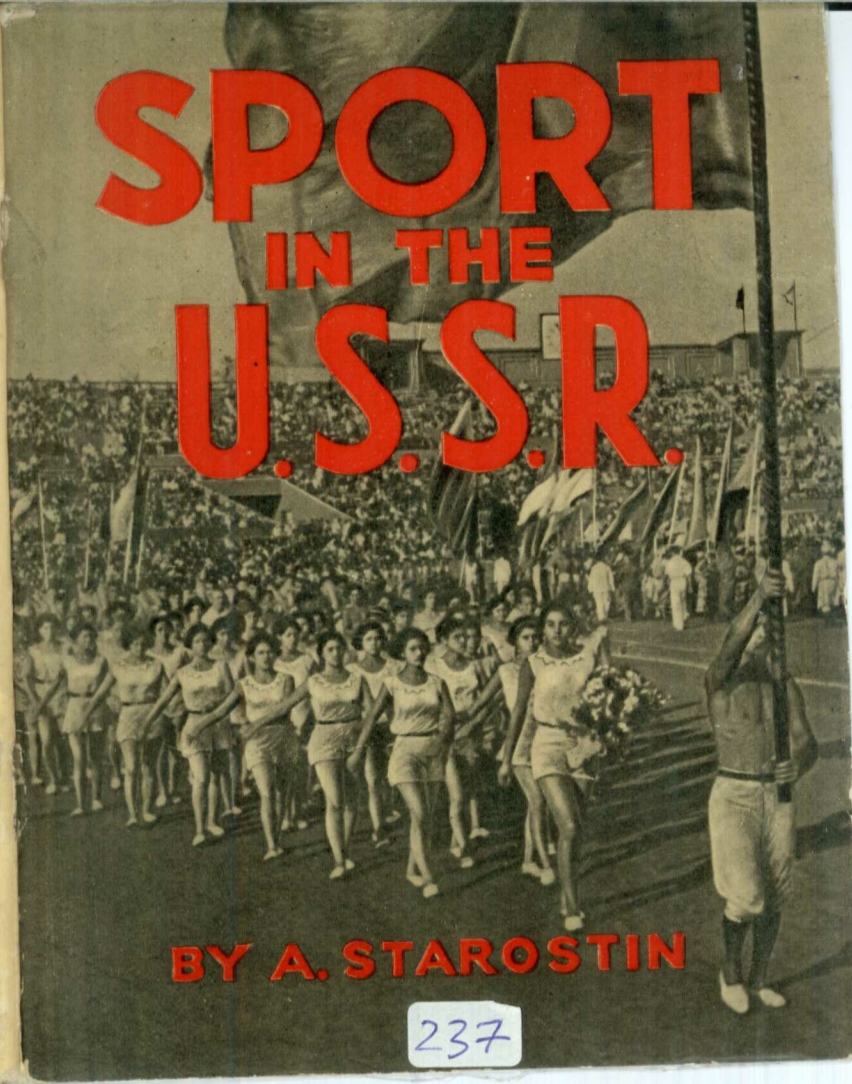


Цена книжки
со словарем 90 к.



SPORT IN THE U.S.S.R.



BY A. STAROSTIN

237

Scanned / Transcribed by
The Socialist Truth in Cyprus – London Bureaux

<http://www.st-cyprus.co.uk/intro.htm>

<http://www.st-cyprus.co.uk/english/home/index.php>





H



parade takes place every summer. The leaders of the Government and the Communist Party with J. V. Stalin, who has done so much personally for Soviet sport and Soviet sportsmen, review this parade of happy youth. Sportsmen from all the eleven republics in our Union march into the square. All the nationalities of the great Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are represented. Every republic demonstrates its prowess in sport, its national sports. Boys and girls, mothers and fathers with their children take part. Through the Red Square march Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, Byelorussians, Tajiks and sportsmen of other nationalities. Here too you will see Kirghizian falconers with their huge trained eagles. The exultant young folk march past with song, saluting their Government and J. V. Stalin, the leader of the Revolution.

They are living proof of his own words: "A new generation of workers is rising in the U.S.S.R., healthy, buoyant in spirit, able to make our Soviet country a tower of strength."

SPORT IN THE U.S.S.R.



By A. STAROSTIN

BADGE OF HONOR

CAPTAIN OF THE "SPARTACUS" SOCCER TEAM



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
MOSCOW 1939

PRINTED IN THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS



A column of young mothers with their children at the physical culture parade in Moscow

there were 20,000 participants in high mountain climbs.

On the Caucasus, Altai and Tiang-Shang last year there were 43 high mountain camps in which 14,000 persons studied the art of mountain climbing.

The mass nature of the physical culture movement in the U.S.S.R. ensures a constant rise of new talent. People who display ability in any field of sport are given proper attention, trainers help them to come on and become adept sportsmen. It should be noted as a very important fact, that recognized masters of sport, champions, do not break with their old contacts but continue to be members of the same sports societies.

The Soviet Government has established a Sportsman of Merit title which is awarded for sporting feats and long records of activity in the sports movement. There are now about a hundred sportsmen in the U.S.S.R. with this title. Many sportsmen have been decorated for outstanding feats.

In Moscow, on the Red Square, before the walls of the Kremlin an All-Union Sports



Mountain-climbers cross the pass into Svanetia
(Caucasus)

26,000 kilometers (16,000 miles) along the borders of the Soviet Union. Sportsmen of the Far East skied to Moscow over a distance upwards of 10,000 kilometers (6200 miles). Women employees of the Moscow Electrical Equipment Works skied from Moscow to Tobolsk, a distance exceeding 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles).

Before the Revolution, mountain-climbing in Russia, with so many mighty peaks on her territory, was practically non-existent. From 1829 to 1914, nearly a century, only 59 persons climbed Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe, and 47 of them were foreigners at that. Between 1877 and 1903, i.e., over a quarter of a century, Russian mountain climbers did not make a single first ascent. Those that were made were accomplished by foreigners.

Touring and mountain-climbing are widely developed in the U.S.S.R. Soviet climbers have scaled all the main peaks in the U.S.S.R. In 1937, twelve Soviet mountain climbers scaled peaks of over 7,000 meters (23,000 feet). In 1938 alone



PHYSICAL culture in the Soviet Union is a matter of importance to the state.

The government considers it its duty to widen the popularity of sport, and thereby to improve the health of the people and harden them physically for labor and defense.

Under the auspices of the government there is a special committee whose function is to foster the development of physical culture and sport. This committee directs the activities of the numerous sports societies in the country.

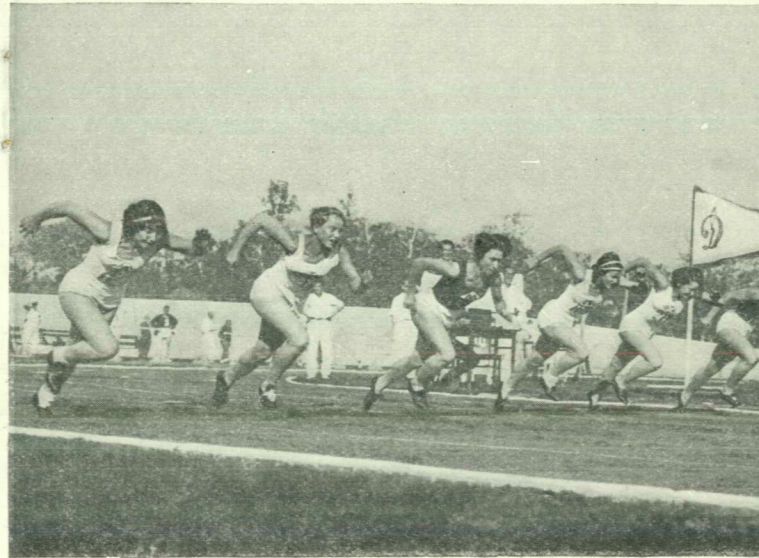
The amateur sports clubs aim for mass membership. There are sports clubs and societies not only in the cities but in the

countryside, the army and the navy. Over ten million people are organized in sports societies, sports clubs and kindred bodies. Twenty million schoolchildren engage in various sports in specially equipped gymnasiums and playgrounds.

The sports societies concentrate mainly on all-round physical development. All members of sports societies must undergo a course of athletic tests so as to qualify for the "Labor and Defense" Badge. These tests include running, broad-jumping, throwing, swimming, rowing, shooting, etc. The tests are graded according to age and sex: reduced standards for children (from 13 to 16 years of age), adult standards ("first degree"), advanced standards ("second degree").

All who pass the test are awarded a special badge, the likeness of a runner embossed on a red five-pointed star, superscribed "Ready for Labor and Defense." There is also a special badge for children, inscribed "Be Ready for Labor and Defense."

Aspirants for the badge are tested all the year round by specially-appointed instruc-



The start

belongs to a Soviet skater, Maria Isakova, who covered the distance in 2 m. 37.4 s. and beat the record of 2 m. 38.1 s. made by Skou Nilsen, the Norwegian woman skater.

There are many annual sports contests in the U.S.S.R. There are special championships for the various sports societies in the army, the navy, the rural districts and universities. The number of participants is tremendous. There were no less than 4,000 participants in the contests held in the Army, the Navy and under the auspices of the Dynamo society in 1938.

Much attention is paid to endurance contests. There are regular Marathon races, long-distance ski races, cycle races over distances of 2,000 and 2,500 kilometers (1,240 and 1,550 miles), horse runs, long distance swims of 30, 50 and 60 kilometers (18.6, 31 and 37.2 miles) in the sea, and long-distance ski treks.

Turkmenian horsemen rode from Ashkhabad (Central Asia) to Moscow, covering a distance of over 10,000 kilometers (6,200 miles). Sportsmen frontier guards cycled



Students of a physical culture school in training
at Lake Issyk-Kul in Kazakhstan

matches have shown the high standard of Soviet soccer.

To Soviet sportsmen records are not an end in themselves. They are a natural result of well organized mass training. Our masters of sport are showing remarkable prowess. In weight-lifting Soviet athletes hold world records and are constantly improving upon them. Of the 35 world records for bar-bell lifting 23 belong to Soviet athletes.

Shooting as a sport is also highly developed in the U.S.S.R. Among its traditions are the contests which take place nearly every year between rifle clubs here and rifle clubs in the U.S.A. Soviet marksmen hold nine world records.

Among Soviet swimmers is the world-record winner Semyon Boichenko. He has beaten world records time and again. He swims the 100 meters, breast stroke, in 1 m. 6.8 s. and the 200 meters in 2 m. 36.2 s.

Soviet skaters too are a credit to Soviet sport. Often they have excelled the best skaters in the world—the Scandinavians. The world record for the 1,500 meters

tors, at sports grounds, aquatic sports stations and bathing beaches in the summer and at skating rinks, indoor swimming pools and skiing stations in the winter time.

Millions of schoolchildren, lads and girls, adult men and women and even middle-aged people are proud bearers of the "Labor and Defense" Badges. By January 1, 1939, there were 5,815,000 holders of the first degree badge, and 71,000 holders of the second degree. No less than 1,091,000 schoolchildren passed the juvenile test.

As a result of the rising standard of living in the U.S.S.R. and the extensive promotion of sport the average stature of young workers called up for the army has in the last six to seven years increased by 1.07 inches, their weight by almost five pounds, and their chest measurement by 8.6 inches.

The state is creating the material basis for a wide development of sports in the country. There are now 650 large stadiums, 7,200 sports grounds, 100 physical culture clubs, 350 aquatic sports stations and 2,700 skiing clubs. In 1938 alone, over

600,000,000 rubles were expended on the promotion of physical culture and sport.

The stadiums, tennis courts, indoor swimming pools, manéges, skating rinks and race courses are always crowded with spectators.

On big days the Dynamo Stadium in Moscow, one of the largest in Europe, has a gate of 75,000. In recent years first-class stadiums have been built in all the main cities in the Soviet Union, each with accommodation for tens of thousands of spectators. Moscow is now building a stadium to accommodate 140,000 spectators. Sports grounds, sports clubs, physical culture clubs and gymnasiums are functioning in all parts of the country. Collective farms are building stadiums of their own.

These amenities are the property of the Soviet people, the Soviet young generation. All sports clubs are open to any citizen of the U.S.S.R. who is interested in sports. All he has to pay is a small membership fee and he is amply provided with all the necessary tackle and equipment. He also has instructors and trainers at his service,



A Moscow skier (Mikhail Lebedev)

by the government for our achievements in sport. A fourth brother, the youngest, also plays hockey and football. Our sister is a hockey player and tennis player. My sister-in-law is a champion motor-cyclist and is well known as a tennis player and hockey player.

All varieties of sport are cultivated in the U.S.S.R. The most popular of them are light athletics, gymnastics, skiing, football, volleyball, basketball, tennis, cycling, swimming, rowing, yachting, skating, parachute-jumping, ice-hockey, boxing, weight-lifting, wrestling, Rugby football, horse-riding, shooting, hunting, fencing, motoring, motor-cycling, motor-boat-racing, mountain climbing, etc., etc., altogether over fifty kinds of sport.

Sports like light athletics, gymnastics and football have spread phenomenally. Soccer is played by hundreds of thousands of people and the number of spectators during the season runs into millions.

In the last few years Soviet football teams have played several times against crack foreign teams, at home and abroad. These



Entrance to the collective farm stadium in Slavyanskaya, a Cossack village in the Krasnodar Territory

a locomotive engineer's assistant, ran in the 3,000 meters. Another son, an airman, took part in the 5,000 meters. Her son-in-law broke the ribbon in the 3,000 meters. It is interesting to note that the mother ran the 500 meters in 1 m. 50.5 s. She trained for the race at a local stadium. The Kochetkovs have endowed a family prize for the best showing in cross-country running.

Another all-sporting family is Chistyakov's, the Soviet film actor who appeared in *Mother* and other well-known pictures. Chistyakov himself, formerly a prominent cyclist and hammer-thrower, though already 58, is still seen on the sports grounds competing in the veterans' class. His daughters are first-class skiers and his son is a famous cyclist.

The writer can say the same of his own family. Both my elder brothers are football players and hockey players, and Sportsmen of Merit. I am the captain of the Spartacus eleven, the Moscow team which stands at the top of the league and won the U.S.S.R. Cup in 1938. We have all been decorated

and is kept under constant medical observation by doctors on the premises.

The U.S.S.R. has six special colleges and twenty-five schools for the training of specialists in physical culture. In addition there are special physical culture departments in twenty teachers' training colleges. In all these institutions tuition is free. Furthermore the students receive a regular monthly allowance from the state and are provided with living quarters.

Soviet sportsmen are not professionals. They are free from the tutelage of promoters and managers, whose existence is inconceivable in the U.S.S.R. For Soviet citizens sport is not a means of making money. The Soviet sportsman goes on working at the job—in the foundry, at the wheel, on the farm, at the flying field, in the laboratory or the weaving room. For instance, the two brothers, Seraphim and George Znamensky, Sportsmen of Merit and champion runners, are studying at the Institute of Medicine; Mikhailov, Sportsman of Merit and champion boxer is working as a chauffeur. The

world famous Soviet chess player Botvinnik is an electrical engineer and research worker.

Hero of the Soviet Union Gromov who flew non-stop from the U.S.S.R. to America over the North Pole was at one time a champion weight-lifter. Soviet sportsmen have no fear of losing their jobs while competing in sports events. They are paid their average earnings for all time taken off for this purpose.

Soviet sportsmen are not left high and dry when time brings their sporting career to a close. They still have their staple profession to work at.

The extent to which physical culture and sports have taken root among the Soviet people is shown by the following facts. At Kuibyshev, a large town on the Volga, a whole family, the Kochetkovs, entered for one of our numerous cross-country runs, which are so popular in the U.S.S.R. The fifty-year old mother took part in the 500 meters (about 550 yds.) with her two youngest daughters. Her eldest daughter was the winner of the 1,000 meters. Her son,



"Dynamo" Stadium in Kiev