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**AN EXPLORATION OF THE HISTORY OF WEIGHTLIFTING AS A  
REFLECTION OF THE MAJOR SOCIO-POLITICAL EVENTS AND TRENDS  
OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

A CASE STUDY  
by  
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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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in  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 2: THE RISE OF NATIONALISM 1815-1914 .....	4
EUROCENTRISM DOMINATES THE 19 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY .....	4
Balance of Power Politics .....	4
The Industrial Revolution .....	6
WEIGHTLIFTING .....	10
The Strongman Era .....	11
The Development of the Barbell .....	11
The Golden Age of Professional Strongmen .....	12
Worker Sport and The Turner Movement .....	14
Nationalistic Influences .....	15
The British Role .....	17
What Constitutes a World Championship? .....	20
Attempts at International Organization and Unity .....	21
The Importance of Cultural Support .....	21
New Attempts at International Regulation .....	22
CHAPTER 3: GLOBAL CONFLICT 1914-1945 .....	24
WORLD EVENTS .....	24
Return to Normalcy: The Roaring Twenties .....	24
The Toll of The War .....	24
The United States .....	25
The Soviet Union and Germany .....	27

Prelude to War: The Thirties .....	29
Problems Develop .....	29
Tensions Escalate .....	31
World War II .....	31
WEIGHTLIFTING .....	32
A New Beginning for the Olympics and Weightlifting .....	33
Worker Sport, the Turner Movement, and Alternatives to the Bourgeois Olympics .....	35
Rivals to the Bourgeois Olympics .....	35
Developments in the Soviet Union .....	37
A Glimpse Into the Future of Weightlifting .....	38
Egypt .....	39
Weightlifting Develops in America .....	40
The Tense 30's .....	41
Bob Hoffman and America Rise to the Top .....	41
“It Was Their Finest Hour” .....	43
The Debate Over the Berlin Olympics .....	44
The Olympic Year .....	46
Prelude to War .....	47
The War Years .....	49
OUTLIERS .....	50
Egypt .....	50
Japan .....	53

The United States (pre-1932) .....	55
CHAPTER 4: THE COLD WAR YEARS 1945-1990 .....	57
WORLD EVENTS .....	58
The Divisive Issues .....	58
The Period of Increasing Tension .....	60
The Effects of Decolonization of Africa-Asia .....	61
Mutual Co-Existence .....	63
Afghanistan .....	64
Germany Reunites as the Soviet Union Disintegrates .....	65
WEIGHTLIFTING .....	67
Opposing Views of Amateurism .....	68
Politics and Propaganda .....	75
The Emergence of the Third World .....	82
Gender and Racial Equality .....	84
Sociologically Deviant Behavior Patterns .....	87
The Search for the "Secret" .....	87
The Cultural Revolution .....	90
The Clean Up .....	94
CHAPTER 5: THE MODERN ERA 1991-PRESENT .....	96
WORLD EVENTS .....	96
WEIGHTLIFTING .....	98
Commodification of Athletes .....	99

The Ongoing Drug Problem .....	100
Gender and Racial Equality .....	103
The U.S. View of Amateurism Evolves .....	104
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY .....	107



## PREFACE

The Industrial Revolution caused a number of changes throughout society, including the availability of time for the pursuit of leisure activities, such as sport. Some of our most popular sports - such as basketball, baseball, and volleyball - came into existence during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is also true of weightlifting, which is one of the most popular sports internationally. Sports in general are reflective of many aspects of society. Weightlifting, in particular, has been a vehicle for - and mirror of - change, cultural tension, and socio-political events. The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of this relationship.

A number of individuals have provided invaluable assistance in making this work complete and accurate. Rudy Sablo and Artie Dreschler, although from different eras, have both been nationally active competitors, administrators, and referees in the sport over a period of many years and both have been very kind in sharing their recollections. Mark Cameron and Norbert Schemansky, two of America's most successful and well known weightlifting champions - both of whom have made a fair share of history themselves, shared their perceptions and recollections. In Mark's case, he was helpful in putting me in touch with others as well. Gerry Willis, Jan Dellinger, and Joe Roark are each, to some extent, recognized historians in this area and they have shared information from their archives, tracked down information and sources, put me in touch with others, and filled in gaps in my knowledge. Precious McKenzie, a former Olympian, was kind enough to consent to an interview. Diane Roy was able to translate certain original documents from their native German for me. The direction, guidance, and support of my readers, Reed Coughlan and Brian Richardson, has been an integral part of this process. I am eternally grateful to these individuals.

## ABSTRACT

The 20<sup>th</sup> century can be discussed from the perspective of a number of specific events resulting from paradigmatic shifts in the struggle for sociopolitical power. These include World War I, the emergence of the United States as a world power (Nye, 1993, p. 58), World War II (Nye, 1993, p. 100; Rourke, 2000, p. xv), the Cold War (Nye, 1993, p. 103-105), the nascent industrialization of the Third World, the collapse of several communist states, the growth of the technology and service industries, and the increasingly global nature of the economy at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Rourke, 2000, xv-xix). These paradigmatic shifts have been reflected generally in the history of the sport of weightlifting.

This thesis is a speculative case study of the apparent relationship between international sociopolitical events and events within the sport of weightlifting, including an exploration of the possible roots of this relationship. There will also be a discussion of countries that do not fit the proposed model and an attempt will be made to account for these outliers. The entire discussion of the relationship between paradigmatic shifts in international politics and the sport of weightlifting will be considered in the context of Pope's conceptualization of sport as a vehicle for and mirror of change in modern society.

## DEDICATION

Almost from the instant I first learned of weightlifting as an organized sport over a quarter of a century ago, I knew of Rudy Sablo. In the beginning, all I knew was that he was a referee in both powerlifting and weightlifting and that he tended to be strict in his enforcement of the rules. Eventually I came to know the man personally and to realize the extent of his contributions to this sport: former national chairman, Category I International Referee, devised the national referees test in the U.S., helped organize the Empire State Games in the 1970's, helped get the AAU Jr. Olympics program started - I could go on forever. Rudy was already very old when I came to know him, but he acted so young that I - like most others - just kind of assumed that he would, in fact, go on forever. Of course, none of us do and Rudy passed away in February of 2003.

Rudy's sixty-five year involvement in this sport, and the fact that he had been an eyewitness to a good share of the sports history, gave him a perspective that no other living person shared. I made it my personal mission to tap into that perspective as much as possible in my research for this thesis. Rudy agreed to be interviewed, but only on the condition that he get to review a draft of this work for factual errors and misrepresentations of his statements prior to publication. I saw Rudy's reputation as a stickler for details and perfection as a guarantee that this thesis would be as accurate as a historical account of the sport as humanly possible. Unfortunately, he passed away before giving me any indication of what he thought of the early draft I had given him. I hope it met with his approval.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The study of sport has been linked to an increased understanding of international politics, military strength, culture, history and society. For example, Pierre de Coubertin, the driving force behind the Olympic revival at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, believed not only that sport plays a role in international politics, but also that those nations which are best in sports are also the strongest militarily (Kruger, 1997, p. 88). Woeltz (1977, p. 307) suggests that sport and exercise and the roles attributed to - and envisaged for - them “can document times and mentalities as suggestively as can their industrial enterprises”, but admits that the “study of sport in [the]19th-20th centur[ies]...as a form of modern popular culture has only recently attracted the interest of historians”. Woeltz (1977, p. 307) further notes that “the role of play, physical education, and sport in a society always tells us something about that society”. Indeed, Woeltz (1977, p. 309) indicates “the history of physical culture becomes...an integrated element of a comprehensive structural history of industrial civilization”.

It seems that the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the whole of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been a time of socio-political upheaval and change, as exemplified by the Industrial Revolution, World Wars I and II, the Cold War, the emergence of the Third World, the counterculture revolution of the 1960's, and the struggles for gender and racial equality. Since sport, as a whole, can be used to study such issues as international politics, military strength, culture, history, and society, it follows that the study of a specific sport might accomplish the same ends. In that regard, this thesis is a speculative study exploring the relationship between the socio-political events and trends of the past one

hundred fifty years or so and the various shifts within the sport of weightlifting, and the extent to which the latter is reflective of the former. The questions to be answered specifically are:

1. Has the sport of weightlifting been reflective of international politics?
2. Have the nations which have been the best in weightlifting been the strongest militarily?
3. Has success in the sport of weightlifting correlated to the extent to which that nation is industrialized?
4. Can the sport of weightlifting document times and mentalities?
5. Does the state of the sport at a particular time reflect the major events and trends of that time?

This project, by definition, is of an interdisciplinary nature and so, too, was the literature search. Published works on the history of the sport of weightlifting, the history of sport in general, and world history over the past one hundred fifty years or so were reviewed. Theses and dissertations relative to the history of weightlifting have been published by Todd, Kutzer, and Willis, while articles on the same topic by Starr, Fair, Todd, Paul, Wilhelm and others have appeared in scholarly journals. Fair, Schodl, Webster, and Willoughby have each published full length books on the history of sport. An overall perspective of the role of sport during this time period can be developed through developing a familiarity with the published works of Kruger, Riordan, Dyreson, Wright, Kyle, Krammer, Murray and others. The major historical issues of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have been discussed by Nye, Rourke, Roberts, Pearlman, and Dulles among others.

The time period that will be discussed herein can be divided into the following distinct chronological blocks: pre-World War I nationalism, the era of global conflict, the cold war years, and the modern era. Each of these time periods will be represented in a separate chapter. Within each chapter, the major socio-political events will be covered first, followed by a discussion of major happenings in the sport of weightlifting and how these events have played out in the sport. The final chapter will be a summary and will return to the questions posed above and see if they have been answered.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE RISE OF NATIONALISM 1815-1914

#### EUROCENTRISM DOMINATES THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

##### Balance of Power Politics

The 1815 Congress of Vienna set up a multipolar system with the five major European powers that became known as the Great Powers (Prussia [Germany], Great Britain, France, Austria-Hungary, and Russia) balancing each other and determining much of what happened in Europe and the rest of the world throughout the remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Nye, 1993, p. 32). There were various shifting alliances, but the overall balance and stability of the system were maintained for more than half a century.

French revolutions in 1830, however, contributed to a more liberal France while the 1832 Reform Act in Great Britain increased the size and influence of the middle-class British politics. This led to a situation where the more democratic Britain and France were increasingly aligned against the monarchies of Russia, Prussia and Austria, thus preserving the balance of power and separating the two halves of Europe (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 72). The Depression of 1873 caused an increase in tariffs and the decline of international trade, and led to a resumption/escalation of European colonization in an attempt to cultivate colonial markets for industrial products, and altering the entire economic trading system (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 72).

German unification came about as a result of war and the guidance of Otto Von Bismarck in the 1860's. Bismarck sought to ensure German security through the cultivation of alliances with Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Italy (Roberts, 1993, p. 397). By 1871, Germany had replaced

France as the dominant European nation, having humiliated France in setting the terms of their “peace” in 1871 and creating a deep desire for revenge in the hearts of the French (Roberts, 1993, p. 396). Because of the careful work of Bismarck in cultivating relationships with other European nations (including Britain), France initially had no ally with which to pursue retaliation against Germany (Roberts, 1993, p. 397).

Great Britain and the United States pursued policies of noninvolvement in European affairs for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, primarily as a function of their physical isolation from the continent. In fact, the Great Powers in general preferred to obtain needed food and raw materials from less developed areas and colonial possessions. Nonetheless, Britain stood out on the basis of the extent of their desire for isolation. Rosecrance (1992, p. 68) has suggested that Britain “wanted to make its empire a unit largely independent of trade with the rest of the world”.

Europe, as a whole, remained relatively disinterested in the affairs of the U.S. for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Roberts, 1993, p. 397). The huge export market for cotton had largely driven the need for slaves in the U.S.. Eventually, the further import of slaves was made illegal and, by 1860, the majority of slaves were actually American-born (Roberts, 1993, p. 375). Disagreements over the continuation and expansion of slavery ultimately led to the Civil War. The death toll from the Civil War was greater than the U.S. has ever suffered in a foreign war (Roberts, 1993, p. 377).

### **The Industrial Revolution**

British industrialization, expansion, and prosperity led the way during the Victorian Era (1837-1901) and ensured Britain's position of prominence in Europe. The other Great Powers soon followed suit and European industrialization and imperialism simultaneously rose to peak levels between 1870 and 1914 (Nye, 1993, p. 48). The leading industrial powers at the turn of the century



were Great Britain, Germany, and the United States and the latter nations had passed Britain in terms of industrialization by 1890 (Jones, 1996, p. 98; Nye, 1993, p. 53, 59; Riordan, 1996, p. 8). Industrialization led to shorter work days, increasing the amount of leisure time available and providing opportunities for the socialization aspects of that time. Since the more fit and mentally rejuvenated the worker was, the greater the productivity of that worker was likely to be, industrialists tended to favor the promotion of sport (Palbrant, 1996, p. 121).

The abolition of serfdom in 1861 paved the way for the industrial and urban development of Russia (Riordan, 1977, p. 9). By about 1890, the agrarian base of Czarist Russia began to increasingly yield to the processes of industrialization and urbanization, driven by advances in transportation, protective tariffs, and growing foreign loans (Riordan, 1996, p. 44). By the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Russian industrial output was growing at a faster rate than any other European nation (Roberts, 1993, p. 428). A Russian industrial crisis in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to a decline in urban living standards which “caused a rash of strikes, both economic and political, and increasing violence” (Riordan, 1977, p. 32). Unrest led to attempts to overthrow the Russian monarch and the assassination of the Prime Minister and a Grand Duke. In response, government troops shot over a thousand demonstrators in 1905 (Riordan, 1977, p. 32).

Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, four distinct threats of European dominance and the Balance of Power system emerged: 1) the unification of Germany (Nye, 1993, p. 33, 57); 2) the growing tide of nationalism (Nye, 1993, p. 34); 3) the formation of various alliances (Nye, 1993, p. 48); and 4) the increasingly aggressive nature of German and Russian nationalistic ambitions (Dulles, 1954, p. 59; Nye, 1993, p. 33-34, 48, 57). German unification was important because of its location in the strategically important center of Europe and the lack of natural borders, and was a result of the growing sense of nationalism sweeping Europe at that time.

A number of treaties and alliances helped split Europe into two ideologically opposed camps. Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy formed the Triple Alliance in 1882 and Britain, France, and Russia ultimately responded through a series of looser arrangements, beginning with the 1894 agreement between France and Russia (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 27). The Anglo-French Agreement of April 1904 was a pledge of mutual diplomatic support regarding Egypt and Morocco by Britain and France (Nye, 1993, p. 48; Wilson, 1996, p. 227-228). In 1907, England and Russia also signed an agreement of mutual protection and support (Nye, 1993, p. 48; Wilkinson, 2002, p. 27). The British-French alliance was modified in November 1912 to provide for mutual action in the case of an unprovoked attack by a third Power (Wilson, 1996, p. 228). Finally, in August of 1914, the British cabinet authorized the foreign secretary to authorize the British fleet to protect the French coasts and shipping interests in the event of hostile operations by the German fleet (Wilson, 1996, p. 228).

Dulles (1954, p. 59-60) indicates that peace conferences "were held at The Hague in 1899 and 1907" and further notes that the constant threat to England and the United States arising from German imperialism created a bond that "became a vital factor in the international alignments of the twentieth century". President Theodore Roosevelt "fully sensed the growing dangers to peace as an insurgent Germany continued to threaten the existing balance of power...[and] was resolved to exercise American influence, so far as it could be done without commitment to force, in maintaining world equilibrium" (Dulles, 1954, p. 77). Finally, Dulles (1954, p. 60) maintains that the U.S. was, in fact, inextricably part of European political affairs despite widespread belief among Americans that they were somehow not part of the power politics game and that this had increasingly dangerous consequences.

There was tremendous “social and economic transformation” in the United States during this period, including the emergence of a “national market,...new communications and transportation systems, ...[and] assembly line technologies which produced consumer items” (Dyreson, 1989, p. 271). Dyreson (1989, p. 271) goes on to note that “scientific management, time and motion study designed factories, and the giant corporate dimensions of the big businesses designed to serve a consuming public” also took shape in the early part of the century. By 1907, Henry Ford - who had helped revolutionize “the relationship between the mode of production and the masses” - had made public his intention to manufacture a car for the man on the street (Dyreson, 1989, p. 271).

Industrialization generally resulted in profound changes in the social structure of life, including urbanization, the rise of the working class, the expansion of the middle classes, and the emergence of women’s rights (Lindaman, 2000, p. 779). Advances in communication and transportation included the telephone, automobile, and airplane, all of which served to increase the rate of change and the speed of life as well. Ongoing social, cultural, and economic changes ultimately led to increased expression of cultural anxieties (Lindaman, 2000, p. 779).

By 1914, the foundation of European civilization itself was beginning to crack and come under increasing pressure, due to increasing nationalism and agitation, and many of the leaders of the great powers acknowledges and accepted that Europe was heading toward a great war (Roberts, 1999, p. 169, 205-206).

Shifts in the political power, and thinking, of the German and Russian governments changed the nature of the interactions between these two “great powers” and helped exacerbate this procession (Lebow, 2000, p. 597). Dissatisfaction over living conditions, a desire on the part of more peasants to be landowners, the presence of various revolutionary elements, and the

industrialization and urbanization of Russia culminated in the 1905 Revolution, led to an increased protection of the civil rights of Russians, and set the stage for the later struggle (Riordan, 1996, p. 44). Russia's loss to Japan in the war of 1904-1905 combined with the 1905 Revolution were signs of the growing disenfranchisement of the middle class, and growing support for a revolution, which made Russian leaders fearful of the foreign and domestic costs of another foreign policy defeat (Lebow, 2000, p. 595). Eventually, in 1917, the Czar abdicated and a provisional government was set up. This was a case of too little too late, however, and the provisional government was soon toppled by the Bolsheviks (communists), a process which took a few years for completion (Roberts, 1993, p. 434-435).

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Schlieffen Plan for a German war against Russia and France was formulated, gambling on the fact that the Russian Army would take longer to mobilize because of their lack of industrialization and allowing the Germans time for a quick invasion and defeat of France prior to switching focus to Russia (Roberts, 1993, p. 428). Germany feared that Russian industrialization would make such a war plan unworkable in the near future (Lebow, 2000, p. 595). Lebow (2000, p. 597) notes that "Russia's improved military and mobilization capability...was [at least partially] the result of Russian industrialization". Balkan instability threatened the overall security and internal stability of Austria-Hungary, which viewed war with Serbia as a means of dealing with these threats.

All that was needed was a catalyst, which ultimately came in the unlikely form of an Austrian Archduke who was opposed to such a war. Franz Ferdinand, heir apparent to the Austro-Hungarian throne, had not been a supporter of going to war with Russia or Serbia, and felt that such a war might end with the overthrowing of either or both monarchies (Lebow, 2000, p. 599). Austria-Hungary exploited his assassination in 1914 by a Serbian nationalist to initiate a war with

Serbia, which brought the various nationalistic forces that had been threatening to divide Europe through much of the previous decade to a head (Lebow, 2000, p. 594). Lebow (2000, p. 610) further indicates that Austrian leaders went to war on principal, without a plan to deal with Serbia and Russia simultaneously, and realizing they needed German assistance in a long war.

World War I led to profound transformation of the international political and economic system and has been described as the defining event in shaping the twentieth century (Lebow, 2000, p. 591). Additionally, it has helped subsequent generations of political scientists to hone and refine their theories on conflict and international relations (Lebow, 2000, p. 591).

## **WEIGHTLIFTING**

The previously noted industrialization and urbanization of society, along with a growing sense of nationalism created an opportunity for individuals to participate in sport, including weightlifting, because they now had leisure time available. Weightlifting began to develop along nationalistic lines as a separate entity from professional strongmen toward the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Schodl (1992, p. 8) suggests that “a flashback into the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century” will allow one to trace how “various lines of force...result[ed]...in the establishment of an international weightlifting federation recognized all over the world”.

### **The Strongman Era**

#### *The Development of the Barbell*

While dumbbells had been around for quite some time, J. Todd (1995, p. 10) and J. Svub (2000, p. 67) both note that the first spherical ended barbells appear in an 1854 illustration in a book. George Barker Windship patented and sold exercise equipment from 1865 to 1873, appears to have

invented shot loading weights, and patented the first plate loading dumbbells in 1865 (J. Todd, 1995, p. 12). By the 1870's, the huge solid globed barbells in vogue in Germany only a few years earlier had given way to hollow globed ends which could be filled through a time-consuming process with sand or lead, but this did not lend itself to standard increments (J. Svub, 2000, p. 68; J. Todd, 1995, p. 12). Svub (2000, p. 68) has indicated that these bars did not revolve and often had diameters of 32 to 70 millimeters (roughly 1 ½ to 3 inches). Exposed plate loaded barbells were first introduced by Josef Markl in 1889 (J. Todd, 1995, p. 13). Svub (2000, p. 68) suggests it was Britain's Thomas Inch who developed the first oil bath revolving handle. W.A. Pullman, also from Britain, put sleeves on the bar, allowing the handle grips to revolve (Svub, 2000, p. 68).

In considering the feats of weightlifters and strongmen of this era, one must keep in mind that they were achieved using shot loaded barbells, equipment with a significantly thicker diameter than is customary today, or block weights (Desbonnet, 1997, p. 27; Schodl, 1992, p. 64; Svub, 2000, p. 68; Willoughby, 1970). These factors definitely increase the difficulty of any lift and limit the amount of weight that can be lifted in a given manner. In 1908, German Franz Veltum produced a disc barbell. The prototypical "Olympic" revolving barbell with bearings was designed by Veltum and produced by the Berg company in 1910 (Schodl, 1992, p. 65; Svub, 2000, p. 68).

### *The Golden Age of the Professional Strongman*

The latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was really the "Golden Era" of professional strongmanism and there was a great interest in human strength capabilities among the general public (J. Todd, 1993, p. 4). Paul (1983, p. 41) indicated this was a "time of growth for cities, a period when mortality and social values were being challenged, and a time of

increased health concerns". The circus was "an important cultural event" during this time and strongmen of the era were often associated with circuses (J. Todd, 1993, p. 5).

In 1859, Harvard-educated Dr. G. B. Windship, who was commonly referred to as the "American Sampson" in newspaper accounts of his performances, embarked on a lecture tour across North America on the health benefits of strength, which was said to revive public interest in physical education (Paul, 1983, p. 47). Representatives of the scientific, literary, legal and medical professions frequently attended Windship's lectures (Paul, 1983, p. 48). Windship gave his final lecture in April of 1861, as the Civil War forced a curtailment of his activities, but continued to teach and to treat his medical patients, remained an influential and sought-out advocate of the benefits of strength training, and opened a combination medical practice/gymnasium in Boston in 1867 (Paul, 1983, p. 48-49).

The extent of Windship's influence on weightlifting becomes more obvious when one considers the contributions of two of his disciples, William B. Curtis and Bob Roberts. Curtis, the first internationally known American weightlifter, would go on to help found the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), which eventually governed the sport of weightlifting in this country for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (T. Todd, 1966, p. 168; Webster, 1976, p. 28). Bob Roberts is widely recognized as "one of the most important personalities in the history of" the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) (Paul, 1983, p. 55). Thus, Windship's disciples influenced two organizations, the YMCA and the AAU, which would later become almost synonymous with weightlifting. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a proliferation of professional strongmen, although none ever captured the attention of the general and professional public as had Windship (Paul, 1983, p. 57).

There were many "strongmen" on the performing circuit who were charlatans claiming to perform great feats of strength, but using trickery instead (Buck, 1997, p. 18). These tricks caused

legitimate sportsmen to want to distinguish themselves from the professional strongmen of the day. There was a resurgence of interest in professional strongmen during the period of 1889 to 1897 due to the feats of two of the most legitimate strongmen of that or any era - Louis Cyr and Apollon (T. Todd, 1966, p. 121, 124).

Cyr, a French-Canadian, toured Europe and North America from 1892 to 1896, and remained unbeaten against a virtual Who's Who of 19<sup>th</sup> century strongmen including Donald Dinnie, the McCann brothers, and August Johnson (Buck, 1997, p. 19). Apollon was a stage name of the French strongman, Louis Uni, who would have provided a challenge to Cyr that could only have enhanced the reputation of both men. Apollon peaked during the period 1889-1901 and was widely believed to be the strongest man in the world of his era, with the possible exception of Cyr (Desbonnet, 1997, p. 25; T. Todd, 1966, p. 124). In short, both Cyr and Apollon were dominant and authentic strongmen, hampered greatly by the lack of modern equipment and techniques, who performed feats of strength any modern lifter would have great difficulty matching under the same conditions and paved the way for future generations of weightlifting. Disregarding the achievements of these great athletes on the basis of their supposed professionalism seems a bit arbitrary, especially in light of the current state of the sport.

### **Worker Sport and the Turner Movement**

Friedrich Jahn founded Turnen (German gymnastics or what we would call calisthenics) after the French defeat of the Prussian Army in 1806 (Magdalinski, 1995, p. 63). The Turner Method of physical education emphasized gymnastics, holistic physical culture, and the importance of participation over ability, and was seen as a means of self-development, and as the forerunner of



individual sports such as weightlifting (Kruger, 1998, p. 57; Willis, 1995, p. 8). Ueberhorst (1976, p. 6) notes that "Jahn believed that Turnen should be a medium of national education".

The first Turner Association was formed in 1848 as an attempt to stand for liberty and equality and to combat tyranny, so the Turner Movement was as much a political movement as anything (Kruger, 1996, p. 3). Then large numbers of immigrants arrived in the U.S. fleeing the German Revolution of 1848, they brought the German cultural tradition of Turner sport, which then became institutionalized by YMCA's throughout the country (Kruger, 1996, p. 3; Willis, 1995, p. 8-9). The Deutsche Turnerschaft (DT), a new Turner organization, was formed in 1859 and grew rapidly due to the nationalist enthusiasm sweeping Germany (Kruger, 1996, p. 4). Ueberhorst (1976, p. 6) contends that "The German Turner Festivals, established in 1860 at Coburg, were intended to function as a folk festival equal to the ancient Olympic Games". Despite these delusions of grandeur, this did not happen, but may have paved the way for subsequent attempts.

Worker Sport, in general, was open to all workers, regardless of sex or race. Riordan (1996, p. vii) notes that this was a viable "alternative to...commercialism, chauvinism, and the obsession with starts and records...and set the foundation for a true working class culture". The importance of this movement to international sport in general, as well as its relevance to the specific topic of this paper, will become apparent soon enough.

Those cities in Germany that had contacts with, or large populations of, the British began to see the arrival of sports popular in that country by the turn of the century (Kruger, 1996, p. 8). Whereas the Turner Movement had been associated with well-rounded athleticism and general fitness and was generally opposed to competitive sport of any kind, the British approach emphasized competition and record breaking (Kruger, 1996, p. 8).

Woeltz (1977, p. 296) notes the emergence and growth of a number of various sport specific national organizations in Germany towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A few years prior to World War I, most sports in Germany had separate worker sport organizations devoted solely to that sport. For example, the German Athletic Association - which oversaw weightlifting in Germany - had a membership of more than 300 clubs and more than 12, 000 athletes by this time (T. Todd, 1966, p. 54; Schodl, 1992, p. 38). These organizations were consolidated into the Central Committee for Worker Sport and Physical Fitness by 1912 (Kruger, 1996, p. 4, 12). By the start of World War I, the Turner Movement had nearly 200, 000 members (Kruger, 1996, p. 6).

### **Nationalistic Influences**

Weightlifting began to develop along nationalistic lines as a separate entity from professional strongmen toward the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example Ueberhorst (1976, p. 9) notes that the vast majority of the 1894 Paris Congress, convened with the intent of reviving the Olympics, was spent dealing with defining what constitutes amateurism. Ueberhorst (1976, p. 9) notes that the Philhellenic movement tended to glorify the ancient Olympics and the concept of amateurism, and that this played a large role in influencing the thoughts of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who in turn influenced the Olympic movement and sports in general. In fact, Lucas (1976, p. 17) suggests that "Coubertin...[felt] that English 'Muscular Christianity' had profoundly affected every military and political area of influence and power in that country".

Schodl (1992, p. 18) credits Germany and Austria as the sites of the first weightlifting clubs prior to 1880. Weightlifting was one of the few sports where workers enjoyed an edge over bourgeois sport, by virtue of the physical requirements (Kruger, 1996, p. 10). Schodl (1992, p. 21)

credits Vienna with the formation of the first national governing body for the sport in 1890 and London as the site of the first world championships in 1891.

Nationalistic fervor and cultural tension led many countries to proclaim their top strongman as the best but a lack of a consensus of exactly what weightlifting consisted of made comparisons difficult (Lindaman, 2000, p. 797). Willoughby (1981, p. 40) noted that by about 1885 or so, two distinct styles of lifting had emerged in Europe. The clean style of lifting was used by lifters from France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, and Scandinavia while the continental style was used by lifters from Germany, Austria-Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden (Svub, 2001, p. 88; Willoughby, 1981, p. 40). The Continental style allowed the barbell to rest at the waist prior to being taken to the shoulders, permitted unlimited back bend when pressing a weight overhead, and usually meant snatches were really semicircular swings (Willoughby, 1970, p. 88). Repetition lifting had initially been part of weightlifting competition in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Austria, but by 1906, it had lost appeal everywhere except Austria (Schodl, 1992, p. 48-49).

As early as 1895, Marquis Luigi Monticelli-Obizzi had been campaigning for the formation of "an international authoritative body, capable of eliminating the discrepancies between the different national traditions and codifying universally accepted rules for the official competitions" (Bonini, 2001, p. 78). It would be nearly a decade, however, before an attempt at an international organization in weightlifting was made.

### *The British Role*

English sport tended to emphasize team sports of an outdoor nature, and has subsequently evolved into professional sports with large spectator appeal (Willis, 1995, p. 8-9). Sports at the end

of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were divided between devotees of the highly nationalistic Turner sport and those favoring English imports such as “football, rugby, tennis, competitive swimming, and boxing” (Woeltz, 1977, p. 307).

In 1896, weightlifting was part of the first Modern Olympics in Athens (Schodl, 1992, p. 21). T. Todd (1966, p. 56) indicates only two lifts were contested on this occasion: the one and two arm versions of the clean and jerk. Britain's Launceston Elliot won the one arm lift with 156 ½ lbs. while Denmark's Viggo Jensen took the two hands event with a 245 lbs. effort (T. Todd, 1966, p. 56; Willoughby, 1970, p. 126). Notably, these lifts were well below the capabilities of both Cyr and Apollon, both of whom were at or near their peak strength at the time (T. Todd, 1966, p. 56, 122, 128). Furthermore, Schodl (1992, p. 21) indicates this contest did not carry the recognition in the weightlifting world that the Olympics carry today, which is corroborated by the absence of Wilhelm Turk, a future world champion, who was more than capable of winning this first Olympic competition if he had deemed it worth his time.

The British entered the weightlifting scene as a major player with the formation of the British Amateur Weightlifters Association (BAWLA) in 1911 (T. Todd, 1966, p. 57). This organization maintained records on 42 distinct lifts including those which were part of the continental and clean styles. Although this was only a national organization, these records were often accorded world record status.

### *What Constitutes a World Championship?*

The 1898 World Weightlifting Championships were held on July 31 and August 1 of that year in the Jubilee Coliseum in Vienna with contestants from Russia and France, as well as seven Viennese lifters (Roy original translation, 2002; T. Todd, 1966, p. 55). The event selection of this

contest favored the Viennese lifters, and this raised the ire of lifters and administrators alike, including Hackenschmidt of Russia (Schodl, 1992, p. 37; T. Todd, 1966, p. 55). While Turk, the official winner, was a tremendously strong man, an objective comparison tends to suggest that Hackenschmidt, who placed third, would come out on top in a contest where the events were not chosen to favor any one competitor. Hackenschmidt turned professional shortly after this contest, but in the sport of wrestling - not weightlifting (Willoughby, 1970, p. 74). In so doing, he began a trend that has continued, especially in the United States, right up to the 1996 Olympian Mark Henry.

The 1899 Milan World Championship was sponsored by the magazine *La Gazzetta dello Sport* and attracted approximately a dozen competitors representing Germany, Italy, and Russia (Svub, 2001, p. 88). It is noteworthy that the bent press and a repetition squat were among the events contested (Svub, 2001, p. 88). The 1903 Paris World Championships, with separate divisions for amateurs and professionals, was the next international meet. Points, not total poundage, determined the order of placing for the amateurs, while the professional division included competition in four events (Schodl, 1992, p. 35-36; Svub, 2001, p. 88). Whereas the 1898 and 1899 versions of this meet had been according to the continental rules, this meet was governed by the stricter clean style rules and there was a corresponding decrease in poundage lifted. For example, Eliseyev of Russia was successful with a one arm press of 165 lbs in 1899, but in 1903 he could manage only 110 lbs (Svub, 2001, p. 88).

The 1904 Vienna World Championships, consisting of eight movements heavily favoring the Viennese lifters, was again a source of controversy and resulted in disturbed relations between the upper echelons of Germany's and Austria's national federations (Schodl, 1992, p. 36-37). Josef Steinbach, of Austria, became the next in the line of Viennese champions and won this event

handily (Schodl, 1992, p. 45; Willoughby, 1970, p. 126). All of the top lifters chose to forego the 1904 Olympic Games in St. Louis, which consisted of two separate events: the two hands continental and jerk and a ten-event dumbbell competition (Kutzer, 1979, p. 21).

It was somewhat of a common occurrence to have multiple world championships for the next several years due to national pride, lack of diplomacy among the various national federations in their dealings with each other, lack of a sense of direction and purpose, and lack of recognition of the efforts and authority of others (Schodl, 1992, p. 36-37). In short, many of the same problems the world at large, and particularly Europe, were dealing with at that time (Schodl, 1992, p. 38).

#### *Attempts at International Organization and Unity*

Schodl (1992, p. 39) credits the 1905 Berlin World Championships as the first in which separate weight classes were contested: less than 148 lbs, 148-176 lbs, and more than 176 lbs. The 1905 Duisberg World Championships marked the formation of the "Amateur Athletic World Union" with Denmark, Germany, Holland, and Italy as charter members and eventually including the national federations of Switzerland, Sweden, and one of the national federations of Austria (Schodl, 1992, p. 40-44; Bonini, 2001, p. 79). Schodl (1992, p. 46) indicates certain decisions were made at this meeting, including what lifts were to be contested and organization of competition into three weight classes.

The weightlifting portion of the unofficial 1906 Olympics included athletes from eight countries. The two hand event was controversial, because the continental technique was not allowed and the bar used actually belonged to one of the competitors (T. Todd, 1966, p. 56-57; Willoughby, 1970, p. 84). Tofalos succeeded with 317 lbs, which Steinbach - although unable to clean that much - continentalled to his shoulders and then jerked it overhead for six repetitions (T.

Todd, 1966, p. 57; Willoughby, 1970, p. 84). Steinbach had been a three-time World Champion and now had one gold and one silver Olympic medal - marking the first time the top weightlifter in the world had competed in Olympic competition (Schodl, 1992, p. 45; T. Todd, 1966, p. 56-57; Willoughby, 1970, p. 83-84, 126). He was essentially a specialist in the Two Hands Continental Press and the Two Hands Continental Jerk - which was typical of the group of Viennese lifters that also included Wilhelm Turk, Josef Grafl, and Karl Swoboda, all of whom won World Championships and set world records.

In the meantime, the German administration of the World Union, as the new federation was commonly referred to, was making arbitrary decisions beyond the scope of its authority (Schodl, 1992, p. 51). The 1907 Frankfurt World Championships saw Germany withdraw from the World Union to the delight of France and Austria, as the strength of their position in the battle for early domination of the sport improved dramatically as a result of the withdrawal (Schodl, 1992, p. 61). Both Bonini (2001, p. 79) and Schodl (1992, p. 61) suggest that disputes between Italian and German administrators led to the collapse of the World Union in 1907.

### *The Importance of Cultural Support*

The next several years were a period of searching and lack of direction. When evaluating the lifting performances of Swoboda and the other Viennese greats, one must keep in mind that most of their lifts were made on inferior equipment and prior to the existence of the Berg barbell. In late 1911, Swoboda became the first man to ever lift 400 pounds from the ground to over his head without assistance, using the continental and jerk to elevate 409 pounds (Schodl, 1992, p. 65).

T. Todd (1966, p. 115) noted that "For any athlete to truly flourish, the people of the culture in which he lives must be so hospitable toward and conversant with his specific sport that they take

vicarious pleasure in his ability and glory in his triumphs". There is, perhaps, no better demonstration of the importance of this type of support than to compare the experiences of the Viennese lifters with that of Sergi Eliseyev.

A large monument honoring Steinbach erected in Vienna less than a year after his death was paid for through financial contributions by German and Austrian fans (Willoughby, 1970, p. 85). Grafl died in World War I, but was so popular that a contest was held in Vienna in his honor (Willoughby, 1970, p. 87). Swoboda was honored on an Austrian postage stamp in 1912 and his funeral procession in 1933 was said to have been witnessed by more than 50, 000 mourners (Willoughby, 1970, p. 90). The Viennese lifters, while perhaps not known by name, remain highly revered throughout the world because of their success and the support of their native culture.

In contrast, Eliseyev, the 1899 World Champion, soon found himself on the wrong side of the political divide in his native Russia. During 1904 and 1905, he actively participated as a revolutionary in opposition to the czar and the war with Japan. His fame as an athlete, combined with his revolutionary activities, made him a target for the government and he was eventually arrested and placed in hard labor. Because he had become an enemy of the czar, his accomplishments in weightlifting were actively suppressed for many years (Svub, 2001, p. 89). Even today, Eliseyev remains largely unknown - even among serious students of the history of the sport.

### **New Attempts at International Regulation**

The Stockholm Olympics in 1912 was the site of a meeting of representatives from twelve national federations for the purpose of again organizing an international federation to oversee the sport (Schodl, 1992, p. 67). This led to a constitutive assembly in Berlin in June in 1913 (Schodl,



1992, p. 69). One of the major achievements of this assembly was the approval of five weight classes ranging from under 60 kgs/132 lbs to over 82 ½ kgs/181 lbs (Schodl, 1992, p. 72). Membership in the International Amateur World Federation for Strength Athletics included fourteen nations (Schodl, 1992, p. 67, 73). Russia was not among them, however, and would not rejoin the international weightlifting community again for over thirty years.

In fact, the Olympic emphasis on the bourgeois concept of amateurism was rivaled by the proletarian concept of blue-collar or worker sport (Riordan, 1996, p. viii; Schodl, 1992, p. 90-91, 96). Jones (1996, p. 101) notes that “the first international worker sport conference [was held] in Ghent in 1913”. This led to the formation of the Lucerne Worker Sports International (LSI) in 1920 and, indirectly, to several attempts at competitions designed to mimic the Olympic and organizations designed to compete with the International Olympic Committee promoted by the Russians and other socialist states (Riordan, 1996, p. viii; Schodl, 1992, p. 90-91, 96). These competitions will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Kruger (1997, p. 85) notes that June of 1914 “marked the height of early twentieth century nationalism which led to the beginning of World War I”. Ironically, nationalism was also an important aspect of a number of events in the sports world during that same month, including the Olympic Congress, an IOC work session, and the first meeting of the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF)(Kruger, 1997, p. 85). Weightlifting was confirmed as an Olympic sport at these meetings held in Paris (Schodl, 1992, p. 73). The Olympic Congress also passed a rule at that time that stated an athlete “who has represented a country in the Olympic Games cannot represent in subsequent Olympic Games another country - unless the National Olympic Committee of the first country no longer exists” (Kruger, 1997, p. 91). World War I shifted the balance of

power in the world at large, sports in general, and the sport of weightlifting specifically. It also led to the demise of the second attempt to develop an international federation.

# CHAPTER 3

## GLOBAL CONFLICT 1914-1945

### WORLD EVENTS

This period encapsulated an extraordinary number of important historical events into a relatively narrow time frame: the two most devastating wars in the history of the world, a well-known period of economic prosperity, and an even more well known economic downturn. It was truly a time of global conflict and unrest.

#### **Return to Normalcy: The Roaring Twenties**

##### *The Toll of The War*

The First World War changed the world in terms of political structures (Roberts, 1999, p. 265-266), diminished Eurocentrism (Roberts, 1999, p. 239-243), the emergence of several independent small Baltic states (Roberts, 1999, p. 265-266, 292-293), and the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)(Roberts, 1999, p. 277). European industrialization meant this war was more mechanized than any previous war, resulting in a greater ability to end human life - or cause serious injury - than had been the case in the past, when the biggest killer had always been sickness (Roberts, 1993, p. 432). The toll of the war has been expressed in a number of ways, including loss of human life, the even greater number of wounded, the psychological and spiritual scarring of an entire generation, and the economic devastation of the manufacturing and transportation sectors of Europe (Nye, 1993, p. 58; Roberts, 1999, p. 266). Ultimately, the Allied forces of Great Britain, France, Russia, Japan, Italy, United States, and China were victorious over the Central Powers nations of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Turkey (Roberts, 1993, p. 432).

Starvation and disease accounted for an additional loss of more than a million lives during the war and shortly after, and led to the further debilitation of Europe (Roberts, 1999, p. 266).

The "Big 3" of the Great Britain, France and the United States set the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which was signed in June of 1919 (Roberts, 1999, p. 271-277). U.S. President Wilson called for a general coalition of non-aggressive nations dedicated to making aggression illegal and the deterrence of such aggression, and charged with the collective security of all nations - regardless of their size (Nye, 1993, P. 75). This conceptualization would come to be known as the League of Nations. Wilson made numerous concessions on other issues in order to keep this proposal intact, but could not drum up sufficient support in Congress for U.S. membership. Rosecrance (1992, p. 64) suggests the immediate post-war period, up to 1924, was a time of rule by central coalition internationally, in the form of the League of Nations. Ultimately the overall effectiveness of the League was compromised by the absence of the United States and the Soviet Union, although both nations eventually began to send observers to League meetings (Nye, 1993, p. 79).

### *The United States*

Dulles (1954, p. 144) notes that "[postwar] American foreign policy...represented a return to traditional isolationism" and that these policies "more than ever ignored the practical political responsibilities inherent in the nation's global position". President Harding had vowed to seek world disarmament, promote arbitration and meditation, and adhere to a policy of justice rather than force, but the U.S. remained isolated from political events in Europe and ultimately turned its back on Wilson's brainchild, the League of Nations (Dulles, 1954, p. 125-126).

The strength and leading role of the U.S. economy allowed it to finance gifts and loans that led to Europe's financial and economic rehabilitation and recovery from war, directly benefiting a

number of countries, but tying the economic well-being of Europe to U.S. industry, the repercussions of which would become apparent by the end of the decade (Dulles, 1954, p. 130-131). Americans as a whole finally became aware of cultural transformations resulting from decades of industrialization (Dyreson, 1989, p. 271-272). For example, people went from listening to the radio at home for entertainment to going out to motion pictures, which they got to in their new cars. They were inundated by revolutionary mass advertising enticing them to purchase further technological innovations at various chain stores using the installment plan. This transition spurred the American economy and indirectly made possible the European recovery from the war (Dyreson, 1989, p. 272).

The extension of credit to everyone, however, hampered the stability of financial institutions and, eventually, the nation's economic well-being. Nye (1993, p. 88) suggests that the major capitalist countries were unable "to establish effective international economic coordination to deal with imbalances in transactional trade and financial flows". This led to the dissipation of American foreign loans and investments and the U.S. stock market collapse in October of 1929, which became a global economic problem due to Europe's reliance on the U.S. economy for its own stability (Dulles, 1954, p. 132; Nye, 1993, p. 88; Roberts, 1999, p. 339). The Depression continued through the 1930's and was as much a description of the general outlook of people around the world as it was an economic statement (Roberts, 1999, p. 378). Nye (1993, p. 88) further notes that the depth and severity of the Depression in the 1930's was such that it gave rise to ideologies (communism, fascism, Nazism) that glorified aggression and made war an almost certainty.

### *The Soviet Union and Germany*

Germany and Russia<sup>1</sup> were not part of the immediate post war international community, albeit for different reasons.

Russia was very much in the midst of a transition and crisis in the immediate aftermath of World War I. Riordan (1977, p. 73) notes that “Russia was besieged by inclement climate, illiteracy, lagging industrialization, disease and starvation, and lack of knowledge of basic hygiene” by 1919. Riordan (1996, p. 45) notes that “the third Communist International (Comintern), set up in Moscow in March 1919, was, in intention, a single political party of which all worldwide communist parties were to be only ‘sections’, adjusting policies to a world revolutionary strategy determined in Moscow”. This was kind of like putting the cart before the horse in the sense that the Civil War did not end until November of 1920 (Riordan, 1977, p. 81).

The Soviet Union believed that interstate diplomacy was an example of bourgeois nonsense at best and, therefore, did not participate in the Treaty of Versailles negotiations, nor did it become a member of the League of Nations (Nye, 1993, p. 26-27). At some point after 1928, Riordan (1996, p. 63) notes that “the Soviet Union and Comintern underwent a radical change in foreign policy...[and] became defensive; they [henceforth] aimed to prevent or frustrate an anti-Soviet [capitalist] coalition rather than to foment revolution”, opening the door for some level of international diplomacy or formal diplomatic recognition, which was extended by the U.S. in 1933 (Dulles, 1954, p. 130-131).

German losses as a result of the war included 25,000 miles of territory and nearly half of the war’s total fatalities (Nye, 1993, p. 77). The Treaty of Versailles formally blamed the Germans for

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<sup>1</sup> Both Russia and the Soviet Union are used in this section, as this was the very time of transition from the former to the latter.

starting the war, assessed \$33 million against Germany in war reparations, and limited the size of the German army to 100,000. This led to resentment and lack of popular acceptance of the Treaty among Germans and, eventually, inflations and internal stability in Germany (Nye, 1993, p. 77-79; Roberts, 1999, p. 273). Their mutual exclusion from the international community proved to be a bonding influence, and Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922.

Postwar Germany underwent a number of changes. The Kaiser abdicated and was replaced by the Weimar Republic (Magdalinski, 1995, p. 63-65). Germany became an increasingly urban and industrialized society, and workers there were introduced to the eight-hour work day in 1918 (Woeltz, 1995, p. 305, 310). An obscure meeting in February of 1920 marked the formulations of the National Socialist (Nazi) party (Magdalinski, 1995, p. 71). The Locarno Treaty of 1925 paved the way for Germany to enter the League of Nations a year later in 1926. It also began the process of correcting some of the wrongs perpetrated by the Treaty of Versailles, setting up a double standard which would later be a source of regret: inviolable borders to Germany's west and negotiable borders on the east (Nye, 1993, p. 79).

### **Prelude to War: The Thirties**

This was a decade of financial poverty, increasing military tension, and a buildup to war. Virulent ideological disagreements began to emerge within the League of Nations, undermining the League Council's domestic consensus and eventually making the organization completely ineffective in preventing a war whose scope and devastation would literally dwarf that of any previous war.

Meanwhile, there was a wave of political change sweeping Europe. The Nazi's, communists, and fascists were in control of a large portion of Europe by the middle of the decade. These

transformations were partly the result of the disastrous depression of 1929-39. The economic crisis forced desperation upon hard-pressed but still liberal governments in the 1920's, making them vulnerable to the appeals of either fascism or socialism (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73).

### *Problems Develop*

Japan's attack on Manchuria in 1931 flagrantly violated the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Treaty and was seen as an indirect challenge to the United States (Dulles, 1954, p. 162). However, President Hoover felt that since Japan had not endangered the "freedom of the American people, or their economic or moral future", the most that the United States could do was to refuse to "recognize any territorial changes in eastern Asia violating existing treaty engagements or brought about by force or arms" (Dulles, 1954, p. 163).

Germany withdrew from the League of Nations and a disarmament conference in 1933, proving catastrophic to the League's ability to prevent wars such as the one that had led to its creation (Magdalinski, 1995, p. 61; Nye 1993, p. 83). Hitler and the Nazis preached the "racial superiority of the Aryan race" and a "contempt of the Eastern European races, such as the Jews and the Slavs" (Magdalinski, 1995, p. 66). As a result, Hitler's popularity and appeal to the masses had risen steadily after the onset of the Great Depression and he rose rapidly through the political ranks - becoming Chancellor in 1933 (Roberts, 1999, p. 391-393). Magdalinski (1995, p. 61) points out that the Nazi's "had little more than a loosely formulated...party plan which spelled out general objectives" and further contends that this lack of "systematic pre-existing national socialist theories" was to plague the Third Reich throughout its existence. Understanding the ramifications of this supports Magdalinski's (1995, p. 61) contention that the Nazis were "unprepared for power in 1933". Upon the death of Hindenburg in 1934, Hitler assumed the office of President and



completed the consolidation of power (Roberts, 1999, p. 394). Nye (1993, p. 84) explains that by March of 1935 Hitler had “denounced the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty” and began a restructuring and expansion of the Germany military.

### *Tensions Escalate*

Dulles (1954, p. 170) suggests that, by 1935, “the threatening attitudes of both Mussolini and Hitler” gave cause for concern. Mussolini’s attack on Ethiopia in 1935, and Hitler’s attack on the Rhineland in 1936 provided major victories for fascism, demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the League of Nations, and set the stage for World War II (Dulles, 1954, p. 172). In 1937, Japan’s attack of China in an attempt to “establish national hegemony over the entire Far East” was further evidence of a mounting world crisis (Dulles, 1954, p. 178-179). Hitler used the recent German military buildup to annex Austria, defy a previous agreement with England and France and overtake Czechoslovakia and, ultimately, to invade Poland to start World War II, while Mussolini seized Albania (Dulles, 1954, p. 183-184; Nye, 1993, p. 84-85).

These increasingly aggressive acts were allowed to continue because other countries were either unavailable to act as a policing agency or were ill-placed to do so (Roberts, 1999, p. 396-406). In the 1930’s, France was divided internally, and Britain and France were loath to collaborate with the Soviet Union. Because his imperial policy in Africa had run afoul of Britain, Mussolini had abandoned his opposition to German expansion and entered into an alliance with Hitler. Isolationism guaranteed that the United States was no longer a player in European politics. Hitler could attack his enemies piecemeal, while counting on the support of Italy, the neutrality of the Soviet Union and the United States, and the inability and unwillingness of Britain and France to oppose him.

## **World War II**

Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939 was the catalyst for all-out war, as the assassination of an Austrian Archduke had been some twenty-five years prior. The German invasion of Norway and Denmark, the French collapse, and an increasingly serious threat to Great Britain's existence - all of which occurred in 1940 - led to a collective realization in America that Hitler's conquest of Europe would have grave ramifications to our freedom and security (Dulles, 1954, p. 190-192). There were sharp differences among Americans as to the nature of the foreign policy approach the government should pursue (Dulles, 1954, p. 196). The June 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union and the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 would later prove to be huge mistakes in Germany and Japan, respectively.

There is a tendency to oversimplify the causes of the second World War and to attribute the blame solely to Hitler's aggression. The reality is that a number of factors contributed. For example, while financial assistance from the United States was instrumental in helping Europe get back on its feet, it also tied together the economics of two continents, ensuring that the U.S. stock market collapse in October of 1929 became a global economic problem (Nye, 1993, p. 88). This was devastating for Europe and created a climate ripe for the rise of fascism, which Hitler and Mussolini took advantage of. There was also the failure of World War I to deal with the German problem, the harshness of the Treaty of Versailles, the double standard of the Locarno Treaty, and the impotence of the League of Nations. Of course, Japanese imperialism and aggression certainly contributed.

## **WEIGHTLIFTING**

Just as the 1920's were a time of propensity and rebuilding, they were a time of reorganization and growth in the sport of weightlifting. The administrative control of the sport had shifted from the hands of German and Austrian officials prior to World War I to the French in the postwar period. The continental style of lifting, dominant prior to the war and favored by the Germans and Austrians, was all but abandoned and certainly no longer officially recognized. There were bourgeois and worker organizations, each with their own set of records and events.

### **A New Beginning for the Olympics and Weightlifting**

A special committee oversaw the 1920 Olympic weightlifting competition, but this occasion also marked the formation of the Federation Internationale Halterophile (FIH), under the direction of Jules Rosset of France (Schodl, 1992, p. 74-75; T. Todd, 1966, p. 63). The 1920 Vienna World Championships was an unsuccessful attempt to restore the German and Austrian organizations to a position of power in weightlifting (Mueller, 1951, p. 30; Schodl, 1992, p. 76-77).

The continental style of lifting was no longer allowed in official competition. From the end of World War I on, only the clean style was allowed. This uplifting was generally accomplished by a splitting of the legs fore and aft to reduce the height of the shoulders and the distance the bar had to be pulled, which came to be known as the split technique. The same goal could be accomplished by squatting under the weight as one pulled, which came to be known as the squat technique of snatching or cleaning. Up to 80% of the German team was using the squat style of cleaning and snatching by the late 1920's, despite the facts that most of the rest of the world used the split style and there were problems with the consistency of this technique. A few Americans, such as Bobby

Mitchell and Gord Venables, had also begun to experiment with the squat style, but experienced the same problems as the Germans (Sablo, personal communication, 2002; Venables, 1940, p. 14).

In the Soviet Union, there were conflicting opinions as to the role sport could and should play. The view that competitive sports bred attitudes inconsistent with true socialism, led to narrow specialization, were detrimental to one's overall health, and encouraged "commercialism, demoralization, and professionalism" (Riordan, 1996, p. 50) prevailed throughout most of the decade. The Soviets ignored the bourgeois sports organizations (the IOC, for example), refused to affiliate with any of the international federations, and refused to take part in what it perceived as bourgeois sports competitions (such as the Olympics) and, in so doing, mirrored their isolation in the political arena (Riordan, 1996, p. 60).

Political infighting and the relationship of the FIH with former members of the Central Powers dominated the new federation's early history. For example, tensions between General Secretary of the FIH, Joseph Duchateau, and FIH President Rosset revolved around a lifting of the boycott against the former Central Powers nations and led to special meetings of member nations of the FIH and a round of dismissals and reinstatements until the Congress at the 1924 Olympics in Paris confirmed Rosset as President in 1924, while Linden became first vice president and Duchateau was out again (Schodl, 1992, p. 79-85).

Sanctioned bourgeois international weightlifting competition was limited to the Olympics and many decisions were made by the IOC with the rubber stamp approval of the FIH, which was proving to be about as ineffective as the League of Nations. For example, in 1925, the IOC decided that weightlifting in the Olympics should consist of the two hands versions of the clean and press, snatch, and clean and jerk (Schodl, 1992, p. 80, 85, 86, 88). The 1928 Olympics included a total of 95 weightlifters from 20 countries (Schodl, 1992, p. 94). The 1928 Amsterdam Congress approved

a motion to hold European Championships annually and to make those championships open to overseas non-European countries, such as Egypt and America (Schodl, 1992, p. 94).

In short, like the League of Nations, the FIH in the 1920's was hampered by the noninvolvement of the United States and Soviet Union and the absence of Germany for the first half of the decade. In the case of the FIH and the IOC, however, this weakness was exacerbated by the existence of an alternative pathway.

### **Worker Sport, the Turner Movement, and Alternatives to The Bourgeois Olympics**

#### *Rivals to the Bourgeois Olympics*

Riordan (1996, p. vii) points out that "worker sport clubs or associations existed in almost every country in Europe, in the United States and Canada, and in South America and Asia" and that sport was, therefore, linked to the labor movement for millions of workers during this time period. In the United States, worker sport would have been roughly akin to semi-pro sports of the modern era (Ackerman, personal interview, 1997). Kruger (1996, p. 14) notes that the international socialist worker sport organization, the Socialist Worker Sports International, was formed in 1920.

Woeltz (1977, p. 304) suggests that Germany nearly supplanted England as the dominant sporting society in Europe in the 1920's, while Kruger (1996, p. 12) notes that there was a split between the bourgeois and worker Turner organizations in Germany in December of 1922. The German bourgeois organizations were not permitted to participate in international sports festivals for several years after the war - in fact, they only rejoined the Olympics in 1928 - whereas the worker Turners took the name Arbeiter Turn-und Sportbund or ATSB and staged the first Worker Olympiad, designed to rival the bourgeois Olympics, in 1925 in Frankfurt, thus engaging in international competition years before the bourgeois group (Kruger, 1996, p. 14; Woeltz, 1977, p.

306). Kruger (1996, p. 14) points out that these alternative festivals tended to “stress the performance of the general athlete rather than the specialist”, in direct contrast to the bourgeois Olympics, where the specialist was becoming increasingly prevalent even at this early point.

The bourgeois Germans had organized the non-FIH sanctioned 1920 World Championship, and the European Championships in 1921 and 1924 primarily as a protest for exclusion from international competition (Schodl, 1992, p. 91). The Germans accepted the invitation to the 1923 Vienna World Championships, which was the start of Germany's return to the international sports community (Schodl, 1992, p. 91). The Locarno Treaty preceded and made possible the IOC's renewed recognition of Germany as a member nation at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics (Schodl, 1992, p. 91-92). The ATSB also opened their organization to sports and became the dominant worker sport organization in Germany, had the support of the Weimer government, and was active in promoting programs for youth and women years before the bourgeois group rejoined the Olympic festivals (Woeltz, 1977, p. 306).

The refusal of the Soviet Union to recognize the bourgeois Olympics limited their athletes to worker events, but a number of foreign governments refused to permit Soviet athletes to enter their country - further limiting the options available to Soviet athletes, including weightlifters (Riordan, 1996, p. 62). Comintern had formed the International Association of Red Sports and Gymnastics Associations, also known as Red Sport International or RSI, in Moscow in 1921 “to counterbalance the social-democratic Socialist Worker Sport International” (Riordan, 1996, p. 45). As an alternative to both the bourgeois Olympic Games and the socialist-controlled Worker Olympics, RSI held the first Spartakiade in 1928 in Moscow, which finally provided an opportunity for Soviet weightlifters to engage in international competition, as weightlifting - one of the most

popular sports in the Soviet Union since 1925 - was among the 21 sports contested in that event (Riordan, 1996, p. 62).

These three international sports festivals and sanctioning organizations coexisted for a number of years, each with their own athletes and records.

### *Developments in the Soviet Union*

It was shortly after the 1928 Spartakiade that the foreign policy of Comintern and the Soviet Union underwent the previously mentioned change from a revolutionary focus to more of a defensive emphasis, opening the door to the possibility of rejoining the international athletic community at some point down the road. Riordan (1996, p. 63) notes that the Soviet Union did, in fact, begin to enter contests against various bourgeois states by the early 1930's, apparently coinciding with the initiation of diplomatic recognition by other countries. However, it would not be until after World War II that the Soviets were once again part of either the Olympics or the FIH.

In 1935, the Soviet Union "created a uniform system of classification of sports achievements...decided by times recorded [or, presumably, weight lifted] in particular event and/or success in competition, both national and international...in a range of sports...[including] weightlifting". This creation of an apparently harmless means of recognizing superior athletic achievement was, in fact, one large step away from the emphasis on mass participation which had always been the cornerstone of the Worker Sport Movement. Eventually, the Soviet desire "to produce the most talented athletes" created a need for "intensive coaching" and other rewards, and "resulted...in disputes within the sport movement as to the right balance between...mass participation...and mastery" (Riordan, 1977, p. 132).

This struggle led to a change in the emphasis of the sports program. The new prioritization of mastery of a sport predictably led to other changes. Potentially elite athletes were taken from production, and provided with coaching and training facilities (Riordan, 1977, p. 133). There were also other perks associated with being a top athlete, as they were given “large sums of money” and preference with “respect to flats and scarce commodities for establishing records and winning championships” (Riordan, 1977, p. 134).

Despite the fact that it is the bourgeois organizations which have survived and essentially written the history of sport, this should not be taken to have any meaning with regard to the caliber of athlete participated in these alternative venues. In fact, Riordan (1977, p. 142-143) suggest that Soviet weightlifters may have set as many as 23 unofficial world records in weightlifting by 1939. One of the most impressive Soviet athletes from this era is Ambartsoomian, mentioned in Terry Todd's book on powerlifting and Schodl's work on the lost history of weightlifting.

#### *A Glimpse Into the Future of Weightlifting*

As has already been discussed, Germany had been victorious in war against the French in 1870. From that point on, Germany had been stronger militarily and in many other ways, one of which was weightlifting. Just as German military power had been overcome in World War I, with the French among the victorious, so too it was in weightlifting. This was a paradigmatic shift within weightlifting away from its German roots as a test of absolute strength in favor of the aesthetic speed oriented test of overall athletic ability and power favored by the French. Whether or not they controlled the international organization or had success on the competitive platform, this French vision of the sport guided it from 1920 on and continues to do so. In many ways, Charles Rigoulot's rise epitomized this shift.



Rigoulot, of France, took first place in the 181 lbs weight class at the 1924 Olympics in Paris and may have been the quickest moving heavyweight on record (Willoughby, 1970, p. 96-97). By 1925, Rigoulot was a professional strongman and approximately every six months, he sought to increase his previous achievements (Willoughby, 1970, p. 97-98). Rigoulot had mastered the technique of utilizing the springiness of a specially made bar which he used on these occasions (Willoughby, 1970, p. 98, 107). Since Rigoulot was a professional from 1925 on, and weightlifting was officially and strictly an amateur sport at that time, all of his best lifts were unofficial.

The difficulty in verifying lifts from this era is a direct result of the lack of a reliable set of records, the fact that many lifters chose to turn professional and lifted in excess of the records they set when amateurs, the existence of worker sport and bourgeois organizations with their own sets of records, and the lack of a true international administrative body. There is insufficient substantiated evidence of the lifts of athletes from this era to justify any attempt to make a definitive statement as to the absolute records of this era. This is further evidence of the irrelevance and ineffectiveness of the FIH during this time period and lends credence to Willoughby's (1970, p. 98-107) argument that it is the limits of human performance that we should be interested in and not the official record. However, weightlifters have tended to exaggerate their abilities when their lifts were not subjected to official scrutiny. One must keep these facts in mind when discussing how weightlifting performances have improved in the interim.

Rigoulot has traditionally been considered to be inferior to his contemporaries in terms of all-around strength, but this may not have been the case. For example, Mueller suggests that Goerner exceeded a number of his previous official bests as a professional strongman, but contemporaneous sources cast significant doubt as to Mueller's claim on Goerner's behalf of a 793 lbs deadlift and suggest that his true capability may have been closer of around 680 lbs. In contrast,

Rigoulot deadlifted at least 622 lbs and should have been ultimately capable of around 680 lbs (Willoughby, 1970, p. 107). The issue is further clouded when one considers that Mueller's assertions relative to Goerner's lifts are, by his own admission, his recollection of Goerner's lifts some 20 years after the fact and Mueller himself may not even have written the book in question (Roark 2003, personal interview). In short, Rigoulot was the best pure weightlifter of the era, particularly in the case of the current format of snatch and clean and jerk, and may have been as strong as anyone else of that era. He truly was the prototype of the modern weightlifter.

### *Egypt*

Egypt is discussed much more fully shortly - in the section of this chapter on outliers - as their position in the weightlifting world during the time period under discussion really can not be predicted by the proposed theory. The reader is reminded that the proposed theory holds that weightlifting has been reflective of socio-political events and trends on a larger scale in such areas as military power, international politics, cultural shifts, and societal issues. In the case of Egypt, this theoretical connection breaks down for reasons to be explored more fully in that subsequent discussion. However, at this point, it is sufficient and important for the reader to be aware that the Egyptians were a real power in weightlifting during this time period.

### *Weightlifting Develops in America*

This was an ideal time for sports in America, as we were free from the post-World War I rebuilding that Europe was preoccupied with (Fair, 1993, p. 3). In 1922, George Jowett organized the American Continental Weighlifters Association (ACWLA) to oversee amateur and professional weightlifters in America (Fair, 1993, p. 4-5, 16; T. Todd, 1966, p. 61). Jowett and his associate,

Ottley Coulter, were somewhat skeptical of the AAU's link to the highly specialized form of weightlifting advocated by the IOC and the FIH, and believed that such a narrowing of focus would disproportionately benefit a very small portion of potential competitive weightlifters, discourage membership in the ACWLA, and put a lot of capable lifters out of any worthwhile recognition (Fair, 1996, p. 4; Schodl, 1992, p. 93) - an interesting position, especially when one considers how the sport evolved.

David Willoughby hosted both the first weightlifting contest in the United States held under official conditions in May of 1923 and the first National Weightlifting Championships in the United States in Los Angeles in 1924 (Fair, 1993, p. 11-12), and would go on to become the sport's preeminent historian. By March of 1927, Jowett had been replaced as editor of *Strength* by Mark Berry, who then began his own lifting organization - the Association of Bar-Bell Men (ABBM), through which he sought to oversee weightlifting in the United States (Fair, 1994, p. 21).

Dietrich Wortmann succeeded in getting the AAU to agree to take the leadership role in the sport and was subsequently appointed as national chairman (Fair, 1996, p. 4). The first AAU National Championships, in 1929, attracted 23 competitors (Fair, 1996, p. 6; Kutzer, 1979, p. 36; T.Todd, 1966, p. 61). By 1930, the AAU was inextricably tied to the FIH and the French style of lifting (Fair, 1996, p. 6-7). In fact, Featherweight Tony Terlazzo had begun to stand out among American weightlifters as our best hope of challenging the Egyptians and Europeans at the 1932 Olympics on U.S. soil in Los Angeles (Fair, 1996, p. 9-10).

## **The Tense 30's**

### *Bob Hoffman and America Rise to the Top*

The preference in the United States to want to remain isolated from European politics aside, the War had clearly established the United States as a military power to be reckoned with - an image that persisted into the 1930s and was cemented with the Second World War. In much the same fashion, Bob Hoffman had clearly become someone to be reckoned with in the sport of weightlifting by the 1930s and his rise had led to the similar rise in rankings of American weightlifting internationally. By 1936, Germany, the United States, Great Britain and Egypt were the top nations in weightlifting. Except for Egypt, this was quite reflective of their geo-political importance internationally.

The Berg Barbell had been the only one in the world and was primarily accessible to Europeans, until the Atlanta dentist became the first American to own one (J. Todd, 1995, p. 13; Schodl, 1992, p. 65; Strossen, 1993, p. 6). By 1930, Hoffman had copied the design and began to manufacture York revolving bars in the United States (Fair, 1996, p. 10; Strossen, 1993, p. 6; J. Todd, 1995, p. 13-14).

Hoffman's York Oil Burner Athletic Club (YOBAC) weightlifting team was developing a reputation as one of the best weightlifting teams around (Fair, 1996, p. 8). His athletes were already getting mileage reimbursement and other performance incentives of up to \$15 for winning a meet when Hoffman began to recruit top caliber weightlifters to work in his factory and pointing out that, as employees, they could lift on his team (Fair, 1996, p. 8). This began the sport's movement toward professionalism and pre-dated any attempts in his regard by the Soviet Union, a fact Hoffman later conveniently failed to mention. While Hoffman would later complain about the state sponsored professionalism of other weightlifters, it was he who had been among the first in the

sport to move in that direction and he had not complained when he was reaping the benefits of doing so.

The 1932 Los Angeles Olympics was significant in that U.S. weightlifters Tony Terlazzo and Henry Duey won bronze medals, propelling the U.S. to finish third in the team results (Fair, 1996, p. 11; Kutzer, 1979, p. 46-49; Schodl, 1992, p. 96; T. Todd, 1966, p. 65). Germany again made its presence felt, with a win at 165 lbs and one each at third and fourth place for a second place finish in the team results (Fair, 1996, p. 11; Kutzer, 1979, p. 46-49; Schodl, 1992, p. 96; T. Todd, 1966, p. 65). The low turnout of weightlifting participants reflects a trend for European and Asian weightlifters to claim hardship or to forgo the trip when the worlds or Olympics have been in America, which will be discussed further in a subsequent chapter.

Hoffman began to publish *Strength and Health* shortly after the Los Angeles Olympics to communicate directly with the lifting public and picked George Jowett to oversee the new venture (Fair, 1996, p. 12). Hoffman had the best lifting team in the country, the financial resources to ensure success, and a communications tool at his disposal now, and his resolve to make America a world power in this sport resulted in Hoffman not only being the only significant barbell manufacturer in the country, but the real power in U.S. weightlifting - a distinction he would retain for approximately the next fifty years (Fair, 1996, 10-14).

Hoffman accentuated the ethnicity of his weightlifters, as well as the fact that many of them had overcome significant adversity in one way or another, yet had risen to be champions (Fair, 1999, p. 10, 44). He was able to tap into the subliminal sociopsychological forces of low self image, both personal and cultural, endemic to many of his strength stars, and their compulsion to enter mainstream America (Fair, 1999, p. 63). Hoffman's belief that men of any nationality or color

could become world class weightlifters flew in the face of prevailing attitudes within the United States and world wide.

By 1934 and 1935 Senior Nationals, both of which used the five lift format, the U.S. was developing into one of the top weightlifting nations. The heavyweight class featured the likes of Bill Good - already a four-time national champion, J.C. Hise - a product of Mark Berry's training methods and high repetition squatting, and John Grimek - who was an unknown at this point but would not remain so for long (Dillinger, personal communication, 2001; Fair, 1999, p. 64-71; Kutzer, 1979, p. 38-41; Roark, personal communication, 2002; Strossen, 1989, p. 30-32). Hoffman saw in Grimek the ideal representative for York Barbell and by 1935, Grimek was part of the York team. In fact, most of us who grew up in the "York era" (pre-1980) associate York as much, if not more so, with John Grimek as with Hoffman.

*"It Was Their Finest Hour"*

Tyrrell (2001(b), p. 41) points out that the British style of lifting, recognizing over 40 lifts, was considered to not only require greater versatility, but to be a better test of strength, speed, and stamina than the more specialized three lift format of the Olympics. This is consistent with the previously discussed views of Coulter and Jowett. This type of lifting reached its zenith near the end of the 1930's, which coincides with the last time Britain was truly a world power in terms of military strength. Dane Kennedy's Britain and Empire, 1880-1945 traces British imperial expansion up to the beginnings of decolonization in the wake of World War II, however, one can not and he does not, deny that the British policy of appeasement of Hitler was not one of strength. Hence the late 1930s were the peak of British colonialism and international might – though, of course, Britain remains influential and important in international politics to this day.

Had this type of lifting remained in vogue, Britain's Ron Walker and Bert Assirati, as well as the previously mentioned American, John Grimek, would likely be remembered as the greatest weightlifters of all time internationally. Ron Walker, with a string of British Heavyweight Championship wins and British records in the heavyweight class, was the finest example of the non-specialized British conception of weightlifting (Tyrrell, 2001, p. 68-70). He took second to Manger at the 1935 European Championships, despite a considerable bodyweight disadvantage, and won the 1936 British Olympic Trials, setting up a showdown in the heavyweight class at the Olympics (Kutzer, 1979, p. 61; Tyrrell, 2001, p. 70; Tyrrell(b), 2001, p. 42; Webster, 1976, p. 86). Unfortunately, questionable judging calls by German officials, out to ensure a Manger victory, left Walker in fourth (Tyrrell, 2001, p. 43). Walker established a British and world record snatch and records in 26 of the 42 lifts recognized by the BAWLA before embarking on a professional career in 1937, which was ultimately cut short by World War II and the cancer that eventually took his life while still quite young (Tyrrell(b), 2001, p. 44, 46).

Bert Assirati was a professional wrestler - so his lifts were unofficial - but he reportedly did a 368 lbs clean and jerk (in excess of the world record), a 200 lbs strict curl, a one legged squat with 200 lbs, an 800 lbs deadlift, and a 645 lbs squat - all just prior to the start of World War II (Smith, 1990, p. 34; Willoughby, 1970, p. 134-135). Once again, obviously, we see that the "records" of this era may not be synonymous with the best performances in various lifts.

### *The Debate Over the Berlin Olympics*

Wenn (1996, p. 162) notes that within a few months of Hitler's rise to power in January of 1933, German sports federations began to eliminate Jewish members and proclaim that sports were for Aryans only, not Jews. Nonetheless, by 1934, German sports administrators not only affirmed

that the 1936 Olympic Games would be conducted in compliance with all Olympic regulations, but also that German-Jewish athletes would be allowed unfettered access to the team selection process in Germany (Wenn, 1996, p. 163).

It is essential to understand the roles of various organizations within the sports community prior to proceeding. The AAU was the national governing body for a number of sports in the U.S., and was responsible for confirming the individual athlete's amateur status (Wenn, 1996, p. 161). The American Olympic Committee (AOC), freshly appointed prior to each Olympics, was responsible for the selection process for the U.S. Olympic Team and was the primary fund-raising source for the athletes (Wenn, 1996, p. 161). The International Olympic Committee (IOC) was charged with overseeing the Olympics as a whole, while the FIH oversaw the sport of weightlifting internationally.

U.S. opinion as to the appropriate action was split. A group led by AOC head Avery Brundage claimed that they had been assured that Jewish athletes would have access to the teams and that the Berlin Olympics would be conducted according to IOC practices. This group also pointed out the hypocrisy of chastising the German when some regions of the United States were still unreceptive to the participation of blacks in sports events (Wenn, 1996, p. 161-162). Another group, led by AAU chief Jeremiah Mahoney, opposed U.S. participation and called for transfer of the Olympic Games from the German capital (Wenn, 1996, p. 162-165). Brundage sought to reduce the influence of this group when he asked for permission to submit eligibility forms for U.S. Olympians without the AAU signature attesting to their amateur status. Henri Baillet-Latour, President of the IOC, granted that permission and, in so doing, circumvented Mahoney's role (Wenn, 1996, p. 165).



At the December 1935 AAU National Convention, a motion was passed that conceded that it was the sole responsibility of the IOC to uphold the rights of all Olympic competitors and that certification of U.S. Olympians did not reflect support of Nazi policies (Wenn, 1996, p. 166). Wenn (1966, p. 161) contends that these events compromised the AAU's influence in U.S. Olympic affairs and foreshadowed its decline, and points out that the AAU's signing authority as the agency that attested to the amateur status of U.S. Olympians was not renewed. The significant impact of the AAU's decline on the sport of weightlifting in this country, which will be explored more fully later, is the reason so much attention had been given here to these events leading up to the 1936 Games.

### *The Olympic Year*

The three lift Olympic format was used at the 1936 Philadelphia Senior Nationals. New Yorker John Terry competed in the 132 lbs class and was selected to be the first black weightlifter to represent the United States in international competition, indicating that weightlifting was far ahead of most other sports in breaking through the color barrier. Grimek, by now living and working in York, had the highest total of the meet and went on to finish with the highest total of any American lifter at the Berlin Olympics (Fair, 1999, p. 64-71; Kutzer, 1979, p. 56, 62-64, 69-71; Sablo, personal communication, 2002; T. Todd, 1966, p. 65). Thus, by 1936, Grimek was the top lifter in the country regardless of bodyweight and possibly the best in the world at his weight.

The German hosts of the Berlin Olympics showed their power not only on the platform, where they finished second in the team standings and won the heavyweight division, but also administratively within the sport (Fair, 1996, p. 15; T. Todd, 1966, p. 65). Schodl (1992, p. 97) notes that Rosset was opposed for the first time in his bid to remain President, the French proposal

to replace the press with right and left-handed snatches was defeated, and international meets other than the Olympics were allowed to contest exercises other than the Olympic Triathlon during the two-year period following the Olympics. However, not all was going badly for the French as the 1937 World Championships were awarded to Paris to coincide with the World's Fair there (Schodl, 1992, p. 97).

On the way home from Germany, Hoffman viciously attacked U.S. Olympic coach Mark Berry from behind, resulting in Berry's withdrawal from the sport altogether and cementing Hoffman's position as the Patriarch of Weighlifting in America (Fair, 1996, p. 15). Subsequently, Hoffman - through the pages of *Strength and Health* - effectively rewrote the history of weightlifting in America and, in so doing, minimized the contributions of others while simultaneously exaggerating his own (Fair, 1996, p. 16). Like his mentor, Jowett, his contributions were so significant that he did not need to engage in this deception to ensure his legacy but by doing so he significantly tarnished that legacy.

#### *Prelude to War*

Jules Rosset resigned his post as president of the FIH in the summer of 1937, and Willem Linden succeeded him (Schodl, 1992, p. 98-99, 105). The FIH Congress in Vienna in 1938 approved the U.S. bid to host the 1939 World Championships - contingent upon the U.S. making a \$10,000 financial contribution to the European participants (Schodl, 1992, p. 100). Here again, we see the bias against the U.S. in terms of meet allocation and expectations.

John Terry broke another racial barrier by winning his class at the 1938 Senior Nationals, where fellow black lifter John Davis, who would go on to be the most dominant weightlifter in history, made his national debut - taking second place in the 181 lbs class (Kutzer, 1979, p. 82).

Grimek's performances during 1938 earned him a spot on the U.S. team going to the world championships (Fair, 1999, p. 64-71). Grimek has been largely thought of as a bodybuilder, but had the current rules regarding the timing of weigh-ins and the need to re-weigh been in effect then, he would have been in the 181 lbs class at that time or in the 187 lbs class currently and he likely would have been an Olympic champion in 1936 (Fair, 1999, p. 64-71; Sablo, personal interview, 2002). Perhaps more amazingly, Grimek's lifts would still place him in the top 5-10 at the Senior Nationals (Fair, 1999, p. 64-71).

The 1938 Vienna World Championships was a coming out party for black American weightlifters John Terry, the first U.S. athlete of any color to officially be credited with a world record, and John Davis, the first black weightlifter to win a world championship (Kutzer, 1979, p. 85; Schodl, 1992, p. 108; Willoughby, 1970, p. 108). Sablo (personal communication, 2002), a former teammate and friend of Terry's, remembers him pulling a 625 lbs deadlift during the time period - a lift that would not be equaled by a man of that size for many decades. Hoffman's publicity of the achievements of Davis and Terry through the pages of *Strength and Health* angered several readers who clung to racist beliefs, yet Hoffman remained unfailingly supportive, even at the risk of economic loss (Fair, 1999, p. 77-79). Hoffman's quest to make America the best weightlifting team in the world was now within reach, as only the German team was of the same caliber.

The German team equated military muscle with athletic success, both of which it demonstrated in 1938. The German team emerged victorious in two competitions, held in the United States, against an American team (Hoffman, 1982, p. 35; Roark, 1993, p. 22). In New York City, Manger succeeded in jerking 402 lbs from the shoulders overhead - after having help getting

the weight to his shoulders - on an extra attempt outside of the contest, joining Swoboda and Rigoulot as the only men to lift 400 lbs or more over their heads (Roark, 1993, p. 22).

American weightlifters were also busy showing their muscle, however. Stanko did a total of 895 lbs at the 1939 Senior Nationals, when only Manger had done more (Kutzer, 1979, p. 86; Schodl, 1992, p. 108, 111; Willoughby, 1970, p. 126). Davis and Terlazzo both set world records during 1939 (Hoffman, 1982, p. 35). Grimek's total at the 1939 North American Championships in the 181 lbs class had thus far only been exceeded by seven other lifters, most of whom were heavyweights (Fair, 1999, p. 64-71; Schodl, 1992, p. 108, 111). It would have been nearly impossible for any team in the world to beat a U.S. team featuring Terlazzo, Terry, Terpak, Davis, Grimek, and Stanko. Alas, there was no competitive outlet for them to prove international superiority after 1938.

In short, the immediate pre-War period in weightlifting can be described as Britain's peak in international ratings, and a U.S. - Germany battle for international supremacy. This sounds like it could just as easily be describing the international political scene at the time.

### *The War Years*

The 1940 Senior Nationals, held at Madison Square Garden in New York City, marked the debut of the 123 lbs weight class, the first ever AAU Mr. America, and the first time lifters had to meet a certain qualifying total prior to the meet in order to be allowed to lift in the meet (Kutzer, 1979, p. 87). Stanko became the first man in history to break the 1000 lbs barrier in the total at the Middle Atlantic Championships in March of 1941 (Hoffman, 1982, p. 36; Kutzer, 1979, p. 88; Schodl, 1992, p. 108). This was his high water mark in weightlifting - as he was to be plagued by

health problems from shortly after this occasion until his death in 1978 (Gentle, 1984; Hoffman, 1982, p. 36; Staff, 1982, p. 48).

Hoffman had always included women in the pages of *Strength and Health*, but in the early 1940's, he began to advocate women lifting relatively heavy weights in much the same manner as men (Fair, 1999, p. 84-86). Sablo (personal interview, 2001) indicated that women lifted in competitions on a somewhat regular basis in the U.S. by this time, but there were no separate women's classes, they merely lifted in their appropriate weight class right alongside men. Fair (1999, p. 99) notes Hoffman's enlightened view of women and minorities was an enormous asset in developing American weightlifting. The 1943 and 1944 versions of the Senior Nationals were plagued by low attendance. John Davis, indisputably the best lifter in his class in the world, was absent in 1944 because he, like many young men of his age, was serving in the Army (Kutzer, 1979, p. 101). The years 1938-1944, almost unbelievably, play a very small role when assessing the legacy of John Davis, whose reputation was sealed with his performance in the late 1940's and early 1950's.

In July of 1941, FIH President Willem Linden passes away, but since international activities in weightlifting were practically nil at this time due to the war, most FIH member nations thought that a decision on his successor could wait until after the war (Schodl, 1992, p. 100). Germany's Max Wolff, however, saw fit to appoint himself as General Secretary of the FIH - a move which basically consolidated all power in his hands, since there was no president at this time (Schodl, 1992, p. 100).

## OUTLIERS

Since no theory can account for every instance of what it purports to explain, there are always outliers or exceptions to the rule. The present theory is no exception. Before getting into explaining those outliers, however, a review of the theory proposed herein is in order. Specifically, the proposed theory holds that sport generally and, more specifically, the sport of weightlifting has been reflective of and, as such, provides a means of understanding and documenting the major socio-political events and trends since the middle of the nineteenth century. This includes such areas as military power, international politics, cultural shifts, and societal issues. There are three nations that clearly do not fit the proposed model during the time period covered in this chapter: Egypt, Japan, and pre-1932 United States. Egypt was not a military power but was among the top nations in weightlifting. Conversely, Japan was militarily powerful and aggressive, but was absent from major weightlifting competitions. Before 1932, the United States was militarily powerful, but was not a factor in weightlifting. In all three cases then, there is a discrepancy not accounted for by the proposed theory between the military power of the nation during this period and its ranking within the sport of weightlifting. The reasons for these outliers vary and will be discussed below, as well as whether or not those reasons are sufficient to alter the proposed theory.

### *Egypt*

The 1936 Olympics marked the coming out of Egypt as a world power in weightlifting, led by Khadr el Sayed Touni, whose near mythical performances helped inspire his countrymen to make Egypt the unofficial team champions (Fair, 1996, p. 15; T. Todd, 1966, p. 65; Tyrrell (b), 2001, p. 43; Webster, 1976, p. 124). Former U.S. National Weightlifting Committee Chairman Rudy Sablo (personal interview, 2002) indicated that around the time of the Berlin Olympics, Touni

did a clean and jerk with so much more than anyone else in the world could do at a comparable bodyweight that officials doubted such a lift was possible and official ratification of the lift was refused on the grounds that the lift was impossible for someone of that bodyweight.

Egypt's socio-political importance during this time period is not readily apparent, so the success of Egyptian weightlifting teams during this era appears to be in conflict with the proposed theory. However, Roberts (1999, p. 190) indicates that Egypt was, in fact, of some importance to Britain. Roberts (1999, p. 231) postulates that "the predatory activities of European powers, and the growth of nationalism" had affected the history and development of Egypt, just as it had in the various European countries. An Albanian had established himself as the governor of Egypt in 1805 and was virtually independent of Ottoman control (Roberts, 1999, p. 232). Roberts (1999, p. 232) further notes that the governor, Mehemet Ali, admired European civilization and wanted the Egyptians to benefit from it, so he began the process of opening the area to French educational and technical institutions. Eventually, the most Europeanized Egyptians became the biggest supporters of Egyptian nationalism (Roberts, 1999, p. 232). Nationalistic feelings took a back seat to financial reality, however, Egyptian debt had led to bankruptcy by 1876, and British and French controllers effectively ran the country (Roberts, 1999, p. 233). French influence waned after 1882, coinciding with an increased British presence (Roberts, 1999, p. 233; Wilkinson, 2002, p. 22).

The Suez Canal, which opened in 1869, allowed "the British governments to maintain secure imperial communications with India" (Roberts, 1999, p. 190, 232). Moreover, because of the antagonism between Britain and France until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the French had long engaged in "efforts to hinder and embarrass the British in Egypt" (Roberts, 1999, p. 190). Eventually, strong feelings of nationalism led the Egyptians to resent British occupation and control. In 1922, the Kingdom of Egypt replaced the former British protectorate status, but the country

remained in a state of “prolonged constitutional crisis and intermittent disorder” until 1936 when the British “retreated another step and agreed to be content with a right to garrison the Canal Zone for a limited number of years” (Roberts, 1999, p. 307). During the Second World War, Egypt once again became basically a British military base (Roberts, 1999, p. 483).

Thus, Egypt's socio-political importance lies in the presence and mutual antagonism of British and French nationalists, the strategic importance in Britain's eyes of the Suez Canal, and the timing of becoming independent relative to other countries in that region of the world - all of which are unique and specific to Egypt and to the time period involved. In short, a number of international events ensured that Egypt had some strategic importance, particularly to Britain, and that led to extensive exposure to both British and French influence in Egyptian culture, presumably including weightlifting. The probability of such influence contributing to Egypt's success in weightlifting is further strengthened by the fact that Britain was unable to exert its former level of control over Egypt after the war and Egypt's international stature in weightlifting immediately correspondingly diminished. Therefore, it does not appear the theory proposed herein is diminished or contradicted, nor in need of modification.

### *Japan*

The Meiji Restoration, which some historians suggest began in 1868, formally restored the Emperor as the head of the government of Japan and set that country firmly on the path toward modernization (Roberts, 1999, p. 62). Textile production was a mainstay of the Japanese economy even at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the country appeared quite “Westernized” (Roberts, 1999, p. 62). Japan's military was considerable and had been ably demonstrated in wars against China in 1895, and Russia in 1904-1905 (Lebow, 2000, p. 595; Roberts, 1993, p. 62). In 1902, the Japanese



government entered into an alliance with Britain in which both nations “promised one another benevolent neutrality should either find itself obliged to defend by war its interests in the Far East and, should a third power enter such a war, each agreed to come to the engaged partner’s assistance” (Roberts, 1993, p. 189).

Japan, part of the victorious Allies in World War I, was a true world power by the end of the war, as evidenced by having the third largest Navy in the world and being rewarded after the war with a permanent seat on the Council of the League of Nations (Roberts, 1993, p. 248, 352). In 1922, Japan agreed to give back the Chinese territory it had won from Germany during the war, but the nature of the treaties was such that it made China dependent on U.S. intervention to stop any future Japanese acts of aggression (Roberts, 1999, p. 359).

This would have major repercussions a short while later, after nationalist extremists had taken control of the government. Japan’s attack on Manchuria in 1931 not only violated these treaties but was an indirect challenge to the United States to see how serious we were about the protection of China (Dulles, 1954, p. 162; Roberts, 1999, p. 379, 381). When President Hoover’s reaction was to merely state that we would not “recognize any territorial changes in eastern Asia violating existing treaty engagements or brought about by force of arms” (Dulles, 1954, p. 163), Japan knew it would pretty much have no meaningful opposition in that regard from the U.S. In 1937, Japan’s attack on China in an attempt to “establish national hegemony over the entire Far East” was further evidence of a mounting world crisis (Dulles, 1954, p. 178-179). Eventually, Japan was on the losing side of World War II.

Clearly then, Japan held major socio-political importance throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If the proposed theory is correct, one would expect Japan to have been quite successful in the sport of weightlifting even prior to World War I, but this was not the case. Webster (1976, p. 126) notes that

although strength was culturally important in Japan and there was a long history of contests to see who could lift the heaviest boulders or rice bales, the sport of weightlifting was not introduced to the Japanese until the year 1934, at which time plans were immediately made to field a competitive team by the 1940 Tokyo Olympics. Of course, those Games were never contested due to the outbreak of war.

In retrospect, one would have expected Japan to reach international prominence in the sport of weightlifting earlier but its failure to do so is solely attributable to the fact that the sport was not introduced there until the 1930's, which is probably a function of its geographic isolation from Europe and the prejudice of many Europeans against the "yellow" races, which was quite prevalent in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, it does not appear to contradict the proposed theory. Nor does it appear to warrant any modification of that theory.

#### *The United States (Pre-1932)*

The history of the United States, in terms of geopolitical events and the sport of weightlifting, has already been covered in some detail. This was necessary because the U.S. did become a major player in weightlifting. Not only that, but it is important to understand the roots of the sport, which the U.S. was part of, and the roots of the various institutions, such as the YMCA and the AAU, which would be such a large part of the history and development of the sport in this country. That having been said, the U.S. was not a world power in weightlifting until the 1930's. Some have credited Tony Terlazzo and Henry Duey as having won the first Olympic medals for the U.S. in 1932, but this is not quite true. American weightlifters medaled in the 1904 St. Louis Games, albeit in a very nontraditional format. The 1932 Games did, however, mark America as a

real power in the sport. There is some similarity between the isolationist policies of the United States and the absence of the same from international weightlifting competition.

Certainly, America was among the strongest and most industrialized nations prior to this point, so why was it not competitive in weightlifting prior to this? There are two reasons for this and they are of unequal importance. The first, though probably of less significance, is that the death of Dr. George Barker Windship, who was mentioned earlier, hastened the willingness of the American people to engage in a program of heavy exercise, such as Windship recommended, lest they too die prematurely. Windship, you will recall, had been quite active on the lecture circuit and as a Harvard-trained physician, he held considerable weight in the medical community. Since Windship's pupils had gone on to be quite influential in both the AAU and the YMCA, one would suspect that his theories would be well known in those circles as well. Thus, his premature death unwittingly turned the medical community, the YMCA, and the AAU away from encouraging heavy weight lifting and did nearly irreparable harm to the sport in this country.

Meanwhile, the sport flourished in Europe and therein lays the second, and more important, problem. In a nutshell, American and European weightlifters do not compete on equal footing and never have. Americans are always expected to travel abroad for competition. For example, four of the five Olympic Games held during the time frame covered in this chapter were in Europe. The one that was held in America was poorly attended, at least in terms of competing weightlifters. The FIH wanted the U.S. to put up a \$10,000 financial contribution to the European participants in order for the U.S. to host the 1939 World Championships, yet no such contributions were made to the U.S. team when it traveled to Berlin in 1936, Paris in 1937, or Vienna in 1938. These are but a few examples of how Americans were unfairly penalized in the sport. In summary, the U.S. exception is also somewhat unique and does not disprove or significantly affect the proposed theory.

# CHAPTER 4

## THE COLD WAR YEARS 1945-1990

The world of 1939 had still been a multipolar world but, by 1945, two superpowers - the United States and the Soviet Union - had begun to dominate the post war world (Nye, 1993, p. 100). Bipolar nations tend to develop similar societies that are smaller in size and can be used to ensure the security of the larger state. The U.S. and Soviet Union cultivated their own spheres of influence during the immediate aftermath of the war (Nye, 1993, p. 100). The borders between the two spheres of influence were often the site of increased tension. This was particularly true of Germany.

This was a time characterized by propaganda, subversive tactics, guerilla warfare, and a genuine belief on the part of most people that communist and noncommunist countries could not live side by side in a civilized manner - even long after such tactics and beliefs served any useful purpose or reflected reality (Roberts, 1999, p. 460-465). The role of women in society changed, primarily in the more industrialized nations. The 1960's ushered in an era of chemical and sexual experimentation heretofore unheard of. In short, this was a time of political instability and personal experimentation.

The ideological battles of the Cold War were fought on a number of fronts, but never in the all out nuclear war between the superpowers that most of the world feared, and expected, for most of this time period. The possibility of nuclear war remained high, especially during times of increased tension (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73). The fact that all out nuclear war did not occur may have been as much a result of luck as anything else.

## **WORLD EVENTS**

### **The Divisive Issues**

The February 1945 conference at Yalta between Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin divided Europe into eastern and western halves along a line from the Adriatic to the Baltic (Roberts, 1999, p. 439-440). Germany ceased to exist as a single political entity and was replaced by zones controlled by the Soviet Union, the U.S., Great Britain, and France. Several key issues strained the relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, which had emerged as superpowers in the immediate aftermath of war: the extent of the sphere of influence of each, economic issues, and the real and perceived inequalities of nuclear power (Nye, 1993, p. 103-105). These main issues were actually quite intertwined. With that in mind, a general overview of these issues will be presented prior to discussing how the relationship of the superpowers changed over time.

The United States and Soviet Union carved their spheres of influence by different means and in different parts of the world. The Soviets used territorial occupation and puppet governments to develop a sphere of influence that included most of Eastern Europe.. Conversely, the U.S. used a combination of political, military, and economic means in Western Europe (Nye, 1993, p. 101). Roberts (1999, p. 448) adds that the European satellites of the Soviet Union were more or less a result of territorial occupation, while those which tended to side with the U.S. were a result of the industrial and financial strength of the latter. At their roots, the aims of the superpowers in terms of their sphere of influence differed greatly. The U.S. was concerned with the promotion and development of a liberal economic and political system, while the Soviet Union wanted to develop communist solidarity (Nye, 1993, p. 100, 113).

U.S. and Soviet economic growth faced a number of obstacles. Deterrence was an expensive and tension-laden system, as the arms race involved the expenditure of about \$500

billion per year by the Soviet Union and United States alone at its peak and directly impeded their economic growth (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 64). Simultaneously, American companies faced new financial criteria and a new generation of chief financial officers emerged. American investment lagged because it was not immediately reflected on the balance sheet, whereas foreign companies faced no such dilemma.

The U.S. financed the Western trading system through the American marketplace and, in so doing, aided the development of European and Japanese economic strength (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73). These nations were able to rely on the U.S. for military protection and economic assistance, which allowed them to prosper. The U.S. bore the brunt of the costs and accordingly forfeited its own economic growth to preserve the growth and security of its allies (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73). These countries then sold their products to Americans at a lower rate than American companies could match, creating export surpluses for American allies and even greater hardship for American industry and economy (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73). As a result, Americans engaged in excessive consumption while its allies saved, invested, and grew - doubtlessly aided by America's extremely generous political, military and economic commitments to them (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73). The Soviet bloc, of course, reciprocated and created an Eastern economy among its satellites. Although the quality of many of the east European products was deficient, they nonetheless, were sold to the Soviet Union in return for Soviet exports of raw materials and oil (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73). Both the U.S. and the Soviet Union had placed a high premium on military strength and both economies suffered, albeit to varying degrees, as a result. For example, the American economy was drained by the costs of nuclear deterrence, the support of more than forty allies, and spending on conventional weaponry (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73).

## **The Period of Increasing Tension**

Immediate postwar Germany had been partitioned into sections controlled by the Soviet Union, U.S., Britain, and France. Eventually, the latter three banded together to form the democratic Federal Republic of Germany, commonly known as West Germany. Meanwhile, the Soviet-occupied eastern zone became the German Democratic Republic (Roberts, 1999, p. 464-465). The line dividing Germany also became the barrier between the two ideological camps of the Cold War (Roberts, 1999, p. 464-465).

A rapid unfolding of events in this area led to the beginning of the Cold War. A U.S. plan for currency reform in West Germany led to the Soviet-led Berlin Blockade of 1948-1949, which was an attempt to squeeze that aforementioned three nations out of Germany (Nye, 1993, p. 99, 107). This resulted in the U.S. led Berlin aircraft of humanitarian aid. The situation escalated when non-Eastern Bloc European countries and the United States and Canada combined to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with the intention of protecting Europe in the case of Soviet invasion (Nye, 1993, p. 107). Generally, the birth of NATO is recognized as the start of the Cold War.

This paved the way for the arms race and a preventative strategy that previous generations could not have envisioned. The U.S. placed military forces in the territories of its European and other allies as a defensive strategy when the range of Soviet nuclear weapons was extended to include the continental United States (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 70). Nuclear weapons helped maintain the status quo, in that it was understood that they would likely be used in the event of a Soviet attack on Europe and this deterred such an action. The arms race proved to be detrimental to the economic growth of both nations, hampered their ability to effectively deal with domestic social problems, and ultimately contributed to the demise of the global bipolar economic and military system;

meanwhile, other nations - particularly U.S. allies-proceeded to make unparalleled economic gains (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 64, 70).

The most rigid period of this ideological battle, from 1949 through 1962, was characterized by the deteriorating relationship between the superpowers and their conflicting desires. Those areas immediately peripheral to the Soviet Union - namely, Europe and Japan - were of considerable strategic importance to both and, along with the superpowers, were the key areas of technological and industrial productivity in the postwar period (Nye, 1993, p. 111).

### *The Effects of Decolonization of Africa-Asia*

The decolonization of non-European lands began to produce countries not particularly committed to either side in the Cold War, which definitely complicated the situations (Roberts, 1999, p. 466). The Far East would be one area where the dueling forces involved in the Cold War met the wave of decolonization crossing Africa and Asia. This part of the world was besieged by much unrest for an entire generation as new nations formed from former colonial lands (Roberts, 1999, p. 468-469). In December 1948, the communist forces of Mao Tse Tung claimed victory over the nationalist forces, exiling them to Taiwan. The People's Republic of China officially came into being in October of 1949, although it would be many years before the international community as a whole recognized its existence. Scarcely more than ten years later, Asia had ceased to be primarily a continent of colonies (Roberts, 1999, p. 477-478).

The will of the general populace in the U.S. to fight a war abroad to combat the spread of communism was tested twice in less than a decade (Roberts, 1999, 489-490). The Korean Conflict in the early 1950's tested the will of the U.S. and the ability of NATO to deter communist aggression. By the end of the Korean Conflict in 1953, Stalin was dead, Western Europe had been



essentially rebuilt and restored to economic viability through the Marshall Plan, and the U.S. and the Soviet Union both had the hydrogen bomb, guaranteeing their status as superpowers (Roberts, 1999, p. 489-490). Vietnam was the site of a thirty year long war<sup>1</sup> that began as a war for independence and became a war against international communism (Roberts, 1999, p. 481). This war would become a political hot button in the United States and a source of internal strife and dissent.

The decolonization of Asia and Africa had progressed to such a point by 1955 that a number of new nations had arisen. In 1955, Indonesia hosted a meeting of 29 African and Asian nations that bore no allegiance to either of the superpowers. Most of the nations in attendance had come into existence as a result of decolonization, China being the notable exception. These nations would come to be known as "The Third World" and, though they tended to be more in alliance with China than either of the superpowers, there was no cohesiveness among the members of this group (Roberts, 1999, p. 501). By 1960, China was recognized as a world power (Roberts, 1999, p. 507).

Tensions peaked in 1962 and very nearly escalated to the point of no return. By this time, nuclear war was a real possibility, as evidenced by the regular performance of "bomb drills" - along with the customary "fire drills" - by school children across the country throughout the 1960's. The Kennedy administration's policy that nuclear weapons might not be employed in certain situations had created some credibility problems for the U.S., but the Cuban Missile Crisis demonstrated that Kennedy could be tough when he needed to be, and catastrophe was narrowly avoided (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73). Both nations apparently realized such a conflict would have no winners, and there was a gradual relaxation of tensions lasting through the late 1970's (Nye, 1993, p. 115). Nuclear

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<sup>1</sup> The thirty year time period refers to the time period from when Vietnamese quest for freedom began in earnest (1945) until the fall of Saigon. U.S. involvement, of course, spanned twenty years, as is mentioned elsewhere.

weapons were not used in anger, but the world had veered uncomfortably close to the brink (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 64).

In 1962, President Kennedy sent U.S. troops to South Vietnam as military advisers (Roberts, 1999, p. 508). China and the Soviet Union were in competition for influence over Vietnam and did not act as allies, though both were heavily involved in the support of the Vietnamese communists while the U.S. backed the South Vietnamese (Roberts, 1999, p. 508). Vietnam was neither part of the industrial/technologically productive regions identified previously, nor was it peripheral to the Soviet Union. Yet despite this lack of overall strategic importance, the United States became entangled for two decades in a battle to prevent the spread of communism in this region - resulting in more than a million lives lost and an economic toll of over \$600 billion.<sup>2</sup>

The resulting domestic turmoil over involvement in Vietnam nearly split the U.S. in half ideologically and led to a loss of support for the overall policy of containment (Nye, 1993, p. 114). The intensity of the antiwar movement was undoubtedly aided by the general discontent of the youth of America, "embodied in the civil rights movement, women's liberation, and protest of the Vietnam War" (Fair, 1999, p. 256). Eventually, the cultural revolution led to sexual experimentation and promiscuity among America youths (Fair, 1999b, p. 270). In retrospect, the issues of racial and sexual equality, Vietnam, drug use, and sexual promiscuity/experimentation became intertwined as the sociological phenomena known as "the 60's".

### **Mutual Co-Existence**

Periodically, the U.S. government and Department of Defense occasionally contended that a Russian attack could be effectively countered by Western conventional forces alone. This claim

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<sup>2</sup> See previous footnote for explanation of difference between the duration of U.S. involvement and that of the actual

became less credible as time went on and Soviet forces grew both qualitatively and quantitatively (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73). The threat of nuclear retaliation constrained the behavior of the two superpowers and served as a motivation for the pursuit of mutual coexistence.

Eventually, Richard Nixon became the first U.S. President to visit Communist China or the Soviet Union. U.S. involvement in Vietnam ended in the early 1970's, Nixon's visit to Communist China served as a catalyst for international recognition of that country. After these high points in the early 1970's, relationships again began to falter. U.S. involvement in Vietnam ended in the early 1970's, which was also the general time frame of Nixon's historic visits to Communist China and the Soviet Union.

### *Afghanistan*

The Soviet Union sent its own forces into Afghanistan and proxy forces to Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia (Rosecrance, 1992, p. 73). The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979 quickly met with the disapproval of the U.S. on the grounds that it interfered with the decolonization of the Third World (Nye, 1993, p. 115). Diplomatic relations between the two superpowers slid backward again over the next several years as tensions again escalated. The Soviet-led invasion of Afghanistan and the failure of U.S. President Jimmy Carter to persuade the Soviets to abort the mission, resulted in the U.S. led Olympic Boycott of 1980.

### **Germany Reunites as the Soviet Union Disintegrates**

Mikhail Gorbachev rose to the helm of the Soviet Union in 1985 and unwittingly began the disintegration of that country. Gorbachev's foreign policy was based on an attempt to prioritize

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conflict as a whole.

economic revival while increasing the “country’s domestic and foreign choices” (Lebow, 2000, p. 608). Lebow (2000, p. 608) further notes that “cutting loose from Third World commitments, internal democratization, toleration of the noncommunist regimes in Eastern Europe, and the unification of Germany within NATO were the direct result of Mikhail Gorbachev’s advocacy of glasnost, perestroika at home, and ‘new thinking’ in foreign affairs”.

Gorbachev’s ability to implement such policies was aided by a number of other factors, including “[his] consolidation of power, the collapse of communist governments in Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union’s accommodation with the West were also facilitated by a series of catalysts—Chernobyl, Mathias Rust’s flight to Red Square, the Reagan administration’s endorsement of the ‘double zero’ option in the mistaken expectation that Moscow would reject it outright, the demand of East German tourists in Hungary to travel to West Germany via Austria and Budapest’s initial willingness to accommodate them” (Lebow, 2000, p. 608).

As Nye (1993, p. 98, 116) points out, Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe had collapsed by 1989, as evidenced by the Soviet failure to use force to support the East German governments’ efforts to keep the Berlin Wall intact. In November of 1989, the single most recognized symbol of the Cold War - the Berlin Wall - was toppled (Nye, 1993, p. 116). Lebow (2000, p. 608) blames faulty strategy and overconfidence on Gorbachev’s part for his failure to grasp the likely consequences of many of the key decisions that he made that ultimately led to political change in Eastern Europe and “to the demise of communist regimes, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, unification of Germany within NATO, and the breakup of the Soviet Union”. In 1991, the Soviet Union itself ceased to exist as a result of events Gorbachev himself had put into motion (Nye, 1993, p. 98). It is ironic and interesting that events related to the partitioning of Germany led to the Cold War and effectively ended the Cold War - albeit some forty years apart.

## **WEIGHTLIFTING**

This era was dramatically influenced by a number of social and political issues, such as economic incentives, nationalism, political propaganda, legal considerations, the emergence of the Third World, gender equality, the cultural revolution, sexual experimentation, and the drug issue. It was a time of revolution and change in the world at large and the world of weightlifting.

The Golden Age of American Weightlifting lasted from the end of World War II until approximately 1960. Bob Hoffman's York Barbell Team and the U.S. National team were virtually identical and were comprised largely of second or third generation ethnic Americans from blue collar backgrounds who bore tremendous personal allegiance to Hoffman and saw weightlifting as an opportunity to be assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture (Fair, 1987, p. 164, 167-169). Hoffman could give them a job at York Barbell, a place to train, an opportunity to travel as part of the U.S. national team, recognition through his magazine (*Strength and Health*), and an opportunity to contest for world and Olympic titles. This was also a time of strong national loyalty and Hoffman was not above exploiting this to its fullest. The defeat of one lifter from a communist country was seen as a victory of democracy and the United States as a whole (Fair, 1987, p. 171).

The Golden Age of American Weightlifting ended around 1960. The decline of U.S. fortunes in weightlifting coincided with a rise in the prestige of Soviet satellite nations and roughly paralleled the deindustrialization of the U.S. workforce and the rise in affluence of the middle class in this country (Webster, 1976, p. 93-103). The United States, Great Britain, and France continued to have some lifters who were capable of medal-winning performances at world and Olympic championships, but such performances became less common as the years progressed.

## **Opposing Views of Amateurism**

The 1946 FIH Congress marked the post-war revival of international weightlifting, included delegates from thirteen countries, and elected Jules Rosset and Dietrich Wortmann as President and Vice President, respectively. Oscar State - who would go on to be one of the most divisive and significant individuals in the history of the sport - was elected Assistant for the Olympic Games in 1948 (Schodl, 1992, p. 105-106). The delegates voted to recognize the 56 kilogram (123 lbs) weight class and recognize world records in the total before considering one of the most significant decisions in the history of the sport. The Soviet Union's application for membership was ultimately accepted by a narrow 7-6 margin after a lengthy and heated discussion regarding Soviet amateurism (Schodl, 1992, p. 106-107).

Todd (1966, p. 70) noted the United States adhered to the classical Greek concept of amateurism whereas the Soviets viewed the continuum from amateur to professional as mirroring the advancement from novice to elite. U.S. adherence to this archaic view brought about a decrease in the prestige of U.S. weightlifting in much the same way as U.S. adherence to unsound economic policies, which supported our allies but did nothing for our economy, brought about a loss of prestige and international standing of the American economy.

Soviet professionalism continued undeterred, as their team was accompanied by coaches, trainers, doctors, interpreters, and various other officials for a full term of ten lifters (Schodl, 1992, p. 107). Meanwhile, American Tony Terlazzo - a former national and world champion - came out of retirement to take second place in the 148 lbs class at the 1947 World Championships, but was subsequently disqualified because he had opened a health studio and was now considered a professional (Kutzer, 1979, p. 107, 109-110; Schodl, 1992, p. 109). In 1949, the Egyptian team

won the team title, but Hoffman felt government subsidization made them professional athletes (Fair, 1987, p. 167, 175-178).

As the decade of the 1950's opened, Hoffman faced challenges from two formidable adversaries with whom he had philosophical differences: Joe Weider and the Soviet Union. Whereas Hoffman always considered an improved physique as a byproduct of proper strength training, rival publisher and barbell manufacturer Weider was interested in physique for its own sake and had an overall flashier approach (Fair, 1987, p. 176). Hoffman saw communism as the direct opposite of the cultural melting pot of America that he believed in (Fair, 1987, p. 174, 178, 185).

By the end of 1953, Marvin Eder - who had exceeded the American and world records in the press in the 198 lbs weight class on several occasions - lost his amateur eligibility as a result of dealings with Weider. His absence from the U.S. team at the 1953 World Championships probably cost the U.S. a 1-2 finish in the middle heavyweight division and the team title (Fair, 1987, p. 179; Purcell, 1997, p. 62-64; Smith, 1996, p. 44). Purcell (1997, p. 64) notes that several attempts for reinstatement were unsuccessful. Weider was also involved in sponsoring Canadian strongman Doug Hepburn, whose presence at the 1953 World Championships also hurt the United States team which he became the first man to beat John Davis in fifteen years (Fair, 1987, p. 179). Hoffman's philosophic rivals seemed to get the best of him in 1953, as Weider was at least partially responsible for both Hepburn's presence and Eder's absence and the U.S. weightlifting team was defeated by the Soviet team.

Hoffman's position in international weightlifting, and that of the United States, was slipping just as he began to get official governmental recognition and coverage from mainstream media (Fair, 1987, p. 177-181). Hoffman began to put less emphasis on the major factors that had been

responsible for the success of American weightlifting, but blindly blamed the unfairness of competing against Soviet government subsidized professional athletes for this loss of position (Fair, 1987, p. 177-181).

Paul Anderson's performances had marked him as the man to beat in the United States and the world in the mid-1950's (Strossen, 1999, p. 22-23). Going into the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, Hoffman had indicated that Anderson was "surer of winning an Olympic title than any man, from any country, in any sport" (Fair, 1987, p. 183). The reality was that Anderson found himself in the battle of his life and needed to make his final clean and jerk to stay in the meet and win on bodyweight. Thereafter, Anderson dedicated his life to the work of Jesus Christ and opened the Paul Anderson Youth Home with funds generated through performing a number of exhibitions around the country. This led the AAU to declare Anderson a professional and bar him from further competition (Fair, 1987, p. 181; Strossen, 1999, p. 47, 55-56).

Hoffman's lack of belief that Americans would triumph over the communists at the 1959 World Championships and his persistent search for a "secret" weapon with which to beat the Soviets transferred to the mind set of his athletes and fed into the belief that the Soviets were unbeatable, a belief which American weightlifting has suffered from ever since and which has been detrimental to the progress of the sport in this country (Fair, 1987, p. 185). Paul Anderson could still beat the top Soviets, but was unfairly expected to adhere to standards athletes in other parts of the world were not being held to.

In 1961, Paul Anderson resurfaced at an exhibition in Knoxville - exceeding the listed world records in the press, snatch and total, and the winning totals at the 1960 Olympics and 1961 World Championships (Schodl, 1992, p. 245-246; Strossen, 1999, p. 54). Anderson was reinstated by the State of Georgia because they claimed that he had raised money for charitable and public service



purposes and not for his own use (Strossen, 1999, p. 55). Strossen (1999, p. 56) indicates that the AAU Registration Committee at the AAU National Convention voted against reinstatement by a margin of 14-12 in December of 1963. Strossen (1999, p. 210) further notes that the "1964 attempt to reinstate Paul Anderson was approved by the National Registration Committee [of the] AAU but later rejected by a vote of 106 to 40 by the [AAU] Board of Governors". Thus ended any chance of Paul Anderson ever officially competing again.

The professionalism of the more successful nations became increasingly obvious as the years progressed (Todd, 1966, p. 68-69). By the mid-1960's, Peary Rader had noted that the Russian, Polish, and Hungarian lifters were professional athletes training three times per day and doing little else (Kutzer, 1979, p. 231). Poland - with a population of only eleven million - had 9,000 registered weightlifters in 1965, whereas there were only 3,000 registered weightlifters in the U.S. at that time (Todd, 1966, p. 69).

U.S. lifters had difficulty getting time off from work to go to and train for meets (Kutzer, 1979, p. 231-234), or ran the risk of being banned if they engaged in any activity associated with even the the most remote appearance of professionalism (Kutzer, 1979, p. 210; Strossen, 1999, p. 46, 56-57). For example, Gary Gubner, despite having finished second at the world championships the previous year and having won the Senior Nationals and having set an American record in 1966, was unable to go to the world championships in 1966, because he could not get time off from his job (Kutzer, 1979, p. 234). Bob Bednarski was now living in, training at, working for, and completing for York and Starr (1977, p. 75) relates that Bednarski

quickly learned that he was going to have to do much more than just lift weights if he expected to feed his family. Terpak informed him that he was going to have to put in a full week's work in the warehouse...So, when he wasn't

training, he mixed protein powder, prepared suntan lotion, and loaded trucks...

Nearly forty years ago, Todd (1966, p. 68) recognized the importance of incorporating the sport into the collegiate system, including scholarships, as the only viable way for free nations to compete against state sponsored professional weightlifters. Despite Todd's theories and the success of the Japanese in implementing such a system, such opportunities have never been made available in this country in any meaningful way.

When Ken Patera retired after the 1972 Olympics, America's best hope to regain the top position in the heaviest division evaporated. Wilhelm (1994, p. 24) notes that

Ken put too much pressure on himself, saying that if he won a gold medal, he'd make big money in professional wrestling, which after all was where he was headed. Verne Gagne of Minneapolis had been helping Ken with his training expenses, but it was not for free. Bills had to be paid. Life goes on.

Economic interests and needs drove Patera into an activity in which he could make a living and away from competitive weightlifting, thus adding to the growing list of American weightlifters unfairly penalized by the strict American adherence to an archaic amateur code while competing against de facto professional weightlifters (T. Todd, 1966, p. 69-70). When one considers the caliber and depth of American weightlifters in the heaviest weight class and the propaganda value of that class, one can make a strong case that the United States could have dominated this class, and probably international weightlifting as a whole, from 1938 through 1972 had our lifters and those of other nations been on a level playing field economically.

Weightlifting in the United States was in a state of transition from about 1976 to about 1980. Up to this time, bodybuilding and powerlifting were all part of the weightlifting fraternity in this

country. The Amateur Sports Act of 1978 was ultimately signed by President Jimmy Carter and stripped the AAU of a great deal of its previous power, forever splintering the weightlifting-bodybuilding-powerlifting fraternity (Dreschler, personal interview, 2002; Fair, 1999, p. 338; Sablo, personal interview, 2002). The three factions of weightlifting (weightlifting, powerlifting, and bodybuilding) separated and pursued independent routes, each with its own governing body. Sablo (personal interview, 2002) - a former National Chairman - and Dreschler (personal interview, 2002) - currently a member of the USAW Board of Directors - both concur that passage of this Act by Congress irreparably damaged the camaraderie that once existed between these sister sports in this country, to the detriment of all three. The 1977 AAU Annual Convention was characterized by Rader (1978, p. 59) as “interesting and productive”, and he went on to note that

This committee [the Olympic Lift Committee] approved complete autonomy. This means that the committee is almost completely on its own; however, it is tied in directly with the U.S. Olympic Committee, which makes the situation somewhat different from the Physique and Power Lift Committees who have no relations with the Olympic Committee...The AAU ...will have no direct control over the organization and functioning of the different sports.

Rader's comments regarding the benefit of weightlifting as being connected to the U.S. Olympic Committee were particularly insightful. Fair (1999, p. 362) notes that there was but \$306 in the treasury when Murray Levin was elected chairman of the national committee in 1976. By the end of that year, sponsorship of the Junior Olympics by Sears, television rights, and strategic investments had combined to increase that balance to \$12,000 (Fair, 1999, p. 362). By 1982 USA Weightlifting (USAW) had access to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs and assets

of over \$80,000 in place (Fair, 1999, p. 365). Another \$3 million was added to the coffers by Miller Brewing Company in 1982 (Fair, 1999, p. 365).

When the city of Los Angeles began to envision an economic loss for the third consecutive host of the Summer Olympics, Peter Ueberroth stepped in with a plan to fund the Olympics through corporate sponsorship (Barney, 1999, p. 283). This was against IOC regulations, but they eventually relented and the door to the commercialization of the Games and the sport of weightlifting was thrown wide open. Revenue sources for the 1984 Games included television rights, corporate sponsorship from companies wishing to use the Olympic logo on their product, and premium corporate sponsors wishing to market their product as an "official" Olympic brand and resulted in a new profit of \$150 million to be split among the various Olympic sports, despite a boycott of 17 Soviet satellite nations in retaliation for the U.S. led boycott of the Moscow Games (Barney, 1999, p. 283). Apparently the IOC felt Ueberroth was onto something and inaugurated a program whereby large corporations bought the rights to the Olympic logo for up to four years, resulting in revenue of \$100-400 million per four-year time period (Barney, 1999, p. 284).

### **Politics and Propaganda**

The 1947 World Championships, held in the U.S. (Philadelphia) for the first time, provided several examples of the existence of an apparent double standard. Hoffman put up \$10,000 for the traveling expenses of foreign athletes, a cost no previous world championship host had been required to incur (Fair, 1987, p. 173). Nonetheless, only four European countries were represented by twelve athletes, the remainder coming from the U.S., Canada, Cuba, Korea, Panama, and Argentina (Fair, 1987, p. 173; Schodl, 1992, p. 109). The 1947 FIH Congress, like the international

political scene, was characterized by bitter battles on just about every point discussed (Schodl, 1992, p. 109).

The 1950 Congress saw the removal of Oscar State from his post as Assistant General Secretary and the election of the Frenchman Jean Dame to succeed him (Schodl, 1992, p. 116), passage of a motion to study the issue of a time limit during which athletes must attempt a weight they have requested (Schodl, 1992, p. 115-117), the acceptance of Japan as an FIH affiliated country (Schodl, 1992, p. 116), and approval of an organizational name change from the FIH to the FIHC - the Federation Internationale et Culturiste - to reflect an expansion of the organization into the realm of bodybuilding (Schodl, 1992, p. 116). The composition of international teams was also a topic of discussion and it was decided to limit teams to seven athletes, with not more than two in any one class (Schodl, 1992, p. 117).

At the 1956 Congress, the rule on performance of the press was changed to reflect what had actually been occurring. This did little to stem the erosion of a once great lift as lifters continued to flaunt their disregard of even the new more liberal standard, referees tolerated these violations, and audiences applauded lifters and encouraged their disregard of the rules (Schodl, 1992, p. 120-121). This situation "led to national differences reflecting international political rivalries...and disputes emerged in refereeing over what should constitute a legal press" (Fair, 2000, p. 85). The Cold War certainly exacerbated the situation as the lifting world "separated into Eastern and Western Blocs. In these more intense circumstances it was not only the rulings of the referees, but decisions made by juries of appeal over questionable lifts, that often determined the outcome of competitions" (Fair, 2000, p. 85).

The FIHC tried twice in the 1950's to deal with the issue of dual entities competing for international recognition. In 1951, the IOC recommended the reinstatement of West Germany to

the FIHC on the condition that teams to international events consist of athletes from East Germany as well, a decision which would come back to haunt both the FIHC and the IOC (Schodl, 1992, p. 118). Communist China - which had been a member of the FIHC since 1955 - withdrew in 1958, due to political reservations related to the ambiguity of Taiwan also having full membership status (Schodl, 1992, p. 128).

In the early 1960's, there was a shift in both the administration and competitive dominance of the sport. The 1960 Olympic Congress marked a major shift in the administration of the sport with the election of Clarence Johnson, of the United States, and Oscar State, of Great Britain, as President and General Secretary, respectively, as French officials had almost continuously held one or both of these positions up to this point (Schodl, 1992, p. 126). Victory in the heaviest weight class has historically been identified with the mythical title of "world's strongest man" (Todd, 1966, p. 70). Soviet recognition and exploitation of this along with the presence of a vast number of registered weightlifters of various abilities (Kutzer, 1979, p. 151), the professionalism of Soviet bloc weightlifters (Kutzer, 1979, p. 210, 231-234), and the adherence of the U.S. weightlifting hierarchy to the archaic concept of amateur athletics (Strossen, 1999, p. 46, 56-57) during this period were all interrelated and contributed to the shifting fortunes of American and Soviet weightlifters.

The 1962 World Championships were initially awarded to the United States, but the United States was forced to decline because of an inability to guarantee the acceptance of the entry of the West German team and Hungary stepped into that role (Schodl, 1992, p. 128). Events in the heavyweight division of this meet help illustrate some of the major issues in the sport at the time. The 37 year old American, Schemansky, led Vlasov of the Soviet Union going into the clean and jerk. Hoffman and Schemansky both felt that the latter was credited with an illegal lift in the clean

and jerk to eke out the win, and that the officials lacked honesty and integrity (Kutzer, 1979, p. 204; Wilhelm, 1995, p. 43).

Hoffman's power and influence was virtually uncontested during the 1960's, particularly at the national level. While he did a great deal for the sport nationally and internationally, he also had some lapses that can only be described as abuses of power. Hoffman perpetrated the greatest abuse of his power at the 1963 AAU Senior Nationals, when he invited three Japanese lifters to the Senior Nationals, which they were free to win (Glossbrenner, 1996, p. 50-51). Ostensibly this was to motivate the Americans but, it had the opposite effect, as it was not unexpected that the Japanese lifters would each win their weight class and deprive three American lifters of the championships that they had earned (Glossbrenner, 1996, p. 50; Kutzer, 1979, p. 206). In 1986, at the USAW Board of Directors meeting, a resolution was introduced and passed "that the '63 trio from Japan should be deleted from the final results from that year and the highest ranking American in each of those three categories should be proclaimed [Senior] National champion for that year" (Glossbrenner, 1996, p. 51).

Starr (1997, p. 77) notes that "in 1964...Hoffman insisted on having two more tryouts after the official one in order to get [Bill] March and [Tommy] Kono on the team". Lou Riecke, who had originally been named to the Olympic Team in the middle heavyweight class sustained an injury from having to compete in multiple Olympic Trials due to Hoffman's interference (Kutzer, 1979, p. 216; Starr, 1999, p. 100). Ultimately, Riecke had to demonstrate to the committee's satisfaction that he was sufficiently recovered from the injury and could compete effectively at the Olympics (Kutzer, 1979, p. 216; Starr, 1999, p. 100). Unfortunately, in an ironic twist, Riecke's attempt to prove that he was not injured led to further injury and he failed to complete a single clean and jerk to

the judges satisfaction in his third attempts at the Olympics (Kutzer, 1979, p. 222-224; Starr, 1999, p. 100).

China continued to engage in various competitions against FIHC member nations and, on occasion, Chinese lifters exceeded listed world records, but Oscar State refused to ratify them (Schodl, 1992, p. 128). The Soviets took exception to this and, in 1964, made a motion to allow FIHC member nations the option of competing against nonmember nations without facing repercussions from the FIHC, but the motion failed (Schodl, 1992, p. 128-129). Problems continued in 1965, as Schodl (1992, p. 130) notes "Romania, Indonesia, North Korea, and Pakistan were suspended each for one year, including a world championship, due to participation in competitions with China." This began a war of words between Oscar State and the FIHC on one hand and the Chinese weightlifting administration on the other (Schodl, 1992, p. 130). Political tensions rose to the forefront again in 1967. Schodl (1992, p. 128) indicates "Japan...declined the 1967 Championships because they were not ready to display the GDR flag or eventually play the GDR anthem...[and] the pre-Olympic year of 1967 remained without its World Championships". This was the first time that the world championships had been cancelled since the end of World War II.

Schemansky became the first American and only the third man in the world to total over 1200 pounds in 1964, but age and loss of flexibility were catching up to the forty-year-old Schemansky rapidly (Kutzer, 1979, p. 226; Schemansky, 2003, personal interview). Bob Bednarski became the new American hope in the heavyweight class when he hit a world record press, and world record clean and jerk for a total only twenty pounds short of the world record, despite giving up considerable bodyweight to just about everyone in the heavyweight division, at the 1968 Senior



Nationals (Schodl, 1992, p. 244-246; Starr, 1997, p. 71-73). No American of comparable weight has yet exceeded this performance, despite the passage of more than thirty years.

Cultural and political alliances helped shape one of the major movements within the sport. Oscar State, of England<sup>3</sup>, opened the 1968 Congress with an attack on the press in support of its abolition from competitions but the USSR forced the deletion of those comments from the official report ultimately accepted by the Congress (Schodl, 1992, p. 131). On this occasion, the FIHC gave up its effort to control bodybuilding and reverted to the previous designation of FIH (Schodl, 1992, p. 132).

Webster (1976, p. 108) describes the international or "Olympic" press as having decayed, by 1970, into a five-phase movement that began with the body straight followed by a rapid thrust into a bow accompanied by a dropping of the height of the bar and a spring outward again, a pronounced rapid back bend at the sticking point and a follow through to the finish. This technique had become known as the "Polish press" in international circles, as it was the Poles who had pioneered this technique<sup>4</sup> (Webster, 1976, p. 108).

The first week of the 1972 Munich Olympics had concluded, as had all of the weightlifting - except the superheavyweights (as the heaviest weight class is now known as) - prior to the events of September 5, 1972, which has been referred to as "the blackest day of [the] modern Olympic Games" (Schodl., 1992, p. 140) and the "darkest day in the history of the sport of weightlifting"

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<sup>3</sup> The reader is reminded that Britain was politically more in the US sphere of influence than in the Soviet sphere. The relevance of this will unfold quickly. Also, remember the French prioritized aesthetic considerations and had long opposed the press. So, there is a British-French-American connection more or less opposing the press and the Soviets not only want it to remain but force the editing of the official report to omit mention of the debate.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, the Poles were very much part of the Soviet Bloc and their pioneering of means of using what could be characterized as either tricks or efficient technique to elevate more weight was one way of showing their allegiance. Webster actually goes into a great deal more detail as to how this lift evolved through several stages and how that evolution was very much tied to national origin, beginning with Britain in the 1930s.

(Webster, 1976, p. 157). World politics entered the sports arena in a most devastating manner on that day, as described by Schodl (1992, p. 140).

Political fanatics firing machine guns, broke into the quarters of the Israeli team at the Olympic village, shot two athletes and, in the following evening, at a failed rescue operation at the Furgenfeldbrook airport, murdered nine Israelis kept as hostages.

The dead included three participants and one referee from the sport of weightlifting, including David Berger, who had dual citizenship in Israel and the U.S. and lived in the United States (Schodl, 1992, p. 140; Webster, 1976, p. 157). These obviously unexpected events delayed the superheavyweight competition by a day and ensured that the atmosphere in the competition venue was now one of sorrow and was subdued in comparison with the excitement normally synonymous with the heaviest weight class (Schodl, 1992, p. 140).

The superheavyweight competition at the 1972 Olympics was the final major battle in weightlifting involving the press as a competitive lift, as the Munich Olympic Congress of the IWF voted to retire the press<sup>5</sup> and records in the triathlon and replace them with records in the biathlon of the snatch and clean and jerk (Schodl, 1992, p. 137). The vote was 33 delegates in favor to 13 against, but there were 17 delegates who had left prior to the vote taking place - thus abdicating their responsibility and possibly changing the course of the sport's history in the process. The Games also marked the selection of English as the official language of the federation, which then became known as the International Weightlifting Federation, or IWF (Schodl, 1992, p. 140).

The 1975 AAU Senior Nationals saw some individuals move to the forefront that many felt would help the U.S. once again compete near the top: Lee James, Mark Cameron, and Bruce

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<sup>5</sup> Thus continuing the paradigmatic shift mentioned several pages back that cemented the longstanding French conceptions of the sport and continually distanced itself from the German cultural roots which were at least an equal source of the sports early heritage.

Wilhelm (Kutzer, 1979, p. 284). In 1976, various African countries felt New Zealand should be barred from the Olympics because a New Zealand Rugby (a non-Olympic sport) team had competed against a South African team (Barney, 1999, p. 282-283). When the IOC did not take the requested action, these nations responded by boycotting the Montreal Olympics (Barney, 1999, p. 283). Although this boycott was inconsequential in terms of weightlifting, it set the precedent for future events which would directly impact the sport. Hungarian Tamas Ajan's 1976 defeat of Oscar State for the position of General Secretary and Austrian Schodl's reelection as President put in place the administrative team which was to essentially control the sport through the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Schodl, 1992, p. 143).

In December of 1979, the Soviet Army invaded Afghanistan and U.S. President Jimmy Carter threatened to boycott the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics in an unsuccessful effort to pressure the Soviets to back off (Schodl, 1992, p. 148). The Soviets were unmoved, so Carter carried out his threatened boycott and 62 other nations chose to join the United States in not sending a team to Moscow, although Schodl notes many of these boycotting nations still sent their officials to meetings of the various international federations (Barney, 1999, p. 283; Schodl, 1992, p. 149).

The 1980 Olympic Congress of the IWF has been called "the most significant in the history of the IWF" by the former President, Gottfried Schodl (1992, p. 157). The Presidents of the various continental federations were, for the first time, automatically granted membership to the IWF Executive Board (Schodl, 1992, p. 157). International tournaments which allowed lifters of different bodyweights to compete against each other were termed World Cup Events (Schodl, 1992, p. 158). The Oceania Weightlifting Federation became the fifth continental federation by the end of 1980 (Schodl, 1992, p. 158). The year 1981 was no less significant, however, as that was the year the IWF began to set specifications for the bars and weights to be used at major international meets

(Schodl, 1992, p. 158). World Weightlifting, the official publication of the IWF, was first published in 1981 (Schodl, 1992, p. 158). In 1981, Vladan Mihajlovic - Chairman of the IWF Historical and Statistical Commission - proposed that the IWF should officially recognize the pre-1920 "wild card" championships and that the federation officially fix the date of its inception as June 10, 1905. Both proposals were officially approved by 1987 (Schodl, 1992, p. 152). One of the ramifications of these actions was to alter the numbering of world championships which had been consistent presumably since 1920 (Schodl, 1992, p. 152).

Politics again took center stage when the Soviet Union and several other socialist countries boycotted the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics (Strossen, 1994, p. 8; Schodl, 1992, p. 149-150). The financial hardships Montreal and Moscow encountered in hosting the Olympics, no doubt resulting at least partially from rather sizeable boycotts, limited the number of cities interested in hosting the 1984 Summer Olympics - a task ultimately accepted by Los Angeles (Barney, 1999, p. 283).

### **The Emergence of the Third World**

Beginning in the first two to three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the forces of globalization shifted the locus of industrial production to the countries of the Third World, thereby increasing their significance in the global arena. At the same time, many of these countries began to achieve a fair amount of success in weightlifting. While Japan is not generally considered part of the third world and having no intention to include it as part of that group now, the fact is that Japan is located geographically as part of the Asian continent and in proximity to many of these nations. This actually fits the proposed model in the sense that Japan has declined in international standings in weightlifting, as have Western nations that industrialized earlier. However, Japan came to the sports upper echelon much later than France, Britain, Germany, and the United States. In that sense,

it was a transitional power, much the same as it not being part of the Third World nor of the West, but rather something in between.

The seeds of Japanese success in the 1960's were sewn during the previous decade. In the 1950's, the Japanese educational system saw fit to incorporate weightlifting as a competitive sport at the high school and collegiate level (Webster, 1976, p. 126). Japanese weightlifters of this era demonstrated convincingly the benefit of such a system in producing talented weightlifters. The 1960's were really the peak of Japanese prowess in this sport, with several medal-winning performances at the 1964 and 1968 Olympics (Webster, 1976, p. 126).

The evolving diplomatic recognition of the "rightful" government of China carried over into the sport arena when the Asian Games Federation affiliated with the People's Republic of China and simultaneously expelled Taiwan (Schodl, 1992, p. 141). This led to reconsideration of the China-Taiwan issue by many international sports federations, including the IWF. Eventually, the People's Republic of China requested, and was granted, re-affiliation with IWF - which was accompanied by the simultaneous expulsion of Taiwan, in May of 1974 (Schodl, 1992, p. 142).

In 1984, a small minority of ethnic Turks living in Bulgaria were subjected to an attempted forced assimilation into Bulgarian culture, including a bulgarization of their names (Schodl, 1992, p. 160). Perhaps the most well known, especially in Bulgaria, of this group was Naim Suleimanov - who was then Bulgaria's top weightlifter. In the course of this forced assimilation, Naim Suleimanov became Nuem Shalamanov and continued his winning and record setting ways in the 132-lbs class (Schodl, 1992, p. 160).

This saga of Neum Shalamanov took a major turn at the end of 1986. When Shalamanov was absent from the World Cup awards banquet a few days later, it was the subject of speculation and allegations of kidnapping in the press. As it turns out, he had fled to London and, ultimately, to

Turkey via the private jet of Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal (Schodl, 1992, p. 160). Once in Turkey, this “pocket Hercules” as he became known in the popular media, assumed a third and final identity as Naim Suleymanoglu (Schodl, 1992, p. 160). Two years of subsequent negotiations ultimately resulted in Turkey paying Bulgaria over \$1,000,000 and Suleymanoglu becoming a Turkish citizen (Schodl, 1992, p. 160).

### **Gender and Racial Equality**

The 1952 Olympics were John Davis’s final success on the international platform. How good was John Davis? Dreschler (2000, p. 2-3) notes:

He performed his lifts with no thigh brush (the bar was not permitted to touch the thighs or hips during the pull in those days), used a split style, employed no hook grip (John’s hands were too small to hook comfortably), and lifted on equipment far poorer than today’s (and John certainly used no banned substances)...Davis had won 6 consecutive World Championships and 2 consecutive Olympic Games. Since that time, only two other weightlifters have ever duplicated Davis’ achievement - Tommy Kono and Vasili Alexseev (Naim Sulemanaglou has won more World Championships than this legendary trio and one more Olympic Games, but his victories were not consecutive and Naim’s record was set up 43 years after Davis’). One can only imagine how many championships Davis might have won had the war years not cut 7 years out of the prime of his career.

It is only on his final point that I disagree. Davis was undefeated for a fifteen-year period, encompassing the war years, so it is logical that he would have won the 5 world and 2 Olympic championships not held, giving him 4 Olympic and 11 world championships, had it not been for the war - a tally unapproached in the intervening fifty years, making a very strong case that John Davis was the greatest weightlifter of all time. Wilhelm (1996, p. 5) notes that “In 1992...[Kono} was acclaimed by...[International Weightlifting Federation] vote to be the greatest weightlifter of all

time". Kono's obvious achievements notwithstanding, the selection of anyone other than John Davis for that honor demonstrates that he remains underrated and one has to wonder to what extent that is race-based. Perhaps the greatest measure of his ability is that recognizing Davis as an eight-time world and Olympic champion does not give him sufficient credit for longevity.

The issue of gender equality has had a major impact upon the sport. Schodl, (1992, p. 155) suggests that there were exclusive "women only" weightlifting clubs in existence in Russia over one hundred years ago. Former National Committee Chairman Rudy Sablo (personal interview, 2002) indicated that U.S. women have been participating in weightlifting meets for over half a century often competing alongside men of the same weight because there were no separate women's divisions.

Spears (1976, p. 62) notes that the cultural variation in the status of women within that culture makes it difficult to make any broad generalizations about women's Olympic sports. Specifically, Spears (1976, p. 62-63) notes that women in less developed countries are much more concerned about the basic needs of health, literacy, and economic self-sufficiency – all of which affect or is affected by population control techniques as well. Women's economic, social, and legal roles are defined and understood through her role in the family unit. In such cultures and societies, gender-based equality of opportunity for sport skill development and sports competitions is neither valued nor available. In contrast, Spears (1976, p. 63) maintains that developed countries tend to provide increasing opportunities for women in a variety of spheres, including participation and competition in sport. sharing work in the home, controlling their own bodies, and understanding themselves as persons. These differences, as they apply to weightlifting, were discussed at the 1977 AAU Annual Convention, and it was noted (Rader, 1978, p. 62) that:

Women may compete in

weightlifting in the United States, but it is not permitted on a worldwide basis by the IWF. Other countries do not have the women's lib that we have here in the United States.

The IWF approved the concept of women's weightlifting in principle in 1983, and the first international women's event was held in March of 1986 (Schodl, 1992, p. 156). Although women from Great Britain, Hungary, China, Canada, and the United States attended, it was not yet considered an official world championship, but the first official Women's World Weightlifting Championships were held in 1987 (Schodl, 1992, p. 156-157).

In direct contrast to the men, the U.S. women were competitive from the start. For example, Karyn Marshall had already been the first woman to clean and jerk 300 lbs prior to the acceptance of official women's world records (Schodl, 1992, p. 283). These early successes for American women weightlifters was probably as much a function of our cultural perspective as to the role of women and the fact that women do have opportunities to pursue sports competition in this country.

### **Sociologically Deviant Behavior Patterns**

As was mentioned previously, the 1960s were a time of evolution, change, the rock revolution, the sexual revolution, cultural revolution, the drug revolution – many of which were seen as forms of social deviance. These trends, including the desire on the part of the older generation to see this as deviance played a major role in events in weightlifting.

#### *The Search for the "Secret"*

By 1953, Hoffman had become preoccupied with "a deeper search for ways to alter the body's chemistry to induce more efficient muscular growth" and "an increased emphasis on human



physiology rather than the human spirit as a means to improved lifting performance" (Fair, 1987, p. 181). It was this preoccupation on his part that planted in others the idea of looking to physiological and chemical means to increase strength, which ultimately opened the door to drug use in weightlifting.

The impact of drugs on the sport has been significant, and the volume of work that has been done on drug testing methodology, the ethics of drug use and detection, physiological effects of these substances, and various other aspects of this complicated and multifaceted issue has been just as significant. Other issues such as sexual freedom have been intertwined with the drug issues. All of these issues will at least be touched on here, but in an unconventional way. The emphasis here will be on approaching the issue on a very personal level, emphasizing the interaction and influence of several key individuals.

Several of Hoffman's weightlifters developed legal and other problems in the late 1950's, signaling an end to the camaraderie that had been associated with, and at least partially responsible for, the success of York Barbell teams. Among the most serious were the legal charges Ike Berger and Dave Sheppard faced. Fair (1999, p. 186) suggests that these incidents were evidence of the continuing moral decline of American weightlifting. This may be a bit harsh, especially since Sheppard was never convicted, but these events were certainly not consistent with the squeaky clean image Hoffman wanted to project and they may have been a sign of impending cultural revolution.

Dr. John Ziegler virtually single-handedly ushered in the pharmaceutical era of weightlifting (Fair, 1993, p. 2, 4). In 1959, Ziegler began to experiment with the combination of various nutritional substances, psychological conditioning, and a low dose of the steroid Dianabol using active national level weightlifters and John Grimek as his subjects (Fair, 1993, p. 5-6, 8; Starr,

1998, 76-78). Grimek and Tony Garcy either saw no improvement or attributed it to other sources (Fair, 1993, p. 6-7). Bill March and Lou Riecke probably got a 10-12% improvement over their previous all time best result independent of any improvement resulting from moving up a weight class, which both men ultimately did (Fair, 1993, p. 8-14).

Obviously, not everyone benefited equally from steroid use and there was, apparently, a ceiling to the amount of improvement that could be expected. One must therefore suspect that even the improvements noted by March and Riecke were probably not all from steroid use. There are several theories as to what these factors may be.

Mental factors account for up to 90% of one's competitive success by some estimates. Garcy specifically credited psychological conditioning for the improvement that he experienced (Fair, 1993, p. 6-7, 17). Those who had peaked during the "Golden Age of American Weightlifting" were intrinsically motivated and, for lack of a better term, tended to be mentally tough. Kono, for example, cited the importance of pride as a key to his success (Wilhelm, 1996, p. 8). Hoffman's anti-communist rhetoric and reliance on a strong sense of nationalism had become an anachronism, particularly in this country. In fact, Hoffman's propaganda was reminiscent, in some ways, to that of those in American political life who were leading the battle against communism. By the 1960's, cultural assimilation was no longer motivating and the younger generation did not have to deal with the things that had made the previous generation so mentally resilient.

The new generation also fell victim to the "Soviet mystique", as had Hoffman himself, and followed Hoffman's lead looking to physiological sources of improvement, believing that steroids would result in huge improvements. The toughness, life experiences, and intrinsic motivation of the older generation were such that they could not conceive of resorting to a pill for increased strength.

It seems that Ziegler was of the opinion that one should optimize all other factors - such as nutrition, psychological conditioning, and training - prior to experimentation with pharmacological substances. While this may well be sound strategy, it also compounds the difficulty of ascertaining how much of the improvement that one experiences is a direct result of steroids and, in fact, probably leads to an overestimate of the percentage. In this case, it is likely that each of these individuals followed different training routines and had varying degrees of success in optimizing the other factors mentioned above.

Ziegler also theorized that one would have more opportunity for one's muscles to adjust easier and more rapidly from two or three movements compared to seven to sixty movements, causing less muscular re-adaptation (Fair, 1993, p. 18). This forced the "modern" lifter to resort to steroids to get what had been a natural byproduct of training for previous generations. Thus, Grimek, for example, practiced more movements in training, had greater muscular re-adaptation as a result, and would not have seen substantial benefit from steroids.

In assessing the effectiveness of steroids, one must also take into account the probable increase in injuries. For example, Riecke's progress was undoubtedly hampered by his injuries which were probably exacerbated by his drug use. One must wonder if Riecke could have duplicated his subsequent efforts and remained injury free had he not used steroids but had set about to gain seventeen pounds over a three year period.

### *The Cultural Revolution*

While March, Riecke and others had been among the first in weightlifting to use steroids, the slightly later experiences of Starr and Bednarski and, to a lesser extent, others provides a very personal perspective on how the counterculture clashed with the older generation and the prices

paid as a result. This included recreational drug use, sexual deviance, and (at least in the eyes of the older generation) moral decay. Since the older generation was the power structure that was being revolted against, and they remained in power because they controlled the financial purse strings, someone had to publicly pay the price for these transgressions.

Starr (1999, p. 100) notes that “by [1965] . . . word had leaked into the weightlifting community about the anabolic usage so [March] . . . no longer had an edge in this department”. Schemansky (2003, personal interview) indicated that people that he had beaten easily only a short time before were rapidly catching up to him around this time, and he felt that this was due to the increased availability and usage of steroids. Since he was remote from the power center of the sport (York), at least in this country, he apparently did not have access to steroids and denied any significant personal usage (Schemansky, 2003, personal interview), thus he was unable to match the progress of these individuals.

Bill Starr and Tommy Suggs were responsible for much of the York revival of the late 1960’s and they recreated the socialization aspects of York that had been a factor in the earlier success of the club (Fair, 1999, p. 236). Fair (1999, p. 256) notes the national youth culture was “embodied in the civil rights movement, women’s liberation, and protest of the Vietnam War” and that, initially, this did not seem to pervade the atmosphere at York. Eventually, however, the weightlifters began to grow their hair longer and grow beards and moustaches as a show of their solidarity with the youth counterculture movement sweeping America (Fair, 1999, p. 256). Fair (1999, p. 256-257) goes on to note that the use of marijuana and other recreational drugs had become commonplace by 1968, in York and in society as a whole. Some, including Bednarski, trace this “contamination” of York by the youth subculture to the presence and influence of Bob Hise III from the West Coast (Fair, 1999, p. 270).

The story of the meteoric, but tragic, career of Bob Bednarski bears witness to the excesses of the drug and sexual revolutions at their peak. For purposes of clarification, the tragedy is not how much more Bednarski could have lifted, or what drugs he took, or even what other behaviors he engaged in. The ultimate tragedy here was the overall effect on one man's life.

Bob Bednarski dislocated his elbow representing the United States at the 1967 Pan-Americans in Winnipeg, Canada, requiring surgical intervention and an intensive rehabilitation regimen culminating in an American record clean and jerk exactly 100 days after the injury despite initially being told he would never regain full use of that arm (Starr, 1997, p. 76-77). By this time, Bednarski was taking steroids, amphetamines, Dexedrine, and a number of sedatives (Fair, 1999, p. 268). He became addicted to a codeine-based muscle relaxant and marveled that he was still lifting world records in spite of a drug habit so severe that the normal person with a similar habit probably wouldn't be able to function (Fair, 1999, p. 269).

The "drug revolution" led to the "sexual revolution" and, again, Bednarski led the way. Blaming a combination of drugs that increased his sexual drive and urges and lowered his inhibitions, Bednarski engaged in extramarital affairs and became preoccupied with sex (Fair, 1999, p. 270). Eventually, other lifters followed suit, and sexual experimentation, wife swapping and divorce became commonplace in York (Fair, 1999, p. 270).

By the year 1970, there was a real rift between the youth (lifters) and elder (administrative power) generations. Most of the team did not even reside in York and were connected primarily by the underground drug network (Fair, 1999, p. 273). Grimek lamented the breakdown in social fabric and the fact that the youth seemed "destruction bent" (Fair, 1999, p 274). The mainstream press, in the form of Sports Illustrated, did an article on weightlifting prior to the 1970 World

Championships in Columbus, Ohio. Ryan (1970, p. 33) noted the success of the Soviet program and potential reasons for that success:

The Soviet weightlifting program is unrivaled. There are 350,000 lifters in the country, and it is estimated that thousands of these are talented enough to have a chance of approaching Olympic standards. From this pool the Russians have drawn some fabled champions. For a dozen years Soviet lifters won every heavyweight (over 198 3 lbs) title at the world championships and at the Olympics. Last April, 10 world records were set at the U.S.S.R. championships. It has been suggested that such extraordinary exploits are unlikely without the aid of drugs. Many weightlifters use anabolic steroids to build their muscle mass and increase their recuperative powers, but there is now talk that the Russians have a power-stimulating inhalant that is administered like smelling salts and gives the athlete quite a lift.

Perhaps more importantly, Ryan (1970, p. 33) noted that Kono cited the increasing number of injuries as an indication the limit of how much the human body could lift was being reached. Ryan's emphasis on the use of drugs was foreboding in light of later developments in the sport, both long and short term. In what can most appropriately be described as a preview of major developments in the sport of weightlifting over the next thirty years or so, nine weightlifters were disqualified and subsequently reinstated on the basis of drug testing and associated problems (Kutzer, 1979, p. 256).

By 1971, Starr had fully embraced the antiwar movement, the sexual revolution, and the drug revolution (Fair, 1999, p. 276-277). Starr's temperament may have been altered by the drugs and/or his marital breakup, but he no longer had the support of York's power structure - Hoffman, Dietz, and Terpak (Fair, 1999, 270-271). His printing of an article openly embracing the drug culture did little to enhance his standing in York and soon he was gone (Fair, 1999, p. 278-279). Around this same time, Dr. Craig Whitehead ran afoul of the law. Whitehead, a physician, had been a top level bodybuilder in the 1960's and was part of the York group of that era. Whitehead had

embraced the drug culture until his arrest in Sacramento for property destruction (Fair, 1999, p. 280-281). The drug of choice for Whitehead was Retalin (sic) (Fair, 1999, p. 281).

Drug abuse and debauchery reigned at York. Fair, (1999, p. 297) notes some of the events occurring in York at this time:

Stories circulated about York lifters engaging in sex with eleven-year-old girls, acts of sodomy with teenage boys, and picture-parties with babysitters. One of the athletes derived a perverted delight from watching his wife have sex with junior high boys, and the ten-year-old son of another proudly demonstrated how to roll a joint. One lifter's apartment was a frequent gathering place for drug and sex orgies.

The 1973 AAU Senior Nationals marked the return to national level competition of Bob Bednarski as a heavyweight, not as a superheavyweight. Bednarski was out of York, back in New England, and making progress again (Starr, 1997, p. 78). He won, but with lifts well under what he had done only a few years prior. It was his final major meet.

The 1973 Senior Nationals may have been the ultimate example of the moral degradation of weightlifting. Fair (1999, p. 299) explains

Hospitality House, the meet headquarters, was the scene of lawlessness and destruction. Fifteen-year old Dennis Senay was caught smoking marijuana and passing out pills. After his featherweight victory, Warner was "slipped a mickey" at a party in Bednarski's room on Saturday night and did not wake up until Sunday night. In addition to damage and theft in the rooms of Hill and Holbrook, Timmy Garcia, a follower of Holbrook, "totally destroyed" Warner's room in rage. Afterward he fell into a deep depression. He was hospitalized for several days in a security unit for fear he might take his life or someone else's . . . the incident sent shock waves through the iron game.

Four members of the York team were suspended by the AAU in the aftermath of the 1973 Senior Nationals and Bednarski suffered the further indignity of removal from the York team (Fair, 1999, p. 301). Tragically, any chance of a further Bednarski comeback or a return to past form ended a few months prior to the World Championships when he suffered third degree burns on both thighs (Starr, 1997, p. 78).

Obviously, Bednarski was not the only weightlifter of this era to engage in deviant behavior. Nor is there any indication that his behavior was any worse than others of that era, both within the sport of weightlifting and external to it. Nor, for that matter, were weightlifters the only group whose members engaged in such behaviors. Unfortunately, the general public began to associate weightlifters with drug use (steroids) and the perception has remained. Within the sport, it is Bednarski who became the scapegoat for this era. He was the face of the drug problem, the moral decay, and the deviancy of the modern generation in the eyes of the York power structure and, because of York's influence, in the eyes of the weightlifting community in general. Of any of the weightlifters from this generation, it is Bednarski who paid the greatest price for his transgressions (Schemansky, 2003, personal interview). The question remains whether the penalty fit the crimes or was excessive.

### *The Clean Up*

Even before the problems of the 1973 Senior Nationals, the administration of the sport realized it needed to curtail the drug use of athletes. Hence, the previously discussed attempt at drug testing at the 1970 World Championships. The next major attempt at testing was at the 1976 Montreal Olympics. Kaczmarek of Poland, Blagoev of Bulgaria, and Khristov of Bulgaria had to forfeit gold, silver, and bronze medals respectively when they were disqualified after positive tests



results for anabolic steroids. The USA's Mark Cameron was also disqualified after a positive drug test (Cameron, 2002, personal interview).

The early 1980=s were problematic for several top weightlifters. Jeff Michels fell victim to drug testing procedures and tested positive for the presence of excessive testosterone at the 1983 Pan Am Games (Fair, 1999, p. 366; Newton, 1984, p. 16). Soviet weightlifters Alexander Kurlovich and Anatoli Pisarenko were caught trying to smuggle 12,000 steroid tablets into Toronto in 1984 (Strossen, 1994, p. 8). Both were allowed to lift at the competition they were attending and to return to the Soviet Union with the understanding there would be repercussions when the pair returned home (Strossen, 1994, p. 8). In fact, Kurlovich was suspended for two years and Pisarenko never again held a world title (Strossen, 1994, p. 8).

The 1988 Olympics were, of course, marred by the disqualifications of sprinter Ben Johnson and several other athletes for drug use. Weightlifters were not immune, as two members of the Bulgarian weightlifting team were disqualified for the presence of diuretics (Dreschler, 1993, p. 27). In order to spare further embarrassment, the Bulgarians withdrew the remainder of their team (Dreschler, 1993, p. 27).

Just as in society as a whole, the 1960s had been a time of turmoil and experimentation for weightlifting as well. But with Ronald Reagan's election as President of the United States in 1980 and the subsequent "just say no" campaign, society had begun to distance itself from drug experimentation. Concurrently, the AIDS epidemic led to a realization of the dangers of sexual experimentation. Likewise, in weightlifting, drug testing efforts had become mainstream. Of course, unsafe sexual practices and recreational drug use were not eliminated from society, nor were either performance enhancing or recreational drugs eliminated from weightlifting. But, officially at least, they were no longer condoned behaviors.



# **CHAPTER 5**

## **THE MODERN ERA 1991-PRESENT**

It is always difficult, if not impossible, to accurately assess which events are of historical import until the passage of some amount of time has occurred. Thus, to discuss events of the past twelve years or so in a historical context may appear to be premature and foolhardy. However, there are several reasons to justify such an attempt. Had there been no discernable change in the world or the sport, there would be no reason to discuss the end of the Cold War as having any significance. Acknowledgement of such change without discussing it would leave questions as to whether the proposed relationship remained intact after the end of bipolarity. If the relationship did not continue from one time period to another, this would be indicative of a problem with the theory and overall timetable. Another reason to discuss the major issues and developments over the past decade is that they may provide insight as to future issues and directions of international politics and the sport.

Based on the reasons just laid out, an attempt will be made here to discuss the events of this relatively short and very recent time period. However, the reader is cautioned that, at some point in the future, the events and trends discussed here may be shown to actually be of very little historical import.

### **WORLD EVENTS**

#### **A Shift in the Axis of Power**

As we discussed in the previous chapter, the decolonization and emergence of Asia and Africa during the Cold War coincided with a period of lagging economic growth among the superpowers. Increased opportunities for transnational investment caused large corporations to

develop global strategies and increase international investments, and, in turn, fed the rapid industrialization of the Third World (Nye, 1993, p. 98). Nye (1993, p. 186) suggests that this may eventually lead to altered views of long-standing global problems, based on reduced identification of the individual on the basis of one's nationality.

A shift to service-oriented computer-based economies in the Western Hemisphere has coincided with this tendency of multinational corporations to move their industrial functions to the newly industrialized Third World. This has resulted in a new bipolar economic and political power structure characterized by the disappearance of Cold War alliances, increased importance of technology, increased importance of economies in world politics, and the emergence of a new north-south axis of international politics and prosperity, with power and prosperity residing in the north (Nye, 1993, p. 119; Rourke, 2000, p. xv). The industrialized nations in the north are relatively prosperous while the less developed countries in what was formerly known as the Third World are still in the process of industrializing and remain relatively poor (Rourke, 2000, p. 116-117). Specifically, Weidenbaum (2000, p. 84) suggests that Southeast Asia is rapidly gaining ground in terms of economic power and rate of industrialization.

### **A Case Study**

China is one of the world's fastest growing economies and is an example of a country in transition from an agriculturally based economy to one rooted in industry (Rourke, 2000, p. 60-61) Undoubtedly part of the reason for recent economic gains in this part of the world is the large number of U.S. companies that have established branches in this and other previously less developed regions (Weidenbaum, 2000, p. 81). Such investment in foreign undeveloped areas benefits these companies because it allows the company to circumvent U.S. regulations regarding

employee wages (Rourke, 2000, p. 101), serving the dual domestic purposes of keeping inflation down and the standard of living up, while also benefiting the foreign economy (Rourke, 2000, p. 78). This type of arrangement, either with foreign branches of a company or an alliance with a foreign-based company, had become quite typical of most businesses of significant size based in the more economically advanced countries (Weidenbaum, 2000, p. 82).

There has been a general tendency towards the universality of the commodities we all use, the emergence of the information age, and the increasing importance and acceptance of science in our daily lives (Roberts, 1999, p. 575). Roberts (1999, p. 575) notes that “The coming [and possession] of cheap consumer goods . . . confers status; this is an incentive to work for higher wages to buy them”.

## **WEIGHTLIFTING**

Some of the more recent socio-political issues that have had an impact on the sport of weightlifting include gender and racial equality, commodification and commercialization, globalization, and the ongoing drug problem. Just as the countries of much of the Third World have taken on increased recognition and importance in the global arena in general, so too have they done so in weightlifting.

### **Commodification of Athletes**

Naim Suleymanoglu’s flight from his home country of Bulgaria and request for political asylum in Turkey, where he ultimately became a citizen, was fully discussed in the previous chapter. The eventual deal which resulted in Turkey paying Bulgaria over \$1,000,000 to pave the way for Suleymanoglu becoming a Turkish citizen and lifting in international competition for Turkey

(Schodl, 1992, p. 160) set the precedent and is symptomatic of the commodification of weightlifters and weightlifting.

It is no longer a simple matter of saying someone was born in or trains in a certain country, so that is the nation that they represent in international competition. There has been a commodification of weightlifters such that a system exists - similar to that in professional sports in America, but on a national level - where the athlete may be bought or sold or traded to other teams (Cameron, personal communication, 2002; Glossbrenner, 1995, p. 45; Schodl, 1992, p. 160). Thus, there is a diminished sense of nationalism and an increased sense of the importance of the individual, again mirroring developments in society as a whole. This has allowed countries not normally able to produce great weightlifters to “buy” them from other countries.

The breakup of the Soviet Union, the most successful nation in history at producing large numbers of champion weightlifters, helped feed this process. The Olympics and world championships now assign countries a maximum number of competitors that they can enter at one of these events based on relatively recent showings at major international events (USAW Rulebook, 2002). The better a country does, the more spots they have available. Although each of the former Soviet republics sends a team to major international tournaments, there are still more weightlifters in these countries that are capable of being competitive at the highest levels than there are spots available on these terms. Schmitz (2000, p. 22) notes that several countries have taken advantage of this and have purchased weightlifters from the former Soviet Republics. This process, which much include a change of citizenship, may take as little as six weeks to complete and potentially costs upwards of one million dollars, depending on the ability and number of weightlifters involved (Schmitz, 2000, p. 22).

Former superheavyweight world champion and world recordholder Antonio Krastev, originally of Bulgaria, had defected from his native country and was living in New York City a few years ago (Glossbrenner, 1995, p. 45). At that time, he was still capable of beating anyone in the world on the right day and, since he was interested in lifting for the United States, this was an opportunity for USAW to increase the number of athletes that could be sent to major international meets and increase the number of Americans that have an opportunity for international competition. This, in turn, might have made us more attractive to more highly skilled foreign lifters looking for a country to represent, which would also have increased the number of Americans that could have had international meet experience based on even higher placings.

Nonetheless, Krastev was not allowed to lift for the U.S. in international competitions and soon left the country (Glossbrenner, 1995, p. 45). There is still propaganda value to having the top superheavyweight - a value the hierarchy in control of U.S. weightlifting apparently still does not see. In short, Antonio Krastev could have fueled a major resurgence in American weightlifting but this was not pursued because our culture does not place a premium on strength, as demonstrated in this sport.

The weightlifting administration in America has a long history of requiring a stricter standard for athletes than do other countries, to the detriment of the sport in this country. This has been an on-going issue with our top weightlifters for many years, and has been manifested in the amateurism and drug use issues. USAW continues to be a step behind in terms of allowing foreign lifters to represent the U.S. and the overall direction of the sport internationally. This is also reminiscent of U.S. economic politics that excessively hampered domestic economic growth while fostering such growth in other parts of the world.

## **The Ongoing Drug Problem**

Drug testing in all Olympic sports and, specifically, in weightlifting became much more stringent and frequent after the 1988 Seoul Olympics (Schodl, 1992, p. 153). Discussion of the possibility of changing the weight classes began as early as the mid-1980's (Schodl, 1992, p. 156). The stated rationale for this move was that the new weight classes would give an opportunity for new records without the taint associated with drug use. In fact, new weight classes were instituted at the beginning of 1993 and the old world records set in the old weight classes were retired (Strossen, 1994, p. 27). The IWF then set up "world standards" in each weight class and the first lifter to exceed these standards in a given weight class was recognized as the new world recordholder (Strossen, 1994, p. 27). One of the immediate effects was a drop by about 10% in what the top weightlifters internationally were lifting (Strossen, 1994, p. 27).

In 1994, Randy Strossen (1994, p. 17-20; 24-27) was so concerned about the future of the sport in this country that he published a roundtable discussion featuring noted experts in the sport, interviews with two of the greatest American weightlifters of all time - Pete George and Tommy Kono, and a discussion of the "drug use excuse" in the April 1994 issue of *Milo: A Journal for Serious Strength Athletes*. The ideas expressed ranged from the radical to the mundane. There was no clear consensus, however, on how to improve American weightlifting. That is one of the biggest problems that USA Weightlifting faces - the people in a position to make things happen can not agree what should happen. This is an obstacle that was not a factor during America's heyday in the sport because, as has been discussed throughout this work, Bob Hoffman's influence and power was nearly absolute.

Tommy Kono, a former world and Olympic champion whose exploits were discussed previously, suggested improved attention and focus on the mental aspects on an individual basis as



a means of improving our international standing in the sport, which is eerily reminiscent of Bob Hoffman's philosophy during America's glory days in this sport.

However, Kono's perspective stems from the fact that the top weightlifters of his era were essentially blue-collar, ethnic Americans with a strong sense of nationalism who saw weightlifting as a means of cultural assimilation and a means to overcome adversity. In post-industrialized America, the blue collar culture has disappeared as a result of de-industrialization, nationalism is on the decline (although the events of September 11 may ultimately change this), there is a strong desire for cultural preservation, and adversity/disability is not seen as something to be overcome. Unfortunately, Kono's approach is unlikely to work in this country, as our society today is vastly different than it was forty to fifty years ago.

In contrast, some authors and athletes from the U.S. claim that drug use by others is the reason for American lack of success. This belief is a direct result of Hoffman's search for a physiological "secret" to improved results and his belief that other nations had greater access to pharmacological technology, which continues to haunt U.S. weightlifting and is another root cause for our lack of success. Hasenmaier (1998, p. 39-40) rebuffs this notion and indicates that West Germany's Manfred Nerlinger faced up to "eight unannounced drug tests per year" during the period 1986 to 1993, and still clean and jerked 573 lbs in 1988.

In 1997, Wes Barnett became the first U.S. world championship medalist in some time, when he scored a silver medal in the clean and jerk and a bronze in the total (Schmitz, 1998, p. 20-21, 25). Schmitz (1998, p. 21) indicated this was the first medal winning performance by an American male since Cameron's bronze medal in the clean and jerk in 1977, other than the East European - boycotted Games of 1984. This claim is quite interesting on its face, as it appears to suggest that weightlifters in the U.S. tend to downplay their successes in this sport, limited though

they are. It is also noteworthy that Barnett's lifts closely approximate those of Michels, Cameron, and Bednarski - each of whom were arguably the best American lifters of their era and were of similar bodyweights. Unfortunately this also suggests the top Americans at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were lifting approximately the same as their predecessors had thirty years prior.

### **Gender and Racial Equality**

American women have consistently performed well since the advent of international competition opportunities of women. U.S. lifters Robyn Byrd-Goad, Karyn Marshall, Cheryl Haworth and Tara Nott have all been world or Olympic champions or medalists, while several other U.S. women have medaled at this level. Nott was the first U.S. Olympic gold medalist in this sport since Chuck Vinci at the Rome Olympics in 1960.

The year 2000 marked the inauguration of women's weightlifting in the Olympic Games in Melbourne . In more than one way, this was a sign that women, in this sport at least, had reached parity with men. Obviously, this increased yet again the overall number of weightlifters (men and women) likely to be at the Olympics and made the contests virtually unmanageable. In response to this, the weight classes for both men and women were altered for a second time in less than ten years and the existing records at the end of 1999 were retired as a byproduct of this realignment. While this increased the distance from records set prior to sophisticated drug testing, it also allows weightlifters to set "world" or other records with less weight than others were doing at a comparable level years prior, thus rewarding mediocrity.

## **An Evolving Concept of Amateurism**

The Soviet conceptualization of the role of amateurism within the sport of weightlifting has already been discussed extensively - as has the traditional U.S. approach. This section will deal with how the U.S. view of amateurism has changed over the past decade or so, as well as other national approaches to the issue.

### *An Elusive Concept*

Perhaps the biggest problem in reconciling Soviet/Russian and American conceptualizations of amateurism is the fact that there has been no agreed definition for more than a century. As far back as 1894, at the first meeting of the IOC, the definition of amateurism consumed a large portion of the proceedings (Ueberhorst, 1976, p. 9; Lennartz, 1994, p. 99-101).

VanderZwaag (1976, p. 84) suggest that “amateurism is determined by the motives of the participant”, but readily conceded the impossibility of knowing the motives of another. VanderZwaag (1976, p. 84) goes on to define an amateur as “one who plays a game for no other reason than to play it”. This is problematic in that any athlete who has reached a level of excellence in any given sport sufficient to qualify him or her for national or international competition in that sport is probably not participating in that sport merely for the sake of such participation (VanderZwaag, 1976, p. 85). As a result of this dilemma, VanderZwaag (1976, p. 92) postulated that, at best, Olympic sports “can only be evaluated as less professional than certain other activities”.

*The U.S. View of Amateurism Evolves*

Generally speaking, economic incentives are available to U.S. weightlifters through the IWF, the USOC, USA Weightlifting, and private sponsorship. The IWF sanctioned five international meets during the calendar year 2002 for which prize money was available (USA Weightlifting Athlete Reference Guide, 2002, p. 13). In terms of U.S. weightlifters, this potential source of funding will be omitted from the discussion, as it is unlikely that the U.S. would have a weightlifter place high enough in a major international competition to reap such a reward.

The USOC provides elite athletes who meet certain criteria with a number of benefits including basic grant, incentive, tuition grant, Operation Gold, and Elite Athlete Health Insurance, according to the Technical Director of USA Weightlifting, Paul Fleschler (personal interview, 2003). The latter includes access to the USOC National Rehabilitation Network and the National Dental Referral program (USA Weightlifting Athlete Reference Guide, 2002, p. 41). USAW provides additional financial incentives for various placings at world and Olympic championships, setting American or personal records, and education reimbursement (Fleschler, personal interview, 2003).

For those athletes who qualify and choose to participate in the Resident Athlete Program at the Olympic Training Center (OTC) in Colorado Springs, the USOC pays for their room and board. Athletes may even be asked to participate in promotional opportunities which arise from their presence at the program. Participants also immediately qualify for in-state college tuition rates (Fleschler, personal interview, 2003). Fleschler (personal interview, 2003) further noted that athletes who make either the Regular or the Super Squad “receive outfitting from Adidas worth about \$500-\$1000 depending on which squad they are on” and that “USAW also pays for all major international trips...[which] typically costs about \$2000-\$2500 per athlete per trip”.

The 2002 USA Weightlifting Athlete Reference Guide (p. 32) makes a distinction between being in the “trade or business” of being an amateur athlete or it being a hobby but, in either case, identifies weightlifting as an amateur sport and weightlifters as amateur athletes. Clearly, if this is the case, then our national conceptualization of amateurism has undergone significant change.

Former national champion Bruce Wilhelm (1994, p. 24) notes the existence of these programs and points out that there is no sacrifice by the top weightlifters in the country today, as there was just a generation ago. Perhaps this can be made more apparent by looking more closely at the dollars generated by our top athletes in the U.S. through these programs. Cheryl Haworth, Tara Nott, and Shane Hamman have been among the top U.S. weightlifters in the past few years (Fleschler, personal interview, 2003). All three are on the Super Squad previously mentioned and the latter two are part of the Resident Athlete Program at Colorado Springs (Fleschler, personal interview, 2003). Fleschler (personal interview, 2003) estimated that our top weightlifters earn about \$30,000 per year if they are not members of the Resident Athlete Program and about \$45,000 per year for those who do participate in that program, not including any private sponsorship deals which some of our top weightlifters also benefit from. While this does not rival the salary of an NFL quarterback, it is surely just as far away from the days when York employees worked all day for a meager salary and trained at night or during their noon break.

### *The Chinese Approach*

Despite the availability of funding for U.S. weightlifters, the United States remains far behind other countries in terms of the financial incentives offered to weightlifters. For example, Schmitz (2000, p. 22) suggests that weightlifters representing Qatar at the 1999 World

Weightlifting Championships were paid “in the five and six figures...for medals and placings” at this one meet.

One of the biggest changes in the last few decades has been the rise of Korean and Chinese teams and weightlifters. Japanese lifters, of course, were internationally well known and highly regarded by the 1980's, but the rise of other Asian teams - particularly the Chinese - has been much more recent and coincides with the rapid rate of industrialization in this part of the world over the past several years. Perhaps a discussion of their approach may yield clues as to how to improve the performance of U.S. weightlifters.

Yu (personal interview, 2002) - a member of the Chinese National Team in the early 1990's - cited the fact that U.S. lifters are expected to work for a living and then engage in training as the biggest difference between weightlifting in the U.S. and in China. The top U.S. weightlifters have the opportunities just discussed, but even they do not enjoy the economic incentives available to the top Chinese weightlifters.

Yu (personal interview, 2002) explains that, in China, an athlete is recruited and signed to a local team in much the same manner as college athletes in this country are recruited and signed to professional baseball, basketball, football, and other such teams. The athlete is then paid a salary by that team in the range of \$2000-\$5000 per month (Yu, personal interview, 2002). Additionally, the athlete will have corporate sponsors which pay him a like amount monthly (Yu, personal interview, 2002). Not to be outdone, the Chinese government then pays the members of the National Team a quarterly stipend and pays extra money at the end of the year for any records set during the year (Yu, personal interview, 2002).

## **The Future of Weightlifting in the U.S.**

Despite, recent progress in the area of payment of our top weightlifters, there is obviously much more to be done in this area. The relative lack of financial incentives, an ignorance of the propaganda value of being home to the “strongest man in the world”, a reliance on physiological rather than psychological means of strength improvement, a belief that athletes from other countries are pharmacologically aided to a greater extent than our top athletes, a resistance to the commodification of weightlifters, a failure of collegiate athletics to sanction and regulate competition in weightlifting, and an apparently incessant need of USA Weightlifting to hold U.S. weightlifters to a higher standard indicates that USA Weightlifting will be less than competitive internationally for some time to come.

In this case, the socio-political importance of the U.S. is overshadowed by the post-industrialized state of the American economy. The disappearance of blue collar industrialized society in America has led to, and been reflected in, the various factors - identified in the previous paragraph - which restrict the development of the sport in this country. Therefore, the prospect for any kind of timely improvement in the international standing of U.S. weightlifting appears unlikely. Since the proposed theory links the sport to industrialization and socio-political events and trends, the current state of U.S. weightlifting is not in conflict with the theory, despite the continued socio-political importance of the U.S.

# CHAPTER 6

## SUMMARY

The study of sport has been linked to an increased understanding of international politics, military strength, culture, history and society. Examples can be found in the Olympics, in the Turner Movement in 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany, and in the sport of weightlifting. Recently the value of sport as a means of documenting history has gained recognition and acceptance. Riordan (1977, p. 57) noted that "a society's pattern of sport will ultimately depend on the specifics of that society's socio-economic foundation [and] its class relationships...[therefore] the nature of sport can...be expected to alter with any change to a new socio-economic formation".

Basically, there were four major socio-economic and political power shifts in international society during the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the shift from pre-World War I Balance of Power politics to the era of global conflict and transition, the rise of the bipolar system dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union, and finally the shift to a new north-south axis. Thus, the past one hundred and fifty years or so can be neatly and chronologically divided into specific time periods, as follows: pre-World War I nationalism, the era of global conflict, the cold war years, and the modern era. Each of these four major time periods were covered extensively in a previous chapter. This thesis is offered as a speculative case study exploring the relationship between the socio-political events and trends of the past one hundred fifty years or so and events in the sport of weightlifting, and the extent to which the latter is reflective of the former.

A number of specific questions were posed in the Introduction. Throughout this work they have been discussed in less formal terms. The validity of the proposed theory lies in the response to



those very questions. As a final step in the presentation of this proposed theory, the information presented thus far can be used to answer those same questions.

1. Has the sport of weightlifting been reflective of international politics?

The history of weightlifting has generally consisted of four distinct phases which are roughly analogous to those in international politics since the latter portion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The chapters on each of these time periods provided numerous examples of how individual events in international politics were, in fact, reflected in the sport. Therefore, it appears that the answer to this question is a resounding “Yes”.

2. Have the nations which have been the best in weightlifting been the strongest militarily?

The perception of military strength would seem likely to benefit from the propaganda value of being the nation with the strongest man in the world or the strongest weightlifting team in the world. In reality, there was some correlation between the two up until around 1960.

The Great Powers and the U.S. and Japan were essentially the military powers of greatest significance prior to World War I. These same nations, except for the U.S. and Japan, were also the most prominent in weightlifting during this period. The two exceptions were discussed in a previous chapter and are not cause to modify the theory. Hitler’s Germany and the U.S. were the greatest military powers during the period immediately prior to World War II and were also home to the two best weightlifting teams in the world. During the postwar period, the two superpowers were so named because of their military strength. They were also dominant in weightlifting during that time.

There does not appear to be a great correlation between military strength and a nation’s success in weightlifting in recent years. The U.S. was one of two superpowers for over thirty years and remains the only one in the modern era, yet has not been a major factor in weightlifting since

approximately 1960. This is probably due to events and trends in weightlifting being correlated to a greater extent to industrialization and socio-political power and events. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the U.S. remains a socio-political power but, in terms of weightlifting, the correlation is outweighed by that with industrialization. The answer to this question, then, appears to be some correlation but that it is limited and outweighed by other factors.

3. Has success in the sport of weightlifting correlated to the extent to which that nation is industrialized?

Britain was the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. Since the British society of that era placed a premium on strength, London was considered the premier engagement for professional strongmen. In fact, London was the home of the first-ever World Weightlifting Championships. As the other great powers of the pre-war era began to industrialize, there was a high correlation between those nations that were industrialized and those that were producing the top weightlifters. This trend continued through the World Wars and beyond. In the modern era, the most industrialized areas (or those that are industrializing most rapidly) are the former Third World nations and they are also producing many of the top weightlifters. Furthermore, the decline of U.S. weightlifting roughly parallels the movement of the industrial functions of multi-national corporations out of the U.S.

A nation's level and rate of industrialization appears to show a high correlation to the ability of that nation to produce top weightlifters. In fact, it appears that this may be the single greatest factor in determining how successful a nation will be in weightlifting.

4. Can the sport of weightlifting document times and mentalities?

5. Does the sport reflect the major historical events and trends of the time period involved?

Pre-World War I nationalism, global conflict, the Cold War, the struggle for racial and gender equality, the emergence of the Third World, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the counter-culture revolution of the 1960's, the anti-drug campaign of the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the arms race, and the globalization of industry will be seen as some of the important events and trends of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by future historians. The sport of weightlifting has been demonstrated to be an adequate means of the documentation of these events and trends through the preceding chapters. Therefore, it appears that weightlifting can be used to document times and mentalities and does reflect the major developments and trends during this time period. The limitation here would be that weightlifting has only been around in anything resembling its modern form for a little over a hundred years.

In short, the majority of the questions posed in the Introduction have been answered affirmatively. In conclusion, I present this work as documentation of a theory that events and trends in weightlifting are highly correlated to the level of industrialization of a nation, socio-political events and trends, respectively, and - to a lesser extent - to the military strength of a nation.

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