

P O P C U L T U R E
R U S S I A !

Media, Arts, and Lifestyle

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A B C  C L I O

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5

Popular Entertainment

Russian television serials from *Cops* to *Brigade*, Russian pulp fiction from Akunin to Marinina, and Russian sports from Rodnina to Sharapova all attract a large numbers of spectators and readers and are destined primarily for passive consumption. They provide commercially available entertainment for the masses, and as such they represent genuinely new forms of popular culture. Spectator sports, soap operas, and pulp fiction are expressions of culture that had existed in some rudimentary forms in the Soviet era, when their public consumption was not encouraged by the regime. Detective stories were read widely in the Soviet era, but they had a low print run and were difficult to get hold of. And soap operas were made not for entertainment but for education, although spy thrillers attracted huge audiences in the 1970s. In sports, the Soviet state had fostered the performance of athletes in international competitions but had not encouraged public support (say, in the form of fan clubs). In the post-Soviet era the state-supported system of coaching sportsmen and sportswomen crashed, but sport has become more publicly accessible altogether (both in its active and passive forms). Television serials were influenced by Mexican and Latin American soaps before Russian-made detective and crime series (rather than sitcoms) took off. And in terms of books, the homegrown detective and fantasy stories boom.

Sports

Soviet sports dominated international competitions. It does not follow, however, that since the collapse of the USSR Russian sports have sunk to a low profile. The international sports scene is full of contemporary Russian sports personalities, such as the tennis players Anna Kurnikova and Maria Sharapova, or the hockey stars Pavel Bure and Alexander Mogilny, or the soccer players Valeri Karpin and Alexander Mostovoy. The world, certainly the European Champions League 2003–2004, has had to take notice of the Moscow soccer club Lokomotiv and has not for-

gotten the popularity of Spartak (Spartacus) Moscow in recent years. But all this is trivial when compared to the acquisition of London's prestigious premier league Chelsea Football Club in 2003 by the Russian millionaire and governor of Chukotka, Roman Abramovich. How did Russia manage to become so competitive in the sports market in such a short space of time?

Olympic History

The USSR had always seen sports competition as a way to demonstrate its ideological and political superiority. Winning more Olympic medals than the Americans (which they did most years) was a way of showing to the world the superiority of the Communist system and of reassuring the people at home that the country had adopted the cor-

rect and better path—toward the Communist future.

Olympic Glory

The Olympic Games played a crucial role in the official Soviet sports history and in the importance of sports for the Russian people, insofar as the success in some disciplines led to the popularity of that particular sport. The Olympics of the modern era were revived in Athens in 1896 by the Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin. Russia was a founding member of the Olympic Organization but did not partake in the Games in Paris (1900) and St. Louis (1904), making its first Olympic appearance only in London in 1908, followed by Stockholm in 1912. Then World War I interrupted the Games' cycle (1916); in 1924 the Games ac-



Valeri Shantsev (left), vice mayor of Moscow, in front of the Lenin Mausoleum on Red Square, passing the Olympic flame to former hockey player and chairman of Russia's State Committee for Sport, Viacheslav Fetisov, 2004. (Photo by Mikhail Galustov/Kommersant)

quired a winter edition (in addition to the summer games). After the Revolution, Russia, and later the USSR, did not participate in the “bourgeois” competition in sports (as the new regime labeled the Olympics) until 1952, when the country won 22 gold, 30 silver, and 19 bronze medals in Helsinki. In 1956 the USSR participated for the first time also in the winter Games in Cortina d’Ampezzo, where the ice hockey team won a gold medal, beating Canada in the final. In the summer Games in Melbourne, the USSR achieved 37 gold, 29 silver, and 32 bronze medals and by Rome in 1960 they had reached an absolute record of 43 gold, 29 silver, and 31 bronze medals. The Olympic triumph of the USSR continued at the 1964 Olympics in Innsbruck (winter) and Tokyo (summer) and in 1968 in Grenoble (winter) and Mexico (summer). In 1968 the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was for the first time represented as a team competing with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), using the Olympics as an arena to demonstrate the GDR’s superiority over capitalist regimes. In 1972 the winter Games in Sapporo saw the USSR emerge as the leader in ice skating. The Olympics of Munich in 1972, where Arab terrorists killed the entire Israeli Olympic team, brought for the USSR a new record of 50 gold, 27 silver, and 22 bronze medals. In 1976 the Olympics turned even more into a political arena, when African states boycotted the summer Games in Montreal, because New Zealand, a country that supported the apartheid-ridden South African Republic, was participating. The winter Olympics in Innsbruck remained untouched by politics. In 1980 the winter Olympics took place in Lake Placid, and the summer Games in Moscow became again the place of a political rally. The

United States, West Germany, Canada, Japan, Italy, and the UK (but not France) boycotted the Games because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In 1984, after the winter Olympics in Sarajevo, the summer Games in Los Angeles were boycotted by the USSR and most Eastern European states in an act of revenge for the 1980 boycott, but also because the United States had allegedly reinforced its assistance for Soviet citizens to defect during the Games. In 1988 the winter Olympics in Calgary were followed by the summer Games in Seoul, not boycotted by the USSR despite calls from North Korea to do so. In 1991 the USSR collapsed; the united teams of the now largely independent republics and the Russian Federation appeared in the winter Games in Albertville and the summer Games in Barcelona in 1992 as the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) team, carrying the Olympic, not a national, flag. What was once the ultimate national pride—to participate in and win an Olympic competition—had become a nationless spectacle for the former Soviet sportsmen. In Lillehammer in 1994, after the winter Olympics began to alternate with the summer Games, the team of the Russian Federation made its debut. The Olympics in 1996 Atlanta were doomed by a bomb explosion. In the 1998 Olympics in Nagano, 2000 in Sydney, 2002 in Salt Lake City, and 2004 in Athens the Russian team finally returned to its previous excellent performance, even if not to the former glory of world leadership in the medal count. The Olympics were no longer an arena for proving political superiority through athletic achievements, or the battle ground for political disputes, but had become again what they were once conceived to be: athletic competitions. For the

Olympic Games in 2004 Russia sent 472 sportsmen and -women to Athens, who won 92 medals; there were no major scandals over medals (as in Salt Lake City in 2002, see below), and only one major embarrassment when the shotputter Irina Korzhanenko tested positive in a drugs test and had to return her gold medal, which she had already, hastily perhaps, dispatched to Russia. Russia seems to have settled within the framework of international sports competitions. This is further enhanced by Moscow's bid (alongside London, New York, Paris, and Madrid) to host the 2012 Olympics.

Sport, Soviet Style The concept of a healthy mind in a healthy body (*mens sana in corpore sano*), the harmony of mind and body, dominated in socialist thought. Therefore, sport was seen first and foremost as a way of keeping fit; physical education (PE) was intrinsically linked to health, almost taking the role of preventive medicine. The Soviet regime perceived competition as "bourgeois," but after a party resolution of 1925, competition on a national level was considered appropriate. Instead of Olympic competition, national Spartakiades (*spartakiady*) were organized from 1928 on. Only in the 1930s could sport become a leisure activity, once the first Five-Year Plan had been fulfilled and workers had more time.

It was not until the victory in World War II, however, that the USSR deemed it worthwhile to demonstrate to the world its superiority in sports. Indeed, Stalin only agreed to sending teams to the Olympics in 1952 in those disciplines where medals were "guaranteed"; he had thought of sending a Soviet team to the 1948 Olympics but had been dissuaded by his advisers, as not

enough medals were certain. Spartakiades were held again after 1956 in the year before the Olympics as a testing ground for international competition.

Sport had played an important role in military and army training since 1918. The Vseobuch (Vseobshchee Voennoe Obuchenie, General Military Training) included skiing, wrestling, and fencing. This led to the formation of CDRA/CDSA (Central House of the Red Army, then Soviet Army) and CSKA (Central Army Sports Club), used by the staff of the Ministry of Defense and the army. In 1923 the club Dinamo (Dynamo) was founded by Felix Dzerzhinsky for the staff of the interior services (Secret Service and Ministry of the Interior). The party held control over other sports clubs, mostly voluntary sports organizations associated with the workplaces. Such sports organizations associated their names with the workers' organizations: Burevestnik (Stormy Petrel) for state trade, later for students; Lokomotiv for railway workers; Spartak for cooperatives; VVS (Voenno-vozdushnye sila, Air Force) for the air force; and Krylia Sovetov (Wings of the Soviets) for trade unions. By 1938 there were about 100 clubs. In 1936 a football league was formed, and teams were set up in almost every town. Stadiums were designed, recognizing sport as a mass spectacle; many were built only after the war, however.

In 1945 monetary prizes were introduced as an incentive for performance. All sportsmen were employed in the military, or they held fictitious jobs in factories, or they were students. Sportsmen had no need to earn a living elsewhere, a principle called "shamateurism," where the state masks a professional as an amateur. After the war, clubs were organized on a territorial princi-

ple. New sports disciplines were encouraged in the 1950s and 1960s during the growing engagement with the Olympic movement. Exceptions were karate and yoga, both deemed to be nonsocial sports that turn the individual away from society. Moreover, facilities such as arenas, pools, and ice rinks were constructed, without, however, providing a suitable infrastructure including restaurants, ticket offices, and proper public access. The introduction of the sports lottery in 1964 served to finance the development of sports facilities and the Olympic travel of USSR teams.

Although sports became of interest to the masses from the 1930s onward, during the Soviet era they never reached the popularity of cinema, literature, and the theater. Television transmissions of matches further took their toll of spectators away from the clubs and the fields in the 1970s. Only hockey continued to attract huge interest. The focus by both the party and the media on Olympic sports only ceased in 1985, when Gorbachev made possible wider coverage of non-Olympic sports. The emphasis shifted clearly to hockey and football. Sports may have been controlled by the party, but that did not mean that fairness and transparency pervaded Soviet sports. There were rigged games, bribed referees, hooliganism, and bought players, and in this sense the Soviet sports world was no different from sports elsewhere. Soviet sportsmen were paid by the party and state and played for the glory of the country, but they also had self-interest at heart.

Television coverage was led by Nikolai Ozerov, an actor of the Moscow Arts Theater. He was a most formidable commentator, always displaying a certain degree of sympathy for the Soviet teams, as is common for sports commentators. The chief

sports commentator on radio was Vadim Siniavsky, and the most prolific sports journalist Vladimir Pereturin. In 1988 the Soviet media were able for the first time to send their own journalists to the Olympics to obtain live coverage of the events, although still relying on the images of the Korean hosts. During the 1988 Olympic coverage, the first advertisements (Pepsi Cola) were shown on Russian television, opening the path for a commercialization of sports. The leading journal *Soviet Sport* broke up in 1991 to form *SportExpress*, which is now partly owned by the French *L'Equipe* and reaches a circulation of almost one million. *SportExpress* covers national and international sports, as well as Formula One. In total, there are around 35 journals dealing specifically with sports, including journals on motor sports, an area where Russia has hardly any active role. On television, sports coverage has always usurped a lower percentage of airtime than in other European countries; television devoted a mere 900 hours per year to sports, radio 700 hours per year (averages for the 1990s). For a while, sports disappeared almost entirely onto the paid cable network, but the coverage on the national channels has risen since 2000, and the formation of a sports channel in 2002 (Channel 6) bears further evidence to the growing interest in sports.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the republics of Georgia and Lithuania immediately formed their own leagues in football and basketball. At the same time in Russia the interest in football had been waning: in 1987 an average of 27,000 spectators came to a game, dropping to 6,000 by 1992, and picking up only after 1996. This coincided with the "brawn drain" in the mid-1990s when around 300 soccer play-

ers, 700 hockey players, and 100 basketball players were on contracts abroad and made it difficult for Russian teams to perform well, until Russia too began to hire and buy foreign players. In the late 1990s, salaries began to rise as sponsorship increased and investors could be found on the Russian market for football and hockey, but less for other sports. The state largely pulled out of sports support, which became independent and now relies on ticket sales, sponsorship, and advertising deals. The Russian team for the Olympics in Atlanta was sponsored by Reebok; other main sponsors at Russian football and hockey games include the Italian dairy giant Parmalat, the German beer company Holsten, and Samsung, which are all strong on the Russian market. Russian sportsmen also appear in advertising clips for products: the hockey trainer Viktor Tikhonov was one of the first sportsmen to do this, appearing in a spot for Vicks cough drops.

Post-Soviet Russia only gradually returned to active sports. Much of the sports facilities belonged to the above-mentioned clubs, and new facilities in Moscow and Petersburg were expensive to use. The new private sports clubs in Moscow are for members only, with fees reaching US\$2,000 a year, when the average monthly income was just under US\$200 in 2004. Aqua parks and saunas are also expensive, but some cheaper pools remain open. Tennis courts and golf courses are part of luxury hotels or clubs, accessible only to the upper and (upper) middle classes. Open-air sports are still available for the masses: skiing and skating on snowy plains and hills, on frozen rivers and lakes remain as popular as swimming in the sea (Black or Baltic), in the numerous lakes, or in rivers. People play games in parks or courtyards. The

high pollution in the big cities makes joggers and runners a rare sight.

Team Sports

Football (Soccer) The game of football, as soccer is called outside of the United States, originally came to Russia in the form of the Georgian game of *lelo* and the Russian game of *shalyga*. Russia joined the world and European football leagues only after World War II, but the formation of national leagues began in the early twentieth century. Indeed, matches took place between the Russian and the English teams in Petersburg, formed by the colony of British people living in Petersburg in 1907. The first Russian championship took place in 1912. Football clubs were formed in the 1920s, and most sports clubs of the large industries and workers' organizations had their football team in major cities. The club Dinamo had teams in Moscow, Kiev, and other cities.

Once the USSR entered international competition, victory was meant to demonstrate superiority over capitalism. The Soviet performance in the World Cups, however, left a great deal to be desired. The USSR team reached the quarterfinals in Sweden in 1958 and in Chile in 1962. Then the Soviet team disappeared from the international arena until it featured in the quarterfinals in 1982. On the European level, the national team fared somewhat better. In 1956 the USSR won the European Cup in France; in 1964 it lost to Spain in the final; in 1968 it took fourth place; in 1972 it lost to Germany in the semifinal. In the following years (1976, 1980, 1984) the Soviet team did not qualify and returned to the European arena only in 1988, losing the final to Holland. In the late 1990s Russian clubs un-



Disciplined soccer supporters watching a match at the Dinamo Stadium in Moscow in the early 1950s. (Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis)

successfully participated in the UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) Cup (1996, 1998, 2000). In the absence of a strong international performance of Russia's national football team in the World Cup and Russian football clubs in the UEFA cup, it is not surprising that hockey was much more popular as a spectator sport than football. Nevertheless, football too had its followers, especially on a local and national level.

The Dinamo stadium in Moscow is one of the oldest sports venues; it was built in 1927 with a capacity of 20,000–35,000, which has been extended to up to 55,000 after restoration. In the postwar period, outdoor and indoor pools as well as an ice rink and a small arena were added. It is not

roofed, and the southern stands is usually occupied by the club's fans, the Dynamites. Dinamo stadium has its own metro stop outside the front entrance. In order to accommodate the "mass" spectatorship for football and hockey, the Soviet leadership planned grand new arenas in the 1930s, but most of the large stadiums were built only in the 1950s. The Luzhniki Stadium was built in 1956, with a capacity of over 100,000. After the reconstruction in 1997, it remains the largest arena in Moscow. It is located at some distance from the metro, however: the station Leninskie Gory (Lenin Hills, later renamed Sparrow Hills [Vorob'evye gory]) was closed until 2002 after the bridge on which the station is located proved in need of major repair work



Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium, built in 1956, with a capacity of over 100,000. After the reconstruction in 1997 it remained the largest arena in Moscow. (Bettmann/Corbis)

in the 1980s. People have to walk from the metro stop Sportivnaya. Luzhniki is the home of the Torpedo and Spartak teams, and it is a comfortable, modern stadium, which also includes a smaller arena, a gym, a sports hall for indoor events, and a hockey pitch. The Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980 equipped the city with further facilities, including the Olympic Stadium on Prospekt Mira, with indoor seating for 35,000 spectators and two pools, designed by Mikhail Posokhin in the building materials popular in the 1970s, concrete and steel. The roofed Olympic Stadium hosts the Kremlin Cup, Russia's largest tennis championship, established in 1991. The CSKA has a basketball arena, a hockey stadium seating 5,500, and a football pitch in the north of Moscow. The Sokolniki Sta-

dium is one of the training grounds for Spartak, seating 5,000 spectators and also hosting the Russian championships in figure skating on its ice rink. The sports arena at Krylatskoye in the west of Moscow was built in 1979 and has a modern velo-track. In Petersburg the largest stadiums are also in the north of the city: the sport palace Jubilee and the Petrovsky Stadium.

Historically, the Moscow football teams always dominated the national league tables (rankings), and among the Moscow teams, there has always been a rivalry between Dinamo and Spartak. Dinamo was the team favored and formed by the Ministry of the Interior and the NKVD/KGB and distinguished itself by a disciplined and rigorous approach to play. The Spartak team was formed by the workers from the public

Political Football: Stalin versus Beria; Winner Starostin

During Stalin's purges of the 1930s, many people, including sportsmen, were arrested and exiled. The situation for Spartak was worsened by their rivalry with Dinamo, the team sponsored by the NKVD (Secret Service) and its chairman, the Georgian Lavrenti Beria. Beria disliked Spartak for being better than the Dinamo team. But even worse, the Spartak team beat Dinamo Tbilisi (Georgia) in a semifinal in 1939. Beria was so outraged that he ordered a replay of the semifinal after the final had been played and won by Spartak, who fortunately also won the semifinal second time round. Beria's attempts to arrest Nikolai Starostin were hampered on several occasions by the fact that Starostin's daughter went to school with Prime Minister Molotov's daughter, and Molotov refused to sign the order for arrest requested by Beria. In 1942, however, Nikolai Starostin and his brothers Andrei, Alexander, and Peter—all footballers—were arrested

for contact with foreigners, which had occurred during the matches abroad in the 1930s. Nikolai Starostin was sent to a labor camp in the north. He was awaited there with great eagerness, however, and instead of hard labour he was "sentenced" to coach Dinamo Ukhta. Then he was transferred to Khabarovsk in the Far East, where he served on similar terms. All this was entirely unknown to Beria. In 1948, while still exiled from Moscow, Starostin was brought back to the capital by Stalin's son Vasili in order to train the VVS (air force) team. Because his return to Moscow was illegal, Vasili Stalin had to accompany Starostin during all public appearances to prevent Starostin from being arrested by Beria. Starostin was caught out, however, and sent to Alma-Ata for the remainder of his exile, where he trained the Kairat Alma-Ata team. In 1955 he was officially allowed to return to Moscow and managed Spartak.

sector (trade) and excelled in a more improvised style of play. Popular sympathies therefore lay with the Spartak team, which was the better team already in the 1930s. Indeed, in 1934 Spartak, with such players as Nikolai Starostin and Mikhail Yakushin, scored a win against the Basel football club (5:2), the first major international win of a Soviet football team. Spartak subsequently went on a tour through several Czech cities. In 1937, Spartak beat the Basque national team, which was visiting Russia, after a disputed penalty. By 1945 Dinamo took the lead, however, and played Chelsea and Arsenal in London, gaining a win over Arsenal. From 1945 to 1951, the CSKA dominated the national league. In the 1950s Spartak recaptured its former glory when Nikolai Starostin returned to the team. On

the basis of the Spartak team, he formed the Olympic team that won the gold medal in Melbourne in 1956 with the legendary Abkhazian striker Igor Netto (1930–1999), who was captain of the Soviet team for the World Cup in 1962.

When football matches were watched in the Soviet period, cases of hooliganism were not uncommon, even if the sophistication of fan clubs and the paraphernalia available to express their support did not reach Western levels until the 1990s. The Soviet Union was not immune to disasters either. On 20 October 1982 Spartak Moscow played the Haarlem team in the Luzhnik stadium. At the score of 1:2, with Spartak clearly losing and only minutes of the match to go, many disappointed Spartak supporters started to head for the exit. At



Supporters of Spartak Moscow at a match of their team against Saturn in July 2003. (Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

that point, the police closed three of the four exits. When Spartak scored a goal, the fans tried to return to the stadium and were met by the crowd trying to leave through the one open gate. In true Soviet fashion the media hushed up the event, refused to blame the police for not opening the gates, and the state organ *Izvestiya* admitted 61 dead. Unofficial Western sources suspected 340 casualties; other sources give figures of up to 700. The exact number of victims has never been officially confirmed. In order to avoid crowds clashing in the stadium, the soccer match between Russia and Japan on 9 June 2002 that took place in Luzhniki was translated live onto a large screen built on Manège Square in central Moscow, where no riot police were in place. Hooliganism in the crowd escalated toward the end of the match, and the fans

caused serious damage to shops, cars, and public spaces in central Moscow.

In the 1990s, paraphernalia for fans were gradually introduced: imported goods mass produced in England or items handmade in Russia. Spartak Moscow fans wear red and white, the CSKA colors are red and blue, Dinamo sports blue and white, Torpedo Moscow is black and white, and Lokomotiv Moscow carries the colors green and white. Football fans all sport black “bomber jackets” with orange linings as well as black military boots. The Spartak fans are the most aggressive and largest contingent, numbering around 9–10,000. The CSKA team has about 7–8,000 fans and Dinamo 4–5,000. On 30 August 1997, fights took place in Petersburg before a match between Zenit Petersburg and Spartak Moscow; further fights between fans flared up



The team Lokomotive, Moscow, February 2004. (Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

in Moscow on another occasion of a Zenit versus Spartak match. The number of spectators for the sport is not large, as the interest dropped significantly in the latter half of the 1990s when football was increasingly seen as a game for the working class and youth gangs. The CSKA stadium and Luzhniki (Dinamo) were filled to less than a third of their capacity; Krylia Sovetov and Spartak's Sokolniki Stadium to less than half; non-Moscow stadiums, however, managed to fill up their arenas to capacity. The numbers of both fans and spectators are indicative of the low standing of football in Russia when compared with other European countries.

In the early 1990s a few good players from Russian and CIS teams transferred to foreign clubs, among them Alexei Mikhailchenko from Dinamo Kiev, who joined the

Glasgow Rangers in 1990, and Andrei Kanchelskis of Shakhter, who moved to Manchester United in 1991. The Ukrainian player Sergei Rebrov (b. 1974) transferred to England's Tottenham Hotspurs in 2000 for a transfer fee of almost \$U.S. 20 million; since 2004 Rebrov had played for West Ham United. The highest transfer fee for a Russian player was for Sergei Semak, who transferred from CSKA Moscow to Paris for \$u.S. 4 million in 2005.

In 1996 the company owning the Luzhniki Stadium bought Torpedo Moscow, and the new general director, Vladimir Aleshin, and the coach, Alexander Tarkhanov, conducted a mass dismissal of long-serving staff. CSKA was taken under the wings of Mezhprombank in 1996 and has been sponsored by Oneksimbank since 1997. Spartak has found a sponsor in LukOil and includes



Football players Marat Izmailov (left) and Fabio Cannavaro (right) during the match between Lokomotiv and InterMilan. The match was held in the Lokomotiv stadium and finished with a 3–0 score. (Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

a great number of foreign players. Control through targeted crime to eliminate adversaries was common not only in Russian politics and business but also in sports in the latter half of the 1990s. Spartak's president, Lidia Nechayeva, was murdered in 1997 in a dispute over television rights.

In 2003–2004 the Spartak and Torpedo teams, although both declining in fortunes, paradoxically played at the huge Luzhniki Stadium. Spartak's player Yegor Titov was disqualified from UEFA matches until January 2005 for the use of illegal substances.

The coach, Oleg Romantsev, long-time trainer for the national team from 1994 to 1996 and 1999 to 2002, who had been with Spartak since 1989, was dismissed and moved to Saturn (Moscow Region) in 2003; he was replaced by the Italian coach Nevio Scala. This followed the decline of Spartak, the Russian champions from 1996 to 2001, to third place in 2002 and to tenth place in 2003. At the same time, Lokomotiv's fortunes have been rising with cup wins in 1997–1998 and 1998–1999. Lokomotiv was in the Champions League 2003–2004, with

Arsenal, Inter Milan, and Dinamo Kiev. After winning the Russian Cups of 1996, 1997, 2000, and 2001 and the Russian Premier League in 2002, Lokomotiv rose to the Champions League in 2003–2004. Lokomotiv can boast the best Russian players in its club, many of whom returned after contracts abroad, enriched with the experience. Their goalkeeper, Sergei Ovchinnikov, joined the team in 1991 but played in Portugal for several seasons before returning to Lokomotiv in 2002. The players Oleg Panchin and Vladimir Maminov hold Uzbek passports, as they played for Uzbekistan in the FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) qualifying match in 2002, but both have been one-club players and have been with Lokomotiv since the early 1990s. Marat Izmailov is probably the finest player in the Russian league and a shooting star since his debut at the age of 19. Dmitri Loskov from Rostov is the most prolific striker in the team. The team also includes two players from Georgia, Mikhail Ashvetia and Malkhez Asatiani, the latter the son of the football legend Kakhi Asatiani. Lokomotiv is internationally the most successful Russian football club and is gaining support nationally. Football in Russia is not as strong as other sports, however.

Hockey Hockey may have been invented in the mid-nineteenth century in North America, but it was played in Russia, albeit with a ball rather than a puck (*shaiba*), as a popular game in Peter the Great's times. It was the Canadians who formed a hockey association in the late nineteenth century, however, and whose governor, Lord Stanley, sponsored the Stanley Cup in 1893. The Canadians also developed the rules of the game as it is known and played today. In

1920 the first world championship took place, and since 1966 there have also been European championships. The NHL (National Hockey League) is the most prestigious association, offering top wages for players in North America.

Hockey became accessible to mass spectators around the world when arenas were built in the 1930s. In 1956 the USSR team won Olympic gold and World Cup medals in ice hockey, a discipline until then dominated by North American teams. In 1957 the world championship took place in Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium. In the years 1957 to 1962, however, the teams of Sweden, the United States, and Canada regained superiority over the USSR. In 1963 the Golden Era of Soviet hockey began: between 1963 and 1971, the USSR won nine world championships and consistently held the Olympic gold medal between 1964 and 1988. They were also world champions for most years between 1973 and 1990. The "golden" Soviet team was coached by Anatoli Tarasov (1918–1995), who had himself played from 1945 to 1953; by the Dinamo player Arkadi Chernyshev (1914–1992), and finally by the former CSKA coach Viktor Tikhonov (b. 1930). Then the Soviet team collapsed with the Soviet Union, and the Russian team returned to its former lead with an Olympic silver medal in 1998, the world championship in 2000, and an Olympic bronze medal in Salt Lake City in 2002. Tikhonov resigned as CSKA hockey coach in April 2004 to concentrate on his work with the national team.

In hockey, the CSKA team had always been a strong leader nationally and served as a basis for the national team. In 1989 a conflict flared up between the CSKA coach Viktor Tikhonov and the players Viacheslav Fetisov, Igor Larionov, Alexander Mogilny,



Russian ice hockey star Pavel Bure at a training session at the Winter Olympics 2002 in Salt Lake City. (Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

and Vladimir Krutov, who wanted to play in the NHL. They were refused the army commission papers that they needed to leave the USSR (they were playing for an army team and their “professions” were major, lieutenant, and so on). Fetisov’s papers were unnecessarily delayed in 1989, leading Mogilny to defect in order to play in the NHL. Subsequently, all CSKA players were freed from their army commission in May 1989. Pavel Bure emigrated through a fictitious marriage to a Canadian. The rift in the Soviet hockey team was intensified after the Olympics in Albertville, where the team had won the gold medal. The national team split and two teams were formed, one coached by Tikhonov, the other by Boris Mikhalkov. In addition to the players’ emigration (“brawn drain”), a fight for leadership in the hockey association started

when the party replaced the Hockey Association’s president Vladimir Petrov with Vladimir Sych in 1995. In 1997 Sych was shot during a dispute over the right to tax-free imports of tobacco for members of the Sports Federation. Alexander Steblin became the new president. The brawn drain had left the Soviet team without its best players. Dmitri Khristich went to the Washington Capitals, Andrei Lomakin to the Philadelphia Flyers, and Sergei Nemchinov to the New York Rangers.

Between 1993 and 1995, the CSKA experienced a first taste of capitalist management in the sports. The Pittsburgh Penguins tried to invest in CSKA, but the team’s performance dropped and investors (including Disney) pulled out of the deal, ending the romance between a U.S. and a Russian club. The CSKA hockey team later folded

completely. Dinamo's coach Vladimir Yurzinov coached the Olympic team, including the forwards Alexander Makarov, Igor Larionov, and Vladimir Krutov, with Viacheslav Fetisov and Alexei Kasatonov as defense and Vladislav Tretiak in the goal.

After emigration became possible in the 1990s, a mass exodus or "brawn drain" began after the CIS team had won the gold medal in Albertville. Most players of the Olympic team stayed with NHL teams. Viacheslav Fetisov and Sergei Fedotov went on to win the Stanley Cup with the Detroit Red Wings in 1997 and 1998; Igor Larionov also joined the Detroit team; Alexander Mogilny joined the Buffalo Sabers, after having defected during the 1989 world championships in Sweden. Pavel Bure, the "Russian Rocket," married a Canadian in order to play with the Vancouver Canucks, then joined the Florida Panthers in 1999 for a substantial transfer fee. The goalkeeper Tretiak coaches the Chicago Black Hawks. They all continue to play for the Russian national team. It may have taken time for Russian players to adapt to training conditions in the West, but North American teams were also stunned by the much lower level of discipline that some of the Soviet players demonstrated. Soviet sportsmen had lived in the secure and protected shell reserved for a privileged elite, who could enjoy the luxuries of Western life and not bother about everyday life problems such as taxes, shopping, and insurance.

Hockey is a popular spectator sport, but it is also widely played on the open air pitches in Gorky Park and Izmailovo Park or on the numerous ice rinks in the major cities.

Basketball, Volleyball, and Handball

The ancient game of basketball was re-

invented in Canada by James Neismith (1891) as a college sport. It was brought to Russia in the twentieth century and gained popularity among factory workers in small industrial settlements. In 1909 the first official match took place, and by 1923 there were even Russian championships. In 1936 basketball became an Olympic discipline, and in 1976 women's basketball was recognized as an Olympic sport. Throughout Olympic history, the U.S. basketball teams have been most successful. Twice only could the USSR score a victory, in 1972 and 1988, but really they drew their support from the Baltic states, especially Lithuania, which had always boasted strong basketball teams. Indeed, today's top players are Lithuanian: Arvydas Sabonis (b. 1964), played for Žalgiris Kaunas from 1985 to 1987 and joined Real Madrid in 1990, then the Portland Trail Blazers in 1996. He ensured the USSR national team's victory at the European championships in 1986 and played on the Lithuanian national team that won Olympic bronze in 1992 and 1996. In 2004, new coaches were appointed for the national team: Sergei Babkov from Lokomotiv Novosibirsk and the CSKA player Yevgeni Pashutin. It was, however, the women's team that won a bronze medal in Athens.

Volleyball was invented by William Morgan at Mount Holyoke in 1895 as a college game. It reached the USSR in the 1920s as a popular game. Only in 1947 was an International Volleyball Organization formed, and since 1964 volleyball has been an Olympic discipline. Until then, it was not a sport promoted by the Communist Party as a competitive sport. An unofficial discipline, it was popular among artists and actors in Moscow in the 1920s and 1930s. It was played by students of the arts and film col-

leges as well as by the famous actors Boris Shchukin and Ivan Moskvina. Once it had become a competition sport, the USSR strove for, and finally achieved, dominance in this sport (Olympic gold in 1980 and 1988). Russia won a silver medal in Sydney 2000 for both the men's and women's teams, and a silver medal for the women's team and bronze for the men's team in Athens 2004.

Handball became an Olympic discipline in 1936. The USSR men's team won a gold medal in the 1976 and 1988 Olympics and the women's team in 1976 and 1980. The CIS and Russian teams also won several medals at the Olympic Games in Barcelona (1992), Sydney (2000), and Athens (2004).

Individual Sports

Golf and Tennis Golf was neither a competitive discipline nor a leisure activity in the Soviet era. The Soviet Union had one golf course near Vyborg, until the first golf club opened in Moscow in 1987, and the sport spread largely as a form of leisure occupation for the upper classes. In 1992 the first golf tournament was held in Russia, and only in 1996 did Russia venture onto the international arena. The largest golf club in Moscow is in the southwest of the city, on the Lenin (Sparrow) Hills.

Tennis, the kings' game, was invented in eleventh-century France and spread across Europe and North America in the mid-nineteenth century. In France, Australia, and the United States it became part of the school curriculum. The relationship between tennis and the Olympic movement is complex, however: between 1896 and 1924 men's singles were an Olympic discipline; then the sport was removed from the Olympics until the 1988 Games in Seoul.



Tennis player Yevgeni Kafelnikov during the Kremlin Cup at the Olympic Complex, October 2003. (Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

Therefore, achievement in tennis is measured in the four Grand Slam competitions (Wimbledon, Australian Open, Flushing Meadows, and Paris Open) rather than the Olympics, as well as in the Davis Cup, where the USSR has participated since 1962. In the Davis Cup, the Soviet team reached a semifinal only in 1976, but the match was canceled since the team was recalled when having to play against Chile, a country that was condemned for the Pinochet regime. The Russians made a comeback to the Davis Cup in 1993; they reached the finals in 1994 and lost to Sweden. In 1995 they were again in the finals after overcoming the German team with Boris Becker and Michael Stich in the semifinals, when Andrei Chesnokov scored



Tennis star Anna Kurnikova during the Kremlin Cup at the Olympic Complex, October 2001. (Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

a victory over Michael Stich after the latter made a double fault at 15:40. In the finals, however, Pete Sampras beat Yevgeni Kafelnikov, and the U.S. team won the cup in Moscow. In 1998 the Russian team again reached the semifinals in Brisbane, but here the Australian team took the upper hand. Overall, Russian tennis has asserted itself forcefully in the international arena after years of neglect by a Soviet regime that favored collective sports. Indeed, the tennis history of the USSR is not as glamorous as that of other sports disciplines. The sport was popular among actors of the Moscow Arts Theater. Vsevolod Verbitsky was a national champion in 1918. Some players were artists: Nikolai Ozerov was the son of an opera singer, and Anna

Dmitrieva the daughter of a theater designer. Only two Soviet women have ever played at Wimbledon: in 1959 Dmitrieva was the first USSR tennis player at Wimbledon, and in the 1970s Olga Morozova reached the women's finals three times. In the 1960s, Alexander Metreveli was the first seeded player and the first Soviet Wimbledon winner.

In the New Russia, Andrei Chesnokov was the first professional player who had a contract with a Western firm, and he was twice ranked among the top ten players and participated in seven major competitions. In 1992, the 18-year-old Yevgeni Kafelnikov won the Open Italian Juniors. In 1994 he showed his great skill during a three-hour match against Pete Sampras in the Australian Open. By 1995 he was ranked sixth in the world. In 1996 he won his first Grand Slam tournament with the Paris Open and was ranked number three. His performance since has been uneven, although by 1999 he had returned to the first rank after winning the Australian Open and Olympic gold in 2000. The tennis player Marat Safin was 20 years old when his ranking rose to third after a victory over Pete Sampras; in 1999 he scored a victory at Flushing Meadows. Igor Andreyev is another rising star of Russian tennis; he has trained in Spain since the age of 14.

The star of "new" Russian tennis—although not necessarily an outstanding player—is Anna Kurnikova. Trained at the Nick Bolletieri Tennis Academy in Florida since the age of 11, the 16-year-old played a semifinal in Wimbledon in 1997. In 1999 she won the women's doubles in the Australian Open with Martina Hingis. Kurnikova is not a winner, however; instead, she has made a fortune by posing as a model for various sports journals and glossy mag-

azines. In 1999 Yelena Dementieva (b. 1981) entered the tennis arena and won Olympic silver in Sydney in 2000. In the Paris Open of 2004, Dementieva was the first Russian woman to qualify for a Grand Slam final in thirty years, where she was beaten by another Russian player, Anastasia Myskina (b. 1981). Vera Zvonareva, Nadia Petrova, and Svetlana Kuznetsova also performed well in the Paris Open in singles and doubles. The real heroine of Russian tennis celebrated victory in Wimbledon on 3 July 2004, however, when Maria Sharapova was the first Russian to ever win Wimbledon, beating Serena Williams in two sets. Sharapova, born in 1987 in Niagan, has trained for more than ten years at Nick Bolletieri's tennis school in Florida.

As for the active interest in tennis, contemporary Russia knows a growing number of tennis clubs and courts can be found at a number of holiday resorts and in the sports centers (Luzhniki, Dinamo, Olympic complex, CSKA). The Russian Tennis Association has a club in Altufievo in the north of Moscow. Like golf, however, tennis remains a sport for the privileged and the high earners.

Athletics Athletics are the oldest form of sport, originating in ancient Greece. In 1908 the first championships were held, but only in 1946 was an international federation for athletics formed. Although Russian sportsmen and sportswomen have always performed well in Olympic disciplines, it is in athletics that they have maintained most easily the record level of Soviet times.

In walking (*skorokhod*), the first Soviet Olympic champion was Leonid Spirin, who won in 1956 in Melbourne over 20 kilometers. The first world title was not won until

1976, however, when Veniamin Soldatenko achieved his over 50 kilometers. In 1987 Irina Strakhova was the first Soviet woman to win a world championship title. After the collapse of the USSR, Irina Stankina in 1995 became the youngest world champion, aged 18 years. Yelena Nikolayeva won Olympic gold in 1996 over 10 kilometers, and in the new millennium Olimpiada Ivanova became world champion (2001) and won a silver medal in Athens. It is clearly the Russian women who dominate in this discipline internationally. Among the sprinters (*gladkii beg*), Svetlana Masterkova won two Olympic gold medals in 1996. Valentina Yegorova won the silver medal in the marathon. In hurdling (*baryerny beg*), the former sprinter Irina Privolova won a gold medal in Sydney.

In jumping, particular mention must be made of the Soviet coach Vladimir Diachkov, who developed a special and successful technique for the pole vault in the 1950s, before the flop technique replaced his method in the 1960s and took the lead away from the Soviet team. In the high jump (*pryzhok v vysotu*), Igor Kashkarov won Olympic gold in 1956. Yuri Stepanov established a new world record in 1957, which marked the first time that the world record was not held by an American sportsman. In the 1960s, Valeri Brumel several times set a world record in the high jump, making the "cosmic jump" of 2.26 meters in 1962, claiming Olympic gold in 1964. After sustaining a leg injury in an accident, Brumel had to retire. In pole vaulting (*pryzhok s shestom*), the first world record for the USSR came in 1981 when Vladimir Poliakov jumped 5.81 meters. In the 1990s, the Ukrainian-born Sergei Bubka reached 6.14 meters (1994). Maxim Tarasov won Olympic gold in 1992, bronze in 2000, and be-

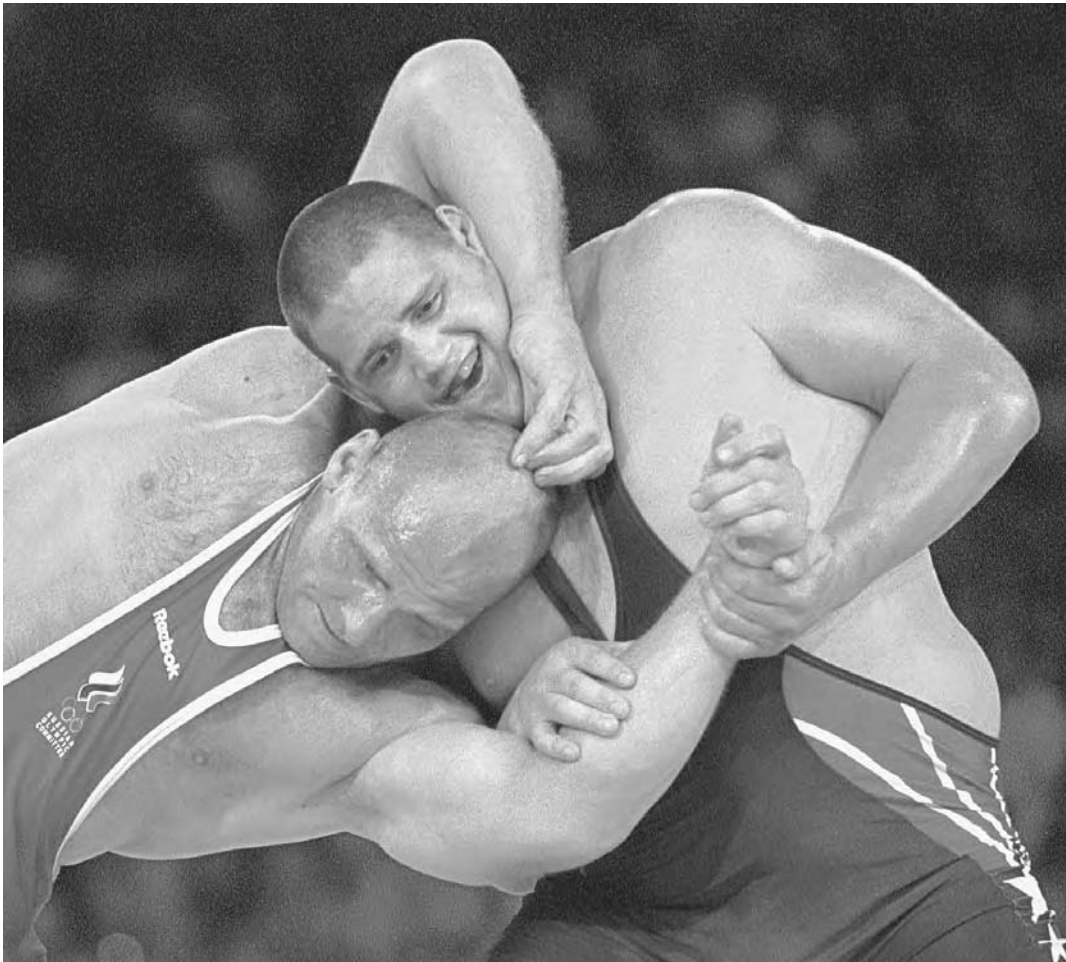
came world champion in 1999 with 6.05 meters. The long jump (*pryzhok v dlinu*) is a discipline that has not brought the USSR great triumphs, but it is worth bearing in mind that in over 100 years, the 18 world records have been set by only 12 jumpers. Igor Ter-Ovanesian set one such new world record in 1967, with a jump of 8.35 meters, which later earned him Olympic gold. During the Athens Olympics the Russian women gained several medals in high jump, pole vault, triple jump, and long jump. The athlete Tatiana Lebedeva, who had already secured a silver medal in Sydney and had set an indoor world record in Budapest in 2004, deservedly received a gold medal.

In the discus (*metanie diska*) and javelin throw (*metanie kop'ia*), the Soviet teams scored occasional victories in the 1970s and 1980s. The javelin thrower Alexander Makarov won Olympic silver in 1980, and his son, Sergei, took the Olympic bronze in Sydney in 2000. The first Russian champion in weightlifting in the pre-Revolutionary era was Alexander Zass (1888–1962) from Vilno (now Vilnius), called the “Iron Samson.” Zass sustained an injury in World War I and later worked in the circus, where he gained fame for carrying two lions on his shoulders, a number that he modeled on his war experience, when he had carried his injured horse. Yuri Vardanian set five world records in the 1980s. Yuri Zakharevich won three Olympic gold medals in Seoul, and his fellow countryman Andrei Chemerkin, Olympic winner of 1996, is recognized as the strongest man in the world. Other heavy-athletic disciplines, such as judo and karate, were not widespread in the Soviet Union outside competition sports, but with the emergence of clubs in the New Russia, and Russia’s president actively practicing karate, these

sports have gained popularity. In judo, Alexander Mikhailin has won a world championship.

Ever since the former USSR entered the world arena of wrestling competitions in 1953 with Boris Gurevich, the first Soviet world champion in wrestling, the country led infallibly in the various categories of the discipline. The Greco-Roman wrestler (130 kg) Alexander Karelin (b. 1957 in Novosibirsk) was the longest reigning world champion (1989–1999), and the only athlete who won three Olympic medals for his country under three different flags: for the Soviet Union in 1988, for the CIS in 1992, and for Russia in 1996. After being defeated in Sydney by Rulon Gardner, he defended his doctorate in sports at the Lesgaft Institute in Saint Petersburg (2002) and was elected a Duma deputy (for the party “Edinstvo,” Unity) by his Novosibirsk constituency (1999). The wrestlers won ten of the 92 medals won by Russia in the Athens Olympics.

Boxing, so popular in the United States, was part of army training in the Soviet period, and as such, it was a recognized and supported form of sport. The boxer Boris Lagutin (b. 1938), who won Olympic bronze in 1960 and gold in 1964 and 1968, is probably one of the best-known boxers, if not sportsmen, of the Soviet era. In the New Russia the welterweight boxer Oleg Saitov has popularized the sport with a gold medal in the 1996 Olympics, world and European championship titles, the Barker Cup, and two further gold medals at the Sydney Olympics. He achieved another third place in the Athens Olympics in 2004. In 2001, Konstantin Tsiu entered the ring, winning the world championship; Alexander Lebziak won Olympic gold in Sydney in the heavyweight class.



Russian three-time Olympic champion in Greco-Roman wrestling Alexander Karelin fights during the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney. (Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

Gymnastics Gymnastics were, first and foremost, a health exercise introduced to Russia in the late nineteenth century by Doctor Petr Lesgaft from Petersburg, who was sent to Europe with the mission of studying health exercises. Lesgaft founded a school in Petersburg, which became the Lesgaft Institute of Physical Culture after the Revolution.

When Soviet gymnasts entered the Olympic arena, the sport was no longer a health exercise but a highly competitive discipline. It was here that the Soviet teams scored a

range of medals at the Olympics. Larisa Latynina won eighteen Olympic medals in the 1950s and 1960 for gymnastics and was world champion in 1962. Then, however, the Japanese took the lead in gymnastics, until in 1970 Liudmila Turishcheva (b. 1952) won the world championship. She gave a remarkable performance at the European championship in London in 1973, when she completed an exercise on parallel bars after one of the bars had broken. Turishcheva, who remains a legend in contemporary Russia, was swept aside on the interna-

tional arena by Olga Korbut (b. 1955, Grodno/Belarus), who at the age of 16 won Olympic gold in Munich in 1972, showing a loop on the parallel bars and a backward salto. It would soon become common for teenagers rather than mature sportspeople to enter international gymnastics competitions, such as the 11-year-old Romanian Nadia Comaneci (b. 1961), who first appeared at the age of 14 in European championships, where she won four gold medals. She went on to win Olympic gold in Montreal in 1976 with a “perfect” score of 10 for her performance on the uneven bars and gained several medals in Moscow in 1980, competing along with the Korean-born Russian Nelli Kim (b. 1959).

Although it was generally expected that the level of discipline needed for gymnastics could not be maintained without party discipline in post-Soviet Russia, and considering that this sport was not a mass spectator sport, Russia scored surprisingly high in gymnastics competitions in the 1990s. Svetlana Khorkina began her career in 1994; she was European champion (1998, 2000) and world champion (1997, 1999), and won medals in the 1996, 2000, and 2004 Olympics. In Sydney she showed a great sense of team spirit when she let her junior colleague Lena Zamolodchikova (b. 1982) do the jump instead of her, thus giving Zamolodchikova a chance of demonstrating her ability and ensuring the women’s team a gold medal. Zamolodchikova also won two gold medals for individual performance on the vault in Sydney, and Khorkina brought in the gold medal on uneven bars. Yulia Barsukova became European champion in 1999 and won Olympic gold in 2000. In 2003 she was cast as the White Cat in the Russian Ice Stars’ UK touring production of *Sleeping Beauty*, leaving competitive for



Athlete Svetlana Khorkina receiving a silver medal at the Athens Olympics in 2004. (Photo by Ilya Pitalev/Kommersant)

commercial sports. Alina Kabayeva was European champion in 1999 and 2000 and world champion in 2001; she won Olympic bronze in Sydney and gold in Athens. Among the men, the Belarusian Vitali Shcherbo took six Olympic gold medals in Barcelona in 1992. Alexei Nemov (b. 1976), who became captain of the Russian team for the 1996 Olympics, won gold and silver medals in Sydney for his performance on the horizontal bar, pommel horse, and parallel bars as well as floor exercises.

Water Sports Rowing was a competitive sport in the Soviet Union but not associated with universities as in the United Kingdom. In 1956 the USSR made a strong debut in

the Olympic Games at Melbourne with two gold and three silver medals. After 1991 the performance and interest in the sport dropped, but by 1996 the Russian team was again among the medalists: in Sydney, Maxim Opalev won a silver medal. The former USSR coach Valentin Mankin, who trained the national team from 1988 to 1990, went to Italy and coached the Italian national team that won gold and silver medals in Sydney. Yachting was relatively popular in the Soviet Union: with around a hundred clubs, the sport had 30,000 members.

Swimming was a physical exercise introduced by a swimming school in Petersburg in 1825. By the late nineteenth century, pools could be found in most steam-houses (a steam-house is a *banya*), and in 1895 even the famous Sandunov Baths in Moscow had a small pool. Saunas or steam-houses are still very popular, with Finnish and Russian saunas being an integral part of urban and provincial life. The Russian sauna is a steam sauna, heated up to 60°C, where people beat each other with birch tree twigs (*veniki*). The Finnish sauna is a dry sauna that heats up to 100°C, and it is also common in Russia. The steam-house formed part of provincial life, however, where it provided the bathhouse in areas without sanitation, and it remains an integral part of Russian culture.

Although swimming became a popular exercise, both in the *banya* pools and in rivers and lakes, the USSR did not fare very well in the Olympics. Instead, Johnny Weissmuller, who continued to play the part of Tarzan, conquered the hearts of Russian sports spectators and cinema audiences in the 1950s. The 16-year-old Galina Prozumenshikova was the first Soviet swimmer to win an Olympic gold medal, in Tokyo in 1964.



Swimmer and champion of the 2000 Olympics Alexander Popov prepares for the World Championship in the Olympic Sports Complex, Moscow, in 2002. (Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

The New Russia has a lot more to offer in terms of competition success. The swimmer Alexander Popov held the world record in 50 and 100 meters and won Olympic gold in 1992. He then trained in Australia and again won Olympic gold in 1996, followed by the European championship in 1997 and a silver medal in Sydney. Roman Sludnov won the world championship in 2001. Among the women, Maria Kiselyova excelled in synchronized swimming in the Olympics in 2000; in 2004 the Russian team won two gold medals in synchronized swimming.

A number of pools can be found in the major cities. The famous open-air pool Moskva, which from the 1960s to the 1990s took up the space where the Cathedral of Christ the Savior stood until 1931 and again stands since 1994, was an extraordinary

sight in its time with swimmers in the heated pool at outside temperatures of minus 25° C. All the major sports clubs (Luzhniki, Olympic, Krylatskoye, CSKA) have their indoor pools, and the Seagull (Chaika) in the south of Moscow is the major public pool. Many fitness clubs also have small pools, and there is a growing number of aqua parks.

For the common people, water sports such as diving and waterskiing are available at a great number of Russian holiday resorts on the Black Sea. Swimming is possible in the summer seasons in lakes and rivers, even in the Moskva river, which has a famous beach near Serebrianyi Bor (Silver Forest). There are numerous lakes in the Volga region, north of Moscow, and north of St. Petersburg. Diving is popular, but very expensive because of the special equipment required. A basic course of six hours can cost between \$150 and \$250.

Other Sports In fencing, the USSR Olympics team first performed in 1960 and obtained a gold medal; it repeated this success in 1964, 1968, 1976, and 1980, asserting the USSR's superiority in this team sport. In the post-Soviet era, individual fencers gained international awards, first and foremost Stanislav Pozdniakov, who won Olympic gold in 1992 and 1996 and was world champion in 2001. His teammates Alexander Beketov and Pavel Kolobkov also won Olympic medals in 1996 and 2000. In Sydney the women's épée team and the men's saber team won gold medals; in Athens the women's épée team repeated their gold medal, while the men's team took only bronze in foil and sabre.

Darts only entered Russia in the 1990s as a foreign import. In the 2000 world championship in London, however, Anastasia Do-

bromyslova won a bronze medal, becoming the first Russian to gain any awards. The sport remains of limited interest for competition, but facilities are available in clubs and pubs. Paintball reached Russia in 1993. There are a number of carting and bowling clubs that are fairly popular.

In equestrian terms, the Caucasian republics always had a strong presence in horseback riding. The Djigits performed in many circuses. In Soviet Russia, equestrian sports were not very popular. The best racing performance was in 1961, when a Russian jockey participated in the Grand National and reached the tenth hurdle. Horse racing was not a sport sponsored in the USSR; neither was betting, considered to be an utterly bourgeois pastime. There were few clubs or stables where individuals could keep horses. With the collapse of the USSR, it therefore took a while for equestrian sports to establish themselves. Horse racing is still not a mass spectacle, although there are a few races and arenas, most notably the hippodrome on Begovaya in Moscow, which even has a couple of bookmakers (*bukmeikery*). There are horseback-riding clubs in Bitsa, Izmailovo, and Nagornoye where people can hire horses and take riding classes. Interest in the sport is on the increase as the first international successes are visible: Nina Menkova won the bronze and silver medals in the world championships between 1989 and 1991 in the dressage exercises on her horse Dixon. However, such successes remain isolated.

In biking, Russia always lagged behind Europe. The first cyclists in Russia were referred to as "satan riding on the devil" (*chert na diavole edet*); the bike was considered a silly and dangerous Western invention. In 1883 the first bicycle race took

place in Moscow, but the bicycle never really gained wide popularity in Russia, neither as a means of transport nor as a piece of sports equipment. There have, however, been occasional record attempts: the electrician Gleb Travin cycled along the borders of the USSR in 1928, an exercise that covered 85,000 kilometers and took three years and 14 days, starting from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky and going across the Arctic Circle. The cyclist Viacheslav Yekimov won gold medals in Seoul and Sydney, and Olga Sliusareva took the gold medal in points race and silver in road race in Athens in 2004, but no Russian cyclist has taken part in big international events such as the Tour de France or the Giro d'Italia.

Mountain climbing was not a popular sport in the Soviet era, but an exercise of achievement. Yevgeni Abalakov's conquest in 1933 of Pik Kommunizma (Communism Peak, 7,495 meters) in the Pamir range, the highest mountain of the USSR, was one such achievement. Mountain climbing became a popular sport in the 1990s, when military helicopters were used to transport people to remote locations in the Caucasus for climbing. Other forms of extreme sports, such as bungee jumping, are gaining in popularity among the prosperous "New Russians."

Formula One and other motor races were not part of spectator or competitive sports in the Soviet era, and the interest in Formula One races remains a passive one. Formula One is covered extensively on television and in the print media, indicating an interest in the races as a spectator sport.

The noncompetitive sports of fishing and hunting have long-standing traditions in Russia, and—although they are exclusively male sports—they are extremely popular and widespread.

Winter Sports

The first skis were used in Russia in 1894. By 1910, the first Russian championships took place in Moscow. Bearing in mind the Russian winter, the country was clearly predestined for skiing, and it remains a very popular sport and almost a way of moving through the countryside during the winter.

Soviet downhill ski teams joined international competitions in the 1950s, and here women have always been better skiers than men. In 1956, Vladimir Kuzin won Olympic gold in Cortina d'Ampezzo; Viacheslav Vedenin won silver in Grenoble in 1968 and gold in Sapporo in 1972. The women led more consistently: between 1958 and 1966, Alevtina Kolchina was three times world champion and won Olympic gold in 1964. Galina Kulakova became USSR champion in 1967; she held the title of world champion five times and four times participated in the Olympics. Raisa Smetanina participated in seven world championships and five Olympics. Such long-term champions were no longer on the ski slopes in the 1990s.

In cross-country skiing, the Russian teams have demonstrated their strength: Liubov Yegorova was world champion from 1992 to 1994 and took Olympic gold. Larisa Lazutina was world champion in 1995 and again in 2001, with three gold medals in Nagano. Yelena Vaelbe had, by 1995, won five gold medals in world championships. Among the newcomers are Olga Danilova, Nina Gavriliuk, and Julia Chepalova, making their medal debuts at the 2001 world championships. Indeed, the training opportunities for cross-country skiing are widely accessible, so that the lead in this area is not surprising.

Ski jumping saw only a few Soviet sportsmen win, but the biathlon was an-

other Soviet-dominated discipline. In the 1960s and 1970s Vladimir Melanin, Yuri Kashkarov, Renat Safin, and Alexander Tikhonov were multiple world champions and led in Olympic competitions. The former skier Anfisa Reztsova scored success for Russia in the biathlon in the 1990s.

Skiing remains a very popular leisure activity. There are numerous ski resorts in the Caucasus and Central Asia, now separate republics, but also in the Urals. The resort of Krasnaya Polyana near the Black Sea resort of Sochi has been expanded, since it is President Putin's favorite resort. Many Russians can afford the quite cheap package holidays to Austrian and Swiss, Italian, and French ski resorts. Quite a few ski jumps are available in major cities, with the most famous jump descending from the Sparrow Hills toward the Moskva River.

Ice Skating Skates were first brought to Russia by Peter the Great, and the first competitions were in speed skating in the nineteenth century. Alexander Panshin was the first Russian world champion in speed skating, taking advantage of the facilities in Petersburg's Yusupov Gardens. He was followed by a whole host of Russian speed skaters, including Boris Shilkov (1954 world champion), Boris Stenin (1960 world champion), Viktor Kosichkin (1962 world champion), four times world champions Inga Artamonova, Klara Guseva (Nesterova) (1960), and Lidia Skoblikova.

The end of the 1960s saw the end of a string of Soviet speed skaters dominating the discipline. At that point in history, figure skating became the domain of Soviet hegemony, and the USSR and Russia have dominated this discipline in all its four variants to the present day. Figure skating is therefore very popular in Russia, but also

because skates are relatively cheap and icy surfaces abound in the Russian winter, making the sport a family leisure activity.

The first figure skating competitions took place in Vienna in 1872 and included pair and single skating. In 1908, ice skating first featured in the Olympic program. At the London Games, Russia was represented by Nikolai Panin-Kolomenkin, a finance inspector. Since 1922 there have been European and world championships, which now also include ice dance as a fourth form. As figure skating developed, it encompassed a number of compulsory elements and jump combinations: loops, flips, toe loops, and death spirals. Some new elements were invented and named after the skaters who first performed them: the salchow was named after the Swedish skater Ulrich Salchow; the axel was named after Axel Paulson, who performed it at the 1908 Olympics; the lutz was named after the Italian skater Tomas Lutz; and one of the most recent elements, the Biellmann spin, was first shown by the Swiss skater Denise Biellmann in the 1980s.

The USSR took great pride in its figure skaters, a tradition begun in the 1960s. Men's figure skating has never been quite as strong as that of the Soviet pairs, however. Among the European and world champions of the 1970s were Vladimir Kovalyov, the Leningrad skater Igor Bobrin, and Yuri Ovchinnikov. Alexander Fadeyev showed a fine free skating program based on Russian folk dance and won the world and European championships in the 1980s. He first landed a quadruple toe-loop. The Ukrainian Viktor Petrenko won a gold medal for the unified CIS team in Albertville (1992). Alexei Urmanov received a gold medal in Lillehammer. He has since shown excellent free programs, without,

however, winning medals. Ilia Kulik took the gold medal in Nagano.

Yevgeni Plushchenko first won a bronze medal at the world championships in 1998, aged 15; he took the world title in 2001. Plushchenko first performed the combination of a quadruple, triple, and double jump. Russia has been best represented by Alexei Yagudin, who won Olympic gold in Salt Lake City in 2002, relegating Plushchenko to the silver medal. The Petersburg skater Yagudin (b. 1980) excelled with a free program set to “Man with the Iron Mask,” but he made Olympic history by achieving the highest total score for individual skating (106.6 out of 108 points).

In women’s skating the United States held the lead, and in the 1970s and 1980s the GDR skaters trained by Jutta Mueller, including Katerina Witt, took the limelight. Kira Ivanova was the first and only woman to win an Olympic medal for the USSR in Sarajevo in 1984. Anna Kondrasheva gained a silver medal in the 1984 world championship. Yelena Vodoretzova (b. 1963) achieved a European title in 1982. Her pupil, Olga Markova, became a European medalist in 1994 and 1995. In the 1990s, Russian women finally reached the steps of the Olympic pedestal more frequently. The Ukrainian Oksana Baiul (b. 1977) was the youngest Olympic champion, winning a gold medal in Lillehammer in 1994, but her career has been hampered by alcoholism. Irina Slutskaya became European champion in 1996, 2000, and 2001, winning a silver medal in the 1998 world championships and in the Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. Marina Butyrskaya won the world championships in 1999 and European championships in 1998 and 1999, at the mature age of 27. Russian women certainly



Figure skater Irina Slutskaya performing a Bielman spin during the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City’s Delta Center.

(Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

are back among the leading skaters with solid artistic and technical performances.

The greatest success has been recorded in pairs skating, which has also enjoyed widespread spectator popularity in Russia and abroad. In 1958 the USSR joined the leadership race in figure skating, when Nina and Stanislav Zhuk won the silver medal at the European championship in Bratislava, which they subsequently defended in Davos in 1959 and in Garmisch Partenkirchen in 1960, eventually crowning their career with a sixth place at the Olympics in Squaw Valley. They were soon overtaken, however, by Liudmila Belousova and Oleg Protopopov, who took Olym-

pic gold in Innsbruck in 1964, winning the first Olympic medal in the discipline. They have become, like their successors, national heroes. Their free skate set to Liszt's "Love Dreams" demonstrated their athletic competence in a lyrical and romantic presentation, probably least expected from the disciplined Soviet camp. They defended their medal in Grenoble and reigned as European and world champions between the two Olympics. Since the times of Belousova and Protopopov, the USSR has never lost Olympic gold in pairs figure skating; they surrendered the world championship only seven times and the European title only three times. The coach Igor Moskvina trained his wife, Tamara Moskvina, who skated with Alexei Mishin and won a world championship silver medal in 1969. From this pool of skaters the schools and training camps developed that dominated, and still rule, the sport. Figure skating became a massively popular sport, where the competition was not only between nations but between "camps" of skaters trained in Moscow or Petersburg, by Zhuk or Moskvina.

In 1969 Irina Rodnina (b. 1949) and Alexei Ulanov made their debut at the world championship. They held the European title between 1969 and 1972, when they won Olympic gold; the silver medal went to Andrei Sureikin and Liudmila Smirnova. After the Olympics, Ulanov decided to skate with Smirnova, whom he had married in the meantime, leaving Rodnina without a skating partner. Her trainer, Stanislav Zhuk, paired her with the relatively unknown skater Alexander Zaitsev. Although Smirnova and Ulanov won world championship silver in 1973 and 1974, Rodnina and Zaitsev rose to Olympic gold in 1976 and 1980. They held the title of world

champion ten times between 1969 and 1978 and the European title 11 times (1969–1978, and 1980), interrupted only in 1979 when Rodnina had her baby son.

It was impossible to imagine in those days that anyone could overtake the pair of Rodnina and Zaitsev, whose "Kalinka" free skate program became their trademark. The coach Stanislav Zhuk knew, however, that he had to raise a new generation of skaters. In his choice of pairs, Zhuk always chose a small woman and a tall man and peppered the programs with decisive and forceful moves, tending more toward the athletic than the artistic side. Marina Cherkasova and Sergei Shakhrai performed well in the late 1970s but were clearly not challengers for the Olympic gold medal. Yelena Valova and Oleg Vasiliev won several European and world titles between 1983 and 1988, with an Olympic victory in 1984. They were, however, coached by Tamara Moskvina, who insisted on a program that included a variety of jumps, emphasizing overall more the artistic composition. Zhuk's pair of Yekaterina Gordeyeva and Sergei Grinkov, who made their debut aged 14 and 16, soon demonstrated their superiority over the Moskvina pair and held the European and world titles between 1986 and 1990, with Olympic gold in 1988 and 1994. Their free program in Lillehammer to Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" was a memorable and truly golden performance. In 1998, Grinkov died of cardiac arrest at the age of 28. Moskvina trained Natalia Mishkutionok and Artur Dmitriev, who quickly ranked among the top skaters and won Olympic gold in Albertville. In Nagano, Dmitriev skated with a new partner, Oxana Kazakova, and won another gold medal. Yelena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze



Yelena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze during their free program at the Winter Olympics 2002 in Salt Lake City's Delta Center. (Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

rose to the top three pairs in the world in the late 1990s, winning silver in Nagano and gold in Salt Lake City, although they had to share it with the Canadian pair Jamie Sale and David Pelletier. After Berezhnaya and Sikharulidze were awarded the gold medal on 12 February 2002, it transpired that the French judge Reine-Marie Le Gagne had been pressured to award higher marks to the Russian pair than they deserved; her vote was discounted and Sale and Pelletier had their silver medal exchanged for gold, while the Russian pair kept their gold medal also. The rising stars, who are apparently being prepared for the 2006 Olympics, are Marina Totmianina and Maxim Marinin, already successful in the European and world championships since 2002 with a program set to Sergei Rachmaninoff's "Paganini."

Many contemporary Russian skaters have Russian coaches but practice in the United States, where facilities are deemed to be better.

Ice dance was introduced into international competition rather late, in 1948. The first world championships were held in 1952, and the first European championships in 1954. Liudmila Pakhomova (1947–1986) and Alexander Gorshkov were the first Soviet Olympic ice dance champions. Their career was hampered by Gorshkov's undergoing heart surgery in 1975. They won Olympic gold in 1976, and under their coach Yelena Chaikovskaya, they took a number of European and world championship medals in the 1970s. Natalia Lini-chuk and Gennadi Karponosov succeeded the pair of Pakhomova and Gorshkov, winning the world championship in 1978 and Olympic gold in 1980. Irina Moiseyeva and Alexander Minenkov were coached by Tamara Tarasova and became world champions in 1975 with their program to "West Side Story." For the first time, a pair used one tune for a miniperformance rather than a mix of tunes in a special arrangement. Moiseyeva and Minenkov gained Olympic silver in 1976 and bronze in 1980. Their experiment was ahead of its time, however, and not rewarded by the judges with the gold medal they deserved for their artistic performance reminiscent of classical ballet. Natalia Bestemianova and Andrei Bukin, also trained by Tarasova, reigned at the European and world championships in 1985–1988 and won Olympic gold in 1988 with their extravagant and challenging style. Their expressive dance inspired the famed French pair, Isabelle and Paul Duchesnay.

Marina Klimova and Sergei Ponomarenko followed as world and European champions between 1989 and 1992 and as

Olympic winners in Albertville. Maya Usova and Alexander Zhulin took the lead for a brief time in 1993–1994. Oxana Grishuk and Yevgeni Platov showed a splendid rock and roll program that won them Olympic gold in 1994 and 1998. Anzhelina Krylova and Oleg Ovsiannikov were world champions in 1998 and 1999. Indeed, the Russian dominance in ice dance climaxed in Albertville, when three Russian pairs stood on the Olympic steps: Klimova and Ponomarenko, Usova and Zhulin, and Grishuk and Platov. At the end of the 1990s, Irina Lobacheva and Ilia Averbukh emerged as top skaters. After the Salt Lake City Olympics, a new generation began to emerge in preparation for the next Olympics. Tatiana Navka and Roman Kostomarov impressed at the European championships in 2004 with a dance set to “The Pink Panther.” Ice dancers tend to perform in competitions for shorter terms, turning to professional careers after five or six years in order to earn money.

Chess

Russia’s most popular game, and indeed sport (the one with most club members), has been chess. International championships had existed since 1851, but most chess masters of the twentieth century were Russian. Indeed, chess has always been popular in Russia, and among the world’s top twenty chess players in history there are eight Russians. Garri Kasparov was the youngest player to become a grandmaster and had at the age of 26 achieved the highest rating. Millions of fans watched his matches, especially those against computers, where he was victorious in 1989 and 1996 but lost to an International Business Machine (IBM) computer in 1997.



Chess player Garri Kasparov ponders his next move during the match held to mark the ninetieth anniversary of Mikhail Botvinnik, the patriarch of the Soviet chess school. The match took place in the Pillar Hall of the Unions’ House, Moscow, in December 2001. (Photo by Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant)

The first Russian chess master was Alexander Alekhin (1892–1946), whose mother took drugs and left the family and whose father was a gambler. Alekhin himself was an alcoholic. From a well-off merchant background, Alekhin suddenly had to work to provide for himself after the Revolution. A law graduate, he found a job as a police investigator. He emigrated to France in 1921, however, claiming that he had lost seven years of chess practice because of World War I and the civil war. The reigning chess champion had been, since 1921, Jose Raul Capablanca; in 1927 Alekhin challenged and defeated him.

Alekhin defended his title three times, in 1929, 1934, and 1937.

After the war Mikhail Botvinnik followed Alekhin on his throne, gaining, and then defending, the world title between 1948 and 1961, losing only to Vasili Smyslov in 1957.

The dominance of Soviet chess players was regained in the 1970s. Anatoli Karpov won the title in 1978 and 1981 (over Viktor Korchnoy); in 1984 and 1985 and then again in 1996 and 1998, Karpov defeated Garri Kasparov. Kasparov, on the other hand, defeated Karpov three times between 1985 and 1987 as well as in 1990 and held the title in 1993 and 1995. The matches between Kasparov and Karpov always attracted a great deal of attention, as they represented chess games between two equally talented and intelligent players. Alexander Khalifman beat Vladimir Akopian in 1999, and Vladimir Kramnik defeated Kasparov in 2000. All these matches were dominated by Russian players, showing the clear dominance of the USSR and Russia in this field. Chess remains a most popular sport in Russia, as indeed does reading.

Pulp Fiction

Books were always a “deficit” (a product in insufficient supply). Although there were thousands of books in the shops and in the libraries, they were not the books people wanted. The Russian classics were more or less readily available, but contemporary literature was not, and foreign literature in translation was a great rarity. Literary journals with the latest prose fiction were handed around privately, just like the samizdat—typewritten illegal dissident literature multiplied by the use of several lay-

ers of carbon paper. Foreign literature, especially adventure and detective stories, was in high demand. Writers such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Jules Verne, and Jack London were on the “wanted” lists as well as the works of Valentin Pikul and Alexander Dumas’s *Queen Margot*. These were bait on the list of books people could purchase if they would hand over books and papers (20 kilograms) for recycling (*makulatura*) to overcome the paper shortage, a system introduced in 1974. Such rare editions could also be purchased at high prices on the black market. Another way of acquiring those much-wanted books was the *beriozka* (birch tree), the hard-currency shop where foreigners could buy all sorts of souvenirs, deficit goods (coffee, detergents, toothpaste, electrical goods), and books. The *beriozka* on Kropotkinskaya Street (now Ostozhenka) specialized in books.

Publishing

Books were, above all, not regarded as a commodity in Soviet Russia. Whereas in the West the discrepancy was cultivated between high art with a mission of civilizing the people and low, popular culture with no value but revenue, the USSR published books not according to demand, but to need—issuing what the party and ideologues thought to be of educational value. Books had a value as a sign of culturedness and were an essential decor of Soviet flats. The official canon of Russian literature is therefore misleading. Although the nineteenth-century classics are read and known by a wide range of Russians, neither their novels nor the official Soviet literature were best sellers. The most widely read authors were Valentin Pikul, whose historical novels had print runs of more

than one million, and Yulian Semyonov, who sold more than 35 million copies of his 60 or so titles. Neither of them features on any higher education syllabus in the West, nor are they widely translated. Thus, the West went along with the official image presented by the Soviet Union as a nation that loved its classics, Russian and Soviet.

The 1960s saw a reading boom: the level of education had increased, and the school curriculum included a great deal of classical literature, so that most Soviet children were widely read and had a taste for literature. According to a survey by Klaus Mehnert undertaken in the 1970s, which was groundbreaking in its time, the most popular writers in the stagnation period were Konstantin Simonov, who had become famous for his war novels in the late 1940s; Georgi Markov, who had written an epic novel set in Siberia; and Yulian Semyonov with his Stirlitz spy thrillers set during the war. It is interesting to note, though, that all three writers had their works turned into films, which reached mass audiences and achieved huge popularity. The league table was followed by the Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov; Viktor Astafiev, who wrote chiefly about the war and labour camps; and Yuri Bondarev and Alexander Chakovsky, both famous for their novels about the war. Many of these novels were published in the series *Novel-Paper* (*Roman-gazeta*), an edition reserved for very popular works, with a print run of two million copies.

In the Gorbachev period, most previously banned novels were published in the literary journals in the first instance, which explains the massive rise in their print runs in those years. Once the flood of material delayed by censorship had ceased, the journals returned to their *preglasnost* lev-

els of print runs. This kept prices for books low while at the same time leaving no margin for profit for the bookshops. Then the book trade experienced a drop in light of the unstable economy and a sharp rise in print costs in 1993. If, until 1993, the number of titles and the print runs had been increasing, then after 1993 the time for cheap books was over. The number of bookshops halved in the 1990s, whereas the need for specialized shops arose after 1993 to cover intellectual demands.

Once it had become possible for new publishing houses to register and start business (1991), the book market changed rapidly. If in the mid-1990s the majority of bookshops were still run along the lines of books on display behind a counter and out of reach, where the book had to be paid for at a till before it could be collected with the receipt, then by the end of the 1990s most bookshops, such as *Moskva*, *Dom Knigi*, and *Biblio Globus* had changed to self-service systems with books on open display and payment made to a cashier. By 1994, some 7,000 publishers had registered, although copies went down from 1,553 billion in 1990 to 422 million in 1996. During this period, as in the present, publishers remained largely based in Moscow and a few in Petersburg. Books acquired hardcover and paperback editions, and at last also a dust jacket. By 1997, seven main publishers remained. In 1990 the Russian Association of Bookpublishers (*ASKI*, *Assotsiatsiia knigoizdatelei Rossii*) was set up.

Moreover, around the same time books were in great demand: first and foremost children's books, followed by reference books and literature. In children's literature the publishing house *Rosmen*, founded in 1992, took the lead, producing beautifully illustrated books largely by Russian, but also



The writer Boris Akunin (left) and his colleague Vladimir Sorokin (right) in conversation before the concert of the Finnish group Salvation Army Band in Kinotsentr, Moscow, 2003. (Photo by Dmitry Lebedev/Kommersant)

by foreign, authors. Rosmen also specializes in educational literature.

Publishers of the leading detective fiction writers Alexandra Marinina, Boris Akunin, Daria Dontsova, and Polina Dashkova soon discovered the paperback as a worthwhile addition to the hardback. Detective and crime fiction is published by Eksmo Press, a huge publishing house established in 1993 that produces over 55 million books and 50,000 titles per year, including reference works and dictionaries. Boris Akunin publishes his novels exclusively with the publishing house Zakharov. Olim Press and Astrel also publish popular

crime novels; so does Vagrius, which specializes, however, in prose and memoirs. Olma Press prints encyclopedias, special editions, children's literature, and some crime fiction. The publishing houses Ad Marginem (founded in 1991 by the Institute of Philosophy) and OGI (Obedinennye gumanitarnye izdatel'stva; United Humanities Publishers) publish experimental literature, literary criticism, and art. OGI is a unique setup launched in the late 1990s, where affordable restaurants and clubs (attracting mostly students and intellectuals) were combined with bookshops. Ad Marginem opened its private shop in 1993,

complementing the specialized shops of 19 October and Eidos.

Although Eksmo is clearly the largest publishing house, in terms of genre, there are differences. Detective fiction leads clearly with Dontsova, Tatiana Poliakova, Marinina, and Akunin listed as best sellers for 2003. Eksmo has 60 percent of the market share in the print run, followed by AST (short form of Astrel') with 10 percent and Olma Press with 8 percent. Between 2001 and 2003, the print run for detective stories rose from 15,000 to 19,000 while prices went up from 15 to 30 rubles. Most detective fiction is published in series. In fantasy there are about 1,000 titles listed with average print runs of 10,000; here the market is dominated by AST (30 percent) and Eksmo (40 percent). There are some 1,500 to 2,000 titles in this section, with prices rising from 50 to 80 rubles and print runs remaining stable at 8,000. Eksmo leads this sector (17 percent) marginally, before Olma Press (12 percent) and AST (9 percent). Overall, the rating for publishers lists Eksmo, AST, and Olma at the top, followed by Rosmen among the top ten and Akunin's publishing house, Zakharov, in 32nd place (data are for 2003).

The term *best seller* is tricky in the context of the Russian market, where information on film budgets or publication is a well-guarded business secret. Information on the exact print runs is hard to come by, as most publishers reprint a work several times according to demand, in low print runs at a time. As Russia loves ratings and rankings of all sorts, one way to assess popularity is to study the sales rates of bookshops. Here, Pelevin's *Generation P* was a clear hit. The works of Dontsova, Dashkova, Marinina, Akunin, Daniil Koretsky, and Tatiana Ustinova and other crime

fiction are clear best sellers. Television and film stimulate the demand for books. Dostoevsky's *Idiot* ended up in the best seller lists after the television serial by Vladimir Bortko had been broadcast in 2003, and Marinina's novels were reprinted after the television serial *Kamenskaya* had begun.

As far as foreign authors are concerned, the times of Dumas and Jack London have long passed. Paul Coelho, Haruki Murakami, Milorad Pavic, and Patrick Süskind lead on the Russian market just as they do on the European market. The book market responds best, it seems, to the demand of the reading public, yet it is dominated by "pulp" fiction and trash novels.

Best Sellers

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the State Prize, associated with political correctness and deemed ideological, rather than merit-based, lost in prestige. Especially in the literary world the need for a prize was felt, and in 1992 the Booker Prize was awarded in Russia, administered by a joint Russian and British team, with an international jury member involved and advice taken from literature scholars outside Russia. The first Booker Prize went to the previously unknown writer Mark Kharitonov for his novel *Lines of Fate, or Milashevich's Trunk*. Each year the Booker was surrounded by secrecy, scandals, and great expectations: was the jury objective, and who was on the short list? In subsequent years the award went to rather established writers, such as Vladimir Makanin, Bulat Okudzhava, and Georgi Vladimov, until in 1996 Andrei Sergeev won the award for *Stamp Album*, which was a memoir in the guise of fiction and created some queries about the genre. In 1999 Smirnoff took on the sponsorship, which had run out from

the UK, but only for two years; then Smirnoff was forced to pull out of business in Russia (a dispute over the right to the label Smirnoff/Smirnov). Since then the foundation Open Russia (run by Yukos) administers the Booker award, without sponsorship. In 2001, Liudmila Ulitskaya won the long-deserved award for *Kukotsky's Case*. A scandal occurred in 2003 when a non-Russian-born writer was awarded the Booker: Ruben David Gonzales Gallego for *White on Black* (Beloe na chernom). The winner of the Booker Prize certainly gets media attention and sales are boosted, but Russian readers more often go by the bookshop's choice of the best seller of the week or the month in their choice of titles.

The Anti-Booker Prize was established by the *Nezavisimaya gazeta* in 1995 and was awarded in three categories (poetry, prose, and drama) until Boris Berezovsky (shareholder in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*) was forced out of business in 2000. The award was a counterattack on the Booker, and its value exceeded the Booker by one dollar. The award winners included more popular authors, such as Dmitri Bakin, Andrei Volos, and Boris Akunin. In poetry the award honored the best-known poets of the 1990s, Sergei Gandlevsky, Timur Kibirov, Mikhail Amelin, and Bakhyt Kenzheyev. In drama, the award was important for the emergence of new young writers: Ivan Saveliev, Oleg Bogayev, Maxim Kurochkin, Yevgeni Grishkovets, Vasili Sigarev. The last three playwrights subsequently made a career in national and international theater.

High or Low: Postmodernist Best Sellers A recent and strange phenomenon is the best seller status attributed by major Moscow and Petersburg bookstores to

some authors of "highbrow" literature, in particular to those associated with postmodernism. Viktor Pelevin and Vladimir Sorokin are two tremendously popular authors, widely translated into a variety of European languages, whose works rank among the most popular in Russia. After Pelevin had written several novels and short stories, read widely but largely among educated readers, his novel *Generation P* (1999) turned into a best seller. Pelevin is a postmodernist writer but achieved massive popularity through using the parodic form with a popular twist. While incorporating nonliterary historical or cultural parody, he mocked manifestations of popular and consumer culture. The title alluded to Douglas Coupland's *Generation X*, about yuppie culture in the United States. Here the title *Generation P* lends itself to a number of interpretations (P for Pelevin), but the most pertinent of them is the reference to Pepsi Cola (also on the cover of the original edition). During the Brezhnev era, a license for Pepsi was acquired, so that the soft drink could be manufactured in the Soviet Union. The "generation that chooses Pepsi" (*pokolenie, kotoroe vybiraet Pepsi*) was a common phrase used to describe the generation of those who exchanged (Soviet) high culture for commercial Western values and manifestations of culture, such as jazz music and jeans. Effectively, Pelevin's novel dealt with the commercialization of Russia in the 1990s. The cover showed Che Guevara wearing a cap that advertises Nike and Adidas, set against an American flag that is divided in the middle to foreground an advertisement for Pepsi on the one side and Coca Cola on the other. The dominance of advertising is central to the novel. Since the collapse of the Soviet empire, adver-

tisements have merely replaced the empty political and ideological slogans, a theme frequently alluded to in sots-art works such as in the collage of McDonalds with Lenin's portrait above the slogan "McLenin's: Next Block" by Alexander Kosolapov (1990). In *Generation P* the protagonist, Tatarsky, is a poet who graduated from the literary institute and, as so many literati, is without work after perestroika. He is hired as a copywriter for advertising spots, including the cigarette label Parliament. Pelevin mocked the media language and exposed it to mockery and *styob*. He also parodied the new phenomenon of PR and image making, leaving politicians as mere reflections (or simulacra) of themselves. Ultimately, Tatarsky realizes that the entire world around him consists merely of mirrors, reflections, and simulacra and that even President Yeltsin is only an animated and simulated figure created in a film studio that Tatarsky visits. Although very much a product of an art that parodies Socialist Realism and Soviet culture (sots-art), Pelevin's novel contained different layers of plot and could be read in different ways (political parody, anecdotal discussion of advertising, critique of commercialization), so that it appealed to different groups and generations of readers.

A similar phenomenon happened with Vladimir Sorokin: a conceptualist who dealt in his early novels and plays with the deconstruction of language, his novels *Blue Lard* (Goluboe salo, 1999) and *Ice* (Led, 2002) were best sellers, although both were published by the relatively small publishing company Ad Marginem, with whom Sorokin had worked earlier. Sorokin was widely read by scholars of postmodernism, thus appealing to an elitist readership with his cynical and mocking com-

ments on Soviet culture and language. Yet he was also one of the few Russian writers who were popular in Germany and France. In his later novels, Sorokin combined utopian and science-fiction elements with his notion of the destructive effect of the totalitarian past on the individual. In *Blue Lard* he explored the theme of an experiment where, through genetic manipulation, text is produced from the cells of great writers, which is weighted by the side product of this creation: lard. Although remaining within the convention of an epistolary novel, Sorokin invented an entire range of words that are explained (or rather unexplained) in a glossary, making clear once more how useless language is as a means of communication.

Such writers as Sorokin and Pelevin, and perhaps also the postmodernist writer Liudmila Ulitskaya, are exceptions, however, in the contemporary book market in Russia. On the whole the demand has risen for sentimental novels, adventure, and fantasy, all those genres that had been in short supply in the Soviet era.

In the first half of the 1990s most works in these genres were translated, but the second half of the 1990s saw a rise in homegrown thrillers and crime fiction, which took a lead in the market. This was followed by love stories and historical novels as well as fantasy. In 1996, crime fiction contributed 38 percent of books published.

The move to the homegrown detective story after 1995 was partly due to large license fees but also because the reality of Russia was so different from that of Western Europe, and crime was taking up the minds of so many ordinary citizens in a period of ruthless Mafia killings, violent street crime, and open media coverage of atrocious criminal offences committed in

the country, such as those of the serial killer Andrei Chekatylo, who had sexually abused, mutilated, and killed more than 50 children. Indeed, crime figures were on the rise in Russia, where 750,000 crimes committed in the USSR in 1965 rose to almost 3 million in 1990.

Love novels have not found a large resonance among Russian writers and are published in their majority as translated works. Another genre that has seen excessive growth in the Russian book market is children's books, particularly J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, but also Harry Potter's parodic counterparts of Russian creation, Dmitri Yemets's *Tanya Grotter* and Igor Mytko's *Porri Gatter*.

Detective Stories

When looking at American spy thrillers and detective novels set in the Soviet Union, the amount of incorrect detail is striking. This is one of the reasons why the spy thriller and detective story were far more difficult to import than, say, the sentimental romance. The *detektiv*, the detective story, offered an idealized view of the criminal investigator, underscoring the trustworthiness of the system. Later in the 1990s and into the new millennium, the action thriller (*boevik*) became equally prominent. In a climate of growing inefficiency and the inability of the police to catch the criminals (especially the Mafiosi), the system was no longer seen to be superior, but society was "saved" by the superman-cum-hero figure, often an ex-policeman, who takes the law into his own hands (an example is Danil Koretsky's *Anti-Killer*).

Moreover, it could be argued that detective fiction had a long-standing tradition in Russian literature, if Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* is considered as a detec-

tive story. Indeed, Raskolnikov commits a crime and receives punishment. In that classical novel of the nineteenth century, Dostoevsky also laid the foundation for the composition of the detective story: the reader knows from the start who committed the crime but explores the reason for the crime in the character's psychology and the investigator's strategy to make the criminal confess. Indeed, confession plays a particularly important role not only in Russian crime fiction but also in the judicial system.

After the Revolution, the detective story (à la Pinkerton) was decried as a bourgeois phenomenon, and it was decreed that Soviet literature needed "Red Pinkertons," in an original new Soviet variant of the detective genre. The only such novel, however, was written by Marietta Shaganian and turned into a film, *Miss Mend* (1925); both the novel and the film were considered unsuccessful. During the Stalin years, detective fiction ceased completely, and Conan Doyle was removed from all Soviet libraries. The genre of detective fiction upholds social order but singles out deviance, and such an approach was deemed inappropriate for Soviet fiction, which ought to attribute crime to a social cause. Thus, Raskolnikov's crime was not condemned outright in Soviet interpretations of the classic (Raskolnikov kills an old pawnbroker and her sister to assert his own self and advance to the class of a Nietzschean superman, a concept seen by the writer as incompatible with orthodox faith that assumes meekness and submissiveness as man's superior traits of character). Schoolchildren who studied the novel on the syllabus were led to interpret Raskolnikov as a man who wanted social justice (kill the pawnbroker as a bourgeois-capitalist ele-

ment) and who redistributed the loot. One pupil went as far as commenting in a school essay: "Raskolnikov was right to kill the old hag; a shame he got caught."

In the postwar period, detective stories were largely written in the guise of adventure stories for children. In the 1960s, Yulian Semyonov created his Soviet spy Maxim Isayev, who, under the name of Max Otto von Stirlitz, takes a key role in Hitler's control center in Berlin during World War II. The brothers Arkadi and Grigori Vainer created the police investigator Znamensky. Agatha Christie novels were widely translated and read between 1966 and 1970, with over 15 works appearing in literary journals. It was not until the émigré writers Edward Topol and Friedrich Neznansky published (abroad) their spy thrillers *Red Square* (1984), *Deadly Games* (1985), *Red Gas* (1987), and *Red Snow* (1988), however, that the way was paved for a new generation of detective writers to emerge, who would explore politically motivated crime. At the same time established writers such as Valentin Rasputin, Chingiz Aitmatov, and Viktor Astafiev exposed crimes of the past in their perestroika novels. Finally, by the mid-1990s, Russian detective series were launched by major publishing houses such as Eksmo and AST.

Indeed, there was not much scope for crime in Soviet fiction, as criminal offenses occurred largely within a family, as there were not the property issues and class differences that explain a large proportion of crime in capitalist societies. The criminal code changed only in 1997. The Russian legal system distinguishes between intentional murder and murder "committed in a heightened emotional state" to differentiate manslaughter from murder. It dwells on the confession of the criminal, thus reduc-

ing the relevance of evidence for the investigation and shifting the focus onto the psychological motivation for the crime. A case can only be brought before the prosecutor if the criminal has confessed and the case is watertight. Therefore, the genre of the courtroom drama is not pertinent to the realities of the Russian legal system and to Russian crime fiction and film.

In the early days of Russian detective fiction, the works were largely written by male writers. They test the masculinity of their protagonist in a situation where social values have collapsed. With the collapse of all values in the New Russia in the mid-1990s, the detective novel became a testing ground for the moral value system and raised questions about the borderline between good and bad and about the acceptability of certain forms of behavior. Crime fiction delineated the current moral and social values, pointed at the violation of such values and their transgression, thus creating a framework for the new society and the old (Soviet) values within it. Therefore in most novels the issue is not about who commits the crime but why it is committed and how the culprit is caught. Detective fiction thereby stresses the need for the individual to subordinate himself to the interests of state and society in order to avoid a "lawless" society. Indeed, one of the crucial areas of the detective novel is to explain why a certain form of behavior was considered "wrong" in the Soviet era and "right" in the New Russia: what the Soviet system condemned as speculation (selling things and being creative) became entrepreneurship; what Soviet society considered as greed (accumulating personal property) turned to ambition; and whereas the Soviet man would be told to bear in mind the benefits for society, capitalist

Russia seems to focus exclusively on the benefit for the individual. At the same time, the Soviet values were fraudulent: it was impossible in the Soviet Union to satisfy the demands of the state (and fulfill the plan) without cutting corners, without procuring spare parts in an illegal way on the black market and from people who sidelined state property (the same spare parts) to make money. Thus, while fulfilling state demand, people undermined the system or flatly robbed the state. This explains why still today, in the New Russia, there is some hostility to property and material possession, which occasionally go hand in hand with villainy (the rich man is the murderer or a criminal).

Another major difference between Russian crime fiction and the Western detective novel is the relative absence of sex. Indeed, neither Soviet nor Russian law has a clause that makes prostitution illegal. Only coercion and sex with minors are described as “crime.”

Supermen Russian culture has a tradition of the “good criminal” redistributing the goods from the rich to the poor. The legendary characters Emelyan Pugachev and Stepan Razin are examples of this tradition that led eventually to the hero of the *boevik* (action thriller): the male war veteran who takes the law into his own hands. The supermen are often veterans of the Afghan or Chechen wars, loners without family, orphans. They are decisive, show no weakness, and neither smoke nor drink. Viktor Dotsenko created such a figure with his protagonist Saveli Govorkov, a returnee of the Afghan war, who fights the Mafia in the manner of a superhero or Rambo. His character Beshenyi (rabid) in *Rabid Love* (Beshenaia liubov’) takes money from the

Chechen leader Dudayev in order to give it to the Russian government, represented by the then prime minister Chernomyrdin. The Russian superhero ensures that the state is treated fairly. He is loyal, but his methods do not correspond to the official law, which clearly fails in the face of social and political injustice and chaos. Koretsky’s protagonists often specialize in the martial arts and act in self-defense while establishing order where the state fails to do this.

Many writers of detective novels are former policemen and investigators. Alexander Kivinov, the author of the series *Cops* (Menty), turned into a television serial under the title *Streets of Broken Lights* (Ulitsy razbitykh fonarei), is a former investigator of the Petersburg police. His crime squad displays some sympathy for the criminals, and the police officer get away with peccadilloes. A criminal is allowed to have sex in the office before being sent to prison; another has a blind eye turned on him when he goes into withdrawal, and the police officers leave the room so that he can inject himself. There is also a sense of disillusionment with the job: the crime squad investigators resort to a supermarket to arrest some petty thieves so that the statistics of “crimes solved” will look good. At the same time they could be doing more important jobs that would, however, not have such an immediate result. The police officers are essentially kind, but they have human flaws and break the law. Often they have to cut corners in order to catch criminals and combat the chronically underfunded police apparatus. Kivinov’s position on the side of the police force is quite obvious in his works. Andrei Konstantinov is also a former police officer, but he dealt with organized crime in