

What role did sport play during the cold war? assignment

[History](#)



At first glance, sports being played during the Cold War were to be seen as entertainment and “ as a combination of religious practice and great fun” (Margo, 2) as it is errantly, but to others during 1960 and 1989, it became “ a weapon of international affairs” (Hill) especially between massive countries such as the Soviet Union and the United States. Sport sometimes helped ease violent tensions (“ American Society & Culture in the Cold War.) especially between major countries such as the Soviets and the United States during the Cold War, but at the same time, it played a role as “ particularly prominent venues for rivalry’ (“ American Society & Culture in the Cold War”), “ a propaganda machine” (Margo, 4), and the participation of it was used as an excuse to try to make the Soviet Union remove their troops from Afghanistan (Margo, 9).

Stalin believed that his country would be viewed as the strongest country if his athletes were the strongest as well, as “ in the arms race it was thought that the one with the biggest, strongest weapons would be viewed as the best country with the best social system” (Margo, 4). However, the Soviet Union’s athletes were unfit, so they needed lots of training in order to be the strongest, as Stalin wanted the country to be viewed as (Margo, 4).

Nathan Kinshasa, one of Soviet’s representing gymnasts for the 1968 Olympics then said that “ sport was considered the prestige of the government, if sport was strong, government was strong” (“ Interview with competing in the Olympics such as Nathan, “ knew only a life of education and sport” (Margo, 5), as they were forced to train by doing “ exercises in the morning, then one four-hour session until four o’clock, then the second four-hour session until eight o’clock” (“ Interview with Nathan Kinshasa”).
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The athletic programs of the Soviet Union were created to serve the state: athletes represented their nations and their nation's beliefs. They had to perform well to show the world that capitalism was dying. " (Margo, 5). The athletic programs of the Soviet Union caused children to be tired and to be sick of their sport, and also caused Nathan to " want to give it [her sport] up" (" Interview with Nathan Kinshasa").

Although the Olympic Games during 1960 and 1980 seemed as if it was full of rivalry and violent tension for the people in the Soviet Union, it was " Just what the people of the United States needed to uplift their spirits", when they won the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid for hockey. For the United States' team, a team of unpractical college athletes was formed to play in that year's Olympics, while the Soviet Team had a team that's been together thorough four years of training, " practicing over and over for hours for the two week tournament that would come only every four years" (Margo, 9).

Although the United States needed this victory as they went through an oil crisis and had some of the country people held as hostages in Iran, this match was seen as a winning match for the Soviet Union. However, it was the opposite from what Stalin expected it to be. Stalin wanted " the capitalist's beating the Communists in one of their favorite games [hockey]" (Margo, 9), but " the US boys beat the Soviet men in an upset" and " went on to the final round and beat Finland for the gold medal" (Margo, 9).

The Soviet Union invaded into Afghanistan in late 1979, since Hafizullah Amin, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan's leader, had secret meetings with US diplomats (" Timeline: Soviet War in Afghanistan"). President Jimmy

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Carter cautioned that the US wouldn't participate in the 1980 Moscow Olympics if the Soviets did not withdraw their troops from Afghanistan (Margo, 9). Therefore, in the 1980 Moscow Olympics, 60 nations including the US didn't enter, and only 81 nations participated, while in 1972, there were 122 nations (Margo, 9). However, the Soviet Union did not withdraw from Afghanistan till May 15, 1988.

If Stalin didn't see the Olympic Games as a political tool to show the country strength through his athletes, the Olympics now wouldn't have been competitive as it is today. When Stalin's government put lots of money and effort in their athletic program, it caused the athletes to have intense rivalry between themselves, which is mainly why so many people currently enjoy watching the Olympics. Without Stalin, the Cold War and the tension created by different countries through their athletes, the Olympics may not have been as entertaining to watch.

The role that sport played during the Cold War between 1960 and 1989 was that it was a location where different countries and well-trained athletes competed with each other in various sports, representing their country strength.