

Modern communications technology, however, makes matches of national interest immediately available to anyone who wants to watch or listen. It enables the *mass public*, which identifies with the athletes, to take instant notice of contests against individuals or teams from friendly or hostile states. National governments can use sporting events to demonstrate the temper of relations between nation-states. Sport, due to its peripheral political status and mass public audience, assumes an active role in the expression of the international political climate.

Sport is also used as an expression of national strength. National programs for physical culture are often promoted in order to maximize the use of human beings for whatever the "National Effort" is designed to be.

The United States and Soviet Union use both the public/peripheral political nature of sport and the linkage between physical culture and national defense and in the struggle between them. Sport is one of the favorite arenas for the demonstration of the prowess of the "New Soviet Man" and the "All-American Boy."

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# The Sport System of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: An Illustrated Analysis

by  
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In the U.S.S.R., the dependence of sport on the political system has always been explicit, where this institution is regarded as an extension of the state politically and ideologically. The Soviet sport program has always had specific socio-political objectives affixed to it as evidenced by a Party resolution appearing in 1925:

"Physical culture must be considered not only from the point of view of physical training but should also be utilized as a means to rally the broad working masses around various Party, Government and trade union organizations through which the masses of workers and peasants are drawn into social and political life . . . Physical culture must play an integral part in the general political and cultural training of the masses."

Some sources conservatively estimate that \$2.2 billion is spent annually in fulfilling an axiom attributed to Lenin that "a nation cannot be strong, unless it is strong in sports." It is significant to note that the organization, supervision, financial support, selection of leaders, construction of facilities, control of award systems, and selection of athletes for international competition is considered just as important as any other function of government. Beginning with the establishment of the Supreme Council of Physical Culture in 1923, the Soviet Union became the first country in the world to establish a ministry of sport and physical education as a regular department of the government. This tradition has continued

to the present, although there have been certain time periods where the strict government control has been relaxed. From an organizational point of view, the vertical articulation of the sport system is, indeed, a positive feature. On the other hand, the horizontal coordination is extremely complex, prompting one Soviet official to remark that “the structure is too disjointed and involves too many committees.”

On paper, the Soviet sports system caters to a program of balanced excellence in which both opportunities and incentives are offered to encourage mass participation in sport, as well as the development of the elite athlete. Awards programs such as the *Prepared for Work and Defense Program*, and the *All-Union Sports Classification Scheme* are promoted.

Other unique features which have contributed to the establishment of the Soviet sport program as one of the world’s finest include: coaching programs (training, qualification, and certification), the scientific basis underlying sport, the pragmatic, utilitarian philosophy ascribed to sport, the employment of a co-operative ethic in all phases of sport, and the built-in incentives system.

The athlete in the U.S.S.R. has prestige—evidence for this is borne out in the statement of a high-ranking Soviet sports official “winning a medal in international sports competition is just as important as a major scientific discovery.” Prestige is mobility, and mobility is freedom in the U.S.S.R.



# Political Cartoons Employing Sports and Games as Communication Media

by

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This study was confined to examining four sport themes in political cartoons published during the nineteenth century that commented on the national political scene. Theories relating to humor, communication, and body image provided the conceptual framework. Sport imagery was used to promote the candidacy of a politician, to enlighten voters about the strengths or shortcomings of politicians, to express public fears or dissatisfactions, to attack evils, to inform or inflame the public about issues, to test or crystalize dissent or consensus, and to bolster morale during the Civil War. Cartoonists selected traditional sports, rapidly developing sports or recent spectacular physical performances to arouse the interest of the electorate. The competitive, structural, and content format of sports—the arena, cast of characters, activities, and equipment—provided a familiar frame of reference for interpreting the political struggle. Socially validated sport symbols identified the qualities or lack of them that lead to victory or defeat, and sport stereotypes transmitted shorthand messages about politicians. Through exaggerating or manipulating the body image—height, weight, musculature, movements, attire—cartoonists projected the attributes they wanted to convey about politicians. Each public opinion molder sought to stamp his picture of reality on the minds of the viewers, hence, in some instances, a human