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DOCUMENT A

I don't recall much about the football that first afternoon. One of those tricks of memory enables me to see the only goal clearly: the referee awards a penalty (he runs into the area, points a dramatic finger, there's a roar); a hush as Terry Neill takes it, and a groan as Gordon Banks dives and pushes the ball out; it falls conveniently at Neill's feet and this time he scores. But I'm sure this picture has been built up from what I have long known about similar incidents, and actually I was aware of none of this. All I really saw on the day was a bewildering chain of incomprehensible incidents, at the end of which everyone around me stood and shouted. If I did the same, it must have been an embarrassing ten seconds after the rest of the crowd.

But I do have other, more reliable, and probably more meaningful memories. I remember the overwhelming maleness of it all - cigar and pipe smoke, foul language (words I had heard before, but not from adults, not at that volume), and only years later did it occur to me that this was bound to have an effect on a boy who lived with his mother and sister; and I remember looking at the crowd more than at the players. From where I was sitting I could probably have counted twenty thousand heads; only the sports fan (or Mick Jagger or Nelson Mandela) can do that. My father told me that there were nearly as many people in the stadium as lived in my town, and I was suitably awed.

(We have forgotten that football crowds are still astonishingly large, mostly because since the war they have become progressively smaller. Managers frequently complain about local apathy, particularly when their mediocre First or Second Division team has managed to avoid a good hiding for a few weeks; but the fact that, say, Derby County managed to attract an average crowd of nearly seventeen thousand in 1990/91, the year they finished bottom of the First Division, is a miracle. Let's say that three thousand of these are away supporters; that means that among the remaining fourteen thousand from Derby, there were a number of people who went at least eighteen times to see the worst football of last or indeed most other seasons. Why, really, should anyone have gone at all?).

It wasn't the size of the crowd which impressed me the most, however, or the way that adults were allowed to shout the word 'WANKER!' as loudly as they wanted without attracting any attention. What impressed me most was just how much most of the men around me hated, really hated, being there. As far as I could tell, nobody seemed to enjoy, in the way that I understood the word, anything that happened during the entire afternoon. Within minutes of the kick-off there was real anger ('You're a DISGRACE, Gould. He's a DISGRACE!' A hundred quid a week? A HUNDRED QUID A WEEK! They should give that to me for watching you. '); as the game went on, the anger turned to outrage, and then seemed to curdle into sullen, silent discontent. Yes, yes, I know all the jokes. What else could I have expected at Highbury? But I went to Chelsea and to Tottenham and to Rangers, and saw the same thing: that the natural state of the football fan is bitter disappointment, no matter what

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the score.

40 I think we Arsenal fans know, deep down, that the football at Highbury has not often
been pretty and that therefore our reputation as the most boring team in the entire history of
the universe is not as mystifying as we pretend: yet when we have a successful side, much is
forgiven. The Arsenal team I saw that afternoon had been spectacularly unsuccessful for some
time. Indeed they had won nothing since the Coronation and this abject and unambiguous
45 failure was simply rubbing salt into the fans' stigmata. Many of those around us had the look
of men who had seen every game of every barren season. The fact that I was intruding on a
marriage that had gone disastrously sour lent my afternoon a particularly thrilling prurience
(if it had been a real marriage, children would have been barred from the ground): one partner
was lumbering around in a pathetic attempt to please, while the other turned his face to the
wall, too full of loathing to even watch. Those fans who could not remember the thirties
50 (although at the end of the sixties a good many of them could), when the club won five
Championships and two FA Cups, could remember the Comptons and Joe Mercer from just
over a decade before; the stadium itself, with its beautiful art deco stands and its Jacob
Epstein busts, seemed to disapprove of the current mob even as much as my neighbours did.

Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch*, London: Gollancz, 1992

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DOCUMENT B

Now that the brief visit of the Dynamo football team has come to an end, it is possible to say publicly what many thinking people were saying privately before the Dynamos ever arrived. That is, that sport is an unfailing cause of ill-will, and that if such a visit as this had any effect at all on Anglo-Soviet relations, it could only be to make them slightly worse than before.

5 Even the newspapers have been unable to conceal the fact that at least two of the four matches played led to much bad feeling. At the Arsenal match, I am told by someone who was there, a British and a Russian player came to blows and the crowd booed the referee. The Glasgow match, someone else informs me, was simply a free-for-all from the start. And then there was the controversy, typical of our nationalistic age, about the composition of the Arsenal team. Was it really an all-England team, 10 as claimed by the Russians, or merely a league team, as claimed by the British? And did the Dynamos end their tour abruptly in order to avoid playing an all-England team? As usual, everyone answers these questions according to his political predilections. Not quite everyone, however. I noted with interest, as an instance of the vicious passions that football provokes, that the sporting correspondent of the Russophile *News Chronicle* took the anti-Russian line and maintained that Arsenal was NOT an 15 all-England team. No doubt the controversy will continue to echo for years in the footnotes of history books. Meanwhile the result of the Dynamos' tour, in so far as it has had any result, will have been to create fresh animosity on both sides.

And how could it be otherwise? I am always amazed when I hear people saying that sport creates goodwill between the nations, and that if only the common peoples of the world could meet 20 one another at football or cricket, they would have no inclination to meet on the battlefield. Even if one didn't know from concrete examples (the 1936 Olympic Games, for instance) that international sporting contests lead to orgies of hatred, one could deduce it from general principles.

Nearly all the sports practised nowadays are competitive. You play to win, and the game has little meaning unless you do your utmost to win. On the village green, where you pick up sides and no feeling of local patriotism is involved, it is possible to play simply for the fun and exercise: but as soon 25 as the question of prestige arises, as soon as you feel that you and some larger unit will be disgraced if you lose, the most savage combative instincts are aroused. Anyone who has played even in a school football match knows this. At the international level sport is frankly mimic warfare. But the significant thing is not the behaviour of the players but the attitude of the spectators: and, behind the spectators, of 30 the nations who work themselves into furies over these absurd contests, and seriously believe — at any rate for short periods — that running, jumping and kicking a ball are tests of national virtue.

Even a leisurely game like cricket, demanding grace rather than strength, can cause much ill-will, as we saw in the controversy over body-line bowling and over the rough tactics of the Australian team that visited England in 1921. Football, a game in which everyone gets hurt and every nation has 35 its own style of play which seems unfair to foreigners, is far worse. Worst of all is boxing. One of the most horrible sights in the world is a fight between white and coloured boxers before a mixed audience. But a boxing audience is always disgusting, and the behaviour of the women, in particular, is such that the army, I believe, does not allow them to attend its contests. At any rate, two or three years ago, when Home Guards and regular troops were holding a boxing tournament, I was placed on guard 40 at the door of the hall, with orders to keep the women out.

In England, the obsession with sport is bad enough, but even fiercer passions are aroused in young countries where games playing and nationalism are both recent developments. In countries like India or Burma, it is necessary at football matches to have strong cordons of police to keep the crowd from invading the field. In Burma, I have seen the supporters of one side break through the police and 45 disable the goalkeeper of the opposing side at a critical moment. The first big football match that was

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played in Spain about fifteen years ago led to an uncontrollable riot. As soon as strong feelings of rivalry are aroused, the notion of playing the game according to the rules always vanishes. People want to see one side on top and the other side humiliated, and they forget that victory gained through cheating or through the intervention of the crowd is meaningless. Even when the spectators don't
50 intervene physically they try to influence the game by cheering their own side and "rattling" opposing players with boos and insults. Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting.

55 Instead of blah-blahing about the clean, healthy rivalry of the football field and the great part played by the Olympic Games in bringing the nations together, it is more useful to inquire how and why this modern cult of sport arose. Most of the games we now play are of ancient origin, but sport does not seem to have been taken very seriously between Roman times and the nineteenth century. Even in the English public schools the games cult did not start till the later part of the last century. Dr
60 Arnold, generally regarded as the founder of the modern public school, looked on games as simply a waste of time. Then, chiefly in England and the United States, games were built up into a heavily-financed activity, capable of attracting vast crowds and rousing savage passions, and the infection spread from country to country. It is the most violently combative sports, football and boxing, that have spread the widest. There cannot be much doubt that the whole thing is bound up with the rise of
65 nationalism — that is, with the lunatic modern habit of identifying oneself with large power units and seeing everything in terms of competitive prestige. Also, organised games are more likely to flourish in urban communities where the average human being lives a sedentary or at least a confined life, and does not get much opportunity for creative labour. In a rustic community a boy or young man works
70 off a good deal of his surplus energy by walking, swimming, snowballing, climbing trees, riding horses, and by various sports involving cruelty to animals, such as fishing, cock-fighting and ferreting for rats. In a big town one must indulge in group activities if one wants an outlet for one's physical strength or for one's sadistic impulses. Games are taken seriously in London and New York, and they were taken seriously in Rome and Byzantium: in the Middle Ages they were played, and probably played with much physical brutality, but they were not mixed up with politics nor a cause of group
hatreds.

75 If you wanted to add to the vast fund of ill-will existing in the world at this moment, you could hardly do it better than by a series of football matches between Jews and Arabs, Germans and Czechs, Indians and British, Russians and Poles, and Italians and Jugoslavs, each match to be watched by a mixed audience of 100,000 spectators. I do not, of course, suggest that sport is one of the main causes of international rivalry; big-scale sport is itself, I think, merely another effect of the causes that have
80 produced nationalism. Still, you do make things worse by sending forth a team of eleven men, labelled as national champions, to do battle against some rival team, and allowing it to be felt on all sides that whichever nation is defeated will "lose face".

I hope, therefore, that we shan't follow up the visit of the Dynamos by sending a British team to the USSR. If we must do so, then let us send a second-rate team which is sure to be beaten and
85 cannot be claimed to represent Britain as a whole. There are quite enough real causes of trouble already, and we need not add to them by encouraging young men to kick each other on the shins amid the roars of infuriated spectators.

George Orwell, "The Sporting Spirit", text which appeared in *The Tribune*, 1945

http://www.orwell.ru/library/articles/spirit/english/e_spirit

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DOCUMENT C



Angus McBride, *The Man and the Moment: Tommy Atkins -- His First Christmas at the Front*.
British and German soldiers hold a Christmas truce during the Great War. Original artwork from
children's magazine *Look and Learn* no. 415 (27 December 1969). Gouache on illustration board, size
unknown