
Soccer and Social Identity in Pre-Revolutionary Moscow

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In the history of sport, Russia shares a common chapter with most nations of the world. With few exceptions, soccer appeared wherever the British colonized or traded. The large number of young men who worked and traveled in the trade professions brought soccer with them to foreign shores. The uniqueness of the entry of soccer into Russia, however, lies in its conjunction with the intense social and political upheaval of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The story of Moscow soccer, in particular, deepens our understanding of pre-revolutionary Russian society and the process by which social identities changed in the tumultuous years leading to the October Revolution.

Soccer first entered Russia through the port cities of St. Petersburg and Odessa, most likely in the 1870s. In Moscow, soccer developed later and initially on the periphery of the city, where most British textile mills were located. In 1894 at the Morozov textile mills in Orekhovo-Zuevo, an English plant manager, Henry Charnock, formed a team of fellow English engineers and managers to play teams from St. Petersburg. The following year a Moscow newspaper reported that on the green fields of the Hopper factory English workers have started playing soccer. Muscovites are showing great interest in this new pastime. Two hundred to three hundred people gather to watch how they chase the ball. Often one of the spectators will join into the game.

At the Orekhovo-Zuevo plant, Charnock introduced soccer to a number of his Russian workers. This was just one of many Moscow industrial centers where factory workers would become acquainted with the sport in the coming decade. A 1910 article in *Moskovskie vedomosti* (Moscow News) reported that a number of Moscow factories had recently formed sports circles for their workers. Factory owners wished to raise the level of health and thereby productivity of their workers by encouraging exercise and by offering an alternative to the heavy drinking that characterized worker life. The article praised factory owners for understanding that sport is the best way to fill free time which lures the

workers and low-level managers away from activities and into the taverns.³

By the efforts of these factory owners and their plant managers, Moscow soccer began to spread throughout the city, the suburbs, and the outlying towns linked to Moscow by rail. Within the first decade of Moscow soccer, the journalist D. Blagoev wrote, "Soccer has caught on in Moscow, no question. It has become the most interesting thing to watch."⁴ In 1909, *Moskovskie vedomosti* described the efforts of two sports clubs to make the traditional Russian folk game *gorodki* as popular as soccer.⁵ In 1910, the first issue of the journal *sportu* (*To Sport*) reported that soccer was the most popular sport in Moscow. "Only three or four years ago there were perhaps only a few dozen soccer players. Now the number of players likely exceeds one thousand, and the numbers of spectators watching these games has grown accordingly."⁶

Moscow was not unlike other large European cities where the growth of soccer accompanied urbanization and industrialization. Members of the growing technical class and workers who were steadily gaining a measure of leisure time and surplus wealth often began turning to sport as a form of recreation and entertainment. Expanding transportation networks provided new opportunities for local teams to compete on a city or regional basis, and for fans to fill stadiums in ever-growing numbers.

The work of Richard Holt and Tony Mason contributes to our understanding of the way in which sport took root in urban areas and began to reshape social and cultural identities. In his study of nineteenth-century British soccer, Holt describes the sport as a vehicle for collective urban identity, intense localism, and male socialization.⁷

On the one hand men lived in intimate neighbourhoods where they played with their friends and relations, their neighbours and work-mates. On the other they were also citizens, members of new economic, administrative and political units of hitherto unimagined provincial scale and complexity....By supporting a club and assembling with thousands of others like himself a man could assert a kind of membership of the city....As three o'clock approached and the trickle of spectators became a flood in the streets leading to the ground, the workers briefly took possession of the city.⁸

Sport provided a forum for communities to express their identity. Holt writes: "As the scale of the industrial city outstripped the capacity of individuals to compass it, the fact of being a supporter offered a sense of place, of belonging and of meaning that could never come from the formal [expressions] of citizenship...."⁹

Tony Mason writes that soccer in urban areas of Britain contributed to the growth of local and community consciousness. In building on these "pre-existing local loyalties," however, soccer simultaneously helped to break down such loyalties "by providing an experience, a topic of conversation even, which, assisted by increasingly extensive press coverage, was almost nationwide by 1915." In Russia too, spectators were cultivating a complex set of overlapping identities. Strong localism gave way to wider perspectives of soccer as a city-wide, nation-wide,

and eventually even Europe-wide phenomenon. Spectators felt they were participating in something larger than themselves. Soccer matches with their thousands of spectators fostered a sense of collective identity, solidarity, and a feeling of belonging. Soccer was a temporary escape from the anomie of the assembly-line world, a collective possession where spectators could express their emotions and govern their own behavior. Holt writes, «If [soccer] was an opiate, it was a democratic one of the people, by the people, for the people!»

Muscovites, by their participation in the rituals and forms of soccer as both players and spectators, articulated a self-image that signaled the disintegration of rural identity and the assertion of a new urban mentality. Participants, predominantly younger people, displayed a loss of interest in the forms of rural recreation practiced by their parents and grandparents. They embraced the «foreignness» of soccer by emulating the dress, behavior, and language of the English and German players in Moscow. This emulation of foreigners eventually gave way to a degree of animosity, as the pitch of competition increased and nationalist feelings entered the discourse.

A final salient feature of pre-revolutionary Russian soccer is the way that it exacerbated class tensions. When Russian workers tried to join teams or form leagues of their own, they consistently found their path blocked by middle- and upper-class athletes unwilling to admit workers to this inner circle of culture. Exclusionary rhetoric and practices stoked the flames of class division, and are a central theme in the history of soccer in Russia.

Moscow soccer evolved along three distinct lines. The first and ultimately most influential of these lines was the urban league of the amateur sports societies. Members of the foreign community along with wealthy Russians able to pay the sizable annual dues comprised these elite clubs. At the time, the prevailing notion was that members of sports societies should not limit themselves to one sport, but should cultivate a wide range of athletic abilities. One of Moscow's first soccer teams, for example, hailed from the OLLSóthe Society for the Lovers of Skiing.

Closely following the development of soccer in urban Moscow was the development of soccer in the dacha towns linked to Moscow by rail. These «cottage» towns on Moscow's periphery were made up of small plots of land, increasingly owned and farmed by wealthy city residents. As early as 1909 teams from the dacha towns of Mamontovka and Bykovo began appearing regularly in the Moscow soccer news, and in July of 1910 Moskowskie vedomosti reported:

In recent days soccer has spilled over into the dacha towns. Young people there are enthralled by the game, and they are turning their backs on the unhealthy activities of the dance hall. Often the dacha teams are so strong that they travel to play other teams, sometimes even against the organized soccer sport clubs. Such trips truly enliven the soccer season and attract a large number of spectators. For example, the team from Tsaritsyno played against the second squad of the Zamoskvorerskii sport club yesterday before close to a thousand spectators.¹²

Dacha soccer leagues naturally evolved along the railroad lines that connected these small towns to one another. Five of the major railroad lines leaving Moscow

had a league of their own: Aleksandrovskaiia, Iaroslavskaiia, Kazanskaiia, Nikolaevskaiia, and Nizhegorodskaiia. Teams traveled by rail on appointed days to meet their opponents. On the eve of the Revolution, there were at least 157 dacha towns in greater Moscow competing in organized soccer leagues.¹³

How and when soccer arrived in these towns, as well as the social composition of teams, is difficult to establish. Seasonal migration likely played a key role. Following the 1861 emancipation of the peasants, new economic and demographic forces began to accelerate the process of urbanization in Russia. New state taxes, land redemption payments, and a population explosion that by 1900 reduced per capita land holdings by one-third, all combined to drive peasants toward the economic promises of the city.¹⁴ In the years before the Revolution, more than 200,000 peasant seasonal workers descended annually on Moscow to engage in construction, transport, and industrial work.¹⁵ Peasants and workers seeking seasonal jobs in Moscow or in industrial centers such as Orekhovo-Zuevo could have observed soccer in those locations. This theory is strongly supported by the fact that dacha leagues ran in the middle of the summer, while Moscow city leagues ran in spring and autumn. This suggests that the driving force behind dacha soccer was an element present in the summer and absent in the autumn and spring—a pattern corresponding to trends in seasonal migration. Still, this cannot be asserted with any certainty, particularly in the absence of dacha player biographies.

Another factor contributing to dacha soccer was that many upper-class Russians left the city for the countryside in the summer months. In 1908 in the dacha town of Rastorguev, where the future soccer star Vasiliï Sysoev lived with his family during the summer, an English boy gave his Russian playmates a soccer ball and explained in gestures and broken Russian the rules of the game. By the end of the summer, boys and young men played soccer in a nearby meadow from morning to night.¹⁶ If a British boy in a dacha town is any indication, dacha soccer may well have had its origins primarily among the wealthy foreigners and Russians who brought their urban forms of recreation to the countryside in the summer. Further evidence exists in an August 21, 1913, article *Moskovskie vedomosti*: "Thanks to the return of the public from the dachas, where the majority of club members played during the summer, the flood of spectators to soccer matches has significantly increased."¹⁷ Most likely, dacha soccer was the product of both seasonal peasant migration and upper-class summer vacationing in the country, but further research is needed before the sources of dacha soccer and the composition of these teams can be definitively established.

The third major line of soccer development in Moscow consisted of the unsanctioned *dikè* (outlaw) worker teams. The genesis of worker soccer is perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the story of pre-revolutionary Moscow sport. As described above, male workers at a limited number of factories enjoyed the opportunity to play soccer as part of their management's efforts to create a more healthy, vibrant, and productive work force. It should be emphasized, though, that this encompassed only a tiny fraction of the overall working population. For many reasons, soccer remained essentially closed to Moscow's workers. Private

clubs charged exorbitant fees for membership and for the use of fields if they considered renting them to workers at all. Monthly membership dues at the Vega club were equivalent to a typical worker's monthly pay. In addition, elite clubs forbade their referees from officiating the games of worker teams. Many civil authorities were also unsympathetic to worker soccer. When rail workers attempted to organize games in the open space of railroad yards, they met with the stern reprimands of supervisors who called the game a dangerous distraction. Workers living in southeast Moscow played soccer at the Kalitnikovskoe cemetery until clergy drove them away for disturbing the eternal rest.¹⁸ The Moscow police, fearing that worker soccer clubs might be a front for subversive political activity, forcibly disbanded many teams.¹⁸

Still, as its interest grew, the working class found venues for playing soccer. Workers pooled their resources and gradually organized clubs and rented facilities for use. The grounds of the first organized worker club, Ragozhskii Sport Club, consisted of an open meadow and an unused barn that members converted into a clubhouse. It did not take long for worker soccer to make its presence widely known in Moscow. In January of 1912, sport published a letter written by Boris Chesnokov, co-founder of the club. He wrote: "The main elements of the outlawed circles are workers, petty bureaucrats, and students. We are not Patricians who arrive at soccer games in our automobiles. We are ~~them~~ passionately attracted to the healthful interests of sport.... Why can't the league give a little assistance and extend us an experienced, helping hand?"¹⁹

Even in the absence of assistance from the exclusive clubs, worker teams began to make great strides. In 1911 a league for worker teams formed, and by 1913 K sport was sponsoring a cup for the league's championship. The most remarkable soccer event of 1912 was a victory by Chesnokov's worker team against the Morozovtsy, a pillar of elite Moscow soccer. This was a historic and symbolic first. While worker teams still suffered under makeshift playing conditions, outlawed soccer had made its successful debut.

The success of the first Russian-only worker teams was a source of great pride for working-class Russians. For years, foreign players had dominated the leagues, and Russian players only gradually earned the right to participate. There was an ever-present, nagging feeling of inferiority in soccer and a desire to prove that Russians were just as adept in the sport as foreigners. As a result, toward the end of the first decade of the century, anti-British feelings began to increase. Conflicts arose in the Moscow soccer council when British teams broke protocol in scheduling non-league matches. At one point, the council issued an ultimatum, and the British had one week to respond to charges that they were violating league rules.²⁰ Lingering bitterness over the exclusionary practices of the English clubs made its way into the press. A 1910 article in *Moskovskie vedomosti* read: "The next appearance of the Mamontovka team will be on the 22nd of August against the British. However, a large crowd is not anticipated since admission to the BKS [British Sport Circle] is free but only for those with the recommendation of a club member."²¹ When the all-Russian team from Novogireevo won the Moscow city championship in 1915, K sport wrote: "For the first time the

champion of Moscow is a team where there is not a single foreigner. Their victory is doubly gratifying. There is no denying that Russia can play soccer.²²

Despite this rise in nationalistic sentiment, the Russian public displayed a simultaneous propensity to emulate foreign players and foreign aspects of the game. Readers of *Moskovskie vedomosti* became well-acquainted with the exploits of foreign players such as Golits, Shulits, Toller, Viliten, Parker, and Uaitkhed (Whitehead).²³ The most telling characteristic of this foreign emulation was the way in which Russians embraced the foreign terminology associated with soccer. In addition to the numerous technical terms which had no Russian equivalent (havbek, forward, gvgolkiper, penaliti-kil), Russians embraced even those foreign terms for which they had native equivalents. Rather than the Russian *oditi miachii* (to guide the ball), players often used the English *idribling*.²⁴ Instead of using the conceptually adequate *Bei!* (Strike!), players would use the hybrid imperative *Shutui!* (Shoot!).²⁵ A remarkable example of this predisposition to foreign terminology appears in an article in the Moscow press where foreign words in Latin typeset no less describe a match:

Referi Bell ne propuskal ni odnogo nekarrektnogo postupka s obeikh storon, prichem sleduet ormetiti, chto peterburghtsy pozvoliali sebe bolishe raznykh faults chem moskvichi. Publika s interesom sledila za igroi i vykrikivali imena svoikh ljubimtsev: to i delo slyshalos' Filippov pass, Tripp play, Charnok shoot. Kogda, nakonets, referi dal signal o time, i publika khlynula na pole i ustroila pobediteliam i pobezhdennym ovatsiui.

(The referee Bell did not allow a single incorrect play from either side, though it should be noted that the Petersburg side committed more faults than the Muscovites. The public followed the game with great interest and cried out the names of its favorites. Thus was heard: Filippov pass, Tripp play, and Chamok shoot. When the referee finally gave the signal for time, the public flooded onto the field and gave the victors and the vanquished an ovation.)²⁶

Russian players joined spectators and journalists in emulating foreign elements of the sport. Following the visit of the Czech team, Corinthians, in 1910, players began wearing striped shirts and white shorts like their opponents. Iurii Korshak, a Russian player, recalled, "They really wanted to be like the foreign celebrities."²⁷

The often heated rivalry with the British was not the only one defining Moscow soccer. For two centuries, Moscow and St. Petersburg shared a mutual distrust and antagonism stemming from profound differences in each city's culture and history. St. Petersburg was the westward-looking, rational city of the Russian monarchy and its aristocratic entourage. Moscow, by contrast, was the ancient walled city of Russia's medieval past, a symbol of traditional Slavic culture and the heart of Russian Orthodoxy. The historic rivalry, which found expression in the political and intellectual life of the country, found expression in soccer as well. From as early as 1907, all-star teams in Moscow and Petersburg competed against one another to see which city had superior soccer. The future Soviet soccer star and coach, Mikhail Iakushin, reminisced of these years: "Moscow-Petrograd!

What stirring and romantic pride characterized meetings between the all-star teams of these cities! What a heated rivalry they carried on without compromise! And how positively all this served to foster in the youth feelings of deep love for the sport traditions of their respective cities! feelings of profound and lasting sport patriotism!²⁸ The fact that it was mostly British players competing in these earliest championships did not diminish the native passions.

In 1902, the Petersburg journal *Sport* wrote: "Interesting news. A soccer club is being formed in Moscow. Unbelievable, but a fact!"²⁹ This insinuation of Moscow backwardness set an acrimonious tone for discourse in both cities' press. A Moscow journalist in 1909 wrote: "According to the opinion held by Moscow sportsmen, the last match between Sokolnicheskii Sport Club and Petersburg ended in the defeat of the Muscovites only because the players from Petersburg resorted to illegal tactics such as leg kicks and hand balls. At the same time, the Muscovites played the game correctly and out of principle did not want to stoop to the tactics of the Petersburg team."³⁰

Although the Moscow-Petersburg rivalry was the most celebrated in all of Russian soccer, tensions between the teams of northern and southern Russia also existed. Odessa's victory in the 1913 national championship touched off heated protests that Odessa had played with too many foreigners on their team. The national soccer council dominated by Petersburg and Moscow nullified the result. A subtle prejudice existed against teams from the South. Northern Russians believed that the "Southern character" was good for producing quick and energetic players, but that they lacked the necessary "technical skills."³¹

These multifaceted rivalries between Petersburg, Odessa, Moscow, and the British, as well as competitive tensions existing between teams in the same leagues, generated tremendous fan interest. Robert Lockhart, a British diplomat playing for the Morozovtsy team in 1912, reported that an average attendance at Orekhovo-Zuevo was twelve thousand people.³² That same year Moskovskie vedomosti corroborated that, in spite of rain during the game, the season-opener at Orekhovo-Zuevo drew ten thousand fans.³³ While crowds of this size were certainly the exception, the sporting press almost weekly reported attendance figures in excess of one thousand.

While we do not know the exact social and demographic composition of Russian soccer spectators, from their behavior we can draw some preliminary conclusions. First, spectators showed an avid propensity to idolize star players. Fans adorned their favorite players with nicknames. Mikhail Iakushin was known to Moscow soccer fans as "Tricky Mickey" [Khitryi Mikhai].³⁴ Konstantin Zhiboedov was "Zhibo!" and Evgenii Nikishin somehow earned the English moniker "Dzhek."³⁵ When Grigorii Fedotov dribbled down the field, crowds chanted in unison, "Grisha! Grisha! Grisha!"³⁶ In 1913 K *sportu* conducted a popularity contest asking readers to name players for an all-star Moscow team.³⁷

Crowds commonly surrounded the dressing rooms and playing field before and after matches in an effort to be close to the players. The congestion became so pronounced in 1910 that the Moscow league commission passed a resolution that warm-up balls must be removed from the field of play twenty minutes prior

to the game, so that crowds surrounding the goals and interfering with the players could be dispersed into the stands.³⁸ Victories frequently resulted in spontaneous spectator celebrations on the field of play.³⁹ To the spectators, soccer belonged to them just as much as it belonged to the players. Discussion of matches and players spilled over into taverns and the workplace. In these days before television and radio, the wireless fan telegraph⁴⁰ operated on Friday afternoons, circulating information about the weekend sportivnye batalii (sports battles) throughout the shop floors and schoolyards of Moscow. Fans with hand-copied schedules pondered the best routes for traveling across the city the following morning.⁴⁰

The process of constructing various fan identities often began in childhood. Young boys were among the most enthusiastic and loyal supporters of particular teams, and the way they re-created soccer in their neighborhoods demonstrates just how significantly soccer shaped the lives of some Moscow youth. Mikhail Iakushin was born in 1909 and lived with his parents in the Samarskii region of Moscow. His family's apartment overlooked the playing field of the sport club Union. Following the example of the older boys, he spent his weekdays watching the practices of the Union team and then their games on Sundays. He studied the names of the players and listened attentively to their banter. When Union was not practicing, Iakushin and the neighborhood boys organized their own soccer matches. A stocking stuffed with wadding and rags served as the ball. Games were organized apartment house against apartment house or na dvoř and street against street (pereulka na pereulka). Iakushin and his friends who lived in the same building, owned by a Mr. Ziablov, named their team ZKKSó Ziabfovskii klub sporta (Ziablov Sport Club) analogous to the real Zamoskvoretskii klub sporta (Zamoskvoretskii Sport Club) also located in Samarskii. Still, Iakushin and his friends remained loyal to nearby Union. When children's teams began forming, Iakushin asked his father to dye the team's jerseys the same lilac blue worn by Union's players.⁴¹

For those boys who did not live adjacent to sport clubs, soccer lore nonetheless percolated through their neighborhoods. Andrei Starostin, one of four soccer-playing brothers who left a profound mark on Russian soccer and who later chronicled its rich history, was born in 1906 and lived on the Presnenskii embankment of the Moscow River. He recalls how as a child the enigmatic letters OLLS represented a distant, mythic place to him. He vividly imagined how the open fields, the wooden grandstands, and the hundreds of cheering spectators must look. In a remarkable story, Starostin recounts how he traveled alone across Moscow as a ten-year-old boy to the OLLS stadium in Sokolniki.⁴² His childhood recollections of central Moscow are indicative of the way in which thousands of other people were experiencing the urban milieu of Moscow, and trying to make sense of their place in it. For Starostin and other boys, soccer forged formative and lasting identities.

Older generations were less likely to embrace soccer. Age precluded active participation, and even aspects of spectator culture—the long travel (often by foot) to stadiums, the jostling in the grandstands—were prohibitive factors. Those unable to participate in soccer were more apt to view this new form of culture

with skepticism. While native games resembling soccer may have existed in Russia before the introduction of the British version of the sport, there is no evidence to suggest that traditional Russian culture in any way prepared Russians for the pattern of mass soccer evolving in urban areas.⁴³

A parallel phenomenon is the way that younger generations were losing interest in the rural aspects of culture and lifestyle retained by their parents and grandparents. Andrei Starostin's father and uncle were professional hunters originally from Pskov province. They hunted elk and other game in the woods outlying Sokolniki. Yet Starostin and his three brothers showed little interest in becoming hunters themselves; all four wanted to play soccer. This loss of interest in traditional patterns of life resulted in a shift of boyhood emulation from fathers and uncles to older brothers and neighborhood boys. Starostin recalls the way in which his older brother Nikolai came home from school with tales of playground soccer battles and intriguing new words like *likhends* (hands) to teach his brothers. One of Starostin's lasting childhood memories was of carrying brother Nikolai's equipment to a game, maintaining a strict two-meter distance behind his seventeen-year-old brother whom he idolized.⁴⁴

For older Muscovites, soccer was the source of much confusion and alienation. Starostin's uncle was apprehensive that soccer would attract shady people to the neighborhood, and he loathed the crowds of people who congregated outside soccer stadiums. He could not understand the dress of the players, and he caustically referred to them not as *futbolisti* but *goloshtanniki* (ragamuffins). He suggested that his nephews would profit from chopping more wood and playing less soccer. On more than one occasion, when older residents of Presnenskii saw Nikolai doing training sprints in the streets, they notified the police on the assumption that he was a criminal fleeing a crime.⁴⁵

Starostin writes that money was not usually the greatest difficulty for young men and boys in their quest to play soccer. Often it was the opposition of parents which caused the greatest hardship. The Vasiliev family were Old Believers living in Presnenskii. When the three sons began showing interest in neighborhood soccer games, the father angrily refused to listen to their petitions to play this rebellious [kramolnain] game.⁴⁶ The writer Yuri Olesha, born in Odessa in 1899, recalls trying to explain to his mother and father the game he watched every Saturday and Sunday.

îThey play ball with their feet...î

îWith their feet? How can that be?î

To adult spectators, the game seemed something unesthetic, hooliganism almost something dreamed up by the less able students, by boys who hung around the streets!

îIt's a mistake to let Yura go to soccer games.î

îWhere is this raking place?î

îAt the Sporting Club field,î I would answer.

“Where?”

“At the Sporting Club field.”

“What is that? I don’t understand,” my father would say. “What field?”

“The Sporting Club field!” I would answer with all the assurance of a new culture.⁴⁷

Residents of the countryside associated this new culture with urban life. Although teams from the dacha towns and the outlying industrial areas such as Orekhovo-Zuevo played some of the strongest soccer in the region, they believed Moscow city soccer was superior. Dacha players generally aspired to play in Moscow. They imitated organizational and traditional aspects of the Moscow league by establishing championship cups similar to the Fulda Cup—Moscow’s annual autumn contest. The top team at Orekhovo-Zuevo, located some sixty miles from central Moscow, named itself *Grozy Moskvyy* (Moscow Thunder) an unambiguous expression of identity. The mere fact that railroad travel made the dacha leagues possible was a blow against rural tradition. As many scholars have pointed out, the railroad was a symbol of apocalyptic change in the Russian countryside.⁴⁸ As those who took interest in soccer traveled extensively by rail to other dacha towns, the rural horizon dramatically expanded. Soccer brought rural residents into contact with other people, places, and events which they might never have known. When various dacha leagues began playing inter-league championships, teams had to travel through Moscow to transfer trains, underscoring Moscow’s symbolic role as the center of all regional soccer.

Rural adoption of urban soccer patterns paralleled the way that urban worker teams aspired to become like the elite clubs of Moscow. Because members of worker teams could scrutinize the traditions of elite soccer firsthand, their efforts at imitation were much more direct. A worker team which used a shed as a changing room referred to the shed as its *pavilion*.⁴⁹ When Boris Chesnokov’s worker team rented its first facility, players drank iced tea with lemon during half-time, as this was the practice at *real soccer clubs*.⁵⁰

As a new and powerful form of urban culture, soccer began to supplant elements of traditional rural culture. Soccer *héroes bogatyrii* (epic folk heroes) seen in the actual flesh and worshipped by thousands began to replace the story-bound bogatyrii of traditional folklore.⁵¹ Soccer uniforms, banners, and team colors became new cultural icons. The five youngest Starostin children beheld brother Nikolai’s yellow and black jersey with awe. The jersey, received on the eve of the match, lay on the dresser in the nursery. A countless number of times we walked past it, our eyes riveted to the sacred stack of clothing. Nikolai kept close watch that, heaven forbid, someone should commit the sacrilege of touching these holy sport relics.⁵²

Soccer in pre-revolutionary Russia was an aggregation of new and dynamic cultural elements rapidly forging into everyday Russian life. It was a driving force behind the formation of neighborhood, city, regional, and national identities. The foreign origins of the game and its appeal to predominantly younger

generations eroded traditional cultural elements in Moscow as the city and its surrounding areas continued to undergo urban transformation. Perhaps most importantly, soccer in pre-revolutionary Moscow added to the growing tensions between bourgeois and working-class residents. Whereas in the Western context sport had often mitigated class differences, soccer in Moscow greatly exacerbated them. Much work remains to be done in order to understand how wide-reaching soccer's effects were on class tensions, and what role the sport might have played in adding to the social and political antagonism that found expression in the revolutionary events of 1917. What we do know is that in the brief span of twenty years, soccer became a preponderant element of Moscow city life, and would remain so in the Soviet era to come.

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1. See Victor Peppard, *The Beginnings of Russian Soccer*, *Stadion* 8 (1982-1983): 156, and Robert Edelman, *Serious Fun* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 29.
 2. L. B. Gorianov, *Kolumby moskowskogo futbol* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1983), 28.
 3. *Moskovskie vedomosti* 24 November 1910.
 4. Gorianov, 30.
 5. *Moskovskie vedomosti* 18 May 1909.
 6. Gorianov, 15.
 7. Richard Holt, *Football and the Urban Way of Life in Nineteenth Century Britain*, in *Pleasure, Profit, and Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700-1914*, ed. J. A. Mangan (London: Frank Cass, 1988), 73.
 8. *Ibid.*, 79-80.
 9. *Ibid.*
 10. Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1914* (Brighton: Harvester Press Limited, 1980), 242.
 11. Holt, 68.
 12. *Moskovskie vedomosti* 18 July 1910.
 13. This is my own figure based on research in *Moskovskie vedomosti*.
 14. Barbara Alpm Engel, *Between the Fields and the City: Women, Work, and Family in Russia, 1861-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 2.
 15. William J. Chase, *Workers, Society and the Soviet State* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 86-87.
 16. Gorianov, 8.
 17. *Moskovskie vedomosti* 21 August 1913.
 18. Gorianov, 33-36.
 19. *Ibid.*, 37.
 20. *Moskovskie vedomosti* 30 July 1910.
 21. *Ibid.*, 22 August 1910.
 22. Gorianov, 46.
 23. *Moskovskie vedomosti* 3 July 1909; 4 August 1909; 27 August 1909, examples.
 24. Andrei Starostin, *Povest'io fitbole* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1973), 25.
 25. Mikhail Iakushin, *Vechnaia taina fitbola* (Moscow: Fizkultura i sport, 1988), 9.

26. Moskovskie vedomosti 16 September 1910 Emphasiz mine.
27. Peppard, 161.
28. Gorianov, 59-60.
29. Peppard, 161.
30. Moskovskie vedomosti 2 October 1909.
31. G. Diuperron, *Sportivnye igry: Futbol, in Sovetskii sport* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Krasnoi gazety, 1928), 57.
32. Robert Bruce Lockhart *Giants Cast Long Shadow* (London: Putnam Press, 1960), 175.
33. Moskovskie vedomosti 9 August 1912.
34. Iakushin, 5.
35. Starostin, 25.
36. Ibid., 30.
37. Gorianov, 17.
38. Moskovskie vedomosti 8 September 1910.
39. Gorianov, 12.
40. Ibid., 52
41. Iakushin, 9-11.
42. Starostin, 13-21.
43. Peppard, 151. Soviet anthropologists attempted to show that native forms of soccer existed on the territory of the Soviet Union before the British introduction, thus diminishing the need to recognize borrowed Western culture.
44. Starostin, 5, 62.
45. Ibid., 58, 65.
46. Ibid., 107.
47. Iurii Olesha, *No Day Without a Line* trans. Judson Rosengrant (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1979), 124-25.
48. See for example James Billington *The Icon and the Axe* (New York Vintage Books, 1966), 507.
49. Starostin, 232.
50. Gorianov, 36.
51. Ibid., 53.
52. Starostin, 59.