

**“All China Has Muscles Now, And We Know How To Use Them’:  
Nationalist and Communist Sporting Cultures During Wartime, 1937-45”<sup>1</sup>**

**Andrew Morris  
Department of History  
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo**

On 9 June 1940, dozens of patriotic Chongqing youth gathered at the bottom of a small mountain in the Nan’an district of the city. At the sound of a whistle, they burst into a mass sprint up the hillside. Any other time, observers would have thought this an odd approach to the popular recreation of mountain climbing. But this day was different, as anyone in the vicinity knew. These youth were here for the Capture-the-Traitor Mountain Climbing Competition (*Pashan zhua Hanjian jingsai*), a special event sponsored by the Nan’an District Social Services Department. The sprint up the hill must have been a very clear mixture of elation and solemnity, athletic strain and nationalistic relief. Participants’ minds were not clouded by the typical desire to win a trophy, medal, pennant, or athletic shoes, the typical prizes given to athletic standouts during the Republican era. Here the goal was much more personal, if at the same time hopelessly abstract; at the top of the mountain stood life-size paper effigies of the ten most villainous and hated of Chinese pro-Japan Nanjing collaborators – Wang Jingwei, Chen Gongbo, and the rest of their foul traitorous lot. The lucky first-place finisher wasted no time in seizing the Wang model, enacting in a split second the capture that so many millions had been taught to dream of. The second-place finisher, just steps behind, snatched Chen’s likeness, followed by eight more patriotic speedsters who helped complete this symbolic coup. The several dozen competitors who finished the race

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later posed for a group photograph, with the ten successful traitor-busters lined up in front holding their paper quarry.<sup>2</sup>

The realm of sport and physical culture in wartime China - Nationalist, Communist and otherwise - served as a rich site for nationalistic and political propaganda. By the time of total war's outbreak in 1937, Chinese people had some four decades' experience cultivating and participating in modern sport and physical culture. This important social and cultural realm known as *tiyu* (literally "body-cultivation") was vital to notions of China's very survival, and to the imagination and construction of a modern China since the last years of the Qing Dynasty. It was thus a natural and immediate site for the extension of wartime propaganda.

While all of the chief participants in World War II made propaganda use of organized sports and physical culture, the Chinese model actually lay closer to those of the Axis powers than to its Allies. In bourgeois polities like the US and the UK, the discourse over wartime sport revolved around benign-sounding notions of its "appropriateness" and its use as a morale-booster. In England, sports like soccer were seen as a healthy form of recreation that could serve as "a lubricant ... [for] the war machine,"<sup>3</sup> while the all-American game of baseball was said to "assist vitally in the war effort" by improving wartime morale.<sup>4</sup> Although popular sociology often describes sport as a ready-made nationalistic stand-in for war – as in, for example, the old George

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<sup>2</sup> Chongqing shi tiyu yundong weiyuanhui and Chongqing shizhi zongbianshi, eds., *Kangzhan shiqi peidu tiyu shiliao* [Historical materials from wartime physical culture in the provisional capital] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1988), photo before p. 1; Film on Chongqing physical culture highlights of 1940 (title unavailable).

<sup>3</sup> Norman Baker, "A More Even Playing Field? Sport During and After the War," in Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, eds., *'Millions Like Us?': British Culture in the Second World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), pp. 125-135.

<sup>4</sup> Steve Bullock, "Playing for Their Nation: The American Military and Baseball During World War II," *Journal of Sport History* 27.1 (Spring 2000), pp. 67-79; Richard Goldstein, *Spartan Seasons: How Baseball Survived the Second World War* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1980).

However, Robert S. Brown challenges this benign "morale-boosting" thesis. He points out the importance of wartime baseball as a site for the effective dissemination of explicit pro-war propaganda, to crowds told that they merely were being "entertained." "Sport and Social Change: Baseball as Propaganda," in Susan J. Drucker and Gary Gumpert, eds., *Take Me Out to the Ballgame: Communicating Baseball* (Hampton Press, forthcoming 2002).

Carlin bit “Baseball - Football”<sup>5</sup> – the coming of war did not activate any hidden militaristic tendencies in these games.

In China, under both the Nationalist and Communist regimes, physical culture (*tiyu*) was understood as having more immediate corporeal and disciplinary uses to a nation at war. Military preparedness, mass participation, political commitment, and a preoccupation with the dynamic and aggressive disciplined body – common elements of physical culture in fascist Japan, Germany and Italy<sup>6</sup> – are the values that fit much more closely the framework of Chinese *tiyu* in wartime Chongqing and Yan’an. Since modern Chinese *tiyu* had always been defined as crucial to national fitness and a national future, it makes sense that in China there would be a more literal edge to this realm – that Chinese physical culture would be much more about the cultivation of a national body than about the “sport,” fun and entertainment associated with its Anglo-American cousins.

In this paper, I will attempt to explain the evolution of modern Chinese physical culture under the Nationalist and Communist regimes during China’s Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, specifically with respect to its use as a mode of political and national propaganda. Chang-tai Hung has written on the propaganda uses of wartime “popular culture” in China. Defining this realm as including spoken dramas, cartoons and newspapers, Hung maintains that “while the Nationalists used popular culture largely as a patriotic tool, the Communists refashioned it into a new ‘people’s culture.’”<sup>7</sup> I suggest that wartime Chinese *tiyu* was also an important form worthy of inclusion in an enlarged category of “popular culture,” while at the same time challenging the

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<sup>5</sup> George Carlin, *An Evening With Wally Lando* (WEA/Atlantic recording, 1975).

<sup>6</sup> Ikuo Abe, Yasuharu Kiyohara and Ken Nakajima, “Fascism, Sport and Society in Japan,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 9.1 (April 1992), pp. 13-22; John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), pp. 83-109, 162-169; Sir Walter Citrine, *Under the Heel of Hitler: The Dictatorship Over Sport In Nazi Germany* (London: Trades Union Congress General Council, 1936), pp. 3-8; Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 164-179.

<sup>7</sup> Chang-tai Hung, *War and Popular Culture: Resistance in Modern China, 1937-1945* (Berkeley: University of

characterization (shared by Hung and many other historians for five decades now) of typically and essentially reactionary Nationalist and revolutionary Communist forms.

Hung's translation of the Chinese word for propaganda (*xuanchuan*), "to inform and to propagate,"<sup>8</sup> hints at how it made perfect sense to invest physical culture with political and nationalistic wartime messages. The chance for the average Chinese citizen to live, perform, gesture, physically enact – not just read or hear – these national forms is what made *tiyu* such a dynamic space for teaching and learning about this war. Standard concerns about print and performance modes of popular culture – that these were vulgar, standardized, faceless products – could be bypassed merely by citing the dire need for the national fitness that could only be brought by modern sport, an assumption that was simply commonsensical by the 1930s in China.

Here I will explain the role and evolution of physical culture in the Nationalist realm, both during the 1937-39 migration to the southwest, and then during the years of Guomindang rule from Chongqing. Specifically, I focus on the Nationalist wartime turn from explicitly commercialized and militarized brands of physical culture to "mass *tiyu*," a development especially important given our decades-long understanding of the Chongqing regime as an utter failure that "never [had] a mass following."<sup>9</sup> I then turn north to the field of "red *tiyu*" as developed by the Chinese Communist Party in its southern bases and transported to Yan'an. Here, following recent scholarship on the continuities between Nationalist and Communist culture and institutions,<sup>10</sup> I describe how this "red *tiyu*" – while an important avenue of CCP propaganda –

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California Press, 1994), pp. 4, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Hung, *War and Popular Culture*, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Hsi-sheng Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War: Military Defeats and Political Collapse, 1937-45* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1982), p. 238.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph W. Esherick, "Ten Theses on the Chinese Revolution," *Modern China* 21.1 (January 1995), pp. 47-49.

was much more a continuation of dominant Nationalist forms than any sort of revolutionary innovation.

The different modern physical culture movements active in China during the war – in Chongqing and Yan’an, as well as in Manchuria and eastern China under Japanese “puppet” regimes – traced back to, and never departed radically from, the same established traditions of physical culture in a modern China. Those looking for more proof of the CCP’s revolutionary deeds in North China would be disappointed by the lack of dramatic struggle between, or contesting of, *tiyu* forms under these different regimes. Specific material conditions surely produced different understandings of what exactly modern physical culture meant in these areas. Some wartime adjustments were made to the dominant *tiyu* structures by the Nationalists and the Communists, adjustments that eventually became part of the Cold War *tiyu* models constructed in the PRC and Taiwan. Yet the established modern *tiyu* structure was so logical and powerful in China by the 1930s that few could afford to try to change it in drastic ways.

### ***Tiyu in the Nationalist Territories, 1937-1945***

(“Get up, get up!” every morning a comrade would blow his whistle and shout.)

The sky  
In April  
Is blue;  
The park  
In the north  
Is blue;

On a blue morning, in a blue world, amidst a blue war,  
In the morning  
We do calisthenics.

- T’ien Chien, “In the Morning We Do Calisthenics” (1937?)<sup>11</sup>

“You have grown so handsome, Ting-Yu, and your muscles are hard like young

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<sup>11</sup> Julia C. Lin, *Modern Chinese Poetry: An Introduction* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), pp. 192-193.

mountains.”

He kissed her, and then he said, “All China has muscles now, and we know how to use them.”

- from *Westward to Chungking* (1944)<sup>12</sup>

When full-scale war erupted in July 1937, intensive planning was under way for a majestic Seventh National Games, scheduled to begin on 10 October 1937 in Nanjing’s Central Stadium in the sacred Purple Mountains. This meet – a biannual 11-day orgy of giddy nationalist excess – was to be a valuable chance for the Guomindang state *tiyu* bureaucracy to finally unite the “mass sports” (*minzhong tiyu*), “militarized sports” (*junshi tiyu*), and elite-level competitive sports modes of physical culture over which intellectuals, educators, and party agents had battled during the 1930s.

The tragedies of war did not stop the pursuit of the physical culture enterprise in Nationalist China, however. Agents of the *tiyu* project, retreating west and finally settling in the provisional capital of Chongqing, continued and intensified the Nationalist physical culture programs to reach and teach all China’s citizens through the powerful motions and disciplines of *tiyu*. For participants in Nationalist areas of China, *tiyu* became an important way of living and creating the “reality” of war against the hated Japanese. The popular portrayal of the “decay” or “rot” of the Guomindang during these years in Chongqing notwithstanding, the wartime *tiyu* enterprise in fact further developed Nanjing Decade trends of mass and militarized physical culture that could later be found in the *tiyu* of the early People’s Republic.

### The Wartime Educational Migration and *Tiyu* on the Run

Some of the most romantic accounts of wartime physical culture come from the grueling long-distance treks made by entire Chinese universities retreating to the interior. By 1939, two

years after hostilities began, 34 of China's 108 institutions of higher learning had been uprooted and moved to the inland provinces of Hunan, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, Shaanxi and Gansu.<sup>13</sup> These mobile institutions included many physical education schools and departments whose members were able to bring their science to the inland and southwest communities that hosted their efforts.

One such institution was Zhejiang University of Hangzhou. In the fall of 1936, P.E. Department Chairman Shu Hong refereed the Olympic basketball championship game in Berlin, winning great glory for China and cementing Zhejiang U.'s reputation as a giant in the Chinese sports world. After the outbreak of war the next summer, however, the elite institution was forced to head southwest, to Jiande in western Zhejiang and then to Ji'an and Taihe in central Jiangxi.<sup>14</sup> Yet Shu, and doubtless many others like him, treated this retreat as another part of the lessons to be learned from a serious and disciplined body-cultivation. Shu's emphasis on sportsmanship led to a new spirit of responsibility that some of the school's athletes now remember as unique to the wartime period. On basketball teams coached by Shu during the war, in the case of a bad pass the passer would apologize, "My fault," while his teammate would protest, "No, I was in the wrong position." That this quickly did not become incredibly annoying is testament to how crucial this realm of sport was to the comforting recreation of a national community that could withstand the terror of war. Not all wartime athletes shared this new civic pride that the sporting realm

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<sup>12</sup> Helena Kuo (Guo Jingqiu), *Westward to Chungking* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1944), p. 239.

<sup>13</sup> Hubert Freyn, *Chinese Education In the War* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, Limited, 1940; Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1974 reprint), p. 11.

By the end of the war 52 institutions had made this move. Of these 108 institutions, the only one not forced to move or close (or both) was the Xinjiang College. Ou Tsuin-chen (Wu Junsheng), "Education in Wartime China," in Paul K. T. Sih (Xue Guangqian), ed., *Nationalist China During the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* (Hicksville, NY: Exposition Press, 1977), p. 99.

<sup>14</sup> Yu Chengzao, Zhao Shanxing and Peng Shixun, "Huainian Tiyu zhuren Shu Hong laoshi" [Remembering our Physical Education Director Mr. Shu Hong], in Guizhou sheng Zunyi diqu difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, eds., *Zhejiang daxue zai Zunyi* [Zhejiang University in Zunyi] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 1990), pp. 341-347.

represented. Zhejiang U. player Yu Chengcao was punched in the face by an Infantry University basketball player frustrated at not being able to defend Yu well during the 1940 Zunyi Youth Basketball Tourney.<sup>15</sup> But incidents like these, which reflect more vividly the frustrations and conflicts of the day, are still remembered as isolated instances, aberrations from a special wartime cooperative spirit.

In 1937, the Central Martial Arts and Physical Education School was forced to relocate from Nanjing to Changsha. Several of the school's basketball and martial arts standouts were lucky enough to go on a tour of Southeast Asia in affiliation with the Chinese Red Cross, participating in exhibitions in Hong Kong, Manila, Cebu, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Penang to raise money for war refugees.<sup>16</sup> Those left behind, like educators and students of all China's schools on the move, endured hunger and dreary accommodations as they attempted to keep their spirits up and maintain a proper sporting ethic. In 1938, the school moved to Guilin, and took over a city park on Liqun Road. The meager facilities there, consisting of just one basketball court, forced the school's instructors now to focus exclusively on martial arts and basketball during the six months they were in Guilin. The school started a new basketball fever in Guilin, playing over one hundred games against local clubs like the Skeletons, the Crowdpleasers and the September Eighteenthers, whose names all reflected different aspects of the wartime experience. Martial arts expositions featuring famed performers from Wuhan, Guangzhou and Kunming also excited Guilin crowds. Thus, modern sports as well as traditional Chinese

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<sup>15</sup> Yu, Zhao and Peng, "Huainian Tiyu zhuren," pp. 345-348.

<sup>16</sup> Zhang Changjiang, "'Guoti' jianxiao shimo" [The story of the establishment of the Central Martial Arts and Physical Education School], *Tianjin tiyu shiliao* 6 (December 1985), p. 21.



entertainments served as public endeavors that could bring hope inspiration in the form of these exhibitions of Chinese teamwork, competitive drive, and martial skill.<sup>17</sup>

One significance of these *tiyu* activities is seen in the mechanisms at work between more urbane and *tiyu*-experienced newcomers and the local “provincials” or “natives.” This migration of educational elites to southwest cities like Zunyi, Guilin, Kunming and Chongqing resulted in these populations being imagined and included into a national community in ways they never had been before. No longer unknown people of the exotic periphery, the residents of these cities were discovered by these elites to be individuals with the capacity to discipline themselves as healthy citizens just as their coastal compatriots had done for decades now.<sup>18</sup> The very extension of this modern physical culture thus constituted a victory for the national effort that *tiyu* was supposed to represent in the Chinese Republic.

The war brought Ma Yuehan, famed Qinghua University Professor of Physical Education and Head Coach of the 1936 Chinese Olympic Team, to Kunming as a faculty member of the new Southwest Associated University. Besides his teaching duties, Ma worked wholeheartedly to develop the *tiyu* scene in Kunming. In his capacity as Yunnan Province Physical Culture Czar (*Tiyu duxue*), Ma organized a Kunming Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (Southwest U., Yunnan U., Tongji U., Air Force Academy), transformed Kunming’s China P.E. Normal School into the Yunnan Province Physical Education Training School, lectured in middle schools on the connections between hygiene and physical fitness, put on five city-wide athletic meets, and

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<sup>17</sup> Quan Jun and Wang Chengrong, “‘Guoti’ zai Guilin” [The Central Martial Arts and Physical Education School in Guilin], *Guangxi tiyu shiliao* 8 (October 1984), pp. 50, 31. The school would continue to move, from Guilin, to Longzhou on the Guangxi-Vietnam border, Kunming, Chongqing, and finally settling in Beibei (Sichuan) in 1942.

<sup>18</sup> The migration opened up great opportunities in the field of “frontier exploration” (of the region’s geology, geography, flora, fauna, and residents) - suggesting the traditional anthropological approach taken toward frontier peoples by these educational elites. However, Hubert Freyn records that Southwest Associated University students were very pleasantly surprised by the “national consciousness” exhibited by Miao residents of Guizhou toward their “civilizing” guests (as many coastal elites described themselves). Freyn, *Chinese Education In the War*, pp. 37, 83, 131.

sponsored several sports exhibitions pitting top Chinese teams against American and British military basketball, baseball, tennis and soccer squads.<sup>19</sup>

Kunming, formerly dependent on national cultural trickle-downs from Chengdu and Chongqing, immediately experienced the spread of agents of modernity like sports with the sudden presence of these educational elites from Beiping and Tianjin (home of the three universities which merged into the new Southwest Associated University). Although modern sports were by no means brand-new to Kunming by the late 1930s, wartime newcomers like Ma worked to develop the physical culture enterprise there to levels of saturation rivaling China's coastal metropolises. By 1939-40, the pages of *Zhongyang ribao* and *Yunnan ribao* regularly carried news about the Kunming Municipal *Tiyu* Research Society, the Kunming Spring Men's and Women's Hand Grenade Throwing Contest, Kunming Healthy Baby Contests, Youth Sports Weeks, a Yunnan Uprising Commemorative Marathon, and *Duanwujie* Dragon Boat Races (which were recorded by the Central Motion Picture Department Outdoor Film Squad).<sup>20</sup> And these activities were not meant to be limited to participation by society elites; top finishers in a Rowing Contest sponsored by Kunming's New Life Movement Promotion Society identified themselves as members of the Amateur Friendship Society, tailors, Tongji University engineering and medical students, merchants, soldiers and simply as Kunming residents.<sup>21</sup>

Yiliang County, 30 miles east of Kunming, formed a County Physical Culture Association in 1938. Standards were stringent in these modern nationalist organizations; explicitly barred

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<sup>19</sup> Ma Yuehan, "Zai Kun tiyu gongzuo ba nian huigu" [Looking back on eight years of physical culture work in Kunming], *Zhengyibao*, 10 September 1946, reprinted in *Yunnan tiyu wenshi* 7 (December 1986), p. 10; Huang Manyan, "Ma Yuehan jiaoshou zai Kunming shiqi de jishu" [A record of Professor Ma Yuehan's time in Kunming], *Yunnan tiyu wenshi* 6 (July 1986), pp. 26-29.

<sup>20</sup> "Jiuwen zai deng" [Old news published again], *Yunnan tiyu shiliao* 2 (December 1983), pp. 43-44; "Jiuwen zai deng" [Old news published again], *Yunnan tiyu wenshi* 3 (June 1984), pp. 42-43; "Kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi Yunnan tiyu shiliao liu ze" [Six sports history items from the Anti-Japanese War era], *Yunnan tiyu wenshi* 13 (October 1991), pp. 52-53.

from membership were any individuals who “violated the Three People’s Principles in word or action,” “deprived others of their civil rights,” were mentally ill, or who gambled or smoked opium.<sup>22</sup> Kunming operatives spread their disciplines even farther out into the reaches of Yunnan province. In 1941, after Japanese forces occupied Vietnam, Kunming’s “Yunnan-Guizhou Pacification Office” sent army engineering corps to Malipo County on the Vietnam border to destroy roads and bridges making a Vietnam-Yunnan crossing more practical for Japanese troops. Their important accomplishments in Malipo also included planning and execution of a massive three-day Anti-Japanese National Salvation Athletic Meet in Shuidongping Village, which drew more than three thousand fans who enjoyed sporting contests, Boy Scout and military drill exhibitions, and who even donated money to the national salvation movement.<sup>23</sup> The sporting movement intensified by these national forces in Kunming thus created an even wider nexus of personal discipline and national identity that allowed people in the city and beyond to experience their nation and their role in it in ways they had never known – and these acts of unification were said to be half of the battle against the Japanese imperialists.

These southwest cities hosting the coastal cultural enterprises in wartime retreat surely saw conflict between “native” groups and the newcomers who disrupted older hierarchies and webs of power. Still, one does not have to launch into a paean to the mass educational migration having “safeguarded the cream of the intelligentsia and the cultural heritage of the nation”<sup>24</sup> to see that this mass progress did effect great diffusions of modern Nationalist culture that a Nanjing Decade

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<sup>21</sup> “Kang Ri zhanzheng shiqi Yunnan tiyu,” p. 53.

<sup>22</sup> “Yijiusanba nian de Yunnan sheng Yiliang xian tiyuhui zhangcheng” [The 1938 Yunnan Province Yiliang County Tiyu Association Constitution], *Kunming tiyu wenshi* 1 (1986), pp. 22, 63.

<sup>23</sup> Hu Xingyi, “Shuidongping kang Ri jiuguo yundonghui” [The Anti-Japanese National Salvation Athletic Meet at Shuidongping], *Yunnan tiyu wenshi* 7 (December 1986), pp. 45-46.

<sup>24</sup> Ou, “Education in Wartime China,” p. 91.

of centrally-controlled programs and movements never achieved. Students involved in these moves and in *tiyu* activities in these new settings took pride in their new chance to spread these important bodies of knowledge among “the people” of the benighted inland population, recreating on a national scale the liberal 1920s impulse to share the knowledge and awareness of the cities with less fortunate country folk. And these disciplines of team spirit, self-control, vigor and sacrifice caught on quickly among young nationalistic elements of the populations of these southwest cities, as this era of national tragedy made it possible for them to experience and perform firsthand the ideologies and motions designed to bring China and its people to final victory.

#### The Nationalist State *Tiyu* Project in Chongqing

In September 1938, the Chongqing journal *Sino-Soviet Culture* featured on its cover a cartoon entitled “Our post-September 18th (1931) return shot.” A fit and healthy athlete (“China”) was shown embroiled in a tennis match with a fat brutish ruffian (“Japanese warlord”) before a judge (“League of Nations”) in top hat and tuxedo, but unfortunately sound asleep high atop his judge’s chair. The support of the Western judge is immaterial now, however, as “China” has delivered a fearsome return shot which has smacked the “Japanese warlord” in the forehead, knocking off his military cap and pounding him to the ground.<sup>25</sup> The vagaries of sport clearly held inspiration for members of the newly Chongqing-based Guomindang cultural and political apparatus trying to imagine what might happen in their newest round of “competition” with the Japanese.

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<sup>25</sup> “Jiuyiba hou de huijing” [Our post-September 18th (1931) return shot], *Zhongsu wenhua* 2.8 (16 September 1938), cartoon on front cover.

Chongqing quickly became a showcase for the developments of the wartime physical culture enterprise. Its inauguration as Provisional Capital brought to this secluded and damp “Mountain City” the different units of the Nationalist *tiyu* bureaucracy which had tried to lead the competitive sports, mass and militarized *tiyu*, school physical education, and martial arts movements of the Nanjing Decade. In 1939, the Nationalist *tiyu* relocation from Nanjing to Chongqing was complete, as its branches got quickly to the different tasks necessary to the work of training the bodies of a China at war.

In just months, the Education Department Physical Education Committee was already busy proving the Nationalist government’s attention to the bodies of their youth – propagating new rules for the design of athletic grounds, designing a new national Physical Education Administration Exam, organizing mobile *tiyu* examination squads to test the physical abilities of Sichuan middle school students, publishing research on traditional Chinese physical culture forms and their use in modern society, and organizing a National Citizens’ *Tiyu* Conference in Chongqing.<sup>26</sup> The Chinese Physical Culture Study Society, representing the scientific-academic branch of the *tiyu* discipline, was reorganized in Chongqing. Here, it quickly set about its old activities in publishing, researching, carrying out studies and physical examinations among the public, and standardizing *tiyu* terminology and definitions.<sup>27</sup> Finally, the Central Martial Arts Academy (*Guoshuguan*), representative of the Guomindang’s decade of hard work to synthesize the diverse genius and secrets of China’s disparate martial arts cultures into one single national martial art, or *guoshu*, was relocated as well. In Chongqing, home to one of China’s finest and

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<sup>26</sup> “Jiaoyubu tiyu weiyuanhui gaikuang” [State of the Education Department Physical Education Committee], *Guomin tiyu jikan* 1.1 (15 September 1941), reprinted in Chongqing shi tiyu yundong weiyuanhui, *et al.*, eds., *Kangzhan shiqi peidu tiyu shiliao*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>27</sup> “Zhonghua tiyu xuehui huiwu baogao” [Report of the Chinese Physical Culture Study Society’s tasks], *Jianguo jiaoyu* (27 November 1938), reprinted in Chongqing shi tiyu yundong weiyuanhui, *et al.*, eds., *Kangzhan shiqi peidu tiyu shiliao*, pp. 54-56.

fiercest martial arts traditions, the Academy undertook its second decade of rationalizing and spreading martial arts knowledge and skills, no longer to illiterate and superstitious imperial subjects, but to an enlightened Chinese citizenry.

Finally, the tasks of the elite sports mission, necessary to the international stature and face of the ROC, were handled by the Chinese National Amateur Athletic Federation, which met in early 1939. Its members decided that the Nationalist government would send soccer and basketball teams to the 1940 Olympics, which had been awarded to Tokyo in 1936.<sup>28</sup> This resolution no doubt helped lend a rare sense of normality to life during wartime; the spectacle of Chinese athletes competing with the world's best would pay great dividends in reminding the Chinese people of the Republic's ability to represent them on a world stage. However, the decision was also strange for two reasons. First, it reversed a stand taken a year earlier, when the GMD-supported Chinese National Sporting Community Salvation Federation (headed by CNAAF leaders Zhang Boling and Hao Gengsheng) joined the United Kingdom's effort to boycott the 1940 Tokyo Olympics!<sup>29</sup> Secondly, the Japanese Olympic Organizing Committee had canceled the 1940 Games in July 1938 – more than six months before the CNAAF decided to join them!<sup>30</sup> It is not clear if the CNAAF in 1939 was counting on the Games being held in a location besides Tokyo; the decision refers only to the XIIth Olympic Games, but not to their Japanese hosts. However, it is also possible that in this case, form – declaring China's willingness to join the great nations of the world in noble competition – was more important than the reality that these competitions had been cancelled.

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<sup>28</sup> “Zhonghua tiyuhui jueyi canjia Shier jie shiyunhui” [The Chinese Athletic Federation resolves to join the XIIth Olympic Games], *Zhongyang ribao*, 6 February 1939, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Shen Hui, “Zhongguo lishi shang di yi ci dizhi Aoyunhui shimo” [The whole story behind China's first-ever Olympic boycott], *Tiyu wenshi* 49 (May 1991), pp. 66-67.

<sup>30</sup> Junko Tahara, “Count Michimasa Soyeshima and the Cancellation of the XII Olympiad in Tokyo: A Footnote to Olympic History,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 9.3 (December 1992), pp. 467-470.

These four different institutions of the physical culture movement soon found their goals and activities converging much more than they ever had during the Nanjing period. The outbreak of total war, the central government's retreat to Chongqing, the consolidation of these different organizations under a more unified *tiyu* elite, and events in the international sports world combined to render moot many of the conflicts which had marked the sports and physical culture world in Nanjing.

Mentioned above were the mid-1930s contradictions between elite-level competitive sport and the "mass" and "militarized" physical culture movements. Before July 1937, the seeming efficacy of paramilitary *Wehrsport* exercises in Germany seemed to justify a turn toward a more militarized physical culture for China. This "militarized *tiyu*" was posed as the polar opposite of elite competitive sport, which after all did nothing for the bodies of the 400 million Chinese people who would never compete in the Olympics. However, the importance of participating in worldwide rituals of vigorous nationhood like the Olympics had allowed competitive sport to survive the scathing critiques it received for its distance from the condition of the masses.

Yet the realities of war took away the justifications for both of these forms. Real, not fantasized, war ironically rendered obsolete the "militarized *tiyu*" dreams of the fiery ethnocentric/fascist wing of the Nanjing *tiyu* movement.<sup>31</sup> By 1939, the atrocities and inhumanity of the German war machine could no longer be explained as overly rambunctious behavior of an admirably nationalistic and strong ally. Wholesale use of militarized physical culture designed at one end of the Axis did not make sense anymore, now that its other end had been plunged deep into the guts of the Chinese "national body." Also, "militarized *tiyu*" had been imagined as a tool for creating a strong and united citizenry that could resist the inevitable Japanese invasion. But

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<sup>31</sup> Andrew Morris, "Cultivating the National Body: A History of Physical Culture in Republican China," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 1998, pp. 316-345.

war had arrived, and even the most militaristic of exercises prescribed in Chongqing hardly worried Japanese military officers overseeing the conquest of eastern and central China. The cause of elite competitive sport was similarly betrayed by the war. In 1939 the CNAAF oddly was committed (at least on paper) to spending the money needed to send a fair-sized delegation to an Olympics hosted by the same Japanese imperialists who were busy burning and ravaging so much of the Republic. These Games were canceled, of course, and what would have been an obscene worldwide sporting stage mercifully dismantled. And without these Olympics, elite competitive sports in wartime China lost almost any justification whatsoever.

The ideologies of elite and militarized sport discredited, then, the aims of wartime physical culture now were to inculcate a generation of Chinese who could lead and live a postwar Nationalist China. In terms of this raging war, it was simply too late to expect to transform the populace into efficient soldier-citizens. In Japan, the pressures of war drove the Japanese sports world further and further into outright fascist forms and models. For example, by 1942, the national *Meiji Jingū* Athletic Meet, now managed by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (*Kōseishō*), was known as the *Meiji Jingū* Citizen Training Games, its former sporting events replaced totally by militaristic drills, gymnastics and martial arts.<sup>32</sup> In China, by contrast, the heady fascist dreams of the mid-1930s were gone, and so were the militarized *tiyu* forms borne of them. The opinion voiced by most experts was that *tiyu* would surely profit from the “organization and discipline,” or the “neatness, efficiency, clarity, simplicity, and precision” of the military life, as in fact could all areas of education - but that using physical education to improve Chinese military capability was a “stubbornly unimaginative and stupid” solution.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Imamura Yoshio, *Nihon taiikushi* [The history of Japanese physical culture] (Tokyo: Kaneko Shobō, 1951), pp. 308-309; Abe, Kiyohara and Nakajima, “Fascism, Sport and Society in Japan,” pp. 13-22.

<sup>33</sup> Yuan Dunli, “Tiyu jiuqing shi shenme?” [So what is physical education after all?], *Jiaoyu tongxun* 2.35 (September 1939), and Wu Demao, “Jianli woguo tiyu tixi zhi shangque” [Discussing the construction of our nation’s physical



The final result of these changes was an overwhelming emphasis on a well-rounded and healthy sports program for the masses. No matter what other great pressures the Nanjing-to-Chongqing migration brought to the provisional capital, the leaders of the physical culture realm were presented with an almost clean slate on which to design a new *tiyu* program for China and its citizens. Thus, these *tiyu* forces had little choice but to turn to the “masses” and the category of “mass sport,” even if only to keep their disciplines alive.

National and municipal *tiyu* bodies were both quite active during the seven-year Chongqing period. Physical education standards and curricula were prepared and published, and investigations conducted into the ill and weak bodies of Chongqing students. (One such study, conducted in 1938, revealed that only 96 of 5031 students examined were judged to be “completely healthy.”<sup>34</sup>) *Tiyu* organizations also sponsored a wide range of public sporting activities for the people of Chongqing, like the 1940 Capture-the-Traitor Mountain Climbing Competition mentioned above. On 3 January 1940, physically active citizens of Chongqing celebrated the new year in a great Provisional Capital *Tiyu* Parade. Over ten thousand participants put on mobile demonstrations of martial arts, group calisthenics, cycling, track and field, basketball and even billiards played on moving wheeled tables.<sup>35</sup> After decades of theorizing on how nationally-led physical culture would trickle down to the bodies of the Chinese people, the constraints of wartime Chongqing actually made this reach possible at last.

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culture structure], *Jiao yu xue* 5.3 (31 May 1940), both reprinted in Guojia tiwei tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui and Quanguo tizong wenshi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, eds., *Tiyu shiliao di 17 ji: Zhongguo jindai tiyu wenxuan* [Historical materials on physical education, Volume 17: Selections from modern Chinese physical culture] (Beijing: Renmin tiyu chubanshe, 1992), pp. 389, 395.

<sup>34</sup> Lu Sihong, *Xin Chongqing* [New Chongqing] (Kunming: Zhonghua shuju, 1939), p. 182; cited in Lee McIsaac, “The City as Nation: Creating a Wartime Capital in Chongqing,” in Joseph W. Esherick, ed., *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000), p. 178.

<sup>35</sup> Film on Chongqing physical culture highlights of 1940.

Between 1942 and 1945, four citywide sports meets were held, as well as two municipal martial arts competitions, several Chongqing middle and high school meets, and even a Chongqing Bureaucrats Athletic Meet held in 1944. Some years, mountain climbing competitions were organized for 9 September, honoring the traditional *Chongyang* festival celebrating old age and the triumph of the *yang*. Song Qingling (the widow of Sun Yat-sen) organized a Disaster Aid For Henan International Soccer Tourney to send relief to this ravaged northern province. In 1943, the Chongqing Municipal Athletic Federation organized classes in martial arts, baseball, acrobatics, and *banyuqiu* (“paddle-feather-ball,” a new game invented by Dong Shouyi, combining the skills of volleyball, tennis and badminton), and sponsored a Nation-Race (*Minzu*) Health Activities Day, with contests in team sports, martial arts, group calisthenics, and parachuting.<sup>36</sup>

The most important “mass *tiyu*” achievement by the *tiyu* bureaucracy in Chongqing was the establishment in 1942 of September Ninth as a national holiday, Sports Day (*Tiyu jie*). Selected for its ties to the old *Chongyang* festival, and also as the date of Sun Yat-sen’s Guangzhou Uprising of 1895, September Ninth became a holiday which would celebrate the physical fitness of China’s citizens by giving them, “no matter if they are students, workers, clerks, bureaucrats or just average citizens ... the opportunity to exercise, and a guaranteed time for exercise.”<sup>37</sup> In August 1942, the Education Department issued official directions for the correct planning, funding (from general education budgets), and execution of Sports Day in every province, city, county and town. Preceding the holiday would be a Publicity Week, with educators and students fulfilling that decades-old GMD promise of “going to the people,” this time to

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<sup>36</sup> Chongqing shi tiyu yundong weiyuanhui, *et al.*, eds., *Kangzhan shiqi peidu tiyu shiliao*, pp. 40-48, 150-238.

<sup>37</sup> “Duanlian tiyo - zhu di yi jie Tiyu jie” [Train the body - Celebrate the first Sports Day], *Xinhua ribao*, 9 September 1942, p. 2.

demonstrate *tiyu* activities and methods. Sports Day was a festival of *tiyu* activities for all - from martial arts to mountain climbing, swimming to rowing, weightlifting to ball games.<sup>38</sup>

Of the 19 cities and counties in Nationalist-controlled Sichuan, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Fujian and Xikang provinces that organized a Sports Day in 1942,<sup>39</sup> the holiday was celebrated most conspicuously in the provisional capital. National and municipal bodies sponsored the First Chongqing Municipal Athletic Meet, held on the grounds of the Nankai Middle School's new campus. The day began with rousing speeches by Education Minister Chen Lifu (who also read a message prepared by Chiang Kai-shek), Mayor and Meet Chairman Wu Guozhen, and Education Vice Minister Gu Yuxiu, who voiced his hopes that Chongqing might someday host the Chinese National Games and even the Olympic Games.<sup>40</sup> More than two thousand Chongqing citizen-athletes took part in this great meet, which included some 162 competitions in track and field, basketball, volleyball, soccer and baseball, stretched over 33 days!<sup>41</sup> Sports Day was meant to be more than the typical brief affair where spectators gathered for a weekend to watch elite-level athletes at play. The format here was more realistically designed to accommodate the schedules and obligations of the Chongqing "masses," enabling them to be the heroes of the day, and fulfilling the most idealistic goals of the Guomindang's mission to empower the people of China.

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<sup>38</sup> "Jiu yue jiu ri Tiyu jie jinnian te kuoda juxing" [September 9th Sports Day - This year make it especially grand], *Dagongbao (L'Impartial)*, 6 August 1942, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Wu Yechun and Ruan Rong, "Minguo shiqi de Tiyu jie" [The Republican-era Sports Day], *Tiyu wenshi (Sport History)* 53 (January 1992), p. 44.

By 1943, Sports Day was even being observed and celebrated in Dihua (Urumqi), Xinjiang. Xu Jinyong, "Jiefang qian Xinjiang lanqiu yundong jiankuang" [A brief outline of the pre-Liberation basketball movement in Xinjiang], *Xinjiang tiyu shiliao* 5 (1991), p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> "Di yi jie yundonghui kaimu dianli" [The Opening Ceremonies of the First Athletic Meet], *Xinminbao*, 10 September 1942, reprinted in Chongqing shi tiyu yundong weiyuanhui, *et al.*, eds., *Kangzhan shiqi peidu tiyu shiliao*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>41</sup> "Shiyunhui zuo yuanman jieshu" [Chongqing Municipal Meet comes to a perfect close], *Dagongbao (L'Impartial)*, 13 October 1942, p. 3.

Events like these Sports Day festivities typify the Chongqing physical culture program, as the conditions of wartime relocation bred a new concentration on the physical fitness of the “masses.” Questions of national “face” and Olympic prestige, of national essence and martial arts, and of national strength and militarized *tiyu* were all outweighed by this new mass disposition. Even Chongqing’s larger sporting competitions now were run as fundraisers for important public and “mass” enterprises. Basketball and soccer teams from Chongqing and other southwestern cities participated in several large tournaments to benefit causes like the Western Hubei Relief Fund, the Professor Wu Demao Memorial Education Foundation, and the Chongqing Municipal Sports Foundation.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, the Guomindang regime’s attention to the bodies and minds of the local southwestern populations in many ways disproves the caricature of its wartime rule as the last pathetic acts of a corrupt and exploitative governmental farce. This study is meant to explain this advocacy of modern physical culture as a project meant to discipline and train Chinese into new national subjects, often delivered in the guise of “liberation” from old legacies of weakness, regionalism and superstition. The “Liberation” delivered by the Communists just years later was hardly as original or as “New” as advertised; by 1949 Chinese people in Chongqing and other areas of the wartime Nationalist realm had been educated and trained for years in self-consciously “mass” forms of culture like those described here.

### **Red *Tiyu* and the Communist Movement**

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<sup>42</sup> “Chongqing shi tiyu xiejinhui gongzuo baogaoshu (sanshier nian)” [Official Work Report of the Chongqing Municipal Athletic Federation (1943)], and “Choumu tiyu jijin juxing zuqiu yisai” [Soccer friendly matches held to raise money for the Sports Foundation], *Zhongyang ribao*, 17 November 1944, both reprinted in Chongqing shi tiyu yundong weiyuanhui, *et al.*, eds., *Kangzhan shiqi peidu tiyu shiliao*, pp. 44-46, 235-236.

In October 1937, the pages of the American *Life Magazine* featured 23 photos taken by Harry Dunham and Harrison Forman of Chinese Communists at Xi'an and Yan'an. This "tantalizing X," as *Life* called the CCP with respect to its crucial role in the war against Japan, was given a human face in this photo essay. A section titled "Chinese Communists play games" featured four shots of CCP soldiers playing basketball, croquet, ping-pong and a stick-throwing game called "Slay Japan." The message was clear - these Communists in padded uniforms couldn't be all bad, if they were playing sports just like us. After all, the cover of that very issue of *Life* featured a close-up of a rough-shaven, squinting, helmeted Chuck Williams, "No. 1 Trojan" and Captain of the 1937 USC football team!<sup>43</sup>

Yet this explanation of the CCP sporting instinct was more than just a palliative for *Life* subscribers whose knees trembled at the mention of communism. The realm of physical culture in the Communist base camps also helps us to understand the CCP as a thoroughly modern part of, not just an utterly revolutionary exception to, a greater Republican-era Chinese milieu. By the late 1920s and 1930s, it was simply inconceivable that a political movement hoping to establish its credibility as a force for strength and order in a modern China could forego activity in the proven domain of physical culture.

The Chinese Communist Party from a very early date linked itself closely to this cult of the strong and disciplined body and nation.<sup>44</sup> This endeavor continued throughout the Long March,<sup>45</sup> and in 1937 a Soviet Physical Culture and Sports Committee was formed under the command of

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<sup>43</sup> "The Camera Overseas: Chinese Communists to the Rescue," *Life* 3.15 (11 October 1937), pp. 100-103.

<sup>44</sup> See Fan Hong, "'Iron Bodies': Women, War, and Sport in the Early Communist Movement in Modern China," *Journal of Sport History* 24.1 (Spring 1997), pp. 1-23; Morris, "Cultivating the National Body," pp. 537-553.

<sup>45</sup> Zhang Guotao's Red 4th Front Army even held a meet during the Long March, in Luhuo, northeastern Xikang (now part of the Garzê Zang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan). There, on a grassy plateau behind a Lama temple, the unit held a small three-day May First Athletic Meet celebrating the international Labor Day. Zhang Xinyun, Lan Cao and Han Lei, "Changzheng zhong de yundonghui" [An athletic meet held during the Long March], *Tiyu wenshi* 24 (April 1987), pp. 5-6.

Zhu De, Lin Boqu and Xu Teli.<sup>46</sup> Official Yan'an-published newspapers like *Liberation Daily*, *Red China*, and *Resist-the-Enemy News* often carried editorials by sports-minded leaders like Mao Zedong, Zhu De, CCP Secretary-General Li Fuchun and Eighth Route Commander Ye Jianying. These CCP base and border governments obviously lacked the great resources spent by the Nationalist central government on great competitive sports meets, societies and publications. The *tiyu* role of these Shaan-Gan-Ning government bodies came down mostly to crafting and disseminating catchy *tiyu* slogans like Mao's "Train the body well, fight Japan thoroughly" or Zhu's "Hitting a ball is also hitting thought,"<sup>47</sup> both clever if not entirely original examples of linking the wartime struggle to the *tiyu* project.

The Communists, vanguard for a brand-New China, would as a matter of course describe the role of physical culture differently than did GMD *tiyu* programs. GMD physical culture by (CCP) definition had to be misguided and feudal, even if figures like Zhang Yuan, Chairman of the Yan'an *Tiyu* Committee, were not quite sure how. As Zhang wrote in 1942,

There are some bourgeois sports experts that advocate that "*tiyu* is just for entertainment," stating that it is not related to politics at all. Of course we are opposed to this view, although we cannot totally deny [*tiyu*'s] entertainment value.... Games are surely a proper, beneficial form of recreation. Comrade Lenin said, "If one cannot rest, then one cannot work," where his "ability to rest" refers to the ability to regain one's energy and strength through rest. Exercise has great benefits for the body and mind, and is a fine way to take rest and recreation. But it must be done appropriately; this is something to which we must pay close attention.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyushi bianshen weiyuanhui, eds., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyushi* [The history of physical culture in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border region] (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1990), p. 34.

Zhu De, famed as the sportiest of all CCP leaders, is even said to have included in his plans for warfare against Nationalist-controlled cities minor plots to appropriate basketballs and soccer balls for use in the Jiangxi and Fujian soviet bases! Fan Hong, "Iron Bodies," p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Qiao Keqin and Guan Wenming, *Zhongguo tiyu sixiangshi* [The history of Chinese physical education philosophy] (Lanzhou: Gansu minzu chubanshe, 1993), pp. 310, 315.

<sup>48</sup> Zhang Yuan, "Tiyu de gongneng: Wei jinian Tiyu jie er zuo" [The uses of physical culture: An essay written for Sports Day], *Xinhua ribao*, 9 September 1942, p. 4.

CCP functionaries knew something was suspicious about the dominant liberal forms of physical culture current in the Nationalist era, but their similar position as a modernist Leninist party made it difficult to isolate exactly what modern *tiyu*'s failings were. Their concern for modern sports and physical culture and their imaginings of its role in creating a socialist China, even if phrased sometimes in new terminologies of class struggle or socialist democracy, were still solidly part of the Republican-era Chinese *tiyu* common sense. Also in line with Nationalist models was the CCP approach to advertising physical culture as the key to building a strong Chinese nation that could defeat the Japanese enemy.

“Red physical culture” (*chise tiyu, hongse tiyu*) was the name of the movement founded in the CCP's rural soviet days and promulgated through the Anti-Japanese War. Hagiographical and teleological treatments of Communist physical culture attempt to isolate uniquely “socialist” characteristics distinguishing it from dominant contemporary Nationalist *tiyu* forms, and marking real progress and innovation in the field of Chinese physical culture. For example, Fan Hong writes that the CCP's “red *tiyu*” “was to create ‘a new Chinese’ - strong, disciplined, and patriotic, able to fight and thus ensure the solidarity, stability, and success of the Chinese Soviet republic.” She calls this CCP physical culture movement “one of the most significant cultural innovations of the Jiangxi Era,” claiming that “[i]ts emancipatory role to date has not been adequately recorded.”<sup>49</sup>

Yet an examination of the red *tiyu* movement in CCP base and border areas shows, as hints the Zhang Yuan excerpt above, that Communist physical culture was not a radical departure from proven Chinese means of propagating this modern form of bodily discipline and knowledge. Party

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<sup>49</sup> Fan Hong, “Iron Bodies,” pp. 6, 15. This article is an adaptation of a chapter from her *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997).

Or see Yu Jianyong, “Shilun hongse tiyu he Xin Zhongguo tiyu de neizai lianxi” [An explanation of the inherent connections between red physical culture and the physical culture of New China], *Tiyu wenshi* 47 (January 1991), pp. 36-38.

propagandists talked a very red game, of course, but offered very few challenges to the sporting ideology that swept the modern world in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chang-tai Hung has shown how the performance of urban and foreign plays was seen as a sign of “political insensitivity” in Yan’an (and especially after 1942),<sup>50</sup> but no such commonsense applied to the world of *tiyu*. Joseph Esherick’s advice that we understand Guomintang policies not only as a “political enemy” of the CCP but also as its “precursor”<sup>51</sup> actually understates the case with regard to Communist physical culture policies and institutions, which exhibited little innovation or originality at all.

Gregor Benton has described the relatively new Chinese academic field of Yan’anology (*Yan’anxue*) that attributes the 1949 Liberation to a timeless and inherently revolutionary Yan’an struggle, style, tradition and spirit.<sup>52</sup> Shooting fish in the proverbial barrel is not necessarily fun, but it is still important to explain the problems with such ahistory. Here I wish to show that the vital realm of *tiyu* was one in which CCP agents felt no compunction about maintaining proven Nationalist forms. The pre-1949 “red *tiyu*” movement was fundamentally a product of its times - nourished by the milk of Darwinian and Spencerian views of the body and the mind, of competition and survival, and of the enlightened self-disciplining subject and the nation-state.

After the end of civil war in 1949, the defeated Guomintang characterized the work of the Yan’an Communists during the war as less than totally patriotic. The exact evaluation in this case was that CCP work had been “10% anti-Japanese, 20% anti-Guomintang, and 70% for the sake of enlarging Communist influence.” Few on the Communist side could totally refute these sour

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<sup>50</sup> Hung, *War and Popular Culture*, pp. 222-225.

<sup>51</sup> Esherick, “Ten Theses,” p. 47.

<sup>52</sup> Gregor Benton, “Comparative Perspectives: North and Central China in the Anti-Japanese Resistance,” in Feng Chongyi and David S. G. Goodman, eds., *North China at War: The Social Ecology of Revolution, 1937-1945* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), p. 191.



grapes, since anti-Japanese programs by definition also were often anti-GMD or pro-CCP in nature.

Wartime Communist physical culture programs and propaganda should be judged by this same standard – that is, of seeing nationalism, partisanship, and social revolution all expressed in the same forms. The primacy of “revolution” in CCP public discourse implied that any Party activity would be defined as a purely “red” break with the old ways of the feudal Guomindang. In the world of modern physical culture – again a set of ideologies seen around the world as “proven” and universally applicable – this was usually not the case. Yet Communist insistence that this was a revolutionary enterprise uniquely defined this realm as a rose-colored mirror image of the Nanjing Decade sporting world.

Like the Guomindang *tiyu* project, the CCP defined their work as benefiting “the masses.” This ideological focus seemed more logically consistent in CCP areas than under GMD rule, of course, but the CCP did very little that had not been done previously by physical culture activists working under the GMD regime. CCP *tiyu* activists talked in revolutionary ways of “spreading” (*puji*) “mass” (*qunzhongxing*) forms of exercise,<sup>53</sup> just as faithful GMD party agents had for years. A crucial point in the CCP’s general propaganda, the notion of a “masses” emboldened and strengthened by a uniquely red training ethic became a bedrock of Yan’an *tiyu* ideology.

As in the rest of China, one way of expressing the CCP’s popular commitment was in the form of “group calisthenics” (*tuanticao*), also called “10,000-person calisthenics” (*wanrencao*). This form allowed subjects of CCP rule to express as one a corporeal allegiance to the Party, while simultaneously presenting them the immediate opportunity to survey and reinforce the unity of

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<sup>53</sup> For example, see “Guoji qingnianjie yundong dahui bianqu ge jie relie choubei” [All border region groups enthusiastically preparing for the International Youth Day Athletic Meet], *Jiefang ribao*, 27 July 1942, reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao* [Historical materials from Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border region physical culture] (Xi’an: Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, 1986), p. 298.

their own ranks. If it seemed uniquely “red” to some excited observers starving for some kind of Chinese physical power and presence, it wasn’t; the form had been popular in urban Chinese schools since the late 1890s, when it was imported from Japan.<sup>54</sup> In fact, mass calisthenics’ appeal had much more to do with totalitarianism than with socialism. Like German police performing under dramatic fog and lights in Berlin’s Sport Palace in 1936,<sup>55</sup> Chinese Communist soldiers participating in these mass exercises were praised for the public display of their “serious and energetic” demeanor and exact movements.<sup>56</sup> The characters that these mass formations outlined on the athletic field – like “Long Live Women’s Liberation” (*Funü jiefang wansui*) at a 1940 International Women’s Day Meet<sup>57</sup> – may have differed from those seen at a typical GMD-sponsored meet. But the motivation and technology of presenting hundreds of bodies in simultaneous disciplined motion to impose a “popular” image upon authoritarian culture, was clearly the same.

As opposed to self-consciously “popular” forms like calisthenics, competitive sport posed problems for Chinese *tiyu* activists with an eye toward the masses. Sports spectatorship, so integral to this form of modern physical culture, clearly represented a consumptive rather than productive mode. CCP media facing this contradiction hence fell back on the not-so-revolutionary presence of the cheer squad (*laladui*) to bring some agency into the passive mode of spectatorship. CCP media paid great attention to the cheer squads at official meets, who led cheers such as

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<sup>54</sup> For more on the late Qing import of foreign calisthenics (*ticao*), see Morris, “Cultivating the National Body,” pp. 64-72.

<sup>55</sup> “Regimentation” (Photograph #14497), part of “The Nazi Olympics, Berlin 1936,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum On-line Exhibition, <http://www.ushmm.org/olympics/zcb016.htm>, accessed 14 January 2002.

<sup>56</sup> Zhou Zikun, “Jinian ‘Wu sa’ yundonghui zongjie” [A summary marking the May 30<sup>th</sup> Athletic Meet], *Kangdi bao*, 11 June 1939, reprinted in Chengdu tiyu xueyuan tiyushi yanjiusuo, ed., *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi ziliao* [Materials from modern Chinese physical culture history] (Chengdu: Sichuan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1988), p. 667.

<sup>57</sup> Yu Min, “Sanbajie yundong dahui suxie” [Sketch of the March 8<sup>th</sup> Women’s Day Athletic Meet], *Xin Zhonghua bao*, 15 March 1940, reprinted in Chengdu tiyu xueyuan tiyushi yanjiusuo, ed., *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi ziliao*, p. 670.

“Beautiful passes, perfect shots, Comrade So-and-so is really hot” (*toude zhun, chuande miao, Moumou tongzhi guaguajiao*).<sup>58</sup> Mocking neo-Marxist analyses like Lewis Mumford’s, that “in the sports arena the spectator has the illusion of being completely mobilized and utilized,”<sup>59</sup> clearly were of no import to an ultra-modern entity such as the CCP. The presentation of the *laladui* brought the “masses” back into the picture of “red” basketball, or soccer, or whatever, reminding the active cheerleader or conscientious newspaper reader that comradesly support from the sidelines was an integral and natural part of life in the Shaan-Gan-Ning region.

One of the CCP’s most prized justifications for a physical culture regime was that only a red *tiyu* training could teach Chinese people to throw off the heritage of a “weak” China, and to arm themselves for the struggles of the modern age. In 1942, a New Physical Culture Study Society was formed under the command of Zhu De. *Liberation Daily* marked the occasion by recommending the application of wisdom of contemporary German and Japanese physical culture (!) to “eradicate the humiliation of [being called] the Sick Man of East Asia (*Dongya bingfu*),”<sup>60</sup> perhaps unaware that this was an idea advocated by the decidedly unrevolutionary likes of warlord Yuan Shikai since the late Qing Dynasty.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Wu Jiangping, “Yi Yan’an” [Remembering Yan’an], *Xin tiyu* 2-3 (1957), reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 200.

<sup>59</sup> Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1934), p. 305.

<sup>60</sup> “Jian quanguomin tige, Xin tiyu xuehui chengli” [Build the physiques of the entire citizenry, establish the New Physical Culture Study Society], *Jiefang ribao*, 28 January 1942, p. 4, reprinted in Chengdu tiyu xueyuan tiyushi yanjiusuo, ed., *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi ziliao*, p. 627.

In a speech at the 1942 International Youth Day Athletic Meet at Yan’an, Education Minister He Fu also repeated another claim of Yuan Shikai’s, that “Foreigners call us ‘The Sick Man of East Asia’ because our nation’s physical culture is not developed.” “Yundong dahui zuori bimu” [Athletic meet closed yesterday], *Jiefang ribao*, 7 September 1942, reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 348.

<sup>61</sup> Yuan Shikai, “Nüzi wei guomin zhi mu” [Women are the mothers of citizens], *Shuntian shibao*, 17/6/Guangxu 31 (19 July 1905), reprinted in Li Yu-ning and Chang Yü-fa, eds., *Jindai Zhongguo nüquan yundong shiliao, 1842-1911, shang ce (Documents on the Feminist Movement in Modern China, 1842-1911, Volume 1)* (Taipei: Zhuanji wenxue she, 1975), pp. 606-608.

The CCP “red *tiyu*” program was also heir to other 19<sup>th</sup>-century ideologies about the uses of physical culture, such as the close identification of Chinese citizens’ individual bodies with a Chinese national-racial “body.” Communist sport was regularly and effortlessly limned as crucial to staving off the “destruction of the nation and the extinction of the race” (*wangguo miezhong*).<sup>62</sup> The notion of “hygiene”<sup>63</sup> (*weisheng*, or literally “the guarding of life”) was a convenient way, as Chinese intellectuals and scientists half a century earlier had found,<sup>64</sup> to push together the concept of individual and national health, here for the sake of describing how the Japanese imperialist enemy could be overtaken.

The ideology of “sportsmanship” (*yundong daode*) – perhaps the most easily identifiable trace of Western bourgeois morality in modern physical culture – was also accepted wholeheartedly by the athletes of the Chinese revolution. Decades of its inclusion in the feudal, bourgeois, treaty-port urban athletic culture of China could not discredit the commonsense modern idea that a strong nation – and perhaps especially a socialist one – would be made up of “team players” and “good winners.” The 1942 September 1<sup>st</sup> International Youth Day Enlarged Athletic Meet at Yan’an, sponsored by the Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region Head Command, was the greatest CCP meet of pre-Liberation times. The huge event lasted six days, drawing 1388 committed soldier-, student- and worker-athletes from all over northern Shaanxi and Shanxi.<sup>65</sup> It

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<sup>62</sup> Lang Shan, “Jinnian de ‘ba yi’” [This August 1<sup>st</sup>], *Xin Zhonghua bao*, 29 July 1937, reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 237.

<sup>63</sup> “Jian quanguomin tige,” p. 627.

<sup>64</sup> For example, see Andrew Morris, “‘To Make the 400 Million Move’: The Late Qing Dynasty Origins of Modern Chinese Sport and Physical Culture.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42.4 (October 2000), pp. 879-888.

<sup>65</sup> The 120th Division’s famed “Fighting Basketball Team” (a team which included several players from 1930s national and provincial teams, and which often traveled between Shanxi and Shaanxi for Red Army exhibitions) and several of its top gymnasts marched for more than 20 days to get from northwest Shanxi to Yan’an for this meet held to coincide with International Youth Day. Zhandou lanqiudui laoduiyuan (Liu Zhuofu, Li Shubin, Zhang Lianhua, Zhang Zhihuai, Liu Kai, Shan Ergu and Tian Renmin), “Rongma kongzong xian xiongfeng - yi Zhandou lanqiudui” [Displaying heroism in a hectic military life - remembering the Fighting Basketball Team], *Tiyu wenshi* 21 (October 1986), pp. 40-46.

featured an official meet song (also a practice dating back to Chinese meets in the 1910s) that began by urging the “revolutionary braves” present to “command the ... bloody fascists to tremble before us.” The end of the song, though, reminding meet participants that “the victorious should not be proud, and the defeated should not hang their heads,”<sup>66</sup> would have fit in with the chants of any American pep squad.

The “Athlete’s Oath” for the same Yan’an meet interposed these revolutionary and bourgeois sentiments – which must have seemed utterly congruent – concluding, “Defeat the fascists, revolutionize the spirit. Be not arrogant in victory, or dispirited in defeat.”<sup>67</sup> Communist propaganda sometimes described this important value of sportsmanship differently than did GMD organs, pairing it with “revolutionary affection” (*geming you’ai*) in praising the ideal athlete,<sup>68</sup> or opposing it to “petty capitalist heroism”<sup>69</sup> which did not also recognize the losing side in a contest as a true winner as well. But the sin described as the mortal moral opposite of communist sportsmanship, and indeed of a communist utopia – individualist liberalism<sup>70</sup> – was equally feared by many in the GMD physical culture camp.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> “*Yousheng de bu zijiao, shibai de bu di tou.*” “‘Jiu yi’ yundonghui ge” [September 1<sup>st</sup> Athletic Meet anthem], *Jiefang ribao*, 31 August 1942, reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 316.

<sup>67</sup> “*Sheng bu zu jiao, bai yi bu nei.*” “Yundongyuan shici” [Athletes’ oath], *Jiefang ribao*, 19 September 1942, reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 317.

<sup>68</sup> Dongfang Ming, “Huaxu” [News tidbits], *Jiefang ribao*, 5 September 1942, reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 340.

<sup>69</sup> Tiewu, “Yundong dahui duiyu women” [The athletic meet for us], *Xin Zhonghua bao*, 29 July 1937, reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 237.

<sup>70</sup> Wu Xuansheng, “Wo jun lishi shang de changsheng qiudui – Zhandou lanqiudui huiyi pianduan” [The Fighting Basketball Team – the winningest team in the history of our military], *Xin tiyu* 15 (1957), reprinted in Chengdu tiyu xueyuan tiyushi yanjiusuo, ed., *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi ziliao*, p. 641.

<sup>71</sup> The constant harping on “sportsmanship” under CCP rule was also accompanied by the same routine violations of this spirit that occurred in Nationalist China. Revolutionary training was clearly not enough to teach the Yanchang Town basketball team about how “poor winners” run up the score; they beat the Shaanbei and 30<sup>th</sup> Army teams by scores of 62-10 and 92-12 in the August 1<sup>st</sup> Athletic Meet at Yan’an in 1937. “Dahui di wu tian bisai jieguo” [Results from the meet’s fifth day], *Xin Zhonghua bao* (*Ba yi yundong dahui tekan*), 6 August 1937, reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 248.

Uniquely “red” sportsmanship was advertised as superior to its counterpart in Nationalist China for several reasons. One was the self-conscious simplicity and thrift of sports in the CCP territories. One of the most famed CCP calls to sporting action was that issued on the occasion of the September 1<sup>st</sup> meet at Yan’an in 1942, which began,

There are no great marble viewing stands here; is a simple earthen platform not just as stately? There is no steel-reinforced concrete stadium here; is it not just as solemn to build a gate tower of wild flowers and vines? There are no perfectly aligned bleachers here, but can’t a hillside padded with stones and grass mattresses seat thousands of spectators as well?

The author went on to praise the meet participants, who represented all conceivable circles, nationalities, and ages: “We wear grass and cloth shoes, sometimes even competing barefoot. You – the athletes wearing uniforms red, green, and every other color and shade – are setting records!”<sup>72</sup>

This paean to the sporting masses of Yan’an was made more interesting, though, for its subsequent mention that among the diverse meet competitors was Liu Yunzhang, who had competed on the 1936 Chinese Olympic basketball team in Berlin!<sup>73</sup> Even those disavowing the trappings of materialist Nationalist sport were proud to cite them in order to establish the credibility of this enterprise.<sup>74</sup> Again, the CCP, sworn enemies of so much of the bourgeois urban culture that they saw dooming the Guomindang regime, in the realm of modern sport could offer few true alternatives to the proven models followed in China for decades. Their propaganda

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<sup>72</sup> Wang Jialin, “Women yundong dahui” [Our athletic meet], *Jiefang ribao*, 5 September 1942, reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, pp. 342-343.

<sup>73</sup> Liu, who later changed his name to Liu Zhuofu, went on to serve as Vice Governor of Yunnan Province. Yiping, “Yi jiefangqu zui da de yi ci yundonghui” [Remembering the biggest athletic meet in the liberated area], *Xin tiyu* 24 (1958), reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 357.

<sup>74</sup> Indeed, many of Yan’an’s physical culture leaders had been educated in suspect Nationalist urban, or even worse, Japanese institutions. The one faculty member of the Yan’an University P.E. Department was Zhang Yuan, a graduate of the Beijing Normal University P.E. Department. Yang Lie graduated from the Shanghai Liangjiang Women’s Physical Education School and studied at the Tokyo Calisthenics School Women’s Department before moving to Yan’an and taking on *tiyu* committee work there. Yang Wei, “Wo de muqin Yang Lie” [My mother Yang Lie], *Tiyu wenshi (Sports History)* 71 (January 1995), pp. 39-40.

diatribes against the Guomindang's urban-based *tiyu* project had the odd effect of confirming its central position in the history of Chinese physical culture development; indeed, the CCP seemed in so many other realms to protest too much its fellow Leninist alter ego known as the Guomindang.

Continuing along the materialist lines mentioned by the September 1<sup>st</sup> author above, another enemy of CCP *tiyu* circles was the corrupt ideology of “trophy-ism” (*jinbiao zhuyi*).<sup>75</sup> This phrase was coined in Nationalist *tiyu* circles to describe those debased athletes who competed for the sake not of the nation or race, but merely for the trophies s/he could collect. Yet the anti-materialism materialists of the CCP *tiyu* ranks maintained, and even developed further, the old practice of awarding prizes to successful athletes and teams. Public and official write-ups of every meet included detailed accounts of what prizes were donated by whom and awarded to which winners. Money, championship banners, athletic shoes, sporting goods, clothing, stationery, comic books, teas, medicines, personal effects and hygiene items, rugs, paintings, wood carvings and porcelain were all among the prizes that Shaan-Gan-Ning's best athletes took home to their caves after successful sporting performances.<sup>76</sup>

This contradiction is better understood by looking at the work of Jiwei Ci, who defines as the true “dialectic of the Chinese revolution” not some timeless Yan'an spirit, but a raw hedonism, which he sees as “an essential, though sublimated, component of utopianism.”<sup>77</sup> This concern with proletarian prizes and awards illustrates well what Ci means when he describes the

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<sup>75</sup> Zhou Zikun, “Jinian ‘Wu sa,’” pp. 663.

<sup>76</sup> “‘Wu yi’ yundong dahui de meisheng” [Exultant shouts on the May 1<sup>st</sup> Athletic Meet], *Xin Zhonghua bao*, 9 May 1937, p. 2; “Quzi Xian ‘Wu sa’ xuesheng jianyue yundong dahui baogao” [Report on the Quzi County May 30<sup>th</sup> Students’ Review and Athletic Meet]; “Guoji qingnianjie kuoda yundonghui zhengji dahui jiangpin qishi” [Report on the call for prizes for the International Youth Day Enlarged Athletic Meet], *Jiefang ribao*, 22 August 1942, all reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, pp. 229-230, 267, 270, 294.

<sup>77</sup> Jiwei Ci, *Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution: From Utopianism to Hedonism* (Stanford University Press, 1994), p.

revolution's logic as "Asceticism for now, hedonism later."<sup>78</sup> The CCP's reifying culture of Liberation<sub>TM</sub> – both in the narrow realm of physical culture but in larger ideological senses as well – can thus be understood to have been as much a continuation of materialist and bourgeois practices as it was a repudiation of them.

A further way in which CCP *tiyu* propaganda described the fundamentally "mass" nature of Communist sport was by its inclusion of non-Han "minority nationalities" in meets and competitions. It perhaps seemed uniquely Stalinist and anti-Han-chauvinist when, at the great September 1<sup>st</sup> meet at Yan'an in 1942, Chinese Muslims, Mongols, Koreans, Miao and Tibetans participated in equestrian exhibitions and other competitions.<sup>79</sup> Again, it was not; Nationalist *tiyu* programs had been including and heavily publicizing the participation of China's Mongol and Tibetan populations in modern sport settings since the early 1930s as part of the GMD's own appeal to a pan-ethnic Chinese republic.

Finally, at the risk of seeming gratuitous, the lack of radical "redness" in CCP physical culture can be seen in the Yan'an fascination with one sport in particular. In the American context, dazzling Dick Button and JoJo Starbuck never brought to mind the revolution. But members of the CCP did love their figure skating. Mentions of the sport are common in remembrances of the Yan'an era. One CCP athlete told of a Long March veteran, whose name he had long forgotten, but whose performance of graceful Figure 8 and Figure 3 skating routines had left an indelible impression.<sup>80</sup> One avid Yan'an skater even described how he and his comrades

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<sup>78</sup> Ci, *Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution*, p. 13.

<sup>79</sup> "Zuori juxing tianjing juesai gezhong qishu biaoyan" [Track and field competitions, equestrian demonstration events, held yesterday], *Jiefang ribao*, 4 September 1942, reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 328; Wang Jialin, "Women yundong dahui," p. 343.

<sup>80</sup> Wu Jiangping, "Yi Yan'an," p. 209.



on ice even welcomed periodic Japanese bombing raids, which, among other things, left plenty of scrap iron that could be used for skate blades!<sup>81</sup> Communist figure skating clearly was not the often-silly melodrama the sport has become today in America, but the Yan'an popularity of this decidedly individualist sport does help to describe how the Communist “red *tiyu*” did not always live up to its radical billing.

This characterization of the CCP's physical culture project as a ideologically loaded riff on Guomindang *tiyu* should include the one way in which Communist *tiyu* did truly depart from its reactionary forbears in Nationalist China. In Shaan-Gan-Ning, the CCP military was an important link in the red *tiyu* movement, whereas the Nationalist military structure made no real contribution to China's modern *tiyu* movement. Many Red Army units managed physical education training centers that trained soldiers in modern P.E. pedagogy, enabling them to teach modern exercises and sports within their own units.<sup>82</sup> In fact, the Red Army seems to have been just as influential in spreading the *tiyu* project as they were in any other social mass campaign. Still, I disagree with Fan Hong's characterization in her article ““Iron Bodies”” of the red *tiyu* movement as a purely militaristic phenomenon.<sup>83</sup> The precarious nature of CCP existence meant that all of their social programs would be militarized to some degree. But the physical culture of the Red Army, as approved by faithful students of the New Culture modern *tiyu* line like Mao Zedong, Zhu De and He Long, would never depart too radically from the models dominant in Nationalist China. The Red Army's contribution to red *tiyu* was not a fundamental alteration of its content, but rather as a

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<sup>81</sup> Zhang Guoliang, “Huiyi Yan'an shiqi de tiyu gongzuo” [Remembering Yan'an-era physical culture work], *Tiyu wenshi* 2 (1983), reprinted in Shaanxi sheng tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui, ed., *Shaan-Gan-Ning bianqu tiyu shiliao*, p. 195.

<sup>82</sup> For example, in 1942, He Long's 120th Division Headquarters combined with the Resist-Japan University Seventh Branch to form a Physical Education Training Squad, and the Shanxi-Suiyuan Military Zone Education Department Physical Education Section established a similar organization that same year. Chen, Lu and Li, *Zhongguo ticao yundong shi*, pp. 217-218; Zhandou lanqiudui laoduiyuan, “Rongma kongzong,” pp. 45-46.

<sup>83</sup> Fan Hong, ““Iron Bodies,”” pp. 5-6.

new source of its dissemination. This perspective, on an admittedly particular but also very telling realm like modern physical culture, helps us to see 1949 as a “watershed, not an unbridgeable chasm,”<sup>84</sup> and to interrogate the often-uninterrogated Communist wartime propaganda of revolution and liberation in North China.

## **Conclusion**

I have concentrated here on refuting the claim of Communist exceptionalism, and have posed “red *tiyu*” as a close younger sibling, and not the proverbial red-headed stepchild, of the dominant Nationalist *tiyu* movement. The main point in discussing this element of the pre-Liberation *tiyu* movement is to show the power of the model of modern physical culture shaped by the Nanjing Decade. While there was certainly room in the model for changes in organization or political ideology, the larger content and goals of the movement would by definition stay roughly the same. The CCP sought too to form a new national citizenry, educated in modern ways, capable of self-discipline, and able to see close connections between the health of their bodies and the fortune of their national or local community. The sea change in the Communist *tiyu* movement came in post-Liberation days, when Soviet Russian forms were imported to create new models of the body in the Cold War socialist world.

During the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, both the Guomindang and Chinese Communist Party used the realm of physical culture to make claims about their concern for, and appeal and worth to, the masses of China. As explained above, the GMD line on “mass *tiyu*” had much to do with the wartime irrelevance of earlier Nationalist modes of elite competitive sport and fascist-leaning “militarized physical culture.” The Communist claims to a truly mass and “red” physical culture were predicated on a willful forgetting of the explicitly Nationalist origins of so

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<sup>84</sup> Esherick, “Ten Theses,” p. 48.

much of the exertions and competitions they continued in their rebel bases. Famous is the remark by Ernest Renan that “Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation;” it seems that this notion of a synchronized forgetting would be just as important to the convincing definition of a modernist force like the CCP.<sup>85</sup> This study of sport and physical culture during wartime is important in recovering the historicity of Nationalist and Communist dogma, in understanding exactly when, how and why reified categories like “the masses” become seemingly ahistorical and indispensable elements of political and national propaganda.

DRAFT – PLEASE DO NOT CITE  
[admorris@calpoly.edu](mailto:admorris@calpoly.edu)

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<sup>85</sup> Mark C. Elliott also has recently applied Renan’s idea to the creation of ethnicity, specifically the “Manchu.” *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 47.