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**Gymnastics: Sweden Denmark and Germany Part 2**

**Script**

### **The Recreation Movement in Germany**

Toward the end of the century many factors contributed to a change of attitude toward organized recreation and sports participation and stimulated their promotion. Herbert Spencer, widely read in continental Europe, not only influenced nations to revise secondary schools curriculums, placing more emphasis upon mathematics and science, but also made it quite clear that gymnastics could not compare with sports participation, competitive or recreation, in the development of desirable social characteristics. In 1878 Wilhelm Max Wundt, a physiologist and experimental psychologist, aroused considerable interest in play and recreation as expressions of animal and human behavior. Under the influence of Wundt's work, Karl Groos, a professor of biology of the University Of Basel, Switzerland, produced his exhaustive studies, *The Play of Animals* (1896) and *The Play of Man* (1899). In the closing years of the nineteenth century interest in play and games contributed to the child-study movement in America and the play movement in Europe as counteragents to the harmful physical effects of modern sedentary life.

### **Early Contributors**

Through Konrad Koch, a teacher of history and classical languages, and August Hermann, a gymnastic instructor, at Martino-Katharineum Gymnasium (secondary school) in Brunswick, German boys were introduced to the English games of Rugby and cricket and the American game of baseball between 1874 and 1876. By 1878 these games became so popular that they were made a regular part of the school's physical education program two afternoons a week. Koch and Hermann were appointed supervisors of the play period, and a modest budget was provided to purchase playing equipment. By 1879 the school authorities made participation in these and other games a requirement for the lower and middle grades, and by 1882 for the upper grades.

At the convention of the German Gymnastic Teachers Association at Brunswick in 1876, Hermann said that the German people must, like the English, make gymnastics and participation in games a national habit if they were to combat the deteriorating effects of modern life. Other

speakers, who had visited England, pointed out that enthusiasm for games was not restricted to the schoolboy but was to be found among Englishmen in every walk of life. The English found in this participation certain values which the Germans might well consider.

### **Emil Hartwick**

In 1881 Emil Hartwick, a Prussian judge and an expert gymnast in his student days at the universities of Heidelberg and Berlin, led a movement to promote games and outdoor sports in Germany. Under his influence the Central Association of Bodily Education in the Nation and School was organized in 1882. Its aim was the promotion of bodily exercise through gymnastics, skating, swimming, bathing, rowing, games, and festivals. This organization was one of the first to appoint a medical section to observe the physical effects of exercise on the individual, which has since become standard practice in European countries.

Local branches of the Central Association were quickly formed in the larger German cities, and Jahn's Turnplatz, which had moved indoors to accommodate the Turners and schoolchildren, once more returned to its former function as an outdoor playground. By 1882 playgrounds were established and equipped in Düsseldorf, Bonn, Witten, and Berlin, and by 1884 in Bremen and Chemnitz. Other German municipalities provided leadership for public participation in games and other recreational activities.

Hartwick was pleased with the general response but disappointed in the small membership in the subsidiary associations and the financial support given the playground movement. Hartwick's greatest stumbling block was the German Association, whose leaders assumed an indifferent attitude. At the height of his career, in 1886 Hartwick was shot and killed in a duel, and the playground movement in Germany had for the time being lost its momentum and one of history's pioneer recreational leaders.

### **Other Playground Leaders**

Hartwick had convinced Gustav von Gossler, Prussian Minister of Education and Public Worship, of the worthiness of his cause. In his student days the Prussian minister had been an expert all-round athlete. At the ninth national convention of the German Gymnastic Association in Berlin in 1881 he told gymnastic leaders that games and outdoor activities should share the program with formal gymnastics. In 1882 von Gossler passed an edict which required the provision of outdoor playgrounds for gymnastics and active games.

Emil von Schenckendorff, a proponent of the manual arts idea, which paralleled the playground movement in Germany in the 1880s, got in touch with Hartwick in 1882 to request some form of activity to counteract the effect of school routine on his boys at the Garlitz Manual Training School. At Hartwick's suggestion and with the able assistance of Gustav Ernst Eitner, a gymnastic instructor in the secondary school, von Schenckendorff succeeded in introducing a games program not only into his school but also into the elementary and secondary schools of Garlitz.

At the national convention of language teachers at Grolitz in 1889 Eitner provided a program of games as a feature of the meeting. The visitors received the exhibition with enthusiasm, and several teachers suggested that since few were familiar with games instruction a normal course should be established to teach them. Von Schenckendorff accepted the suggestion and with the support of von Gossler organized such a normal course in 1890 with Eitner at its head. In his first playground course Eitner lectured on the theory of play and games, discussed

the mechanics of some sixty games and provided demonstrations and actual practice in thirtyfour. Eitner published a games manual, *Die [ugenspiele*, which had six printings in the year 1890.

With the continued favorable acceptance of the playground movement, von Schenckendorff invited a group of influential public figures to meet in Berlin in 1891 to consider a large-scale national promotional scheme. This meeting resulted in the formation of the Central Committee for the Promotion of Games, designed to assist individuals or local organizations in the introduction of games and other recreational activities to the public. The Central Committee not only accelerated the playground movement in Germany but also laid the foundation for the establishment of sports clubs in every village and city in Germany and later in practically every foreign country on the Continent."

### **Teacher Preparation in Germany**

As gymnastics and Spiess's free exercises were introduced into the schools of the German confederation, the problem of teacher preparation ration became acute. To meet the demand for qualified gymnastic instructors in the elementary and higher schools, the Prussian government founded the Royal Central Gymnastic Institute in Berlin under the joint control of the Ministers of War and Education. Captain H. Rothstein of the Prussian Army was appointed director.

General Ernst van Pfuel (1779-1866) as chief of staff had organized the first military swimming school (Schwimmanstalt) at the Berlin Institute sometime after 1815. Swimming pools were rare even in teacher-training institutions financed by the government but prospective teachers attending the Royal Central Gymnastic Institute received swimming instruction. General Pfuel introduced the "fishing pole" technique, in which the learner was suspended in the water by means of a staff and rope attached to a wide bell encircling his midriff. This method of instruction was used in the military and naval schools of other countries and to some extent in school systems.

### **A Conflict of Gymnastic Philosophies**

As a government official Captain Rothstein had become familiar with the Swedish system of gymnastics and when he organized the Institute at Berlin was inclined to favor this "scientific" system as opposed to the Jahn-Eiselen system of German gymnastics. When Captain Rothstein banished the horizontal and parallel bars from the program of the Institute, he provoked violent reactions, which precipitated a debate on the respective merits of the two systems. In 1862 a commission of medical men of such caliber as Rudolph Virchow and Emil Du Bois Reymond was appointed to study the problem and make a recommendation. The commission recommended that the two pieces of apparatus in question should be retained, and Captain Rothstein resigned. In the same year Prussia made German gymnastics obligatory in elementary schools and the future of the Jahn-Eiselen system was assured.

### **Gymnastic Leaders in Sweden**

#### **A. O. Lindfors (1781-1841)**

Lindfors graduated from the University of Lund in 1802 and returned the following year to get his Ph.D. He wrote his dissertation on the subject of gymnastics (*Arte Gymnastica*), the first of its kind presented as partial fulfillment of the doctorate degree in any university. In this study Lindfors made a distinction between "Gymnastica naturakis" and "gymnastica artificiosa". In his opinion artificially devised exercises had educational value and were an improvement over spontaneous natural activities. Lindfors placed artificial exercise in three categories:

1. Military gymnastics

2. Pedagogical or athletic gymnastics
3. Medical gymnastics for the prevention and correction of physical defects. In his treatment for the second category Lindfors recommended the Greek pentathlon of running, jumping, javelin and discus throwing and wrestling and Plato's *Politeia*, which consisted of games, acrobatics, and dancing. He cited the educational value of games directed by a well-prepared Teacher and antedated Froedel's appreciation of the importance of play and games in the development of self-expression and personality in children.

Lindfors was appointed lecturer in education at the University of Lund, where he controlled the qualifications of tutors, who he insisted should be as well prepared to teach gymnastics as they were other subjects. He eventually gave up his active interest in gymnastics.

Pehr Henrik Ling (1776-1839)

Ling's father was a clergyman and his mother a close relative of the famous Swedish author, Olof Rudbeck. Ling and Lindfors grew up in the same parsonage in southern Sweden, attended the same classical school and the University of Lund. Ling crystallized his thinking on Swedish gymnastics in his book, *General Principles of Gymnastics* (*Gymnastikens allmänna grunder*).

Between 1794 and 1799 Ling served as a tutor and a city clerk in Stockholm. At an early date he showed literary talent of great promise. In 1799 he left Sweden for Denmark, where he met men who stimulated his literary efforts for Denmark, where he met men who stimulated his literary efforts, which later earned him the title of poet laureate of Sweden. Ling also developed an interest in gymnastics and became a master performer in the art of fencing.

In 1804 Ling returned to Sweden and secured an assignment as substitute teacher for an aging fencing master at the University of Lund. After the latter's death Ling was given a full-time appointment as instructor of gymnastics, fencing, horseback riding, he studied anatomy and physiology and applied his knowledge, rudimentary as it was in his time, to gymnastics.

Ling's contribution to Swedish Gymnastics

Ling not only accepted Lindfors' three categories of gymnastics but made practical contributions to all three areas. As a consequence of the Napoleonic wars Sweden realized the importance of conditioning men for military service and asked Ling to prepare men to give army personnel physical training. At the Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics, established in 1814, director Ling provided a course in gymnastics, fencing and published army manuals on gymnastics and bayonet fighting. He also experimented with physical rehabilitation in a special room where he accepted persons of all ages and degrees of physical handicaps.

Ling's aim was to develop the body by maintaining a balance between antagonistic pairs of muscles and by teaching the pupil to subjugate his will to the command of the teacher. He believed that body movements should not be determined by apparatus, as in the German system, but that the apparatus should be designed so as to secure the desired result, whether they were military, educational or rehabilitation.

Ling originated the stall bars (*ribbstol*), Swedish boom (*bom*), saddle (*saddlebom*), windmill ladder (*stege*), low combination benches (*bank*, *balansribb*, and *lutplå*), and vaulting box (*plint*). To these he later added the horse (*hast*) and the horizontal, vertical, and oblique climbing ropes.

These pieces of apparatus were efficiently arranged in the gymnasium or exercise hall, and class members exercised upon them according to their individual needs and at the command of the teacher.

### Ling's successors

Upon his death in 1839 Ling was succeeded by Lars Gabriel Branting as director of the institute. Branting continued Ling's policies and spent considerable time in the promotion and development of medical gymnastics. During Branting's administration the scientific Swedish method of gymnastics attracted the attention of military and educational authorities in other lands. The Prussian government sent Lieutenants Rothstein and Techow to the Institute in 1845 and 1846, and Eulenberg and Neumann of Prussia, Melchior of Austria, and Roth of England also came to visit and observe.

Branting was succeeded by Gustaf Nyblaeus, a former army officer and a keen student of Spiess's free exercises. Under Nyblaeus the course at the Institute was extended from one to two years and a separate course for women teachers was established. Nyblaeus gave each of the three areas in gymnastics the status of a separate department. He appointed Hjalmar Ling, Ling's eldest son, head of the educational gymnastic department, Truls Johann Hartelius head of the medical gymnastic department, and himself head of the military gymnastic department.

Hjalmar Ling, who succeeded Nyblaeus, completed Spiess's work by assigning each exercise to its proper category according to the way it affected parts of the body and the organism as a whole. He then arranged the exercises in an orderly progression from the least demanding. This approach to the free exercises of Spiess became known the world over as the "Day's Order." In 1886 Ling was followed by Lars Mauritz Torngren, under whose administration medical gymnastics were given as a third-year course and the length of the courses in all areas was increased.

### **Gymnastics in Denmark**

#### **Franz Nachtegall (1777-1847)**

The son of a Copenhagen tailor, Franz Nachtegall received his early education in a private school. He enrolled in the University of Copenhagen to study theology but discontinued his education upon the death of his father. Taking employment as a tutor, he sought relief from his long teaching hours in gymnastics and fencing. He enjoyed fencing so much that he gave private lessons in his free time. Convinced that he had found his true vocation, in 1799 he opened a private outdoor gymnasium, which attracted 150 university students and townspeople.

Early in the Napoleonic Wars Denmark was forced by her geographical location to ally herself with the French Emperor. She faced all Napoleon's aggressors" and the drain on her manpower and material resources was disastrous. When the government established the Institute of Military Gymnastics in 1804, Nachtegall was made its director.

### **Military Versus Educational Objectives**

In the ensuing years the Institute was hard-pressed to meet the demand for personnel qualified to condition soldiers for military service. Before the close of the Napoleonic Wars the government sought to meet its military needs by extending gymnastics to the schools. In 1809 an ordinance was passed requiring the teaching gymnastics to potential soldiers in the secondary

schools, and in 1814 a similar ordinance was passed affecting elementary school. Historians hail these ordinances as landmarks in the history of physical education, but viewed in terms of their modus operandi they lose much of their glory. The schools' teaching personnel was drawn from noncommissioned officers who had been trained at the Institute of Military Gymnastics and their warlike objective was clear. The dominant position of the military in the preparation of teachers of gymnastics in the schools lasted until the turn of the century.

### **The Playground Movement**

As in other countries, the emphasis on games became more pronounced in Denmark when the authorities realized that English games helped develop desirable social traits not encouraged by individualized gymnastics. The Copenhagen Playground Association was founded in 1891, and a promotional organization similar to the German Central Committee was organized in 1897. In 1896 the Copenhagen Playground Association proposed to Wilhelm Pardenfleth, Minister of Education that the government provides grants-in-aid to assist local school authorities establish and equip playgrounds. The proposal was approved and appropriations made for a three-year period. As a sequel a Committee for Promoting Group Games among School Children was appointed, part of whose responsibility was the administration of state funds for recreation.

### **Teacher Preparation**

Denmark was one of the first nations to establish an institute to train military personnel to serve as gymnastic instructors in the armed services. Nachtegall's teaching procedures probably served as a guide for both military schools and teacher institutes established in other countries after 1804. Although Nachtegall had drawn heavily upon Guts Muths's Gymnastics for the Young) his program, at the Institute was attractive enough to hold a position of respect for more than a quarter of a century.

Toward the close of the nineteenth century, Denmark, like other European countries, became interested in the Swedish system for schools. Guts Muths-Nachtegall gymnastics were gradually replaced under teachers trained in the Swedish system or imported from Sweden. In 1898 the Danish government established a one-year course for the training of gymnastic teachers. This course was organized by K. A. Knudsen, who was well versed in the Swedish System.

