



Evolution of the physical education system through the prism of history

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Abstract

Objective of the study is to determine the place and role of physical education and sports in the system of agricultural education in the USSR and the Russian Federation, carrying out their comparative analysis.

Methods and structure of the study. The following methods were used in the work: included and non-involved observation of physical education teachers, interviews with physical education teachers and sports coaches, a sociological survey of first-year students. The example of the leading agricultural university of the country – Timiryazev Academy – shows the evolution of approaches to teaching physical education in the USSR and the Russian Federation.

Results and conclusions. Data on the teaching of physical education at Timiryazev Academy in different periods of its history are provided. The results of a sociological survey among students of Timiryazev Academy are highlighted, according to which the overwhelming majority of students have a positive attitude towards the GTO standards, which were the normative basis of the Soviet system of physical education. The University has a Physical Education and Sports Development Program for 2021–2030, one of the areas of which is the popularization of the All-Russian Physical Education and Sports Complex “Ready for Labor and Defense”. The main scientific result: the timeliness of turning to the positive developments of the Soviet era is substantiated, but taking into account modern realities. This is the approach implemented at the Timiryazev Academy.

Keywords: *physical education, agricultural education, USSR modern education system, sociological survey, comparative analysis.*

Introduction. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of physical culture in the process of socialization. And yet it is of particular importance for specialists in the agricultural profile, since without professional and applied physical training it is impossible to develop the professional qualities necessary in the countryside.

N.Yu. Borisova draws attention to the recreational function of physical culture, considering it the most significant [2, p. 138]. G.A. Ivakhnenko and V.V. Kuzmina propose to transfer university physical culture from a practical to an educational discipline [3, p. 111]. G.V. Astratov and M.A. Kocheryan [1, pp. 18–31] put forward the idea of applying the categories of institutional marketing to the study of physical culture. T.L. Dyachenko and V.V. Vucheva rightly note that there are contradictions “between the increased requirements

for physical culture ... and the lack of necessary information on the dynamics of their development” [6, p. 2]. Some aspects of teaching physical education are considered by foreign researchers [5, pp. 74–85; 7, pp. 59–70]. The authors of this article, in turn, offer a retrospective view of the problem, believing that it would be very useful to turn to the Soviet experience of forming a student’s personality in the process of physical education classes.

Objective of the study is to determine the place and role of physical education and sports in the system of agricultural education in the USSR and the Russian Federation, having carried out their comparative analysis.

Methods and structure of the study. In the course of preparing the article, included and non-involved observation of physical education teachers, in-



interviews with physical education teachers, and a sociological survey of students studying at the Timiryazev Academy were used.

Results and conclusions. The Timiryazev Academy, the flagship of agricultural science and education since the times of the USSR, was chosen as the subject of the study. Here alone in the first year more than 3 thousand students study, representing all federal districts of the Russian Federation, which makes sociological surveys as representative as possible. The curriculum of all implemented training areas includes the academic discipline "Physical Education", the university also operates sports sections in 38 sports.

Physical education classes at the Timiryazev (Petrovskaya) Academy began long before the October Revolution. In 1910, the first competitions in various sports were held [4, p. 22].

Physical education classes reached a new level in the 1930s, when the Soviet government considered physical education as a means of strengthening the combat power of the Red Army. Membership in Osoaviakhim and participation in sports sections became mandatory. Particularly distinguished students received the "Voroshilov Sharpshooter", "Voroshilov Horseman", "Ready for Labor and Defense" badges. Auto-moto, parachute, flight, mountaineering and other clubs were created. As an incentive, participants were given food coupons, vouchers to health centers and rest homes. In 1936, a physical education department was created at the academy, headed by V. M. Marakuev, and all further sports activities at the university were carried out by this department.

In the post-war period, priorities changed. The main thing for the Soviet government was to prepare workers for agriculture with maximum labor productivity. An important component here was physical training.

In the Russian Federation, the focus of physical education has changed. The priorities have become raising the general level of physical fitness, developing a love for sports and raising a healthy nation. However, commercialization has not bypassed physical education: the number of sports facilities has decreased, and the cost of physical education and sports services has increased significantly, becoming inaccessible to most students from rural families, who form the basis of the contingent of agricultural universities.

Since the mid-2010s, a tendency to return to the

experience of the USSR has emerged. On March 24, 2014, a decree was signed on the revival of the GTO standards, which was the normative basis of the Soviet system of physical education. The question arose about the revival of the "Leather Ball", "Golden Puck", "White Rook" – competitions that had the status of all-Union. The training process itself has also changed. Some Russian trainers have begun to view the "warm-up" known since Soviet times as a separate training system, which can be seen in the example of the Timiryazev Academy.

In March 2025, two sociological surveys were conducted among first-year students of the Timiryazev Academy, in which more than 350 students took part. Their results clearly showed the popularity of the GTO standards: 37% of respondents were "definitely positive" about them, 30% were "rather positive". An extremely small number of respondents were "rather negative" about the GTO standards – only 3%, even fewer were "definitely negative" – 0.5%. And only 1% of respondents have no idea about the GTO.

It should be emphasized that 44% of students have already passed the GTO (apparently, even before entering the university). Of the rest, only 3% plan to pass the GTO. It can be assumed that one of the motives for passing the GTO standards was the desire of applicants to get additional points when entering a university. However, students no longer have this motive, although their attitude towards the GTO is generally positive. Hence the task of motivating the remaining part of respondents (23%) to pass these standards. In this regard, the inclusion of a clause on the popularization of the All-Russian physical education and sports complex "Ready for Labor and Defense" in the Timiryazev Academy's Physical Culture and Sports Development Program for 2021-2030 seems justified and timely.

Conclusions. The main difference between the physical education systems in the USSR and the modern Russian Federation was its focus. If in the pre-war period the priority was to prepare well-trained defenders of the Motherland, then after the war the main attention was paid to physical training as the basis for labor productivity. In post-Soviet Russia, priorities changed again: increasing the general level of physical training was put at the forefront. And only since the mid-2010s, our country has once again begun to use Soviet experience.

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