

Playing politics - Soviet sport diplomacy to 1992

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This is the brash young Shostakovich of the and the cantankerous early symphonies; allowed to act the part of a 1920s avant-gardist by the relative creative and economic freedom of the New Economic Plan, alive to twitchings from Berlin and Paris. Although it relates only peripherally to the main points of this book, it should be noted that the Russians were competing in the Olympics prior to World War I and the founding of the Soviet Union.

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The young choreographers, Vasili Vainonen and Leonid Jakobson, undaunted by their first commission, included folk and popular dances, acrobatics, puppetry, boxing, and a satirical polka about the Geneva Peace Convention; designer Valentina Khodasevich created a set of dynamic, Constructivist angles and. This form of diplomacy is effective if not efficient because, being enacted metonymically through sport and not bluntly through politicians, it is necessarily ambivalent.

Alexander Zass

SAGE is a leading international provider of innovative, high-quality content publishing more than 900 journals and over 800 new books each year, spanning a wide range of subject areas. As the production was quietly withdrawn, the initial enthusiasm of the audience became lost in the historiography, until it was possible for later conservative revisionists to dismiss the ballet as an unfortunate symptom of its infected era. This distinction reveals, perhaps, just why The Golden Age was so problematic for its time and place: the two levels of exegesis were at odds.

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In a sense, though, such an elision is too easy: football and poetry are such distant cousins that they can be arranged together in pretty patterns without risk of friction. The nascent Bolshevik state needed to recommence trading with its neighbours, and hence required access to shipping in the Gulf of Finland.

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Was this neurotic and difficult man a willing servant of the Soviet system, or did he harbour ill-concealed contempt for the country that he, after all, never abandoned, despite its frequent assaults against him and his output? Ian McDonald, one of the loudest cheerleaders for the dissident Shostakovich, gets rather carried away. Commenting on the exploits of Fedotov, Shostakovich admits that the player never got the wider recognition he deserved, due apparently to his uneasiness faced with the political pressure that came with playing for the national team.

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Glikman and Shostakovich never had much time, it seems, for the USSR national team, preferring their Leningrad and adopted Moscow club sides; after Yugoslavia beat the USSR 3-1 at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, the two men celebrated by getting drunk on Finnish champagne outside Komarovo train station. He imagines one passage to stand for a political rally, and assigns theatrical roles Stalin, his stooges, the fawning crowd to different sections of the orchestra.

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