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AGITATION AND PROPAGANDA OF PHYSICAL CULTURE AND SPORT IN THE USSR IN MILITARY CONDITIONS (1941-1945)

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The presented article analyzes agitation and propagandistic activities of the publishing house “Physical Culture and Sport” and, in particular, the newspaper “Krasny Sport” in 1941-1945. Unlike many other specialized publishing organizations and periodicals, which were closed or reprofiled since the beginning of participation of the USSR in World War II, both the publishing house and the newspaper continued to work, which was explained by the importance of disseminating physical education knowledge and skills for training the Red Army. Until now, issues of the sports literature release in the war period have not become the subject of historical journalistic research. The State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) in Moscow stores working documents of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports under the USSR Council of People's Commissars of 1941-1945: correspondence of the newspaper's editorial office and the publishing house's directorate with the leadership of the All-Union Committee, letters to the newspaper from republican and city physical education committees, reports of correspondents and business trips, etc. Based on these materials and on publications of “Krasny Sport” newspaper involvement, the factors determining the publishing house's functioning in military conditions were identified and the main directions of its activity were. As a result, we can determine how useful the activities of the newspaper and publishing house were for winning the war and the subsequent restructuring of the entire physical culture and sports movement of the USSR in accordance with new socio-political tasks after the end of the war.

Keywords: агитация и пропаганда, физкультура и спорт, спортивная пресса, Вторая мировая война

INTRODUCTION

In the Soviet Union, the development of the physical culture and sports movement was a part of the socio-political problems solution, had a pronounced ideological orientation and was used as a means of ideological education and struggle. On the eve of the Second World War, sport was considered as an integral part of a wider phenomenon — physical culture, had a rather limited value, mainly served as preparing the population for work and defense of the country.

The active introduction of physical education in the Soviet society life, the importance that was given to it by the Communist Party and the Soviet government as an instrument of cultural, educational, political and ideological education, led to the intensive development of physical culture and sports journalism. Like the entire Soviet media system, the sports press did not so much aim at informing and covering the sports sphere in the necessary ideological spirit, as it itself made a certain perception of sport. It formed a clear vision of the world in the audience, offered ready-made answers to questions about what Soviet sport serves, what kind of competitive and training processes should be, what they should be directed to and what the Soviet athlete represents. This was manifested both in specialized publications and in the publications of sports departments of central newspapers, physical education programs (morning exercises, lectures on sports topics, etc.) and reports on radio.

During this time, even against the general background of poorly studied issues of the history of sports journalism, publishing in the field of physical education and sports during the war of 1941-1945 on the Eastern Front¹ is one of the darkest historical spots.

Researchers of the history of sports regularly turn to the topic “sport during the war”, proving that quite active training and competitive activity remained in Europe at that time. For example, M. Goksøyr examined how the sports organizations of German-occupied European countries adapted to live in war conditions¹, and what role they could play in resistance movement². Jensen C. T. studied the coverage of Danish-German sports collaboration during the Second World War in German newspapers, sports magazines and newsreels.³ Vonnard P. and Quin G. analyzed the investment of Axis forces around FIFA, particularly in the light of its continued activity during the Second World War.⁴ But the practice of using physical education in the USSR had a particular importance for consolidation the strength of the world’s first socialist state. Therefore, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of maintaining physical culture and sports activity in the rear and at the front precisely for the population of the Soviet Union, which bore the brunt of the war with Nazi Germany.

At the same time, the general features of the development of the Soviet system of physical culture and sports, its importance in the general culture of the USSR population, are currently studied quite fully. Such researches as S. Grant⁵, B. Keys⁷ and J. Riordan⁸ were giving attention to various aspects of the problem. A number of Russian researchers, such as V. V. Mikhailov⁹ and S. S. Tolstoy¹⁰, specializing in the use of sport in the ideology and socio-cultural policy of the state, were focused on manifestations of sports activity that were symbolic and propagandistic.

Valuable information on this issue can be found in the writings of sports historians who really closely studied the development of Soviet sports during the Great Patriotic War, primarily A. T. Vartanyan and R. Edelman. The statistician and researcher of the football history A. T. Vartanyan¹¹, a creator of series of articles for the Russian sports newspaper “Sport-Express”, which was also combined into a solid, comprehensive collection of Chronicle of Soviet Football, introduced a huge layer of newspaper publications and used archival materials. Based on them, he proves that elite Soviet athletes did not stop training and competitive activity even with the outbreak of war, combining it with preparation in hand-to-hand combat, overcoming obstacles, and skiing. In 1943, there was a firm hope for a successful outcome of the war, even members of the most militarized sports societies of the CDKA^{II} and Dynamo^{III} were returned to sports fields and playgrounds.

R. Edelman, a professor of Russian history and sports history at the University of California in San Diego, author of detailed study “Serious Fun. The history of spectacular sport in the USSR”, following the results of its research, expressed an important idea: “The German invasion of the USSR in June 1941 gave a rise to a process that ultimately put an end to the diplomatic isolation of the country of Soviets <...> brought the Soviet Union into the world community, and sports played a certain role in this”.¹²

But even these attentive researchers, referring to press reports as a source of information about Soviet sports, never set themselves the task of purposefully tracking the nature of physical culture and sports propaganda and agitation, as well as the structure and content of the sports press itself changed in time of war. At the same time, clarification of the circumstances of the specialized sports press history contributes to a more complete picture of the development of the physical culture and sports movement in the USSR. As for the media history researches, they are limited to brief theses on the folding or extremely limited functioning of the sports journalism system in the war years.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this work, on the basis of archival documents stored in the State Archive of the Russian Federation and not previously put into active scientific circulation, as well as publications of “Krasny Sport” (Red Sport) newspaper, we consider features of the “Physical Culture and Sport” publishing house and “Krasny Sport” newspaper in period of 1941-1945.

¹ In the USSR, the war on the Eastern Front was called the Great Patriotic War, and hereinafter in the article this name will be used.

^{II} Central Military District — main sports club of the Red Army.

^{III} Sports club of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

According to survived archival documents (correspondence of the newspaper's editorial board and the publishing house's directorate with the leadership of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports, letters to the newspaper from republican and city physical education committees, reports of correspondents and business trips, etc.), the tasks that were set to the printed structures, to recreate the main directions of their work and determine how useful the activities of the newspaper and publishing house were for winning the war. Examining the publications of the newspaper "Krasny Sport" using the method of conceptual analysis, descriptive and comparative methods, one can trace the changes that occurred in the coverage of sports phenomena — they reflected shifts in understanding the essence and tasks of the sports and athletic movement, showed the transformation of the functional role model of sports during this period.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH

On the eve of the war, since the late 1930s, physical and sports press of the USSR had focused on demonstrating the indestructible power of the Soviet people, their unlimited devotion to the Communist Party and the Soviet government, their combat readiness to defend their socialist homeland and their peaceful work from any enemy. The Soviet physical culture movement had the main goal, as the editorial of "Krasny Sport" reported: "to tirelessly strengthen the defense power of its worker-peasant state".¹³

The newspaper "Krasny Sport", while promoting the general distribution of the new GTO complex^{IV}, in which the presence of military-applied skills was strengthened since 1939, wrote: "A citizen of the USSR must be healthy, physically strong, agile, hardy in work and, especially, in a combat situation. He must be able to overcome obstacles, shoot, throw a grenade, wield a bayonet, run well, swim, easily ski and do the simplest gymnastic exercises — daily exercise".¹⁴

Along with increasing general physical fitness, an important requirement was the indispensable mastery of the second defense specialty, which included swimming, shooting, auto and motorcycling, primarily athletics and skiing. Elements of military training were necessarily included in the training and competition process in all sports that had a defense significance — for example, ski cross-country runs in gas masks, with imitation of chemical attacks, with mandatory firing and throwing grenades. An excellent skier, according to the slogan that appeared in "Krasny Sport" newspaper at the end of 1940, is "a skier-walker, a skier-shooter, a skier-grenade thrower".¹⁵

As for the heroes of sports, champions, under these conditions they were required not so much to show good results, but to serve as an example of endurance training for millions of athletes: "Without weakening the struggle for world sports records, we must, first of all, educate youth all the qualities that are necessary for the soldiers of the Red Army and the Navy".¹⁶

The stars of Soviet sport were to become propagandists of mass physical culture with all its military-applied load. Accordingly, illustrations which appeared in "Krasny Sport", in which the swimming champion L. Meshkov makes a militarized race in full combat gear and with a rifle behind his back; Union champion in high jump N. Ozolin overcomes not the bar, but the ditch. The honored master of sports and the USSR athletics coach I. Sergeev wrote a methodical article for the newspaper "Krasny Sport" titled "Ski-throwing of grenades".¹⁷ The general tone of the slogans, caps, headings, texts following them, illustrations — escalating the atmosphere, over and over again reminding that the country will soon need well-trained fighters in large numbers. They were really needed soon after the invasion of the Nazi army on the USSR territory on June 22, 1941.

Changing of activities of publishing house "Physical Culture and Sport" and newspaper "Krasny Sport" in the beginning of the War.

Immediately after the outbreak of war on the Eastern Front, the system of civil periodicals of the USSR was significantly (almost doubled in terms of number of titles and circulation volumes) reduced. In order to create a mass military press, which needed journalistic personals, printing equipment, supplies of paper, ink and other resources needed in newspaper production, many publications were closed, including 21 out of 39 central newspapers^V. All activities of the remaining publications were reoriented to meet the requirements of the country's defense.

^{IV} A set of physical culture and sports standards adopted in the USSR in 1931, part of the state systems of sports and patriotic education of citizens. Abbreviation stands for "Gotov k trudu i oborone" — "Ready to Work and Defense".

^V The central ones were the most significant newspapers of the USSR, which were published in Moscow by leading party and government organizations of the Soviet government and distributed by all over the country.

Among those whose existence was deemed necessary even in wartime, there was also the weekly newspaper “Krasny Sport”, published by the publishing house “Physical Education and Sport”. It was the official body of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports (hereinafter referred to as the All-Union Committee, AUCPCS), which was created in 1936 under the Soviet government, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR (hereinafter referred to as the USSR Council of People's Commissars, CPC).

The activities of the publishing house “Physical Culture and Sport”, which was submitted to the AUCPCS, in the issue of physical education and sports printing continued even under military conditions — unlike many other specialized peacetime publishing houses that were closed or reprofiled with the outbreak of war. Obviously, this was explained by the importance of disseminating military-applied knowledge and promoting physical training among fighters and commanders of the Red Army.

By 1941, the largest publishing house in the Soviet Union for the production of periodical and non-periodical physical education and sports printings was “Physical Education and Sport”. In 1940 it published almost 250 titles of books with a total circulation of 4635 thousand copies¹⁸, which amounted to a little less than 50% of the titles and more than 70% of the circulation of all books about physical education and sports published in the country. In addition, in 1941, under the auspices of the publishing house, eight journal-type publications were published with a total circulation of 150 thousand copies and a 135-ton print paper fund, and two newspapers: “Krasny Sport” and “64. Shakhmaty i shashki” (64. Chess and checkers).

Table 1. Circulation and frequency of magazines published by the publishing house "Physical Culture and Sports" in early 1941.¹⁹

Title	Num. of issues per year	Circulation of one issue
“Fizicheskaya kul'tura i sport” (Physical culture and sport)	24	60 000
“Na sushe i na more” (On the land and in the sea)	12	43 000
“Shakhmaty v SSSR” (Chess in the USSR)	12	20 000
“Gimnastika” (Gymnastics)	12	20 000
“Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoy kultury” (Theory and practice of physical culture)	12	11 000
“Sport za rubezhom” (Sports abroad)	12	1 000
“Bulletin' Vsesoyuznogo komiteta po delam fizkul'tury i sporta” (Bulletin of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports)	12	5 000

In the summer of 1941, the publishing house underwent natural changes. According to the instructions of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, all journal editions and the newspaper “64” were “temporarily” closed, and “Krasny Sport”, although it continued to publish weekly on the same 4 pages, in a reduced format (twice as compared with the pre-war).

In addition, the State Staff Commission of CPC^{VI} reduced the staff of both the publishing house and the newspaper's editorial staff. At the same time, when in October 1941 the apparatus of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports was evacuated in connection with the German offensive from Moscow to Tomsk, part of the publishing house (10 out of 24 employees) was also taken out to establish the organization's activities in a new place.²⁰ However, as V. V. Snegov, chairman of the All-Union Committee, informed in the Council of People's Commissars, “in view of the limited printing base and personnel, it was impossible to fully publish work in Tomsk”.²¹ The head of Soviet sports softened the situation, he was told differently from the publishing house directorate: it was impossible to establish work in Tomsk because the production and administrative departments were evacuated, and the editorial department remained in Moscow.

^{VI} The government structure, which established the nomenclature of posts and official positions in the USSR salaries for all government agencies.

And if the Moscow part could still continue its activity, although in cramped conditions without staff, then “the maintenance of workers doing nothing in Tomsk turns the publishing house into a social security agency”.²²

Even under such circumstances, recognizing the need for active propaganda of military-physical-cultural knowledge and coverage of ongoing activities to prepare athletes for the front, the publishing house managed to publish more than 50 books with a total circulation of 5.4 million copies.

The work of the Physical Culture and Sport Publishing House during the war years was fully determined by the goals, working methods and circumstances, which were common to the entire publishing industry of that time: “Publishers had a big and responsible task — to organize their activities on a limited material base so that the Red Army and the rear was supplied with the necessary literature. Up to 40% of the total circulation of books published in 1941-1945 accounted for the military-political and military-technical books. All central specialized, as well as peripheral publishing houses devoted a significant part of their products to military subjects <...> A brochure was widely used at the front and in the rear. The average volume of the book fell to 2.1 printed pages, and the average circulation reached 23 thousand copies, exceeding the figures of all the pre-war years”.²³

In full accordance with the general trend in the second half of 1941, the publishing house “Physical Culture and Sport” switched to the issue of publications of a reduced format and volume, mainly methodological and guiding brochures, manuals for fighters, leaflets. However, as can be clearly seen from the data presented in Table 2, with a decrease in the number of items and a decrease in the volume of printed sheets, the circulation of products was significantly increased — this ensured the mass distribution of concisely presented, but most useful in military conditions manuals and recommendations. For example, the book “Skier-fighter” was published in the winter of 1941-1942 with a circulation of 250 thousand copies.²⁴

Table 2. Issue of books by the publishing house "Physical Culture and Sports" in 1939-1945.²⁵

Year	Number of items	The total volume in printed sheets	Circulation in thousand copies
1939	106	440	1 270
1940	247	980	4 635
1941	193	446	8 468
1942	84	145	2 480
1943	43	57	600
1944	56	119	645
1945	54	124	915

During the war years, the forefront in the work of the publishing house and the newspaper’s editorial office was political and educational work among athletes (especially among pre-conscription youth), the organization of exchange experience of excellent physical education students and assistance to the All-Union Committee in the implementation of its decisions and events (for example, military ski training, bayonet fighting, swimming, etc.).

In the first six months of the war, “Physical Culture and Sports” published 51 books with a total circulation of 5.4 million copies. The Leningrad^{VII} branch of the publishing house was especially distinguished, which issued 19 titles of books after the beginning of the blockade. On the one hand, this was explained by the fact that the main printing facilities of the publishing house were located in Leningrad (up to 75% of production was printed there). On the other hand, the Leningrad branch consisted of only three employees who worked in much more difficult conditions than their colleagues in Moscow and Tomsk because of the complete blockade of the city by German troops that began on September 8, 1941.²⁶

From the end of November 1941 until the middle of summer 1942, communication with the Leningrad branch was completely lost. During this period, the authorized representative of “Physical Culture and Sports” for Leningrad M. Kogan, who directed all the work, after which the department’s activities were “mothballed” and the remaining products were stored in the basements of the Leningrad Institute of Physical Culture named after P. F. Lesgaft.²⁷ Subsequently, the work of the publishing department in Leningrad was resumed after the war.

^{VII} From 1924 to 1991, St. Petersburg was called Leningrad.

By the spring of 1942, when the retreat of German troops from Moscow and the general situation at the front allowed the majority of state organizations evacuated to the eastern regions of the country to return to the capital in autumn, the chairman of the AUCPCS, V. V. Snegov, developed vigorous activity. He wanted to resume the full-fledged work of the “Physical Culture and Sports” publishing house in Moscow and to return at least the publishing house managers from Tomsk. Moreover, since February, he has been addressing the Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, A. S. Shcherbakov, and the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars, R.S. Zemlyachka, with a request to allow the publishing house to start publishing a two-week military-physical journal with a circulation of 60 thousand copies: “In order to systematically guide the operational activities of physical education organizations and training personnel, to strengthen the propaganda of military-physical culture events of the All-Union Committee and regional committees, to deploy mass sports work in schools, universities, units of Vsevobuch^{VIII}, as well as to fully involve athletes in everyday assistance to the front, The All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports Affairs considers it necessary and timely to raise the issue of resuming release, instead of issuing pre-war magazines, one joint magazine called “Athlete-Fighter”.²⁸

In addition to the urgent propaganda tasks that Snegov spoke of, it can be assumed that the position of “Krasny Sport” newspaper pushed him to the idea of launching the magazine. The fact is that the newspaper’s editorial office was initially an independent structure, but before the war it was “poured into the All-Union Committee to cover its annual deficit in the amount of 150-200 thousand rubles”.²⁹ In June 1942, V. V. Snegov wrote about the losses incurred by the newspaper during the war to G. F. Aleksandrov, head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks^{IX}: “The “Krasny Sport” newspaper is published in a circulation of 40,000 copies. With a nominal value of 30 kopecks per issue, the newspaper deficit in 1941 averaged 700 rubles per issue, and in 1942 it was up to 2400 rubles, which will give about 125 rubles for the year (2400 rubles x 52 issues). In past years, this deficit was covered by the publisher “Physical Culture and Sport” at the expense of profits from magazines. This year, in connection with the termination of magazines publishing, the shortage of the newspaper will be a burden on the budget of the publisher”.³⁰

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVES OF THE PUBLISHING HOUSE AND EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE NEWSPAPER

According to reports, the newspaper “Krasny Sport” had a special place in the structure of the publishing house, worked in isolation from it and only was financed by it. The editor-in-chief of the newspaper, A. S. Finogenov, who was appointed to this post in February 1942, coordinated all plans for the preparation of publications directly with the AUCPCS, bypassing the director of the publishing house, and sent employees on business trips without his consent. Even the salary of the newspaper employees was significantly higher than that of colleagues from the publishing house who worked in the same positions: for example, the salary of the newspaper’s editor-in-chief was 1600 rubles, and the editor-in-chief of the publishing house was only 900 rubles.³¹ The newspaper “Krasny Sport” did not “grow” together with the publishing house. It is enough to point out that it has its own round seal and keeps the employees files³² — “Physical education and sports” was forced to state.

This “class inequality” and even the confrontation between “Krasny Sport” newspaper and the publishing house explains a strange (at first glance) phenomenon: in 1942, during the war, the official newspaper of the AUCPCS launched a whole campaign against the official publishing house of the AUCPCS! In a number of publications, the newspaper pointed out numerous errors, mistakes, shortcomings in the work of the publishing house: isolation from the masses of athletes, discrepancy between published literature and requirements of the war, serious methodological errors).

For example, one of the notes it was noted: “The leaders of the publisher cc. Kotlyarov and Smirnov still have not even bothered to discuss the order of the All-Union Committee in the team, to mobilize their employees to quickly eliminate serious shortcomings in the work of the publishing house <...> The publishing house’s plans are not discussed by the general athletic community and representatives of military organizations. Books about such an interesting and lively business as sports are written in the dry, official language of circulars, which kills any interest in the topic.

^{VIII} The system of universal military training for citizens of the USSR, created in September 1941.

^{IX} A special unit within the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, responsible for the spread of the communist ideology in the USSR. It performed, among other things, censorship and control functions over in relation to periodicals.

Books are made out without love, without fiction, creative initiative and ingenuity <...> Until now, the publishing house stands apart from living reality, it does not have an author's activeside from practitioners of physical education, athletes who participating in the war. And where can the publishing house have a wide activeside, when the editor-in-chief Z. Smirnov managed to become a specialist and author of books on skiing, water crossings, athletics, hand-to-hand fighting techniques and overcoming obstacles. The publisher pays a fruitful and universal author for this over a salary of about 10 thousand rubles".³³

To summarize, the accusations against the director of the publishing house N. I. Kotelnikov and the chief editor Z. K. Smirnov boiled down to the following:

- the issue and preparation for release (despite negative reviews) of clearly poor quality leaflets, containing gross errors, and physical education and military training brochures, which then had to be removed from production or destroyed circulation;

- Attracting a narrow circle of authors to work;
- receiving royalties as authors and editors of published books;
- unlawful (inconsistent with the leadership of the AUCPCS) overpricing of publications.

Both conflicting parties have repeatedly sent letters containing self-justification and accusations of competitors to higher authorities: AUCPCS, the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the USSR Council of People's Commissars. The result of the conflict, which lasted more than half a year, was removal of Kotlyarov and Smirnov from their posts; a new director of the publishing house was appointed N. I. Toropov. Toropov found out that only in the 6 war months of 1941, as a result of writing off the already issued brochures and leaflets, the distribution of which was later prohibited by the AUCPCS, the publisher suffered a loss of 400 thousand rubles: "The management of the Publishing House of Kotlyarov and Smirnov caused great economic harm to the Publishing House and the entire physical culture movement <...> People did not think about the quality of the products, but only cared to give additional income to a narrow circle of authors, as well as to themselves".³⁴

However, with the advent of a new director, the conflict between the newspaper and the publisher did not end. It is significant that in this conflict the editorial side of the newspaper (which once again emphasizes its special position) was the accusatory side, which was sharply criticized. The management of the publishing house was forced to make excuses and defend themselves in the face of the authorities, pointing out the unreliable depiction of the facts in newspaper publications, thereby causing new attacks from the editor-in-chief of "Krasny Sport": "Comrade N. Toropov, instead of listening to the criticism of the newspaper and mobilizing the staff of his apparatus to improve work, took the completely wrong position, trying to compromise the newspaper and evade criticism".³⁵

For his part, Toropov, asking higher authorities "to help the Publishing House get rid of unreasonable attacks by the newspaper editor", wrote that they can be explained by "his desire to intimidate the Publishing House employees who persistently save money and demand the same from him: stopping excesses in spending state money (expenses for proofreading and registration of the issues of the newspaper "Krasny Sport" are overestimated, the editorial staff is inflated — 13 editorial staff versus 7 before Comrade Finogenov came). This is essentially a stumbling block in relations between the Publishing House and the editor of the "Krasny Sport" <...> I would like to receive practical help and advice from Comrade Finogenov, and not vicious attacks and arrogance".³⁶

Thus, the basis of the conflict lay in two planes: managerial and financial. On the one hand, there was a management of the publishing house, which, with limited military resources, sought to save and control the expensive newspaper production process. On the other hand, there was an influential editor-in-chief of "Krasny Sport", who had the opportunity to apply directly to the chairman of the AUCPCS, bypass the director's head, striving for even greater independence and additional opportunities for the publication.

Of course, in such conditions of the struggle for power and the losses and costs caused by it, there could be no talk on a second year of the war about any expansion of production, the issue of a military-physical culture magazine, etc. However, Snegov managed to obtain the right from the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to increase the retail price for "Krasny Sport" from 30 to 40 cents per issue.

This measure made it possible not only to make the newspaper self-sustaining and to remove the additional financial burden from the publishing house, but also made it possible to improve the quality of printing production, “Krasny Sport”, from December 1942, which Finogenov specifically reported on as a great success to the chairman of the All-Union Committee.³⁷

The editor-in-chief of “Krasny Sport” A. S. Finogenov maintained direct contact with the chairman of the All-Union Committee Snegov, bypassing the management of the publishing house. Plans for the preparation of not only leading articles and thematic strips, but also key materials of the main headings were approved by the AUCPCS for several months in advance.

Among the priority thematic areas on which the newspaper’s correspondents worked (including front-line ones), we can distinguish:

- coverage of the statement of physical education in the regions and republics not affected by the war;
- creation of essay materials about athletes and their experience in applying athletic skills and sports training in combat conditions;
- methodological assistance to physical education instructors in schools for the preparation of pre-conscripts.

For example, in May 1942, V. V. Snegov pointed out to the editors: “I consider it necessary to supplement the plan of the “Krasny Sport” newspaper with the following materials ...”³⁸ — followed by a list of urgent recommendations of 10 points. During of preparing the newspaper’s plan for the winter months of 1943, I. Vereskov, head of the AUCPCS organizational and inspection Department, wrote: “The main task of the “Krasny Sport” newspaper should be assistance to the Committee <...> in the implementation of Order No. 117 and resolution on military ski training population, in strengthening the district committees since then in the field of physical education and sports and in carrying out activities on the ideological and political education of instructors, masters of sports and physical education. It is necessary to make these questions leading from issue to issue”.³⁹ In response to these instructions from the editorial office, the All-Union Committee received detailed, numbered plans of publications (with the names of leading articles, thematic strips, correspondence, materials of the main headings) and the newspaper’s mass events.

SUBSTANTIVE AND THEMATIC CHANGES IN NEWSPAPER’S PUBLICATIONS

At the beginning of 1943, newspaper publications can be divided into two main categories:

1) Letters to the newspaper’s editorial office, received from military athletes in which they talked about how they managed to carry out a combat mission thanks to previously received sports training. These publications are close in spirit and meaning to correspondence from the army, received from the military correspondents of the newspaper itself. Such materials appeared in the regular column “Athletes at the Front”. The headings themselves eloquently speak about the content of such publications: “Athletes in battles”, “Athlete Goltsev’s combat score”, “Ski masters at the front line”, “Not by number, but by reduction. What five skiers can do”, “The death of an enemy squad. The art of Soviet skiers”, “Sprinter Shcherbakov conducts an air battle”, “Blow without a glove”. Their obligatory element is to appeal to young people of draft age, who are waiting for their turn to go to the front (apparently, this was the target audience of the publication during this period), to intensively prepare themselves with sports and physical education to repeat successful actions under suitable conditions front-line athletes.

2) The sports life of the rear: reports on past military sports holidays, reports on how military training has been established in a particular educational institution, industrial enterprise, as well as practical tips and recommendations — from how to fix ski bindings yourself, up to the construction of sports sites. There was an interesting column “What are you doing to win?”, where athletes talked about how they work in the rear, how they prepare reinforcements for the front, and manage physical education at enterprises. This also includes materials that with the outbreak of war were minimized, to short informational messages. They talked about sporting events taking place in different regions of the country: “Skaters are preparing for competitions”, “Best results of shooters of Bashkiria”, “Winter cycling”, “Matches of skaters, skiers, swimmers and chess players”, “Georgian Boxing Championship”, “Gathering of the strongest skiers of the Urals”, “Hockey Championship of the capital”.

In 1943, a radical turning point occurred during the war. The defeat of the German group of forces near Stalingrad, the breaking of the Leningrad’s blockade, the liberation of the occupied territories — all this contributed to a change in the mood of people at the front and in the rear, and also entailed a certain reorientation of state propaganda, which directly affected the content of the publications of “Krasny Sport”.

New materials began to appear, significantly different in meaning and spirit from the previous ones. If in 1941-1942 sport was considered as a way to maintain the morale of people, as a symbol of the resistance of the Soviet country, the indomitability of its people, and also as a necessary means of preparation for heavy fighting. The emergence of a new layer of publications marked a turning point in the war and meant that sport, in the interpretation of the central publication, covering this area, was expanding its significance and was already a symbol of confidence in the coming victory and a speedy return to peaceful life.

In this regard, the essay “Two Rackets” published in the newspaper in March 1943 looked significant. It described the fate of the two strongest tennis players of Leningrad — Z. Klochkova and T. Nalimova, who on June 22, 1941 had to participate in match with team of Ukraine. Instead:

On June Sunday, the gates in the stadium were closed. Someone in a hasty hand wrote in red pencil on a wallpaper sheet "On the occasion of the war, competitions are postponed indefinitely." The match Leningrad - Ukraine, which began the day before, was not finished. Yes, I had to abandon tennis. And for the first time a bitter thought crept into the heart of each of them:

“Well, who needs me like that? Tennis player! Lawn tennis! What is it now? Here are others, they know where to find their place! Skiers, runners, knives, throwers. And tennis players?” It was necessary to look for own place in the war among Leningrad athletes, among Leningrad residents. And this place was found.⁴⁰ Zinaida Klochkova began conducting physical therapy courses at the hospital and put many soldiers and officers on their feet, put them back in service:

When for the first time, leaning on one side of a stick and the other on her hand, the major tanker put both legs in shoes on linoleum, on the floor, she knew that this was the key to victory <...> More than 2500 people received relief from her hands. She returned many of them with her own hands to the ranks. Mail brings news from those grateful people whose features have already vaguely preserved in her memory. Recently, news came from a major tanker, now a lieutenant colonel. He is on the offensive.⁴¹

Tatyana Nalimova became a bayonet fighting instructor:

Twenty times a day, she showed fighters how to crawl, how to ski, how to stab with a bayonet <...> She trained more than a thousand all-education students in a special program. She became one of the first “thousand athletes”. Those are masters of sports who trained more than a thousand fighters during the Patriotic War, they are called thousands of thousands.

A few days ago on Nevsky avenue a fighter, who arrived from the front for a short visit, approached her:

“Let me talk, comrade instructor,” he said. — I report that your teaching has learned”. And he told how, having penetrated the trench, he stabbed three Germans.⁴²

It would seem that this material followed a standard thematic direction: it talked about how athletes — including those representing a sport as far from military-applied significance as tennis — contributed to the fight against fascism, as wartime required. But the essay ended non-standardly:

Yesterday Zinaida Klochkova and Tatyana Nalimova met. “You know,” said one to another, “that night, when the Last Hour was broadcast, I took out a racket and wiped it for the first time during the war, even snapped my fingers on the strings. Ringing! It seems to me that now is not far the time when the tennis match Leningrad - Ukraine will be played out”.⁴³

In this ending, there was both confidence in the coming victory, and rehabilitation of the independent meaning of the “non-military” sport, useless in war.

It is curious that this essay also resonates in later publications of the newspaper. In a note from issue number 36 about the open championship of Moscow with a substantial headline “For the first time in 26 years, the champions of Moscow are Leningraders”,⁴⁴ it was reported that Z. Klochkova and T. Nalimova won the single and double championship of the capital. Moreover, in the doubles category T. Nalimova won along with the famous Moscow and future main sports commentator of the USSR N. Ozerov. In the fall of 1941, Ozerov, along with several other Moscow tennis players, held a series of demonstration matches designed to demonstrate under the conditions of the German offensive on Moscow that there can be no question of surrendering the capital if sports life continues in it. In 1943, the fact of holding the open championship of Moscow and the victory of Leningrad athletes in it testified to much more.

It is noteworthy that “Krasny Sport” began to write about leading Soviet athletes precisely in connection with high sports achievements, and not only reflecting their contribution to the country's defense. If at the beginning of 1943 the famous weightlifter A. Bukharov was informed that he was fighting in the same division with his son, then boxer E. Ogurenkov, gymnast N. Ser, runner M. Shamanova and other winners of the newly held USSR championships in various sports, was told in a different vein. They became interesting precisely as heroes of sports, and not heroes of the front, and the significance of their results is valuable, for example, the fantastic success of E. Vasilyeva, who in August 1943 broke the world record of the Czechoslovak athlete Kubkova in the run for 800 meters, which lasted for 10 years.

At the same time, the number, volume and proportion of publications that reported specifically about sports events without any additional semantic load increased. In 1943, there were enough informational occasions for such publications — raffled championships, cups, crosses, friendly matches, all-Union and republican gatherings, etc. In the beginning of May, Moscow hosted the traditional track and field relay race for the prize of the newspaper “Vechernaya Moskva” (“Moscow Evening”), and the football players of the CDKA and Dynamo teams opened the season with a friendly game. Then the Moscow football championship started, and the “Dynamo” stadium gathered 20 thousand spectators for matches. There, in the capital, there was a match between boxers of Moscow and Estonia, the championship of the trade unions in athletics, in June a rowing race for the prize of “Vechernaya Moskva” was held. At the USSR Athletics Championships in Gorky^X, where almost all the country's leading athletes gathered, three new USSR records were set. In the summer, regional competitions in the Volga region, the Urals, and Central Asia were organized and received proper coverage on the pages of the “Krasny Sport”. Athletics cross-country events were held throughout the country, reports on which were regularly published in the newspaper. Local competitions were held in every major city — from Murmansk to Baku and from Leningrad to Khabarovsk. Moreover, headings were revived on newspaper pages that disappeared in the summer of 1941. For example, the headings “Council of the Fisherman” or “Chess” under the editorship of Grandmaster V. Smyslov have returned.

The newspaper's editorials reflected even more eloquently. As in the case of other central publications in the USSR, the content of the editorial of “Krasny Sport” had a particular weight, primarily implementing the functions of management, organization and control, laid down among the main ones when creating the official organs of Soviet power. Therefore, the leading articles carried and meant more than simply informing or orienting the physical education and sports community — it was practically a directive to action, an order, followed by very specific actions.

The newspaper's issue number 38 in 1943 for the first time in two years of the war came out with an editorial entitled “To sports victories!”.⁴⁵ Up to this point, the editorials spoke of something completely different and their headlines were different — “Live the interests of war”, “Patriotic duty”, “Athlete, be the first in battle”, “Work in the military”. And so, to paraphrase one of these headlines, the central newspaper called on the country's athletes to “live in peacetime interests”, to improve their skills, not for the sake of military training, but to improve sports results and strive for new records and victories. The editorial in issue No. 42, entitled “Back to Life”, clarifying the latest decisions of the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports, also had a programmatic character. It said: “The Red Army, span by span, cleanses the Soviet land from the German invaders <...> The cannonade has not yet died down, and life in the liberated cities and villages is already beginning in a new way. Hospitals, schools, bakeries, canteens, postal enterprises are being rebuilt. Cultural life is reborn. Together with theaters, cinemas and clubs, stadiums and sports grounds begin to operate. <...> The All-Union Committee for Physical Culture and Sports under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR issued a special order, which outlined a number of measures to revitalize physical education in liberated cities and regions”.⁴⁶

Since the fall of 1943, the official course of the physical culture and sports movement in the USSR has been called the restoration of sports activity, an increase in the number of competitions held, both mass and elite, and, as a result, an improvement in the results of Soviet athletes. In the December 51st issue of the newspaper (the penultimate one in 1943), a calendar was published — “Plan of All-Union Sports and Mass Competitions for 1944”. This plan included all-Union, regional, regional and republican competitions in skiing, speed skating, athletics, gymnastics, swimming, hand-to-hand combat and fencing, cycling, boxing, wrestling, weightlifting, basketball, tennis, football, sailing, chess, motor sports, shooting sports, sports days. In total, hundreds of items of events of various levels almost two years before the end of the war.

^X In honor of the writer Maxim Gorky, the city of Nizhny Novgorod was called in the period from 1932 to 1990.

- A. T. Vartanyan testifies to the fact that in 1944 even the USSR football championship was planned to be fully resurrected: “The crushing victories of the Red Army in the 43rd generated a desire at the top to return football competitions in the all-Union format, which had a huge moral and political value. The return to the people of Big Football, an indispensable attribute of peaceful life, would be perceived in the country and abroad as a harbinger of the inevitable Victory”.⁴⁷ Moreover, according to archival data discovered by A. T. Vartanyan, AUCPCS chairman V. Snegov, in his message to the secretariat of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks was explaining the necessity of holding the USSR championship, pointed out as the main argument: “This will help our football players prepare for international meetings”.⁴⁸

B.

It is interesting that the turning point in the perception of sport and the shift of emphasis in the formation of its ideological burden fell on 1943-1944, the time of war, when it was still very far from defeating Germany, and the population of the USSR should have had no time for sports.

ACTIVITIES AND SURVIVAL OF PUBLISHING HOUSE “PHYSICAL CULTURE AND SPORT” AND NEWSPAPER “KRASNY SPORT” IN FINAL PERIOD OF THE WAR

The newspaper “Krasny Sport” fully reflected this thematic turning point. Since 1943, the time has come for her to make consistent improvements and substantial changes, then for the publishing house “Physical Culture and Sport” 1943 became the most difficult for the entire time of the war, and the 1944th year did not bring significant changes for the better (see Table 2). First of all, compared to 1941-1942, the production of literature fell significantly as a result of a reduction in paper funds allocated to the publishing house: “In 1943 and 1944 the publishing house was forced to go not only to reduce the number of book titles, but also to sharply reduce circulation. For the whole of 1943, 17.5 tons of paper were received, and in 1944 only 15.5 tons. During these years, all pre-war remnants of paper located in various printing houses and at the publishing house’s warehouse were used”.⁴⁹ It can be assumed that the reduction of the paper stock was closely connected not only with the general situation with paper in a warring country, but also with the scandals that shook the publishing house in 1942.

In addition to the main — paper — factor, there were several more circumstances that directly affected on the reduction in work of the publishing house. First, throughout the entire period of the war, the leaders of “Physical Culture and Sports” regularly pointed to the extremely low salaries of their employees compared to generally accepted ones, for example, as a whole in the Association of State Book and Magazine Publishers (ASBMB).

Table 3. The difference in salaries in the publishing house “Physical Education and Sports” and in the ASBMB during the war.⁵⁰

Position	Salary in “PE and Sports” (in rubles)	Average salary in the ASBMB (in rubles)
Editor in chief	900	1600-2000
Editor	750	1100-1400
Corrector	350	600-750

It should be pointed, that since the beginning of 1943, in connection with a decrease in the workload of the publishing house, AUCPCS reduced its editorial staff — only 29 remained in the book department of 37 people.⁵¹ Not only did the salary level not fully equip the already limited publishing staff with qualified specialists, but also, as N. I. Toropov noted, “existing employees have to be kept at work only by the force of the laws of war”.⁵² The director of the publishing house repeatedly reported on the shortage of staff to the chairman of the All-Union Committee, but only in December 1944 he put to the Council of People’s Commissars the question of equating salaries with the generally accepted ones, but did not reach a positive decision.

The next problem was the publisher’s lack of its own printing base, which was especially felt after the work of the Leningrad branch was curtailed. To print books in Moscow, the publishing house “Physical Culture and Sport” concluded an agreement with one of the Moscow printing houses, however, the fulfillment of its obligations was far from exemplary: it systematically delayed or even refused to fulfill orders from the publishing house.⁵³

Finally, as another important factor determining the low productivity of the publishing house in 1943-1944, N. I. Toropov pointed out the dependence on the Scientific and Methodological Council of the All-Union Committee, which not only approved publishing plans, but also — after the history of abuse — coordinated the text of each published book. “The leadership of the AUCPCS deprived the publishing house of any independence. The AUCPCS order says: “To prohibit the “Physical Culture and Sport” Publishing House from publishing any literature without the sanction of the relevant departments and departments of the committee”.⁵⁴ At the same time, materials, which were sent for review and testing were delayed by the AUCPCS employees for up to six months.

By the end of the war, despite the increased workload due to the increase in the paper stock, the above difficulties in the work of the publishing house were not overcome. The key issue remained the situation with staffing and salaries. HR situation the director of the publishing house, N. I. Toropov, in his staff reports of 1945 defined nothing more than “catastrophic”: “At present, the publisher does not have a single corrector and not a single technical editor (released according to the decisions of medical commissions) <...> under the existing conditions, the publishing house cannot satisfy the needs of the physical culture movement in high-quality literature”.⁵⁵

During the war, the AUCPCS leadership could not or did not want to solve the problems of its specialized publishing house. Somewhat better the situation was with the newspaper “Krasny Sport”, which had a lot of sport’s leaders attention. After raising the retail price and switching to self-sufficiency, the newspaper’s editorial staff finally became isolated from the publisher and maintained only a formal connection with it. The staff of the newspaper occupied 15 of 17 positions (which was facilitated, as already noted, by higher salaries), it steadily came out with a weekly periodicity of 40 thousand copies, without experiencing paper outages.

However, both the circulation, and the volume (4 pages), and the format (30x40 cm, half of the pre-war) newspapers were already lagging behind the demands of a rapidly reviving physical culture and sports life. The editorial staff also demanded expansion, the newspaper needed to deploy a network of local correspondents, which was curtailed at the outbreak of the war. Nevertheless, during 1945, significant changes did not occur: the number of products produced by the publishing house increased slightly compared to the previous war years, the newspaper was published in a regime established in wartime.

The publishing house “Physical Education and Sport” and the newspaper “Krasny Sport” expected a real qualitative leap forward already in 1946, and it was connected with changes in the priorities of the Soviet leadership on the use of physical education and sports for political purposes, and with the assumption of the post of chairman of the All-Union Committee N. N. Romanov, who was called upon to implement these changes.

One of the first steps of Romanov as a executive was a creation of a special commission to study the work of the publishing house and bring it out of the crisis.⁵⁶ As a result of this work, in January 1946, N. N. Romanov turned to G. M. Malenkov, one of the most prominent members of the Communist Party at that time, with a letter in which he noted: “The newspaper is published only once a week, with a small format (30x40 cm) and a circulation of 41,000 copies. This situation with the newspaper cannot satisfy the demands of the USSR physical culture movement”.⁵⁷

The renaming of the newspaper in “Sovietsky Sport” (Soviet Sport), which followed in 1946, became a symbol of the global reconstruction that the system of Soviet physical culture and sports journalism survived after the war. The Soviet Union was no longer surrounded by enemies on all sides, the old paramilitary pathos of newspaper reports disappeared, and the sport lost its former task — to forge a new fighters. Now the USSR has become the head of a number of countries oriented towards it in a socially-political system: “The Soviet people are striving for constant friendship and cooperation with the peoples of other peace-loving states in all areas of economic and cultural life. This fully applies to sports, which, as you know, have always played a great role in the matter of cultural cooperation between peoples”⁵⁸ — was noted in 1946 in the publication of the newspaper, which had already become “Sovietsky Sport”.

With the growing tension of the Cold War, the role of sport as a means of agitation and propaganda of the Soviet way of life has increased many times. R. Edelman concludes: “The party and the state passed the main exam — the test of war. Now new battles were coming, safer, but no less important for the country. International competitions opened Soviet sport to the world, and foreigners were struck by the sports system, which looked new and completely different <...>

Four years of titanic military efforts left their mark on the whole of Soviet society, but in the midst of mass death and destruction, Soviet sport demonstrated its persistent ability to survival”.⁵⁹ From now on, the main goal in the field of sports was the conquest by Soviet athletes of the world championship in major sports, and sports journalism had to provide information, agitation, propaganda and organizational support for this global goal.

CONCLUSIONS

The fact that the publishing house “Physical Education and Sport” and the newspaper “Krasny Sport” continued throughout the long years of the war testifies to the importance that the party and government saw in maintaining physical culture propaganda during this difficult period. Many facts indicate that the publisher’s employees, recognizing the importance of their activities to increase the country’s defense capabilities, fulfilled their tasks even in the most difficult conditions — for example, the work of the Leningrad branch, which continued in the city already blocked by the Germans, is worth it.

It was obvious that the wartime situation would leave an inevitable imprint on the volume and quality of the publishing house. However, in addition to the expected objective difficulties (difficulties with paper and printing services, downsizing, transferring part of the publishing house to the rear, etc.), subjective factors were added: a conflict between the management of the publishing house and the largest of its assets, “Krasny Sport” newspaper, revealed abuses and errors on the part of management. In the structure of the publishing house, the newspaper’s editorial office was in a special privileged position: if the authorities from the All-Union Committee on Physical Culture and Sports provided acceptable conditions for functioning, then the publishing house could not (or did not want) to adequately respond to the crisis situation, solve the publishing house’s problems with staff, etc. As a result, the publishing house “Physical Culture and Sport” approached the end of the war in a deplorable state.

It is obvious that in the 1940s in the USSR, precisely at the height of the war, a cardinal and purposeful transformation of the interpretation of the significance of sport in social and political life occurred compared to the pre-war period. It is no coincidence that when N.N. Romanov replaced V. V. Snegov as chairman of the All-Union Committee, one of the first and key areas of his activity was the restoration and further development of the publishing house, the “Krasny Sport” newspaper and a number of publications that were revived after the military break or re-created. Since the Soviet editions did not so much reflect reality and inform the audience, how much they shaped its attitudes and goals, then we can talk about conscious aspiration for the future, what will follow the victory over Germany — to the new, sporting victories over the West.

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