

The world of Sports Exchange

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Delegates from Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Bahrain, Iraq, Malaysia, Nigeria, Kenya and Canada at Wembley Olympic Stadium.

1981 is an appropriate year in which to examine international exchanges in the world of sports and physical education. One hundred years ago the first international federation for a sport -for gymnastics – was established. One hundred years ago Martina Bergman-Osterberg was appointed by the London Schools Board to teach Swedish gymnastics in the schools of the capital ; the second Swedish lady to be appointed but the most significant -from whose fertile imagination and brilliant drive arose the first college for training women teachers of physical education and, probably, the beginning of a national PE professional association...

Review of the past

There was a similar trend elsewhere. The first gymnastic school in Russia had been founded in 1830 by another graduate of the Gymnastic Central Institute in Stockholm de Paulli. It was Italian G. Olta, four years later, who started things off at the University of Helsinki. In sports proper Britons exported rugby, canoeing, sailing, and especially soccer to the far corners of the globe. Visitors to this country envied the

role which games played in the public schools education and in the rural culture of this country. The most famous traveller of them all, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, not only looked to Rugby School and Thomas Arnold for inspiration, but also to the remarkable Dr. William Brookes of Much Wenlock whose 'Olympic Games' inspired him to take the final steps towards the rejuvenation of the Olympic movement.

Indeed the first International Olympic Committee prior to 1894 comprised 16 persons ; of these, eight were educationists and several were physical educationists. Victor Balck, Director of the Gymnastic Central Institute, presiding over an institution which was exporting the gymnastics traditions of Per Henrik Ling to most countries of the world, became infected by the "Anglo Saxon games tradition" and goes down into Swedish history as the 'father of Swedish sport'. One can fairly state that the movement of persons about the world was a significant factor in the development of world physical education and sport. *No matter how intelligent and meaningful a document, a book, a learned paper, they all need a human being to breathe life and dynamic purpose into them.*

In the United States competing traditions in sport and physical education were introduced by various emigrant groups; the German 'turners', the Slav 'sokolists', the British games players. In 1889 at the Boston Conference on Physical Training decisions were to be made about the best system for the new America. No one system was chosen ; at this moment in time the United States chose eclecticism – the utilisation of an idea from wherever it may come, according to its usefulness. They had a bachelors degree in physical education going strong by 1904. The YMCA was exporting its Physical Directors and its own games of basketball and volleyball to all continents. It was the force of an American backed international foundation which accounted for the establishment and, of course, the name of Carnegie College of Physical Education, the first English college for men. It was the American example which inspired international rotarian traveller, Herbert Schofield, to create his Loughborough School of Games and Athletics. It was the presence at Loughborough and Carnegie of generations of Africans, Asians and other nationalities from the far flung colonies, that made such institutions cosmopolitan centres of world renown.

After the second world war it was the tours by Danish groups performing the swinging gymnastics of Nils Bukh, and vaulting and agility skills, which transformed yet again our own system of physical education. It was the arrival of Rudolf Laban and his 'adoption' by the then Ministry of Education Inspectorate which initiated the 'movement' and 'educational gymnastics' heritage of the last thirty years. The design of the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre was strongly influenced by the Swedish 'Boson' near Stockholm, after Stanley Rous had visited it.

Only a few months ago a remarkable English lady, Constance Applebee, who died at the age of 107 ; it was she who took to the United States higher education system the game of womens hockey: The circle now fully turns; today we witness an astonishing growth of soccer and rugger in the USA together with an enormous demand for British sports ambassadors.

The Americans, having 'corrupted' rugger into their variety of football, are turning to us for the

old games but taught with new initiatives. In physical education too we can point to a brain drain of significance ; Britons in positions of importance are dotted across the North American continent...

In the last thirty years however the developing world has changed. The ex-colonial countries are no longer seen as the major resources for intellectual training – and rightly so. Many countries have developed expertise in sports and physical education and offer it gladly to buyers throughout the world. The Germanies, the Soviet Union, France, are dominant in the area of sports services to the Third World. The USSR has signed protocol agreements in sport with more than 80 countries. Some 2000 sports trainers for Asia. Africa. and Latin America, have passed through the portals of Leipzig's high school for sport. The French speaking communities in the world are carefully nurtured by Paris. The West Germans put on high level courses using English as the medium of instruction. Mexico attempts to head the effort in the South Americas. In Kuwait the government appoints coaches, without prejudice, according to merit ; a Brazilian soccer coach; the Chinese for table tennis, the Koreans for volleyball, and so on ; we British hang on by the skin of our teeth with two or three club soccer coaches. Most Third World countries take responsibility for their own initial training and require aid of a different kind.

The point I am making here is that there is still an enormous traffic in sports exchanges but less of this traffic sees Britain as the final destination or the major source of its inspiration...

Categories of Sports exchange

It seems to me that we can categorise sports visits and exchanges as follows :

1. Studying sport and physical education (students, teachers, others) ;
2. Sports and health holidays (doing sport) ;
3. Watching sports (supporters) ;
4. Sports professions exchanges (technical expertise) ;
5. Sports as history (museums, exhibitions, etc.).

The sports holiday is a growth area...

The steady, state of the winter sports market is another reinforcement of this idea.

The movement of sports club supporters across continents is a further phenomenon of the travel, trade, bringing with it all the social problems with which we are familiar – and baffled.

The movement of sports 'professionals' of various kinds is much wider than that of players, involving numbers of people approaching even tens or hundreds of thousands. It involves the management groups connected with them, the coaches, the facility architects and designers, the equipment manufacturers, the sports organisers and administrators. It involves, too, the exchange of members of the physical education and recreation professions at all levels. Many international organisations foster exchanges and conferences for such professionals. We at the Centre for International Sports Exchange have found ourselves engaged in facilitating the exchanges of sports writers, student sports administrators, and sports writers and television commentators. We have also initiated the exchange of stadium directors between countries.

Sports as history is largely an untapped area.

Few countries really exploit the concrete examples of their sports heritage optimally.

We, in Britain, have only, in recent years, become truly aware of the Jacobean Olympics in the Costwolds which were started in 1612, and the Victorian Olympics at Much Wenlock in 1850. The pilgrimage to Wembley Stadium is established; to the Wimbledon Tennis Museum it is beginning; to Lords and Twickenham still rather casual. Sports Museums in the USA, in Finland and Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, are also available to the sports traveller...

Proposals

I end with three proposals. I envy the international medical profession. Any young doctor or medical student can find a placement at hospitals abroad... The placement involves a free room and partial board in return for general medical duties. Is such a scheme

beyond the wit of the world physical education profession? Cannot we get pledges from people in the colleges and universities – a pledge that they will offer one or two hospitality places to travellers from abroad. The development of this scheme is central to CISE's future programme.

Secondly, in the world of elites, why not a network of sports 'monasteries' where those searching for excellence can find room and board in return for social and professional service of some kind? I am sure that most Olympic sportsmen still require only the chance to attain their potential; monetary rewards are still secondary. Such a network would be a boon to Third World countries where top sports people could live and work with local communities. We are currently working out this project with such bodies as the International Athletes Club, voluntary service organisations, and international agencies like the IOC and UNESCO.

Thirdly, a practical suggestion as to how the Centre for International Sports Exchanges might, through overseas study visits or exchanges, help to solve two burning issues in British physical education. The need for one all-powerful professional body for physical educationists is urgent and paramount. Could we not mount a representative party to study one country where the PE profession is well organised in this fashion? The need to elaborate how practical elements are assessed in modern degree programmes is also critical. Would not an international symposium on how others do it be valuable?

This is what we mean by the world of international sports exchange – the movement of persons and ideas about the world in the hope that there will be mutual enrichment of individuals and countries.

D.A.

