee to "sort out certain shameful practices in cycling." In their letter, the cyclists bemoaned the fact that they could not buy quality cycles and parts in stores. Instead, they alleged that their money went into "the pockets of certain people, who use it to buy cars, dachas, and apartments and to maintain a dissolute lifestyle." The cyclists denounced their head trainer V. A. Kapitonov, who they said instructed them to buy cycles and equipment abroad with their per diems. They also alleged that Kapitonov took the prize money they

---

<sup>90</sup> E. Popov to Politburo of the Central Committee, 23 February 1976, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2626, l. 64.

<sup>91</sup> E. I. Popov to I. T. Novikov, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2626, l. 63. It is interesting to note that Popov addressed Novikov as vice chairman of the Council of Ministers and president of the Olympic Committee of the USSR, suggesting that the person was more important than the title and that Soviet citizens were not necessarily familiar with all the different positions and overlapping responsibilities between the Sports Committee, the Olympic Committee, and the 1980 Organizing Committee.

<sup>92</sup> A. I. Kolesov, Vice Chairman of the Sports Committee to the Central Committee Department of Chemistry, 27 April 1976 and S. P. Pavlov to Novikov, President of Orgcom 1980, 9 March 1976, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2626, ll. 58-60.

earned, and telling them it would go to the Sports Committee to buy equipment, would spend it on other things.<sup>93</sup> In his report on the allegations contained in the letter, Pavlov insisted that the things described did not happen according to written statements by members of the cycling team, trainers, and were not borne out by financial documents. According to two of the accused, they obtained cars and apartments before beginning work in the Sports Committee and acquired them from their personal means and through the help of relatives.<sup>94</sup>

Sports leaders from the Soviet republics also saw hosting the Olympic Games as an opportunity to acquire more resources for their sports programs. For example, the chairman of the Latvian Council of Ministers Iu. Ia. Rubena along with Sergei Pavlov requested permission from the chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers Kozygin to build a bobsled training center with an artificial ice run in Sigulde. In making this request, Rubena and Pavlov highlighted the Latvian bobsled team's good results in Lake Placid and first place finish at the Winter Spartakiad in 1978. He also underscored that there currently was no artificial bobsled run in the Soviet Union, forcing competitive bobsled teams to train on man-made ice in the GDR, FRG, Austria and other countries, "expending significant monetary resources."<sup>95</sup> That the request comes from Pavlov and the Latvian minister suggests that the Sports Committee enlisted the help of the Latvian leader to exert more influence on Kozygin in hopes that he would grant the request.

---

<sup>93</sup> Anonymous Letter to the Central Committee from the Cycling Team USSR, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 3283, l. 202.

<sup>94</sup> Pavlov to Central Committee, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 3283, l. 196.

<sup>95</sup> S. Pavlov and Iu. Ia. Rubena, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR to Chairman of the Council of Ministers USSR A. Kozygin, 23 April 1980, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 5611, l. 58.

Coming on the heels of the Winter Games in Lake Placid, Pavlov and his Latvian comrade must have thought the timing conducive to a positive answer.

### **Financing the Games**

The cost of hosting the 1980 Games was a concern on all sides for a variety of reasons. As the Montreal Games of 1976 drew closer, it became clear that the Montreal Organizing Committee and the city of Montreal experienced serious financial issues in connection with the Games. Estimating that the Games would cost 6,400 million rubles, of which only 4,400 were provided for in the current five-year economic plan, Novikov insisted that the Orgcom "must seriously think of where to get money."<sup>96</sup> Novikov secured permission from the Politburo to secure funding from wealthy Americans willing to send thousand-dollar checks to add to the Olympic fund and foreign firms offering their services for low costs in exchange for advertising and recognition as "official sponsors of the Olympic Games," as long as the Olympiad retained its "socio-political resonance."<sup>97</sup> Killanin shared Novikov's concerns over potential financial problems, but as his main concern was the image of the Olympic Games, Killanin was just as concerned, if not more so, that there be no "apparent waste of money" as he was that the actual cost of the Games be kept under control.<sup>98</sup>

Along with the pressure to modernize, hosting the Olympics also provided opportunities to finance that modernization. Negotiations with foreign firms and

---

<sup>96</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 29-30

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., l. 31.

<sup>98</sup> Killanin to Smirnov, 8 December 1975, IOC Archives/ Vitaly Smirnov Correspondence 1971-1984, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

companies occupied much of the Orgcom's energies. For example, Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola both approached the Orgcom regarding the rights of "official sponsor."<sup>99</sup> The Orgcom also signed a contract with Adidas for providing free uniforms for twenty-eight thousand workers of the Orgcom and service personnel for the Games at an overall cost of 1.5 million dollars in exchange for the right to be named an "official sponsor." The agreement also called for the use of the Moscow emblem on football jerseys and bags, providing the Orgcom with 5 percent of the proceeds from the sales of those products. IBM, Siemens, and Philips likewise approached the Orgcom with proposals for providing various technologies in exchange for becoming official sponsors of the Games.<sup>100</sup> In August 1977, Novikov requested permission from the Council of Ministers to cooperate with socialist and capitalist firms in organizing services for the Olympic Village. Such services would include things such as shopping centers, repair shops, beauty salons, discotheques, and other services, and foreign firms competed for the right to become "official sponsors" of the Games by donating goods or setting up shops for selling goods to athletes and officials.<sup>101</sup>

The IOC director insisted that all major contracts with foreign firms be sent to the IOC for review before signing in order "to avoid the 'fait accompli' situations which have

---

<sup>99</sup> Copy of Report to Council of Ministers on course of preparation for 1980 OG Moscow, 27 January 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 119, l. 7. Coca-Cola proposed to provide ten million drinks free of charge, but Pepsi Cola had concluded an agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Trade to sell Pepsi in the Soviet Union. As a result the Orgcom could not take the Coke deal, but they were able to negotiate a deal on the same terms with Pepsi.

<sup>100</sup> Report for Meeting of Orgcom, On participation of the Orgcom Delegation in the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOC and Familiarization with the Experience of Montreal, 17 September 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 34, ll. 65-66.

<sup>101</sup> Novikov to Council of Ministers, 5 August 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 118, ll. 1, 5-6.

arisen in the past."<sup>102</sup> Lord Killanin also worried about commercial contracts. In a telegram to Berlioux who was visiting Moscow at the time, Killanin asked her to clarify with the Moscow Orgcom which contracts impacted IOC interests or protocol and needed to be countersigned by the IOC. He also requested that, in order to expedite the process, she agree *pro forma* any contracts for merchandising where final approval rested with the NOCs.<sup>103</sup> For their part, the Moscow organizers also wanted to guard their own interests with regard to commercial contracts. In a letter to Berlioux in November 1977, Smirnov asked "the IOC to take into account the interests of the organizing committee when signing contracts with commercial companies."<sup>104</sup>

The Orgcom made good on its obligation to notify the IOC when concluding important contracts. In September 1978, Vladimir Zaitsev, director of the Orgcom material and technical supplies department, copied Berlioux on a letter to a Danish company in which he asked the company to provide simultaneous interpretation equipment for the press boxes at Olympic venues. He asked them to loan the equipment free of charge in exchange for the title of "official supplier of simultaneous interpretation equipment for the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow."<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> M. Berlioux to I. Novikov, 15 December 1975, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>103</sup> Telegram, Lord Killanin to M. Berlioux, 11 November 1977, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>104</sup> V. Smirnov to M. Berlioux, 9 November 1977, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland. It is interesting to note that the Russian original of this letter was addressed "Dear Monique," but the English translation reads "Dear Mme. Berlioux."

<sup>105</sup> V. Zaitsev to DIS Congress Service, 4 September 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.



Television coverage of the Games was a source of considerable income and another area of intense discussion and negotiation between the Orgcom and the IOC. Before the Montreal Games, the Moscow Orgcom had met with the IOC Television Technical Commission and foreign TV companies to discuss the practicalities of televising the 1980 Games. Novikov reported to the IOC session in Montreal that the Orgcom intended to provide color TV coverage through twenty channels, an "unprecedented" scope of coverage that would "entail considerable expenditures." He maintained that such coverage was necessary because of television's ability to "transform the world into a huge Olympic stadium" and to "turn scores of millions of sports enthusiasts throughout the world into eyewitnesses of this international sports festival and make them champions of the noble Olympic ideals of strengthening friendship, mutual understanding, and peace."<sup>106</sup> Novikov hoped the IOC would take this into account when deciding what share the Orgcom would receive from the sale of television rights. In January 1977, Novikov estimated that rights for the Games could bring in \$80 million.<sup>107</sup> In February, the Orgcom signed an \$85 million contract with NBC for broadcasting rights in the United States.<sup>108</sup> Berlioux urgently requested that the Orgcom provide the text of the speeches made by Novikov and Koval' when signing the contract.<sup>109</sup> In April 1978, Novikov informed Killanin that the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) offered to pay

---

<sup>106</sup> Minutes of the 78<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Montreal, September 1976, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>107</sup> Copy of Report to Council of Ministers on Preparations for the 1980 OG Moscow, 27 January 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 119, l. 8.

<sup>108</sup> "Warming Up for the 1980 Olympics," *Time*, 6 August 1979, available at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,948761-1,00.html>.

<sup>109</sup> Telegram, M. Berlioux to M. Petrova, 11 February 1977, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

\$5.75 million, and that the Orgcom had invited Canada's CBC to Moscow for final negotiations.<sup>110</sup> Killanin insisted that TV contracts should be concluded quickly because "it is in all our interests to obtain a maximum amount as quickly as possible."<sup>111</sup> When the Orgcom could not reach the Latin American and Arab broadcasting unions, Koval' asked Berlioux to send updated contact information.<sup>112</sup>

Commercial advertising proved an important source of funding for various aspects of the Games preparation, but the Orgcom also needed to clear advertising with the IOC that wished to ensure that there was no unnecessary "commercialization" of the Games. Monique Berlioux wrote to Novikov in November 1975 clarifying that, according to the Olympic Charter, no airplane advertising banners should appear above Olympic venues, the last torch runner must wear no trademarks, and trademarks and logos on timing equipment and scoreboards must be no larger than at the Munich Games.<sup>113</sup> In August 1976, Andrianov asked the IOC director to confirm in writing that including advertisements in the Orgcom publications, *Olympiad-80* and *Olympic Panorama* "would not infringe the IOC rules."<sup>114</sup> Later that month, Killanin wrote to Novikov addressing a number of issues from the Montreal Games that he hoped the

---

<sup>110</sup> Telegram, I. Novikov to Lord Killanin, 10 April 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>111</sup> Telegram, Lord Killanin to I. Novikov, 31 March 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>112</sup> Telegram, Koval to M. Berlioux, 30 March 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>113</sup> M. Berlioux to I. Novikov, 13 November 1975, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>114</sup> Telegram, K. Andrianov to M. Berlioux, 12 August 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Moscow organizers could avoid, pointing out that none of the official publications of the Games should include commercial advertisements.<sup>115</sup>

Berlioux's tenacity in safeguarding IOC interests with respect to commercial licensing and advertising contracts seems to have annoyed the Moscow organizers. In a 4 December 1975 letter, Novikov informed Killanin that the Organizing Committee worried about its ability to raise the necessary amount of foreign currency needed to meet the "enormous expenses" connected with staging the Games. He also expressed "anxiety over the desire of some officials to gain control over the financial side of the Olympic Games."<sup>116</sup> Killanin claimed that he did not understand what Novikov meant by this, but given the active role played by Berlioux in overseeing contract negotiations, she seems the likely source of Novikov's frustration. Again in January 1978, Novikov complained to Killanin about Berlioux's insistence that all contracts be approved by the IOC secretariat before signing. According to Novikov, this put an undue burden on the Orgcom and represented "moral and a material damage" to it. He insisted that "we have fulfilled and will exactly fulfill all the rules of the IOC, but the rules did not specify that all contracts must receive approval by the IOC."<sup>117</sup> Reminding Killanin of the special problem the Orgcom had in securing foreign currency because of being a socialist country, Novikov argued that it was in both the Orgcom and the IOC's interests to "stop the activities that are preventing us from developing commercial dealings."<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> Lord Killanin to I. Novikov, 23 August 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>116</sup> I. Novikov to Killanin, 4 December 1975, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>117</sup> Notes on Meeting between Novikov and Killanin, 5 January 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 267, l. 7.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., l. 8.

The Orgcom also had to work closely with the IOC when licensing Moscow Olympic emblems to generate revenue. In 1976, the Orgcom launched a worldwide licensing program whereby interested countries would pay for the right to produce and sell coins, medals, stamps, and other souvenirs with the Moscow Olympics emblem. By January 1977, forty-two countries had signed on, and the Orgcom had held around seven hundred negotiations with foreign firms as part of the commercial-licensing program that looked to bring in around 204 million rubles in foreign currency.<sup>119</sup> That October, Smirnov had requested a copy of the IOC's contract with Italcambio regarding commemorative medals to "avoid a possible clash of interests" as the Moscow Orgcom negotiated with other firms on distributing medals commemorating the Summer Games.<sup>120</sup>

In addition to licensing agreements and income from foreign companies, the Orgcom relied on other domestic sources to fund the Games. Novikov and Promyslov argued that each ministry and agency needed to help with financing construction of housing, telecommunications, and transport and listed the amounts they needed to pitch in.<sup>121</sup> The Soviet public also provided a significant source of funding. Two sports lotteries, Sprint and Sportlotto, brought in a considerable amount of money. Also, sales of Olympic stamps, tickets to training events and competitions, and Olympic publications in the Soviet Union provided revenue for the Orgcom.<sup>122</sup> That Soviet citizens bought

---

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., ll. 7-8.

<sup>120</sup> V. Smirnov to M. Berlioux, 14 October 1977, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>121</sup> Report of Meeting of Orgcom Moscow, 4 January 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 33, l. 6.

<sup>122</sup> Copy of Report to Council of Ministers on Preparations for the 1980 OG Moscow, 27 January 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 119, l. 6.

these items demonstrates a degree of popular enthusiasm for the Olympic project.

Novikov noted that although ticket sales for the Sprint lottery in Moscow "showed the enormous popularity" of the program, other ministries and departments had not done their part to guarantee the development of the Sportlotto.<sup>123</sup> Early problems with theft of Sportlotto tickets and revenue led the Orgcom to work out additional security measures with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) to protect Sportlotto distributors and to tighten control over rules for ticket sales.<sup>124</sup>

Novikov often talked of the need to reduce expenditures, but he never advocated cutting corners in any way. Financing the Games needed to be economical, but he insisted that the Olympics needed to be prepared in such a way as to fulfill the needs of both the Games and future development in Moscow and elsewhere in the Soviet Union. In 1976, Novikov articulated the need for economy in construction projects for the Games, advocating that housing projects for the Olympic Village and foreign and Soviet tourists to be constructed in a way that Muscovites could live in them later.<sup>125</sup> He also maintained that the infrastructure for color television transmission would make it possible for all Soviet citizens to have access to color TV after the Games.<sup>126</sup> In April 1976, the Presidium of the Orgcom decreed that "economic expediency and rational use of venues for post-Olympic period should be the guiding principle in negotiations with IFs."<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> Decree of the Presidium of the Orgcom, 12 June 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 4, l. 6.

<sup>124</sup> To Central Committee CPSU from the Department of Propaganda, 26 February 1976, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2626, ll. 7-8

<sup>125</sup> Report of Meeting of Orgcom Moscow, 4 January 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 33, l. 6.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., l. 11.

<sup>127</sup> Decree of the Presidium of the Orgcom Moscow, 1 April 1976, On International Relations of the Orgcom for 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, l. 42.

Similarly, the IOC was keen that the Games help each host city in its long-term development of services and infrastructure, insisting that Olympic construction plans be geared toward the future use of those facilities.

### **Coordination and Bureaucratic "Control" in the Organizing Committee**

Because the Olympic Games depended on close coordination between various departments, the Orgcom understood that the task of hosting the Games required more than decrees from the Central Committee to get the job done. Novikov argued that the committee needed to "propagandize" the Games among the country's leadership, "to make clear the importance and enormity of the task" before them.<sup>128</sup> He likewise suggested that it should bring together agency heads and central institutes to clarify what had to be done in Moscow and Tallinn. Novikov emphasized the personal responsibility of each member of the Orgcom to work out an individual plan and "participate actively in solving all problems."<sup>129</sup> He made clear that no member of the Orgcom was off the hook if the committee was going to accomplish the "colossal" tasks before it.<sup>130</sup>

The Orgcom divided its work between the various departments composing the Orgcom apparat that oversaw the work of commissions made up of representatives from the Orgcom and other Soviet agencies and departments.<sup>131</sup> Although staff members from other sections and ministries were included in Orgcom commissions, this alone did not

---

<sup>128</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 49.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., ll. 49-50.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., l. 50.

<sup>131</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Presidium Olympiada-80, 1 April 1976, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 35, l. 14.

always ensure quality work, as these individuals did not report directly to the Orgcom leadership. In a 1975 report, the foreign relations commission noted that its members who worked for other Soviet agencies and organizations should be able to monitor those institutions' activities. The commission suggested that the Orgcom inform the leaders of those institutions of what was expected from members of the commission and request assistance in their work.<sup>132</sup> The same report criticized leaders of Soviet agencies for not paying sufficient attention to the work of their staff members serving on the commission.<sup>133</sup>

To make sure that other Soviet agencies were on board, the Orgcom required regular reports from other departments and sections on their preparation work and requested that all plans and reports be approved in advance by an Orgcom vice-president. Each Orgcom committee was assigned a ministry, agency, or organization for which to be responsible.<sup>134</sup> The leaders of Orgcom subunits had to prepare their reports with other interested agencies, observing "strict adherence" to deadlines.<sup>135</sup> When Orgcom staff failed to follow proper procedures and channels, they could be chastised for failing to get the required agreement and approval from the vice-presidents for their plans before submitting them to the Presidium.<sup>136</sup> By making the Orgcom committees responsible for ensuring that reports from outside agencies were completed and turned in on time, the

---

<sup>132</sup> Report of Work of Commission for External Relations of Orgcom 1980 for 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 16, l. 9.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., l. 10.

<sup>134</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom, 17 September 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 33, ll. 38-43.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., l. 23.

<sup>136</sup> Record for Meeting of the First Vice-President of the Orgcom, Denisov, I.F., 27 June 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 243, l. 22.

Orgcom leadership hoped to keep closer tabs on how other bureaus contributed toward the Olympic project.

The Orgcom leadership relied heavily upon its department heads and managers who needed expert knowledge as well as administrative skills to complete their work. Another veteran from the Sports Committee, Vladimir Sergeevich Rodichenko, left his position as head of the Chief Sporting-Methodology Department of the Sports Committee to head up the Orgcom Sports Department, where he oversaw the schedule of events and all technical matters concerning the Olympic sports competitions. The sports program had to be planned carefully in correspondence with each International Federation holding jurisdiction over an Olympic sport to ensure that all sports arenas and facilities met the technical specifications and needs of each event.<sup>137</sup> Rodichenko was also responsible for timing and scoring equipment and sports apparatuses needed for the competitions. In addition, the Executive Bureau of the Orgcom charged Rodichenko with inspiring "creative initiative" among his subordinates and holding them "responsible for their assigned tasks." He had to serve as both technical expert and a skilled manager to guarantee that the Olympic competitions were staged at "a high organizational and technical level."<sup>138</sup> Administrative and managerial skills were of paramount importance to Rodichenko, as they would be to any department head in the Orgcom, because every task required close contact and effective collaboration with workers from other

---

<sup>137</sup> Material for Meeting of the Orgcom Presidium, 1 April 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, l. 50.

<sup>138</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Executive Bureau, 17 June 1976, GARF. f. 9610, op. 1, d. 39, ll. 26-27.



departments, members of Orgcom commissions, experts from the Sports Committee and, in Rodichenko's case, personnel in the Soviet sports federations and judging collegium.<sup>139</sup>

The Orgcom leadership, however, did not leave all decisions to their underlings. Instead, they implemented measures for overseeing the work of their subordinates. They controlled the work of department and section heads by providing specific instructions on how they were to fulfill their responsibilities. When overseeing the outfitting and equipping of the sports venues, for example, Rodichenko was required to purchase first from Soviet suppliers and from other socialist countries before turning to western imports as a last resort.<sup>140</sup> Western products cost more; moreover buying them for use in the Games would make it seem to outside observers that the Soviet economy lacked the capacity to produce the quality sports equipment needed for Olympic competitions. The Orgcom leadership required departments to submit frequent reports on every aspect of their work. In addition, the Orgcom required all department and section heads to "expose existing deficiencies and report on what measures had been taken to eliminate them."<sup>141</sup> This form of self-criticism was a hallmark of bureaucratic leadership peculiar to the Soviet Union. Finally, delegations traveling abroad were to report directly to the Orgcom leaders who, in turn, would make all decisions regarding the proposals contained in those documents.<sup>142</sup>

The Orgcom leadership gave special attention not only to the content of reports from department heads, but also to how the reports were presented. When the head of the

---

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., l. 27.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., l. 36.

propaganda department, Shevchenko, failed to produce a thorough report on the progress in designing propaganda for the 1980 Games, he was chastised for not clearing his report with Koval' before submitting it to the Executive Bureau and for not including "concrete proposals" for improving informational-propaganda work.<sup>143</sup> The Executive Bureau also instituted additional controls to ensure that reports for the Orgcom leadership followed the prescribed procedures. To this end, they decided that the names of department, commission, and section heads who were to present reports would be included on agendas for Executive Bureau meetings. Gres'ko took on the task of making sure that all materials and reports to be presented were first approved by the appropriate vice-president.<sup>144</sup>

In keeping with established practice, Novikov continually reshuffled the workforce of the Orgcom, using personnel management as both a tool of control and as a means to increase the organization's efficiency in fulfilling its tasks. In August 1976, Novikov announced to the Orgcom Executive Bureau that the Council of Ministers had approved his recommendation to replace several members to the Orgcom.<sup>145</sup> That same month, the Executive Bureau of the Orgcom endorsed the decision to install long-time head of the Soviet soccer federation and member of the USSR NOC, V. A. Granatkin, as a senior officer in the sports program department and S. I. Kalashnikov as the executive

---

<sup>143</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Executive Bureau, 1 September 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 39, l. 44.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 48.

<sup>145</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Executive Bureau, 11 August 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 39, l. 33. V. G. Bychkov, A. K. Gresko, I. Kh. Kallion, V. N. Makeev, I. I. Pronin, L. N. Tolkunov, and I. A. Iushin all joined the Orgcom at this time, while P. D. Kondrashov, I. I. Udal'tsov, and V. N. Iagodkin were transferred to other work.

officer of the Orgcom in connection with his move from Gosstroil.<sup>146</sup> These moves suggest that Novikov wanted to build up the number of experienced administrators in the Orgcom.

Much of the work of the Orgcom was truly a group enterprise. Nearly every decision required the input and/or approval of two or more departments. The Orgcom leadership realized that each department had its own particular area of expertise and its own specific tasks, so it frequently requested or required input from departments when drawing up plans and reports. For example, the Orgcom leadership instructed department and section heads in December 1976 to submit material for dissemination at the next meeting of the Joint Commission of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries as well as questions that needed to be addressed in bilateral negotiations with socialist sports representatives.<sup>147</sup>

As one would expect when dealing with a high-profile undertaking such as the Olympic Games, disagreements arose between department heads, providing the opportunity for individuals to assert their authority and to defend the importance of their position in the face of opposition. For example, when head of construction for the Games and vice-president of the Orgcom I. K. Koziulia felt that the head of the technical department V. A. Polishchuk overstepped his authority by meeting with West German television experts without Koziulia's permission, he complained to Novikov, requesting that Polishchuk be reprimanded for "willfulness and deceit." Koziulia further accused Polishchuk of neglecting his responsibilities by requesting unnecessary meetings with

---

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., ll. 41, 43.

<sup>147</sup> Instruction to Leaders of Departments and Sections, 27 December 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 50, l. 146.

foreign firms while leaving work in designing, building, and equipping Olympic facilities unfinished.<sup>148</sup> Polishchuk maintained that Koziulia had approved the negotiations in question, admitting that he made a mistake in not securing written permission before holding the meetings. Polishchuk also defended his work in the technical department, insisting that he had requested no unnecessary meetings with foreign firms and that negotiations had not exceeded the budget for technical furnishings.<sup>149</sup> Rather than taking sides, Novikov instructed Koziulia to meet with Polishchuk and settle the matter.<sup>150</sup>

When there was no significant progress in building hotels for the Games, Novikov grew frustrated with the lack of leadership displayed by those in charge of the construction projects. Railing that "we don't have a single hotel with 12,000 occupancy in the Soviet Union," Novikov criticized Kokhanenko who was responsible for building the Izmailovo hotel complex, whose four hotels when finished would accommodate 36,000, but on which construction was only in the beginning stages in January 1978.<sup>151</sup> Kokhanenko complained that he needed help with the ventilation systems, that he did not have enough natural stone, that he still lacked technical documentation, and that he needed electrical supplies. To these excuses, Novikov wondered "Can't you negotiate with Glavkom?"<sup>152</sup> When Ravich from the Ministry of Communications gave similar explanations, Novikov queried "Can't you negotiate with Iashin yourself?" Then he turned on the group as a whole ranting, "You are all important leaders, you should be

---

<sup>148</sup> I. K. Koziulia to I. T. Novikov, 1 February 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 141, l. 81.

<sup>149</sup> V. A. Polishchuk to I. T. Novikov, 21 February 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 141, ll. 82-83.

<sup>150</sup> I. T. Novikov to I. K. Koziulia, handwritten note, 7 March 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 141, l. 80.

<sup>151</sup> Minutes of meeting with I. T. Novikov, 13 January 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 242, l. 16.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 18.

able to resolve these issues yourself," and reminding them of the big picture. "We will have 7,500 journalists, and if even one of them doesn't have an international phone line, it will be a world-wide scandal."<sup>153</sup>

Novikov was not exaggerating. Western journalists doubted that adequate freedom and facilities would be afforded them in Moscow to report on the Games. In May 1976, K. D. Lawrence, sports editor for the *Daily Express* of London complained to Killanin about his inability to get a visa for one of his reporters to cover the USSR versus Great Britain athletics meet in Kiev. Based on this one difficulty, Lawrence concluded "I can see no reason why the Olympics should be staged in Moscow when this is the way they behave."<sup>154</sup> To fault an entire country for one bureaucratic mishap seems rather small-minded, but it was a typical reaction by western journalists in the run up to the 1980 Games.

When Novikov maintained that each member of the Orgcom staff and every individual involved in the Olympic project needed to take personal responsibility for its success, he did not mean just their particular function. He wanted individuals to recognize the full scale of the task before them and the implications of their actions for the project as a whole. Novikov also expected managers to take initiative to solve their own problems and to work with other departments and agencies to get the materials they needed. When Falaleev from the Ministry of Energy needed limestone, Novikov said "You know Demin, he makes limestone. Is it really the case that you can't order it?" He

---

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., ll. 19-20.

<sup>154</sup> K. D. Lawrence to Lord Killanin, 20 May 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

also advised Falaleev to deal directly with the glass factory for windows.<sup>155</sup> Novikov worked on the assumption that exploiting personal relationships to break through bureaucratic barriers was an essential feature of the system. When Falaleev bemoaned his lack of steel beams that needed to be taken up with Kovalev, Novikov remarked, "You are like brothers, solve the problem together, and don't bring it here."<sup>156</sup> At the same meeting, Novikov admonished managers,

Stop taking it out on each other. Each one of you is a responsible person and obliged to make decisions on your own. And you are leaders, so don't say that so-and-so didn't send workers or so-and-so didn't send materials, etc. Truly you will answer for it before the party and the government, and I will answer along with you.<sup>157</sup>

Novikov seems to be asking for lateral, interdepartmental decision-making in a world where administrators were accustomed to taking all their problems up the hierarchy. In a bureaucratic culture where administrators were used to getting higher-ups to intervene, Novikov expected mid- and low-level managers take matters into their own hands to solve their problems.

Novikov was much more appreciative of what Karaglanov had to say. He too discussed shortages but noted that he was working with Promyslov and the Moscow City Soviet to solve them. He also acknowledged that they had to build the venues "ahead of schedule and of high quality," because their work was "an honorable duty."<sup>158</sup> Novikov felt Karaglanov was right. "It is an honorable task for all organizations—demanding, complicated, difficult, but also honorable, because it involves the prestige of the Soviet

---

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., I. 22.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., I. 23.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., II. 41-42.

<sup>158</sup> Minutes of meeting with I. T. Novikov, 13 January 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 242, II. 25-26.

Union."<sup>159</sup> Novikov stressed that managers of Olympic construction projects should be motivated by their patriotism and devotion to the socialist motherland rather than by fear of disciplinary action if they failed to produce results, because "we don't have the right to disgrace the Soviet Union before the entire world."<sup>160</sup> Shoddy workmanship and endless delays might be okay under normal circumstances, but such problems were unacceptable for facilities that had to hold up to international scrutiny.

### **The Working World of the Organizing Committee**

In addition to all the construction necessary for the Games themselves, the Organizing Committee along with the Moscow City Soviet had to arrange office space for the committee's growing staff. The Sports Committee presented a proposal for the construction of a new building to house the Orgcom, press center, and all the television and radio equipment.<sup>161</sup> Then in early 1976, the Organizing Committee moved into new headquarters on Gorky Street.<sup>162</sup> In September of that year, the Executive Bureau instructed the housekeeping department to "establish normal conditions for work" and "improve catering" for the Orgcom staff. Similar measures were also needed at the Orgcom's second location, and Rogul'skii made sure this was done in a timely fashion.<sup>163</sup> Upon completion of the ACS Olympiad for the Games, a number of Orgcom departments

---

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., l. 28.

<sup>161</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 3, l. 29.

<sup>162</sup> Telegram, V. Smirnov to M. Berlioux, 5 January 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>163</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Executive Bureau, 1 September 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 39, l. 48.

relocated to that new building.<sup>164</sup> After the Games, the building would serve as the new headquarters of the Sports Committee and provide some offices for the Moscow City Soviet.<sup>165</sup>

The Orgcom leadership rewarded diligent and dedicated workers with cash incentives and other means of appreciation. For example, the Orgcom Presidium awarded twenty to one-hundred ruble rewards to fifty-nine people for their "conscientious work" during the preparation for the Olympic Games.<sup>166</sup> In March 1977, the Executive Bureau charged Kholod, propaganda head Shevchenko, and Rodichenko to create certificates of merit, diplomas, badges, and medals for recognizing Orgcom workers. The team also explored granting outstanding organizers tickets and tourist passes to Olympic events in honor of their hard work.<sup>167</sup> For dedicated service, Orgcom employees could also expect recognition on their birthdays.<sup>168</sup> By contrast, poor work performance could result in expulsion from the Organizing Committee: in January 1980, V. L. Mal'kevich was taken off the foreign relations commission after failing to show up to meetings for two years.<sup>169</sup>

---

<sup>164</sup> Record of Meeting between the Orgcom President and Vice-Presidents, 20 November 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 242, l. 108.

<sup>165</sup> *Official Report of the Games of the XXII Olympiad*, Vol. 2 "Organization," part 1, p. 129, available from [http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports\\_frmst.htm](http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports_frmst.htm).

<sup>166</sup> Plan of Orgcom for Informational-Propaganda Measures Related to Olympiada-80, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 10, ll. 46-48.

<sup>167</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Executive Bureau, 28 march 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 127, ll. 40-41.

<sup>168</sup> V. Bykov, Kh. Dzhatiev, and B. Shliapnikov to I. Novikov, 2 October 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 256, l. 22.

<sup>169</sup> Report of Commission for External Relations of Orgcom for 1979, 4 January 1980, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 439, l. 18.



Lower-level employees appealed to the Orgcom leadership to improve their working conditions, exposing tensions between increasing professionalization within the committee and remaining patrimonial styles of leadership. In February 1978, senior clerk of the propaganda department V. Shandrin complained to the Orgcom Executive Bureau of the Orgcom about the "style of work of V. G. Shevchenko," the head of the Propaganda Department. Presenting himself as an experienced sports photo-journalist and highlighting his many trips to international competitions and the awards he had earned for his work, Shandrin felt his skills were underutilized. According to Shandrin, after his idea for setting up a photo-lab in the Orgcom was shot down by Shevchenko, Shandrin became convinced of the truth of a saying he had heard in the Orgcom "Initiative is punished!" Shandrin bemoaned "I receive regular pay without any responsibility. I'm okay with this, but I could be of more use." Shandrin contrasted his dedication to the photographer's craft and professionalism to the other members of the propaganda department, who he believed had no real experience or expertise with photography and "use[d] their positions for selfish goals, bringing not only material but also moral damage" to the Orgcom. Calling for a "corrective" to the "style of work" in the propaganda department, Shandrin argued that the Orgcom had already expended more money on the purchase of photographs and negatives than the cost of setting up a central photo-lab. Though not explicitly stated, it seems safe to assume that Shandrin envisioned himself as the manager of photo-services, being allowed to set up an Orgcom photo-lab and perhaps taking advantage of the "more than 10,000 negatives" in his personal

collection.<sup>170</sup> Novikov asked Orgcom vice-president, I. P. Rudoi, to settle the matter "personally."<sup>171</sup>

For some, employment in the Orgcom represented an opportunity for a better apartment. In 1975, Promyslov had designated a building to resettle 350 workers' families and expressed the need to find an additional three or four hundred square meters to house people.<sup>172</sup> As the head of the Administration of Affairs of the Orgcom, S. I. Kalashnikov worked with members of the Orgcom Party Committee to oversee compensation and housing for Orgcom personnel. Owing to limited resources, Kalashnikov often enlisted the help of Novikov to secure apartments from municipal and regional party organs for Orgcom workers, underscoring the needs of Orgcom personnel who often lived with large families in small apartments or in communal flats. In February 1978, Kalashnikov and head of the Orgcom Party Committee E. Korobov wrote to Novikov on behalf of A. Kozlovskii, deputy chief of the Orgcom International Department. According to their letter, Kozlovskii had been living in a small one-room apartment with his wife and daughter. They requested that Kozlovskii be given a three-room apartment, arguing that, in light of the "important and complicated task [of the international department] to ensure broad representative participation in the 1980

---

<sup>170</sup> V. Shandrin to the Orgcom Executive Bureau, 27 February 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 251, ll. 4-9.

<sup>171</sup> I. Novikov to I. Rudoi, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 251, 10 March 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 251, l. 4.

<sup>172</sup> Minutes of the First Meeting of the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympic Games, 7 March 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 31, l. 47.

Olympic Games," Kozlovskii should be granted "better living conditions."<sup>173</sup> Novikov, in turn, asked the person in charge of that district "to help."<sup>174</sup>

At times, Orgcom members appealed directly to Novikov to secure his help in obtaining better living conditions, emphasizing the personal hardships caused by their current circumstances. In May 1977, a member of the Orgcom Sports Department requested Novikov's help in securing an apartment in Moscow to be closer to his place of work, complaining of the distress caused by his almost four hour commute.<sup>175</sup> In May 1978, Novikov intervened on behalf of V. A. Bykov, one of the vice-presidents of the Orgcom. In requesting housing on behalf of Bykov, Novikov cited Bykov's fifteen years working in the Central Committee apparat prior to joining the Orgcom to explain why he deserved a larger apartment.<sup>176</sup> When Orgcom propaganda chief Shevchenko asked for more living space to provide "normal" conditions for work and rest for him and his two daughters and to allow them to care for his ailing parents, Novikov described Shevchenko as a qualified leader, a "principled and exacting communist," and an able organizer who often worked at home on weekends and in the evenings to "fulfill [his] responsibilities."<sup>177</sup>

Workers in other fields stressed any connection they had with the Moscow Games in appealing to Novikov to secure better apartments on their behalf. In June 1981, a

---

<sup>173</sup> Kalashnikov and Korobov to I. Novikov, February 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 250, l. 116.

<sup>174</sup> I. Novikov to V. Novozhilov, 9 February 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 250, l. 116.

<sup>175</sup> V. I. Lakhov to I. T. Novikov, 31 May 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 141, l. 130.

<sup>176</sup> I. T. Novikov to Administrator of Affairs of the Central Committee CPSU, G. S. Pavlov, 5 May 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 216, l. 23.

<sup>177</sup> V. G. Shevchenko to I. T. Novikov, 30 March 1978 and I. T. Novikov to V. F. Promyslov, April 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 252, ll. 19-20.

doctor at a polyclinic asked Novikov's help in securing a better apartment. According to her letter, she and her family of four lived in a communal apartment in a 19 square meter room with two other families, including a cancer patient who was fed through a tube and breathed through a tracheotomy tube and scared her young children. This doctor's claim to Novikov's assistance was based on her treating workers involved with building Olympic venues from 1972 to 1975.<sup>178</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Did being the first socialist nation to hold the Games serve as an advantage or disadvantage? Certainly the massive influx of foreign tourists would tax the underdeveloped tourist industry of a closed society, and lack of technological development in Soviet industry meant that most of the high-tech equipment needed for the Games had to be acquired abroad. Moreover, the system of many independently run government bureaus with no formal lateral contacts could cause delays and setbacks to a project that required coordination among nearly every state agency in Moscow. To overcome logistical problems, the leadership formed a separate committee, formally incorporating officials from various state bureaus and organizations into the effort of preparing for the Games. The Orgcom developed a system for overseeing the work of staff and commission members, including awards and cash incentives to ensure a job well done. The Orgcom leadership also expected individuals to take personal responsibility for their duties. At times, Novikov admonished Orgcom workers for not failing to do so, demanding that they utilize informal channels to acquire the materials and cooperation

---

<sup>178</sup> To Novikov from Minaeva, June 1981, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 679, l. 51.

they needed from other government bureaus. Throughout the process of organizing the Games, the Orgcom leadership demonstrated a keen awareness of the limits of the Soviet system and took steps to break through bureaucratic barriers and to work around obstacles.

The work of the Organizing Committee also reveals a significant degree of professionalization within the Soviet bureaucracy. Orgcom workers were chosen based on their previous experience, and the Orgcom leadership instituted training and educational programs to ensure that their workers had the skills necessary to carry out their tasks. Technical expertise and pragmatism were valued alongside ideological commitment or personal connections. Though party members did make up a significant percentage of the Orgcom staff, this number grew over time, suggesting that work in the Orgcom provided an opportunity for enterprising junior administrators to achieve a degree of professional advancement in the developing gerontocracy. At the same time, limited resources meant that Orgcom employees still had to rely on informal networks to secure better working and living conditions.

For Christopher Ward, the BAM experience "completed the disenchantment by the mid-1980s of the generational cohort of twenty- and thirty-year olds" with the Soviet status quo. By its "completion" in 1984, the disconnect between the mythical "beacon to our communist future" and the reality of a decade of "intense human and material sacrifices" was blatantly apparent. Ward found the BAM project to be emblematic of the Brezhnev era as a whole, in that it revealed that Soviet officialdom was out-of-touch with growing social and cultural tensions in Soviet society and failed to recognize the real

limitations and inadequacies of Soviet state-socialism.<sup>179</sup> If the BAM project symbolized the shortcomings of the Soviet system under Brezhnev's leadership, the Olympic project is an example of what could still be accomplished under Soviet-style "developed socialism." With support from the Party leadership and the dedicated efforts of hundreds of administrators, Moscow could pull off a high-profile international festival such as the Olympic Games. Many Sports Committee bureaucrats acknowledged the realities facing a Soviet Olympics. They knew that the world was coming to see the Olympic Games, and if they had no hotel room to stay in or could not find a decent restaurant to eat in, it would be humiliating for all concerned and could not be concealed from the public, abroad or at home. For perhaps self-serving reasons, they formed a corps of pragmatic and professional "enlightened bureaucrats" who mustered all of their authority to make the Games happen. They did so building upon decades of experience in international sports circles and first-hand knowledge of how Games were run in the past.

Were the 1980 Games good for Moscow? On one hand, staging the Olympic Games in Moscow could be seen as yet another example of Soviet leaders pouring energy and resources into maintaining the image of the USSR in competition with the west: focusing on outward-facing projects, modern Potemkin villages, and diverting limited resources to big-scale projects instead of reforming the economy and improving the quality of life for its citizens. Under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, rising standards of living meant that there were enough resources to do both. However, by the mid 1970s, when the standard of living began to decline while defense spending continued to grow, Soviet citizens became increasingly disillusioned. On the other hand, there was genuine

---

<sup>179</sup> Ward, "Path to the Future," 234, 236.

enthusiasm for hosting the Olympics, both in the leadership and among the population. Thousands of people bought Sport Lotto tickets, and most of the Olympic event tickets were purchased by Soviet citizens. Furthermore, while it is true that Soviet resources were poured into this large-scale project, the Games also brought in a significant amount of resources from the outside world, both in terms of funding and expertise, making long-term improvements to Moscow that would not have happened if the USSR had not hosted the Games.

## **Chapter 6**

### **A Job Well Done? Welcoming the World to the 1980 Moscow Olympiad**

Moscow won the right to host the Olympic Games at a high point in east-west détente, but as the 1980 Games drew near, the international political atmosphere worsened, and Moscow risked becoming the third host city to fall victim to "the boycott era." During the 1970s, the Olympic Games became less able to avoid political interference. Acts of protest, boycott and even terrorism were seen by many as effective and appropriate ways to express displeasure against political conditions and to effect change, and individuals and groups found the Olympic Games and its worldwide television coverage a useful forum for spreading their message to a global audience. At the Munich Games, a terrorist attack on eleven Israeli athletes by the Palestinian group Black September marred the festival and alerted Olympic organizers that the Games had become a serious security risk. Several African nations boycotted the Montreal Olympics to protest the system of Apartheid in South Africa, creating anxiety in the Moscow Organizing Committee that such a boycott could happen to them too, and even before Moscow was officially elected, various groups had already begun discussing the possibility of boycotting a Moscow Olympiad.

While the Orgcom's management of Olympic preparations serve as an example of what could be accomplished under "developed socialism," the inability of the Olympic Games in Moscow to overcome increasing international tensions and domestic social fissures shows the limits of "political modernization" in the Soviet bureaucracy. The



same trend toward political stability that provided space for state bureaus to act without fear of repression also paved the way for political stagnation and ossification in the top party leadership. Ian Thatcher argues that Brezhnev should be credited as "one of the most successful exponents of the art of Soviet politics," but his success at building his own tight-knit group of trusted advisors meant that, especially from the mid-1970s on, decision-making again became the purview of a small group of leaders, isolated from the rest of the Soviet administrative system and society as a whole and unable or unwilling to address the more pressing problems facing the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, under Brezhnev's leadership, the emphasis on an expert-based, rational, and scientific form of "developed socialism," downplayed the human factor, adding to apathy among ordinary Soviet citizens.<sup>2</sup> Brezhnev's declining health and tendency to delegate responsibilities to his subordinates also hampered the Organizing Committee. The reliance on the expertise of a small group of party and state leaders, moreover, gave free reign to military, defense, and police organs to push Soviet power abroad and control dissent and instability at home. Increased defense spending not only drew resources away from other segments of the Soviet economy, including the Olympic Games preparations, but it raised doubts about the Soviet Union's peaceful intentions.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, a stronger leader could have averted the decision to invade Afghanistan, which was pushed by the Soviet Minister of Defense Dmitrii Ustinov and KGB chief Iurii Andropov.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Thatcher, "Brezhnev as Leader," 32.

<sup>2</sup> Sandle, "Brezhnev and Developed Socialism," 185.

<sup>3</sup> Mike Bower, "Brezhnev and Superpower Relations," in Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle, eds., *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002), 90. Defense spending accounted for about 15 percent of the Soviet GDP by 1982.

<sup>4</sup> Bacon, "Reconsidering Brezhnev," 15. See also Zubok, *Failed Empire*, 259-64.

The Organizing Committee showed that it could mobilize personnel and complete the construction and other logistical aspects of the Games, but it also needed to ensure that many countries would accept its invitation to compete in order to make the Games a propaganda success. In the lead up to the Moscow Olympiad, the international and propaganda departments of the Organizing Committee sent legions of representatives abroad to promote the Games and secure guarantees from National Olympic Committees (NOCs) that they would send their athletes to compete. The Orgcom also worked closely with the IOC to manage the press surrounding the event. It likewise had to make sure that the sports venues and competitions met with International Federation (IF) standards to avoid the possibility of IFs withdrawing their endorsement. The relationship between Soviet sports leaders and their IOC counterparts had never been closer, as they worked together to ensure the success of the games and to resist what both saw as the inappropriate intrusion of politics into a non-political event. The possibility of a boycott united the USSR and IOC against a common threat, strengthening the Soviet representatives' position in the IOC for some time to come. However, despite their best efforts, the Moscow organizers could neither foresee nor prevent all eventualities. Ultimately they were overwhelmed by the spirit of the times, both in the growing popularity of boycotts and in the failure of détente. Outside the control of the Orgcom, the invasion of Afghanistan undermined support in the west for détente and inspired fifty nations to boycott the 1980 Olympic Games, demonstrating the limits of what could be accomplished by even the most well-organized and elaborate international sporting project.

## **Mostly Business as Usual in the Sports Committee**

In some respects, it was business as usual for the Sports Committee after Moscow had secured the 1980 Games. At the June 1975 meeting of the Sports Committee Collegium, UMSS head D. I. Prokhorov discussed the need to strengthen the position of Soviet sports organizations, as well as the role of athletes of socialist countries in the international sports arena. At the same meeting, Sports Committee chairman Pavlov echoed many of the complaints that former chairman Romanov often voiced about the need for Soviet representatives to be active proponents of Soviet policies in international sports organizations. Noting that all their recent efforts in international sport had brought results, from reviving the Olympic Congress to gaining the selection of Moscow to host the 1980 Games, he remarked that these initiatives required "the most active, aggressive, and coordinated" efforts. Yet, he complained, "we have spread our representatives everywhere, they sit there for decades, and what do they do? On the whole they keep quiet." Pavlov argued that they needed to "clean up the act" not only of the Committee but of all Soviet sports organizations.<sup>5</sup> Despite demonstrated successes in the IOC, North Korea and the Mongolian People's Republic remained unrecognized by the IOC. Prokhorov asserted the need to bring changes to the Olympic Charter and to work with the General Assembly of NOCs in the struggle against "reactionary tendencies" in the IOC. He also maintained that socialist representatives should gain more leadership positions in International Federations.<sup>6</sup> All of these recommendations were in keeping

---

<sup>5</sup> Record of Meeting of the Sports Committee Collegium, 4 June 1975, GARF f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2274, l. 169.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., l. 168.

with the main trajectories of Soviet involvement in international sports organizations since the late 1940s.

Soviet IOC members continued to push for "democratization" of the Olympic Movement. At the 1977 IOC session in Prague, Andrianov and Smirnov called for IOC members "to reconcile themselves with the real conditions present in the modern world" by strengthening IOC connections with state sports organizations and by establishing close relations with UNESCO. Soviet representatives also recommended refusing entry into the Games to athletes participating in competitions in South Africa, and renewed their call for electing members of the IOC for each recognized NOC.<sup>7</sup> Predictably, the reaction to these proposals was split. Some members from Yugoslavia, Poland, and France supported the Soviet position, but members from England, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Norway, Sweden, and Kenya argued that the IOC needed to maintain its independence from governments and retain its practice of coopting members into the organization. Killanin attempted to bridge the two sides by highlighting the need for more cooperation with NOCs, but insisted that the IOC would proceed on an "evolutionary" rather than a "revolutionary" path.<sup>8</sup> Killanin further argued that the IOC must not progress "too rapidly" and risk "bring[ing] about the end of the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games."<sup>9</sup> Smirnov and Andrianov concluded that many IOC members still regarded the

---

<sup>7</sup> Report of participation of Soviet Representatives in work of 79th IOC session Prague, 10-18 June 1977, by Smirnov and Andrianov, 6 July 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 144, l. 5. For more on the previous Soviet proposal to "democratize" the IOC, see chapter 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the 79<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Prague, 15-18 July 1977, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

organization as a "private club" and recommended that Soviet representatives continue efforts to democratize the organization.<sup>10</sup>

The selection of Moscow did galvanize the activities of the Sports Committee as its leaders reasserted control over athlete training. In order for the Moscow Games to be an unmitigated propaganda success, Soviet athletes had to dominate the competition. As the Orgcom began planning to host the Games in 1980, the Sports Committee stepped up its efforts to win the Olympic Games in 1976. As part of this, the Sports Committee requested additional funding for scientific research into training methods.<sup>11</sup> To inspire Olympic hopefuls to intensify their training, the Sports Committee organized a rally of all the potential members of the Olympic national team.<sup>12</sup> The Sports Committee also turned its attention to the construction of training bases for the national team for both the 1976 and 1980 Games.<sup>13</sup> In 1979, Pavlov asked Politburo member and secretary of the Moscow City Committee of the Communist Party V. Grishin to exert influence over preparing Moscow athletes for the 1979 Spartakiad and 1980 Olympic Games. Noting that U.S. President Carter recently authorized state funding of Olympic training and that West Germany and the GDR had likewise strengthened their training systems, Pavlov suggested that Moscow athletes had deficiencies in rowing and athletics, exhibited poor behavior, and broke their training regimens and asked Grishin to beef up "control" over

---

<sup>10</sup> Report of participation of Soviet representatives in the 79th IOC session Prague, 10-18 June 1977, by Smirnov and Andrianov, 6 July 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 144, ll. 13-14.

<sup>11</sup> Minutes of Meeting of the Sports Committee Collegium, 29 January 1975, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2274, l. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of Meeting of the Sports Committee Collegium, 27 August 1975, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2274, l. 40 and Record of Meeting of the Sports Committee Collegium, 27 August 1975, GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2273, l. 48.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Olympic preparations. He urged Grishin to make sure that the necessary repairs and renovations of Moscow sports bases were undertaken. Pavlov expressed his trust that the sports organizations of "the capital of our motherland, the hero-city of Moscow, would fulfill the tasks of preparing for the Olympic Games of 1980 . . . and win a minimum of fifteen gold medals and 182 points in the XXII Olympic Games in Moscow and three gold medals and fifty-two points at the XIII Winter Games in the USA.<sup>14</sup> These preparations proved successful, as Soviet athletes won ten gold medals in Lake Placid and eighty in Moscow.

### **Mobilizing the Socialist Bloc for the 1980 Games**

While the Sports Committee focused on preparing athletes and democratizing international sports, the Moscow Organizing Committee coordinated a world-wide campaign to promote the 1980 Summer Games. In 1975, the Orgcom held a meeting in Berlin to set up a Joint Commission of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries on Cooperation in Preparing and Staging the Games.<sup>15</sup> Vice-president of the Orgcom, Koval', and head of the Orgcom International Department, Prokopov, took charge of this commission.<sup>16</sup> Smirnov and the head of UMSS, Prokhorov, worked closely with this commission.<sup>17</sup> This joint commission of socialist sports organizations was not merely a

---

<sup>14</sup> S. P. Pavlov to V. V. Grishin, n.d. (1979), GARF, f. 7576, op. 31, d. 4754, ll. 15-20.

<sup>15</sup> Decree of the Presidium of the Orgcom Moscow, 1 April 1976, On the Results of International Relations for 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, l. 41.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., l. 42.

<sup>17</sup> Report of Third Joint Commission of Representatives of Socialist Countries for Holding the 1980 Games and Measures for Fulfilling Recommendations of the Meeting, 31 March 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 216, l. 19.

Soviet led "bloc" representing one set of interests. Increasingly, it represented individual countries and relied on ties each country's representatives had with sports figures around the world. For example, as part of the efforts to avoid an African-led boycott of the Moscow Games (discussed later in this chapter) and to exclude South Africa and Southern Rhodesia from international sports, Smirnov asked socialist sports leaders to mobilize their contacts among NOCs of Africa and Asia to help convince them to participate in the Games.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Smirnov appealed to his socialist "colleagues and comrades" to use their influence on sports organizers in France to convince them to abandon plans to hold a rugby match with South African players.<sup>19</sup> This suggests an awareness on the part of Soviet administrators that their socialist counterparts had cultivated their own networks of personal contacts in the international sports world and that these contacts could be utilized in generating international enthusiasm for a successful Olympiad.

At the third meeting of the joint commission, East European countries reported on what they were doing to propagandize the Games. Bulgaria announced that its central newspapers had already published 1,262 articles on the Games and the Bulgarian radio had begun a weekly program on Moscow-80. The Polish delegation mentioned plans to produce seventy-five books and brochures on Olympic themes. The GDR representatives

---

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Commission of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries for Cooperation in Preparation and Staging of the Olympic Games, 26 February 1979, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 440, l. 22.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 30.

had produced a 2,500 press run of informational pamphlets on the 1980 Games and were holding exhibitions on Sport in the USSR in ten East German cities.<sup>20</sup>

Meetings of the joint commission, like all meetings among socialist sports leaders, had both the practical goals of coordinating the efforts of socialist representatives in international sports organizations and the symbolic goal of creating a sense of socialist solidarity. Soviet representatives always led these meetings, but only at the request, whether sincere or not, of those present. For example, at the 22 January 1980 meeting of the Combined Commission, Heinz of the GDR told Smirnov, "We think that you should lead our meeting, as has been the case to this day." Smirnov answered, "If no one has any objection, I thank you for your trust."<sup>21</sup> Of course, there is no way of knowing how sincere either statement was, but the exchange demonstrates that these meetings were meant to have the appearance of a gathering of equals, committed to the interests of the socialist cause. The meetings may also have been intended as a forum for other socialist countries to sign on to Soviet plans of action, but things did not always go according to plan and representatives often pressed their own agendas at these meetings.

### **"In the Name of Peace, for the Glory of Sports:" Promoting the Games**

The propaganda measures outlined by the Orgcom in August 1975 were meant not only to publicize the work of the Orgcom, but also to disseminate the principles and ideals of the Olympic Movement. For this reason, the Orgcom planned a number of

---

<sup>20</sup> Report of Joint Commission of Representatives of Socialist Countries for holding the 1980 Games and Measures for Fulfilling Recommendations of the Meeting, 31 March 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 216, l. 17.

<sup>21</sup> Minutes of Meeting of Joint Commission of Socialist Sports Organizations on Cooperation in Preparation and Staging of the Olympic Games, 22 January 1980, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 603, l. 4.



exhibitions and contests, including a festival of amateur sports films. The international and propaganda departments were entrusted with implementing these measures in coordination with the Ministry of Culture, State Committee for Television and Radio (Gosteleradio), the State Committee for Cinematography (Goskino), the Union of Artists, the Union of Composers, and the Union of Cinematographers. The Orgcom planned to generate support among ordinary citizens at home and abroad with international contests of children's drawings and posters, a radio festival of songs, a competition for the official melody of the Games, and all-union exhibitions of Olympic themed photographs and stamps, coins, medals, and souvenirs.<sup>22</sup> The Orgcom also planned for a series of documentary films to be made spotlighting the help and cooperation Soviet sports specialists were lending to Asian, African, and Latin American countries. These films were to display camaraderie, loyalty, and mutual help cultivated in the Soviet sports movement from the grass roots collective to the national team USSR.<sup>23</sup>

Exhibitions provided an opportunity for the Orgcom to promote the success of the Soviet sports system as a whole, its mass nature, and the role of sport in a socialist society. No doubt the content of such exhibitions exaggerated the popularity of sport in the USSR, but they were in keeping with the original Marxist-Leninist ideals about the role of sport and physical culture. For example, I.F. Denisov, , Orgcom vice-president, praised the success of the Orgcom exhibition held in Prague during the 79<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in presenting the "lofty goals of physical culture and sport in our country, which in the conditions of developed socialism . . . serves to encourage the health of the individual, his

---

<sup>22</sup> Orgcom Plan for Informational-propaganda Measures Related to Olympiada-80, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 10, l. 14.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., l. 16.

upbringing, and total development." Denisov also noted that when visitors realized, through their exposure to these exhibits, how sport and cultural contact "serves the cause of peace," it will strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between peoples. Denisov proposed that the Orgcom organize more exhibits and make them even more effective and artistic.<sup>24</sup>

To generate enthusiasm among the Soviet populace for the Games, the Orgcom sponsored a competition for designing the official emblem of the Moscow Olympiad. At their May 1975 meeting, the Presidium of the Orgcom entrusted A. Gresko, secretary general of the Orgcom, with orchestrating the contest, instructing the propaganda department to widely publicize the contest in newspapers, radio, and television. Over two thousand rubles were allocated as a prize for the contest winners.<sup>25</sup> By tradition, the emblem reflects the ideology peculiar to the country organizer and expresses the national cultural traditions of the host country. The Moscow emblem, according to the rules for the contest, should reflect the humanistic nature of communist ideology. According to the Olympic Charter, the city selected by the IOC and not the country won the right to host the Games, therefore, the Orgcom decided that the 1980 Olympic emblem should include the symbol of Moscow.<sup>26</sup>

Television would play a key role in domestic propaganda of the Games, but specialists from the Center of Scientific Programming of Gosteleradio, G. Mironovich and I. Rzhetskii, did not want to preempt too many of their regular programs to

---

<sup>24</sup> To Central Committee CPSU, on Results of Exhibition Activities of the Orgcom for 1977, 28 February 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 216, l. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Report of Meeting of the Orgcom Presidium, 4 May 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 5, l. 20.

<sup>26</sup> Order No. 4 of the Orgcom, 23 September 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 10, ll. 5-6.

accommodate the Games. Because the audience of sports fans was narrow, they argued, coverage of the 1980 Games could not entirely supplant the regular informational shows, films, concerts, and other artistic programs offered on Soviet state television. They also proposed that commentary during the coverage of the Games needed to provide the casual viewer with information on the basic concepts of various sporting events in order to reach "new generations, who must open for themselves the wonderful world of sports."<sup>27</sup>

Hosting tourists was seen as another opportunity to publicize the Moscow Olympiad and the work of the Orgcom. The Orgcom instructed relevant departments to draw up the itineraries for tourist excursions entitled "Moscow Prepares for the Olympiad" and to prepare an exhibition complex dedicated to the Olympic Games.<sup>28</sup> It is interesting to note that, in official documents, the Orgcom always listed separately participants, officials, journalists, and tourists, demonstrating a sense that these groups had different needs and should be treated accordingly. Similarly, the international and propaganda departments were charged, along with the Komsomol, to put together a "cultural-political" program for serving young Soviet and foreign tourists as well as participants in the international Olympic Youth Camp that would be held before the Games.<sup>29</sup> Again, they acknowledged that Soviet and foreign youth required different approaches.

---

<sup>27</sup> Report on Coverage of the XII Winter Games on Channel 1 for Reference during the Moscow Games, GARF, f. 6903, op. 48, d.338, ll. 6-7, 12.

<sup>28</sup> Orgcom Plan for Informational-propaganda Measures Related to Olympiada-80, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 10, l. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., l. 14.

Two publications, the *Bulletin Olympiada-80* and *Olympic Panorama-80*, publicized the progress of the Orgcom abroad. Sports Committee veterans Koval' and Smirnov supervised the publication of these periodicals and the overall propaganda plan in general. The publicity should, according to the Orgcom, incorporate the fundamental principles and ideals of the Olympic Movement, including "the development of international relations, improving mutual understanding, and furthering peace and friendship and cooperation between peoples."<sup>30</sup> These elements of Olympism had been the hallmark of the Soviet interpretation of Olympic ideals for decades, so it is no surprise that they were given primacy in Soviet propaganda of the Moscow Olympiad.

The official Olympic publications produced by the secretariat in Lausanne, *Olympic Review* and the monthly press analysis compiled by IOC director Monique Berlioux, provided another important means for disseminating information about the Orgcom and Games preparations to the Olympic community. Early on, Berlioux approached the Orgcom about material and information to be included in *Olympic Review* as well as articles for the monthly press roundup.<sup>31</sup> Berlioux started a column in the *Olympic Review* devoted to preparations for 1980, relying on information from the Orgcom to fill out the Moscow 80 section. Gresko sent materials monthly and appointed Marina Petrova, translator for the Orgcom, to assist him in this role.<sup>32</sup> Berlioux expressed her appreciation for the "useful cooperation" of the Orgcom with regard to publicity, and asked it to designate someone to prepare an article on the 1979 Spartakiad

---

<sup>30</sup> Order of the Orgcom, 25 September 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 10, l. 9.

<sup>31</sup> M. Berlioux to A. Gresko, 14 July 1975, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>32</sup> A. Gresko to M. Berlioux, 11 June 1975, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

for the *Olympic Review* that would discuss the experience gained from the event that would enhance the Olympic Games the following year.<sup>33</sup> In December 1976, at Berlioux's request, the head of the Orgcom propaganda department Vladislav Shevchenko sent an article on Killanin's trip to Moscow for publication in *Olympic Review*, demonstrating the IOC president's approval of the preparations to date.<sup>34</sup>

That same month, Shevchenko and the head of the Commission for Cultural Services, V. F. Kukharskii, appealed to Novikov to change the name of that commission to the "Commission for Cultural Program and Cultural Services" and to increase its size, adding new members from such offices as the section on propaganda and agitation of the Komsomol and the Chief Department for Foreign Tourism under the Council of Ministers. These moves were intended to recognize the importance of the commission's work in staging the 1980 Games and how much more than just "cultural services" were needed to successfully convey the proper message to the world. That message was to underscore "the achievements of the Soviet multinational culture, the enormous artistic contributions of the [Soviet] peoples in the past and during the Soviet period" as well as to "depict the harmonious development of man in the conditions of triumphant socialism" and the "demonstration of the culture of the Soviet people that is national in form and socialist in content." To do this, the cultural commission would enlist the services of top-notch artists and tap the resources of "one of the largest centers of world culture:" Moscow. The 1979 Spartakiad, to which they would invite two thousand foreign athletes

---

<sup>33</sup> M. Berlioux to A. Gresko, 31 July 1975, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78 and M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, telegram, IOC Archives/ Vitaly Smirnov Biography and Press Articles, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>34</sup> Telegram, M. Berlioux to V. Shevchenko, 13 December 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

and many foreign journalists, would serve as a trial run of their cultural program and as a vital source of foreign currency.<sup>35</sup>

As with all the Olympic events, much time and effort from a number of individuals, departments, and ministries went into planning and carrying out the official opening and closing ceremonies of the Games. Unlike the sporting events, however, these ceremonies involved artistic and propaganda elements that complicated matters. I. M. Tumanov served as the lead director of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games, and V. N. Petrov was responsible for the sport exhibition portion of the ceremonies. All of their work had to meet the expectations of both the IOC and the Soviet leadership. Specifically, they had to adhere to the IOC rules, traditions, and protocol governing these events. To please Soviet leaders, the ceremonies had to reflect the peace-loving politics of the party and government, the struggle of the Soviet people for peace and friendship, the multi-national character of the state, and the development of mass sports in the country. To allow extra time for the musical, artistic, and sporting displays, the Orgcom instructed the directors to make the ceremonial portion of the events as short as possible. Furthermore, the artistic and sports directors also had to work with a fixed number of athletes and officials who had to be accommodated within the limits of the stadium. They had to make the most economical use of the allotted financial resources. The head of the Department of Sports and Program, Rodichenko, along with Shevchenko and Gres'ko were in charge of setting the numbers of participants. Since this number would not be final until several months before the Games, they had to work with estimates for the parade of nations. Bykov and Koziulia were charged with investigating

---

<sup>35</sup> Material for Meeting of the Orgcom Presidium, 13 December 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 37, ll. 70-71, 76, 81-82.

whether the stadium could accommodate a large net full of hot-air balloons to be released during the opening. Smirnov, Denisov, Rogul'skii, Koval', Shevchenko, Prokopov, Rodichenko, Gres'ko, and Andrianov were all authorized to oversee the planning of the events and address any problems as they arose.<sup>36</sup>

Not only did the final script have to be approved by the IOC director, the chief of protocol, and the IOC Executive Board before the ceremonies, but the Orgcom leadership elicited input from other department and section heads before drafting their proposal.<sup>37</sup> Praising the overall concept of the script, Pavlov criticized the directors for not taking into account the "traditions of the Olympic Games." He suggested that the ceremonies would be too long and showy, with "unjustified elements of pomposity and adornment," asserting the directors needed to show more "rationality and economy" and produce a "more realistic, well-thought-out, and detailed script."<sup>38</sup> In contrast, the vice minister of culture and head of the cultural program commission of the Orgcom, V. Kukharskii, complained that the proposed opening ceremony did not incorporate enough original music by Soviet composers, including the established musical theme of the Olympiad-80, Shostakovich's "Festive Overture," and the pieces composed as part of a Soviet-wide contest organized by the Ministry of Culture and the Orgcom. He also insisted that all music for the ceremonies had to be approved by his ministry and the Composers Union. Kukharskii likewise questioned the feasibility of housing and transporting the number of

---

<sup>36</sup> Record of Meeting with the Orgcom President, 19 June 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 242, ll. 71-72.

<sup>37</sup> See Berlioux to Smirnov, 12 December 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979 and Berlioux to Novikov, telegram, 3 March 1980, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1980-1993, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>38</sup> S. Pavlov to I. Novikov, 12 December 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 242, l. 92.

regional dance and musical groups proposed by the directors on top of those already being brought to Moscow for other cultural events during the Games.<sup>39</sup> Here one can see the fine balance that had to be maintained between pleasing the IOC and other members of the international sports community, fulfilling the propaganda goals of the regime, and appeasing the departments, ministries, and organizations whose work might be affected.

The Olympic Torch Relay constituted another key cultural component of the Games. The propaganda and international departments were responsible for most of the tasks connected with organizing the relay, including proposing the route and getting agreements from the IOC and NOCs of the countries the torch would pass through.<sup>40</sup> Other departments, however, were charged with drawing up the relay plans, "guaranteeing the preparation and staging of the relay on a high ideological-political and organizational level." Propaganda head Shevchenko would prepare and submit the final plan for approval but, as with all activities of the Orgcom, he was instructed to first elicit input from the Sports Committee and various Orgcom commissions.<sup>41</sup>

Not all of the Orgcom's propaganda plans met with IOC approval. In May 1979, Berlioux chastised the Orgcom for not requesting IOC consent before translating the Olympic Charter into Russian. She therefore demanded that it limit the distribution of the Russian version to members of the Orgcom staff and USSR NOC and not to the general public.<sup>42</sup> Prokopov then requested permission to translate Pierre de Coubertin's

---

<sup>39</sup> V. Kukharskii to I. Novikov, 16 February 1979, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 242, ll. 96-98.

<sup>40</sup> Order No. 43 Orgcom, 31 December 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 48, ll. 211-12.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., l. 210.

<sup>42</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, 8 May 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.



"Ode to Sport" into Russian as part of the domestic propaganda efforts to promote the Olympics.<sup>43</sup> To highlight the "international social-political and cultural" contributions of the Soviet Union as well as the "peace-loving foreign policy of the Soviet Union," the Orgcom proposed to adopt an official motto for the Games in Moscow, eliciting the help of the philosophy department of the Academy of Social Sciences, the State Central Order of Lenin Institute of Physical Culture, and the All-Union Scientific-Research Institute of Physical Culture to work up a list of potential slogans. They then circulated the suggestions to all departments and sections of the Orgcom for their input. The four most popular slogans were "From Friendship in Sport—To Peace on Earth," "Olympiad of Man and Mankind," "Olympiad-Peace-Progress," and "Sport in the Name of Peace." The propaganda department under the leadership of Shevchenko chose "From Friendship in Sport—To Peace on Earth" as the top choice.<sup>44</sup> The IOC, at its 1979 meeting, rejected the proposed motto for the 1980 Games, deciding that only Coubertin's maxim that had been displayed in London or "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*," the motto of the IOC, could be used.<sup>45</sup> At the session, Smirnov argued that slogans had been used in London, Helsinki, Mexico City, and other Games, but other IOC members insisted that these were employed only internally and had not been displayed in the Olympic venues. The Marquis d'Exeter noted that in London the Orgcom had not used a motto but displayed a quotation by Coubertin on the official scoreboards. The Orgcom proposed another motto

---

<sup>43</sup> M. Berlioux to Prokopov, 13 June 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>44</sup> To Smirnov from V. Shevchenko, Orgcom Department of Propaganda, 10 June 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 37, ll. 42-43.

<sup>45</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, 17 May 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

"In the Name of Peace, for the Glory of Sports." This motto had been approved by the Executive Board, but other members of the IOC objected to it, arguing that there was no precedent for it and that the IOC already had a motto.<sup>46</sup>

### **International Relations of the Orgcom**

Headed by V. I. Prokopov, the Orgcom's International Department played a crucial role in managing key relationships within the international sports community. A former international relations specialist for the Soviet Committee for Youth Organizations, Prokopov brought expertise and experience to the Orgcom.<sup>47</sup> Staffed with a number of Sports Committee workers, including the head of UMSS, Prokhorov, the department drew up the international relations plan and signed sports exchange agreements and communiqués of partnership with sports administrators from other countries. The members of the International Department had a long history of and established practices for holding international negotiations. They were well-trained and experienced in that realm of activity.

In contrast, while personnel from other departments also traveled abroad and met with foreign delegations, they sometimes were criticized for waste or unprofessionalism. One administrator complained that departments brought foreign visitors in on the Orgcom budget when these guests "occupy no more than one or two hours a day" on Orgcom business.<sup>48</sup> When a representative from Intourist who went to Montreal as part

---

<sup>46</sup> Minutes of the 81<sup>st</sup> Session of the IOC, Montevideo, 5-7 April 1979, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>47</sup> The Committee for Youth Organizations was founded in 1956 from the Antifascist Committee of Soviet Youth that existed from 1943 to 1956.

<sup>48</sup> V. Ermakov to Smirnov, 14 February 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 141, l. 57.

of an Orgcom delegation waited two and a half months to submit his report, Koval' noted that "this kind of 'collaboration' the Orgcom could not put up with." Koval' insisted that the Orgcom needed more productive ties with other Soviet agencies and organizations. He also recommended that the Orgcom petition other agencies to include Orgcom representatives in their delegations so that the Orgcom members themselves could observe and make use of the experience of previous organizers.<sup>49</sup>

The International Department's counterpart, the Commission for External Relations of the Orgcom, dealt with coordinating their efforts with socialist countries, working with Olympic attachés, and negotiating with foreign companies. The external relations commission cooperated with Soviet embassies abroad to enlist the help of government representatives, IOC members, IF leaders, and NOC members to propagandize the 1980 Games.<sup>50</sup> The external relations commission coordinated visas and movement around the country during the Games with the help of the Ministry of External Affairs (MID) and the Chief Customs Department.<sup>51</sup> Relations between the Orgcom and IOC, NOC, and IF leaders also fell under external relations.<sup>52</sup> Representatives of the external relations commission organized teams to observe the Olympic preparations in Montreal, an international sailing regatta, the Pan American Games in Mexico, and various exhibitions and international symposia in the USA and

---

<sup>49</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Commission for External Relations, Moscow, 27 November 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 16, l. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., l. 4.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., ll. 4-6.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., l. 5.

West Germany to study the staging of such events.<sup>53</sup> Finally, the external relations commission worked with other commissions of the Orgcom to arrange visits by foreign IOC members, IF representatives, and agents of foreign firms.<sup>54</sup>

Former UMSS Sports Committee workers had established contacts in Soviet embassies abroad that benefited the Orgcom. In keeping with the longstanding practices of utilizing embassy contacts and holding private, informal meetings to facilitate close working relationships with international sports figures, in July 1978, Soviet Ambassador to Algeria Vassily Rykov held a reception at the embassy for Lord Killanin during the African Games held that year. The meeting gave Killanin the opportunity to continue negotiations with Novikov, and Rykov's allowing them to meet "in the privacy of [his] study" saved the two sports leaders "a great deal of time."<sup>55</sup> When Soviet representatives of the Orgcom traveled to Vietnam, Laos, and Burma, they expressed appreciation to the embassy workers in those countries for "practical help" during their stay and help in organizing protocol measures which "made the work of the delegation easier."<sup>56</sup>

Sometimes embassy staff failed to aid Soviet sports delegations. When an Orgcom delegation travelled to Brazil, the USSR Embassy gave the Brazilian NOC no notice of their plans until the delegation arrived. By contrast, the president of the Brazilian Olympic Committee offered help to the Soviet delegation, and the head of the Trade

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Lord Killanin to Ambassador Vassily Rykov, Soviet Ambassador to Algeria, 18 July 1978, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1977-79, IOC Archives, Lausanne.

<sup>56</sup> Report of Delegation of Soviet Sports Organizations to SRV, LNDR and Burma, 31 January-16 February 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 279, l. 91.

Mission USSR in Brazil facilitated preliminary negotiations with Globo, a Brazilian coffee producer, on the possibility of supplying coffee during the Games.<sup>57</sup>

### **"Fruitful Collaboration" with the IOC**

Immediately upon Novikov's appointment as president of the Moscow Organizing Committee, the IOC sent a note of congratulations, expressing its "great joy" in working with his colleagues for the "success of this international festival of sport" and their "sincere wishes for fruitful collaboration."<sup>58</sup> Despite the differences of opinion and tense relationship at times, the collaboration between the IOC secretariat and the Moscow Orgcom did prove fruitful on many levels. The two organizations found much common ground not only in staging a well-ordered and spectacular festival, but also in safeguarding the international reputation of the IOC and the Orgcom in the build-up to these highly controversial Games.

As preparations for the Games continued, the IOC and the Orgcom increasingly worked together to protect the licensing agreement and control the use of Olympic symbols. As director of the IOC, Berlioux handled all such licensing matters, including all the symbols and logos connected with the 1980 Games. As vice-president of the Orgcom responsible for propaganda, V. Koval' cooperated with Berlioux to ensure compliance with the Olympic Charter and licensing agreements on all souvenirs and other materials produced in the USSR. Both worked with other National Olympic

---

<sup>57</sup> Report of Delegation of Soviet Sports Organizations to Peru, Argentina, Brazil, and Guyana, July 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 301, l. 54.

<sup>58</sup> M. Berlioux to I. Novikov, 3 April 1975, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Committees who received permission from the IOC and the Orgcom for use of those symbols in their domestic markets. In 1978, when Soviet trade organizations acquired basketballs displaying unlicensed reproductions of the Olympic rings in Bulgaria, Koval' informed Monique Berlioux "in private conversation," then followed up with a letter, assuring the IOC director that the Bulgarian NOC had tracked down the source of the basketballs and had taken "necessary measures" to settle the matter.<sup>59</sup> Koval' also expressed relief that the IOC approved the mascot and pictograms for the Moscow Olympiad, commenting that the approval would allow them to increase production of souvenirs and other products with the official symbols of the Games "to contribute to the wide propaganda of the Games."<sup>60</sup>

In general, the Orgcom assisted the IOC in protecting the use of Olympic symbols. In January 1976, Novikov sent out a circular to the ministries and agencies of the USSR and union republics, councils of ministers of union and autonomous republics, regional and district executive committees, and the executive committees of Moscow and Leningrad asking them to prevent the production and distribution of goods bearing Olympic symbols without authorization by the Orgcom. Novikov insisted that all these bodies had to comply with the IOC rules regarding the use of Olympic symbols and that the appearance of unauthorized items with Olympic emblems could "seriously complicate the fulfillment of tasks entrusted to the Orgcom."<sup>61</sup> Koval' cited both the Olympic

---

<sup>59</sup> V. Koval to M. Berlioux, n.d., IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1977-79, IOC Archives, Lausanne.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> I. T. Novikov to Ministries and Agencies of the USSR and Union Republics, Councils of Ministers of Union and Autonomous Republics, Regional, Provincial, Moscow, and Leningrad Executive Committees, 23 January 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 49, ll. 1-2.

Charter and the decision of the Central Committee and Council of Ministers giving the Orgcom the exclusive rights to use the Moscow Games emblem or other Olympic symbols for propaganda or advertising when he requested that all copyrights for all material portraying Olympic symbols be transferred to the Orgcom for its free use.<sup>62</sup> It was in the common interest of the IOC and the Soviet leadership that the Orgcom remain the sole entity with the right to use the Olympic symbols in order to safeguard the reputation and financial interests of both. In July 1978, Killanin asked Novikov to help in the effort to secure international protection of the Olympic symbol of the five rings. Novikov intervened on behalf of the IOC when the Soviet delegate to a meeting of the World Intellectual Property Organization objected to the protection of the Olympic symbol.<sup>63</sup>

Generating more goods with the Olympic symbols would also help fill the Orgcom's coffers and finance the Games. Indeed, selling licensing rights and official souvenirs was a significant source of revenue for the IOC and the host city. For this reason, Berlioux asked the head of the Orgcom's economic program department, V. Kondratiev, to send her more information on the proposed uses of Olympic symbols for the IOC's lawyer to study. She also requested all designs, a list of articles they intended to put the designs on, information on whether those items would be sold in the USSR or world-wide, and to what use the Orgcom would put the proceeds of those sales.<sup>64</sup> There

---

<sup>62</sup> Koval' to Iu. S. Rudakov, Vice Chairman of the All-Union Copyright Agency, January 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 49, ll. 6-7.

<sup>63</sup> Killanin to I. Novikov, 28 July 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>64</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Kondratiev, Chief Economic Program Department, Organizing Committee of the Games of the XXIIInd Olympiad, 11 August 1978, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1977-79, IOC Archives, Lausanne.

was considerable money to be made by exploiting the Olympic Games, and Berlioux wanted to ensure that no one cashed in at the IOC's expense.

As preparations continued for the Moscow Games, the Organizing Committee leaders developed a cordial personal relationship with the IOC director. This manifested itself in the many personal greetings exchanged between IOC staff and Orgcom officials. On 12 February 1979, Berlioux sent Smirnov a telegram wishing him "many happy returns" on his birthday.<sup>65</sup> In April 1976, Berlioux expressed her condolences to Smirnov and Novikov on the death of Andrei Grechko, Marshall of the Soviet Union and Defense Minister. She stated that his death "sadden[ed] the world of sport" because he had "defended the cause of sport wherever possible."<sup>66</sup> She also sent greetings to the Organizing Committee on the occasion of the fifty-second anniversary of the October Revolution, giving her "heartiest congratulations to you and your countrymen."<sup>67</sup> In sending to Iuri Zhukov a French translation of a circular by Smirnov addressed to all NOCs, Berlioux addressed Zhukov as "Dear Friend" and closed her letter "Believe, dear friend, in my faithful memory."<sup>68</sup> Perhaps Zhukov's ability to speak French allowed for a closer relationship with Berlioux. In January 1979, Smirnov sent birthday wishes to

---

<sup>65</sup> Telegram, M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, 12 February 1979, IOC Archives/ Vitaly Smirnov Biography and Press Articles, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>66</sup> Telegram, M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, 27 April 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>67</sup> Telegram, M. Berlioux to I. Novikov, 5 November 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>68</sup> M. Berlioux to Iu. Zhukov, 3 February 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.



Berlioux on behalf of the Orgcom.<sup>69</sup> In expressing her sympathies to Smirnov upon hearing of him being ill, Berlioux joked "now you will have to start a diet!"<sup>70</sup>

The many trips back and forth between Lausanne and Moscow also strengthened the close relationship between IOC and Orgcom workers. Smirnov asked Berlioux to render assistance to the Orgcom representatives while they observed the IOC meetings in Montreal.<sup>71</sup> The technical director of the IOC, H. R. Banks, was impressed by his visit to Moscow in November 1976 and remarked that "the spirit which prevails in Moscow at the present is surely indicative of the dedication of all concerned to the task which lies ahead, and will result in the complete success of the Games."<sup>72</sup> In 1978, the Orgcom assisted Berlioux in securing a permanent visa to facilitate her travel to and from Moscow during the lead up to the Games.<sup>73</sup>

Throughout their membership in the Olympic Family, Soviet sports administrators became well known in Olympic circles for organizing impressive visits to the Soviet Union. The Orgcom carried on this tradition, taking special care to ensure that important guests were given full attention. The November 1976 visit by Killanin to Moscow serves as an example of how the Orgcom sought to impress special guests. Orgcom personnel drew up Killanin's itinerary in close consultation with all departments who would take

---

<sup>69</sup> V. Smirnov to M. Berlioux, telegram, 9 January 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>70</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, telegram, 4 December 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>71</sup> V. Smirnov to M. Berlioux, telegram, 25 June 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>72</sup> H.R. Banks to V. Smirnov, 24 November 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>73</sup> M. Berlioux to I. Novikov, telegram, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

part in his visit. The final schedule was approved by the Executive Bureau and all corresponding subunits were charged with "close and timely fulfillment" of the plan for Killanin's stay.<sup>74</sup> In October 1978, Berlioux thanked members of the Organizing Committee for a wonderful stay in Moscow. In her note to Shevchenko, she asked him to convey her thanks to his wife for the candy she had given her and noted that the press commission meeting "was very well organized." She believed "all participants left Moscow very satisfied."<sup>75</sup> She complimented Smirnov on "the extremely nice care you took of us all," expressing her "deep appreciation for their art of receiving guests."<sup>76</sup> After Lord Killanin's visit to Moscow in 1977, Smirnov sent photographs taken during his trip to Killanin and the secretariat.<sup>77</sup>

Exchanges of gifts and souvenirs during and after IOC visits to Moscow further strengthened the friendly relations between the Orgcom and the IOC secretariat. In January 1978, Berlioux wrote to Novikov to thank him and the other Orgcom workers for their "kind hospitality" during her recent visit to Moscow. She noted that she was "very touched by the magnificent necklace and bracelet set" he gave her which she vowed to "treasure greatly."<sup>78</sup> Referring to the same trip, Killanin thanked Smirnov for his assistance and asked what he owed for "the beautiful fur hat" so that he could repay him

---

<sup>74</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Executive Bureau, 10 November 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 39, l. 68.

<sup>75</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Shevchenko, 10 October 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>76</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, telegram, 10 October 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>77</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, 14 February 1977, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>78</sup> M. Berlioux to I. Novikov, 18 January 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

when they met again in Tunis.<sup>79</sup> In his thank you note to Novikov, Killanin expressed his appreciation for the "amber necklace and bracelet for my wife, who will be writing to you and also for the vodka and cavier, which has already been sampled by us."<sup>80</sup>

As the Games drew nearer, the IOC secretariat approached the Organizing Committee with requests for tickets and accommodations for friends and family to attend the Games. In December 1978, Smirnov assured Berlioux that the Orgcom would "do everything necessary" to arrange tickets and accommodations for her eighty-two-year-old mother and her companion.<sup>81</sup> In November, Novikov had assured Lord Killanin that the Orgcom would provide his children with "proper hotel accommodation" and "every chance to see all Olympic associated events—both sports and cultural."<sup>82</sup> These requests followed a circular sent by Killanin to all IOC members, asking them to notify the Orgcom of additional family and friends who wished to attend the Games. According to Rule 38 of the IOC by laws, members were entitled to two accreditation cards and accommodation at a lower rate reserved for IOC members. Additional guests would be accommodated at commercial rates.<sup>83</sup> Novikov expressed appreciation to Killanin for the letter, noting that "all this being done in good time considerably facilitates our work in

---

<sup>79</sup> Lord Killanin to V. Smirnov, 12 January 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>80</sup> Lord Killanin to I. Novikov, 11 January 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>81</sup> V. Smirnov to M. Berlioux, 21 December 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>82</sup> I. Novikov to Lord Killanin, 2 November 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>83</sup> Lord Killanin to IOC Members, 1 September 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

distributing tickets and supplying accommodations for the IOC members and their guests."<sup>84</sup>

Despite the cordial relationship they cultivated with the IOC president and director, Orgcom leaders still found themselves defending their actions against criticism in the press and from the IOC itself at times. At Killanin's request, Novikov reconfirmed in writing the pledge by the Orgcom to invite all NOCs recognized by the IOC to the Games and to stage the games in compliance with the rules and regulations of the IOC. He included an official message from the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, signed by vice-chairman M. Iasnov and bearing the official seal, promising "all necessary assistance and support" to the organizers "to ensure the successful holding of the XXII Olympic Games in adherence to the rules and regulations of the International Olympic Committee."<sup>85</sup> Killanin asked for written confirmation to help "put an end to any propaganda against Moscow." After the Canadian authorities angered the team from Taiwan by officially recognizing the PRC and refusing to let the Taiwan athletes compete in the Montreal Games under the name "The Republic of China," press report speculated that a similar situation could develop in Moscow.<sup>86</sup>

Berlioux proved tenacious in overseeing the Orgcom's compliance with IOC regulations. The Orgcom got in trouble with Berlioux when the February 1976 edition of *Olympiad-80* stated that the working languages of the Games would be Russian and

---

<sup>84</sup> I. Novikov to Lord Killanin, 2 November 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>85</sup> I. Novikov to Lord Killanin, October 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>86</sup> Lord Killanin to I. Novikov, 23 August 1976, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

English. Berlioux cited Olympic Rules number 19 and 55, which state that the official languages of the Olympics were French and English, in that order.<sup>87</sup> In February 1977, the long-standing Soviet practice of tabulating medal counts by country for internal publicizing of Soviet Olympic achievements also came under scrutiny by the IOC when the second edition of *Olympiad-80* included a medal tally by country.<sup>88</sup> In May that year, Killanin also drew Smirnov's attention to an issue of *Olympic Panorama* that included a listing of the "Top Ten at Montreal" based on the countries' medal counts. He remarked that this was inappropriate in an official publication and asked Smirnov to "arrange for this to be discontinued, as it is a contravention of IOC rules and principles."<sup>89</sup> Smirnov responded in a brief telegram that "in the future we shall take steps so that all articles in the organizing committee's official publications correspond to the Olympic Rules."<sup>90</sup>

### **The Orgcom and the Western Press**

Soviet sports administrators often expressed frustration and dismay over a variety of activities of the western press. Concerned over how Soviet press reports were used in the west, Pavlov remarked that the Soviet press too often let secrets slip out, insisting that it would be better to publish only articles about the achievements of Soviet athletes. He noted a discussion with the East German NOC president Ewald who expressed surprise at

---

<sup>87</sup> M. Berlioux to A. Gresko, telegram, 25 January 1977, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>88</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, 18 February 1977, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>89</sup> Lord Killanin to V. Smirnov, 4 May 1977, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>90</sup> V. Smirnov to Lord Killanin, telegram, 30 May 1977, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

the "openness and carelessness" of the Soviet press in comparison to media in the GDR.<sup>91</sup> Whereas Soviet administrators used the sports press during the 1950s and 60s as a vehicle for publicizing the work of Soviet representatives in international sports bodies, Pavlov advocated for a more conservative approach to press releases about the Olympics.<sup>92</sup>

The Orgcom delegation waged an ongoing battle against awarding Olympic press accreditation to Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, U.S.-funded radio stations that broadcast news into eastern bloc countries. Regarding the Innsbruck Games in 1976, Smirnov protested the "reactionary, subversive, and antagonistic activities" toward socialist countries by the radio stations.<sup>93</sup> The IOC decided to revoke the radio stations' accreditation cards because they had been issued by the Innsbruck Organizing Committee and not by the IOC as they should have been according to the Olympic Charter.<sup>94</sup> The Orgcom delegation reported that this action by the IOC incited U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to send a memo to the IOC representative from the United States, Roosevelt, instructing him to take action against the decision. According to the report, "Killanin categorically refused to take any steps in that direction and informed Soviet representatives of this."<sup>95</sup> In this case, Smirnov convinced his colleagues in the IOC that Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty represented purely political organizations and that

---

<sup>91</sup> Record of Meeting of Sports Committee Collegium, 4 June 1975, GARF f. 7576, op. 31, d. 2274, ll. 170-71.

<sup>92</sup> See chapter 3 for a discussion of how the Soviet sports press was used to mobilize public opinion in the Soviet Union in support of the effort to democratize the IOC.

<sup>93</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Presidium, 1 April 1976, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, l. 23.

<sup>94</sup> Minutes of the 77<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOC, Innsbruck, 2-3 February 1976, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>95</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Presidium, 1 April 1976, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, ll. 23-24.

the reaction from the United States constituted an attempt to bring politics into IOC business.

However, the issue resurfaced later that year at the Summer Games in Montreal, when the Soviet delegation reported on the "bitter struggle" over this question. Representatives from the Sports Committee, USSR NOC, and the Orgcom took "active steps" to prevent the accreditation of "that slanderous radio station."<sup>96</sup> Their efforts failed, and the report blamed the "reactionary attitude" of some IOC members and the tendency to "formally adhere to the letter of the Olympic Charter" governing press accreditation. Soviet and East European representatives succeeded, however, in securing conditions for the accreditation, including a ban on broadcasting anything of a political nature or interviewing athletes from socialist countries. The Soviet delegation also convinced the IOC to change Rule 49 governing press accreditation to read that any international radio or television broadcast must be agreed upon by the two countries concerned—or as the Soviet delegation described it, only with the agreement of the NOC of that country.<sup>97</sup>

When Novikov, Andrianov, and Smirnov met with Killanin privately during the IOC session in Prague in July 1977, the most pressing issue was accreditation of the radio stations Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe. Novikov intimated that "there can be no discussion" of accrediting journalists from those stations in Moscow. Killanin, however, thought that they should not refuse accreditation to them, given the possibility that

---

<sup>96</sup> Report on Participation of the Orgcom Delegation to the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOC and Familiarization with the Experience of Montreal, 17 September 1976, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 34, l. 53.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., see also Minutes of the 78<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Montreal, September 1976, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland.

President Carter might use that as a pretext, under the rubric of human rights, to keep American athletes from competing in Moscow. Killanin wanted to wait until the press commission had a chance to meet before making a definitive decision on accreditation.<sup>98</sup> After the session, Smirnov and Andrianov suggested that the Orgcom push for further changes to Rule 49 that would allow the Moscow organizers to deny accreditation to those radio stations, "in conjunction with the interests of the Soviet state." Smirnov and Andrianov would then take on the task of getting those changes approved by the IOC.<sup>99</sup> Eventually, Killanin secured promises from the two radio stations that none of their journalists would pursue accreditation at the Moscow Games and relayed to Soviet authorities that "the problem virtually no longer exists."<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, Killanin asked Willi Daume to be the point person on the issue, which he discussed with Novikov in Athens. Killanin asked both men to keep him informed of developments.<sup>101</sup>

Soviet efforts to block the accreditation of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were part of a broader attempt to protect the interests of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The Orgcom delegation to Innsbruck cited complaints by socialist journalists, reporting examples of discrimination against them. According to their report, journalists from Poland and Hungary had to work in one small room, but Novikov was able to obtain better conditions for them through his intervention with the Innsbruck

---

<sup>98</sup> Report on Participation of Soviet Representatives to the 79th IOC session Prague, 10-18 June 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 144, ll. 19-20.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., ll. 22-23.

<sup>100</sup> V. P. Zakhavin to Central Committee, 7 April 1978, RGANI, f. 5, op. 75, d. 310, l. 12. See also Prozumenshchikov, *Bol'shoi sport*, 189.

<sup>101</sup> Lord Killanin to I. Novikov, 30 May 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.



organizers. The delegation also complained of anti-Soviet publications being distributed during the Games.<sup>102</sup> Protecting the interests of socialist countries in international sports circles was a key strategy for maintaining their cooperation and support of Soviet initiatives, particularly in preparing for the 1980 Olympics in Moscow.

### **The Orgcom and Soviet Foreign Policy**

Moscow Organizing Committee international relations advanced Soviet foreign policy interests. In their decree on international relations for 1975, the Orgcom linked hosting the 1980 Olympic Games with the "program of peace" announced at the 24<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party in 1971 as well as the "historic decision" taken at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Helsinki in the summer of 1975.<sup>103</sup> Connecting the 1980 Games with the Helsinki agreement was more than propaganda. The agreement reached at Helsinki did mention expansion of sports ties through encouraging "sports meetings and competitions of all sorts on the basis of the established rules, regulations, and practice."<sup>104</sup> The participating states agreed to expand ties and contacts in a number of other areas that would be facilitated by the Moscow Games as well as the activities of the Moscow Orgcom, including tourism, international conferences and meetings of international organizations, cultural exchange, information

---

<sup>102</sup> Record of Meeting of the Orgcom Presidium, 1 April 1976, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, ll. 23-24.

<sup>103</sup> Decree of the Presidium of the Orgcom Moscow, 1 April 1976, On the Results of establishment of international relations for 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, l. 39.

<sup>104</sup> Final Act, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Helsinki, 1975, p. 41, available at [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1975/08/4044\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1975/08/4044_en.pdf).

exchange, and education.<sup>105</sup> However, the Orgcom Presidium also used its activities to propagandize abroad "the Soviet way of life, the peace-loving foreign policy of the Soviet government, and the achievements of the Soviet people in building a communist society."<sup>106</sup> These messages of the Moscow Orgcom provide insight into how détente was understood by the Orgcom as a means to promote the image of the Soviet Union abroad through peaceful, friendly interactions internationally.

Despite their friendly propaganda, in the lead up to 1980, the Organizing Committee feared possible boycotts of the Games on several different fronts related to international tensions surrounding South Africa, Israel, and the People's Republic of China. Soviet sports leaders spent three years attempting to defuse these sometimes overlapping issues and to ensure maximum participation. Their efforts largely succeeded until a new political confrontation with the United States resulted in a U.S.-led boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games just months before the Games were to begin.

While Moscow prepared to host the Olympic Games, the growing anti-Apartheid movement began to increasingly express its convictions through the rejection of sports ties, putting Soviet organizers in an awkward position. Soviet and other socialist representatives to the IOC and IFs had long been vocal in persuading those organizations to expel South Africa and Southern Rhodesia from their ranks. The IOC banned South Africa from competing in the Olympic Games in 1970, formally revoking recognition of

---

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., pp. 41-56.

<sup>106</sup> Decree of the Presidium of the Orgcom Moscow, 1 April 1976, On the Results of International Relations for 1975, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 36, l. 39.

the South African NOC at their Amsterdam Session.<sup>107</sup> Many countries, however, maintained ties and competitions with South African teams in various sports. In protest over New Zealand's competitions with South African athletes, many African countries withdrew from the 1976 Montreal Olympics. Fearing that African countries might likewise boycott the Moscow Games, the Moscow Orgcom and Soviet representatives to international sports organizations fought to prevent individual countries from continuing sports ties with the racist regimes. At the same time, they used their contacts in the west to try to persuade their national sports federations not to pursue bilateral sports ties with the two countries.

IOC President Killanin shared the Soviet representatives' fears. In a July 1977 private meeting with Novikov, Andrianov, and Smirnov, Killanin agreed that the situation with South Africa needed to be closely monitored to avoid a large-scale boycott of the Moscow Games by African countries as had happened in Montreal. He also concurred that countries that refusing to participate in Montreal should not be fined by the IOC or IFs.<sup>108</sup> After this meeting, Soviet IOC members recommended that the Sports Committee and Orgcom strengthen sports ties with African countries and that Soviet representatives to international sports organizations continue to push for the full exclusion of South Africa and Rhodesia from IF-governed competitions.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the 69<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Amsterdam, 12-16 May 1970, IOC Archives, Lausanne, Switzerland. The vote to expel South Africa from the Olympics was close, thirty-five in favor, twenty-eight against, and three blank ballots.

<sup>108</sup> Report on Participation of Soviet Representatives to the 79th IOC session Prague, 10-18 June 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 144, ll. 19-20.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., l. 22.

Soviet representatives had been pushing for more participation by African, Asian, and Latin American countries in the movement since the 1950s, but this drive to get developing countries recognized by the IOC took on a renewed fervor in the lead up to 1980, especially after the boycott by African nations of the Montreal Games. The Orgcom enlisted the help of Sports Committee personnel in establishing contacts and negotiating sports cooperation with the developing world, with Sports Committee UMSS chief Prokhorov working closely with his Orgcom counterpart Prokopov to accomplish Soviet aims. Both Prokhorov and Prokopov cooperated with the Soviet NOC and IOC members in the USSR to convince IFs to prevent athletes from their member countries from having any sports contact with those states.<sup>110</sup> Soviet sports administrators hoped that this would bring as many third world countries into the Olympic Movement as possible, to both further democratize the IOC and to ensure wide participation in the 1980 Games. Rather than just giving lip service to African and other regional concerns, the Orgcom, Sports Committee, and other Soviet sports organizations expended considerable resources to convince these countries to participate and to ensure their recognition by the IOC to make it possible. Since IOC recognition required that NOCs be members of five International Federations, Soviet representatives had to help build up at least five sports in the prospective member country and use their influence in the IFs to gain their membership.

In meetings with sports leaders from developing nations, Orgcom representatives highlighted the official reasons for their interest in stronger sports ties with Africa, Asia, and Latin America, but also linked them to anti-colonial and anti-Apartheid movements

---

<sup>110</sup> Decree of the Orgcom Executive Bureau and the Sports Committee Collegium, 24 April 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 226, l. 7.

in the third world. For example, in his meeting with the head of the Yemen Ministry of Public, Work, and Youth Affairs, Smirnov emphasized the "great role of developing nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in supporting the international Olympic Movement." He stressed the importance of having developing countries widely represented at the Olympic Games in Moscow as a means for "deepening international cooperation, strengthening peace, friendship and mutual understanding between peoples." He added that expanding participation of African, Asian, and Latin American countries in the Olympics was crucial to the struggle against Apartheid and racial discrimination and promised that Soviet sports organizations would help the Yemen Arab Republic to become a part of the Olympic Movement and prepare athletes for the Moscow Games. The Yemen representative promised to participate in the 1980 Games as a way to "decisively battle against the remnants of colonialism and racism in all its manifestations."<sup>111</sup> The minister of culture of the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), in his meeting with Orgcom representatives, intimated that Africans were "particularly sensitive to racial discrimination and would respond badly to the slightest manifestation of injustice." He expressed the hope that Moscow would be the most representative Olympic Games in history and promised that Congo (Brazzaville) would not participate in a boycott.<sup>112</sup> In his meetings with representatives from Kuwait and Iraq, Koval' promised Soviet help in preparing their athletes for the Games and expanded sports ties.

---

<sup>111</sup> Notes of Meeting of V. Smirnov with the Manager of the Office of the Minister of Public, Work, and Youth Affairs, 12 July 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 194, ll. 6-7.

<sup>112</sup> Notes from Meeting with Minister of Culture, Art, and Sport of the Republic of Congo, 8 December 1977, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 195, ll. 1-2.

Koval' likewise signed documents with representatives from these countries, formalizing the terms of Soviet sports aid under the rubric of "sports cooperation."<sup>113</sup>

All of these efforts required close cooperation between the Orgcom and the Sports Committee, promoted by the number of Orgcom personnel who themselves had worked in the Sports Committee, particularly the vice-chairmen, and by Sports Committee chairman Sergei Pavlov and his direct involvement in organizing the 1980 Games. While the Orgcom could travel to other countries and to large events such as the Asian or Central American Games and invite representatives for negotiations in Moscow, in order to fulfill their promises of Soviet aid and cooperation in developing their sports programs, the Orgcom had to rely on the Sports Committee, which had the necessary experts and budgetary resources for that purpose. As the head of UMSS in the Sports Committee, Prokhorov was in charge of arranging delegations of specialists to travel to developing countries.<sup>114</sup> The Orgcom also prevailed upon the Ministry of Defense and Profsoiuz sports sections to help expand sports ties with the developing world.<sup>115</sup> Along with Prokhorov, the head of the Dinamo sports society, the Ministry of Defense sports section, and the International Department of the Orgcom all used their resources to help supply third world countries with sports equipment and inventory.<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Notes of Meeting of Koval' and Minister of Work and Public Affairs of Kuwait, n.d. 1977 and Notes of Meeting of Koval with Minister of Youth of the Iraqi Republic, 29 November 1977, GARF f. 9610, op. 1, d. 195, ll. 7, 22-23.

<sup>114</sup> Decree of the Orgcom Executive Bureau and the Sports Committee Collegium, 24 April 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 226, l. 6.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

In 1978, the UN General Assembly considered an International Convention against Apartheid in Sport, making matters considerably more complicated for the Orgcom and the IOC. Soviet sports administrators had to find a compromise between supporting the anti-Apartheid movement throughout the developing world and the interests of the IOC and IFs, which saw such a resolution as an unwelcome intrusion of political interests and unacceptable interference by the UN, undermining their authority over governing international sports. Lord Killanin greeted the draft resolution with "considerable anxiety," fearing that if such a resolution were adopted it could lead to legislation at the national level that could discriminate against "the athletes we are trying to protect in the efforts to fight racialism."<sup>117</sup> The Moscow Orgcom anticipated the IOC's reaction and informed Killanin about the draft resolution.<sup>118</sup>

At a meeting of socialist sports leaders, Smirnov expressed concern that such a resolution could cause a schism in the Olympic Movement. Because a number of capitalist countries maintained sports exchanges with South African and Rhodesian athletes, Smirnov argued that the resolution and especially the proposed inclusion of sanctions "would not contribute to the struggle against apartheid in sport but, on the contrary, could bring a schism to the Olympic Movement."<sup>119</sup> To counter the proposed resolution, Soviet, Bulgarian, and Romanian representatives raised the matter at a meeting of the Tripartite Commission of the IOC to cultivate support against the

---

<sup>117</sup> "Lord Killanin at Brighton", *Olympic Review* 134 (1978), 674, available at <http://www.la84foundation.org/OlympicInformationCenter/OlympicReview/1978/ore134/ore134f.pdf>.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Commission of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries for Cooperation in Preparing and Staging the Olympic Games, 26 February 1979, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 440, l. 27.

resolution among IOC, NOC, and IF representatives and to draft a letter in the name of the Tripartite Commission to UN general secretary Kurt Waldheim to seek a meeting between the commission and the UN working group on Apartheid in sport.<sup>120</sup> Feeling that it was preferable for the fight against Apartheid in sport to be waged by the international sports governing bodies themselves, Soviet officials urged the socialist camp to work to exclude South Africa from international competitive sport.<sup>121</sup>

Soviet representatives also sought to convince African leaders to abandon the statute on sanctions because it "could play into the hands of racists and reactionary circles."<sup>122</sup> The Nigerian sports leader and president of the Supreme Council on Sport in Africa, Abraham Ordia led the campaign to include the statute on sanctions. In a meeting with the Ukrainian UN representative, Ordia warned that if Soviet representatives did not support the UN convention against apartheid in sport, including the proposal of sanctions, African nations "would be forced to hold their own private regional sports meets and would struggle against Apartheid in sport 'by their own methods.'"<sup>123</sup> However, some other African leaders resented what they saw as Nigerian pretensions to power on the continent. For example, Samuael Munodavafa, head of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), remarked that Nigerian sports leaders "think they are the greatest force against Apartheid and defenders of the interests of Africans. In fact that is not so, and

---

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., l. 28.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Notes of Meeting of Prokopov with Samuel Munodavafa, National Chairman of ZAPU (Zimbabwe), 6 October 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 300, ll. 12-13.

<sup>123</sup> Report of trip to the United States of the Orgcom Delegation, June 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 279, l. 32.



they enjoy much less authority on the continent than they try to present."<sup>124</sup> Other African sports leaders, however, sympathized with the Soviet side, but at the same time maintained that "African countries must use all opportunities to fight against Apartheid."<sup>125</sup>

Orgcom administrators enlisted the help of other Soviet departments, particularly the Soviet Committee of Solidarity of Countries of Asia and Africa (SCSCAA), to help them convince African leaders not to boycott the Moscow Games. The vice chairman of SCSCAA met with Peter Onu, under general secretary of the Organization for African Unity (OAU), to secure his cooperation in convincing African countries to compete in Moscow. Onu argued that Africans did not believe in the concept of "sport outside of politics," but saw sport as a place where they could achieve goals that they could not achieve in the political arena. He also believed that if they could get the support of Ordia, "no problems with the Olympic Games in Moscow would arise."<sup>126</sup> According to Smirnov, the meeting between the Tripartite Commission and the UN committee laid the basis for cooperation between the UN and the IOC in isolating South Africa from international sport and Olympic Movement "without allowing an international convention with sanctions to be taken."<sup>127</sup> Smirnov suggested that a Soviet representative be

---

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., l. 13.

<sup>125</sup> Note of Meeting of V.I. Prokopov with Jo Jeli, member of Executive Bureau ANK South Africa, 3 August 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 300, l. 11.

<sup>126</sup> Notes of Meeting of V. Kudriavtsev with Peter Onu, under general secretary of Organization of African Unity (OAU), GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 300, ll. 17-18.

<sup>127</sup> Report of the Orgcom Delegation to Belgium, 21-25 April 1979, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 416, l. 94.

included in a Tripartite Commission delegation to New York for continued work with the special commission of the UN.<sup>128</sup>

By February 1979, Soviet leaders reported some success in their efforts to increase the participation of African countries in the Olympic Movement and of securing assurances that African countries would compete in Moscow. At the meeting of the Joint Commission of Socialist Sports Organizations, Smirnov noted that the forty-nine African countries represented in the Supreme Council of Sports in Africa had taken a unanimous resolution to support the Moscow Games.<sup>129</sup> He also informed the commission that the IOC had given temporary recognition to a number of NOCs, including Angola, Mauritius, Yemen, and Mozambique. He appealed to the socialist sports leaders to work together and to use their contacts in Asia and Africa to bring the countries of the third world into the Olympic Movement and into the 1980 Games.<sup>130</sup>

To guarantee a wide representation of African and other developing nations at the Moscow Games, Smirnov and Andrianov worked to get IOC funds to help pay for transportation to bring athletes from poorer countries to the Olympics. At its meeting in San Juan in June 1979, the Solidarity Commission allocated one million pounds to subsidize travel expenses for athletes coming to the Games in Lake Placid and Moscow. In relaying this information to Novikov, Killanin aired his personal view that "a

---

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Commission of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries for Cooperation in Preparation and Staging of the Olympic Games, 26 February 1979, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 440, l. 19. See also Resolution from Supreme Council of Sport in Africa, 11 July 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., ll. 20, 22.

maximum number of National Olympic Committees" be represented in Moscow, but also insisted that any athletes sent should be of "the correct caliber."<sup>131</sup>

Others in the IOC appreciated the Orgcom's efforts to make the Games affordable for poorer countries. R. S. Alexander, president of the Kenyan NOC, thanked Novikov in May 1979 for establishing "most generous" and "realistic [hotel] prices" that he hoped other cities would adopt in the future.<sup>132</sup> In June, Alexander wrote to Smirnov to try to secure air transportation assistance for the team from Kenya, "a developing country . . . poorer than many others in Africa."<sup>133</sup>

While Soviet representatives worked to soothe tensions and address concerns in Africa, a separate set of difficulties related to Asia and the Middle East threatened the Moscow Games. The participation of Israeli athletes posed a challenge on a number of levels. Some members of the Jewish community in the United States remained convinced that the Moscow organizers would try to exclude Israel from the Games, based on the Soviet government's generally anti-Israel foreign policy and because of its restrictions on Soviet Jewish immigration. In September 1977, Len Alpert wrote to US congressman Jack Kemp to "congratulate" him for being the first to speak out in public against "the Russians and third world allies alleged underhanded scheme to possibly prevent Israel from participating in the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow." Alpert also offered his "services" to Kemp "as a concerned American, Jew, and Olympic fan"

---

<sup>131</sup> Lord Killanin to I. Novikov, 21 August 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>132</sup> R. S. Alexander to I. Novikov, 10 May 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>133</sup> R. S. Alexander to V. Smirnov, 19 June 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

contemplating attending the Moscow Games.<sup>134</sup> He sent copies of his letter to President Carter, Lord Killanin, the USOC, the prime minister of Israel, Brezhnev, and the New York office of Intourist. To counter the anti-Moscow campaign among American Jewish organizations, Smirnov and Andrianov presented Lord Killanin with documents about the participation of Israeli athletes in competitions in the Soviet Union and articles published in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, "rebuffing American slander." Killanin offered to republish the articles in the *Olympic Review*.<sup>135</sup>

Related boycott concerns arose in December 1978, when the Orgcom sent a delegation to Bangkok as observers at the VIII Asian Games, studying their organization and promoting participation in the 1980 Olympiad.<sup>136</sup> Rogul'skii saw progress toward the founding of a Supreme Council of Sport in Asia. While such an organization could greatly enhance regional sports cooperation and the development of sport in Asian countries, he maintained that the organization could also be used by a country or group of countries hostile to the Moscow Games as "an instrument for carrying out their own political line," attempting to organize a boycott or otherwise lessen "the political effect of holding the Games in Moscow."<sup>137</sup>

One such concern was the large financial presence of oil-rich Arab countries, which tended to be either strongly anti-Israel or closely tied to the United States or Great

---

<sup>134</sup> Len Alpert to Congressman Jack Kemp, 26 September 1977, IOC Archives/ NOCs USSR Correspondence 1977-79, IOC Archives, Lausanne.

<sup>135</sup> Report of Soviet Representatives to Meetings of the EB IOC, Commission for Olympic Solidarity and EB IOC with IFs in Lausanne, 16-22 October 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 152, l. 33.

<sup>136</sup> Report on the Work of the Delegation of Orgcom in Bangkok as Observers at VIII Asian Games, December 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 301, l. 32.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

Britain. Rogul'skii felt that these countries could potentially boycott the Olympic Games in Moscow for two quite different reasons: either as a protest against the participation of Israel, or to curry favor with the west, should the United States decide to boycott the Games in support of Israel.<sup>138</sup> These fears were corroborated by the Soviet Embassy attaché to Thailand, who had been informed by the Mongolian ambassador that Israel had not been allowed to compete in the VIII Asian Games. The official explanation stated that the Games' organizers could not guarantee the safety of Israeli athletes, but, according to the ambassador, Asian Games organizers warned that members of the board also opposed Israel's participation in the Moscow Olympics. If Israel did compete, many Asian countries might follow the lead of Arab nations and refuse to attend.<sup>139</sup>

The People's Republic of China, keen to "become the leading sports country in Asia," posed an entirely different boycott threat.<sup>140</sup> According to the head of the international department of the Yugoslav Union of Physical Culture, "The Chinese side made it known that it was not against participation in the Olympic Games in 1980 in Moscow, provided the Soviet Union sends an invitation to Chinese athletes and supports the recognition of the Korean Peoples Republic in the IOC."<sup>141</sup> However, in an October 1977 meeting with Smirnov and Andrianov, Killanin volunteered that the Chinese

---

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., I. 33.

<sup>139</sup> From the Diary of O. A. Ershov, Notes of Meeting with the Second Secretary of the Embassy of the Mongolian People's Republic in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 18 November 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 173, I. 90.

<sup>140</sup> Report on the Work of the Delegation of Orgcom in Bangkok as Observers at VIII Asian Games, December 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 301, I. 33.

<sup>141</sup> Notes of Meeting with Head of the International Department Yugoslav Union of Physical Culture with D. A. Prokhorov, Head of the Department for International Sports Relations of the Sports Committee USSR, 18 April 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 173, I. 94.

representatives informed him that only full exclusion of Taiwan, and not merely renaming of its NOC, would compel the Chinese to apply for recognition and compete in the Games.<sup>142</sup> Soviet representatives feared that Communist China was coming out of its self-imposed international isolation and trying to build influence over other developing countries. The status of Taiwan in the IOC continued to be an obstacle to PRC recognition. Rogul'skii maintained that Asian countries were poorly informed of the Soviet Union's "principled" position on the recognition of the PRC by the IOC and that the PRC could use this ignorance to advance an anti-Soviet campaign against the 1980 Games. He proposed working to expel Taiwan from the Olympic Movement and clarifying the Soviet position on China. Rogul'skii insisted that such efforts were essential to head off possible actions by the PRC against the Moscow Olympics.<sup>143</sup>

As with African sports leaders, Soviet representatives attempted to balance the expectations of Asian countries with IOC requirements for hosting the Olympic Games, publicizing their strict adherence to IOC rules, yet addressing Asian leaders' underlying concerns in other ways while also offering sporting aid and assistance. At the VIII Asian Games, the Orgcom delegation responded to a number of questions regarding the Peoples' Republic of China's participation in the Olympic Games. Assuring their Asian colleagues that if the PRC were recognized by the IOC it would undoubtedly be invited to compete in 1980, Orgcom representatives also noted that, since Taiwan was recognized by the IOC, the committee was obligated to invite the Taiwanese athletes to

---

<sup>142</sup> Report of Soviet Representatives in Meetings of the EB IOC, Commission for Olympic Solidarity and EB IOC with IFs in Lausanne, 16-22 October 1977, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 152, l. 33.

<sup>143</sup> Report on the Work of the Delegation of Orgcom in Bangkok as Observers at VIII Asian Games, December 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 301, l. 33.

participate. It defended its position by citing its intention to "strictly" fulfill the guarantee that it had given the IOC to follow the Olympic rules. In the meantime, Soviet representatives continued to push for Taiwan's expulsion from the Olympic Movement.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, the Orgcom responded that as an NOC recognized by the IOC, Israel would be invited to the Games. It pointed out that the Orgcom was "taking all measures to assure broad representative participation of athletes of all countries with NOCs recognized by the IOC, including Asian countries."<sup>145</sup>

Rogul'skii recommended a number of other measures to promote the Moscow Games in Asia. Because an Indian representative was likely to be elected president of the Supreme Council of Sport in Asia, he believed the Orgcom should invite Indian sports leaders to the USSR. He also suggested that, since Japan was discomforted by the growing influence of Arab countries and China in the organization, the Japanese representatives could be a good channel through which to promote support of the Olympics in Moscow. He recommended that the Orgcom work with its contacts in the Kuwait NOC to send more Soviet trainers from the Sports Committee to that country and to continue to work to attract countries like Bahrain, Brunei, and the United Arab Emirates to the Olympic Movement.<sup>146</sup> Rogul'skii also proposed that the Orgcom invite representatives of Thailand to the USSR because of its role in Asian sports as a three-time organizer of the Asian Games. He further recommended that MID and other Soviet bureaus help to organize Orgcom exhibitions in foreign countries.<sup>147</sup> In addition to

---

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., l. 31.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., l. 33.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., l. 34.

measures for promoting the Games in Asian countries, Rogul'skii judged it necessary to work within the IFs to ensure that there were no barriers to the participation of Asian countries in the Games. He identified the issues arising from the decision of the Asian Games Federation not to allow Israel to compete in the event, arguing that Soviet representatives must prevent the International Amateur Athletic Federation from banning track and field teams from those countries that had participated in the Asian Games from entering the Olympic Games.<sup>148</sup> The Orgcom took immediate action on all of Rogul'skii's recommendations, assigning the tasks listed in the report to individual members of the Orgcom.<sup>149</sup>

Soviet officials also feared that various circles in the west that disagreed with Soviet government treatment of dissidents, primarily Soviet Jewish dissidents, posed a significant boycott threat. In May 1978, Killanin sent a news clipping from the *Sunday Times* of London calling for a boycott of the 1980 Games on the basis of human rights abuses in the Soviet Union. Killanin believed any call for boycott should be denounced because it was in the best interests of the Orgcom and the IOC "to have the maximum participation."<sup>150</sup> At a meeting with socialist sports leaders in February 1979, Smirnov acknowledged that there had been a campaign the previous year to boycott the Moscow Games, led by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and various British and American state officials. Smirnov remarked that these calls elicited complaints from NOCs, the IOC, and IFs over the attempt to bring politics into the Olympic Games, resulting in

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., I. 35.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., II. 36-37.

<sup>150</sup> Lord Killanin to V. Smirnov, 24 May 1978, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1975-78, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.



stronger support for Moscow.<sup>151</sup> However, Smirnov also noted that the "ideological opponents" of the Soviet Union had been mobilizing and "using all means to crush the growing authority of the organizers of the Games."<sup>152</sup>

One such organization, the Committee for the Boycott of the Olympic Games in Moscow (COBOM), actually wanted to organize a boycott of both Moscow and Lake Placid because neither the United States nor the Soviet Union "respected human rights and democratic liberties" and because their rivalry "threatened peace throughout the world." Comparing both countries with Nazi Germany, the organization organized in Paris, suggested that, if the international community had boycotted the 1936 Berlin Olympics, "Hitler's barbarism and the triumph of national socialism perhaps could have been avoided."<sup>153</sup> Berlioux duly forwarded the missive to Smirnov for his information.<sup>154</sup> Presumably, she sent a copy to the Lake Placid organizers as well.

Soviet party and state leaders are often seen as secretive, but sports administrators were well aware of pressing political issues in the realm of international relations. For example, in their report on a trip to the United States, Orgcom International Department head Prokopov and MID's divisional manager of the press section, V. Zhuravlev, noted a number of international issues that elicited anti-Soviet press and made their negotiations with the USOC more tense. The "alleged" interference by the USSR and Cuba in the

---

<sup>151</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Commission of Sports Organizations of Socialist Countries for Cooperation in Preparing and Staging the Olympic Games, 26 February 1979, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 440, l. 19.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., l. 22.

<sup>153</sup> COBOM to M. Berlioux, 7 September 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>154</sup> M. Berlioux to V. Smirnov, 28 September 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

internal affairs of Zaire, the detection of listening devices installed during the construction of the American Embassy in Moscow, the trial of Soviet physicist and dissident Iuri Orlov, and the defection of former under general secretary of the UN Arkady Shevchenko were listed as reasons for the anti-Soviet sentiment the Orgcom delegation observed.<sup>155</sup>

After their above trip to the United States in June 1978, Prokopov and Zhuravlev proposed tighter ties and more active communication with American sports journalists, recommending that they accept the invitation to attend the meeting of sports editors of the Associated Press in 1979. They also proposed that the Orgcom use its contacts with NBC to get greater promotion of the 1980 Games on US television, "considering the characteristics of the American way of life."<sup>156</sup> In December 1978, Zhuravlev submitted a report outlining the main trajectories of propaganda against the Moscow Games and suggested counterpropaganda measures for rebutting negative reports in the foreign press. Zhuravlev described a campaign led by US congressmen to boycott or move the 1980 Games on the grounds that the Soviet Union did not respect human rights.<sup>157</sup> Some anti-Soviet articles in the western press, according to Zhuravlev, argued that the Soviet government would refuse entry to countries with which it had no diplomatic ties, that the 1980 Games would be used to consolidate Soviet influence on developing countries, that the Soviet Union wanted to use the Games to rake in foreign currency, that the Games would be "censored," and that the level of services would not meet western standards and

---

<sup>155</sup> Report of the Orgcom Delegation to the USA, June 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 279, l. 33.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Basic Direction of Hostile Propaganda in Connection with Olympiad-80 and Proposals for Counterpropaganda, 18 December 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 286, l. 1.

expectations.<sup>158</sup> Zhuravlev's report likewise discussed criticism in the western press over the socialist sports system in general, describing it as a "champion factory," and insinuating that the Games' results had already been decided by a Soviet Union-East German conspiracy.<sup>159</sup> Zhuravlev outlined suggestions for countering each of these claims, highlighting the Soviet Union's support of Olympic ideals and its efforts to nurture Olympic sports in Africa and the developing world, including its role in fighting discrimination and racism in sport. He proposed making use of statements by western sports leaders such as Lord Killanin and USOC president Robert Caine who spoke recently in support of the Moscow Games and against any attempt by those advocating a boycott "to use the Olympic Games for their own purposes."<sup>160</sup> He further recommended that the Soviet press release information about the Orgcom's plans for holding the Games, outlining how they would house and provide catering for thousands of foreign visitors, and the procedures for selling tourist packages. He advocated that Soviet journalists promote the work that had gone into building and renovating the Olympic venues, and describe the press center and the conditions for journalists during the Games.<sup>161</sup>

When Prokopov traveled to New York in July 1978, trials of Soviet dissidents prompted renewed calls to boycott the Moscow Games. Prokopov found himself deflecting attention away from an appeal by recently jailed Jewish dissident Anatoly Sharansky that the right to host the Olympics should be taken away from Moscow.<sup>162</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., ll. 1-2, 3.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., l. 3.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., ll. 4, 8.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., l. 8.

<sup>162</sup> Report of Stay in the USA of V. I. Prokopov, July 1978, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 279, l. 51.

Prokopov spoke by telephone with Don Miller of the USOC, insisting that the trial of Sharansky and his comments were a domestic matter and had no relation to the Olympic Movement or the Games in Moscow. Miller agreed that the issue was political and had no place in sport. Despite the pressure from Jewish organizations and members of Congress, USOC officials maintained cordial relations with Soviet representatives and continued to support the Moscow Olympiad. For example, IOC member in the United States, Julian K. Roosevelt, announced that he was personally trying to convince Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty not to pursue accreditation for the Games. Despite this, Prokopov warned, "there is every basis to suggest that, as with the accreditation of representatives of radio stations Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, the USOC will behave in 1980 as it is required by the government."<sup>163</sup> Prokopov astutely observed that the campaign against the Moscow Olympiad was part of the general "anti-Soviet, anti-Communist campaign held by [Soviet] ideological opponents during the entire period of the existence of the Soviet state." Therefore, Prokopov noted, "the campaign may temporarily strengthen or weaken but will end only some time after the Games are over."<sup>164</sup> Prokopov's prophecy played out as relations between the United States and the USSR continued to worsen, ultimately resulting in the boycott he and his Orgcom colleagues hoped to avoid.

Meanwhile, a series of new sporting incidents threatened to renew difficulties in Africa and Asia. In October 1978, the daily London newspaper, *Morning Star*, reported that Israeli rugby teams planned to hold competitions with South African teams,

---

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., l. 57.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., l. 64.

potentially fueling boycott threats on multiple fronts with a single stroke. Smirnov asked Killanin to warn the Israeli NOC that any sports ties with South Africa "may cause serious complications." Smirnov asserted that should such competitions take place, "it will be clear to all that the Israeli sport bodies have done it with provocative purposes to bring harm to the Moscow Olympics."<sup>165</sup> Some western countries also continued to anger African countries by holding sports competitions with South African teams. For example, the British rugby football union invited the South African rugby team the Barbarians on a tour of Britain in 1979.<sup>166</sup>

Despite the continuing tensions, Soviet organizers also received a steady flow of good news as the Games drew nearer. In March 1979, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan NOC confirmed to the IOC that it would send ten freestyle wrestlers and officials to the Moscow Olympiad.<sup>167</sup> The Executive Board gave provisional recognition to Vietnam at its meeting in Nagoya in October 1979, along with the NOCs of Angola, Laos, Mauritania, and Mozambique. The EB accorded full recognition to Bahrain at that same meeting. In November, the IOC processed applications for recognition from Bangladesh, Botswana, British Virgin Islands, Djibouti, Grenada, Qatar, Sao tome and Principe, Seychelles, and the Yemen Arab Republic and DPR of Yemen. The status of China was left to the full IOC membership through a postal vote.<sup>168</sup> By 31 December

---

<sup>165</sup> V. Smirnov to Lord Killanin, 26 October 1978, IOC Archives/ Vitaly Smirnov Biography and Press Articles, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>166</sup> Lord Killanin to V. Smirnov, 3 October 1979, IOC Archives/ Vitaly Smirnov Biography and Press Articles, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>167</sup> Democratic Republic of Afghanistan NOC to IOC, 6 March 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>168</sup> M. Berlioux to I. Novikov, 8 November 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

1979, the National Olympic Committees of San Marino, Somalia, Monaco, Andorra, Uganda, and Honduras had confirmed their participation in the Moscow Games, although Albania and Saudi Arabia refused to participate, and the Orgcom still awaited final word from Malawi, Lesotho, Paraguay, Belize, Guatemala, and Haiti.<sup>169</sup> In February 1980, Berlioux informed Novikov that the NOCs of Angola, Bangladesh, Laos, Mauritania and Seychelles had received full recognition at the Executive Board Meeting at Lake Placid and could now be officially invited to participate in the Games.<sup>170</sup>

### **The White House's "Dark Deed:" The U.S.-Led Boycott of the 1980 Games**

Despite the best efforts of the Orgcom's international relations, events in late 1979 and early 1980 led to a U.S.-led boycott of the Moscow Games. On 27 December 1979, Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan. On 14 January 1980, the Carter administration issued an ultimatum to the Soviet Union: exit Afghanistan by mid-February or your Games will be boycotted. Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov gave a television interview, declaring his opposition to Soviet interference in Afghanistan and pledging support for a boycott of the Olympic Games. Soviet authorities arrested Sakharov and sent him into internal exile.

On 22 January 1980, Soviet Orgcom leaders discussed the possible boycott with other socialist leaders at a meeting of the Joint Commission of Socialist Sports Leaders. At the meeting, Novikov commented on the "hysteria being raised by the U.S. administration around the 1980 Games," which he believed would influence American

---

<sup>169</sup> V. Popov to M. Berlioux, telegram, 31 December 1979, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1979, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>170</sup> M. Berlioux to I. Novikov, 16 February 1980, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1980-1993, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

society. Yet he expressed confidence that most of the international community did not support the "crazy" idea of boycotting the Moscow Games.<sup>171</sup> In the Soviet domestic press, Afghanistan was never given as the reason behind the U.S. campaign, but Novikov acknowledged to his socialist compatriots that Carter's ultimatum was linked to what the U.S. administration referred to as "'Soviet aggression' in Afghanistan."<sup>172</sup> The White House's "dark deed" would never work, however, because "the whole world knows the truth" that the Soviet Union's "international duty" was to help developing countries in their fight against colonialism. He also provided an official explanation of the events in Afghanistan that the USSR was "helping the people of Afghanistan with a small number of soldiers" and not involved in "any kind of war."<sup>173</sup> Despite the efforts of the United States government, Novikov concluded, "the staging of the Games in a socialist country should give a new impulse to the development of the Olympic Movement, strengthen its unity, and encourage friendship and mutual understanding among the peoples of the world."<sup>174</sup> Smirnov decried the hypocrisy of "western leaders" who insisted upon removing politics from sport, yet tried to push their political agenda on the IOC. He expressed bitterness at the actions of American politicians who espoused the boycott even though the Orgcom had not broken a single rule of the Olympic Charter and had not a single complaint from the IOC, IFs, or NOCs. Smirnov thanked the commission

---

<sup>171</sup> Minutes of Meeting of Joint Commission of Socialist Sports Organizations on Cooperation in Preparing and Staging the Olympic Games, 22 January 1980, GARF, f. 9610, op. 1, d. 603, l. 12.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. For more on the domestic press explanation of the boycott, see Evelyn Mertin, "The Soviet Union and the Olympic Games of 1980 and 1984: Explaining the Boycotts to their Own People," in *East Plays West: Sport and the Cold War*, Stephen Wagg and David Andrews, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 241-42.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 13

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

delegates for their support of Moscow and for publicizing in interviews and press reports that the Moscow Games would be held "in full accordance with the Olympic Charter."<sup>175</sup>

A few days later, the head of the Novosti press agency and member of the Orgcom, Tolkunov, submitted a report to the Central Committee, outlining his strategy for dealing with the negative press surrounding the boycott campaign. Tolkunov described the many criticisms being laid at the feet of the Moscow organizers. According to him, western forces reacted to the events in Afghanistan, but press reports renewed their criticisms of the Soviet human rights record and the lack of adequate tourist and hospitality services. To counter the boycott propaganda, Tolkunov recommended a counterpropaganda campaign, emphasizing the many hotels and restaurants available in Moscow, the high technical level of the Games, and the widespread support of the Olympic Games by the Soviet people.<sup>176</sup>

When Carter's threat failed to induce the Soviet leadership to abandon its mission in Afghanistan, Carter officially announced the boycott one month later. He sent U.S. boxer Mohammed Ali as an ambassador to Africa to induce African countries to support the boycott. It seems that Soviet efforts to curry favor with African leaders paid off, because the African leaders convinced Ali to stop backing the initiative. After the House of Representatives and the Senate passed a resolution not to send athletes to the Games, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) agreed. In mid-April the USOC announced its decision to support the Carter Administration's boycott, and the

---

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>176</sup> Mertin, "Explaining the Boycott," 240.



government warned its athletes that they could lose their passports if they traveled to the Games.

The USOC decision to boycott the Games set off a flurry of telegram and phone activity between Smirnov and the IOC secretariat. On 14 April 1980, Smirnov telegraphed Killanin, asking him to put the USOC's decision on the agenda for the Executive Board meeting scheduled for the following week in Lausanne and to invite representatives from the USOC to take part in the discussion "in order to avoid any misunderstandings or use of other sources."<sup>177</sup> Upon rumors that Smirnov had hinted at possible implications for the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, Killanin begged him to "please, please remain silent until we meet next week."<sup>178</sup> The previous month, Smirnov had written to Berlioux that there were rumors that the Los Angeles Orgcom was attempting to organize rival "alternative" games to the Olympics in Moscow. He noted that such action would jeopardize its right to host the 1984 Olympics.<sup>179</sup> Berlioux assured him that the LA Organizing Committee confirmed that it had no intention of staging alternate games.<sup>180</sup>

On 23 April, Killanin sent identical telegrams to Brezhnev and Carter, offering to visit each leader personally to discuss the proposed boycott.<sup>181</sup> Killanin also appealed to

---

<sup>177</sup> V. Smirnov to Lord Killanin, telegram, 14 April 1980, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1980-1993, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Killanin to L. Brezhnev, President Of The Presidium of The USSR Supreme Soviet, telegram, 23 April 1980, IOC Archives/ Konstantin Andrianov Biography and Correspondence 1951-84, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Brezhnev in a letter, conveyed by Novikov to the Soviet leader. The letter referenced Killanin's statement to the press in which he asked the Organizing Committee and the USSR NOC "to inform the highest authorities of their government of the reactions which have created these difficulties for so many NOCs."<sup>182</sup> Novikov assured Killanin that he delivered the letter to the Soviet premier who answered in a speech delivered on 22 February, in which he declared, "We will be ready to commence withdrawing our troops as soon as all forms of outside interference directed against the government and people of Afghanistan fully cease. If the United States together with the neighbors of Afghanistan guarantee this, and then there will no longer be any need for Soviet military assistance."<sup>183</sup> Novikov added his own belief that the issue went "beyond the sphere of cooperation" between the Orgcom and the IOC, because it concerned "purely political problems." Insisting that the United States government created the current problem for the IOC in its attempt to undermine the Games in Moscow "for far-fetched, purely political reasons," he expressed the wish that "our good relations of mutual understanding and trust will permit us to avoid any misunderstandings that can arise at times from incorrect information."<sup>184</sup> Novikov alluded to the close working relationship he had developed with Killanin during the preparations for the Games in hopes of maintaining the IOC president's support despite his inability to change the Soviet leadership's foreign policy. Aside from the threat of negative propaganda coming from the US-led boycott threat, President Carter's actions also caused logistical problems for the Orgcom as

---

<sup>182</sup> Lord Killanin to L. Brezhnev, 13 February 1980, IOC Archives/ Konstantin Andrianov Biography and Correspondence 1951-84, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>183</sup> I. Novikov to Lord Killanin, 2 April 1980, IOC Archives/ Konstantin Andrianov Biography and Correspondence 1951-84, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

countries postponed giving final word on whether they would compete. On January 26, Killanin advised the Moscow Orgcom to postpone the deadline for official entries to the Games until May 19, noting "I cannot stress to you the ever increasing opposition to Moscow and only time may assist you."<sup>185</sup>

Despite its propaganda efforts, the Moscow Orgcom could not prevent the interference in Afghanistan nor avert the U.S.-led boycott the invasion had precipitated. The Moscow organizers may have studied the experience of Munich and Montreal too closely, blinding them to some of the difficulties they should have expected as a socialist country hosting the Games during the Cold War. Guarding against a boycott of African nations and focusing on making sure the Games were financially sound were good ideas, but they should have expected more of a problem from the US given the vocal protests from Israeli and Jewish organizations that began with the first Moscow bid. The changing international political climate also caught them off guard. The planning for the 1980 Games had been so meticulous and had basically been laid out in 1975 and 1976, so by the time it became clear that some adjustments should be made, it was too late.

## **Conclusion**

The last time Moscow had opened wide its doors to the world was during the 1957 Youth Festival. At that event, Soviet citizens and foreign visitors participated in a truly spontaneous celebration of cultural exchange, dancing in the streets to jazz and rock

---

<sup>185</sup> Lord Killanin to I. Novikov, telegram, 26 January 1980, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1980-1993, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

and roll and exchanging stories about life in their respective countries.<sup>186</sup> Despite their stated intention of promoting peace and mutual understanding between peoples, the organizers of the Moscow Olympiad did not intend to allow such uncontrolled bursts of fraternization. Instead, their focus remained fixed on making sure the Games went off on a "high organizational level." After years of coordination and careful planning, the 1980 Orgcom wanted no surprises. Nor did the IOC. Perhaps one of the biggest lessons to be learned from the Moscow Olympiad is that, over the course of Soviet involvement in the Olympic Games, Soviet and western sports leaders shared an affinity for tightly controlled spectacle and perfectly organized competitions that relied on a combination of technical innovation and clearly recognizable rules and regulations. They shared a common vision of modern sport, and both the Orgcom and the IOC believed this had been achieved at the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow.

In light of this, the Moscow Games were a qualified success. The following excerpt from the Official Report of the Games of the XXII Olympiad is not far off the mark in explaining how the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow were made possible:

The Organizing Committee consisting of representatives from government bodies and of experienced leaders in the national economy, who possessed both professional knowledge and the required authority in their particular fields, made it possible for the OCOG to resolve efficiently the complex problems involved in the preparation of the Games of the XXII Olympiad and to ensure their eventual success.<sup>187</sup>

This excerpt also demonstrates the main focus of the Organizing Committee: efficiency.

The IOC representatives appreciated the "high organizational level" the Orgcom

---

<sup>186</sup> See Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 11-13.

<sup>187</sup> *Official Report of the Games of the XXII Olympiad*, Vol. 2 "Organization," part 1, p. 10, available from [http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports\\_frmst.htm](http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports_frmst.htm).

achieved. The newly elected IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch applauded the "magnificent organization" of the Moscow Olympiad.<sup>188</sup> Berlioux praised the "diligence and hard work which made the Games of the XXII Olympiad the success they were."<sup>189</sup> Even western critics noted the well-organized and "mechanical" nature of the opening and closing ceremonies, but they attributed them to the ills of communism.<sup>190</sup>

The Moscow Organizing Committee explained the boycott both at home and abroad by defending its position as "morally correct and in full accordance with the Olympic ideal."<sup>191</sup> As Evelyn Mertin points out, Moscow organizers could appeal to the Olympic Charter and the IOC as a neutral arbiter, assuring the public that the Games were held according to Olympic rules and celebrating the tremendous satisfaction of IOC leaders with how they were carried out.<sup>192</sup> Despite the absence of sixty countries, Moscow still welcomed eighty nations to the Games, where 5,179 athletes competed in 203 events. Furthermore, the Orgcom could boast good results for its efforts in international sports over the last decades with several developing nations competing in the Olympic Games for the first time, including Angola, Vietnam, Botswana, Laos, Nicaragua, Seychelles, Mozambique, and Cyprus. In addition, women accounted for 1,115 of the athletes, marking the largest percentage of female athletes ever in the

---

<sup>188</sup> Samaranch to Novikov, telegram, 14 January 1981, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1980-1993, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>189</sup> Berlioux to Novikov, 12 January 1982, IOC Archives/ COJO of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980 Correspondence 1980-1993, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland.

<sup>190</sup> John Hoberman describes the Moscow Olympiad as a "Totalitarian Spectacle," and cites western journalists who criticized the 1980 Games as being too well-ordered and lacking spontaneity. John Hoberman, *Olympic Crisis*, 71-73.

<sup>191</sup> Mertin, "Explaining the Boycotts," 235.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

Olympic Games. Not only that, but many western nations and U.S. allies attended the Games despite the boycott, among them NATO countries—Great Britain, France, Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Portugal—and countries of the British Commonwealth, Australia, and New Zealand. Some of these countries sent smaller delegations and marched under the Olympic instead of their national flags, but the presence of their athletes significantly reduced the impact of Carter's boycott.

The 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles also fell victim to a boycott, this time by the Soviet Union and other members of the socialist bloc. Denying that their campaign of "non-participation" amounted to a boycott, the new president of the USSR NOC and chairman of the Sports Committee, Marat Vladimirovich Gramov, insisted that concerns about the security of Soviet athletes attending the Games and an officially sanctioned anti-Soviet campaign prompted the decision not to compete.<sup>193</sup> Meanwhile, the Soviet press decried the commercialization of the Los Angeles Olympiad, which amounted to a "psychological vacuum" that damaged the Olympic ideals.<sup>194</sup> Others also criticized the 1984 Organizing Committee for its reliance on corporate sponsorships to finance the Games, as well as the pro-American television coverage by ABC.<sup>195</sup> Despite the absence of the fourteen nations that refused to participate in Los Angeles as part of the Soviet-led boycott, 6,829 athletes from 140 countries competed in the 1984 Games. With Soviet and East German athletes staying home, the United States racked up 174

---

<sup>193</sup> Hoberman, *Olympic Crisis*, 127. See also, Mertin, "Explaining the Boycotts," 247.

<sup>194</sup> Mertin, "Explaining the Boycotts," 245.

<sup>195</sup> Alfred E. Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games: A History of Power Brokers, Events, and Controversies that Shaped the Games* (Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics, 1999), 201-02.

medals, 83 of them gold. The Los Angeles Organizing Committee also boasted a profit from the first "capitalist" Olympics, inspiring future organizers to adopt their commercial approach to financing the Games.<sup>196</sup>

The 1980 and 1984 Olympic Games are seen as emblematic of the Cold War and of the character of superpower rivalry. Yet these Games were in many ways shaped by Cold War assumptions just as they have shaped popular memory of the Cold War. The two Games also represented two extremes of a broader trend in the Olympic Games, commonly referred to as gigantism. In Moscow, the Games became a large-scale socialist sports festival where all the resources of the centralized Soviet state and Communist Party were channeled into what was meant to be the greatest and biggest Olympic Games in history. If 1980 embodied all that was negative about the Soviet Union and Communism, 1984 was the essence of commercialization of the Games and of the rampant individualism that characterized U.S. capitalist society. It is true that the two events and, in particular, the reciprocal boycotts of them, represented in many ways the climax of the Cold War, but these Games were not necessarily endemic to the Olympic Movement as a whole nor did they represent the entirety of Soviet or US contributions to the Movement. They are merely examples of the limits of sports to mitigate international conflict.

---

<sup>196</sup> Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games*, 202.

## **Conclusion**

Since their entrance into the Olympic Games in 1952, Soviet athletes have been a dominant force in the world sporting community. The Soviet Union sent 295 athletes to the 1952 Games in Helsinki. Their delegation grew to 373 athletes in 1972, and 514 Soviet athletes competed in the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow. 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. Perhaps even more important than winning the most medals was the opportunity to beat the United States. 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.

Besides their dominance in the medal count, the Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympic Movement in the early 1950s changed the shape of international sports. Through the efforts of Soviet representatives, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) expanded dramatically, welcoming more members from socialist and developing nations into the organization. The number of countries participating in the Olympics also increased markedly between 1952 and 1980, largely due to pressure by Soviet



representatives. In the 1952 Helsinki Games, 69 countries competed, compared to 121 in the 1972 Games in Munich. The Soviet Union's entrance into the Olympics also sparked worldwide interest in women's sport. Only 519 women competed in Helsinki, 10 percent of the total 4,955 competitors. In the 1980 Moscow Games, women made up 21 percent of the athletes, or 1,115 out of 5,179. The number of Olympic events for women doubled, from twenty-five in 1952 to fifty in 1980.

Along with its contributions to international sport, the Soviet Union's involvement in the Olympic Games was also fraught with controversy. In the 1980s, the U.S.-led boycott of the Moscow Olympics and the subsequent eastern bloc boycott of the 1984 Games in Los Angeles caused many observers to conclude that the modern Olympic Movement had outlived its usefulness as a forum for promoting peace and understanding among nations. In their eyes, the Olympic Games had proved unable to rise above international politics to diffuse tensions between east and west, between capitalism and socialism. From the Soviet Union's entrance into the movement in 1952, each Olympiad became a showdown between the United States and the USSR. The drive to win that this Cold War rivalry induced on both sides has been especially injurious to the individual athletes the Olympic Games were intended to celebrate. The elite athlete of today is vulnerable to drug use, eating disorders, and training injuries brought on by the impetus to win. On the one hand, this state of affairs is due to the pressure to compete not just for the love of sport, but also for the prestige of the sponsoring nation. On the other hand, the Soviet Union's participation in the Olympic Games also provided an important outlet during the Cold War for friendly contact and exchange that balanced the highly charged climate of international politics.

Glasnost and perestroika ushered in a mood of "revelatory cynicism" regarding the Soviet elite sports system.<sup>1</sup> As the Sports Committee sought to retain control over the sport system, it received considerable public criticism from trainers, athletes, referees, and journalists who wanted to develop professional, commercial sport outside the confines of the bureaucratic apparatus.<sup>2</sup> During this time, a general image emerged of the state-run sports system as one in which athletes and trainers had been treated as mere tools of the state, abused by the Sports Committee and Communist Party bureaucrats who lauded and rewarded their international successes then left them out to dry once their medal-winning days were over.<sup>3</sup> Former athletes and trainers criticized Sports Committee bureaucrats as being incompetent functionaries "trained in administration and not sport."<sup>4</sup> Moreover, 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 a healthy, more productive workers and happier society, and the realities of an exploitative, elite training program.<sup>5</sup> This imparted a cynicism to the Soviet state-run sports system that, while not totally without foundation, did not fully capture the intentions and aspirations of many Sports Committee functionaries. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and with it the state-run sports system, ex-Olympians found it hard to make

---

<sup>1</sup> James Riordan, "Rewriting Soviet Sports History," *Journal of Sports History* 20, no. 3 (1993): 247.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Edelman, "The Professionalization of Soviet Sport: The Case of the Soccer Union," *Journal of Sport History* 17, no. 1 (1990): 47.

<sup>3</sup> Riordan, "Rewriting Sports History," 253.

<sup>4</sup> Edelman, "Professionalization of Soviet Sport," 49.

<sup>5</sup> Edelman, "Professionalization of Soviet Sport," 54. Riordan, "Rewriting Sports History," 247.

a living under new circumstances.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, sports facilities, including those built for the 1980 Games fell into disuse. Many complained that the gap between *massovost'* (mass participation in sports) and *masterstvo* (sporting mastery) meant that sports and recreational facilities were underdeveloped throughout the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

The frequent pronouncement that Soviet international sport victories were the result of a robust system of mass participation in physical culture and sport was not mere hypocrisy. That was the ideal vision, and sports administrators worked to make reality fulfill the ideal as much as possible. Lack of resources meant that the system remained uneven. The pressures of the Cold War and the Soviet leadership's admonition to "catch up with the west" convinced sports administrators that they should start with the top tier of sports and break international records, to achieve sporting mastery first, and then worry about achieving true mass participation in sports. There was some trickle-down effect, to be sure, and as Soviet victories became more routine and Soviet sports delegations grew larger, the overall infrastructure of sports facilities, schools, and collective sport clubs expanded to meet the demand for "reserves," young replacements for aging sports stars. There was a relationship between *masterstvo* and *massovost'*, but in many ways it was the opposite to what Soviet sports propaganda proclaimed. The Olympic Games did result in expanded sports facilities and new opportunities to develop mass sports—that Olympic venues fell into disrepair and disuse after the 1980 Games was the result of a shrinking Soviet economy, further encumbered by a dying leadership and a costly decade-long war in Afghanistan. Hosting the Olympic Games in Moscow

---

<sup>6</sup> Riordan, "Rewriting Sports History," 254.

<sup>7</sup> Riordan, "Rewriting Sports History," 254.

was an idea born of the optimism that came out of a combination of allied victory in World War II, expanded international cultural ties under the rubric of peaceful coexistence, and the conviction that the Soviet Union should be a world leader in the spread of peace and mutual understanding between nations that underscored the movement toward détente. In this sense, the Moscow Games were a qualified success. The "failures" of the Games had more to do with a shifting international political situation, a growing global economic crisis, and poor leadership in both superpowers than with circumstances within the realm of control of Soviet sports bureaucrats.

The experience of the sports bureaucracy helps break down binary thinking that has often characterized interpretations of the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> Bureaucrats were both part of "the state" and part of "society." They were impacted by social and economic developments that affected Soviet society as a whole, and they were not immune to the social ills of society. State bureaucrats also engaged in alcohol consumption, black marketeering, *blat* (informal networks of favors) and other means that Soviet citizens used to survive and "live through" the Soviet experience. They employed these measures in order to do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. For Soviet sports bureaucrats, their working interactions, which in some cases accounted for the vast majority of their waking hours, had a profound impact on their sense of self, their sense of their role in larger regime goals, and the importance of their work. Soviet sports administrators

---

<sup>8</sup> In his review of two works on Soviet subjectivity, Malte Griesse highlights the importance of not assuming that one sphere of interaction (for instance, "public" vs. "private") is "more 'true,' 'real,' or 'relevant' than the other." He argues that the individual or "complex and multilayered person . . . shapes his or her moral values and even interests in the midst of multiple, often contradictory interactions." He also maintains that breaking out of such "binary reasoning" that artificially creates a tension between the public and private self can also help to break down the underlying "opposition of the Soviet Union and the 'west.'" Malte Griesse, "Soviet Subjectivities: Discourse, Self-Criticism, Imposture," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 3 (2008): 24.

helped to create a working world in which international sports ideals and values reinforced and upheld Soviet and Communist Party ideology and vice versa. Through their interactions with international sports officials and the act of reporting those interactions to a Soviet government and party audience, sports administrators rearticulated both Olympic and Marxist-Leninist philosophy in terms that made them mutually understandable and palatable, rendering their contradictions less significant than their overall commonalities. They brought Olympic and Marxist-Leninist ideas into agreement in such a way that their professional actions could be justified within both systems of discourse and understanding.

The experience of the Sports Committee and its approach to the Olympic Games also helps to break down the binary of modern vs. not-modern. In their study of the Politburo under late Stalinism, Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk argue that "Stalin's patrimonial authority was . . . specifically modern" and that "although he himself remained free of regulations that might constrain his authority, his form of rule did accommodate rational-legal forms of administration at other levels."<sup>9</sup> The Soviet leadership after Stalin became even more "modern" in the Weberian sense. Brezhnev's style of governing, in which he relied on the expertise and ideas of his immediate subordinates, was much more accommodating to the further rationalization and systematization of the Soviet administrative apparatus. Lack of resources certainly compelled many Soviet citizens to work outside of the formal legal-rational forms of power and work through personal, informal networks to get what they needed, but there was a rational-legal alternative. Sports administrators, even in the top leadership, did not behave as little Stalins, cultivating their own personal authority and behaving as if the

---

<sup>9</sup> Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 9-10.

Sports Committee were a kingdom of their own. Rather, they functioned as modern administrators entrusted with a task, looking for the most efficient way of achieving that task within the administrative structure and resources available to them. The Soviet bureaucracy reached maturity in the years after Stalin's death, undergoing a broad-scale process of professionalization. This is especially true of the sports administration, as physical culture institutes and sports universities began to produce graduates who would go on to careers in the Sports Committee apparatus or sports federation administrations.

Soviet sports bureaucrats also helped define the role of the Olympic Games in the post-World War II era, bridging the Cold War divide between east and west. Dikaia Chatziefstathiou argues in her dissertation on Olympic ideology that Olympism should be defined "not as a set of immutable values, but as a process of consensus construction of values in the world of global sport."<sup>10</sup> Soviet representatives to international sport organizations played an important role in this process of consensus building, first as they pushed the IOC and IFs to redefine their rules and values to accommodate more readily a Marxist-Leninist understanding of sport, and later as they fought to bring developing countries into the Olympic fold and forced the IOC to redefine itself as a more inclusive institution, open to a variety of perspectives on sport and more attuned to the needs of non-European, under-developed nations seeking membership in the organization. This expansion of membership brought a larger variety of opinions and perspectives on the purpose of sport and on the meaning of Olympism, helping to transform the core values of the Olympic Movement to fit the demands of an increasingly global sports community. Somewhere between their first entrance into the Olympics in 1952 and the 1980 Games

---

<sup>10</sup> Dikaia Chatziefstathiou, "The Changing Nature of the Ideology of Olympism in the Modern Era," Ph.D. Diss., Loughborough University, Leicestershire, UK, 2005, 1.

in Moscow, Soviet sports representatives went from being pushy outsiders, trying to bring alien views and political agendas into the Olympic Movement, to key insiders in the Olympics, actively promoting Olympic ideals abroad even as they transformed those ideals to better accommodate the Soviet context. At the same time, they became complicit in the more negative practices of elite-level, international sports, such as systematic use of performance enhancing drugs.

Soviet administrators and the IOC shared a concept of "modern sport." To a certain extent, they shared an understanding that sport helped create a society that was orderly and regulated by observable and measurable achievements, defining progress both in terms of enhancing the level of competition and in advancements in technology, sports science, equipment, modern facilities, systematization, and an overall sense of the ability to shape the body and the person—to improve humanity through sport. Theirs was a civilizing mission that strove to pull everyone toward modern society. Allen Guttmann compiled a list of seven "distinguishing characteristics of modern sport" based on a Weberian framework, including "secularism, equality of opportunity to compete and in the conditions of competition, specialization of roles, rationalization, bureaucratic organization, quantification, [and] the quest for records."<sup>11</sup> These criteria match in many ways Soviet interpretations not only of modern sport, but also of modern society, and represent markers of modernization in communist ideology and the self-ascribed vision of what Soviet society should be and, by 1980, had officially become. For Guttmann, the six characteristics of modern society that he draws from Weber—namely, secularism, equality, specialization, rationalism, bureaucratic organization and quantification—are

---

<sup>11</sup> Allen Guttmann, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 15, quoted in Chatziefstathiou, "Ideology of Olympism," 26-27.

"independent, systematically related elements of the ideal type of a modern society," derived from "a fundamental Weberian notion of the difference between the ascribed status of traditional society and the achieved status of a modern one." Guttman sees only the quest for records as "more striking in sports than in the rest of the social order."<sup>12</sup> Yet even this has strong parallels in the larger Soviet experience, as during the Space Race, or the Stakhanovite movement in the 1930s when Stalinist norms made the quest for records a fundamental part of all aspects of Soviet society.

Chatziefstathiou also quotes Richard Gruneau (1988) who applied modernization theory to sports and determined that rationalization in modern sport was a "result of the development of urban industrial societies and existence of rationalization in general."<sup>13</sup> Soviet sport certainly fits within this framework, and the Soviet sports "system" design borrowed both from preexisting sports institutions that arose out of the urbanization in the late Russian imperial era and from the international sports model, consisting of a network of federations governing individual sports and a network of regional and republican sports institutions, all connected to a centralized Sports Committee that acted as the supreme authority over sports, including over its underlying philosophy, purpose, and articulation of that purpose. The main difference between the Soviet and international sports systems was that Soviet sports institutions were government bodies subject to the authority of leading Soviet government and party organs, whereas international sports organizations were independent, non-governmental bodies, fiercely defensive of their autonomy. This difference, though seen as fundamental by most

---

<sup>12</sup> Guttman, *From Ritual to Record*, 80-81, quoted in Chatziefstathiou, "Ideology of Olympism," 27.

<sup>13</sup> Chatziefstathiou, "Ideology of Olympism," 27.



western observers, was not as important to Soviet sports administrators. They saw their role as bringing the two systems and their underlying ideologies into cooperation with one another, working both within and at times against both governing structures to build the authority of Soviet sports and in so doing their own authority in both spheres.

My work also places the Soviet Union squarely within the increasingly global society of the postwar era. Sport became an important marker of modern industrialized society, and the Soviet Union served to spread this ideal and the physical markers of modernity to developing nations during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, and sports committee bureaucrats were immensely influential in that process. The Soviet Union did exert great influence around the world but not necessarily in the ways we have grown accustomed to assuming. Chatziefstathiou quotes Wagner's argument that the homogenization of modern sport is the result of a process of "international modernization" where people "select what they will absorb or not regarding modern sports" through a conscious act that is not imperialistic or a form of "cultural dependency" or "Americanization."<sup>14</sup> During the Cold War, the Soviet Union's approach to sport served as an important alternative to the American style, and during the period of decolonization, many developing nations looked to the Soviet Union for help in building their own sports facilities, in many cases specifically because it was *not* American. The expansion of the Olympic Movement to these new nations also brought different ideas about what modern sport should be and contributed to the shaping and reshaping of what Soviet sports administrators liked to call the "international sports movement."

---

<sup>14</sup> E. Wagner, "Sport in Africa and Asia: Americanization or Mundialization?" *Sociology of Sport Journal* 7, (1990): 400, quoted in Chatziefstathiou, "Ideology of Olympism," 28, 29.

It is common knowledge that the Soviet Union possessed a bloated and sprawling bureaucracy that was intimately complicit in the Soviet Union's ultimate demise. What has been ignored are the bureaucrats themselves and the possibility that they played an essential role in building the Soviet Union into a world superpower that challenged the world's largest and most powerful economic and military power for forty-some-odd years. After the entrance of the Soviet Union into the Games in 1952, they became a highly visible symbol of Soviet power and served as an important counterbalance to the image of a communist empire bent on subjugating the peoples of the world. Where the Soviet Union of the arms race was belligerent, combative, and uncooperative, the Soviet Union of the Olympics was friendly and supportive as well as competitive. Sports bureaucrats were crucial to cultivating the peaceful side of Soviet power during the Cold War. The boycotts of 1980 and 1984, however, reveal the limitation of sports to reduce international tensions.

This study also reveals that transitions in leadership, once thought to be the only important impetus for change in the Soviet Union, both shaped and were shaped by trends initiated from below and from the middle. The essential nature of the Soviet Union was not established under Stalin, nor was it ever firmly established at all. There was constant negotiation and renegotiation about what the USSR was, how it functioned, how it should function, and what it meant to be a Soviet citizen. New directions from the leadership built upon previous goals and experience. Perhaps there were few revolutionary transformations after the Stalinist 1920s and 30s, but reform did take place and actors in all segments of society participated in the formation and evolution of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union broke up in the end, not because it had ossified into a

stagnant leviathan incapable of reform and resistant to substantive change, but because it never coalesced into a coherent whole. The evolution of the Sports Committee demonstrates that, given sufficient time, space, and resources, Soviet governance could evolve into a more rational, effective, and professional endeavor. Yet in the high-pressure international environment of the Cold War, there was no time to wait and let the historical forces of evolutionary change run their course. Instead, the sporadic drives to build the socialist utopia, immediately, fatigued the Soviet populace and resulted in uneven development that could not stand the test of another call to mobilize for change under Gorbachev.

In the postwar years, under Stalin's leadership, the fate of any project was determined by the support of powerful political patrons in the Politburo. By 1980, big projects lived or died by the level of support they generated among rank-and-file state bureaucrats. As Stephen F. Cohen points out, the *nomenklatura* never constituted a monolithic, organized political force, but rather were a diverse group "divided internally by privilege, occupation, education, generation, geographic location, and political attitudes."<sup>15</sup> This diversity was the result of long-term process of specialization and professionalization within the state and party bureaucracy. This process was sped up by Brezhnev's "stability of cadres" policy which valued technical skills and expertise and provided job security, but the lifetime tenure that came with it allowed for lethargy, obstructionism, and resistance to reform. Yet the modernizing administrative apparatus never escaped its dependence on the arbitrary authority of the leader. The mixed success of the 1980 Olympic Games serves as an example of how years of careful planning and

---

<sup>15</sup> Stephen F. Cohen, "Was the Soviet System Reformable?" *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (2004): 473.

coordination could be threatened by poor decisions made by the General Secretary and his small group of top advisors.

The fate of perestroika and glasnost serves as another example of these conflicting trends. Glasnost gave a voice to hard-working, goal-oriented Soviet citizens of all walks of life. Not only dissidents but also state bureaucrats took the opportunity to critique the failings of the system and offer suggestions for reform. Stephen F. Cohen also highlights that rather than an entrenched force opposing reform, many members of the *nomenklatura* and administrative elite supported the Gorbachev initiatives and participated actively in their articulation and implementation.<sup>16</sup> Perestroika, however, inspired resistance from those established bureaucrats who saw it as a threat to their job security and their livelihoods. Members of the sports bureaucracy, likewise, occupied positions all along the spectrum of support and resistance to Gorbachev's reforms. Because the regime had relied so long on coercive and motivational measures geared toward spurring bureaucratic sectors to lobby for their own interests, without a enough attention to how each project would benefit society as a whole, the leadership spread the available resources too thinly. The Soviet Union pulled itself in too many different directions, and the first nominally socialist country ceased to be.

---

<sup>16</sup> Cohen, "Was the Soviet System Reformable?" 474.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Archives

*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (State Archive of the Russian Federation)

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| F. 7576 | Committee of Physical Culture and Sport, 1920-1959, 1968-1991  |
| F. 9610 | Organizing Committee for Preparation and Staging of the Twenty-fourth Summer Olympic Games 1980 in Moscow, 1975-1980 |
| F. 9570 | Central Soviet of the Union of Sports Societies and Organizations USSR, 1959-1968                                    |

*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii* (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History)

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| F. 17 | Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union |
|-------|--|

*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii* (Russian State Archive of Contemporary History)

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| F. 5 | Apparat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union |
|------|---|

Avery Brundage Collection. University of Illinois Archives Record Series 26/20/37

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Box 50    | IOC Members, Andrianov; Konstantin, USSR. , 1954-69, 1970-72   |
| Box 62    | IOC Members, Romanov, Aleksei; Russia, 1954-55, 1962   |
| Box 70-74 | Circular Letters   |
| Box 76-95 | IOC Meetings   |
| Box 112   | USSR Olympic Committee Proposal for Reorganization of IOC, 1959-61   |
| Box 113   | Russia, 1946, 1950-56  |
| Box 149   | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Comite Olympique d'U.S.S.R., 1947, 1950-69, 1970-72; General, 1956, 1960-69, 1970-73; Newspaper Clippings, 1956-68 |
| Box 194   | Olympic Games Bids, XXI Olympiad 1976 Moscow, Russia, 1969-70  |

Box 195      Olympic Games Bids, XXII Olympiad, 1980 Moscow, 1971

Box 277      Clippings, U.S.S.R., 1968-70

Russian State University of Physical Culture Museum, Moscow, Russia

Olympic Winter Games 1964, Innsbruck, 1964

Olympic Games 1964, 2 volumes, Tokyo, 1964

Olympic Winter Games 1968, Grenoble, 1968

Olympic Games 1972, 2 volumes, Munich, 1972

Olympic Winter Games 1972, Sapporo, 1972

International Olympic Committee Archives, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland

IOC Members, Vitaly Smirnov, Biography and Press Articles, 1971-1984

IOC Members, Vitaly Smirnov, Correspondence, 1971-84

IOC Members, Konstantin Andrianov, Biography and Correspondence, 1951-84

IOC Members, Aleksei Romanov, Biography and Correspondence, 1947-1979

National Olympic Committees (NOCs), USSR, Correspondence, 1951-1981

NOCs, USSR Statutes, 1963-1983

NOCs, USSR Executive Board, 1963-1983

Olympic Games of Moscow 1980, Correspondence 1976-80

Olympic Games of Moscow 1980, Political Affairs, Correspondence 1976-80

Olympic Games of Moscow 1980, Boycott, Correspondence with Jews and Israel  
NOC 1975-1980

Olympic Games of Moscow 1980, Congresses, 1980

Organizing Committee of the Summer Games in Moscow 1980, 1975-80

President Killanin, Memoranda, 1976-1980

President Killanin, Correspondence, 1972-1980

## **Document Collection**

Vartanian, Aksel'. "Sekretnyi arkhiv Akselia Vartaniana." Parts 1-7. *Sport-ekspress*, 2002, available from <http://www.sport-express.ru>.

## **Electronic Documents**

*The Olympic Charter*, available from <http://www.olympic.org>.

*Official Report of the Games of the XXII Olympiad*. 3 volumes, available from [http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports\\_frmst.htm](http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports_frmst.htm).

## **Published Memoirs and Autobiographies**

Baklanov, Gleb. *Tochka opory*. Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1971.

Romanov, Nikolai. *Trudnye dorogi k oliimpu*. Moscow: Fizkultura i sport, 1987.

## **Newspapers and Journals**

*Bulletin du Comité International Olympique*

*Fizkul'tura i sport* (Moscow)

New York Times

Olympic Review

*On-line Pravda*, available from <http://english.pravda.ru>.

*Pravda* (Moscow)

*Sovetskii sport* (Moscow)

## **Books and Articles**

Alexopoulos, Golfo. *Stalin's Outcasts: Aliens, Citizens, and the Soviet State, 1926-36*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003.

- Allison, Lincoln. Ed. *The Global Politics of Sport: The Role of Global Institutions in Sport*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Bacon, Edwin and Mark Sandle, eds. *Brezhnev Reconsidered*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.
- Barghoorn, Frederick C. and Thomas F. Remington. *Politics in the USSR*. (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, and Co., 1986.
- Baron, Samuel H. *Bloody Saturday in the Soviet Union: Novocherkassk, 1962*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Beck, Peter. "Britain and the Cold War's 'Cultural Olympics': Responding to the Political Drive of Soviet Sport." 1945-58, *Contemporary British History* 19, no. 2 (2005): 169-185.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. with an introduction by John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Breslauer, George. *Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Soviet Politics*. London and Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1982.
- Chatziefstathiou, Dikaia. "The Changing Nature of the Ideology of Olympism in the Modern Era." Ph.D. Diss. Loughborough University, Leicestershire, UK, 2005.
- Cohen, Stephen F. "Was the Soviet System Reformable?" *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (2004): 472.
- Cox, Michael. Ed. *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse: Sovietology, the Death of Communism, and the New Russia*. London and New York: Cassell, 1998.
- Davenport, Joanna. "Monique Berlioux: Her Association with Three IOC Presidents." *Journal of Olympic History* 4, no. 3 (1996): 10-18.
- David-Fox, Michael. "From the Editors: 1930s Studies." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 1 (2003): 1-4.
- . "From Illusory 'Society' to Intellectual 'Public': VOKS, International Travel and Party-Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period." *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (2002): 7-32.
- Dunham, Vera. *In Stalin's Time: Middle Class Values in Soviet Fiction*. Cambridge, Eng. and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Dunmore, Timothy. *The Stalinist Command Economy: The Soviet State Apparatus and Economic Policy, 1945-53*. New York: Palgrave, 1980.



- \_\_\_\_\_. *Soviet Politics, 1945-1953*. New York, 1984.
- Duskin, J. Eric. *Stalinist Reconstruction and the Confirmation of a New Elite, 1945-1953*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, and Hampshire, England, 2001.
- Edelman, Robert. "A Small Way of Saying 'No': Moscow Working Men, Spartak Soccer, and the Communist Party, 1900-1945." *American Historical Review* 107, no. 5 (2002): 1441-74.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Serious Fun: A History of Spectator Sports in the USSR*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. "Politics as Practice: Thoughts on a New Soviet Political History." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 1 (2004): 27-54.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Russia in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Signals from Below: Soviet Letters of Denunciation of the 1930s." *The Journal of Modern History*, 68, no. 4 (1996): 831-66.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Suplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s." *Slavic Review* 55, no. 1 (1996): 78-105.
- Griesse, Malte. "Soviet Subjectivities: Discourse, Self-Criticism, Imposture." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 3 (2008): 24.
- Gorlizki, Yoram. "Stalin's Cabinet: The Politburo and Decision Making in the Postwar Years." In *The Stalin Years: A Reader*. Ed. Christopher Read. New York, 2003.
- Gorlizki, Yoram, and Oleg Khlevniuk. *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945-1953*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Gorsuch, Anne E. and Diane P. Koenker, eds. *Turizm: the Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Guttmann, Allen. *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002.

- Hahn, Werner G. *Postwar Soviet Politics: The Fall of Zhdanov and the Defeat of Moderation, 1946-1953*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982.
- Harrison, Hope M. *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Hill, Christopher. *Olympic Politics*. Manchester and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.
- Hill, Jeffrey. "Introduction: Sport and Politics." *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3 (2003): 355-61.
- Hoberman, John. *The Olympic Crisis: Sport, Politics and the Moral Order*. New Rochelle, NY: A.D. Caratzas, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sport and Political Ideology*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Toward a Theory of Olympic Internationalism." *Journal of Sports History* 22, no. 1 (1995): 1-37.
- Holloway, David . *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-56*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Holquist, Peter. "'Information Is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Our Work.'" *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no. 4 (1997): 415-50.
- Hough, Jerry F. and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Houlihan, Barrie. *Sport and International Politics*. Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf: 1994.
- Hulme, Jr., Derick L. *The Political Olympics: Moscow, Afghanistan, and the 1980 U.S. Boycott*. New York, Westport, Conn., and London: Praeger, 1990.
- Huskey, Eugene. *Executive Power and Soviet Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Soviet State*. London and New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1992.
- Jones, Polly. Ed. *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Josephson, Paul R. *New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, The Siberian City of Science*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Keys, Barbara Jean. *Globalizing Sport: National Rivalry and International Community in the 1930s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Soviet Sport and Transnational Mass Culture in the 1930s." *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3 (2003): 413-34.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Dictatorship of Sport: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Mass Culture in the 1930s." Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 2001.
- Kojevnikov, Alexei. *Stalin's Great Science: The Times and Adventures of Soviet Physicists*. London: Imperial College Press, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work: Science and the Games of Intraparty Democracy circa 1948." *The Russian Review* 57, no. 1 (1998): 25-52.
- Kotkin, Stephen. "The State—Is It Us? Memoirs, Archives, and Kremlinologists." *The Russian Review* 61, no. 1 (2002): 35-51.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Kozlov, Vladimir A. *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years*. The New Russian History Series. Armonk, N.Y.: ME Sharpe, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance: A Study of Denunciations and Their Bureaucratic Handling from Soviet Police Archives, 1944-1953." *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 4 (1996): 867-98.
- Krementsov, Nikolai. *The Cure: A Story of Cancer and Politics from the Annals of the Cold War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Stalinist Science*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Lieven, Dominic C. B. *Russia's Rulers Under the Old Regime*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Lincoln, W. Bruce. *In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats, 1825-1851*. DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982).
- Malia, Martin. *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.
- Mawdsley, Evan Stephen White, *The Soviet Elite from Lenin to Gorbachev: the Central Committee and its Members, 1917-1991*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- McCagg, William O., Jr. *Stalin Embattled, 1943-48*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978.

- McReynolds, Louise. *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- . "Olympic Politics in Tsarist Russia: The Development of a Nationalist Identity." in *Problemy vsemirnoi istorii*. Ed. B.V. Anan'ich, R. Sh. Ganelin, and V.M. Panaiekh. St. Petersburg: Vilanin, 2000.
- Montagu, Ivor Goldsmith Samuel. *East-West Sports Relations*, Peace Aims Pamphlet 52. London, 1951.
- Peppard, Victor, and James Riordan. *Playing Politics: Soviet Sport Diplomacy to 1992*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1993.
- Pinter, Walter McKenzie and Don Karl Rowney, eds. *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.
- Pollack, Ethan. *Stalin and the Soviet Science Wars*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Prozumenshchikov, M. Iu. *Bol'shoi sport i bol'shaia politika*. Moscow: Rosspen, 2004.
- Ratner, Aleksandr. "Vesnoi Piat'desiat pervogo." *Olimpiiskaia Panorama* (1988): 27-35.
- Richmond, Yale. *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain*. University Park, Penn.: Penn State University Press, 2003.
- Riordan, James. "Rewriting Soviet Sports History." *Journal of Sport History* 20, no. 3 (1993): 247-58.
- . "The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of Sporting Women in Russia and the USSR." *Journal of Sports History* 18, no. 1 (1991): 183-99.
- . *Sport, Politics, and Communism*. Manchester, England and New York: Manchester University Press, 1991.
- . *Sport in Soviet Society: Development of Sport and Physical Education in Russia and the USSR*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Ryavec, Karl W. *Russian Bureaucracy: Power and Pathology*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003.
- Senn, Alfred E. *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games: A History of the Power Brokers, Events, and Controversies that Shaped the Games*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1999.

- Skilling, H.G. and F. Griffiths, eds. *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.
- Solnick, Steven L. *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Tarschys, Daniel. "Management by Duplication: Some Observations on Soviet Bureaucracy." *Nordic journal of Soviet and East European Studies* 3, no. 2 (1986): 37-56.
- Taubman, William, ed. *Nikita Khrushchev*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Tolz, Vera. "'Cultural Bosses' as Patrons and Clients: the Functioning of the Soviet Creative Unions in the Postwar Period." *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1(2002): 87-105.
- Tomoff, Kiril. *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Tucker, Robert. "Culture, Political Culture, and Communist Society." *Political Science Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (1973): 173-90.
- Ulam, Adam. *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-73*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974.
- Walker, Barbara. "Kruzhok Culture: the Meaning of Patronage in the Early Soviet Literary World." *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1(2002): 107-23.
- Ward, Christopher J. "'Path to the Future' or The Road to Nowhere?: A Political and Social Examination of the Construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway (BAM), 1974-1984." Ph.D. Diss. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002.
- Weber, Max. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
- Zubkova, Elena. *Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957*. Trans. Hugh Ragsdale. Armonk, NY and London: M. E. Sharpe, 1998.
- Zubok, Vladislav, and Constantine Pleshakov. *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Zubok, Vladimir M. *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.