

The Development of Russian Sports Psychology in the International Context: from the XIX to the XX Century¹

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Abstract

The article examines the major milestones of the development of sports psychology in Europe, as well as the establishment of international communities in the field of sports psychology in the period going from the XIX Century to the end of the XX Century. Moreover, the author describes the history of sports psychology in Russia, including its Soviet period, and in Eastern Europe. Social and political environment are taken into account as they were important constraints to the evolution of Russian sport psychology either in a positive and negative way.

Keywords: History of sport psychology; development in Europe; Russia and Soviet Union; psychoregulation.

It is generally accepted that the beginning of the academic research of sports psychology is situated in the period going from the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century. The early foundations of Russian sport psychology are also in this period (Ryba and Stambulova, 2016). In 1891, the German doctor George Kolb studied rowers during the 2000 meters race, trying to find out the peculiarities of the so-called “dead point”. He wrote:

At the end of the second minute there comes a moment when a person stops acting on a maximum tension in an everyday life... The effects of shortness of breath are very noticeable, the breathing gets deep and very often as well as the heart activity... A rower keeps on rowing and this “threshold” as rowers call this apparent failure is overcome” (Kolb. Beitrage zur Physiologie maximaler Muskelarbeit und besonders des modernen Sportes. 1891) (Puni, 1959).

Only six years later, in 1897, the American Norman Triplett carried out an experiment in the field of social psychology that can be related to sports psychology. Being a cycle racing fan he noticed that riders showed a better result in pairs or in group competitions. Later, he proved it experimentally and his experiment is considered to be the starting moment of a new science in the USA. In 1918 a student from the University of Illinois, Coleman Griffith, who the Americans consider the “founding father” of sports psychology, ran his first – though unofficial – research with the students involved in football and basketball (Weinberg and Gold, 1998).

However, apparently it was in Europe that the expression “sports psychology” was used for the first time by the French visionary Pierre de Coubertin. The beginning of the XX century was characterized by the development of various kinds of sport as well as by the foundation of International Sports Federations. This movement was encouraged by the Modern Olympic Games created by Coubertin who organized its first edition in Athens, in 1896, after having organized the International Sports Congress in Paris, in 1894.

The rapid development of sports led to the need for scientific support and therefore the first International Congress of Sport Psychology and Physiology was held in 1913 in Lausanne, Switzerland, by Coubertin’s initiative. (Seiler and Wylleman, 2009). It is important to note that Griffith published his first article related to the area of sport psychology only seven years later, in 1920, although it is generally accepted that his first article specifically on this topic was published in 1925 (Green, 2003). It should be mentioned that there were few psychologists present at the Congress. The audience was mainly composed of medical doctors, including psychiatrists, sports leaders, and “sportsmen”. As the Russian sports psychologist Avksenty Tcezarevich Puni noted in his “Essays”, there wasn’t any recognition of sports psychology as a special field of scientific psychological knowledge at the Congress. It could be due to the fact that sport was still poorly developed, and the issues of sports psychology interested only to a small number of public figures and scientists (Puni, 2002) However, Coubertin’s vision guided him to organize the congress in order

1 This article was based on an original unpublished manuscript written by Vadim Rodionov. After the first author’s death, Sidonio Serpa edited and adapted the text, and also added new information. It aims at paying homage to a colleague who passed away too soon and unexpectedly when his family and profession still needed him very much.

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to christen a new science, or to speak in more precise terms, a new branch of a science, by making it more widely known: sports psychology (Coubertin, 1913, pp. 19-20).

Pierre de Coubertin died in 1937 and is buried in Lausanne where the IOC headquarters are located. His heart lies separately, near the ruins of the antique Olympia, in Greece.

The First World War stopped the process of sports psychology development, but in 1920 the sport psychology laboratory under the scientific direction of Robert Werner Schulte started in the German University of Physical Education [Deutsche Hochschule für Leibesübungen] in Berlin. The research of the Berlin laboratory covered various issues, including such topics as the influence of sport on the development of personality and cognitive abilities and psychomotor characteristics of different sports skills (Kunath, 1998). In the USA, the first sport psychology laboratory was founded by Coleman Griffith in the University of Illinois, in 1925.

The Second World War greatly damaged the economic development of the European countries. Sports infrastructures were mostly destroyed. However, in 1944 the International Olympic Committee organized in Lausanne a Scientific Congress devoted to the 50th anniversary of the Olympic Movement. A sports psychology section was organized where sixteen papers were presented. In 1947, the International Bureau on Sports Pedagogy of the Olympic Institute in Lausanne initiated the publication of the proceedings (Seiler and Wylleman, 2009).

ISSP and the International Context

In 1965, the I World Congress of Sport Psychology was held in Rome, organized by Ferruccio Antonelli, an Italian psychiatrist who worked with athletes in the Italian Olympic Committee. It was a great success, joining more than 500 participants from 40 countries (Cei, 2011). During the congress, the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) was founded and it became the first sport psychology association in the History. Antonelli was appointed President. Five years later, in 1970, Antonelli started the publication of the first scientific journal of sport psychology: the International Journal of Sport Psychology published by Pozzi Publishing House owning to his friend Luigi Pozzi who helped Antonelli and has kept the journal until today.

Two USSR representatives, Piotr Rudik and Avksenty Puni (Puni had Italian ancestors) were invited to participate in the Congress. At the last moment, political reasons determined the replacement of Puni by N.A. Khudadov who was Associate Professor in the Psychology Department at the State Institute of Physical Education and Sport. During the Congress, it was decided to initiate the procedures to admit USSR as ISSP collective member.

In the next Congress held in Washington, in 1968, the Soviet sport psychologists should participate as full members, but they were not found in the list of the participants.

By that time, the Cold War was having a major impact in the International climate. Following the 1968 Prague Spring that was an anti-communist uprising, the Soviet army invaded Czechoslovakia which had an important negative impact in the Western World. In his Opening Presidential Speech, Ferruccio Antonelli raised this situation. Tension marked the mood among the Soviet representatives and participants from the western side of the Iron Curtain. In protest against those military actions of the Soviet Union, some ISSP members expressed their wish to turn down the USSR representatives' right to participate in the Congress and to accede to the ISSP membership.

At the next Congress in Madrid, 1973, the Czechoslovakia representative Miroslav Vanek was elected President of the ISSP and the following IV Congress was held in Prague in 1977.

Antonelli's political attitude in the Congress of Washington would have contributed to a movement against his leadership during the Congress of Madrid. Miroslav Vanek was considered the right man to make a bridge between the two blocs. Antonelli admitted that he didn't react due to his friendship with Vanek. (Antonelli's letter to Vanek written in Rome in May, 16th, 1995 c/c Sidonio Serpa and Robert Singer).

The idea of establishing an European association of sports psychologists appeared following the crisis of 1968 and the Washington Congress. It was presented at the International Conference "Psychological Training of the Athlete" which was held in Varna (Bulgaria), on December 3-5, 1968. This was Eric de Winter's idea, a French physiotherapist who proposed to found the European Federation of Sports Psychologists (Federation Européenne de Psychologie des Sports et des Activités Corporelles – FEPSAC). This International Conference became the officially I European Congress of Sports Psychology.

The date of the formal inception of FEPSAC is July 4th, 1969. On that day, within the framework of the III French-German Colloquium on Sports Medicine and Sports Psychology, which took place in a Vittel, France, the II European Congress was held (Wylleman, 2009) and the FEPSAC Managing Council was elected. Ema Geron from Bulgaria became the President, and Eric De Winter the Secretary General.

One year later, at the International Forum of Sports Psychologists in Mamaia (Romania), De Winter refused his position and declared his withdrawal from FEPSAC putting its existence in jeopardy. Sport psychologists from different countries were invited to a special meeting which was urgently held in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1970 in order to "breathe life" into FEPSAC. Ema Geron chaired the meeting that had the participation of prestigious experts such as Guido Schilling (Switzerland), Mihail Epuran (Romania), Laszlo Nadori (Hungary), and Erwin Hahn (West Germany). Along the meeting, the Organization Charter was elaborated. The official elections took place at the III FEPSAC

Congress in Cologne, West Germany, in 1972. Ema Geron became President and kept her position until 1974.

During the ISSP Congress in Madrid (1973), Ema Geron decided to abandon Bulgaria and its socialist regime, in order to establish permanent residence in Israel. She left the congress directly to the Madrid airport with the cooperation of very few Western colleagues who secretly organized the operation. Consequently, she became “persona non grata” in the USSR. On changing her citizenship, Geron lost the status of FEPSAC President and several candidates emerged to substitute her. One of the reasons for the pre-election fight was the influence that the Federation could have upon the political views in the European sport. If ISSP was considered a capitalist Organization, FEPSAC largely supported the countries from the socialist side.

The elections showed the ability of psychologists to find compromise solutions: after the “socialist” Geron, the “capitalist” Guido Schilling, from Switzerland, became President at the IV European Congress, in Edinburgh, Great Britain, in 1975. The participants of the V Congress held in Varna (1979) extended her position to the second term.

In 1983, at the VI Congress in Magglingen, Switzerland, Schilling was replaced by the socialist block representative Paul Kunath, from the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Like his predecessor, Kunath was re-elected for a second term during the VII Congress of Bad Blankenburg, GDR, in 1987. It should be admitted that Kunath turned out to be a skillful politician who managed to avoid confrontation of the two political camps. It led to the situation that the members of the European Federation, including the representatives of the USSR, were officially invited to the ISSP Congresses, and psychologists from all over the world, including the USA, were invited to the FEPSAC Congresses.

The next president who led FEPSAC for two terms was Stuart Biddle, from England, who was elected at the Congresses of Cologne, Germany, in 1991 and reelected in Brussels, Belgium (1995). By this time the USSR ceased to exist and the Federation of Sports Psychologists of the Russian Federation succeeded the previous USSR organization that had not paid the fees for a long period which led to the exclusion of the Russian SP from FEPSAC. The last FEPSAC President of the XX Century was Glyn Roberts (representing Norway) who was elected in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1999. A more peaceful political period had started for International sport psychology. In addition, the institutional relationships between ISSP and FEPSAC normalized. Due to the circumstances of FEPSAC inception in reaction against ISSP and their connection to the Eastern and Western blocks, respectively, the Cold War atmosphere generated a certain tension, although their presidents, Guido Shilling and Miroslav Vanek, had friendly and fruitful relationships during their terms. In 1993, Sidonio Serpa – at that time a member of the ISSP Managing Council – was invited to one session of the FEPSAC MC meeting in Zurich, and invited to be the liaison-person between these

two major International organizations, which was furtherly accepted by the ISSP MC.

From its very beginning FEPSAC took important initiatives. For example, in 1974 Romania published the first volume including scientific articles of European sport psychologists. As it was published by one official editing house of a socialist country, most of the authors were from socialist countries as well. In 1975 the same collection was published in the USSR by the Physical Training and Sport Publishing House on excellent paper and with an expensive cover. Later, such kind of publications were produced in Switzerland, Germany, and Great Britain.

On the other hand, in terms of publications, the International Journal of Sport Psychology became the first SP scientific journal under Antonelli's direction, in 1978. It was the official journal of ISSP published by Pozzi Editors. The Italian Luigi Pozzi, the owner of the company, was a close friend of Ferruccio Antonelli and accepted to take on his hands the journal publication until today, although it has been in deficit for many years.

The development of standardized methods was another FEPSAC initiative. One of the first projects in this field, in 1977, was the standardization of the applied methods. A group of experts with an active participation of the Soviet psychologists developed clear wordings of questions in English, Spanish, Italian, German and Russian for the MMPI personality questionnaire which was one of the main personality questionnaires in psychodiagnosis research. At the same time, the standards for each of the indicators adjusted for different types of sport, age and gender of the subjects were worked out. It was really a huge job, taking into consideration the fact that there were more than five hundred questions in the questionnaire.

During the first years of the FEPSAC's activity the psychology of amateur sport and physical culture was the object of discussion. For the first time, the problem regarding the psychological training of athletes in top sports was discussed in Edinburgh in 1975, and later this topic became the subject of discussion at independent sections. Since then, each country organizing committee of the FEPSAC Congresses should decide about its main topic.

Not a single Congress was held in the USSR though meetings and discussions were often organized in socialist countries including Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. The All-USSR Conference on Psychology of Physical Culture and Sport that was organized in Leningrad, in 1973, could be considered an exception. The Chairman of the all-USSR Section on Psychology of Physical Culture and Sport, Albert V. Rodionov, invited all members of the FEPSAC Executive Committee to the conference that became an International event. One of the main topics was psychological training of athletes and teams.

The FEPSAC importance was growing. At the VIII Congress in Cologne (1991) there were two hundred and fifty scientists who represented thirty six countries including thirteen non-European countries. The Soviet delega-

tion consisting of twenty-one representatives was one of the largest in the Congress (Pristavkina, 1992). The topics suggested the versatility of the psychological approaches to psychology of physical culture and sport. "Psychological Training in Sport" chaired by Albert V. Rodionov (Russia) and Dieter Hackfort (West Germany) was one of the five symposia that took place during the Congress.

Most Soviet psychologists presented papers in the various sections. In one of the three "Research Markets" international researchers were interested in the computerized system of social-psychological control and management of a sports team presented by Evgenii Alexandrovich Kalinin, from Moscow. It should be noticed that computerized psychodiagnosis methods, established in the USSR, were further used in sports psychology. The computerized test-trainer "Tactician", developed by Boris Vladimirovich Turetsky, and Vladimir Gennadevich Sivitsky presented at that very "Market" was another Soviet invention.

In the elections for the FEPSAC Managing Council that were held during the Cologne Congress, the Hungarian László Nadori was the only elected representative from the former socialist countries.

By the end of 1990's, FEPSAC started working on its official journal "Psychology of Sport and Exercise" that had its first issue published in July, 2000 with Stuart Biddle as its Editor-in-Chief. Despite the wide International character of the Editorial Committee and Editorial Board, the Russian sport psychology was not represented. It might be due to the decrease of the Russian sports psychology during the years of "Perestroika", in the 1990's. However, the Russian publication "Sports Psychologist" established by the Russian State University of Physical Culture and Sport and by the Association of Sports Psychologists of the Russian Federation, became popular in Russia.

Sports Psychology in Russia

The development of Russian sport psychology is associated with the name of the doctor and professor Peter Franzevich Lesgaft (1837-1909). He was the first who set up scientifically based strategy of physical education, which was focused on anatomical-physiological, hygienic and psychological principals. Lesgaft graduated from the St. Petersburg Military-Surgical Academy in 1861. Four years later, he was granted a degree of Doctor of Medicine and after three more years, he obtained a doctorate in surgery. In 1874-1886, he was focused in the physical education issues in the Head Department of military-educating institutions (Davidov, 1993).

Peter F. Lesgaft started the courses for teachers of gymnastics and fencing in the military units of St. Petersburg (1881). Both anatomical-physiological and psychological peculiarities of free movements were studied at the courses. It happened ten years before Kolb made his first research in the field of motion psychology. In the well-known Lesgaft's "Manual on Physical Education of School-aged Children"

(1901) there was a separate section under the title "Psychology of Movements". In 1919 to acknowledge his scientific contribution, his name was given to the State Institution of Physical Education in Petrograd, which was based on Lesgaft's Courses.

Alexander P. Nechaev (1870-1948) was another scientist related to the origins of many fields of Russian psychology including sports psychology. In 1894 he graduated from the History and Philology Department of the University of St. Petersburg and three years later he became Assistant Professor in this University. In 1897 he was sent to Germany, to undergo a training on experimental psychology which resulted in a number of articles. In Germany, he met Wundt who founded the World first psychological laboratory at the University of Leipzig, in 1879. One of the main Nechaev's contributions to the Russian psychology was his scientific approach that differed from the Wundt's approach by its applied-oriented character. It was exactly the way sports psychology became, though not at once.

In 1901, with the participation of Nechaev the first laboratory of experimental pedagogical psychology was founded in Russia. It allowed the scientific Russian psychology to make a new step forward. Paying great attention to the hardware of scientific research, this scientist used devices that were successfully presented at international events: three times in Russia (1903, 1906, and 1911) and once in Genève, Switzerland, (1908), Frankfurt-upon-Main, Germany, (1909) and Berlin, Germany (1912). An important number of his papers were published in more than ten languages.

In the 1920's Nechaev worked in the laboratory of experimental psychology and psycho-techniques where research in the area of physical culture and sport was among his priorities. His monograph "Psychology of Physical Culture" was published in 1927 as an important result of his work (Puni, 2002). Nechaev published "Psychology of Losses and Victories in a Chess Game" in 1928, "Physiological Control over Gymnastics on the Radio" in 1929, and the second edition of the monograph in 1930. His contribution to the development of science, including sports psychology, was not as high as it might have been due to political divergences that made him move compulsively to Kazakhstan.

In the first decade of the XX century the Russian bibliography on the psychology of physical culture and sport began to develop. One of the first contributions was doctor-psychologist Vladimir Fedorovich Chizh's (1855-1914) paper "Psychology of Sport", published in 1910 in the "Medical Newspaper" (Myakonkov, 2001) He wrote about the social importance of sport, noting that as

"purely physical or physiological occupation, it is not that nice; health care ... can't be self-sufficing for most people" (Myakonkov, 2001).

In the Soviet Union after the 1917 Revolution, research was renewed in the 1920's, when the laboratory of experimental psychology and psycho-techniques – and later the Department of Psychology – was opened in the State Cen-

tral Institute of Physical Education, in Moscow. In 1932 Piotr Antonovitch Rudik (1893-1983) became its Chair. Almost simultaneously with the Department of Psychology in Moscow, a similar one was founded in the Institute of Physical Culture after P.F. Lesgaft in Leningrad, directed by Avksenty T. Puni.

Piotr Rudik graduated from the Philosophy Department of the Moscow State University in 1915, and in 1919 he started working in the Central Institute of Physical Education to which he would devote all his life. The article "Reaction Research in Application to the Basic Questions of Physical Culture", from 1924, was his first publication concerning sport. Despite the opinions of some colleagues that he was not a brilliant expert on sports activity, it was recognized that he was able to attract young psychologists with sports experience, becoming an inspirer, mastermind and leader of scientific research on many directions of sports psychology (Savankov, 2004). In early works, Rudik had already produced psychological research related to different kinds of sport: "Psychology of a Chess Game" (co-authored with Ivan Nikolayevich Dyakov and Nikolay Vasilyevich Petrovsky), based on the psychological tests of the Participants at the International Chess Tournament, in Moscow in 1925"; "Psycho-Technical Tests of Boxers – Participants in the International Match", in 1928 (co-authored with T.R. Nikitin), and others.

In 1934 it was decided to set up a laboratory in the Department of Psychology with thirteen experts in the staff. Its applied-oriented activity aimed to promote the growth of labor productivity in various types of enterprises, as well as in schools.

Such applied orientation was then claimed in the Soviet Union as it was evident in some Rudik's papers: "Questions of Scientific Organization of Labor in School" (1925), "Experience of Psycho-technical Tests of Telephone Operators" (1927), "Experience of Research of Librarians' Awareness" (1930), and some others. However, the scientific work of this laboratory had not even began, because its main tools (tests) were not always consistent with Marxist-Leninist ideology. In those times, any phenomenon was examined from the standpoint of the communist world-view. The following quotation from the Great Soviet Encyclopedia published in 1940 makes it possible to understand the peculiarities of the development of sport psychology in USSR, as well as any other science:

"Both Western European and American psychology, remaining in a captivity of bourgeois philosophical ideas, were completely outdated by the works of the founders of Marxism who had a crucial importance for psychology... Marx's and Engels' works have provided the possibility of developing the really scientific materialistic psychology only after the victory of proletarian revolution in the USSR" (Schmidt, 1940).

Under the direction of Rudik, the department staff developed the program corresponding to the profile of the Institute of Physical Education and absorbed the best achievements of the psychological science of that time. The program consisted of two parts: 1) general psychology dealing with basic theoretical issues; 2) sports psychology, aiming at solving applied problems of sport and physical culture (Lalayan, 2004; Rodionov and Nepopalov, 2008)

Rudik's scientific "school" brought an important contribution to Soviet and World psychology: (i) the concept of psychological training and related tasks were specified for the first time; (ii) methods and classification of training systems were developed; (iii) the coach's role in this process was defined; and (iv) the unification of research methods was conceptualized.

Under his direction, four basic research trends were followed: (1) common psychological peculiarities of sports activity, (2) psychology of the athlete's personality, psychology of sports activity, and characteristics of the emotional-volitional processes, (3) challenges of teaching physical exercises and conducting sports training, as well as the formation and improvement of motor skills, and (4) sensory processes and their impact on physical exercises.

Rudik classified the types of psychological training and defined the role of the coach in this process. He raised the question about the unification of methods in psychological research, had an important scientific production, and worked out the first documents for the institutes of physical culture regarding training methods (Rodionov and Nepopalov, 2008; Savankov, 2004).

Avksenty Tcezarevich Puni (1898-1986) who would become the founder of "Leningradsкая" scientific school of psychology of physical culture and sport started publishing in the second half of 1920's. His work determined the development of athletes' psychological preparation (Ryba, Stambulova & Wrisberg, 2005; Stambulova, Wrisberg & Ryba, 2006; Ryba, Stambulova & Wrisberg, 2009;) During his youth he was an active sports person, and working in the Leningrad Institute of Physical Education and Sports after P.F. Lesgraft, he played in the soccer team of the Institute. In 1926 Puni published "A Guide Letter on Physical Culture in School" and later, together with doctor N.F. Kostrov, he published articles focused on sports: "Psycho-physiological Influence of Ping-Pong", and "Experience of Studying the Influence of Ski Competitions on Skiers' Psyche" (1930) (Puni, 1949).

Puni defined laws of formation of sports activity skills, suggested characteristics of muscular sensations, memory, attention, tactical thinking, and defined psychological characteristics of general and specific conditions of sports activity. For the first time in sports psychology, he suggested the role of movement mental representation, which allowed him to develop the concept of ideo-motor training. Moreover, he also developed the concept of volitional preparation in sport.

As a psychologist and an athlete, Puni understood the major importance of the athletes' pre-starting emotional condition for a successful performance. In order to explain the psycho-physiological mechanism of this phenomenon, he considered three levels of pre-starting conditions: (i) operational alertness (optimum emotional condition); (ii) pre-starting fever; and (iii) pre-starting apathy. The fever and apathy levels were considered as adverse emotional conditions (Puni, 1949). For him, the state of readiness to maximum volitional efforts was an integral manifestation of personality. He suggested five key factors: (1) athletes' sober confidence in their strengths and skills (2) willingness to compete until the limit of athletes' strengths in order to achieve the victory, (3) optimum level of emotional arousal, (4) high mental stability in coping with distracters, and (5) self-control and capacity of psychological regulation during the action.

Puni's made an outstanding scientific contribution during his career, and among his main publications are the following ones: "Essays of Sport Psychology" (1959), "Psychological Preparation for a Competition in Sport" (1969), "Psychological Foundations of Volitional Preparation in Sport" (1977), and "Personality Issues in Sport Psychology" (1980).

On the other hand, the history of the institute where Puni worked is remarkable. It is one of the oldest World institutes of higher education in the field of physical culture and sport. It was founded by P.F. Lesgaft in 1896 in St. Petersburg to offer training courses for teachers of physical education. In 1919 the State Institution of Physical Education was named after its founder, in 1994 the Institute received the status of Academy and in 2005 of University. It became the only civil high school of the country awarded a Fighting Order for preparing the Red Army reserves, and also due to the participation of students and teachers in guerrilla operations during the World War II.

Participation of the Soviet athletes in the international competitions after the II World War led to a compelling need for a rigorous psychological training of athletes as well as the preparation of scientific and pedagogical personnel in this area. In 1946 a postgraduate course was set up at the Department of Psychology of the Institute P.F. Lesgaft, and in 1948 the commission of sports psychology was included in the Methodological (lately, Scientific) Committee on Physical Culture and Sport under the Council of Ministers of the USSR (Puni, 2002).

Taking into consideration the political importance and prestige of sports victories in the context of the international community, the Soviet Administration gave "green light" to the development of the sports science during post-war years. Sport psychology became a compulsory component of the students' psychological education in the physical training institutes, irrespective of the department.

The Russian scientist Nikolaï Aleksandrovich Bernstein (1896-1966) also had a remarkable influence on the development of sport psychology. In 1919, he graduated

from the Medical Department of the Moscow State University. From 1936 to 1950, he chaired the laboratory of movement studies in the Central Scientific Research Institute of Physical Culture (VNIIFK), in Moscow. In his conceptual work "On the construction of Movement" (1947), Bernstein presented an absolute new principle of movement regulation: the principle of sensory corrections. His research became the major basis of modern biomechanics of sport (Petrovsky, 1976).

In spite of the negative influence of the ideology on the development of sports science, it was impossible to stop the progress. In the 1950's, the concept of athlete's psychological training as a special branch began. In 1952, Puni defended a doctoral degree thesis on sports psychology in the Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, for the first time in the history of Russian psychology. This period may be considered one of the most successful in joining sports theory and practice. Forty years had passed since the 1912 Olympic Games, where the Russian athletes participated for the last time ranking 16 among 18 countries. The Olympic Games of 1952 were marked not only by the return of the Russian athletes – now as citizens of the Soviet Union – to the Olympic participation, but also by their triumph, achieving similar competitive results as compared to USA, the leading Western country, and getting the 2nd position in the medals ranking.

Due to the results of the Soviet athletes' participation in the 1956 Olympic Games – 1st in the medals ranking – a number of specialists, including psychologists, received the highest government awards.

In 1956, in Leningrad, the I All-USSR meeting on problems of psychology of physical culture and sport was held. In his presentation, the Head of Psychology and Pedagogy Department at the Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture after A.A. Lalayan, raised for the first time the topic related to the psychological training of the athlete regarded as a complex pedagogical process. Before that, sports psychology was mostly focused on the influence of sports upon the development of mental functions. The new approach was directed at studying the degree of development of concrete athletes' mental functions aiming at achieving success in a given sport (Davidov, 1993).

In 1958, a specialized laboratory for psychology of sports was established at the Central Scientific Research Institute of Physical Culture (VNIIFK). Vladimir Alexeyevitch Alatortsev, one of the leading chess players of the USSR, was appointed its first director (Rodionov, 2004). Several trends emerged regarding the activity of the laboratory. One of them concerned theory and methodology. Another one aimed at the experimental study of the sensory bases of athletes' technical-tactical skill. The third and the most applied one joined the development of psycho-diagnostic methods and the athletes' mental regulation based on the so-called psychoregulatory training that was a variant of the autogenic training by Anatolii Vasilyevich Alekseyev and Leonid Davidovich Giessen.

The psychic-therapist Anatolii Vasilyevich Alekseyev recalled that during the first meeting with the laboratory staff, when he suggested to work in the field of mental mobilization, the answer was that one psychiatrist in sports would be so unnatural as the doctor-gynecologist in a men's soccer team. However, he got the job and a new original method of psychic-regulation training was developed.

In 1958 Rudik published the first World applied textbook on psychology for institutes of physical culture and a special textbook for middle school educational institutions.

Since the 1950's, the staff of the Moscow Department of Sport Psychology published seven generations of textbooks, four of which were edited by Piotr Rudik, two by Albert Vyacheslavovich Rodionov and one by Vladimir Michailovic Melnikov.

In 1962, the "Society of the USSR Psychologists" was founded. At every regular congress, sport psychologists were designated to its managing council: Piotr Rudik at the second congress, and Avksenty Puni at the third, fourth and fifth. It may be said that sport psychology in USSR had an outstanding development at the beginning of the 1960's. During a rather short period of time some master's theses on the topic psychological training of soccer players, volleyball players, fencers, gymnasts, skiers-racers were defended at the Department of Psychology, in Moscow. At the same time, multidisciplinary scientific groups started their work in the USSR national teams.

In 1968, Albert V. Rodionov's book "Psychology of Combat Sports" was published. The volume was designed for a wide range of athletes and coaches, which was proved by a complete sellout within a short period. On the spectrum of the discussed topics, it became useful not only for martial arts, but also for other sports. Strategically, in the introduction the author replaced the term "psychologist" by the term "scholar", considering that at that time it was still important to show to a wide range of readers that a psychologist was a scientist that could give an important contribution to the training process.

In the 1970's it became clear that a volitional training did not cover all the variety of mental functions. Besides the high level of physical, technical and tactical preparation influencing the sports results, there was a number of psychological phenomena, such as stress, frustrations, intra-group conflicts and emotional failures. Sport psychologists concluded that the volitional and moral preparation based on watching ideological based movies, and on interviews with war and sports veterans were not enough for the emotional regulation of athletes. The self and hetero based psycho-therapeutic methods became an alternative trend. The psychologist Oleg Vasilievich Dashkevitch, from Moscow, was among the pioneers in this field.

It is generally accepted that the effectiveness of the psychological intervention will very much depend on a thorough diagnosis. At that time, applied psychologists used diagnostic means and methods that not always led to appropriate results. Rudik unified the psychological re-

search concerning the athletes. He organized teaching and research activities in the laboratory of his Department focused on the development of methods to be used in a scientific based sports training process.

In 1971 by the decision of Sport Committee of the USSR, the laboratory of sports mental health (sports psycho-hygiene) was established in the VNIIFK, directed by the outstanding sports psychologist and Olympic medalist Leonid Davydovich Giessen. There, it was created a unified set of psycho-diagnostic methods regarding athletes' individuals characteristics. Specialized personal and psychomotor methods were introduced practically in most of the USSR national teams. For the first time the computational processing of psycho-diagnosis was implemented, which made possible to organize the athletes' psychological profiles (Rodionov, 2004b).

In the 60's and 70's, sport psychology had an active development in socialist countries. This was related to the successful activity of Soviet scientists who were invited to lecture and lead courses and seminars in the Eastern European countries. In turn, representatives of these countries visited USSR to train and to attend postgraduate courses at the Moscow and Leningrad institutes of physical culture and sports. During these years, joint development was carried out and sport psychologists from the socialists countries had the opportunity to have their works published by the Soviet publishing house Physical Training and Sport. For example, in the volume *Psychology and Modern Sport* of this publisher, the Bulgarian Ema Geron had an article about qualitatively and quantitatively comparison of psychological characteristics in different sports (Geron, 1973). In another article, the Czechoslovakian Miroslav Vanek and Bohumil Svoboda suggested that sports performance did not depend only on motivation and will, which was defended by the communist ideology, but also on the level of the athletes' ambition, emotional state, among other variables (Vanek, Goshek and Svoboda, 1973). At the same time, sports psychology in socialist countries was under social and political focus, which forced some compromises with the ruling system. For this reason, Paul Kunath from the Eastern German Democratic Republic finished the book closing article "Problems of load from the sports psychology view" with the following sentence:

"One can't forget the V.I. Lenin's wise words: "without a real theory practice is blind" Kunath, 1973.)"

In fact, it was Engels, born in Germany, and not Lenin who wrote this in his letter from London to F.A. Sorge, in November, 29th, 1886. The complete original quotation is:

"Practice without theory is blind. Theory without practice is sterile. Theory becomes a material force as soon as it is absorbed by the masses."

Nonetheless, most probably, the possible political examiners of the text did not know the citation and it fulfilled its diplomatic role...

However, in spite of the ideological constraints, sports psychology was developing. In 1973 by the decision of

the USSR Sports Committee, Complex Scientific Groups (MSG) were established. Sergey D. Neverkovich and Albert V. Rodionov recalled in the article "Back to the Origins of National Applied Sports Psychology":

"The primary goal of MSG was providing practical recommendations for national teams coaches, based on modern scientific interdisciplinary research in physiology, biomechanics, biochemistry and bioenergetics theory of sports training, pedagogy, psychology, regenerative medicine, nutrition, and many other sciences which could promote the more efficient control over athletes' behaviors in different sports at the extreme situations of high achievement" (Neverkovich and Rodionov, 2009, p.5).

Essentially, MSG were elite scientific and research miniature institutes formed by the most famous scientists of that time.

At the same time, it was decided to train sport psychologists out of a number of experts working in various high schools of the Soviet Union. This group, whose training course lasted for ten days, consisted of forty-three people. The number was determined by the quantity of sports that were supposed to represent USSR at the Olympic Games in Montreal, in 1976. Thus, a psychologist became part of each team's MSG (Neverkovich and Rodionov, 2009).

The training of sports psychologists new generation was mostly conditioned by the gap that became more and more evident between academic psychology and its applied branch sports psychology (Rodionov, 2004a). The World Congress "Sports in Modern Society" was held in Moscow in 1974 and papers on sport psychology were presented there. In the spring of 1976, the USSR Sports Committee decided to bring together the academic psychologists and those working at the research institutes of physical culture and sport, under a general structure. The staff of the new psychological subdivision faced two primary fundamental and applied goals. Firstly, they should develop fundamental research in the field of sports psychology, and secondly, they should contribute to the improvement of the Soviet athletes' results in the Olympic Games.

In 1978, Professor Vladimir M. Melnikov became the Chair the Psychology Department of the State Institute of Physical Culture and Sport, in Moscow. His work was mostly focused on social aspects of sports psychology. The change in the research emphasis was due to the increased demand of information about team and interpersonal relationships management that required the knowledge of psychological laws inherent to sport teams building.

A particular attention of the Soviet government was given to the Olympic Games of 1980 in Moscow. The Games preparation was a serious stimulus for the development of the national sport and sports psychology. New sports facilities with modern equipment were built in Moscow and in the cities where the Olympic events were held. In 1980, the All-USSR Scientific and Research Institute of Physical

Culture and Sport (VNIIFK) employed about 900 scientists (80 people, in 2009). Taking into account the political importance of sports victories, the leaders of the country spared no resources and, for example, the first electronic stopwatches measuring the athletes' reaction time exceeded in quality the similar stopwatches used in the work with cosmonauts.

In May 1987, the USSR Federation of Sports Psychology was founded. One of its goals was to develop sports psychology in the country. However, it could not stop the developing social-economic crisis and in 1989, the last psychological laboratory of VNIIFK closed.

The beginning of the 1990's was a hard period for the country and, consequently, for sports psychology. The funding for scientific work concerning national teams was reduced and many experienced psychologists left. However, it was during that period that interesting computer programs were developed for athletes' psycho-diagnosis, mental health and tactical skills development.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union some sports psychologists from the Central Institute of Sports Medicine together with the staff of Sports Games Department of VNIIFK founded the small private company "Psychology and Sports Games" (PSG) (Rodionov, 2004b). The scientific support of PSG was mainly provided by Albert V. Rodionov. Most part of the staff in accordance with life norms of the "dashing 1990s" was involved in commercial activities. The Russian-French project devoted to study the influence of pets on mental development of children and adolescents sponsored by the Mars chocolate enterprise might be considered a scientific success of that company, having its results published.

Given to the insufficient commercial success, on January, 1st, 1993 most of the company's staff established the laboratory of sports psychology led by Albert Rodionov and included into VNIIFK. The renewed personnel took part in the II International Congress in Moscow (1995). In accordance with the Congress terminology, the expression "sports psychology" instead of "psychology of sport" was consolidated in the scientific literature.

Independent associations of sports psychologists started to appear in the former Soviet Union republics. For example, the Society of Sports Psychologists of Ukraine was founded in 1992-1993, and the Belorussian Republican Association of Sports Psychologists opened in 1995.

Conclusions

Sport psychology became a topic of interest in the World during the XIX Century. It was a result of the development of the pedagogical and scientific approaches to physical education and sport by that period, as well as of the new scientific status of general psychology after Wilhelm Wundt creating the first laboratory of experimental psychology in the University of Leipzig, in 1879.

The Olympic movement had a major impact on the development of the various scientific branches applied to sport. Since the very first stages of this movement, Pierre de Coubertin referred to the importance of the psychology of sports, and the expression “sport psychology” – “psychologie du sport”, in French – apparently became official in the First International Congress of Sports Psychology and Physiology organized by the founder of the Modern Olympic Games in Paris, in 1913 (Serpa, 2009).

The establishment of the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) in Rome, in 1965, during the first edition of the ISSP World Congress of Sport Psychology would

be an outstanding stimulus to the scientific and organizational development of sport psychology all-over the World. However, the International social and political situation over the years had a great impact on the accelerations and slowdowns that sport psychology came to have. In Russia/USSR, sport psychology followed the strong tradition of scientific-based general psychology and developed in the direction of psycho-regulation methods aiming at optimizing athletes’ performances in major International competitions. The 1917 Revolution, the I and II World Wars, the Soviet period and its collapse determined the evolution of Russian sport psychology.

Развитие российской спортивной психологии: с 19 по 20 век

Резюме

В статье рассматриваются основные вехи развития спортивной психологии в Европе, а также создание международных сообществ в области спортивной психологии в период между 19-м и концом 20-го века. Кроме того, автор описывает историю спортивной психологии в России, в том числе в ее советский период, и в Восточной Европе. Социально-политическая среда принимается во внимание, поскольку они являются важными ограничениями для развития российской спортивной психологии, как положительно, так и отрицательно.

Ключевые слова: история спортивной психологии; развитие в Европе; Россия и Советский Союз; психорегуляции.

Desarrollo de la psicología deportiva rusa: del siglo XIX al siglo XX

Resumen

El artículo examina los principales hitos del desarrollo de la psicología del deporte en Europa, así como el establecimiento de comunidades internacionales en el campo de la psicología del deporte en el periodo comprendido entre el siglo XIX y el final del siglo XX. Además, el autor describe la historia de la psicología del deporte en Rusia, incluido su periodo soviético, y en Europa del Este. Se tienen en cuenta el entorno social y político, ya que son limitaciones importantes para la evolución de la psicología del deporte rusa, tanto de forma positiva como negativa.

Palabras clave: Historia de la psicología del deporte; desarrollo en Europa; Rusia y la Unión Soviética; psicoregulación.

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