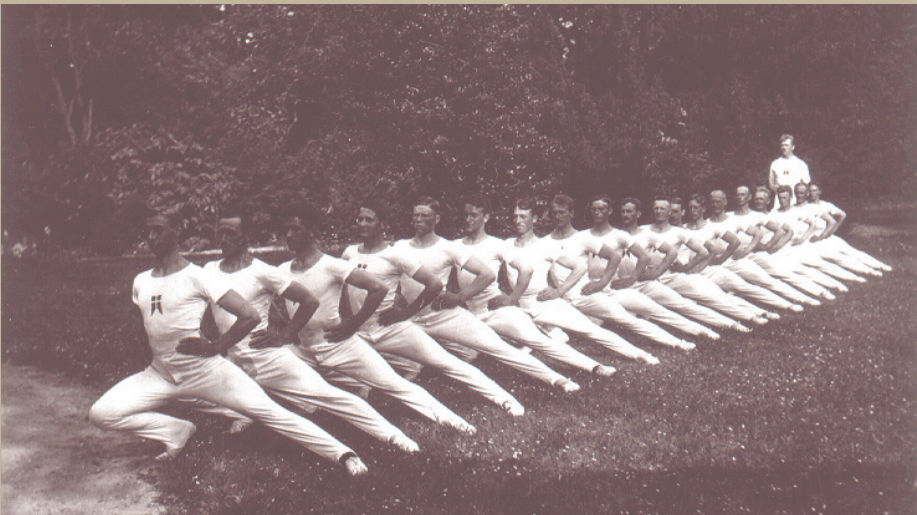


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SPECIAL ISSUE:
PHYSICAL EDUCATION
AND THE EMBODIMENT
OF THE NATION

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Edited by
Daniel Tröhler, Johannes Westberg & Anne Berg



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INTRODUCTION

The Body Between the Protestant Souls and Nascent Nation-States: Physical Education as an Emerging School Subject in the Nineteenth Century

Daniel Tröhler
Johannes Westberg

Today, physical education is an established part of the curriculum of compulsory schooling. Taken for granted as a school subject, yet considered a minor school activity whose mastery and excellence are not decisive for the school careers and thus the life chances of the younger generation, physical education has not enjoyed research attention as have, for instance, language teaching, history or geography, let alone religious instruction. Physical education is publicly undisputed as a curriculum requirement, but it is not really highly valued. The comparatively low public esteem and physical education's lack of necessity for textbooks – a prominent field of research – make physical education a bit of a Plain Jane in educational discourse.

The comparatively low regard in which physical education is held in research¹ has its equivalence in the daily practice of school activity. Physical education instructors might react to this neglect by citing—in Latin—the famous phrase *Mens sana in corpore sano*, “a healthy mind in a healthy body,” indicating that intellectual health (also) depends on physical health. That reaction could, however, trigger reactions from a sophisticated aficionado of the humanities, who knows that *Mens sana in corpore sano* is an abbreviated version of a sentence from Juvenal's *Satire X* in which he was discussing not sports but the value of wishing and praying. In this context Juvenal says, “[...] if you *must* pray for *something* [...] then ask for a healthy mind in a healthy body, demand a valiant heart for which death holds no terrors.”² Juvenal was obviously making fun of the body culture of the Ancient Romans, and he saw a need to pray that those who trained their bodies so extensively would care equally for developing a sound mind and a good heart, too.

1 The sports sciences are an exception, for they indeed have historical interest. Interestingly enough, this particular historical research is somewhat isolated from mainstream history of education. Another exception is research conducted in the field of gender studies.

2 Juvenal, *The Sixteen Satires*, 3rd ed., trans. Peter Green (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 86.

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Against this background, physical education is constantly being a bit discredited—even more so, because at times it was closely connected to un-reflected masculinity, military programmes and war preparation; and in some places physical education policy was and is indeed not domiciled in the ministries of education but in the ministries of defence. Given its commitment to enthusiastically participating in the “educationalization of the world,”³ the several branches of education research are of course much more devoted to finding educational solutions to political challenges and social tensions rather than to helping to train the alleged future killing machines or cannon fodder. To serve anything connected to power and/or war aspirations cannot be located in the moral(istic) realm of education research.

One of the tremendous advantages of the history of education is that—potentially—it does not need to be so devoted to the moralistic agenda of education in general, in policy or in research. Quite the contrary, education history precisely fulfils its function when it does not participate in trends of an educationalised world but when it analyses its causes, its intellectual and institutional developments and trajectories and its discursive effects in the way that education research is being defined as appropriate and helpful: providing ‘evidence’ for policy, for instance. The fact that this is only rarely done does not mean that its potential does not exist but that the advocates of the critical function of the history of education are obviously in need of offering ‘evidence’ for their position.

Part of this agenda is to excavate research topics neglected by dominant discourses or epistemologies. Physical education is an outstanding field of research not only because it is not the target of international assessment programmes. Those programmes might indeed find that Norwegians are doing better in cross-country skiing than the Portuguese and that the Finnish are better in ski jumping than students in Hong Kong or Singapore, but they would not know how these athletic competencies would be an answer to what kind of real life challenges that these assessment programmes assume to exist. Physical education tells us a lot about the making of a school subject in modernity, for it was not included in the curricula of early modern general education. There was indeed horseback riding, fencing or dancing in the curricula of the knight academies and educational institutions for the sons of noblemen who did not wish to enter religious careers—but those particular exercises were not transferred into the educational institutions of elementary schooling for the masses.

The crucial question then is related to the ‘making of’: telling not only the history or the career of an obviously modern school subject in compulsory schooling but also revealing the very mechanisms of modern schooling, its logics of policy and its national and religious entanglements. The diffusion of physical education was a transregional movement in a time when the slowly emerging nation-states were not yet seen as inevitable forms of political organization. Yet—and this is the fundamental thesis of this special issue—physical education would probably not have entered the curriculum of compulsory schooling if the nation-states themselves had not emerged as educational projects, relying heavily on the educational making of future loyal citizens of the nation-state and its respective vision of social order that

3 Daniel Tröhler, “Educationalization of Social Problems and the Educationalization of the Modern World,” in *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Singapore: Springer, 2016).

was sought to be implemented by institutions based on a constitution.⁴ The Nordic States were no exceptions in that respect. Their different routes towards becoming nation-states nevertheless makes them particularly interesting cases.⁵

Physical education in the Nordic countries

One of the European centres in this emerging movement of physical education was late eighteenth century Copenhagen. In its rather unique amalgam of deeply Lutheran commitment, monarchic structure and simultaneous interest in the (also French) Enlightenment, it became a melting pot for different educational movements and all too often a place for exiles, foremost for German liberal Lutheran theologians and educational reformers. Johann Bernhard Basedow, the initiator of the German Philanthropists after 1768, was appointed professor of moral philosophy, belles-lettres and theology at the knight academy, Sorø Academy, in Denmark as early as in 1753. However, due to his rational theology, he was forced to move from there to the Gymnasium Christianeum in Altona near Hamburg, which, at the time, still belonged to Denmark.

Years later, it worked the other way around. The philanthropist Peter Villaume, a Huguenot descendant and theologian, decided in 1793 to move to Fuirendal on the Danish island of Funen because of his radical rationalism.⁶ Villaume had published, in 1787, writings on physical education in the context of an encompassing education for the “happiness of mankind” (*Glückseligkeit des Menschen*).⁷ The breeding ground for educational reforms in Denmark was obvious, as can be seen in the Committee for the improvement of Danish schools (*Commissionen for de Danske Skolers bedre Indretning*),⁸ which was founded in 1789 by Frederick VI, then regent (and later king) of Denmark and Norway.

4 Daniel Tröhler, “Curriculum History or the Educational Construction of Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century,” *European Educational Research Journal* 15, no. 3 (2016), 279–97.

5 Daniel Tröhler, “Curriculum History in Europe: A Historiographic Added Value,” *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 3, no. 1 (2016), 3–24.

6 “Ved sin radikale rationalisme kom V. imidlertid i den grad paa kant med det reaktionære Wöllnerske styre at han 1793 bestemte sig til at opgive sin stilling og drage til Danmark,” *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon* vol. 15, 545. http://denstoredanske.dk/Dansk_Biografisk_Leksikon/Uddannelse_og_undervisning/P%C3%A6dagog/Peter_Villaume.

7 Peter Villaume, *Von der Bildung des Körpers in Rücksicht auf die Vollkommenheit und Glückseligkeit des Menschen, oder über die physische Erziehung insonderheit. In Allgemeine Revision des gesammten Schul- und Erziehungswesens von einer Gesellschaft praktischer Erzieher, Vol. VIII* (Vienna: Rudolf Gräffer und Compagn, Schulbuchhandlung, 1787), 211–92. At that time, Villaume had been teaching philosophy at the famous *Joachimsthalsche Gymnasium* in Berlin, a modern knight academy that two decades later would become the ultimate centre of the gymnastics movement in Germany; see the article by Daniel Tröhler in this issue.

8 Members were: count Heinrich Ernst Schimmelmann, the ethnic German privy councillor and minister of finance, who worked towards the abolition of serfdom in Schleswig and with the improvement of elementary education for the masses following Rochow’s ideas (whereas his wife, Magdalene Charlotte Hedevig Schimmelmann-Schubart, favoured Pestalozzi’s ideas); Johann Ludwig Graf von Rentlow, count and delegate of the “chamber of pensions,” who lived in Funen (to where Villaume would move in 1793, see above); Frederik Carl Trant, founder of several schools and in 1794 of a teacher seminar; Christian Brandt civil servant, privy councillor and school director; Nikolai Edinger Balle, the Lutheran Bishop in Sjælland; and Blaaard Magnus Hoffmann Sevel, the inspector for teacher education. The commission was to send two teachers to Pestalozzi in 1802, Johann Christian Ludvig Strøm and Johann Henrik Anton Torlitz, to learn the fundamentals of a better educational method as basis for educational reform in Denmark. See Rebekka Horlacher and Daniel Tröhler, eds., “King Christian VII. to Pestalozzi, 20 November 1802,” in *Sämtliche Briefe an Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Band 1* (Zurich: NZZ Libro, 2009).

It seems that 1793—the year that Villaume moved to Denmark—was a decisive year, at least with regard to physical education. In this very year, the Lutheran theologian Johann Rudolf Christiani was nominated to become court chaplain in Copenhagen. Based on the writings of the German Philanthropists, Christiani opened the Copenhagen *Philanthropin* in 1795. The *Philanthropin* was a school designed to give sufficient attention to children's bodies through hygiene and exercise. To fulfil this quest, Christiani hired Franz Nachteggall, another Lutheran theologian of German origin who was born in Copenhagen. Nachteggall was devoted to the concept of physical education proposed by another German Philanthropist and theologian, Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths, who had been a teacher at the *Philanthropin* in Schnepfenthal headed by the Lutheran minister Christian Gotthilf Salzmann since 1784/85.⁹ GutsMuths began to teach physical exercises in 1786,¹⁰ and in 1793 he published his widely read and often translated treatise *Gymnastik für die Jugend. Enthalten eine praktische Anweisung zu Leibesübungen*,¹¹ published in Danish in an abbreviated version in 1799.¹²

Nachteggall was not only fond of the German ideas of physical exercise but also had been taught “fencing and vaulting by the old French fencing master Embs, and soon acquired skills in both arts, but especially the latter.”¹³ It was due to Copenhagen's particular political and cultural context that an amalgam of French ideas of physical education, oriented towards an aestheticised ideal of a nobleman, and German ideas of physical education oriented more towards utilitarian ideas of the rising bourgeoisie became possible. From this amalgam, different trajectories across

9 Schnepfenthal, founded in 1784 by Salzmann, was an ‘international’ place, which can be seen in the fact that Pestalozzi's disciple Gottlieb Anton Gruner, acting as private tutor of Erich Lehnsgraf von Bernstorff (1791–1837) from Copenhagen, spent some four months between June and September of 1803 at this *Philanthropin*. Gruner had become acquainted with Erich Lehnsgraf von Bernstorff during a stay in Copenhagen in 1801. See Horlacher and Tröhler, (2009) 684–87.

10 It can be assumed that GutsMuths was familiar with Villaume's manuscript on physical education (Villaume (1787), see Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths, *Gymnastics for Youth: Or a Practical Guide to Healthful and Amusing Exercises for the Use of Schools ... Freely translated from the German of C. G. Salzmann* (London: F. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1800, 70). GutsMuths certainly knew from his visits to the original *Philanthropin* in Dessau that the children (who came from noble families) were taught, among other subjects, fencing, dancing and horseback riding on the one hand and “physical exercises” such as threshing, plane, woodwork and woodturning on the other. Johann August Heinrich Ulrich, “Geschichte des *Philanthropins* zu Dessau,” in *Pragmatische Geschichte der vornehmsten katholischen und protestantischen Gymnasien und Schulen in Deutschland aus authentischen Originalnachrichten, Erster Band* (Leipzig: Weygandsche Buchhandlung, 1780), 265–72. Obviously, physical education included both – the traditional training of nobility and basic vocational training – but it was not yet physical training as we would know it today in our schools.

11 Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths, *Gymnastik für die Jugend: Enthalten eine praktische Anweisung zu Leibesübungen* (Schnepfenthal: Verlage der Buchhandlung der Erziehungsanstalt, 1793).

12 Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths, *Kort Anviisning til Legemsøvelser: Et Udtog af GutsMuths Gymnastik*, trans. V. K. Hjort (Copenhagen: S. Poulsen, 1799). An English translation appeared a year later: *Gymnastics for Youth; or a practical guide to healthful and amusing exercises for the use of schools*, see GutsMuths (1800). For more information on GutsMuths and his concepts of physical education, see the article by Rebekka Horlacher in this issue.

13 Fred Eugene Leonard, *Physical Education in Denmark* (n. p.), 1n. It was not possible to identify this “French fencing master Embs.” Other sources talk of a fencing master “Ebbs” teaching young Nachteggall (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Nachteggall). According to a personal communication (in October 2016) by Mette Buchardt, Aalborg University, French fencing masters in Copenhagen are recorded, but no names are handed down and none similar to Ebbs or Embs.

different emerging education systems arouse, and they met repeatedly and found supporters and advocates in very different contexts across the nineteenth century. Especially noteworthy is the Swede Pe(h)r Henrik Ling, son of Lars Peter Ling, a Lutheran minister in Södra Ljunga, and a Lutheran theologian himself.

After his studies at the University of Uppsala, Ling went on a European journey, starting in 1799 in Copenhagen, where he became acquainted with Nachttegall and his concepts of physical education, and he also joined fencing classes taught by two French immigrants.¹⁴ In 1804, Ling went back to Copenhagen,¹⁵ where he took intensified fencing lessons, again taught by the two French fencing masters, and restored his fragile health. Fencing:

cured a paralysis in one of his arms. He became an excellent fencer and over the years earned his living by giving fencing instruction. Unlike fencing, which was seen as a 'chivalrous' sport, gymnastics was seen as 'common' in 'respectable circles'. Nevertheless, Ling attended gymnastics with the leading Danish gymnastics instructor F. Nachttegall, whose gymnastics were inspired by GutsMuths.¹⁶

With restored health and convinced of the healing power of systematised fencing, Ling became master of fencing at the University of Lund in 1805 and started to propagate his ideas on physical education throughout Sweden. In parallel, Ling became acquainted with the Swedish past and became involved in Nordic mythology. As a co-founder of the Gothic association (*Götiska Förbundet*), in 1811, he was devoted to developing a particular Swedish nationalism out of a praised past, against the background of the Swedish new constitution of 1809 and the loss of Finland that same year.¹⁷ In 1813, Ling became fencing master at the Swedish Royal War Academy at Karlberg and received a royal permit to establish a gymnastic school, the Royal Central Gymnastic Institute (*Gymnastiska Centralinstitutet*).¹⁸ Soon his physical exercises, located between health and fighting, were introduced in many schools and in the army; gymnastics and national romanticism went hand in hand,¹⁹ just as they had in Germany.

Ling, who was appointed gymnastics and swordsmanship teacher at the higher artillery grammar school in Marieberg (*Högre artilleriläroverket i Marieberg*) in 1818, became famous not only in Sweden but also in other parts of the Western world, including the United States, England and France. Ling's Swedish gymnastics were also

14 Gunnar Carlquist, ed., *Svensk uppslagsbok*. vol 17 (Malmö: Svensk Uppslagsbok AB, 1937), 304-07.

15 It is not clear when Ling returned to Copenhagen or if he even was gone from Copenhagen at all; see also Ove Korsgaard, "Gymnastik i kosmisk perspektiv," in *Den gamle nyreligiøsitet: Vestens glemte kulturarv*, ed. Mette Buchardt and Pia Rose Bøwadt (Copenhagen: Forlaget Anis, 2003), 258.

16 Korsgaard (2003), 251-66. We wish to thank Mette Buchardt from Aalborg University for pointing us to this article (and for the translation).

17 Jens Ljunggren, *Kroppens bildning: Linggymnastikens manlighetsprojekt 1790-1914* (Stockholm: Symposion, 1999); Anne Berg, *Kampen om befolkningen: Den svenska nationsformeringens utveckling och sociopolitiska förutsättningar ca 1780-1860* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2011), ch. 3.

18 Esbjörn Larsson, *Från adlig uppfostran till borgerlig utbildning: Kungl. krigsakademien mellan åren 1792 och 1866* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2005), 224-26.

19 Ove Korsgaard, "Gymnastik og romantik: med Pehr Henrik Ling som optik," in *Romantikens verden: Natur, menneske, samfund, kunst og kultur*, ed. Ole Høiris and Thomas Ledet (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2008), 231-47.

popular in Germany, where his concept of physical education was often favoured over *Turnvater* Jahn's conceptions, which were often less popular due to Jahn's determined form of nationalism.²⁰ An important translator here was Hugo Rothstein, who was a Prussian officer, writer, educator and gymnast but a fundamental critic of the German *Turners* and their system of gymnastics. Rothstein became acquainted with Swedish gymnastics when he travelled to Sweden, and he introduced it in Prussian military and civil physical training programmes.²¹ In the military it was labelled *Wehrgymnastik* (defence gymnastics), and in civil training programmes it was called *Heilgymnastik* (therapeutic gymnastics).²² Both attempts found their admirers, such as Albert Constantin Neumann,²³ a physician, and Wilhelm Angerstein,²⁴ a gymnast and publicist. Rothstein was in that sense a pioneer, as it was this instrumental militarist-nationalist idea of gymnastics that eventually acted as a vehicle for the full implementation of gymnastics as a school subject in the German curricula on all levels towards the end of the nineteenth century.

The Protestant soul and the emerging nation states

Of course, it is a paradox that ultimately, this physical education programme—which developed first in Copenhagen, by melding German Philanthropic ideas with French fencing techniques, and then developing in the frame of Swedish or Nordic nationalism—became popular in Germany in order to combat Jahn's conception of physical education that was built on German nationalism. This example shows, however, how educational ideas travel and are received if they fit into the overall curricular aspirations of forming the future citizens of a given (or emerging) nation. The active agents of this particular reform, physical education, were obviously deeply rooted in Protestant, mostly Lutheran, perceptions of life and were concerned less with physical education in regard to the industriousness of a self-sufficient holistic citizen, as had been the case with the Swiss Reformed Protestant Pestalozzi.²⁵ In the Lutheran traditions, the envisaged harmonious formation of the soul, called *Bildung*, was to have an outer equivalent, the harmonious nation-state, which later would become epitomised in

20 Note that Germany played an important part in the dissemination of Ling's gymnastics to, e.g. Belgium; see Pascal Delheye, "Struggling for Gymnastics in Belgium: The Rhetorics of the Battle of the Systems (1860–1914)," *Stadion: Internationale Zeitschrift für Geschichte des Sports* 32, no. 1 (2006), 60.

21 Hugo Rothstein, *Die Gymnastik, nach dem Systeme des Schwedischen Gymnasiarchen P. H. Ling. Zweiter Abschnitt: Die Pädagogische Gymnastik* (Berlin: Schröder, 1847). See also Wolfgang Eichel et al., *Geschichte der Körperkultur in Deutschland 1789–1917, Band 2* (Berlin: Sportverlag, 1973).

22 Hugo Rothstein, *Die Gymnastik, nach dem Systeme des Schwedischen Gymnasiarchen P. H. Ling. Vierter Abschnitt: Die Wehrgymnastik* (Berlin: Schröder, 1851); Hugo Rothstein, *Die Gymnastik, nach dem Systeme des Schwedischen Gymnasiarchen P. H. Ling. Dritter Abschnitt: Die Heilgymnastik* (Berlin: Schröder, 1847).

23 Albert Constantin Neumann, *Die Heil-Gymnastik: oder die Kunst der Leibesübungen, angewandt zur Heilung von Krankheiten nach dem Systeme des Schweden Ling und seiner Schüler Branting, Georgii und de Ron, sowie nach eigenen Ansichten und Erfahrungen; ein Bericht nach einer auf Kosten des Preussischen Staats unternommenen Reise nach Stockholm, London und St. Petersburg* (Berlin: Jeanrenaud, 1852).

24 Wilhelm Angerstein, *Zur Wehrgymnastik und militärischen Jugenderziehung: Nach zwei Vorträgen, gehalten im Berliner Turnlehrer-Verein* (Berlin: W. E. Angerstein, 1880).

25 Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, "Über Körperbildung als Einleitung einer Elementargymnastik, in einer Reihenfolge körperlicher Übungen," in J. H. Pestalozzi, *Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Ausgabe, Band 20* (Zürich: Orell Füssli, 1956), 45–68.

the notion of the *Volk*, be it in Denmark by Nikolai Grundtvig or in Germany by the academic school of thought called *Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik*.²⁶

Accordingly, developments in a Catholic country becoming more secular (laicist), such as France, were quite different. France had no broad public culture of gymnastics, and the schools were very reluctant to introduce it into the curricula. Towards the end of the Second Empire, which ended with the Franco-Prussian War in 1870/71, gymnastics had entered the school curricula only of the institutions of higher education (*lycées*), the higher levels of elementary schooling and teacher education.²⁷ However, and in contrast for instance to Prussia and the German Reich, France had no system of gymnastics teacher education; gymnastics teachers were former soldiers with very low social status within the educational institutions; only in 1907 was a physical training college founded at the initiative of the *lycées* and colleges, and only in 1933 was a separate, state-run gymnastics teacher training institution opened.²⁸

The major difference between France and other European nation-states—foremost Germany—was that France never thought it necessary to ‘invent’ the French nation: It was a given fact. The interrelation between gymnastics and nation-building was no issue. The French authorities were quite alarmed by the development in Germany, but they preferred to look to England and its focus on sports and foremost at theologian Thomas Arnold, who had become famous, for instance, with his publication, *Sermons Preached in the Chapel of Rugby School*.²⁹ And with regard to education, the Swedish system of physical training was crucial to the French, as the publication by Georges Demenÿ, *L'Éducation physique en Suède* [Physical Education in Sweden] shows.³⁰ The Belgians, in their cultural proximity to the French, followed only some 10 years later with a publication under the same title, written by an army captain and head of a military school, Lefebure,³¹ who began the book by quoting “*Mens sana in corpore sana* [...]”³²

These examples show how military ambitions (as fundamental activities in defending the nation-states) and schooling (as fundamental means to stabilising the nation states) are not as divided as one may assume. The idea and existence of the nation-state always depended not only on loyal civil citizens, fabricated by the school, but also on brave and competent soldiers. It is the realm of the latter that has for a very long time been largely ignored by the educational sciences in their dedication to the good and pure inward life. Yet, very recent initiatives provide evidence of this: for instance, the “Education, War, & Peace” theme of the ISCHE conference in 2014,

26 Alexander Maier, “Bildung zur Nation. Geschichtserzählung und kulturelle Identität als sakral-pädagogisches Programm bei Nikolai Grundtvig,” *Bildungsgeschichte: International Journal for the Historiography of Education* 5, no. 2 (2015), 162–81; Daniel Tröhler, “The German Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik and the ideology of Bildung,” in *Languages of Education: Protestant Legacies, National Identities, and Global Aspirations*, ed. Daniel Tröhler (New York: Routledge, 2011), 148–63.

27 Françoise Mayeur, *Histoire de l'enseignement et de l'éducation III: 1789–1930* (Paris: Perrin, 1981).

28 Mayeur (1981), 661–64.

29 Thomas Arnold, *Sermons Preached in the Chapel of Rugby School* (London: B. Fellowes, 1833).

30 Georges Demenÿ, *L'Éducation physique en Suède* (Paris: Société d'éditions scientifiques, 1892).

31 Capitaine Commandant Lefebure, *L'Éducation physique en Suède* (Brussels: H. Lamertin, 1903).

32 Lefebure (1903), xi.

held at the Institute of Education, University of London, or a conference on *Pulverdampf und Kreidestaub* [Gun Smoke and Chalk Dust] organised in Switzerland in 2015.³³

Yet, there is a danger of overestimating formal similarities and underestimating cultural path dependencies. The popular but at least naïve reading of what is called the world polity thesis suggests that schools all over the world are in fact more or less the same. Accordingly, it is suggested that due to specific “world forces,” that is, some “cultural principles exogenous to any specific nation-state and its historical legacy,”³⁴ the developments of schooling and curricula in the different nation states “show surprising degrees of homogeneity around the world”³⁵ and that “variance across national societies is less noticeable than most arguments would have had it,” so that we may speak of a “world curriculum” in the “global village,” indicating the “relative unimportance of the national, so far as mass curricular outlines go.”³⁶ The articles in this issue show that we are well advised to be more careful and understand the different social and cultural ambitions and visions behind the implementation of a particular school subject, for any particular school subject is a part of the overall curriculum designed to fabricate the future citizen of the particular nation-state, and these citizens were quite different.³⁷

Evidently, the school and its system of organising educational careers of the students is less sensitively oriented towards the inward morality than today’s educational research combatants for a better world may wish, and it is less nationally inherent than its rhetoric suggests. The history of physical education is an excellent example for learning not only about the history of physical education but also about the international and martial agenda that are and were compiled within dominant modes in constructing the nation-states. The history of physical education is therefore an object lesson not only of schooling but also of the vulnerability of educational research to reinforcing discursive *topoi* rather than to examine them. The fact that it is an international and historical journal such as the *Nordic Journal of Educational History* that offers a special issue for this attempt is not a coincidence, for it is devoted—like other historical journals in education with clearly international editorial boards, such as *Paedagogica Historica* or the *Bildungsgeschichte: International Journal for the Historiography of Education*—to deconstructing myths, reconstructing its development and to contribute to a better understanding of schooling.

The guest editors wish to express their gratefulness to the Editorial Team of the *Nordic Journal of Educational History* for accepting the idea of this special issue,

33 See Gary McCulloch and Georgina Brewis (Guest Editors), “Education, War and Peace,” *Paedagogica Historica* 52, no. 1–2 (2016); Lukas Boser et al., eds. *Pulverdampf und Kreidestaub: Beiträge zum Verhältnis zwischen Militär und Schule in der Schweiz im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Bern: Bibliothek am Guisanplatz, 2016).

34 John W. Meyer and Francisco O. Ramirez, “The World Institutionalization of Education,” in *Discourse Formation in Comparative Education*, ed. Jürgen Schriewer (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Publishing, 2000), 115.

35 John W. Meyer, “Introduction,” in *School Knowledge for the Masses: World Models and National Primary Curricular Categories in the Twentieth Century*, ed. John W. Meyer, David H. Kamens, and Aaron Benavot (Washington D.C.: Falmer Press, 1992), 2–5.

36 Meyer (1992), 6–9.

37 Daniel Tröhler, Thomas S. Popkewitz, and David F. Labaree, eds., *Schooling and the Making of Citizens in the Long Nineteenth Century: Comparative Visions* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

which can hopefully keep its promise that the history of physical education is, as it is the case with any other school subject, much more than the history of physical education. It is, in fact, a contribution to the somewhat hidden fact that there was indeed a pre-national(ist) Europe constituted by an educated public communicating in different networks like academies, expressing itself in different forms of publications and foremost in correspondences. They were the bearers of connecting visions of the future with education, paving the way for the emerging nation-states to incorporate and institutionalise this educationalised culture by transforming educational practices to binding curricula in the service of the fabrication of future loyal citizens.

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The Emergence of Physical Education as a Subject for Compulsory Schooling in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Phokion Heinrich Clias and Adolf Spiess

Rebekka Horlacher

Abstract • In general, schooling and nation-building are associated with the unifying role of language and history education, since language and culture are perceived as fundamental pillars of the nation. Less discussed—at least regarding the curriculum—is the role of physical education, even if physical education was a highly political issue in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Based on a case study of Switzerland and textbooks for physical education by Adolf Spiess and the activities of Phokion Heinrich Clias for the Bernese school, this article discusses how physical education, distinct from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' care for the body, became a school subject of the nineteenth century compulsory schools and how it was related to the notion of nation and nation-building. It argues that physical education became first part of the “modern” philanthropic education and schooling, was soon taken for granted as an essential curricular component of nation-building and lost thereby the political threat.

Keywords • schooling, curriculum, physical education, nation-building, philanthropic education

Normally, the history of physical education is traced back to the ideas and initiatives of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778–1852), also known as “Turnvater Jahn” and to military requirements such as physical strength and military force.¹ In doing so, a particular meaning of physical education is stressed: that of physical education as a school subject of the compulsory schools with a specific set of gymnastic exercises aiming at a healthy body (and soul) for the students making them valuable members of a political entity, that is, the nineteenth-century nation-state. Be it as it is, physical education was not just preparation for military service nor the exclusive ‘invention’ by Jahn, even though his role in popularising physical education—or *Turnen*—in the first half of the nineteenth century in Germany can hardly be overestimated.² Yet, when Jahn began to advocate *Turnen* as a national public—not necessarily as a curricular—activity, physical education had already been part of the educational discourse, featured in guidebooks for child-rearing already in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³ These guidebooks, often written by paediatricians, discussed

1 See for example Roland Naul, “History of Sport and Physical Education in Germany, 1800–1945,” in *Sport and Physical Education in Germany*, ed. Ken Hardman and Roland Naul (London: Routledge 2002), 16.

2 See article by Daniel Tröhler in this special issue.

3 See for example Roger Mercier, *L'enfant dans la société du XVIIIe siècle* (Dakar: Université de Dakar, 1961); Sabine Toppe, *Die Erziehung zur guten Mutter. Medizinisch-pädagogische Anleitung zur Mutterschaft im 18. Jahrhundert* (Oldenburg: Oldenburg Universität, 1993).

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physical education typically in the context of health and the overall condition of the body.⁴ Recommendations were made regarding appropriate clothing, the frequency and correct temperature of baths, suitable diet restrictions, and so on. Some guide-books combined the education of the body with the education of the mind and soul, and also made recommendations regarding questions of appropriate conduct. A famous example of this kind of literature is John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), which was translated into many languages and widely read across eighteenth century Europe and referred to by the so-called modern educators of the late eighteenth century.⁵

Around 1800, the key question of educational strategies, how to prepare people for conducting a "good life" in a given social order, got new attention. At the same time there was a shift in Europe in the context of the discourse of nation-building, with consequences for physical education. It was a widespread goal of the advocates of compulsory schooling to fabricate the future citizens through mass compulsory schooling, because the new "nation-states" that were established after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 faced the problem of how to transform the former inhabitants of territories into citizens of the new States.

While the role of teaching history and language became and still is the main topic in studies of schooling and nation-building,⁶ physical education is less discussed and, if it is, with emphasis on the second half of the nineteenth century and the 20th century.⁷ This is the case even though early nineteenth century promoters of physical education believed their aspirations were closely linked with national considerations.⁸ Against this background, the central question raised here is how phys-

4 Health education and the shaping of the body are often discussed under a Foucauldian perspective and his concept of power. I will not follow this theoretical frame here, as I am not focusing on physical education as physically hardening, normalisation or submission, nor as liberation from social constraints, but in the becoming of a school subject. In doing so, I refer to curricular frameworks like David Layton's "Science as General Education," *Trends in Education* 25 (1972) or Ivor F. Goodson's "Becoming a School Subject," in *Subject Knowledge: Readings for the Study of School Subjects*, ed. Ivor F. Goodson, Christopher J. Anstead and J. Marshall Mangan (Washington: Falmer Press, 1997).

5 Van Strien-Chardonneau, Madeleine, "Holland," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment, volume 1*, ed. Michel Delon (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 659.

6 See for example Barbara Helbling, *Eine Schweiz für die Schule: Nationale Identität und kulturelle Vielfalt in den Schweizer Lesebüchern seit 1900* (Zürich: Chronos, 1994); Markus Furrer, *Die Nation im Schulbuch – zwischen Überhöhung und Verdrängung* (Hannover, Germany: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2004); Nathalie Dahn and Lukas Boser, "Learning to See the Nation-State: History, Geography and Public Schooling in Late 19th-Century Switzerland," *Bildungsgeschichte: International Journal for the Historiography of Education* 5, no. 1 (2015), 41–56; Joseph Zajda, ed., *Nation-Building and History Education in a Global Culture* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015).

7 See for example David Kirk, *Defining Physical Education* (London: Falmer Press, 1992); Henrik Meinander, *Towards a Bourgeois Manhood: Boys' Physical Education in Nordic Secondary Schools 1880–1940* (Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1994); Rebekka Horlacher, "The Same but Different: The German Lehrplan and Curriculum," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* (2017).

8 See for example Gertrude Pfister, "Physical Activity in the Name of the Fatherland: Turnen and the National Movement (1810–1820)," *Sporting Heritage* 1, no. 1 (1996); Michael Krüger, "Body Culture and Nation Building: The History of Gymnastics in Germany in the period of its Foundation as a nation-State," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 13, no. 3 (1996); Miklos Hadas, "The Rationalisation of the Body: Physical Education in Hungary in the Nineteenth Century," *History of Education* 38, no. 1 (2009); Felix Saure, "Beautiful Bodies, Exercising Warriors and Original Peoples: Sports, Greek Antiquity and National Identity from Winckelmann to 'Turnvater Jahn,'" *German History* 27, no. 3 (2009); Vincent Stolk, Willeke Los, and Wiel Veugelers, "Physical Education for

ical education was made as a school subject of compulsory schooling and how this process of becoming a school subject transformed the notion of physical education. To do so I will focus on two agents of this process, Phokion Heinrich Clias and Adolf Spiess. Neither are seminal for the usual history of physical education like Jahn or Pehr Henrik Ling, but their writings and activities allow insights into these complex processes of changing curriculum in changing times, focusing exemplarily on Switzerland.

The first section of this article reconstructs the general history of physical education in the long eighteenth century, tracing it back to the bodily and healthy debates of child-rearing guidebooks, stressing the educational roots of (German) gymnastics compared to English sports, and making evident that after 1800 the subject of physical education changed significantly from how it was understood and taught in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The second section examines the education of the 'whole body' as promoted by Adolf Spiess (1810–1858). Spiess, who had to leave reactionary Prussia in 1833 and subsequently immigrated along with many other German refugees to Switzerland, followed the German tradition of physical education.⁹ His concept of gymnastics was not merely physical training, but emphasised the education of the body and mind as a unified whole. The sources for this research are textbooks for physical education, guidebooks and educational writings on the importance and relevance of physical education. Spiess is prominently featured because he developed widely circulated teaching materials for physical education in compulsory schooling, initially for schools in Switzerland, but after his return to Germany for German schools as well.¹⁰ The third section uses a case study of the city of Berne to examine how physical education became part of the curriculum, using the textbooks of Phokion Heinrich Clias, one of its prominent promoters. The fourth section concludes by discussing the notion of "the citizen" as presented in the various textbooks, guidebooks and educational writings, and emphasises that the connection between physical education and nation-building is rarely discussed in the sources of the first half of the nineteenth century, not because of a failed connection between these two projects, but because they were so closely linked that their interconnection was taken for granted.

By using these types of sources, textbooks, manuals, or educational writings, the article discusses the normative level of schooling, the envisaged content of schooling

Citizenship or Humanity? Freethinkers and Natural Education in the Netherlands in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in *Sport, Health and the Body in the History of Education*, ed. Mark Freeman (London and New York: Routledge, 2015). A broad variety of research deals with questions of social integration from various perspectives, see for example Marion Keim, *Nation Building at Play: Sport as a tool for Social Integration in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport, 2003); Sid Hayes and Gary Stidder, *Equity and Inclusion in Physical Education and Sport: Contemporary Issues for Teachers, Trainees and Practitioners* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

9 As a rule, the German-speaking tradition of physical education is closely connected with overall educational aspirations in general, in contrast to the Nordic tradition which emphasised more the corporal, that is the sanitary and medical, aspects of physical education (see the article by Daniel Tröhler in this issue).

10 See Adolf Spiess, *Die Lehre der Turnkunst, 4 Bände* (Basel: Schweighauser'sche Buchhandlung, 1840–1846); Adolf Spiess, *Gedanken über die Einordnung des Turnwesens in das Ganze der Volkserziehung* (Basel: Schweighauser'sche Buchhandlung, 1842); Adolf Spiess, *Turnbuch für Schulen als Anleitung für den Turnunterricht durch die Lehrer der Schulen, 2 Theile* (Basel: Schweighauser'sche Buchhandlung, 1847–1851).

and an ideal notion of the future citizen. The understanding of physical education became an integral part of the compulsory school-curriculum which sought to create future citizens. On this discursive level, it can be linked to concepts like “educationalisation of the world,” signifying attempts to solve social problems through education and schooling. This process was embedded in the discourse surrounding the nation-state and the meaning of national identities like “German,” “Swiss” or “French,” for which the army (at least for male citizens) and the school (for girls and boys) were of particular interest.¹¹ Therefore, schooling involved more than teaching reading, writing and numeracy skills; it was (and still is) a national institution expressing its socially determined goals in the curriculum.

Physical education in the educational discourse of the long eighteenth century

John Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, a treatise on the education of a gentleman,¹² is a major source for the educational discourse on physical education in late eighteenth century Germany—a breeding ground for physical education or *Turnen* to become a “normal” school subject of the curriculum. The wide dissemination of Locke’s publication can be read as an expression of a specific *Zeitgeist* of “modernisation,” even if Locke’s arguments were hardly new.¹³ His argumentation was linked to the question of whether the cultural authority of the classics could remain relevant for the conditions of the modern gentleman; the gentleman understood here as the incorporation of the future-oriented part of the nobility, deriving its nobility not primarily from birth but from manners and conduct.¹⁴ Locke specifically enquired into the therefore appropriate forms of physical education, schooling, virtue, politics and the overall system of beliefs for raising young gentlemen in the 1700s. By questioning the cultural authority of the classics,¹⁵ Locke also called into question education and schooling at Oxford and Cambridge, the universities that

11 See for example Stephen L. Harp, *Learning to be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine 1850–1940* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998); Daniel Tröhler, Thomas S. Popkewitz, and David F. Labaree, “Introduction – Children, Citizens, and Promised Lands: Comparative History of Political Cultures and Schooling in the Long 19th Century,” in *Schooling and the Making of Citizens in the Long Nineteenth Century: Comparative Visions*, ed. Daniel Tröhler, Thomas S. Popkewitz, and David F. Labaree (New York: Routledge, 2011).

12 “Gentry” is, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term for “well-born, genteel and well-bred people” of a high social class. The term refers to a specific stratum of the English aristocracy, one whose income derives from large landholdings (landed gentry). The term “gentleman” derives as well from the term gentry and originally designated a man of the lowest rank of the English gentry, standing below an esquire and above a yeoman. The term, as it was used around 1700, had been relaxed somewhat from the strictness of this earlier designation and had come to signify a well-educated man from a good family. See also Rebekka Horlacher, *The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung: A Comparative Cultural History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 19–21.

13 Locke himself emphasised his argument’s novelty against conceptions of the “usual,” “common,” or “ordinary education;” see Nathan Tarcov, *Locke’s Education for Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 80.

14 How to become (intellectually and morally) a gentleman was, for example, described in the 1711 first edition, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* by Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury; see Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

15 A prominent treatment was Jonathan Swift’s *Battle of the Books* (1704); the most famous debate on this topic took place at the court of Versailles in the so-called *Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns* during the last fifteen years of the seventeenth century.

were the traditional places of study for the English nobility and upper bourgeoisie.¹⁶ The “modern” aspect of Locke’s treatise lies in his answer regarding both who was responsible for education and schooling and how his “being a gentleman” was doable.

Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* was addressed to Locke’s close friend Edward Clarke (1650–1710), a member of parliament who had asked him—Locke was a trained paediatrician—for advice on raising his son. After a dedicatory letter explaining the origins of the treatise, the book comprises 202 paragraphs starting with subjects such as air and alteration and proceeding through topics such as goblins, wisdom, and writing. The first paragraph outlines some of Locke’s fundamental assumptions about education, merging body and mind: “A Sound Mind in a sound Body, is a short, but full description of a Happy State in this World [...] He, whose Mind directs not wisely, will never take the right Way; and he, whose Body is crazy and feeble, will never be able to advance in it.”

In Locke’s understanding, the importance of education could not be overestimated: “Even if some ‘natural Genius’ are vigorous and well framed by Nature [...] Nine parts of Ten are what they are, Good or Evil, useful or not, by their Education.”¹⁷ Consistent with this idea regarding the importance of education and Locke’s idea of human nature being largely a “blank slate” or a “tabula rasa,” a substantial part of his treatise examines the education of the body, or is at least devoted to the bodily parts of education like “craving,” “punishment,” or “beating,” and argues for the importance of health for “Business and Happiness.” As all human knowledge and skills have to be learned, it was critical to provide a healthy environment and proper incentives. “How necessary *Health* is [...] is too obvious to need any Proof,” was Locke’s simple justification for its importance.¹⁸

It was precisely this “modernist” aspect of Locke’s curricular argument with regard to the future ideal ‘citizen’ that became—two or three decades before Jahn’s nationalist and attention-grabbing advocacy for *Turnen*—so pivotal for the subsequent reception of his work among the German philanthropists, a group of intellectuals and practical educators seeking to offer “modern” schooling to the emerging bourgeoisie; these developments then functioning by that as pioneers for physical education as modern school subject.¹⁹ This group of educators opened boarding schools with a “modern” curriculum and published books to disseminate their “new” education, discussing publically and at length essential books on education, among them: Rousseau’s *Emile* and John Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*.²⁰ Hence, gymnastics was offered in these new boarding schools as a regular course, also in-

16 As these universities pursued a traditional curriculum, the “modern” sciences, and various new forms of disciplinary knowledge, were being developed in scholarly societies and academies, such as the Royal Society which had been founded in 1660.

17 John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London: A. and J. Churchill, 1693), 1–2.

18 Locke (1693), 3.

19 Rebekka Horlacher, “Wie aus ‘einigen Gedanken’ ein ‘Handbuch’ wurde. Die Locke-Rezeption der Philanthropen,” in *Die Leidenschaft der Aufklärung: Studien über Zusammenhänge von bürgerlicher Gesellschaft und Bildung*, ed. Jürgen Oelkers and Daniel Tröhler (Weinheim: Beltz, 1999).

20 The philanthropists also published a 16-volume book series titled *Allgemeine Revision des gesammten Schul- und Erziehungswesens*. The 9th volume (1787) contained an annotated translation of Locke’s *Thoughts*. The *Allgemeine Revision* claimed to contain all practical and useful educational knowledge. In doing so, the philanthropists pursued similar goals as Locke’s *Thoughts*, even if the philosophical spectrum of the philanthropists is not comparable to Locke’s theory of mind.

spired by the curriculum of knight's academies, where the traditional subjects of the courtly traditions were taught: vaulting, dancing, fencing, manners,²¹ and various manual skills²² that were united to create the "competencies" necessary for the conduct of a "good life."²³ Even if the subjects taught have been still largely inspired by the courtly tradition, an "educationalised" meaning of gymnastics became obvious,²⁴ as the example of one prominent proponent of this "new" physical education as a school subject, the German philanthropist Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths (1759–1839) shows. GutsMuths worked as a tutor for a wealthy family before becoming a teacher at the Schnepfenthal Salzmann School, one of the famous German boarding schools of that time and part of the philanthropic movement, to which the founder of the school, Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, also belonged.²⁵ At the Schnepfenthal Salzmann School, GutsMuths developed a specific type of gymnastics with an understanding of gymnastics as an educational topic which referred to a specific understanding of "initial nature" and was strictly opposite to an understanding of physical education as a soulless shaping of the body or as pure competition. In doing so, he moved the subject from the courtly tradition towards a more systematic analysis of the body. In an essay from 1793 titled *Gymnastics for the Youth*, GutsMuths wrote: "Let us *harden* the body, then it gets more duration and strong nerves; let us train the body, then it gets powerful and active; it will stimulate the mind then, making it masculine, powerful, tireless, firm, and full of courage."²⁶ Hence, the body was not just an unimportant physical shell, nor was it a threat to one's moral integrity as it was under the doctrine of original sin. The body was rather seen as amenable to

21 Christiane Eisenberg, "English Sports" und deutsche Bürger: Eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte 1800–1939 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1999), 97.

22 Hanno Schmitt, "Die Anfänge des Schulsports im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Vernunft und Menschlichkeit: Studien zur philanthropischen Erziehungsbewegung* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2007), 209.

23 The question of how to prepare people to conduct a "good life" was also the main topic of the somewhat competing boarding school of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi in Switzerland and of his educational pedagogy. Pestalozzi's ideas were developed in various essays and implemented in his institutions located in Burgdorf, Münchenbuchsee and Yverdon; see Daniel Tröhler, *Pestalozzi and the Educationalization of the World* (New York: Routledge, 2013). Even if Pestalozzi didn't consider physical education to be the main topic of his education, and even though Pestalozzi's institute lagged behind other boarding schools' physical education curriculum, regular exercises, such as swimming in the summer and skating in the winter, were part of the daily curriculum; see Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, "Über Körperbildung als Einleitung auf den Versuch einer Elementargymnastik, in einer Reihenfolge körperlicher Übungen, Juni/Juli 1807," in *Pestalozzi Sämtliche Werke, 20. Band* (Zürich: Orell Füssli, 1963), 47; see Emanuele Isidori, "Pestalozzi e l'educazione del corpo: Attualità di una pedagogia," *Rivista Formazione Lavoro Persona* 7, no. 21 (2017), 77–89.

24 The hygienic aspect of physical education was addressed at the same time by Johann Peter Frank in the second volume of his *System einer vollständigen medicinischen Polizey* (Mannheim: Schwan, 1780), arguing against a too early tension of the juvenile "soul- and bodily forces" (Nina Balcar, "'Psychopathische' Schuljugend in Deutschland. Eine Debatte zwischen Psychiatriern und Pädagogen im späten Kaiserreich," *Bildungsgeschichte: International Journal for the Historiography of Education* 7, no. 2 (2017), 158).

25 Salzmann had been, in 1787, one of the annotators of the translation of John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*; Joachim Heinrich Campe ed., *Allgemeine Revision des gesammten Schul- und Erziehungswesens von einer Gesellschaft practischer Erzieher, Neunter Theil* (Wien and Wolfenbüttel: Rudolph Grässer und Schulbuchhandlung, 1787).

26 "Lasst uns den Körper mehr abhärten, so wird er mehr Dauer und Nervenstärke erhalten; lasst uns ihn üben, so wird er kraftvoll und thätig werden; dann wird er den Geist beleben, ihn männlich, kraftvoll, unermüdet, standhaft und muthvoll machen." Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths, *Gymnastik für die Jugend: Enthalten eine praktische Anweisung zu Leibesübungen* (Schnepfenthal: Verlage der Buchhandlung der Erziehungsanstalt, 1793), 140.

educational intervention, as an integral part of the human individual and therefore open to but also requiring education.

GutsMuths' work on the body was not only qualitatively different from the courtly tradition with its emphasis on fencing, dancing or horseback-riding, but was also connected to a specific notion of "being German."²⁷ GutsMuths stated: "There is a big difference between learning to dance and the education of the body, between its graceful attitude and nervousness, between a timid spirit of a young gentleman and the masculine nature of a German young man."²⁸ Hardening, training, and the stimulation of the German masculine mind were also intended to create a contrast with a purely outer "French" notion of the body. The respective exercises necessary to create this new type of German citizen had to be oriented towards the human "initial nature" and the characteristics of "primitive people."²⁹ Thus, a specific notion of nature was evoked, a notion of purity, unaffectedness and virginity; yet, this notion of an "initial nature" was largely imagined. Consistent with certain cultural-critical discourses within the German Enlightenment—for example, the work of Johann Gottfried Herder— notions of the "primitive people" and their "initial nature" were synonyms for the unity of mind and body, untouched by artificial civilization.³⁰

However, according to GutsMuths, this particular conception of nature became part of the education of the soul, and was improperly isolated from the education of the body. It seems, GutsMuths further noted, "as if the soul *had no body*."³¹ This is why children's physical activities, their games and playing, were often "dangerous for their health and their lives," and constituted a wasteful form of "leisure and not physical exercises under careful control."³² In his writings, GutsMuths sought to systematically arrange and justify distinct exercises and the concept of physical hardening in order to popularise them "for the merit of my *whole nation*."³³ Thus physical exercises and gymnastics became more than a simple school subject, they became an integral part of the fabrication of the future German citizen.

GutsMuths' writings stimulated other educational writings, and he became a seminal author in discourses on physical education, schooling and curriculum.³⁴ One of

27 In line with the dissemination of the notion of nation after the defeat of the German troops by Napoleon in 1806, this national aspect got stronger in GutsMuths' *Gymnastics book for the sons of the Fatherland (Turnbuch für die Söhne des Vaterlandes, 1817)*.

28 "Es ist aber ein sehr großer Unterschied zwischen Tanzen lernen und Ausbildung des Körpers, zwischen zierlicher Haltung und Nervosität desselben, zwischen dem zaghaften Geiste des jungen Elegants und dem männlichen Wesen des deutsch seyn sollenden Jünglings." GutsMuths (1793), 16.

29 GutsMuths (1793), 3.

30 It was precisely this notion of nature that seemed to be found in Rousseau's work. In emphasising this notion, a (still) dominant strand of the German reception of Rousseau neglected Rousseau's initial statement, that his emphasis for natural education, as proposed in *Emile*, was a temporary solution in light of the corrupt French society and did not constitute an aspired end-goal; see Rebekka Horlacher, "Der Rousseau der Erziehungswissenschaft," in *Zwischen Vielfalt und Imagination. Praktiken der Jean-Jacques Rousseau Rezeption / Entre hétérogénéité et imagination. Pratiques de la réception de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Jesko Reiling and Daniel Tröhler (Geneva: Éditions Slatkine, 2013).

31 GutsMuths (1793), 12.

32 GutsMuths (1793), 14.

33 GutsMuths (1793), 143.

34 See e.g. Henning Eichenberg "Body Culture and Democratic Nationalism: Popular Gymnastics' in Nineteenth-Century Denmark," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 12, no. 2, (1995), 109.

his successors who also promoted physical education was Jahn, who explicitly and in a populist way connected gymnastics to nationalist politics. Jahn's movement was quickly placed under governmental surveillance due to the revolutionary potential of its ideology. Jahn's conception of physical education was so controversial that by 1820 his movement had become politically disreputable. Indeed, it was only after the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795–1861) ascended the throne in 1840 that the so-called *Turnsperre*, the ban on any gymnastic movement within the German Confederation (1815–1866), was revoked. Two years later, in 1842, the King issued a cabinet order implementing mandatory gymnastics training in schools for boys.³⁵ However, in doing so, the Prussian King explicitly dissociated himself from Jahn's notion of gymnastics and criticised its physical and moral disadvantages. Friedrich Wilhelm's goal was not free gymnastics (*Freiübungen*), which was the main concept of gymnastics that Jahn had promoted, but a form of gymnastics that sought to create a "harmonious education of hard working sons of the fatherland,"³⁶ as he proclaimed in a corresponding resolution issued in 1844. The associated exercises Friedrich Wilhelm endorsed did not only seek to strengthen the students' physical capabilities, but also sought to enhance their conduct, and the expression and smoothness of their movement, to support their military strength. It was precisely this combination of physical education and military exercise that became the dominant argument for education policy to include this new school subject. But how became Jahn's notion of physical education politically acceptable? How was his concept of gymnastics transformed to and reshaped for pedagogical purposes and settings?

Spiess' notion of physical education and the role of schooling

Based on GutsMuths' writings and also trained by Jahn, Adolf Spiess focused on establishing gymnastics as a mandatory school subject. Spiess, a Lutheran theologian, member of a fraternity, and acquainted with leaders of the nationalistic German gymnastic movement, started his career in Switzerland in 1833: first as private tutor, then as teacher in Burgdorf, and later as a teacher for gymnastics and history at the secondary school for girls in Basel. During his fifteen years in Switzerland, Spiess published several books on the objectives and uses of gymnastics in schools and their pedagogical implementation for both sexes, whereby he differentiated according to the school tracks.³⁷

Based on his successful initiatives and due to his textbooks, Spiess is one of the "founders" of physical education as a distinct school subject—not only in Switzerland. Spiess' notion of physical education—in line with the German tradition of gymnastics (*Turnen*)—did not focus on competitions or on "sports" as part of leisure activities.³⁸ For his textbooks, Spiess refined Jahn's physical exercises, developed in Berlin at the Hasenheide Park and spread all over Europe through the instructions

35 Filip Bláha, *Frauenkörper im Fokus: Wahrnehmung zwischen Strasse und Turnplatz in Prag und Dresden vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013), 158.

36 Friedrich Wilhelm IV, König von Preussen. "Ministerialverfügung vom 7. Februar 1844," in *Altes und Neues vom Turnen, Heft 1*, ed. Hans Ferdinand Massmann (Berlin: Hermann Schultze, 1849), 80.

37 Spiess (1842), 7.

38 For sports as leisure activity see e.g. Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

of how to build a Jahnish playground,³⁹ and developed a set of gymnastic movements independent of any gymnastic equipment.⁴⁰ This notion of gymnastics became part of the curriculum in several European countries in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Spiess' writings focussed on the body as an instrument of the mind, for which he was later criticised as having endorsed soulless rote drills.⁴¹ In his *Thoughts on the Classification of Gymnastics Within the System of Mass Education* (1842), Spiess emphasised that the body educates the mind, and proclaimed that the outer physical shape is a mirror of the inner soul.⁴² This notion of inner soul and outer shape relates to GutsMuths' notion of working on the body and conceptualises physical education as part of the body-building process akin to the nation-building process. This parallelism between the education of the individual and construction of the nation was explicitly emphasised. Spiess' essay was a seven-point justification of the importance of gymnastics as a school subject. He described not only why the existing public playgrounds were not adequate for this task, but also how school playgrounds had to be equipped, how the associated curricula and tests should be designed, and how teachers should be trained. Moreover, Spiess declared gymnastics—in line with the argumentation of the Prussian King—to be a pre-school for military service, thus giving another reason why this subject had to be taught in the compulsory schools.⁴³

For Spiess gymnastics was a necessary part of compulsory schooling especially if compulsory schooling aimed at “educating the youth towards the community and the nation.”⁴⁴ For him, the main advantage of making gymnastics a part of the curriculum was that it offered a structured, supportive, and controlled proceeding of physical education, while unstructured gymnastics performed on a public playground would largely be random.⁴⁵ The subject itself had to be taught in a way that was easily accessible,⁴⁶ and its relationship to other subjects had to be considered.⁴⁷

The curriculum differed according to the related strands of schooling and had a broad range. In elementary urban schools, standing, walking, and hopping were taught, as well as climbing, hanging, and arm-wrestling, several ways of running and jumping, marching, games, swimming and skating, if possible.⁴⁸ All these ways to move were closely connected to time and rhythm, dance and singing. In secondary schools the curriculum was similar but more advanced and clearly more oriented towards military preparation and “military drill.”⁴⁹ Education for girls differed from

39 Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and Ernst Eiselen, *Die deutsche Turnkunst zur Einrichtung der Turnplätze* (Berlin: Kosten der Herausgeber, 1816).

40 Robert Prohl, *Grundriss der Sportpädagogik 1999* (Wiebelsheim: Limpert, 2010), 39.

41 Bláha (2013), 159.

42 Spiess (1842), III.

43 In line with this argumentation, physical education became a mandatory school subject in Switzerland in 1874. Contrary to the cantonal sovereignty of school laws in Switzerland, physical education remains regulated by federal law.

44 Spiess (1842), 1.

45 Spiess (1842), 2-5.

46 Spiess (1842), 6.

47 Spiess (1842), 7.

48 Spiess (1842), 8.

49 Spiess (1842), 9.

that of boys, especially at the secondary level. According to their female nature, girls' gymnastics focussed more on 'pleasing movements' unrelated to skipping, jumping, running, working with weights, dancing and singing.⁵⁰ The curriculum for rural boys' and girls' schools was further reduced. Here, gymnastics were focussed on their relation to living conditions and were preliminary preparation for future military service or—in the case of girls—were exercises, dancing, and singing.⁵¹

The introduction of gymnastics into the curriculum also required properly educated gym teachers. Once again, Spiess emphasised that physical education was not a supplementary or optional part of schooling, but an integral part of any appropriate education. Physical education required special spaces and playgrounds, and had to be appropriately placed in the curriculum. Even if the curriculum of gymnastics focussed on physical movement, the appropriate education of the teachers was much broader. Teachers were not simply trained in physical education, but also in dietetics, which placed them in a position mediating between ordinary teachers and medical doctors, and connecting the latter closer to schooling.⁵² Similar to the long eighteenth century, when paediatricians figured as the main authors of educational support literature, medical doctors became—via physical education and its increasing orientation towards the physical aspects of the body and gymnastics—authorities in the educational discourse, perhaps even anticipating the medicalisation of everyday life, society⁵³ and educational research.⁵⁴

How physical education became a school subject: The example of Berne

On 10 September 1804, in the middle of the post-revolutionary Helvetic Republic and during a time of various school reform projects in Switzerland aiming at the creation of the later established, state-founded, legally-defined, and public compulsory schooling,⁵⁵ the Bernese government established a commission for the reorganisation of curriculum and schooling. One year later, the commission presented a corresponding proposal calling for organising Berne's public schools along two related lines, an upper and a lower, with the upper strand being supplemented by a voluntary evening school where dancing, fencing and swimming were taught.⁵⁶ While the swimming facilities and fencing halls already existed, the education of teachers for these activities exhibited various shortcomings. After some discussion regarding the necessity of physical education in the curriculum, and the importance of specialised training for teachers for these subjects, Phokion Heinrich Clias (1782–1854) was, in 1818, made officially responsible for physical education in the city schools.⁵⁷

50 Spiess (1842), 10.

51 Spiess (1842), 11.

52 Spiess (1842), 19.

53 See Peter Conrad, *The Medicalization of Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Thomas Szasz, *The Medicalization of Everyday Life* (Syracuse: University Press, 2007).

54 See Daniel Tröhler, "The medicalization of current educational research and its effects on education policy and school reforms," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 36, no. 5 (2015).

55 Rebekka Horlacher, "Mehr als eine Vorgeschichte. Schule im langen 18. Jahrhundert," in *Bildungsgeschichte Schweiz* [working title], ed. Lucien Criblez et al. (Zurich: Chronos, 2018).

56 Ernst Strupler, *Die Anfänge der modernen Leibesübungen in der Schweiz bis 1833* (Winterthur: P. G. Keller, 1955), 33–4.

57 Phokion Heinrich Clias, *Anfangsgründe der Gymnastik oder Turnkunst* (Bern: J. J. Burgdorfer, 1816), 36.

Clias, the son of Swiss immigrants to the United States, was born in Boston during the American War of Independence and named after the Athenian politician who believed that extreme frugality was the condition for virtue. After the death of his mother, his father, who had been an officer in the American War of Independence, sent him to a boarding school in the Netherlands. Clias soon left the school and travelled across Europe, starting his professional career as private tutor in the Netherlands and Germany before moving to Switzerland to become a teacher and working at the institute of Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg (1771–1844) in Hofwyl near Berne. In 1822, Clias became superintendent of physical training for the Royal Military and Naval Academies in England and opened a private gymnasium in London. He owed this appointment to his personal acquaintance with the British ambassador to Switzerland who had asked him to work with his hydrocephalic son.⁵⁸ The medical aspects of physical education were subsequently integrated into Clias' teaching. After his time in England, he moved back to the continent, became a member of the Bernese parliament (1832–1835) and lived partly in France before moving back to Switzerland in 1848 where he died in 1854 following complications from an accident.

Clias clearly presented the value of physical education in his writings as early as 1816. In a book titled *Elements of Gymnastics and Physical Education*, he sought to convince the Bernese government and public of physical education's importance and presented himself as being uniquely capable of introducing physical education into Bernese schools. Clias' experiences as an officer in the Bernese army led him to become concerned about soldiers' inactivity and the resulting risk of their demoralisation. He argued that physical education supported the creation of a national identity that did not require a shared language, religious affiliation or ethnicity—concepts that Clias believed were not applicable to the case of Switzerland.⁵⁹ Regarding recent German history and Jahn's writings, Clias claimed that the Swiss Confederates' heroism allowed them to defeat any well-trained army and therefore had to be taken into account as important concepts for any nation-building project. He stated:

The thunderclouds, which hovered over our heads during the general storm; the inner strength and the awakening of a nation languishing under an iron yoke, its rapid victories, its military glory and the restoration of its customs, – all these are examples and earnest warnings for carefully safeguarding the physical education of a people, who have always been characterized by strength, courage, and fidelity.⁶⁰

The relationship between the nation and physical education is discussed even more explicitly in a footnote to the heading of “nation.” Clias referred here to Jahn who

58 Jan Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful: Purposive Exercise In the Lives of American Women 1800–1870* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 37.

59 Jean-Claude Bussard, *L'éducation physique suisse en quête d'identité (1800–1930)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), 65.

60 “Die Gewitterwolken, welche während dem allgemeinen Sturme über unsern Häuptern schwebte; die innere Kraft und das Aufwachen einer Nation, die unter einem eisernen Joche schmachtete, ihre raschen Siege, ihr kriegerischer Ruhm und die Wiederherstellung ihrer Sitten, – alles dieses sind eben so viele Beyspiele und ernste Ermahnungen, mit Sorgfalt über die physische Erziehung eines Volks zu wachen, welches durch Stärke, Muth und Treue sich immer ausgezeichnet hat.” Clias (1816), 1–2.

is described as someone “whose influence on these exercises greatly contributed to instilling this nation with the patriotic spirit and physical endurance it needed to free itself from the slavery under which it was suffering.”⁶¹ In this sentence, Clias closely connects physical education, military strength and national consciousness. Similar to Anton Santesson’s references to the glorious military victories of the Swedish army, described in Johannes Westberg’s article in this special issue, Clias referred to the heroic acts of the Swiss Confederates of the glorious past, without referring to a concrete war or event. He labelled them “as a handful of shepherds” who resisted “large military force” and resist a “large military force,” like a [“real”] nation would, “even if its barely the size of a province.”⁶²

According to this argument, physical education became a requirement in order for the nation to successfully exercise sovereignty, regardless of whether the concepts of the nation or the sovereignty were the same. Besides the corporal advantages it offered, physical education also had moral advantages, as it resulted in “an enduring serenity of the mind and the soul as a fruit of the physical health of the body.”⁶³ Clias emphasised even more than either GutsMuths or Jahn the anatomical and physiological aspects of gymnastics, which became even more marked as he became older.⁶⁴ Clias’ notion of physical education was thereby twofold: it aimed at military strength and national cohesion in a state not able to refer to shared language or culture and supported moral education following an understanding of the close entanglement of body and soul.

Physical education and nation-building in Switzerland

As described in the first section of this article, physical education was not a completely new topic around 1800. It referred to existing traditions and practices of upbringing and medical knowledge that already existed in several advisory books, but sought to fill them with new content. Based on ideas and publications like Locke’s, reflecting the impact of knowledge from physical anthropology and the medical sciences, the physical condition of children became an educational and pedagogical topic.⁶⁵ Hence, Spiess’ and Clias’ writings encountered a fertile audience. They took up existing knowledge and offered a systematic overview of what had to be done to fully integrate physical education into the curriculum. Using existing traditions and discourses, Spiess, in particular, developed a syllabus for physical education, comparable to other syllabi, in the unique context of establishing compulsory schooling. Switzerland may have been even a particular stimulating context in this respect, as

61 “Der Einfluss dieser Uebungen haben mächtig dazu beygetragen, dieser Nation jenen patriotischen Geist und die körperliche Ausharrung mitzuthemen, dessen sie bedurfte, um sich von der Sklaverey, unter welcher sie seufzte, zu befreyen.” Clias (1816), 1.

62 “Eine Handvoll Hirten konnten ein zahlreiches und geübtes Heer besiegen wie eine Nation, deren Land kaum einer Provinz eines grossen Reichs gleich kommt, Mächten widerstehen, welche durch ihre Siege und die Zahl ihrer Krieger furchtbar waren.” Clias (1816), 2–3.

63 Clias (1816), 23.

64 Strupler (1955), 73. His *Elements of Gymnastics and Physical Education* (1816) was followed by six chapters (20 pages) explaining the body’s structure.

65 See Carsten Zelle, ed, “Vernünftige Ärzte:” *Hallesche Psychomediziner und die Anfänge der Anthropologie in der deutschsprachigen Frühaufklärung* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001); Jörn Garber, “Einleitung,” in “Die Stammutter aller guten Schulen:” *Das Dessauer Philanthropinum und der deutsche Philanthropismus 1774–1793*, ed. Jörn Garber (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2008), 7.

some argue, for the remoteness of the country facilitated the preservation of early modern traditions of popular games, offering a reference point for physical education and for a discourse based upon the unspoiled natural purity of the Swiss countryside and the Swiss Alps.⁶⁶

However, physical exercises did not just seek to strengthen the body's abilities; it sought to gain something "further." This "further" was the health-maintaining effect for the body and soul, which were connected to the idea of the nation and its strength. A well-trained body revealed a proper soul and helped express, and perhaps served to worship, the idea of the nation. Even though the German gymnastics movement that provided the ideological context Spiess grew up in had emphasised the German nation as the ideological concept, Spiess and his contemporaries in Switzerland and Europe, here exemplified by Clais, adapted the German concept of physical education to local circumstances and ideologies. A benefit in this respect was the fact that mass schooling, the method for fabricating future citizens, requested an increasing demand for teaching material focussed on physical education. Spiess filled this gap with his writings and guidance regarding the new subject.

The fact that Spiess' teaching materials were used in countries with contexts as different as Switzerland and Germany, and were also translated into French, might indicate the ideological openness, or undifferentiated nature, of the notion of the nation as expressed in Spiess' textbooks. These textbooks introduced a pedagogical—and no longer a political—understanding of physical education, a concrete syllabus, and lesson planning. In this respect, physical education and nation-building were less oriented to the national tradition and idiosyncrasy than to the physical education promoted by Jahn. The national tradition following Jahn was ambiguous due to its real or just assumed revolutionary potential and therefore not the appropriate notion of physical education in the context of schooling of the emerging nation-states. Nevertheless, there was no need for Spiess to explicitly present his books as being relevant for nation-building because this task had already been accomplished by various education laws providing a legal basis for public schooling and codifying a shared understanding of its role and aims.⁶⁷ On the basis of schooling as part of the educationalisation of the world, the purpose of Spiess' teaching materials was merely to provide guidelines for lesson planning.

The shift that occurred in the educational discourse, from the relation between physical education and nation-building to the pedagogical requirements of physical education and a stronger focus on health education and hygiene, is remarkable.⁶⁸ This discourse subsequently became dominant in the context of schooling, reintegrating medical doctors into education and schooling, while the discourse on physical strength became less prominent and shifted towards a strictly military discourse.⁶⁹

The often-quoted historiographic connection between physical education, mil-

66 Strupler (1955), 1–5.

67 Daniel Tröhler, "Curriculum History, or the Educational Construction of Europe in the Long 19th Century," *European Educational Research Journal* 15, no. 3 (2016).

68 See for example Michèle Hofmann, "Ärztliche Macht und ihre Einfluss auf den Schulalltag in der Schweiz im ausgehenden 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhundert," *Paedagogica Historica* 51, no. 1–2 (2015).

69 See the article of Ingrid Brühwiler in this special issue.

itary service and nation-building is, against this backdrop, not false, but curtails a much more complex and interwoven history. In particular, the understanding of this topic must be contextualised by shedding light on its various political and social entanglements, for only then can we appreciate its broader meaning as a school subject. The transformation of physical education into a school subject is consequently not only the implementation of a new subject into the curriculum but also the success story of solving social problems and building the future citizen through education.

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Shaping the National Body: Physical Education and the Transformation of German Nationalism in the Long Nineteenth Century

Daniel Tröhler

Abstract • The following article reconstructs the curricular story of physical education between the Prussian prohibition (1820) and reintroduction (1842) and broad dissemination of ‘gymnastic exercises’ between 1842 and 1871 and its full implementation around 1900 in Germany, focusing on the interrelation between constitutional reforms, nationalism and the development of a state-directed educational system, directed towards making the loyal future citizens. The successive formation of a German nation-state is being understood as the historical context of the implementation of gymnastics in the school curriculum; a process that in its success depended on the rise of nationalism as a dominant political ideology in the course of the nineteenth century.

Keywords • nation-states, nationalism, curriculum, physical education, nineteenth century

On June 6, 1842, King Frederick William IV of Prussia declared in a patriotic cabinet order that henceforth “gymnastic exercises” would be part of the curriculum for Prussia’s upper high schools, higher city schools and teacher seminars.¹ It was a first step in the institutionalisation of gymnastics as a ‘normal’ school subject—a process that was completed with the foundation of a German nation-state, the German *Reich*, in 1871, when gymnastics, or *Turnen*, became an ordinary part of the elementary school curriculum.

The creation and introduction of a new and ordinary school subject in the curricula for all education levels (below the university level) between 1842 and 1871 represents a history that reveals much about nationalism, constitutionalism, nation-building, curriculum and the making of future citizens, and it unveils how visions of social order in both dimensions, social and cultural, are translated into educational measures designed to implement and sustain these visions.

The story behind the school subject “gymnastic exercises” is rather neglected in history of education in general and in curriculum history in particular, but even less

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- 1 Hermann T. Wangemann, *Schulordnung nebst Einrichtungs- und Lehrplan für die preussische Volksschule: Erste Abtheilung, welche die Schulordnung und die äusserlichen Einrichtungen betrifft, zusammengestellt von Dr. Wangemann* (Berlin: Wohlgemuth, 1856).

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in sports history.² Prussia shows, however, how much this example provides insight into the mechanisms of aligning the modern school to dominant social or national needs, expressed in the fabrication of the desired future citizens of the envisaged social order. After 1842, a part of the citizens, here still reduced to the future male citizen attending higher schooling, had to be physically exercised and trained, and from 1871 on, all children were exposed to physical exercises at school.

The official introduction of gymnastic exercises in 1842 mentioned above was insofar peculiar, as it set an end to a ban imposed by the predecessor of King Frederick William IV, Frederick William III in 1820, which expelled gymnastic exercises not only from the schools but from the whole public sphere. The story between the prohibition (1820) and reintroduction (1842) and broad dissemination of 'gymnastic exercises' between 1842 and 1871 and its full implementation around 1900 will be reconstructed in this article, focusing on the interrelation between constitutional reforms, nationalism and the development of a mass educational system. The successive formation of a German nation-state was the historical context of the implementation of gymnastics in the school curriculum; a process that in its success depended on the rise of nationalism as a dominant political ideology in the course of the nineteenth century.

Gymnastics and the German nation

With the Treaties of Tilsit in 1807 signed by Napoleon and Tsar Alexander, Prussia lost about half of its pre-war territory and was occupied by the French troops. The Prussian defeat also meant the end of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, existing since 1512, and the reactions in Germany were, among others, deliberately fomented seeds of national feelings, or nationalism, with the aim of uniting the German nation as a more valuable opponent to the French nation. Reform-oriented statesmen such as Baron vom Stein, who aimed at transforming and modernising at least Prussia, approached poets, writers and scholars and motivated them to support the reform movement by means of public propaganda.³

Participating in this endeavour to create a "national myth"⁴ were, among others, the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher—both of them centrally involved in the creation of the University of Berlin, today the Humboldt-University⁵—the dramatist Heinrich von Kleist⁶ and last but not least, the rather unsuccessful former divinity student Friedrich Ludwig Jahn. Jahn was an

2 For instance Henning Eichberg, "Body Culture and Democratic Nationalism: 'Popular Gymnastics' in Nineteenth-Century Denmark," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 12, no. 2 (1995), 108–24; Else Trangbeak, "Danish Gymnastics: What's so Danish about the Danes?" *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 13, no. 2 (1996), 203–14, Kyle Grimes, "'Fit Audience, Though Few': Romanticism and Physical Education in the 1820s," *Romanticism* 19, no. 3 (2013), 261–72.

3 Otto W. Johnston, *Der deutsche Nationalmythos: Ursprung eines politischen Programms* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990).

4 Johnston (1990).

5 For more details on the context of the foundation of today's Humboldt University, see Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, "The University of Berlin: A Foundation Between Defeat and Crisis, Philosophy and Politics," *Bildungsgeschichte: International Journal for the Historiography of Education* 4, no. 1 (2014), 11–28.

6 And also the educational policy maker Johann Wilhelm Süvern, the publisher Georg Reimer, the historians Arnold Heeren and Heinrich Luden.

assistant teacher at the famous Plamann Institute in Berlin headed by the Lutheran minister Johann Ernst Plamann, which was the major institutional hub of the Swiss Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's educational 'method' in Berlin.

All of the participants were Lutherans, and the majority of them were sons of Lutheran ministers and had themselves studied theology; Schleiermacher simply translated his Pietist visions of sacrifice, fraternity and community into the German *Volk und Vaterland*, the German people and fatherland.⁷ Deeply embedded in evangelical Protestantism, they were agents of the cultural shift towards 'educationalisation of the world', that is, defining the future in an educational(ised) discourse, aiming educationally at transforming the inner soul of the individual exposed to a changing world.⁸ The paradigm figure of this movement was Pestalozzi,⁹ and his most noble propagandist in Germany was the said philosopher Fichte, who in his famous *Addresses to the German Nation* in 1808 explained the military defeat of Prussia against France as resulting from a long-running moral decay in Prussia¹⁰ that needed to be countered by thorough educational reform following the method developed by Pestalozzi; and in this context Fichte asked explicitly for physical education, too.¹¹

Obviously, Fichte's educational argument arose out of a nationalist concern, and his idea of the "nation" was based on a commonality of language. Yet, according to Fichte, the German nation was not only one among others but also was in fact predestined to morally lead the world, because (in his view) in contrast to all of the Roman languages, the German language had remained an unadulterated language. According to Fichte, the purity of the German language allowed the educated German to recognise original, that is, unspoiled, truths¹² according to which the world should be designed.

This triad of original truths, the future and education became the centre of the German 'national myth' during the French occupation (1806–1814). It proved to be successful not only in creating a particular nationalist imagination but also in the ambition of combatting the French occupiers by trained soldiers serving to implement this imagined nation. In this nascent German nationalism the need grew for physical exercises that would help create a paramilitary reserve army on behalf of the German nation, and to this end, already existing concepts for physical education¹³

7 "The Volk, the people, is God's creation and loyalty to the people is equated with loyalty to God" (as cited in Hans-Werner Hahn and Helmut Berding, *Gebhardt: Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte – Band 14: Reformen, Restauration und Revolution 1806–1848/49*, 10th ed. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2010), 120).

8 Daniel Tröhler, "Educationalization of Social Problems and the Educationalization of the Modern World," in *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016).

9 Daniel Tröhler, *Pestalozzi and the Educationalization of the World* (New York: Palgrave Pivot, 2013).

10 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, trans. and ed. Gregory Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; original work published 1808), xx.

11 Fichte (2008), 24–32, 119, 125.

12 Fichte (2008), 57–58.

13 Peter Villaume, "Von der Bildung des Körpers in Rücksicht auf die Vollkommenheit und Glückseligkeit des Menschen, oder über die physische Erziehung insonderheit," in *Allgemeine Revision des gesamten Schul- und Erziehungswesens von einer Gesellschaft praktischer Erzieher*, vol. VIII (Vienna: Rudolf Gräffer und Compagni, Schulbuchhandlung, 1787), 211–492; Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths, *Gymnastik für die Jugend. Enthalten eine praktische Anweisung zu Leibesübungen* (Schneppenthal: Verlage der Buchhandlung der Erziehungsanstalt, 1793).

were ideologically translated into a nationalist, paramilitary discourse that won momentum on the occasion of the official conscription or draft, which defined every male citizen as a potential soldier, in 1813.

The most prominent figure in this movement was Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, mentioned above, who was a fierce and fundamental nationalist and author of *Deutsches Volksthum* (German Folklore/Tradition/Values)¹⁴ By claiming etymological roots, Jahn even *invented* a name for these kinds of national-military exercises, namely, *Turnen*,¹⁵ which is usually translated into English as ‘gymnastics’. Jahn was able to connect Fichte’s linguistic philosophy with his own military ambitions, conferring the honour of absolute national necessity on the idea of *Turnen*.¹⁶

Jahn’s vision of gymnastics did not aim at drilling the future soldiers¹⁷ in the style of the Prussian army of the eighteenth century that attracted Foucault’s attention.¹⁸ Jahn’s aim was obviously not submissive fighters with slavish obedience but rather nationally minded fraternal warriors characterised by a particular sentiment or attitude, the *turnerische Gesinnung*, or “gymnastic attitude” or spirit.¹⁹ This gymnastic attitude acted as a link between inward purification, often labelled *Bildung*, and the outer, social or national world, and this attitude was characterised by a collectively shared strong sense of equality of German ‘brotherhood’ beyond any social distinctions.

Nation-building and school reform

Between 1807 and 1813, when Napoleon was defeated in Russia, German nationalism was a movement of intellectuals, organised in secret societies like the German Association founded in 1810 by Ludwig Jahn or the League of Virtue (*Tugendbund*) founded in 1808²⁰ devoted to physical exercises, among other things.²¹ Starting with hiking and playing games in and around Berlin, in spring 1811 Jahn and his nationalistic associates organised the first public gymnastic exercises in the Hasenheide park in the south of Berlin. A movement emerged in which men demonstrated the strength and suppleness of their bodies in public, expressing the willingness of the German youth to defend the nation against the French occupiers. The sexual dimension of these exhibitions of the purified German bodies becomes apparent, in particular, by the fact that the French were generally sexually stigmatised as “obscene;”²² French women were in principle equated to prostitutes who aimed to infect

14 Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, *Deutsches Volksthum* (Lübeck: Niemann und Comp., 1810).

15 Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and Ernst Eiselen, *Die deutsche Turnkunst zur Einrichtung der Turnplätze* (Berlin: [s.n.], 1816), XXVII.

16 *Turnen* as a word and physical activity still exists today and has to be seen in contrast to ‘sports’, invented by the British as civic leisure activity.

17 Jahn and Eiselen (1816), 229.

18 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977), 138, 315.

19 Christiane Eisenberg, “English sports” und deutsche Bürger: *Eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte 1800–1939* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1999).

20 Leighton S. James, *Witnessing the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in German Central Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

21 Johann August Otto Leopold Lehmann, *Der Tugendbund, aus den hinterlassenen Papieren des Mitstifters Professor Dr. Hans Friedrich Gottlieb Lehmann* (Berlin: Haude- und Spenersche Buchhandlung, 1867), 171.

22 Ernst Moritz Arndt, *Blick aus der Zeit auf die Zeit* (Germanien [Frankfurt]: Eichenberg, 1814).

the bodies of Germans with germs.²³ Starting in Berlin, disciples of this nationalistic movement were sent out to other parts of Prussia to establish similar activities. In 1817/1818, Prussia had some 100 gymnastic associations with around 6,000 gymnasts.

With the aid of nationalist policy reformers,²⁴ gymnastics started to enter the school curricula right after the end of the Congress of Vienna (in 1815). *Die Deutsche Turnkunst zur Einrichtung der Turnplätze dargestellt* (The German Art of Gymnastics Depicted for the Establishment of Gym Fields), published by Ludwig Jahn in 1816 together with another teacher at the Plamann Institute, Ernst Eiselen, became an official textbook in the public schools and guided teachers in conducting gymnastics with their students. With the full support of Minister Johann Wilhelm Süvern, Eiselen became responsible for the training of the future gymnastics teachers, and Jahn was appointed chief gymnastics inspector, observing gymnastics instruction in all of Prussia.

Despite this success story of *Turnen*, King Frederick William III of Prussia prohibited gymnastics in public and in the schools shortly thereafter in 1820. What had happened? As a matter of fact, in the eyes of the contemporaries the nationalist movement was a *liberal* and *progressive* movement that advocated both the idea of human equality (as long as the human beings were German) and the idea of a German union, that is, the dissolution of all of the duchies, principalities and kingdoms and the creation of *one* new national German Empire. Both concerns, culminating in the need to adopt a national constitution, were rejected by the German nobilities, who had agreed at the Congress in Vienna in 1815 on the creation of the German Confederation, guaranteeing the sovereignty of all of the member states. Most of the political authorities in these member states hesitated to pass a constitution that had been demanded by both the gymnastics movement and the new fraternities, and the actual power holders soon found a good reason to counter these requests for a new constitution.

This reason was the murder in 1819 of the conservative council of state, August von Kotzebue, by Karl Ludwig Sand, a (Lutheran) theology student and *Turner* at the Hasenheide. The conservative monarchs of the loose German Confederation reacted almost immediately with the Carlsbad Decrees, which were reactionary restrictions banning nationalist fraternities, removing liberal university professors and expanding the censorship of the press. It is in this context that King Frederick William III pronounced his ban on gymnastics (*Turnen*), and several leaders of the gymnastics movement were sent to jail, among them Ludwig Jahn. The encompassing educational reforms that were underway were stopped in 1819, and their major promoter, Johann Wilhelm Süvern, lost influence.

But physical exercises were not completely banned from the schools, especially not outside of Prussia. In the time of the ban, Lutheran theologian and former soldier Johann Adolf Ludwig Werner, for instance, introduced gymnastics for women into the school curriculum in the Kingdom of Saxony²⁵ and propagated gymnastics

23 Eisenberg (1999), 116–17.

24 Like Friedrich von Schuckmann, Hans Graf von Bülow or Karl August von Hardenberg; see Jahn and Eiselen (1816), XLVI.

25 Johann Adolf Werner Werner, *Gymnastik für die weibliche Jugend oder weibliche Körperbildung für die Gesundheit, Kraft und Anmuth* (Meißen: Goedsche, 1834).

as a crucial part of public education.²⁶ To prevent any suspicion, the activists refrained from using the concept of *Turnen* and used instead the Germanised version of the old Greek concept of γυμναστική, gymnastics (*Gymnastik*). This was not only an expression of opportunism but also indicated a different style of physical exercises that may be seen as related to medical gymnastics, closer to the Swedish tradition of Pehr Henrik Ling than to Ludwig Jahn.

In the time of the ban, the tight connection between gymnastics and nation-building was dissolved, but the value of healthy, strong male bodies, in particular with regard to military interests, remained appreciated. The *Turnen* ban came to an end when, after the death of Frederick William III in 1840, his oldest son, Frederick William IV, came into power. The nationalists saw in him a ray of hope, which he reliably disappointed.²⁷ But with a new fundamental conflict with France, the Rhine crisis of 1840/1841, when the French reclaimed the territories to the left of the Rhine river, a new broad tide of nationalism arose. This new tide was not connected to Germany at first hand but to Prussia, for these disputed territories had been under Prussian rule. It is in this context that August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben, a university professor of Germanic philology, wrote the “Song of Germany” (*Deutschlandlied*) that later (and up to today) became the official national anthem. The first lines (today omitted from the anthem) are: “Germany, Germany above all else / Above all else in the world / when, for protection and defence / it always stands brotherly together.”

In the minds of the nationalists, the Prussian folk required military spirit and ability, and it was military leaders in particular that pressed for the standardised introduction of gymnastics at all Prussian schools.²⁸ It is precisely in this heated militarist nationalist context that *Turnen*, as indicated above, found wider acceptance, and Jahn became rehabilitated and was now called *Turnvater Jahn* [gym father Jahn].²⁹ *Turnen* was first introduced in Prussian upper high schools, higher city schools and teacher seminars—and then, after 1871, in all schools of the German empire.

The constitutional German nation-states, curriculum and *Turnen*

Depending on the historiography, the enthronement of Frederick William IV of Prussia in 1840 was in the middle or in the beginning of an epoch called the *Vormärz*, literally translated as pre-March. Often this movement is believed to have started in the wake of the July Revolution of 1830 in Paris, triggering a period of political uprising. It culminated in the German Revolution that broke out in March 1848 with the claim of creating a democratically unified German nation-state based on a constitution—a movement that was suppressed by Prussian and Austrian troops in autumn 1849.

A few months prior to this suppression, in March 1849, the self-constituted assembly of the ‘revolutionaries’ proclaimed a constitutional draft called the Frankfurt Constitution, foreseeing the creation of a smaller-scale Germany, that is, without Austria and under the leadership of the Prussian monarchy. Frederick William IV

²⁶ Johann Adolf Werner Werner, *Das ganze der Gymnastik oder ausführliches Lehrbuch der Leibeserziehung nach den Grundsätzen der besseren Erziehung zum öffentlichen und besonderen Unterricht* (Meissen: Goedsche, 1834).

²⁷ He refused to follow most of the neighbouring states in adopting a constitution.

²⁸ Karl-Heinz Schodrok, *Preussische Turnpolitik* (Berlin, Germany: epubli, 2013), 336–43.

²⁹ *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, Nr. 92 (17 April 1847), 366.

rejected this solution and himself imposed a new constitution.³⁰ It guaranteed essential political rights to all Prussians,³¹ but left much power to the wealthy citizens and foremost to the nobility, who often lacked both education and wealth. And it was not national, that is, a part of creating a German nation-state, as it was focused on the territory of Prussia only. The imposed constitution was obviously not a result of democratic deliberation, but it was a constitution nonetheless. It expressed the dominant conservative vision of social order and at the same time formally provided legalised citizenship, even if the notion of Prussian “citizen” was hardly used and their spheres of (political) influence scarce: The Royal subjects had become, formally, constitutionally defined citizens understood as entities with legal status.

As the rebellion of the *Vormärz* had been borne by intellectuals and teachers, a large purge followed, somehow similar to the purge in Turkey after the failed putsch in July 2016, and the reforms affected not least the education system, which was to be fully controlled by the state authorities. Some 470,000 *Turners* as part of the liberal-national movement emigrated from Germany,³² many of them to the United States. The corresponding elementary school regulations³³ that followed the dynastic conservative constitution of 1851 aimed at complete enrolment of all Prussian children in schools with a standardised curriculum comprising Religion first of all, German Language (reading and writing), some Mathematics and Singing.³⁴ In particular, the pupils had no Latin in school, although its mastery was required for transition to *Gymnasium*; Latin was at the centre of the curriculum of the fee-paying ‘prep school’ (*Vorschule*)—prep school understood here as the preparation or preliminary stage leading to *Gymnasium*. Additionally, the curriculum did not foresee any physical exercises in the schools save in the teacher seminaries, where they had to be based *explicitly* on the gymnastics developed by the Swede Pehr Henrik Ling (see the article by Johannes Westberg in this issue) and Adolf Spiess (see the article by Rebekka Horlacher in this issue), and had to aim at young people being a virtuous part of a “valiant and brave people (*Volk*).”³⁵ This explicit reference to Ling and foremost to Spiess is significant, for Spiess fit exactly into the extremely conservative mood of the times after 1848³⁶ and highlighted distance to *Turnvater Jahn* with his nationalist and German-fraternal ambitions connected to gymnastics. Already in 1848, the German *Turners* who remained in Germany were divided into a comparatively unpolitical *Deutsche Turnerbund* (German gymnastics union) and the republican-democratic *Demokratische Turnerbund* (Democratic gymnastics union); many of the latter escaped from Germany in the context of the restoration politics after 1849.

30 On 5 December 1848, and a revision on 31 January 1850.

31 For instance, it provided religious freedom (Article 13), allowed civil marriage (Article 19), declared the principle of academic autonomy and freedom (Article 20), declared freedom of opinion and abolished censorship (Article 27), allowed unlimited right of assembly and the right of petition (Articles 29, 30, 32), and guaranteed the secrecy of correspondence (Article 33). And Article 21 declared that the education of the youth would take place in public schools and that school attendance was compulsory.

32 Schodrock (2013), 502.

33 Ferdinand Stiehl, *Die drei Preußischen Regulative vom 1., 2. und 3. Oktober 1854 über Einrichtung des evangelischen Seminar-, Präparanden- und Elementarunterrichts* (Berlin: Vilhelm Hertz, 1854).

34 Given the very minor importance of mathematics, an average Prussian pupil had to become mainly a hardworking, disciplined and devoted German-speaking Christian Prussian.

35 Stiehl (1854), 47.

36 Schodrock (2013), 391–402.

Nevertheless, after 1850, there were different more or less independent German territorial states—heirlooms of the 1806 dissolved Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation—with (conservative) constitutions that directed the school systems in order to fabricate loyal subjects in now constitutional states. The expansion of the education system was admirable, but gymnastics was not (yet) a school subject on the elementary school level. Increased pressure for the cultural ‘normalisation’ of gymnastics and its thorough educationalisation expressed in its integration into the curriculum of the elementary school came from the German *Turner* movement and its activities. Already in 1856, the *Turners* had published the *Deutsche Turnzeitung* (German Gymnastics Journal) in which they talked about the *Volk* (people), fatherland, nation and even of Germany, but only reluctantly of “unity.”³⁷ In 1860, the first German gymnastics festival (*Turnfest*) was organised in Coburg, and a year later in Berlin; and the leading ideas were both physical and political, aiming at German unity. On the occasion of the Coburg festival, they decided to unite all German *Turners* in one German association, an event that was implemented in 1868 and named the German Gymnasts (*Turnerschaft*). From 1863, the *Turners* published a biannual statistical yearbook of the gymnastics associations.³⁸

Parallel to this process of public institutionalisation, members advocated for a more systematic representation of *Turnen* in the elementary schools. For instance, in 1862, Carl Friedrich Hausmann, a teacher at the teacher seminar in Weimar and head of the local gymnastics association, published *Das Turnen in der Volksschule – ein Beitrag zur allgemeinen Einführung geregelter Körperübungen* (Gymnastics in the Elementary School – a Contribution to the General Introduction of Regulated Physical Exercises),³⁹ followed eleven years later with an extended second edition, *Das Turnen in der Volksschule mit Berücksichtigung des Turnens in den höheren Schulen ein nach dem neuesten Standpunkte der Turnkunde bearbeitetes Lehrbuch*.⁴⁰ In the city of Aachen, the local government made two hours of *Turnen* per week an official part of the school curriculum.⁴¹ In the same year, Prussia standardised the training of future gymnastics teachers in the elementary schools and published guidelines for gymnastics education in Prussian elementary schools,⁴² aiming at combining educational and military interests.⁴³ A year later, the modes of certifying gymnastics teachers were laid down.⁴⁴

37 Svenja Goltermann, *Körper der Nation: Habitusformierung und die Politik des Turnens 1860–1890* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998), 72.

38 Georg Hirth, *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Turnvereine Deutschlands* (Leipzig: Keil, 1863 and subsequent).

39 Carl F. Hausmann, *Das Turnen in der Volksschule – ein Beitrag zur allgemeinen Einführung geregelter Körperübungen* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1862).

40 Carl F. Hausmann, *Das Turnen in der Volksschule mit Berücksichtigung des Turnens in den höheren Schulen ein nach dem neuesten Standpunkte der Turnkunde bearbeitetes Lehrbuch* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1873).

41 Königliche Regierung in Aachen, “Turn-Unterricht in Elementarschulen,” *Centralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen* 7, no. 6 (1865), 366.

42 *Leitfaden für den Turn-Unterricht in den Preussischen Volksschulen* (Berlin: Wilhelm Herp, 1862).

43 Ferdinand Stiehl, “Ausbildung von Turn-Lehrern für Elementarschulen,” *Centralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen* 7, nos. 9/10 (1865), 589–600.

44 Heinrich von Mühlner, “Befähigungszeugnisse für Elementarlehrer zur Ertheilung des Turn-Unterrichts,” *Centralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen* 8, no. 3 (1866), 148–50.

These accelerated developments took place in a broader territorial-political context of German nation-building, which was organised between two ideologies of the *Großdeutsches Reich*, including Austria, and the *Kleindeutsches Reich*, excluding Austria. Due to the Second Schleswig War (1864), which gave rise to a national movement in Denmark,⁴⁵ and the Austro-Prussian War in 1866, the German Bund had been dissolved, followed by the North German Confederation (1866–1871). The Confederation stood under the leadership of Prussia, and on the occasion of the Franco-Prussian War four years later (1870–1871), the French were defeated and the German Empire was founded. In 1871, the dream of a unified German nation (with the exclusion of the Catholic, multilingual Austrian Empire) had formally come true, which in turn meant that the “nation” was not legitimated merely by a shared German language. The “imagined community”⁴⁶ of the German nation had to be constructed differently.

The German Empire’s (*Deutsches Reich*) constitutional monarchy was under the leadership of the Prussian kings, first with Otto von Bismarck as Chancellor. In his early years, Bismarck had been educated at the Plamann Institute in Berlin (mentioned above), with its emphasis on *Turnen*, or gymnastics; and he had been given religious instruction and confirmed by the nationalist and pietistic Friedrich Schleiermacher in 1831. The nationalisation—or the mental and cultural national unification—of Germany was expedited, and the education system reformed, expanded and bureaucratised—all financially supported by France’s war penalty.⁴⁷ This new, reformed school played a crucial role in the making of the German nationalist citizenry, supporting, for some decades euphorically and enthusiastically, the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. The young men, upon leaving school, were physically trained and well prepared to fight, as the meanwhile thoroughly institutionalised *Turnen* gymnastics had taken more and more of a military turn. Ideologically, they were kindled by the nationalist intellectuals.⁴⁸ One of the emergent mandarins of German education in the twentieth century, Eduard Spranger, held a speech addressing youth (*An die Jugend*) in 1914, in which he pointed to the need for a “spirit of duty and self-sacrifice,” as the historical situation—the start of the First World War—had revealed one fundamental claim: “There is something for which one can die!”⁴⁹

Curriculum and the making of loyal citizens of the German Reich

By the time the German Reich was proclaimed in 1871, *Turnvater* Friedrich Ludwig Jahn had been dead for almost 30 years. Backed up by the new nationalism in the

45 See also Trangbaek (1996), 211.

46 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

47 The French were obliged by the Treaty of Frankfurt (May 10, 1871) to pay a war indemnity of 5 billion gold francs in 5 years; the last instalment of the indemnity was paid in September 1873, ahead of schedule.

48 Such as Eucken (see Rudolf Eucken, *Die weltgeschichtliche Bedeutung des deutschen Geistes* (Stuttgart/Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1914) and Sombart (see Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden. Patriotische Besinnungen* (Munich/Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1915)).

49 Eduard Spranger, “An die Jugend,” *Der Säemann: Monatsschrift für Jugendbildung und Jugendkunde* 5 (1915), 386–93.

context of the German Reich (*Reichsnationalismus*), thorough educational reform took place. Already on 31 October 1872, Minister of Education and Arts, Adalbert Falk, published the new *General Provisions* on the reorganisation of German mass schooling and teacher education.⁵⁰ Falk declared, among other things, that from now on gymnastics ought to be taught to boys in all elementary schools.⁵¹ The general appreciation for gymnastics had become obvious and expressed itself, for instance, in the declaration of mandatory gymnastics for the middle and higher schools for girls,⁵² in recommendations for rural elementary school teachers,⁵³ and in a call to introduce gymnastics to the curriculum for deaf-mutes, too,⁵⁴ a demand that was officially supported by the Ministry of Education.⁵⁵ In the 1880s, girls in elementary schools were also taught gymnastics, whereby this was aimed at strengthening the female body to promote “grace and beauty of movement,” whereas the missing inner unity of Germany was labelled as a lack of “masculinity,” which was to be generated through gymnastics (for boys) at school.⁵⁶ In this essential expansion of gymnastics, the teachers and officials were not left alone: The *Turner* Georg Heinrich Weber published a book for teachers and administrators on the fundamentals of gymnastics education for boys and girls in 1881 and contributed to the full implementation of gymnastics in the German curricula.⁵⁷

New teachers were trained in gymnastics, but older teachers had to be particularly trained in four-week courses. In 1875, a group of 231 elementary school teachers took this official course, a year later, 244, and in 1877, 246. A year later, 114, in 1880, some 272, and from that point the numbers decreased, in 1881 to 175, then to 69, a year later, in 1883, to 101.⁵⁸ By the time William I, the first German Emperor, died in 1888, gymnastics or *Turnen* had been almost fully established in the German curricula, including all levels, grades, the two sexes and also the disabled. However, at this

50 Adalbert Falk, “Allgemeine Bestimmungen des Königl. Preuss. Ministers der geistlichen, Unterrichts- und Medicinal-Angelegenheiten vom 15. October 1872, betreffend das Volksschule-, Präparanden und Seminar-Wesen,” *Centralblatt für die gesammte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen* 14, no. 10 (1872), 585–97.

51 Falk (1872), 588, 597, 630.

52 “Protocolle über die im August 1873 im Königlich Preussischen Unterrichts-Ministerium gepflogenen das mittlere und höhere Mädchenschulwesen betreffenden Verhandlungen,” *Centralblatt für die gesammte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen* 15, no. 10 (1873), 582.

53 W. Laus, “Vorschläge zur Förderung des Turnens in den Landschulen,” *Die Verhandlungen der Deutschen Turnlehrer-Versammlung und des Turnlehrertages des Deutschen Turnlehrer-Vereins; [Beilage zur] Monatsschrift für das Turnwesen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Schulturnens, der Turnspiele und verwandter Übungen* 19 (1890), 23–27.

54 Arthur Gutzmann, *Das Turnen der Taubstummen: Ein Vortrag, gehalten am 12. März 1878 im Berliner Turnlehrer-Verein* (Berlin: Angerstein, 1878).

55 Sydow, “Schrift von Gutzmann: Das Turnen der Taubstummen,” *Centralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen*, 20, no. 11 (1878), 626.

56 Gustav von Gossler, “Umfang des Mädchenturnens,” *Centralblatt für die gesammte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen* 25, no.7 (1883), 435.

57 Georg H. Weber, *Grundzüge des Turnunterrichts für Knaben und Mädchen in Volks- und Mittelschulen; Ein Hilfs- und Handbuch für Schulbehörden, Lehrer und Turnlehrer* (Munich: Zentral-Schulbücher-Verlag, 1881).

58 *Centralblatt für die gesammte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen* 18 (1876), 110, 672; *Centralblatt* 20 (1878), 100; *Centralblatt* 21 (1879), 286; *Centralblatt* 22 (1880), 298; *Centralblatt* 23 (1881), 226, 626; *Centralblatt* 25 (1883), 578.

point it was not yet decided which reasoning behind advocating gymnastics (German democratic unity; health in a medical sense; military strength) was to dominate the curricular legitimation and pedagogical configuration of gymnastics. With the enthronement of Wilhelm II as the new German Emperor in 1888, things became clearer. Wilhelm II's passionate love for military strength and pomp left no doubts. On the occasion of a site visit to the Royal Institute for Gymnastics Teachers' Training College in Berlin in 1890 he told the students that he was

extraordinarily happy with what I have just seen [...]. *In this manner* [italics added] gymnastics will indeed promote the physical training of the people, and I am grateful, if the pleasure of the love for gymnastics is more and more introduced to the youth [...]. I have confidence in the Gymnastics Associations that they will contribute their share to prevent the people from subversive [socialist] tendencies. *And in that sense* [italics added] I am grateful for the promotion of gymnastics.⁵⁹

No wonder then, that *Turnen* eventually had become a firm and explicitly “equal” component of the curricula of all school levels and for all the Germans involved in the education system of the German Reich.⁶⁰ That is, after 60 years of fighting and ideological detours, *Turnen* had become a fully acknowledged and socially and culturally appreciated part of the curricula of the German nation-state, designed to form the German unified national body—strong, monarchic and anti-Semitic,⁶¹ and sceptical of, if not hostile to, both the modern sciences and Western democracy.

The advocacy for gymnastics had begun as part of a liberal nationalism of the time that opposed both the French and the pluralism of mostly unconstitutional monarchic German states, and it became more accepted and implemented the more that German unity became real. The anti-French motive remained and was supplemented with anti-Semitism, but the liberal ideas of nationalism drifted more and more to social liberalism and social democracy and were to be replaced by new nationalism in the context of the German Reich (*Reichsnationalismus*): conservative, right-wing, monarchic, militaristic and lacking the idea of popular sovereignty as legitimation of the Reich.⁶² The progressing mutual penetration of the military and the social realms of life enforced gymnastics in school. The gymnastics lessons for the middle and higher elementary school and in teacher education were increased from two to three lessons a week, and teachers were advised to conduct additional physical exercises on all other days as well, aiming at strengthening the national strength (*Volkskraft*).⁶³ A few years before the outbreak of the First World War—in the context of the im-

59 Quoted in: Christa Berg, *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte – Band IV: 1870–1918. Von der Reichsgründung bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Munich: Beck, 1991), 504.

60 *Allgemeine Bestimmungen über das preußische Volksschul-, Präparanden- und Seminar-Wesen vom 15. Oktober 1872* (Neuwied: Heuser, 1897), 23.

61 Hartmut Becker, *Antisemitismus in der Deutschen Turnerschaft* (St. Augustin: Academia Richarz, 1980).

62 Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte – Dritter Band: 1849–1914* (Munich: Beck, 1995).

63 August von Trott zu Solz, “Einführung der dritten Turnstunde auf der Mittel und Oberstufe der Volksschulen; allgemeine Einführung der Übungen für das tägliche Turnen; Aufgaben des Turnunterrichts,” *Centralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen* 52, no. 7 (1910), 597–98.

mense German military armament, especially of the Navy—there was no doubt that gymnastics education at school was an ideal preparation for the “use of weapons” in the “training of the strong and fit for military service youth.”⁶⁴

The visions of the national were tightly linked to the Lutheran idea of *inward* freedom and to military strength, and the militarised body played a crucial role in implementing this vision. The increased importance of and general esteem for the gymnastic clubs (*Turnvereine*) with their mass events went along with the increased institutionalisation of gymnastics as an ‘equal’ school subject. Whereas the philological subjects and history connected the spirit (*Geist*) of the students to true cultural and spiritual idea(l)s of the German nation, it was gymnastics (*Turnen*) that brought them corporally and politically together in the German Reich as an incarnation of the idea(l)s of the German nation. *Turnen*, the disputed emerging school subject for more than a half a century, had found its curricular place, as it did in many other countries, but it also found its very own cultural configurational peculiarity, its curricular distinctiveness from other national trajectories of curriculum development. Different cultural and political aspirations were expressed with this new ‘equal’ school subject, and it aimed at very different kinds of loyal citizens to be fabricated via a reformed school system, materialised in their respective curricula.⁶⁵ The ‘product’ was remarkable. As soon as the First World War was declared, the young loyal citizens fought to be drafted into the respective armies and to kill the enemy across the national borders that had become the dialectical geographical demarcation line, marking off dangerous otherness and the sacred identity for which so many loyal citizens were willing to die.⁶⁶

64 Wever, “Anleitung zum Knabenturnen in Volksschulen ohne Turnhalle,” *Centralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen* 51, no. 2 (1909), 241.

65 Daniel Tröhler, “Curriculum History in Europe: A Historiographic Added Value,” *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 3, no.1 (2016b), 3–24.

66 Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

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Girls' Gymnastics in the Service of the Nation: Educationalisation, Gender and Swedish Gymnastics in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Johannes Westberg

Abstract • In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Swedish gymnastics won a large following across the world. Employing the concepts of educationalisation and gender, I will explore how the physical education of girls was conceptualised and justified in the Swedish system during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Focusing on the publications of Anton Santesson (1825–1892), who was one of the main authors on girls' gymnastics in Sweden, I will show how girls' gymnastics was conceptualised as a response to a social, cultural and physical crisis, which was perceived as partly stemming from the detrimental effects of education on girls' bodies and minds. Girls' gymnastics was thus construed as vital to the future of the Swedish nation. While men and manliness remained fundamental to the strength of the nation, girls' gymnastics was vital to women's rearing of boys and thus instrumental to the development of masculinity in men.

Keywords • Swedish gymnastics, educationalisation, gender, nation building, history of education

Introduction

Alongside sloyd, Swedish gymnastics (The Swedish system/Lingian gymnastics) is probably Sweden's most significant contribution to the history of education. Invented by Pehr Henrik Ling (1776–1839), and refined by his followers, the purpose of this system of gymnastics was to systematically exercise each part of the human body. While mostly featuring freestanding exercises, it also involved some apparatus work, and was characterised by a high degree of formalisation. Promoting manliness and nation building, the Swedish system soon won a significant following across the world.¹

1 Regarding the dissemination of the Swedish system, see, e.g., Anne Bloomfield, "Martina Bergman-Osterberg (1849–1915): Creating a Professional Role for Women in Physical Training," *History of Education* 34, no. 5 (2005); N. Bazoge et al., "Promoting the Swedish Method of Physical Education Throughout France for the Benefit of Public Health (1868–1954)," *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports* 23, no. 2 (2013); Patricia Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the late Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 144; Natalie Barker-Ruchti, "'Stride Jump – Begin!': Swedish Gymnastics in Victorian England," *Sporting Traditions* 22, no. 2 (2006); Theirry Terret and Leomar Tesche, "French Gymnastics in Brazil: Dissemination, Diffusion and Relocalization," in *Gymnastics: A Transatlantic Movement*, ed. Gertrud Pfister (London: Routledge, 2014), 96; Henrik Meinander, *Towards a Bourgeois Manhood: Boys' Physical Education in Nordic Secondary Schools 1880–1940* (Helsinki: Societas scientiarum Fennica, 1994), 36–38. The role of Ling gymnastics in Switzerland is discussed by Ingrid Brühwiler in her contribution to this special issue.

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Although, at its core, Swedish gymnastics was about manliness and masculinity, gymnastics targeting girls and women was introduced during the nineteenth century. Drawing on the concept of educationalisation, which highlights how various social, cultural and economic problems have been interpreted as educational problems, this article explores how the emerging girls' gymnastics in Sweden was conceptualised and justified in relation to the development of the Swedish nation and the minds and bodies of individual women. What were the individual and societal ills that girls' gymnastics was supposed to remedy, and how was it supposed to accomplish this aim? Using Anton Santesson's writings on gymnastics and girls' gymnastics published in the 1850s and 1860s as an empirical starting point, I will show how a wide range of evidence, from statistics to general impressions and individual examples, were used to motivate the implementation of girls' gymnastics. I will also delineate how a number of ideas and beliefs, including diverse notions of women's health, were used to conceptualise girls' physical education as fundamental to the strength of the Swedish nation, and as a response to the modernisation of society. Thus, I will delve deeper into how the main challenge of girls' gymnastics—how to make girls and young women eligible for gymnastics originally created for men—was solved.

Political rationality, educationalisation and gender

The theoretical framework of this article is inspired by the studies of governmentality carried out by Michel Foucault and eminent scholars such as Nikolas Rose, Peter Miller and Mitchell Dean. These studies draw attention to certain kinds of discourses and practices that mark the attempts (by both state and non-state agencies) to govern the health and wealth of populations that have proliferated since the eighteenth century.² In analysing the aims and practices of girls' gymnastics, I am primarily interested in the political rationality of girls' gymnastics, that is the thinking, dreaming and planning that is required when aspiring to govern a population. More specifically, this concept enables me to focus on how girls' gymnastics was conceptualised and justified using theories, notions, various kinds of evidence and ways of reasoning. I am in that respect interested in what may be described as the intellectual machinery that was used to envision gymnastics and its impact on individuals and society.³

Exploring the political rationality of gymnastics, I will pay particular attention to how this governmentality of gymnastics was marked by the process of educationalisation. The concept of educationalisation sheds light upon how girls' gymnastics was related to problematics of varying kinds. As Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller noted, governing is a problematising activity linked to issues that need to be solved, failings that must be rectified and ills that must be cured. It is by the constant act of identifying such issues—whether pertaining to the morals of the population, the structure of the industry or the state of economy—that government agencies, doctors, businessmen, or philanthropists are able to formulate governmental programmes.⁴

2 Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, "Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government," *British Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 2 (1992), 174–75. For a presentation of governmentality that places it within a wider concept, see Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage, 2010), 1–12, 17–30.

3 Rose and Miller (1992), 175, 182.

4 Rose and Miller (1992), 180–81.

In this context, the term “educationalisation” refers to the process through which various kinds of problems became interpreted as educational issues. As a result, in the discourses of the twentieth and twenty-first century, the perception of education as a solution to a wide variety of social, economic, cultural and moral problems has become an almost compulsive reflex. Whether debating road safety, obesity or alcohol abuse, education is commonly cited as the answer. Thus, schools are not only deemed responsible for presenting children with knowledge, but are also given the task of strengthening the economy and producing democratic citizens who eat healthily, make sound economic decisions and practice safe sex.⁵ When this reflex or discursive mechanism became established during the latter half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, gymnastics was integrated into this educationalisation of the world. Swedish gymnastics was, for example, promoted as a response to the (perceived) detrimental effects of modern society, the crisis of manliness, and as a disciplinary method for creating national citizens and strengthening the nation state.⁶ In this article, I will examine this educationalisation process in the context of girls' gymnastics.

In exploring how girls' gymnastics was conceptualised as a response to the issues facing nineteenth-century Sweden, it is vital to consider the concept of gender. In this article, gender is understood as a social construct that is always created, maintained or contested through practices, words and perceptions. The concept of gender thus draws attention to the various ways that gender is constructed at social, economic, cultural, discursive and political levels.⁷ Here, gender is employed to highlight how aims and justifications for gymnastics produced and reproduced discourses on gender differences. In the analyses presented in this article, the notion of the relational character of gender has been particularly useful, since it highlights how gender is always a matter of the relation between masculinity and femininity. In that respect, this study is also influenced by extant works highlighting the multifaceted relationships between gender and nation building projects.⁸

Girls' gymnastics is a vital research object for several reasons. The historiography of Swedish physical education has exhibited an impressive growth during the last decades, investigating for example physical education as a popular movement; Ling gymnastics as a project of masculinity; body, class and gender in twentieth centu-

5 Daniel Tröhler, *Pestalozzi and the Educationalization of the World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 2–4; Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe, eds., *Educational Research: The Educationalization of Social Problems* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2008). For a recent analysis of educationalisation in the case of English teaching, see Jory Brass, “English Teaching and the Educationalisation of Social Problems in the United States, 1894–1918,” *Paedagogica Historica* 52, no. 3 (2016).

6 See, e.g., Jens Ljunggren, *Kroppens bildning: Linggymnastikens manlighetsprojekt 1790–1914* (Eslöv: Symposium, 1999).

7 For a general discussion on the concept of gender that has influenced this study, see Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053–75.

8 See, e.g., Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann and Catherine Hall, eds., *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 2000). For definitions of gender used in studies of physical education, see, e.g., Gertrud Pfister, “Women in Sport – Gender Relations and Future Perspectives,” *Sport in Society* 13, no. 2 (2010), 235–36; Suzanne Lundvall, “Gender Dynamics in the Making and Breaking of a Female PETE Culture in Sweden,” in *The Female Tradition in Physical Education: ‘Women First’ Reconsidered*, ed. David Kirk and Patricia Vertinsky (London: Routledge, 2016), 153–54.

ry physical education; and the careers of female physical educators.⁹ Despite this proliferation of research, the emergence of girls' and women's gymnastics remains relatively under-studied. The relative neglect of how girls' gymnastics was conceptualized and justified is also a feature of analyses focusing on the reception of Swedish gymnastics abroad, which merely touch upon this topic. Instead, such studies focuses other issues, such as the introduction of Swedish gymnastics in Victorian England, or the pioneering work of Martina Bergman-Osterberg.¹⁰

This article contributes to these strands of research by delving deeper into the theories, notions and various kinds of evidence that underpinned girls' gymnastics in Sweden. In addition, this article will contribute to a wider research field on girls' and women's gymnastics, including the research conducted by Sheila Fletcher and Ann Chisholm. Fletcher shows, for example, how women's gymnastics was promoted, using the ideology of Social Darwinism, as a response to the perceived demands created by the Boer War and the British rivalry with Germany.¹¹ Likewise, Chisholm uncovers how notions of Republican motherhood legitimated gymnastics, and how notions of girls' poor health and the workings of the female body in terms of dyspepsia, constipation and gravity were used to conceptualise physical education's impact on women and the American society.¹² Apart from presenting the first in-depth study of Anton Santesson's visions of girls' gymnastics, this article contributes to this line of research through a further investigation into the discursive work required to justify the introduction of girls' gymnastics.

The history of Swedish gymnastics

In Sweden, gymnastics became a subject of interest during the early nineteenth century. Although physical education had been a recurrent topic of academic debate in Sweden—dealt with in a number of dissertations on physical exercises (e.g., *Dissertation Gradualis de Exercitiis Corporis*, 1764; *Gymnastica Graecorum ex Pindaro illustrate*, 1773) and talks by esteemed academics such as Linnaeus—physical education became more widely discussed in the early nineteenth century by education-

9 Jan Lindroth, *Idrottens väg till folkrörelse: Studier i svensk idrottsrörelse till 1915* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 1974); Henrik Sandblad, *Olympia och Valhalla: Idéhistoriska aspekter av den moderna idrottsrörelsens framväxt* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell international, 1985); Ljunggren (1999); Pia Lundquist Wanneberg, *Kroppens medborgarfostran: Kropp, klass och genus i skolans fysiska fostran 1919–1962* (Stockholm: Stockholm universitet, 2004); Barbro Carli, *The Making and Breaking of a Female Culture: The History of Swedish physical Education 'in a Different Voice'* (Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet, 2004); Claes Annerstedt, *Skolgymnastikens utveckling i Sverige* (Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet, 1989); Leif Yttergren and Hans Bolling, "Kvinnor, karriär och familj: En studie av svenska kvinnliga gymnastikdirektörers yrkeskarriärer och livsöden kring sekelskiftet 1900," *Historisk tidskrift* 136, no. 2 (2016).

10 Bloomfield (2005); Barker-Rucht (2006). See also, e.g., Else Trangback, "Discipline and Emancipation Through Sport," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 21, no. 2 (1996).

11 Sheila Fletcher, *Women First: The Female Tradition in English Physical Education, 1880–1980* (London: Athlone, 1984), 27.

12 Ann Chisholm, "Gymnastics and the Reconstitution of Republican Motherhood among True Women of Civic Virtue, 1830–1870," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 23, no. 8 (2006), 1279–83, 1288; Ann Chisholm, "Incarnations and Practices of Feminine Rectitude: Nineteenth-Century Gymnastics for U.S. Women," *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 3 (2005), 740–41; Ann Chisholm, "Nineteenth-Century Gymnastics for U.S. Women and Incorporations of Buoyancy: Contouring Femininity, Shaping Sex, and Regulating Middle-Class Consumption," *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 3 (2008), 95–99.

nalists such as Gustaf Abraham Silverstolpe (1772–1824) and Carl Ulric Broocman (1783–1812).¹³ This debate had strong international features. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's critique of civilisation was important, as were Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's ideas on physical education, which was championed by Broocman. The influence of Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths was marked by the translation of *Gymnastik für die Jugend* to Swedish in 1813.¹⁴

Concrete actions were also taken to promote physical education in Sweden. While the efforts to establish a professor's chair in physical education at Uppsala University in 1800 failed, gymnastics were mentioned for the first time in the school act of Swedish grammar schools in 1807. In 1813, the Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics (*Kungliga gymnastiska centralinstitutet*, GCI) was founded by Pehr Henrik Ling.¹⁵ The Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics became fundamental in the development of Swedish gymnastics, and its dissemination across the world. In 1814, a degree from the institute became prerequisite for teaching physical education in public schools. In 1820, gymnastics became an obligatory school subject in grammar schools, and through the school act of 1842 gymnastics became a subject in the thereby established national primary school system.¹⁶

Pehr Henrik Ling (1776–1839), usually credited as the creator of Swedish gymnastics, studied at Lund University and Uppsala University during the 1790s, earning a degree in theology. He subsequently worked as a civil servant in Stockholm, before moving to the Danish capital of Copenhagen in 1799, where he stayed until 1804. Apart from studies in philosophy and literature, Ling was introduced to the world of physical education. He attended a fencing school run by French immigrants, and the gymnasium of Franz Nachteggall (1777–1847), who was a pioneer of physical education in Denmark. In 1805, Ling moved to Lund, where he was appointed as fence master at Lund University and gave lessons in gymnastics. His reputation grew, partly due to a successful display in 1810, which made him known in the Swedish military. This may have contributed to Ling receiving a position as gymnastics teacher at the Royal War Academy at Karlberg, Stockholm, in 1813, and becoming the founding director of the Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics in the same year.¹⁷

13 Annerstedt (1989), 10–13; Ljunggren (1999), 63–69.

14 Annerstedt (1989), 23–24; Ljunggren (1999), 70–73.

15 Jens Ljunggren, "Nation-Building, Primitivism and Manliness: The Issue of Gymnastics in Sweden around 1800," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 21, no. 2 (1996), 111; Annerstedt (1989), 23–24.

16 Ljunggren (1999), 39. Regarding the role that the institute played in the international dissemination of Swedish gymnastics, see Meinander (1994), 36–38.

17 Ljunggren (1999) 36–37; P. C. McIntosh, "Therapeutic Exercise in Scandinavia," in *Landmarks in the History of Physical Education*, ed. J. G. Dixon, P. C. McIntosh, A. D. Munrow and R. F. Willetts (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2007), 86–91. Regarding Ling's position at the Royal War Academy, see Esbjörn Larsson, *Från adlig uppfostran till borgerlig utbildning: Kungl. krigsakademien mellan åren 1792 och 1866* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2005), 224–26.



Figure 1. Anton Santesson (1825–1892).
Source: *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, s.v. “Santesson, släkt.”

Following Ling’s death in 1839, his leading role was overtaken by his followers, including Lars Branting (the director of the GCI during 1813–1862) and Pehr Henrik Ling’s son Hjalmar Ling, who worked with educational gymnastics at the institute during the 1864–1882 period. This article focuses on the publications of one of these men, Anton Santesson (1825–1892), portrayed in Figure 1. Santesson’s significance does not stem from a successful career. Instead, he frequently moved between grammar schools. After studies at Lund University, he worked as a teacher in physical education at the Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics in 1850, and thereafter in the grammar schools of Gothenburg (1852–), Karlstad (1854–), Strängnäs (1856–), and Karlstad (1861–), as well as the New Grammar School of Stockholm (1863–1876).¹⁸

Santesson was, however, a diligent writer, who rose to prominence in the world of gymnastics by authoring several handbooks, mainly in the 1860s. Santesson’s influence seems to have been particularly felt in Finland.¹⁹ At that time, handbooks on gymnastics were lacking. Pehr Henrik Ling did not publish any handbooks, and his son Hjalmar Ling started to publish slightly later than Santesson. In addition to being one of the main authors of gymnastics handbooks in Sweden, Santesson was also the main writer on the topic of girls’ gymnastics alongside Hjalmar Ling. Santesson’s handbook on gymnastics for young women and school girls was, for example,

18 Gunnar O. C. H. Santesson, *Släkten Santesson från Långaryd* (Karlshamn: Lagerblads tryckeri, 1982), 63–64.

19 The significance that Santesson’s handbooks gained in Finland is noted in Sandblad (1985), 148.

one of the two handbooks used in the department for women's gymnastics that was established at the Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics in 1864.²⁰

Thus, Santesson's writings are an excellent starting point for gaining insight into the emerging girls' gymnastics in Sweden, and for elucidating how it was construed in terms of aims and practices. The analyses presented here pertain to the five handbooks on gymnastics that Santesson authored and articles he published in the journal *Svenska gymnastik-föreningens tidskrift* as its editor during 1865–1866. The handbooks vary in length, from 31 to 140 pages, and in content. Since the handbooks were intended to disseminate Santesson's visions of physical education, they included drawings of various exercises. Nevertheless, Santesson's writings expressed his wide-ranging interests that included not only the pedagogical practices of physical education, but also discussion on hygiene, physiology, the history of Sweden, and the social status of women. In my analysis, presented below, emphasis is placed on the three handbooks where girls' gymnastics were most widely discussed. These are *Handbok i pedagogisk gymnastik för gymnasier och skolor* (Handbook of Educational Gymnastics for Gymnasiums and Primary Schools), published in 1856; *Folkskolans gymnastik* (The Gymnastics of Primary Schools), published in 1859; and *Gymnastik för unga qvinnor och skol flickor* (Gymnastics for Young Women and Schoolgirls), published in 1866. In focusing on these sources, this article serves as a prelude to further studies into the educational debate on girls' and women's physical education in the educational journals, newspapers and handbooks of nineteenth century Sweden.

Gymnastics and the educationalisation of the world

Pehr Henrik Ling's system of physical education was based on a philosophy of nature inspired by GutsMuths and Rousseau, and a notion of the laws of human bodies. Adopting this perspective, he envisioned a system of gymnastics with four directions (military, educational, medical and aesthetic) which was supposed to enhance both body and mind in accordance with these laws and Ling's ethical and aesthetic ideals. As a result, he constructed a system of gymnastics based mainly upon freestanding exercises that also included apparatus exercises and training activities, such as walking, swimming and wrestling.²¹

The gymnastics envisioned in Santesson's handbooks did not depart much from that promoted by other Swedish authors on the subject, even though he probably put a greater emphasis on apparatus exercises and competition.²² This was not without purpose. Santesson described himself as one of Pehr Henrik Ling's oldest disciples, and desired to develop gymnastics in his spirit. Like Ling, Santesson defined gymnastics as exercises based on the laws of the human body intended to promote health and energy.²³ He also used Ling's distinction between educational, military, medi-

20 Santesson (1982), 63–64; Claes Annerstedt, *Idrottslärarna och idrottsämnet: Utveckling, mål, kompetens: Ett didaktiskt perspektiv* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1991), 127; Carli (2004), 115; Ester Svalling, "Den kvinnliga avdelningen vid Kungl. gymnastiska centralinstitutet 1864–1913," in *Kungl. gymnastiska centralinstitutets historia 1813–1913* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1913), 250; Ljunggren (1999), 155.

21 McIntosh (2007), 91–93; Ljunggren (1999), 104–06; Lundvall (2016), 154–55.

22 Cf. Sandblad (1985), 146.

23 See, e.g., Anton B. Santesson, *Folkskolans gymnastik* (Carlstad: s.n., 1859), 5; Anton B. Santesson, *Folkskolans gymnastik och vapenföring* (Carlstad: Agne Peterssons förlag, 1864), 1.

cal and aesthetic gymnastics. In educational gymnastics—the topic that Santesson devoted most attention—he included both exercises that involved apparatuses and those that did not. The former included exercises involving ropes, pommel horses, bars and wall bars. The latter included exercises ranging from leg squats and push-ups to marching exercises (see Figure 2). In addition, his handbooks presented running, wrestling, swimming and dancing exercises.²⁴

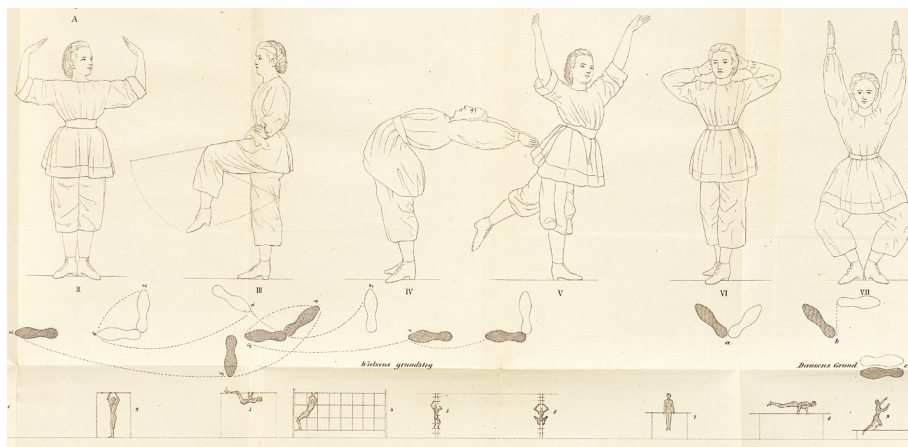


Figure 2. Examples of exercises included in girls' gymnastics. Source: Santesson (1866a).

As the other pioneers of Swedish gymnastics, Anton Santesson perceived gymnastics as not merely a collection of exercises that strengthen the body of individuals.²⁵ For Santesson, gymnastics was also a political technique—a tool for creating national citizens with a certain set of characteristics, and thus also a tool for reforming Swedish society. Consequently, Santesson's discourse on gymnastics certainly educationalised the world, making it possible to enhance through gymnastics.

Promoting this process of educationalisation, Santesson argued that boys' as well as girls' gymnastics addressed several social problems. In general, gymnastics was described as a response to perceived adverse changes in contemporary society. Although Sweden remained a rural country in the early nineteenth century (in 1840, only 10 percent of the population lived in cities), Santesson portrayed gymnastics as a necessary response to a rapidly changing society. In this respect, one might describe Santesson's perspective as *anticipatory* in relation to future developments, which is a term that has been used to interpret the early development of the US school system.²⁶ Using the words of Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, Santesson's publi-

24 See, e.g., Anton B. Santesson, *Handbok i pädagogisk gymnastik för gymnasier och skolor* (Karlstad: s.n., 1856); Anton B. Santesson, *Gymnastik för unga kvinnor och skolflickor* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1866).

25 See, e.g., Ljunggren (1996), 113–15.

26 John G. Richardson, "Historical Sequences and the Origins of Common Schooling in the American States," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 48. Regarding the rural character of Sweden, see Carl-Johan Gadd, "On the Edge of a Crisis: Sweden in the 1840s," in *When the Potato Failed: Causes and Effects of the 'Last' European Subsistence Crisis, 1845–1850*, ed. Comarc Ó Gráda, Richard Paping and Eric Vanhaute (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 315.

cations may certainly also be described as an *intellectual machinery*, that is a text that constructed an intelligible reality possible to not only understand, but also to change through gymnastics.²⁷

In line with a widespread civilisation critique that, inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, formulated the problem of contemporary society in terms of weakness, luxury, idleness and indulgence, Santesson argued that physical education addressed issues stemming from the macro-historical transition from a society of hunters to a society of civilisation.²⁸ In the past, Santesson claimed, humans were forced to use their bodies to satisfy their physical needs. To support themselves by hunting and fishing, they had to cross forests, climb trees and swim in lakes. Their health and physical education was thereby guaranteed by providence. Although hard manual labour still dominated the largely rural nineteenth century Sweden, where a day's labour (*dagsverke*) meant 12 hours of work, Santesson argued that the progress of civilisation meant that reliance on one's bodily fitness was no longer necessary for survival. To compensate for this development, gymnastics were crucial to ensure physical health in modern societies.²⁹

The discourse promoted by Santesson also transformed more specific societal changes into problems that could be solved by physical education. Unlike education in general, and school subjects such as English in US schools that addressed a wide variety of issues in contemporary society, Santesson claimed that gymnastics could solve the problems that education itself created.³⁰ In the case of gymnastics, the process of educationalisation thus turned back towards itself. Although schooling remained rather limited in Sweden in mid-nineteenth century—in the 1850s, there were only about 7,000 pupils enlisted in Swedish grammar schools (*läroverk*), and in 1868, estimates show that only 65 percent of school-aged children were enrolled in primary school for an average of two years, with an estimated attendance of 43 percent—education was described by Santesson as a problem that gymnastics could solve.³¹

The problem of schooling was partly formulated in terms of specific issues, such as schoolchildren's sedentary lifestyle or the mental stress that schooling implied. Santesson attached special significance to the school desk. According to Santesson, school desks were detrimental to girls' posture. Since girls sat leaning forward during long school days, they were all too often unable to stand straight. School desks also created "crooked and inwardly bent shoulders"; cripples and bookworms (*bok-*

27 Rose and Miller (1992), 182.

28 In the context of Sweden, this widespread critique of civilisation is discussed in Ljunggren (1999), 70–73.

29 Santesson (1856), 83. See also the references made to one of Santesson's speeches in T. J. Hartelius, "Gymnastikföreningens fest den 20 maj 1865," *Svenska gymnastik-föreningens tidskrift* 1, no. 1 (1865), 9. For references regarding the length of a day's work, see Johannes Westberg, *Att bygga ett skolväsende: Folkskolans förutsättningar och framväxt 1840–1900* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2014), 154.

30 Regarding the general educationalisation process, see Tröhler (2013), 2–4. Educationalisation in the context of the school subject English, see Brass (2016).

31 Jonas Ljungberg and Anders Nilsson, "Human Capital and Economic Growth: Sweden 1870–2000," *Cliometrica* 3, no. 1 (2009), 80; Wilhelm Sjöstrand, *Pedagogikens historia III:2: Utvecklingen i Sverige under tiden 1805–1920* (Lund: Gleerup, 1965), 352.

malar).³² The deficiencies of school desk have, in other contexts, been attributed inadequate school desk design, and were thus perceived as an issue of improving design.³³ In Santesson's publications, however, such problems were instead a matter of physical education, and Santesson even claimed that bookworms, which he described as the cancer of grammar schools, would become rarer if gymnastics were to become more widespread across Sweden.³⁴

Similarly, the issue of masturbation was educationalised in the sense that it was transformed from being merely a moral or medical issue into a problem that could be resolved by physical education. Against the background of a wider discourse on the perils of masturbation—which was perceived as simultaneously the cause and effect of moral degeneration—Santesson noticed how school work provided fertile ground for this dangerous vice that he claimed was conducted “on a large scale” at schools. In his view, when sitting still, bodily fluids gathered at the genitals and the pupils' minds were given opportunity to excel in what was described as the debaucheries of imagination. The mental pressure of schooling, the demands on maturity that schools placed on children, the reading of novels and the drinking of coffee, also caused this decrease, according to Santesson. Since physical education promoted self-restraint, gymnastics accompanied with cleansing baths could thus be a part of the solution to this problem.³⁵

Apart from specific issues, Santesson recognised a general problem with schooling, positing that schools distanced children from nature. He claimed that this relocation of children restricted their physical life and damaged their bodies. This was particularly strongly felt, Santesson claimed, in the competitive context of the nineteenth century, where pupils had to compete for grades, and thus not only studied late into the night during the week, but also on weekends and during holidays.³⁶ Hence, the modern nineteenth-century school hurt not only the bodies of the youth, but also their souls. Through education, the freshness of youth was all too easily transformed to sadness, fragility and melancholy, and the extensive reading created hesitation and absentmindedness among the youth. In Santesson's view, physical education was a remedy for all these symptoms.³⁷

This educationalisation of social, physiological, moral and psychological problems that rendered physical education as their potential solution was certainly part of what has been labelled a rationalisation and a medicalisation of the body.³⁸ Santes-

32 Santesson (1856), 8, 77–78. The quote is from Santesson (1866d), 3.

33 See, e.g., Pedro L. Moreno Martinez, “History of School Desk Development in Terms of Hygiene and Pedagogy in Spain (1838–1936),” in *Materialities of Schooling: Design – Technology – Objects – Routines*, ed. Martin Lawn and Ian Grosvenor (Oxford: Symposium Books, 2005), 71–95.

34 Santesson (1866d), 3.

35 Santesson (1856), 9; Anton B. Santesson, “Sedeförderfvet i skolorna,” *Svenska gymnastik-föreningens tidskrift* 2, no. 1 (1866), 73–80. The Swedish discourse on masturbation is discussed in Jens Rydström, “‘Sodomitical Sins Are Threefold’: Typologies of Bestiality, Masturbation, and Homosexuality in Sweden, 1880–1950,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9, no. 3 (2000), 244.

36 Santesson (1856), 82–83; Anton B. Santesson, “Om elementarläroverkens gymnastikmönstring samt skolgymnastikens bedömande af svenska läkaresällskapet,” *Svenska gymnastik-föreningens tidskrift* 1, no. 1 (1865), 113.

37 Santesson (1856), 64; Santesson (1866a), 12.

38 Regarding these concepts of medicalisation and rationalisation, see e.g., Bryan S. Turner, *Regulating Bodies: Essays in Medical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1992), 19–22.

son based his arguments on a wider debate pertaining to the health of schoolchildren in Sweden, and in the West. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, educationalists, teachers and psychiatrists became increasingly concerned with schoolchildren's mental overexertion, fatigue, sluggishness and growing immorality.³⁹ In France, many of these symptoms of intellectual exhaustion were subsumed under the diagnostic term *la céphalagie scolaire* (scholar's brain), which was used to describe the educational system's "victims scolaires."⁴⁰ In the case of Swedish gymnastics, this rationalisation of the body did not imply its secularisation. As evident from above, Santesson's discourse was firmly rooted in Christian belief in the close linkage between body and soul. Some of Santesson's arguments in support of gymnastics also employed the narrative structure of a divine punishment: when individuals in the modern society turned their back on nature, they were punished with bad mental and physical health. Hence, only if they acknowledged their sinful ways and turned to gymnastics, they could be salvaged from the detrimental effects of modern society.⁴¹

In addition to saving individuals from the perils of modern society, Santesson claimed that gymnastics benefited the Swedish nation. By hampering the fostering of bookworms, and providing boys and young men with the required physical exercise, gymnastics would strengthen the Swedish nation. Specifically, Santesson addressed the issue of the Swedish army. If gymnastics and weapons training (*vapenövningar*) were implemented across all Swedish schools, gymnastics would become an integral part of the Swedish military.⁴² Such an arrangement, which would provide schoolchildren with the appropriate physical and military training, would enable the creation of a large army at a low cost. In that respect, Santesson argued that gymnastics would contribute to the development of the militant temperament of the Swedish nation that was instrumental to so many past victories over Denmark, Russia, Poland, Turkey and Germany. To quote Santesson, gymnastics would prevent the Swedes from forgetting their "Viking Ancestry."⁴³ In this respect, Santesson based his arguments for gymnastics on the notions of the heroic Vikings, promoted by the Swedish Gothicism movement.⁴⁴

Gymnastics could also serve the Swedish nation in a more general sense that Santesson described in terms of the force (*kraft*) of the Swedish nation. According to Santesson, the superior force that the Swedish nation had developed was widely acknowledged. He quoted a German statistician (Fränzt) who claimed that one

39 Bode Janzon, *Manschettyrken, idrott och hälsa: Studier kring idrottsrörelsen i Sverige särskilt Göteborg, intill 1900* (Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet, 1978), 21–23; Christopher Bischof, "A 'Rich Crop of Nervousness': Childhood, Expertise, and the State in the mid-1880s British Over-Pressure Controversy," *The English Historical Review* 131, no. 553 (2016).

40 Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 148.

41 Turner (1992), 22; David Larsson Heidenblad, *Vårt eget fel: Moralisk kausalitet som tankefigur från 00-talets klimatarm till förmodernas syndastraffsföreställningar* (Höör: Agering, 2012), 229–31.

42 Weapons training, including fencing, rifle drills and shooting practice, was introduced in Swedish schools in 1863, see Esbjörn Larsson, "Barn från Mars – Skolungdomens vapenövningar," *Militärhistorisk Tidskrift* 2013 (2014), 149–53.

43 Santesson (1856), 85.

44 Regarding these notions of the heroic pasts of the Vikings, see Ljunggren (1999), 83–87.

must marvel at the impact of the force of two million Swedes on Europe during the last 200 years. Santesson supported his argument by pointing at famous individuals: Linnaeus, who Santesson described as the king of the kingdom of flowers, Jöns Jacob Berzelius, the discoverer of chemical elements, and Pehr Henrik Ling, the inventor of gymnastics. It was this strength of the Swedish nation that, according to Santesson, gymnastics would support.⁴⁵

Strengthening women's bodies and minds

In addition to presenting gymnastics as a response to a wide range of problems, Santesson specifically focused on the problem of the health of Swedish women, which he—in accordance with the general mechanism of educationalisation—largely interpreted as an educational problem that could be solved using physical education.

Santesson's problematisation of women's health drew upon a long-standing gender dichotomy between strong male and weak female bodies, which had been recurrent throughout history, and persisted in the contemporary nineteenth-century debates. In support of this stance, individual examples of the fragility of girls' and women's bodies were provided, along with anecdotal evidence and investigations. For example, it was noted that girls in private schools generally complained of headache, and witnesses testified that fatigue and drowsiness reached epidemic proportions at the end of each academic year.⁴⁶

Santesson's problematisation of women's health also stemmed from his critique of the modern society. According to Santesson, women's health problems were, in part, caused by "false opinions" that meant that girls were not allowed to run and play to the same extent as boys did. He also discussed detrimental fashion trends, while criticising the widespread use of tobacco, coffee and *punsch* (Swedish liquor based on arrack) in modern Sweden, which "corroded the marrow" of both men and women. Santesson lamented that, while westerners found it strange that feathers were placed through women's noses in foreign countries, Western women nevertheless "mutilate and ridicule" themselves with ear piercings and corsets. Apart from restricting women's movements, Santesson argued that the latter "modern shackles" inflicted not only pain and nasty wounds but also damaged women's respiratory organs.⁴⁷

Santesson claimed that it was not surprising that women, under such circumstances, suffered from health issues. He supported this assertion with statistics, which had grown in significance during the first half of the nineteenth century: the period 1830–1850 has been described as the "era of enthusiasm for statistical data collection" while that spanning 1820–1840 is referred to as an "avalanche of printed numbers."⁴⁸ Although scholars have noted that the statistical data was not particularly reliable, the manifest precision of statistics made it appear as a rational method

45 Santesson (1856), 85–86.

46 Janzon (1978), 29. Regarding the recurrent concern about women's bodies, and the belief of women as the weaker sex, see Vertinsky (1994), 1–8. Late nineteenth century debate in Sweden on the health of school girls is analysed in Anna-Karin Frih, *Flickan i medicinen: Ungdom, kön och sjuklighet 1870–1930* (Örebro: Örebro universitet, 2007), ch. 5–7.

47 Santesson (1856), 77–79; Santesson (1864), xiv–xv. The quotes are from Santesson (1856), 78.

48 Ian Hacking, "Biopower and the Avalanche of Printed Numbers," in *Biopower: Foucault and Beyond*, ed. Vernon Cisney and Nicolae Morar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 67.

to map and manage an elusive reality.⁴⁹ Santesson used this trust in, and enthusiasm for, statistics when arguing for girls' gymnastics. When discussing the need for girls' gymnastics, he quoted the statistician Carl af Forsell (1783–1848) who claimed that every eight married woman in Sweden was childless, every fiftieth woman died during childbirth, and every thirty-fifth woman gave birth to a stillborn child.⁵⁰

When describing the health problem that girls' gymnastics could solve, such statistical data was complemented with individual examples of bad health, and observations of the general physical and mental state of girls and women. Santesson claimed that mothers were no longer able to breastfeed their infants, and described in great detail general trends that featured increasing number of anaemic girls, girls with crooked backs, and girls who—with a bored and sickly look—hailed themselves forward with their feet bent inwards and their heads bowed.⁵¹ True to his character (Santesson was renowned for his temper and frankness), Santesson illustrated the state of women's health by rudely discussing the case of a county governor's daughter in southern Sweden. In part due to the lack of physical exercise, she had the appearance of a piece of meat or a changeling (*bortbyting*)—that is, a troll child that trolls secretly had substituted for a human child.⁵²

In this context, these various health problems were educationalised in the sense that they were presented as if they could be remedied by the implementation of girls' gymnastics. Reflecting on feminine beauty ideals, Santesson claimed that gymnastics did not only make women healthier, but also more beautiful, and more appealing in posture and movement. When discussing the county governor's daughter mentioned above, Santesson noted that such lumpish girls could be "refined" by gymnastics, becoming creatures similar to other human beings.⁵³ Santesson also supported his arguments with a number of individual examples that illustrated the effectiveness of girls' gymnastics. In the city of Malmö, he claimed, anaemic girls had become stronger and healthier after practicing gymnastics every second day for a couple of months. In Strängnäs and Karlstad, girls' gymnastics had initially been perceived as something remarkable and impossible. Nevertheless, it had been very appreciated by parents, who noticed the grace that it gave their daughters. In Prussian Poland (probably the city of Posen that Santesson visited in 1854), nervous young women

49 Henrik Höjer, *Svenska Siffror: Nationell Integration och Identifikation genom Statistik 1800–1870* (Hedemora: Gidlund, 2001), 127–28.

50 Santesson (1856), 79.

51 Anton B. Santesson, "Gymnastik för unga qvinnor och skolflickor," *Svenska gymnastik-föreningens tidskrift* 2, no. 1 (1866): 81–82.

52 Santesson (1866a), 6. Although Santesson probably did not believe in changelings, the belief that trolls actually stole unbaptised children was found among the Swedish rural population in the nineteenth century. Stina Bohman, *Omsorg om livet: Spädbarnsdödighetens förändring i Ådalen under 1800-talet* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2010), 58–60.

53 Santesson (1856), 80; Santesson (1866a), 6–11. For a theoretical description of feminine beauty ideals, see, e.g., Lori Baker-Sperry and Liz Grauerholz, "The Pervasiveness and Persistence of the Feminine Beauty Ideal in Children's Fairy Tales," *Gender & Society* 17, no. 5 (2003): 711–13. The notions of feminine beauty in gymnastics, and its varying functions in that context, deserves further studies. It may, for example, be noted that the Danish gymnast promoter Niels Bukh (1880–1950), did not select female gymnast to his elite teams merely based on gymnastic skills, but preferred pretty women with blonde hair. Hans Bonde, *Gymnastics and Politics: Niels Bukh and Male Aesthetics* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2006), 41. Bukh's visions of gymnastics is examined in Hans Bonde's contribution to this special issue.

not only regained their health, but also developed their interest in gymnastics. In Stockholm, female teachers in all primary schools taught gymnastics. The fact that they continued to do so, even though gymnastics was not a compulsory subject, bore testament to its benevolent effects.⁵⁴

Gymnastics also strengthened the mind of girls and women. Instead of using statistics or general impressions, Santesson supported this claim with quotes from esteemed individuals. He quoted Pehr Henrik Ling, who claimed that, in educational gymnastics, the mind is affected by the body. Santesson also drew on Plato, who according to Santesson claimed that mere mental exercises made individuals weak, and those who only exercise their body become hard-hearted and rebellious. To obtain a male soul in a forceful body, a combination of mental and physical exercises was thus necessary. Santesson also noted that Martin Luther saw this connection between the body and the mind. According to Luther, gymnastics gave students resilience against fornication, drunkenness and gambling.⁵⁵

When presenting the effects of gymnastics on the female mind, Santesson stressed a series of benefits. According to Santesson, gymnastics enabled women to better deal with their “female troubles.” Gymnastics made girls more lively, vigorous and relaxed, and prevented them from becoming depressed because of the worries that the pressure of schooling created. Gymnastics also fostered positive character traits, such as dignity, consistency, self-criticism, determination, self-control and courage.⁵⁶ Exercises involving the head and neck were, for example, deemed important from a moral standpoint, since “it is a fact” that sorrow and troubles do not affect a head held high. Jumping exercises were similarly important, since they strengthened qualities such as calculation and determination.⁵⁷ This close connection between mind and body that these claims presupposed also underlies Santesson’s argument for introducing schoolchildren, and girls in particular, to swimming. Due to the intimate union of body and soul, Santesson claimed that the washing of a body cleansed the soul from impure thoughts.⁵⁸ In the context where the physical and mental dangers of schoolchildren’s increasingly frequent habit of masturbation were discussed, such an effect of physical education was, naturally, of great significance.⁵⁹

These mental benefits of gymnastics were deemed particularly important, since the position of women in the society was changing. Santesson acknowledged that women’s status had been weak, and that men seldom had presented women with serious tasks. Instead, Swedish women first received inheritance rights in the mid-nineteenth century, having previously had a position described by Santesson as somewhere between children and lunatics.⁶⁰ But, in 1866, Santesson acknowledged that women in recent years had been given opportunities to become more independent from men. This was true, as apart from being presented with the same in-

54 Anton B. Santesson, “Gymnastik för unga qvinnor och skolflickor,” *Svenska gymnastik-föreningens tidskrift* 1, no. 1 (1865), 128–30.

55 Santesson (1856), 84–85; Santesson (1866a), 94.

56 Santesson (1866a), 4, 11–12, 38, 41; Santesson (1865a), 130.

57 Santesson (1866a), 45–46, 59. The quote is from pages 45–46.

58 Santesson (1866a), 87–88.

59 The problem of masturbation is also discussed in Santesson (1856), 9; and Santesson (1866c), 72–81.

60 Santesson (1865a), 127; Santesson (1856), 79.

heritance rights as men in 1845, unmarried women became legally competent at the age of 25 in 1858. In 1859, women were allowed to enter the profession of primary school teachers, and were given some voting rights at municipal elections in 1862.⁶¹ Under such circumstances, Santesson argued that girls' gymnastics had a crucial role to play. Basing his arguments upon the notion of gender differences in which women were perceived as the lesser sex, Santesson claimed that women's weaknesses—including their tendency to be overwhelmed by their emotions—may have been tolerated in the past. Such weakness could, however, not be accepted in the new era that was dawning. The courage and health that gymnastics provided women would consequently be crucial for the future of women.⁶²

Women and the Swedish nation

This educationalisation of women's bodies and minds was, however, also extended to the Swedish society, as Santesson argued that girls' gymnastics would strengthen the Swedish nation and support its development towards physical health, national identity and independence.⁶³ This is not surprising. The nineteenth century was an intense period of nation formation in Sweden and elsewhere. The Swedish national identity construction has been described as a complex process, in which voluntary associations as well as the bourgeoisie and the Swedish state participated in various ways.⁶⁴ The educational system certainly played an important part in this endeavour, and the history of gymnastics and nationalism was closely intertwined; the body-building process was, in the words of Rebekka Horlacher, partly parallel to the nation-building process.⁶⁵ For Pehr Henrik Ling, gymnastics was vital to the nationalist project, since the strength of the Swedish nation depended on the manliness and physical strength of its population.⁶⁶

Santesson believed, as evident from above, that the purpose of gymnastics was to foster national citizens that could support a strong Swedish nation. Gymnastics was in this respect certainly a part of the national identity construction process that can be described in terms of internal colonisation or civilising mission.⁶⁷ To paraphrase Eugene Weber, Swedish gymnastics was about making weaklings into Swedish Vikings.⁶⁸ But unlike Pehr Henrik Ling, Santesson did not see men and their manliness

61 For an overview of these reforms in the history of women's rights, see Jan Melin et al., *Sveriges historia: Koncentrerad uppslagsbok: Fakta, årtal, kartor, tabeller* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2006), 479.

62 Santesson (1866a), preface, 15. Regarding gender, power and inequality, see, e.g., Scott (1986), 1072–73.

63 Santesson (1866a), 12.

64 Anne Berg, *Kampen om befolkningen: Den svenska nationsformeringens utveckling och sociopolitiska förutsättningar ca 1780–1860* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2011), 19–21. See also Patrik Hall, *The Social Construction of Nationalism: Sweden as an Example* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1998).

65 See Rebekka Horlacher's contribution to this special issue. Regarding the relationship between schooling and the creation of national citizens, see, e.g., the classic formulations of Hobsbawm in Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), ch. 3.

66 Ljunggren (1996), 117.

67 Cf. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 485–90.

68 The qualities of this Swedish Viking, and how he was understood in relationship to a bourgeois manhood ideal is discussed in Ljunggren (1999), 83–88.

as the key to strengthening the Swedish nation. Instead, he aligned his arguments with contemporaries who saw women as fundamental to the nationalist project, and argued that the future of the Swedish nation lay in the hands of women, rather than men.⁶⁹ Santesson purported that it was short-sighted to only introduce gymnastics at schools for boys, and mistakenly believe that the foundation of the strength, courage and high-mindedness of the Swedish nation had been laid. Admittedly, boys' gymnastics would contribute to this development, but Santesson believed that girls' gymnastics formed the basis of the Swedish population's rise towards health, national identity and independence.⁷⁰

Santesson's line of argument started with the family. He claimed that, if one is searching for the origins to a nation's customs and habits, one will eventually end up in the family, the home. Therein lay the secret to the qualities of a people, according to Santesson, whether these were faulty or commendable, virtuous or vicious. This conclusion was in line with the contemporary social and political interest in the family—one might even speak of a contemporary familialisation of society—which put families at the centre of philanthropic and educational initiatives, and later social work and psychiatry. By using family life as a safeguard against the dangers of the life at pubs and in streets, it was believed that several social ends could be met, including the curbing of alcoholism, promiscuity and crime.⁷¹

Santesson's analysis did, however, not end there. The family was important to society, but Santesson argued that, when one looks closely enough, the matron and the woman emerges as the thinnest root to nation's common qualities. On a general level, Santesson explained this fact by claiming that mothers' hearts beat in the same pace across the Swedish nation, leaving the same impression on everyone nurtured at these mothers' bosoms. To raise a daughter, is thus to raise society.⁷² Santesson also acknowledged more specific mechanisms through which girls' physical education affected the Swedish nation. Strong and beautiful women would bestow the nation with strong and beautiful sons, while women's increased knowledge of physical education would improve the rearing of boys. Through gymnastics, the many mistakes mothers make regarding the diet and clothing of their children would be removed, and mothers' scepticism towards children's physical education would vanish.⁷³ Using such arguments, Santesson successfully combined the value of manliness with the importance of girls' gymnastics: manliness remained fundamental to the strength of a nation, but the physical education of girls was fundamental to the manliness of men.

In the intellectual machinery of this political rationality, Santesson did not rely solely on statistics, general impressions and hearsay, but also used simple stories to describe the intimate relationship between the physical education of girls and the development of the Swedish nation. Santesson recounted, for example, the story of

69 This link between women and the Swedish nation was, for example, highlighted in a state committee in 1869, see Ljunggren (1999), 159, and endnote no 143 on page 286.

70 Santesson (1866a), 12, 16.

71 Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), ch. 1–4; Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Free Association Books, 1999), 128–30.

72 Santesson (1866a), 12–13.

73 Santesson (1856), 80–81, 89.

a woman who was six months pregnant with a baby girl. One beautiful spring day, about thirty years ago, the woman was walking from her house to a nearby garden. Her 7-year-old son said that he wanted to show her something that he carried in his hands, and when she leaned in to have a look, a beautiful butterfly suddenly emerged from his hands. Surprised, the woman slapped her hip with the palm of her hand. When her daughter was born three months later, the daughter had a wound on her hip that refused to heal. But when it finally did, the wound transformed into a perfect image of a butterfly. Although Santesson admitted that this was an unusual case, he argued that it proved the intimate bond between mothers and their daughters. Thus, he claimed that the girls' gymnastics would have a strong impact not only on girls but these girls' future children.⁷⁴ Although such narratives might seem imaginative, they were certainly one of the many cogs of the intellectual machinery that Santesson used in his efforts to justify girls' gymnastics.

Establishing this link between girls, women and the future of the nation, Santesson based his arguments on contemporary discourses in which women were assigned vital responsibilities in the nation-building process. Although the nation was imagined as a masculine community that men served in the public sphere, these discourses stressed that, by raising future citizens and imparting the national language and culture on them, women played an equally vital role. In essence, this responsibility was as important as those of men, but it was nevertheless often portrayed as dependent on the actions of men. Only when being protected by men, women could perform their duties.⁷⁵ In the case of gymnastics, this gender disparity, as evident from above, was not used mainly to maintain women's subordinate status. Instead, the role of women in the nation-building process served as an argument to extend the rights of women to also include the possibility to participate in gymnastics.

In conclusion

Employing the concept of educationalisation, I have in this article shown how the purpose of girls' gymnastics was tied to various social, cultural and moral problems. In this respect, gymnastics was not only aimed at promoting the physical wellbeing of individuals, but also served to elevate the status of their minds and the strength of the Swedish nation. In this respect, the discourse on gymnastics is a particularly interesting case of educationalisation, since it is one of the instances when the consequences of education was interpreted as a problem that education, and more specifically physical education, could solve. The detrimental effect of schooling on children's bodies and minds was, according to Santesson, one of the problems that physical education could solve.

As evident from this article, several difficulties had to be overcome if girls' gymnastics was to be established in Sweden. It had to manage the already established link between gymnastics, manliness and the Swedish nation, and present a vision of the impact of gymnastics not only on girls but also on the Swedish society. There was

⁷⁴ Santesson (1866a), 13–15.

⁷⁵ Ida Blom, "Gender and Nation in International Comparison," in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann and Catherine Hall (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 16–17; Silke Wenk, "Gendered Representations of the Nation's Past and Future," in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann and Catherine Hall (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 64–65.

also the issue of engaging in civilisation critique in a country where 90 percent of the population still lived in rural settings in the 1840s, where only a few were admitted to grammar schools and where the enrolment level in primary schools was still at 65 percent in 1868.

In order to present girls' gymnastics in a manner that addressed these challenges, Santesson described it as a response to the precarious state of women's health that could strengthen both the Swedish nation and the bodies and minds of individual women. In investigating this vision, this article has provided the existing body of research on these topics with an additional example of how notions of motherhood and women's health was used to promote the cause of gymnastics. In addition to presenting the first in-depth analysis of Anton Santesson's educational visions, the main contribution of this article to the research on girls' and women's gymnastics stems from the emphasis on the complexity of the discourse of girls' gymnastics. In this case, Santesson promoted girls' gymnastics using a complicated set of partly inconsistent notions and ideas. The idea of girls' gymnastics was conceptualised and justified using the ideology of the nation, (almost) eternal concerns for women's bodies and a discourse that gave the family a vital role in society. In his vision of gymnastics, Santesson also included critique of civilisation, statistical data on women's health and gendered perceptions of feminine beauty, along with the beliefs about masturbation, medical and quasi-medical conceptions of the body, materialist conception of energy, a nationalistic ideology of the Swedish nation and gothicistic conceptions of Vikings. To support his arguments, he also used various kinds of evidence, including statistical data, individual cases, hearsay, general impressions and quotes from Plato, Martin Luther and Pehr Henrik Ling. By relying on this evidence, Santesson could create an image of mass education and civilisation which required the implementation of physical education at schools.

The inconsistencies and the lack of systematically chosen notions and evidence sources should, however, not be seen as a mistake, or as a result of an irrational thought process. Instead, the wide range of notions and sources of evidence may be perceived as essential components of the intellectual machinery developed by Santesson in order to conceive the aims and practices of gymnastics. Despite this eclectic character, Santesson's political rationality had concrete consequences. Apart from enabling Santesson to think about girls' gymnastics, and legitimating its establishment in Sweden, this rationality was also part of what has been termed the educationalisation of the world—that is, construing social problems as educational problems.

The complexity of Santesson's vision is also of wider interest. It is certainly an example of how political discourses generally lack the relatively systematic and clearly demarcated character of scientific discourses.⁷⁶ In the political discourse under study, statistics was combined with the individual example of a county governor's daughter, moral-aesthetic notions of the significance of good posture, medical notions of mental fatigue, and quasi-religious notions of water being able to cleanse the soul from impure thoughts. Scientific analyses of body movements were combined with descriptions of a near magical relationship between mother and daughter, and descriptions of societal development that shares the structure of narratives of divine

⁷⁶ Regarding this characteristic of political discourses, see Rose and Miller (1992), 178.

punishment. Contrary to what is sometimes claimed, Santesson's political vision of girls' gymnastics demonstrates that the medicalisation of the body that does not necessarily imply its secularisation.⁷⁷ Instead, such political discourses had the ability to combine the most diverse of elements.

By emphasising the complexity of Santesson's discourse, this article also highlights the historical particularity of such political discourses. While Santesson's vision of girls' gymnastics can certainly be described on a general level as a rationalisation, nationalisation and educationalisation of the body, this analysis shows that such processes are always specific. Sceptical about grand narratives, I would argue that this case of girls' gymnastics illustrates that there are no general cases of educationalisation, rationalisation, or nationalisation. Instead, such processes only exist in specific historical non-reducible forms.

⁷⁷ Cf. Turner (1992), 22.

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In-between “Swedish Gymnastics” and “Deutsche Turnkunst:” Educating “National” Citizens through Physical Education in Switzerland in the Last Decades of the Nineteenth Century

Ingrid Brühwiler

Abstract • In Switzerland, physical education was as important as it was in other European countries during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Different visions of physical education were adapted to the Swiss context to promote national citizens that were strong and healthy and thus capable of protecting their fatherland. Discussions of Per Henrik Ling’s “Swedish system” and Friedrich Ludwig Jahn’s “Deutsche Turnkunst,” both of which were adapted in the francophone and the germanophone parts of Switzerland, dominated the discourse. Until the end of the nineteenth century, patriotic ideals permeated the army-ruled physical education, although methodology and health topics were discussed as well. The national and civic aims of physical education were the same for girls and boys, with one very important exception: boys were prepared for military service, whereas girls were primarily prepared to be good future mothers.

Keywords • Switzerland, physical education, Swedish gymnastics, citizenship, nineteenth century

Introduction

When the Swiss confederation, a federal state of cantons, was founded in 1848, the country entered a new phase of nation building. Oliver Zimmer distinguishes between two boundary mechanisms that has influenced the making of national identity in the country. On the one side, voluntarism, which means placing emphasis on the will to belong to a national community, on the other organic and cultural discourses, akin to a form of determinism. National identity in Switzerland can, according to the author, be viewed as a construction of combined voluntary and organic elements.¹

Because of its decentralised political structure, the historical process of national identity formation is complex to grasp in the Swiss case, and becomes even more so when economic and social differences are taken into account.² Citizenship in Switzerland is often explained as being threefold, comprising of a communal, a cantonal, and a national level. Zimmer explains that republican nationalism emerged in the late eighteenth century in Switzerland and gathered further momentum from the 1830s onward. It finally realised its aspirations in 1848 with the founding of the Swiss

1 Oliver Zimmer, “Boundary Mechanisms and Symbolic Resources: Towards a Process-Oriented Approach to National Identity,” *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 2 (2003), 180.

2 Ingrid Brühwiler, “Contested Citizenship: Public Schooling and Political Changes in Early Nineteenth Century Switzerland,” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* 9, no. 2 (2017), 19.

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nation-state.³ A common history, instead of a common language, was often used as a way to create a sense of belonging to an imagined national community during this period.

Despite its special characteristics, Switzerland implemented a public school system in the nineteenth century, partially in order to promote national cohesion. As a part of the curriculum, and in line with other mass educational institutions in Europe, physical education was implemented to strengthen the national body as a whole. This article examines physical education in Switzerland in the last decades of the nineteenth century, when the educators needed to choose between two prevalent systems: the “Swedish system” promoted by Per Henrik Ling and Friedrich Ludwig Jahn’s “Deutsche Turnkunst.” In this article, I ask how the international ideas of physical education were introduced in Swiss schools in the last decades of the nineteenth century, what type of citizenship it supported, and how this citizenship varied across the federation and according to gender.

The type of national citizenship that was promoted through physical education is vital to explore since it was the only school subject that was governed at the national level since 1874. In this year, it was decided that all boys from the age of ten onwards had to attend physical education classes to become prepared for military service.⁴ Even presently, it is the only school subject that is organised for public schools at the national level. However, some cantons had the subject of physical education in their curricula long before the federal law came into effect.⁵ For example, the Canton of Basel-Stadt introduced it in 1852, the Canton of Zurich in 1859, and the Canton of St. Gallen in 1869.⁶ Thus, the federal law did not create a new school subject but rather attempted to standardise it on a national level. Thus, this subject gives the opportunity to analyse how Switzerland, characterised by different languages, ethnicities, and denominational affiliations, addressed international ideas through the lens of its threefold citizenship.

Before I address the main issue of this article, I will say something about the terms, theoretical concepts and source materials used. In the consulted research literature, physical education is also called “physical exercise,” “Turnen” or “gymnastics,” but it is clearly distinguished from the English term “sports,” given that the latter is oriented toward competitions, whereas “physical education” is linked to ideas of nationality and citizenship.⁷ Theoretically, this article is framed by the idea that school subjects can be viewed as “living organisms” (“organismes vivants”): subjects are born and developed, become transformed, disappear, devour each other, become

3 Oliver Zimmer, *A Contested Nation: History, Memory and Nationalism in Switzerland, 1761–1891* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), xiv.

4 Marco Marcacci, “Turnbewegung” (*Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*). <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D16333.php> (Accessed February 10, 2015).

5 Alois Landtwing, *Exercices corporels: gymnastique, escrime, équitation, cyclisme, sports nautiques etc. Bibliographie nationale suisse* (Bern: K.J. Wyss, 1899), V6e.

6 Arturo Hotz, “Johann Niggeler, die Militärdienstpflicht des Lehrers und das Schulturnen,” in *125 anni al servizio dell’educazione fisica nella scuola; 125 ans au service de l’éducation physique scolaire. 125 Jahre im Dienste des Schulturnens 1858–1983*, ed. Arturo Hotz (Stäfa: Gut, 1983), 57.

7 Rebekka Horlacher, “Physische Bildung als Nationalerziehung. Die Turnbewegung in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in *Pulverdampf und Kreidestaub: Beiträge zum Verhältnis zwischen Militär und Schule in der Schweiz im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Lukas Boser, Patrick Bühler, Michèle Hofmann, and Philippe Müller (Bern: Bibliothek am Guisanplatz, 2016), 82–83.

attracted, evolve, are rejected, united and competed against, are in relationship to other subjects and exchange information. They have a name that identifies them, even if identical contents are sometimes hidden under different names and vice versa. They can also be implemented in different ways in different national contexts, although under the same name. Additionally, the name has social and academic transmissions. Thus, with these changes, transformations and interactions, subjects are sources of power (“discipline scolaire comme source de pouvoir”), which means that disciplines emerge as sources of power in social and academic fields, hierarchical fields, characterised by domination and hegemony, dependence and subjugation.⁸

My investigation into the relations between the forming of a national citizenship and physical education starts in 1874, when the federal law was enacted, and ends at the end of the nineteenth century. The sources consist of the federal law of 1874, the two textbooks published in 1876 and 1898 as a result of this law, and the nineteenth century literature addressing physical education in Switzerland, e.g., Ballet’s book titled *De la gymnastique suédoise: son introduction en Suisse, organisation et programme de cet enseignement à l’école primaire* (Swedish gymnastics and its introduction in Switzerland, organisation and program in teaching primary education of 1896) and Balsiger’s work published in 1886, concerning the physical education school subject as a preparation for the army. In addition, several teacher journals, textbooks for physical education from 1876 and 1898 and other books is consulted. Moreover, reports about physical education as well as school regulations is analysed.⁹

In sum, I argue that, during the investigated period, physical education was as important in Switzerland as it was in other countries. Different pedagogical ideas were however adapted in different parts of the decentralised Swiss state, albeit with the same goal and basic idea to construct national citizens, who had to be strong and healthy to protect their fatherland. The debate on physical education focused on two systems. The first was the so-called “Ling-Rothstein” system, which was the Swedish gymnastics created by Per Henrik Ling (1776–1839) as promoted by the Prussian officer and gymnast Hugo Rothstein (1810–1865). The second was the “Jahn-Spiess” system, promoted by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778–1852) and Adolf Spieß (1810–1858). Despite debating these two systems, patriotic ideals in relation to the army ruled physical education during the nineteenth century, although methodology and health topics were discussed as well. The aim of physical education was the same for girls and boys, with one very important exception: boys were to be prepared for military service, whereas girls were to be prepared for childrearing and for being good future mothers, capable of educating future children to be good citizens.

The Swiss system—in between “Jahn-Spieß” and “Ling-Rothstein”

Physical education was a well discussed topic in most European countries in the nineteenth century. Germany played a crucial role in this movement, and the ideas of “Turnvater Jahn” was adapted in Switzerland as well.¹⁰ Jahn promoted physical exercises which include fencing, games, swimming, hiking, and exercises on gym-

8 Antonio Viñao, “Les disciplines scolaires dans l’historiographie européenne. Angleterre, France, Espagne,” *Histoire de l’éducation* 125 (2010), 95.

9 For more details on these reports, see Horlacher (2016).

10 Horlacher (2016), 88–89.

nastic apparatus. The pupils should get strong to defend their fatherland. The book by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and Ernst Eiselen, published in 1816 under the title *Die Deutsche Turnkunst zur Einrichtung der Turnplätze* (The German “Turnkunst” to establish gymnastic fields),¹¹ was extensively cited and was adapted, for example, for Adolf Spieß’s publications and Johannes Niggeler’s works.¹²

The first textbooks on physical education in Switzerland was published by Adolf Spieß, who emigrated from Germany to Switzerland in 1833 and published four textbooks on physical education between 1840 and 1846. Together with Phokion Heinrich Clias (1782–1854) and Johannes Niggeler (1810–1858), Spieß is recognised as one of the “founders” of physical education in schools in Switzerland.¹³ As Clias and Niggeler, Spieß explicitly promoted physical education for girls.¹⁴

The Swiss system of physical education was influenced both by those educational ideas promoted by Jahn and Spieß, and the system promoted by “Ling-Rothstein.” Ling promoted the so-called Swedish gymnastics which includes pedagogical, military, medical and aesthetical aspects. The performance of the movements had to be correct. Later on medical gymnastics got important but as in Jahn’s system military aspects were essential. Although these systems exhibited great similarities, there were recurrent conflicts between the proponents of each system. In Prussia, such disputes lead to the so-called “bars’ conflict” (*Barrenstreit*) in 1860.¹⁵

Although no such conflict occurred in Switzerland, the educational debate nevertheless exhibited different opinions on these systems. Some educationalist was in favour of the “Jahn-Spieß” system. In 1862, Wilhelm Jenny, a gymnastics teacher at the girls’ school in Basel, noted in his presentation to the teachers of Basel that, around 1851, Ling’s system, or rather Rothstein’s interpretation of this system, were predominant throughout Prussia. Since the system was widely criticised, Jenny suggested that, in Switzerland, the method of “Ling-Rothstein”¹⁶ might be replaced by the “Jahn-Spieß” ideas for physical education.¹⁷ Niggeler also clearly preferred the Jahn-Spieß method to the Ling-Rothstein system. Niggeler argued that Jahn’s and Spieß’s approaches were complementary because Jahn created physical education for male juveniles, and Spieß established physical education for male and female pupils of all ages.¹⁸

Other educationalist preferred the Swedish system. Among these were the medical doctor Alcide Jentzer, who visited the Ling institute (*Gymnastiska Central Insti-*

11 Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and Ernst Eiselen, *Die Deutsche Turnkunst zur Einrichtung der Turnplätze* (Berlin: Auf Kosten der Herausgeber, 1816).

12 Stefan Jordan, “Spieß, Adolf“ in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 24 (2010), 693–94.

13 Horlacher, (2016), 91.

14 Wilhelm Jenny, *Ueber die Nothwendigkeit der Leibesübungen an Mädchenschulen* (Basel: Ch. Meyri’s Buchhandlung, 1862).

15 August Frei, “Die Entstehung des Schulturnens,” in *Fakten und Facetten zur Sportentwicklung in der Schweiz sowie zur Geschichte der Schweizer Sportpolitik seit 1874*, ed. Arturo Hotz (Magglingen: Bundesamt für Sport, 2004), 187.

16 The Prussian captain Hugo Rothstein studied Ling’s system in Sweden and published several papers about it. One book in 1847 was titled *Die Gymnastik nach dem Systeme des schwedischen Gymnastarchen P. H. Ling* (Rothstein, 1847).

17 Jenny (1862), 21.

18 Niggeler (1864), 29.

tutet) in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1892 and again in 1895,¹⁹ with two colleagues from other cantons.²⁰ Jentzer also organised courses to train teachers in this method, and the first course started in 1893 and was attended by 26 female teachers. Additionally, in Geneva, in 1895, a gymnastic hall based on Jentzer’s concept was installed and, in Lausanne, wall bars were established in a college.²¹ Jentzer stressed the importance of Ling’s system:

I’m happy to point out to some advantages of Ling’s system compared to our national physical education, which I don’t want to combat, as I’ve already said, but which could be improved [...]. In effect, the system of Swedish physical education has some analogies with the system used in Switzerland and Germany, and it could even be said that if we only have a look at the general form of the exercises, they seem to be very similar. But... they are different concerning their spirits and tendencies, in addition to differences concerning their results.²²

He continues by stating that Ling’s gymnastic is a mixture of exercises, including medical gymnastics, popular games and customs.²³ He further observes differences in the lesson structure, in the access opportunities for all students, in the choice and design of the apparatus and in the different styles of military gymnastics. Furthermore, he highlights that games are important and that medical aspects are even more essential.²⁴ Jentzer was very well known for his competencies in medical and social hygiene.²⁵

The fact that physical education was a sensitive matter is perhaps best illustrated by a report published by Paul Kipfer and Gerhard Pfund. In 1899, Kipfer and Pfund who were both officers of the Swiss Army, visited the famous Ling institute in Stockholm. Kipfer and Pfund published a report about their study trip in the journal *Monatsblättern für das Schulturnen* (Monthly journal for physical education in schools). Although the report was published, the editors added critical remarks in footnotes to indicate that they disagreed with the content of the article.²⁶

19 Bussard (2007), 109.

20 Joséphine Ballet, *De la gymnastique suédoise: son introduction en Suisse, organisation et programme de cet enseignement à l’école primaire: travail présenté à l’Exposition de Genève 1896* (Genève: J. Studer, 1896), 13.

21 Ballet (1896), 12–14.

22 “[...] je me contenterai de faire ressortir quelques avantages du système de Ling sur la gymnastique nationale, que je ne veux pas combattre, comme on me l’a reproché, mais qui est susceptible d’être améliorée, Effectivement le système d’éducation physique des Suédois a quelque analogie avec le système gymnastique usité en Suisse et en Allemagne et nous dirions même que si nous nous rapportons seulement à la forme générale de l’exercice, l’identité pourrait être complète. Pourtant, [...], bien des contrastes apparaissent dans leur esprit et leurs tendances, bien des différences aussi s’observent dans leurs résultats.” (Alcide Jentzer, *Quelques réflexions sur la gymnastique suédoise présentées à la Réunion des maîtres de gymnastique de la Suisse à Neuchâtel, le 5 Octobre 1895 / par le prof. Dr Jentzer* (Genève: Stapelmohr, 1895), 4).

23 Jentzer (1895), 4–5.

24 Jentzer (1895), 6–9.

25 Bussard (2007), 110.

26 Editors in Paul Kipfer and Gebhard Pfund, “Das schwedische Turnen, Studienreise nach Stockholm vom 1.–30. April 1899,” Special Edition of *Monatsblättern für das Schulturnen*, 1900, 3.

What type of national citizen was desired in nineteenth century Switzerland?

Following 1874, and in cooperation with the military department, the federal government published textbooks for physical education in schools and declared them compulsory.²⁷ The first textbook was published under the title *L'école de gymnastique pour l'instruction militaire préparatoire de la jeunesse suisse de l'âge de dix à vingt ans* (Physical Education for the Instruction of the Military Pre-Education of Swiss Youth From Ten to Twenty Years of Age) in 1876.²⁸ The introduction to this textbook, influenced by many well-known authors, such as Ling and Jahn, states that the content describes the minimum that should be taught in each school, but it is possible to pursue higher aims on one's own initiative.

This textbook became criticised, for example for not being useful for everyday life at school.²⁹ This led to the publication of a new textbook in 1898, with many subsequent revisions, due to the criticism regarding its content.³⁰ Similar to the old textbook, this new federal textbook was based on the work of many authors and included a minimum program that should be fulfilled. Furthermore it includes a systematic arrangement of different exercise styles, and classifies two different degrees for different age groups instead of three, as in the old textbook. Furthermore, the age group was limited to 10–15 year-olds and thus no longer included older boys. In the preface, the changes to the old textbook are explained: to facilitate the work of teachers and to assist in the preparation for physical education lessons. Most importantly, systematic order of the old textbook was changed, focusing primarily on methodological advice.

Additionally, the editors emphasised that adaptations to local circumstances are needed because they had written the book for schools in rural areas providing normal conditions. Moreover, they explain that order exercises (*Ordnungsübungen*) had been reduced and that they were adapted to Swiss drill regulations.³¹ Thus, both textbooks still contained military exercises, but their scope was reduced in the second textbook. Also, in the preface to the latter, no military terms appear to guide the pupils, and the introduction in the textbook of 1898 is followed by seven pages of methodological advice.

A comparison of the two textbooks reveals that methodological advice was more important in the textbook of 1898. Additionally, the part with games is much longer than in the first edition, and they are explained in much more detail. In the first edition, some names of games are listed on a few lines, such as "*Katze und Maus*" (Cat and mouse), along with the remark that the description can be found in the works of

27 Raymond Bron, "A propos des manuels ..." in *125 anni al servizio dell'educazione fisica nella scuola; 125 ans au service de l'éducation physique scolaire; 125 Jahre im Dienste des Schulturnens 1858–1983*, ed. Arturo Hotz (Stäfa: Gut 1983), 70.

28 Louis Burgener, "L'armée et l'éducation physique en Suisse (1848–1894)," *Revue Militaire Suisse* 131, no. 5, (1986), 230.

29 Friedrich Iselin, *Bemerkungen über Missstände unseres gegenwärtigen Schulturnens* (Basel: Schweighauserische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1878), 22.

30 Bussard (2007), 104.

31 *Turnschule für den militärischen Vorunterricht der schweizerischen Jugend vom 10. Bis und mit dem 15. Jahre: Vom schweizerischen Bundesrat genehmigt den 6. Mai 1898; Mit Figurentafeln, Register und Tabelle in besonderer Beilage* (Zürich: Friedrich Schulthess, 1898), 10–11.

Niggeler or Kloss.³² In the second edition, for example, the game *Fussball* (soccer) is described across five pages, with an illustration and explanations to plan games and additional remarks.³³ These changes might indicate that, at the end of the nineteenth century in Switzerland, "sports" started to be important as well, which would mean that the English idea of competition was gradually being adopted. However, the description emphasises "virtues" and not "competition." "Competition" would be in line with the English idea of "sports," as explained in the introduction of this article, whereas "virtues" fit strongly with educational aims. The editors of the textbook of 1898 point firmly to using soccer as an educational tool:

The good soccer player is fast, purposeful, vigorous, but definitely altruistic and is only concerned with the overall game. Thereof can be deduced what educational value belongs to the soccer game.³⁴

The textbook of 1898 became "a bible" for physical education across the country. With the federal law as its background and the possibility of creating one textbook for the entire nation, the textbook unified and standardised Swiss physical education teaching in schools.³⁵ In both textbooks, military aspects can be detected. Still, in the second edition, other topics such as pedagogy, health and individuality also become important, at least in the introduction.

As noted above, a closer examination of the arguments for why physical education was important is still needed to answer the question of what type of citizenship was intended. One recurrent argument was that physical education was needed due to the changing political, cultural and social conditions that the nation was experiencing. The entire child, mind and body, now had to be educated and all children had to be formed in the same way:³⁶ "It is not a spirit or a body we should educate: it is a human being, and we shouldn't make two of them."³⁷

Another recurrent argument was that physical education promoted and increased the power of the nation, supported other educational efforts, and realised national and humane educational purposes.³⁸ In particular, physical education prepared for military service,³⁹ which was highly important, given that national defence was promoted as the highest civic task and was said to grow stronger with physical education.⁴⁰ In both the French-speaking and the German-speaking parts of Switzerland,

32 *Turnschule für den militärischen Vorunterricht der schweizerischen Jugend vom 10. bis zum 20. Jahre; Vom Bundesrath genehmigt den 1. September 1876* (Zürich: Friedrich Schulthess, 1876), 51.

33 *Turnschule...* (1898), 247–51.

34 "Rasches, zielbewusstes, energisches, aber durchaus selbstloses und nur auf das allgemeine Spielinteresse gerichtetes Handeln kennzeichnet den guten Fussballspieler, woraus wohl am besten hervorgeht, welcher Wert dem Fussballspiel als Erziehungsmittel beizumessen ist." *Turnschule...* (1898), 251.

35 Bussard (2007), 111.

36 For example, see: Eduard Balsiger, *Lehrgang des Schulturnens: Anleitung zur praktischen Durchführung der "Turnschule" für den militärischen Vorunterricht* (Zürich: Orell Füssli, 1886), v–vi.

37 Egg (1874), 7.

38 Balsiger (1886), xvii–xviii.

39 Egg (1874), 10.

40 See, for example, Adolphe Michel, *Le Développement Physique à l'Ecole: Rapport* (Lausanne: Imprimerie Charles Pache, 1896), 10.

these arguments were very common. Another argument that was also very dominant in both investigated language groups was the societal benefits of healthy and powerful bodies:

Health, Power, agility and endurance of the musculoskeletal system and thus physical prowess to all professions, all performances and all businesses. A reorganization of people's life, concerning the mental, moral and material state, to the good of the nation, would be an inevitable fruit of the general implementation of physical education.⁴¹

Generally, gymnastics was about creating a strong citizen prepared for public life and public duties, such as military service. But, in my view, these formulations have to be seen in the light of prevailing notions of gender at the time. Even though the text used the concept “the people,” it silently implied that it was a community of men that were envisioned. Many scholars have argued that the male body can be viewed as a socially constructed phenomenon that has been culturally codified as “male” through a complex process of knowledge production, combining medicine, biology, social hygiene and health.⁴² In the quote above, health, power and the military duties of a male future citizen were emphasised and constructed. In the view of people such as Jentzer, following Ling's ideas, health was connected to promoting hygiene and to growing strong (male) people for a strong nation, which fits the idea of a socially constructed phenomenon of a “male citizen.” However, the strengthening of the male body goes far beyond the topic of social hygiene; it was mainly a way to build character and to foster hegemonic masculine virtues.⁴³ In the investigated period, such debates were very common.⁴⁴

In summary, the federal law did not mark the beginning of physical education in Swiss schools, given that in some cantons this subject had been compulsory for decades. However, it points to the strong relationship between this subject and the building of a stronger national army. Furthermore, physical education acquired a national dimension and was subject to standardisation as a school subject. Both federal textbooks underline this effort. Differences between these textbooks can be observed in the methodological approach of the second edition, in which military exercises were also diminished, and students were addressed on an individual level. Moreover, in the introduction, health and pedagogical aspects were noted. Physical education in Switzerland at the end of the nineteenth century was influenced by European ideas and was oriented toward those aims. The most important goal was to educate the future male citizen into being a soldier so that the relatively young nation could prosper. The installed order should be kept or even improved, and juveniles

41 “Gesundheit, Kraft, Gewandtheit und Ausdauer der Bewegungsorgane und daraus hervorgehend körperliche Tüchtigkeit zu jedem Berufe, jeder Leistung und jedem Geschäfte. Eine Neugestaltung des Volkslebens zum geistigen, moralischen und materiellen Wohle des Staates würde eine unausbleibliche Frucht der allgemeinen Einführung des Turnens sein.” Adolf Lehner, *Das Turnen, sein Einfluß und seine Verbreitung* (Chur: F. Gengel, 1875), 18.

42 Christina S. Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity During World War II* (DeKalb, Northern Illinois University Press, 2004), 7, 58.

43 George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 47.

44 For example, see Michel (1896), 10.

should love the fatherland and meet its needs. For some, health was as important, and was thus promoted alongside the ideas of the fatherland. Another argument was that schools must support the "entire child," not only the spirit or the body, but both. This argument includes aesthetic aspects, which are explained in more detail in the next section.

The physical education of girls

In the previous section, the close connection between physical education in Swiss schools and the army was demonstrated, and one might think that, for this reason, physical education for girls was not very important in the nineteenth century Switzerland. However, in this section, the opposite will be demonstrated: physical education was very much promoted, albeit by very different authors, who were of view that girls had to receive physical education to become good and healthy future mothers.

In the nineteenth century literature on girls' physical education, most authors argue that physical education is important for girls because they will be mothers in the future and, therefore, must be strong and healthy.⁴⁵ Most authors cite Clias, Spieß and Niggeler, who had promoted physical education for girls since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1829, Clias published a book for girls titled *Kalistenie oder Uebungen zur Schönheit und Kraft für Mädchen* (Calisthenics Or Exercises for Beauty and Power for Girls).⁴⁶ In the introduction, he notes that physical education is needed for girls for health reasons and for shaping their bodies. The exercises promote their vitality and help avoid pampering. He added that the healthier the girl is in body and mind, the more easily she will give birth to children.⁴⁷ Thus, the most important task for girls was to become good and healthy mothers because the mother educates future citizens. Clias notes:

And if we look at the importance of woman in most nations, it has to be admitted that on her true education depends the progress and moral purity of the nation as well as peace in the family.⁴⁸

The same argumentation appears in the presentation by Wilhelm Jenny approximately thirty years later, in 1862. He particularly emphasises Ling's ideas and states that, if it is questioned whether girls and women should have physical education, the reply is again and again: "Let them do g y m n a s t i c s ! G y m n a s t i c s make beautiful!"⁴⁹

Approximately thirty years later, Jentzer in 1895 and Kipfer/Pfund in 1900 promoted girls' physical education, also based on Ling's ideas. While girl's role as the future mother is still deemed important, dancing to become healthy or to maintain

45 For example, see Seminarlehrer Schwab, "Wi wird der Schulturnplatz im vollsten und weitesten Sinne zur Segensstätte für das Volk? Referat, gehalten an der schweiz: Turnlererversammlung den 15. Oktober 1876 in Solothurn," *Schweizerische Lehrerzeitschrift* 22, no. 16 (1877), 139.

46 Phokion Heinrich Clias, *Kalistenie oder Uebungen zur Schönheit und Kraft für Mädchen* (Bern: Jenny, 1829).

47 Clias (1829), x, 1.

48 "Betrachtet man auch jetzt die große Wirksamkeit der Frauen in den meisten Staaten, so muß man nothwendig zugeben, daß von ihrer richtigen Erziehung dass glückliche Fortschreiten, die Sittenreinheit der Nationen wie der häusliche Friede der Familien größtentheils abhängt." Clias (1829), 2.

49 Jenny (1862), 22.

physical and mental health is promoted as well.⁵⁰ Additionally, the argument that there is no need for a direct relationship with military duties for girls was maintained. Thus, some argued that direct military aims should be kept out of the lessons because, usually, until the age of twelve, boys and girls had physical education together.⁵¹

As noted above, physical education for boys became compulsory as a result of the federal law of 1874; for girls, the legislative decision came approximately 100 years later, in 1972.⁵² However, some cantons had legally mandated the subject of physical education for both boys and girls. For example, in the Canton of Fribourg, girls in secondary schools received physical education from 1848 to 1856. For Fribourg, financial restrictions were the most important challenge to introducing gymnastics for girls, given that neither the federal military department nor the cantonal department of home affairs supported this school subject.⁵³ In the cantons of Vaud and Fribourg, gymnastics for boys and girls were introduced simultaneously; thus, no gender differences in the way they were taught in schools can be observed. Very often, however, gymnastics was a subject only in higher schools, and was sometimes voluntary. In the Canton of Vaud, physical education became compulsory in all girls' high schools in 1869. Due to the official status of this school subject, it was standardised in the canton. Initially, however, the new subject was offered to socially privileged classes, given that such schools were not attended by all girls. Subsequently, the subject was introduced for all pupils.⁵⁴

To summarise, the argumentation in support of physical education for girls was very similar to that for boys, except that there was no direct link to military duties. Women's main task in support of the nation was motherhood. As girls were viewed as future mothers, they must have strong and healthy bodies to pass on those characteristics to the future citizens of the fatherland. Moreover, they had to be mentally and physically healthy to manage these important tasks for the fatherland. Aesthetic arguments were important as well, and physical education was perceived as a method for creating beautiful women.

Due to the lack of a federal law, standardisation occurred much later at the cantonal level, which means that, for a long period of time, there were enormous differences in the way physical education for girls was approached in Switzerland. Forging a nation clearly required both women and men, but with a strict division in the tasks. As noted in the introduction, the idea that school subjects are "living organisms" and therefore adapt their systems to different circumstances can be detected in the analysis herein: boys' physical education was directly supported by the army and thus had some unique aspects that did not apply to girls' physical education. The nation imagined as a gendered political community in which the male citizen was the norm is supported in this investigation as well, given that, for example, girls' physical edu-

50 Jentzer (1895), 10–11; Kipfer and Pfund (1900), 3–10.

51 Egg (1874), 24.

52 Bron (1983), 70.

53 Eva Kleisli, "Mädchenerziehung und Turnen in Freiburg um die Jahrhundertwende," *Freiburger Geschichtsblätter* 72 (1995), 97.

54 Véronique Czàka, "Société de gymnastique, éducation physique et politique : Contribution aux débuts de l'histoire de la gymnastique dans le Canton de Vaud. Histoire du sport dans le canton de Vaud," *Revue Historique Vaudoise* 117 (2008), 28.

cation was not standardised on the same national level as that for boys because there was no direct link to military service.

Conclusions

This article aimed to answer the question of how international ideas of physical education were introduced in schools in Switzerland in the last decades of the nineteenth century and what type of citizenship was supported. As evident from above, physical education was a well discussed topic in Switzerland, as in other European countries at that time. Two dominant systems, called "Ling-Rothstein" and "Jahn-Spieß," were promoted by different actors. Both systems, however, strongly pushed for military aspects and a sense of nationality, and were cited in both French-speaking and German-speaking parts of Switzerland.

Physical education in schools in Switzerland in the nineteenth century was oriented toward European ideas of physical education. In this sense, this school subject was similar to others, given that it promised to educate the "new citizen." Thus, patriotic ideas of how to educate the "new citizen" were adopted from one country to another, aligning them to the respective national practices and traditions.⁵⁵ Important was to educate the future male citizens into being strong soldiers and the future female citizens into being good mothers.

⁵⁵ Horlacher (2016), 96.

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Gymnastics between Protestantism and Libertinism from 1880 to 1940: A Comparative Analysis of Two Internationally Renowned Danish Gymnastics Educators

Hans Bonde

Abstract • The purpose of this article is to analyze and compare two internationally renowned Danish Gymnastics teachers, Jørgen Peter Muller and Niels Bukh. Whereas Muller's home gymnastics had a cosmopolitan agenda that appealed to everyone regardless of ethnic origin, including many Jews, Bukh's gymnastics increasingly became embedded in a right-wing nationalist frame of reference. Muller created an individual system of home gymnastics with a focus on health by means of exercises and the cleansing of the body that included a cold shower. In contrast, Bukh's system was a collective form of gymnastics that emphasised the beauty of the young body. Common to both of them, however, was propagation of sexual liberation, which in Muller's case focused on the naked heterosexual body's manifestations in the sunlight and the fresh air. By contrast, Bukh was homosexual and through his aesthetic gaze he encouraged well-trained and sweaty young men to show their muscular upper body in touch-tight choreographies wearing only boxer shorts. It is the main thesis of the article that the contribution of sport to sexual liberation from late Victorianism's firm grip is far greater than hitherto assumed.

Keywords • gymnastics, sports, hygiene, aesthetics, sexuality

Introduction

In this article, I will conduct a comparative analysis of two world-renowned Danish gymnastics teachers J.P. Muller (1866–1938) and Niels Bukh (1880–1950). The fundamental research question is to what extent and in what way they contributed to the sexual liberation of the male body in opposition to the strict notions of appropriate sexual behaviour of their contemporaries. It is my thesis that the apparent innocence of gymnastics and its rational attachment to health care has made it a suitable place for an increased nudity and more sensual movements. First, a presentation of the two main characters of the article is necessary.

J.P. Muller became a propagandist for the blessings of water, air and light at a time when these concepts were gaining an increasingly important role in the emerging science of medicine. He spread the evolving medical profession's gospel of hygiene and purification to the broad public by his own example and his simple ritualistic scheme of gymnastics. In his writings and in his agitation he always fought against the cramped life of the growing cities and for the blessings of the open-air life which made him become an icon of beauty and health for the evolving Continental movements which praised the concepts of nudity, healthy food and the liberation of the body from Victorian dogmatism. In 1908 he published a book on sexology that was a contribution to sexual liberation and feminism. In 1912 Muller had achieved such international recognition that he was able to settle in London.

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In 1920, Niels Bukh replaced J.P. Muller as the great Danish gymnastics educator of international stature. His revolutionising concept of gymnastics for young Danish male farmers mainly gained its fame through its effects on masculinity regarding norms for touching other men, for the rhythmic expression of the male body and for the exposure of the naked and sensual young bodies. These features of Bukh's gymnastics broke with existing norms for the disciplined and correct male demeanour in the inter-war period, though a general celebration of the athletic and partly nude male body was becoming more accepted in many European countries.

In addition, it is difficult to understand the popularity of Bukh's new gymnastics for the male heterosexual youth without including his own homosexual orientation and personal interest in the aesthetics of the male body. The great paradox of the life of Niels Bukh is that he created a liberating male gymnastics but, as we shall see, tried to use it for totalitarian purposes.

In the following gymnastics is defined as a movement culture that aims at improving the level of physical excellence for the purpose of health and beauty.¹ Gymnastics can be "sportified" in the sense that it is performed for competition in accordance with an "objective" system of measurement. This article constitutes a traditional historical study based on source criticism. The source material for this article mainly consists of Muller's extensive writings, interviews with J.P. Muller's descendants and pupils, photographs from his many books and the film, from 1911, of Muller showing his gymnastics system made by Danish Royal photographer Peter Elfeldt.² As far as Niels Bukh is concerned, Niels Bukh's own archive from his gymnastics college is supplemented by archive material from the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs together with a wide range of interviews with Bukh's family and students from Bukh's own time.

As far as previous research is concerned, I have written several research articles and books on the topic. In particular, three articles constitute the backbone of the present article,³ which, on the other hand, derives its originality from a comparison between the two Danish gymnastic teachers and especially the underlying erotic dimension. The article, however, takes its starting point from Michel Foucault's notion that sometimes sexuality is very present where it is least expected to be expressed and, in addition, that the apparent innocence of a phenomenon such as gymnastics could function as a shield hiding the sensuous nature of activities.⁴ Furthermore, I have been inspired by the Danish sociologist Henning Bech, who claims that the strong denial of the presence of a phenomenon such as male homosexuality in the culture of modern competitive sport can sometimes be an indication of homoerotic

1 See Jacques DeFrance, *L'excellence Corporelle – La Formation des Activités Physiques et Sportives Modernes (1770–1914)* (Rennes: Press universitaires de Rennes, 1987).

2 The film can be studied at: <http://www.dfi.dk/faktaomfilm/film/da/48886.aspx?id=48886> [accessed November 30, 2017].

3 Hans Bonde, "From Hygiene to Salvation: J.P. Muller, International Advocate of Gymnastics," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no. 10 (2009), 1357–375; Hans Bonde, "Niels Bukh's Gymnastics School in Denmark, 1912–1933: Gymnastics, Erotics, and Male Bonding," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 6 (2015): 800–14; Hans Bonde, "The struggle for Danish Youth: Fascism, Sport, Democracy," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no. 10 (2009), 1436–457.

4 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: The Will to Knowledge* (London: Allen Lane, 1976).

undercurrents: “Where homoeroticism is unthinkable it might be the most.”⁵ Or to be more specific, the high degree of closeness, affections⁶ and intimacy⁷ in modern sport sometimes creates a need to reassure in a demonstrative way that this has nothing to do with homosexuality.

In addition, Allen Guttman’s book *The Erotic in Sport* has been inspirational.⁸ Guttman shows that sport often has an underlying erotic dimension that thrives especially if it is not expressed in a conscious way. For him, eroticism in sports is usually not the main characteristic, but often an important bi-phenomenon of sport. He believes that sport can create erotic feelings both through the actual sensations and touches of the athletes, but also through the enthusiasm of spectators by watching the movements of the often beautiful and well-trained athletic bodies in rhythmic action. For him, the driving force of becoming fit often is connected to the desire of creating a sexually attractive body in your own eyes and the eyes of the others.⁹

The erotic dimension of sport has traditionally been a taboo in modern history. Typically, the reaction of the public in J.P. Muller’s case was that though he fought for nudity and self-massage, his propagation of extreme outdoor sporting activities in fresh air followed by a cold shower was, on the contrary, a protection against sexual licentiousness. Of course, Bukh and Muller did not invent the celebration of the male athletic body from around 1900 and onwards. Rather they contributed to a much larger movement which has been labelled “vitalism.” Apart from being a philosophical current with inspiration from among others Friedrich Nietzsche, vitalism in addition was expressed artistically in Western Europe from around 1900 to 1914. In Denmark a painter such as J.F. Willumsen celebrated life’s light, youthful and active elements. The Danish writer Johannes V. Jensen (Nobel prize winner in 1944), was strongly oriented towards an American inspired praise of outdoor life, and in a philosophy concentrated in an aphorism, notoriously famous in Denmark, as “the strong ones’ right to the realm.”¹⁰ The celebration of the male body was also to be found in Sweden. The Swedish scholar Patrik Steorn has discovered that in Sweden the “use of images of naked men was widespread at the turn of the 20th century” in art, photographs, newspaper and advertising.¹¹

In addition, my investigation will include religious currents not least in J.P. Muller’s gymnastics and his concept of “hardening of the body” which I interpret in the light of research in British Muscular Christianity which was of inspiration to him. The concept of Muscular Christianity will be defined below. Concerning the term nationalism, I will use it in the sense of the political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson’s theory on nations as “imagined communities,” and that unifying histori-

5 Henning Bech, *When Men Meet: Homosexuality and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

6 Lone Friis Thing, *Sport – en emotionel affære: Kvinder, holdsport og aggression* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen University, 1999).

7 Frederik Schoug, *Intima samhällsvisioner* (Stockholm: Symposion, 1997).

8 Allan Guttman, *The Erotic in Sport* (Columbia: University Press, 1996), 2–3.

9 Guttman (1996), 3.

10 Johannes V. Jensen in the poem “Tilegnelse,” *Skovene* (Copenhagen: s.n., 1904).

11 See Patrik Steorn, *Nakna män: Maskulinitet och kreativitet i svensk bildkultur 1900–1915* (Stockholm: Norstedts Akademiska Förlag 2006), 228.

cal symbols are at the core of modern nation building.¹² Especially, Bukh's attempt to reconcile his Danish national sentiments with National Socialism will be discussed.

Finally, I use the term Libertinism not as an expression of a total rejection of all sexual moral but rather as a term which signifies the attempt to expand existing sexual possibilities in a given context. In this sense J.P. Muller's agitation for sex before marriage and the use of contraception can be seen as containing libertine elements although he also condemned homosexuality as a perversion and rejected adultery and promiscuity.¹³

The success of J.P. Muller

The typical office worker in big cities is often a sad sight. Hunched over in early years, his shoulders and hips made crooked by the awkward position at his desk, his face pale, pimply, and powdered, his thin neck sticking out of a collar that a normal man could use as a cuff, his foppish, fashionable suit rotating around pipe cleaners that are supposed to be arms.¹⁴

In 1904 at the age of 39 a Dane, Lieutenant J.P. Muller (1866–1938), wrote a book called *My System*. Its main theme was home gymnastics, and in five months 30,000 copies were sold. This figure acquires additional significance, when one bears in mind the small size of Denmark with its 2.5 million inhabitants. In one year 20,000 copies were published in Swedish, 70,000 in German and more than 25,000 in English. 21,000 copies were to be published in the USA, 11,000 each in France, Czechoslovakia and the Netherlands and 6,000 in Finland. This explosive sale in a single year was followed by steady growth; by 1930 J.P. Muller's books had been translated into 26 languages and sold 1.5 million copies. One million copies were claimed to be sold alone in English-speaking countries.¹⁵ In the following years Muller established himself as an author by publishing, in 1908, *The Fresh Air Book*, in 1912 *My System for Ladies and my System for Children*, in 1914 *My Breathing System*, in 1915 *My Army and Navy System*, in 1923 *The Daily Five Minutes* and in 1927 *My Sun-Bathing and Fresh-Air System*, to mention only the English editions. *My System* and his many other writings on gymnastics and hygiene remained important right up to 1930.

After the great international breakthrough with *My System*, Muller busied himself abroad showing how strengthening his system was. As an agitator he was unsurpassed—for example when he had a wheelbarrow loaded with stones run over a board on his stomach so that he could demonstrate his bulging abdominal muscles. More than anyone, Muller became Denmark's great apostle of health.

In 1912, Muller had achieved such international recognition that he was able to settle in London, change his name from Müller to Muller, and open the very successful Muller Institute at 45, Dover Street, Piccadilly. Muller became principal with "a lady director, secretaries and a staff of trained instructors of both sexes under his direct supervision."¹⁶ His institute was frequented by ailing members of the affluent

12 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

13 J.P. Muller, *Kønsmoral og livslykke* (Copenhagen: s.n., 1908), 296, passim.

14 J.P. Muller, *Mit System* (Copenhagen: Jul. Gjellerups Forlag, 1904), 31.

15 See J.P. Muller, *My System* (London: David McKay Publisher, 1905), passim. 50; J.P. Muller, *Mirakel-Kure* (Copenhagen: s.n., 1934), 11.

16 J.P. Muller, *My Breathing System* (London: s.n., 1914), 95.

classes, including the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII (1894–1972). In 1925 the Prince of Wales granted his patronage to Muller's books.¹⁷ Muller also contributed to Danish National identity and to the image of Denmark abroad. In *Dansk biografisk håndleksikon* (Danish Bibliographical Hand Dictionary) of 1923 it was said that Muller had "more than any other existing person made the name of Denmark famous. His name is mentioned from Piccadilly to the Far East, and many people greet him as the great health apostle of our times."¹⁸

The success of Muller's system was partly due to the fact that it could be carried out without special apparatus. Only an ordinary hand wash basin and jug were needed. This meant that virtually everybody could afford to practise the system. *My system* was also distinguishable from many other books of the same type by the fact that the exercises were calculated to be performed in a specific, short space of time—a fact that meant a great deal "to the busy, hurrying, average man" of modern society.¹⁹ Finally, Muller's system was a stimulating exercise in synthesis, whereas most systems of home gymnastics had focused on one or two sources of health. Muller's system combined gymnastics with a daily bath, fresh air, sunlight and the preservation of the skin through rubbing exercises.

Muller's praise of the naked body was inspired by the German Life Reform-movement.²⁰ He travelled to Germany, Switzerland and Austria several times from 1906–1910, where his ideas found fertile ground among similar minded men. The praise of the naked body, of the sun and of nature itself was prevalent among the many "nature healers" such as the Swiss Arnold Rikli who Muller credit for having established the first "open air sanatorium in the year 1855."²¹

In addition, Muller's concept of the fit and athletic body was inspired by the creator of modern body building, Eugene Sandow, who organised some of first body building contests in London in 1901.²² However, whereas Sandow praised the building of a muscular body, Muller was much more preoccupied with health obtained by a clean skin and healthy internal organs. In this way it could be stated that Sandow paved the way for body building whereas Muller paved the way for the health oriented fitness movement.

Masculine beauty

Already in the late nineteenth century, Muller was known to the Danish public as the epitome of the new, vital man: on the one hand, as one of the brothers in the conquering 'Muller team' that dominated the sport of rowing; and, on the other, as a health agitator in the press, and for his great versatility in sports as varied as boxing, race-walking and rowing. Before 1900 he could boast Danish records in a whole

17 J.P. Muller, *My Sun-Bathing and Fresh-Air System* (London: Athletic Publications 1927), 15.

18 *Dansk biografisk håndleksikon* (Copenhagen: Gyldendals Boghandel and Nordisk, 1923), 672–75.

19 *Katholische Schulzeitung*, 16 June 1905. Quoted from *How J.P. Muller and 'My system' are Spoken of by Officers, Doctors, Gymnastic Instructors, Schoolmasters and Others, and by Newspapers and Magazines Outside Denmark* (London/Copenhagen: s.n., 1905), 16.

20 J.P. Muller, *Vink om Sundhedsrøgt og Idræt* (Copenhagen: Tillges Boghandel 1907), passim.

21 Karl Rothschild, "From the history of the naturopathic movement (VII). Healing power of light, air and earth. Arnold Rikli, Adolf Just and Pastor Felke," *Zeitschrift für Allgemeinmedizin* 16 (1983), 933–40.

22 David Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1994), 132–35.

succession of athletic disciplines such as running, discus and hammer throwing. From around 1885 to 1900 he became more preoccupied with all different sorts of sports and became known as the pioneering “Mr. Sport” of the early Danish sports movement.

J.P. Muller was the son of a clergyman, one of his brothers became clergymen as well, and he himself studied theology for a couple of years obtaining a bachelor degree. His almost manic devotion to hard training can be interpreted a compromise between the tradition of asceticism of his childhood home and the celebration of the body of early modern sport.²³ After his athletic career, J.P. Muller wanted to stay fit but had no opportunity of participating in sport on a regular basis. Therefore, he started to develop a gymnastics system that would make it possible to retain one’s good health and vigour without being too time-consuming. The result was the book *My System*. The English deluxe edition contained 44 photographic illustrations; and a chart illustrating the exercises mounted on cardboard could be procured through any British bookseller. In all of the photographs Muller himself showed the exercises either half-naked or even a few times totally naked. In his books Muller was celebrated as one of the most handsome men of his times.²⁴

Reviews of his books commented on his extraordinarily well-built body, which was seen as a proof of the validity of *My System*. For instance, the German *Monatsschrift für das Turnwesen* (Monthly Gymnastic Review) wrote: “If the pictorial illustrations of the author’s own superb physical proportions were not proof enough, his style would reveal that we have here to do with a man who does not treat us to empty theory but to actual fact, who is a living example of what he preaches.”²⁵ The many pictures and the fresh style made it easy to identify with Muller, and *My System* suggested that following the system would reshape one’s body to the ideal of the master himself.

As part of Muller’s vitalist stimulus, he was inspired by antiquity. Even his image of male beauty was neoclassical in inspiration and consequently the first page of *My System* was illustrated by a photograph of a statue by the Greek sculptor Lysippos. This marble statue was called *Apoxyomenos* (the scraper) and the choice of this motif was no coincidence. Muller commented:

Much has been written about this statue, but all concur in praising its beauty, and in admiring the Greeks, who, by means of their athletic sports and gymnastic training, were able to produce human forms fit to serve as models for such sculptures.

I have expressly chosen *Apoxyomenos* from among the many beautiful statues of antiquity to decorate the cover of my book because he is the embodiment of the contents of it: He is the athlete cleansing and caring for his skin after exercise, and thus the ideal towards which my book points. Under this pseudonym, generally abbreviated to Apox or Ap, I wrote for a number of years on Athletics [in the press].²⁶

23 Max Weber’s notion that the protestant ethics was used to form new citizens devoted to labour and hard work in early capitalist society could in addition be applied to the sports movement which praised hard training as a means to victory, see: Hans Bonde, “Den sportslige askese: Om den protestantiske etik og sportens ånd,” *Fønix* 26, no. 3 (2002), 167–74; Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London and Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1930).

24 Muller (1905).

25 Bonde (2002), 20.

26 Muller (1905), 148.

Muller claimed that for many years he had trained with the ideal of *Apoxymenos* in mind. Therefore, he sharply criticised the traditional ideal of the dominant so-called Swedish or Ling gymnastics, which could be summed up as: ‘stomach in, chest out.’ One should here bear in mind that Ling Gymnastics around 1900 were widespread in the educational and military systems of many countries on a worldwide scale. As an example Swedish gymnastics had gained a foothold in the British Army, Navy and school system.²⁷ Muller certainly knew that paving the way for his own system implied a critique of Swedish gymnastics:

The front line of a healthy man, seen in profile, will be almost even, and show the chest and abdomen as being equally forward; only during exhalation will the abdomen protrude a little. God made man in this shape. And thus was His masterpiece reproduced by the unparalleled sculptors of antique Hellas. In the statues of ancient Greek athletes and demigods, we never find the tightly indrawn abdomen and outward arched chest, so common nowadays. Why? Because it is unnatural, inexpedient, and therefore not aesthetic.²⁸

In 1921 Muller tried to persuade the Danish Ministry of Education to introduce his system in the Danish primary and lower secondary schools. The Ministry responded to this by informing all schools that Muller’s system could be integrated into the gymnastic lessons if wished for by the teacher. Muller, however, was sceptical of the impact of this step and therefore sharply criticised the Ministry of Education. After all, the head of Danish school gymnastics, K.A. Knudsen, who really had the power to make Muller’s dream come true, was a fanatical devotee of Swedish/Ling gymnastics, and thus probably worked against Muller’s plans.²⁹

Muller’s criticism of traditional gymnastics paved the way for the ideal of a more relaxed male body. In the sports movement at the turn of the century the ideal of the tense male body was widespread. For instance, this ideal was very dominant in the first beauty contests for men in Denmark, organised by the *Dansk Athlet Union* for weightlifting, boxing and wrestling, which took place between 1902 and 1917 in Copenhagen.³⁰ Notions that in modern bourgeois culture women have always been the aestheticised and sexualised gender are thus mistaken: the first beauty contests in Denmark were in fact for men.

Muller participated in the ‘beauty contest’ of 1903 and won. The choice of Muller instead of one of the strong “body-builders” certainly wasn’t unaffected by the fact that the referees belonged to the same social class as Lieutenant Muller, who as mentioned had also studied theology at the University of Copenhagen. They were either medical doctors or sculptors and presumably preferred a less “vulgar,” muscle-bound and demonstrative form of masculinity. However, with regard to the mas-

27 Muller (1914); J.P. Muller, *My Army and Navy System of Free-standing Exercises: A Manual of Physical Training for Soldiers, Sailors, Constables and Others* (London: s.n., 1915), 17–20.

28 J.P. Muller, *The Daily Five Minutes* (London: s.n., 1923), 27.

29 Anne Lykke Poulsen, *Den kvindelige kvinde* (Copenhagen: Institut for Idræt, Københavns Universitet, 2005), 52–55; J.P. Muller, *What is Wrong with the Physical Education of our Children* (Copenhagen: s.n., 1927), passim.

30 Hans Bonde, “Vitalist Sport,” in *The Spirit of Vitalism: Health, Beauty and Strength in Danish Art, 1890–1940*, ed. G. Hvidberg Hansen and G. Oelsner (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2011), 88–105.

culine erotic ideal of the broad chest and the small hips,³¹ Muller's ideal came very close to that of the working-class sportsmen.³²

The great success of *My System* must be attributed partly to the fact that in a narrow, post-Victorian culture Muller dared to perform more or less naked in front of an audience and in photographs. Thus, Muller's books and displays could play a role as sexually stimulating but at the same time shielded by an aura of health, hygiene and naturalness. The appeal of a naked body to a person who most probably had never seen his own parents without clothes is not to be underestimated. However, in *My System for Ladies* from 1912 the female gymnast wore a bathing suit that covered almost the whole of her body.³³ Muller's books, his public displays of *My System* and the Danish beauty contests for men bear witness to the existence of a segregated cult of the nude male, at least in Denmark after the turn of the century. The nude female body was unacceptable in the media, probably because female nakedness was strongly associated with eroticism and pornography.

Another reason for Muller's success was that his gymnastics was open to all, while many other gymnastics systems became more and more nationalistic and even racially based as it happened to some extent in Germany. This cosmopolitan aspect probably forms the background for many Jews' fascination with Muller's system of whom not least Franz Kafka stands out.³⁴

The purification of mankind

The gist of Muller's philosophy was the importance of preventing illness through a process of cleansing the body. As already shown, Muller's ideal was the *Apoxyomenos* of Lysippos, not only because of *Apoxyomenos*' beauty, but to a high degree also because of his actions, "cleansing himself with a bronze scraper, after athletic exercises from oil, sweat and dust."³⁵ Unlike other systems of home gymnastics, Muller's system placed the bath in the middle of the exercises after the traditional exercises of bending and stretching and before his unique rubbing exercises.³⁶ However, Muller also widened the meaning of the word bath, so that every part of his system became part of the process of cleansing. The central idea of the open window during the exercises was meant as an 'air-bath.' The best place to exercise was outside in sunny weather, which Muller called 'air-bathing.' Muller also recommended not wearing hats, calling this wearing a 'hat of air.' To lie in bed without clothes was called wearing an 'air nightdress,' and so forth.³⁷

Muller became an apostle of the fresh air movement, which found many supporters after the turn of the century. In Germany, Austria and Switzerland he became a

31 Muller, (1927), 112.

32 Hans Bonde, "The Time and Speed Ideology: 19th Century Industrialisation and Sport," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no. 10 (2009), 1315–334.

33 J.P Muller, *My System for Ladies: Fifteen Minutes' Exercise a Day for Health's Sake* (Philadelphia, D. McKay, 1915).

34 Mark Anderson, *Kafka's Clothes: Ornament and Aestheticism in the Habsburg Fin de Siècle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

35 Muller (1905), 2.

36 See Peter Elfeldt's film from 1911 of Muller demonstrating his system, <http://www.danskkulturarv.dk/dr/gymnastik-i-1908/> (accessed November 30, 2017).

37 Muller (1927).

symbol for the members of the *Wandervogel*, or hiking, movement and the emergent light and air bath institutions. In Germany there was actually a phrase, *zu Mullern*, that is to engage in his rubbing exercises, a kind of 'auto-physiotherapy.' Muller's central idea, which found broad recognition, was that gymnastics in particular and hygiene in general had the purpose of cleansing and strengthening the 'inner body' with the help of fresh air, clean water and sunlight. Muller's gymnastic exercises were meant to increase the metabolism of the body, whereby the body would be cleansed from all the poisonous substances that, if not removed, would accumulate in the internal organs.³⁸

Muller's unique rubbing exercises (Figure 1) meant that people developed a growing awareness of, and identification with, their skin. Muller described the various phases and techniques of the bath in detail, which illustrates that many people did not know how to have a bath at that time. Every day, he said, one should rub one's skin, and ten of his eighteen exercises were rubbing exercises either with the hand or after the bath with a towel. The rubbing exercises basically were a form of skin gymnastics which aimed at removing all of the old exhalations of the body and increasing the circulation of the blood and thereby the metabolism of the body.

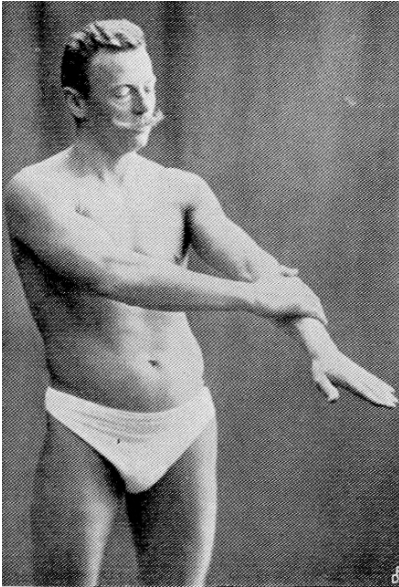


Figure 1. J.P. Muller performing his rubbing exercises. Source: J.P. Muller, *My System* (London: David McKay Publisher, 1905).

According to Muller, neither money nor status was the real mark of distinction but having a clean, decent and healthy body. For Muller the central 'organ' of the human body was the skin. Muller always described dirty skin in the most disgusting manner. In a description of unclean sportsmen Muller stated: "The pores of their skin were choked with clotted grease and dirt until they could not perspire, while their muddy complexions or flabby appearance were infallible signs of their unwholesome condition."³⁹ Muller's negative attitude towards unclean skin was based on the never-proven theory that the dirt of the body consists of waste matter and poisonous

³⁸ Muller (1915).

³⁹ Muller (1914), 25.

substances which are given off through the skin and, if not removed every day, can be partially absorbed again to poison the body. In the long run the dirt that was not removed would result in the “hygienic breakdown” of the unclean person.⁴⁰ This theory was propagated by many medical doctors though it came under attack after 1900 because of the growing understanding of bacteriology. Also, Muller’s fascination with the healing power of the sun was inspired by medicine or, more accurately, by the creator of “light therapy,” the Dane Niels Finzen, who received the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1903 for his discoveries.

The risk of poisoning the body, more than any other medical theory, could persuade people to have their daily bath and do their home gymnastics. Muller described the threatening bacilli in the most frightening way. Whereas in the past wolves, wild boars and robbers were the worst enemies, the “mortal enemies” of mankind now were said to be “the bacilli lurking in every corner.” Clean water, soap and exercises had to replace “the sword and the spear” as the main weapons in man’s fight against his enemies.⁴¹

In order to detect the degree of civilisation of a person, not the look of the clothes, but the smell of the skin became the central issue of Muller’s systems. In this respect the nose replaced the eyes as the central “social sense.”⁴² Muller’s theory that the body perspiration was poisonous meant that the unclean person not only “polluted” himself but also all other persons nearby, almost just as passive smoking is considered by modern medical thinking today. Muller, therefore, often agitated for the open window in offices, railway compartments and so forth. The smell of sterility became the most acceptable smell of all. Every old, personal smell was abandoned, and to allow such a personal smell was objectionable “to those others whose sense of smell has not been blunted by an unhealthy mode of life.”⁴³

Whereas in other times and cultures smell had often been a central way of perceiving a person, the nose now became the central filter, allowing no personal odour to pass. Muller’s perception of the polluting effect of the odours of the body seems to have been inspired by the popular theory in the nineteenth century called the miasmatic theory of disease. Diseases even as dangerous as the plague or cholera were perceived as being caused by a certain form of “bad air” or miasma—which is Greek for pollution. Today this theory has been replaced by the germ theory of disease.⁴⁴

Muller’s ideas of the importance of the clean skin were inspired by a general shift in nineteenth century European cultural history. As the French historian Georges Vigarello has demonstrated, traditionally in aristocratic culture it was important to keep up appearances by impressive cloths and the use of strong perfumes. In the words of Elizabeth Collingham in *Imperial Bodies* writing on the cleaning habits in London around 1800: “Cleanliness at the turn of the century was generally associated with clean linen rather than a spotless skin.”⁴⁵

40 Muller (1914), 23.

41 J.P. Muller (1907), 265. This book is a collection of some of Muller’s newspaper articles.

42 See, for instance Muller (1914), 16–19.

43 Muller (1905), 23.

44 Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

45 Elizabeth Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Existence of the Raj, c. 1800–1947* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 46.

However, during the early nineteenth century in France as in many other Western European countries, the bourgeoisie increasingly became interested in the hidden aspects of life and started the practice of taking a daily bath, emphasising a clean body and neutral, antiseptic odours.⁴⁶ Health now presided over aesthetics and clean skin more and more became a demarcation line between the individuals of bourgeois culture that became strongly preoccupied with the taboos surrounding all the fluids of the body.⁴⁷ The absence of odour in the intimate sphere now became a sign of class and good manners.⁴⁸ In this way the civilisation of the body became an important factor in creating the modern individualistic man with a clear sense of body limits.

Like other gymnastic systems around the turn of the century, Muller's system had health as its basic assumption. Gymnastics *per se* aimed at preventing or curing ailments, and thus the subtitle of *My System* was "15 Minute's work a Day for Health's Sake." Muller was aware that illness had very severe social implications, since the "race" as a whole was "degenerating."⁴⁹ It should be noted that 'race' in the Danish context was not understood in a racial or biological meaning of the word—as increasingly became the custom in Germany after 1900—but just as "the human race," not distinguishing between inhabitants in Denmark as "authentic population," Jews, Polish people (of whom many worked in Southern Denmark on the islands of Lolland and Falster) and so forth.⁵⁰

For Muller the process of hardening the body through the daily bath and all-round daily exercise was not only the individual's obligation towards himself but also towards society as a whole, since all other members of society had to pay for the sick person's reduced working capacity and the expensive health services.⁵¹ The cleansing and hardening of the body was also part of the creation of a new man by means of character building. The idea of stimulating the character of the young men from the countryside was inspired by the various sports imported from the UK. In the UK, sports were associated with the development of a form of protestant ethics. At many English public schools in the mid-eighteenth century the upper-class boys and young men were taught to put more emphasis on sports than on the academic subjects in order to build "character," that is to become hard, learn to never say die, and to be able to accept a defeat.⁵²

Through "muscular Christianity" the young British men were supposed to obtain the hardship and willpower that qualified them to manage the development of capitalism and the leadership of the great empire. At the boarding school Rugby the new "sports religion" was developed by the chancellor Thomas Arnold Rugby, who led the school from 1828 to 1842, and his message was diffused through Thom-

46 Georges Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness: Changing Attitudes in France since the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

47 Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process, Vol. I: The History of Manners* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969); Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process, Vol. II: State Formation and Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).

48 Corbin (1986).

49 See for instance Muller (1905), *passim*.

50 Lene Koch, *Racehygiejne i Danmark 1920–56* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1996), *passim*.

51 Muller (1905), 6.

52 James Anthony Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

as Hughes' novel *Tom Brown's school days* from 1857.⁵³ Muller was well acquainted with *Tom Brown's School Days*, which he mentioned as "this excellent book," and he recommended it to his readers, stating that "it is available in a very cheap version in Danish."⁵⁴

Through the inspiration from muscular Christianity, Muller was able to create an ideological foundation that united a Christian tradition of asceticism with his hardening sports training as part of the creation of a new ethical human type. Muller came from a family of ministers, studied theology and was himself destined for a clerical career. On the one hand, his work appeared to represent a break with the Christian Protestantism when he in his youth engaged in the body worship of early modern sports in Copenhagen in the late nineteenth century. On the other hand, the hard training he subjected himself to in countless disciplines, could be interpreted as an expression of a form of continuation of Christian asceticism. For Muller, sport became a compromise between Christianity and the devotion to the body, which culminated in his book *My System* from 1904.

Muller was also one of the first and main Danish agitators for eugenics. In this he was explicitly inspired by an international tendency represented by such names as the Swedish author Ellen Key, who won international reputation with her two volumes entitled *The Century of the Child* (1900), by the British author H.G. Wells' *Mankind in the Making* (1906) and finally by the Dutch doctor and author J. Rutgers' book *Raceforbedring* (Improvement of Our Race) published in 1908. In 1908, Muller published the book *Kønsmoral og livslykke* (Sexual Morality and the Happy Life). In this book, he took a quite liberal position by arguing strongly against the Christian churches' sexual morality and for free contraception and the legitimacy of sex before marriage between two people who loved each other.⁵⁵

In this book, however, Muller also proposed that municipal doctors should be authorised to prohibit "drunkards, epileptics and syphilitics" from having children. In the same way a clergyman ought to refuse to marry a "young and healthy bride" to an "alcoholic, tubercular or venereally infectious bridegroom." In addition, Muller interpreted homosexuality as an illness, and he proposed that gay men should not be allowed to enter the swimming facilities where they could be together with heterosexual men and boys.⁵⁶ In Muller's opinion a sound society would emerge if all the people whose only mission in the world was to be "outcasts and noxious animals" were weeded out. Eugenics would mean an increase in the number of a class of people who were characterised as "healthy, strong, intelligent, good, clever, industrious and enduring."⁵⁷ Muller's ideas on the improvement of the human stock led to an interest in all the things he believed were obstacles to human perfection. Having indicated the way to achieve a vital body, he included the care of the body in a project for improved social hygiene.

Muller's deliberations resulted in a vision of society where all the bad elements

53 Mangan (1981).

54 J.P. Muller "Om Terrænløb," *Dansk Idrætsblad* March 16, 1900.

55 Muller (1908).

56 Muller (1908).

57 Lars Henrik Schmidt and Jens Erik Kristensen, *Lys, Luft og Renlighed: Den Moderne Socialhygiejnes Fødsel* (Copenhagen: Akademisk forlag, 2004), 110.

had been purified away. The truth was that there was a surplus of one kind of people and a shortage of another kind: “For already now there are far too many sickly, unhealthy, feeble-minded, criminal, lazy and useless people.” In *Kønsmoral og livslykke* he proposed that illness consultants or hygiene inspectors should be engaged in the Danish parishes, and that they should be entitled to prohibit “demonstrably harmful child-breeding. These parish hygienic experts would then “in return provide instruction on the avoidance of fertilization.”⁵⁸ All in all, the rational basis of Muller’s combination of health and cleanliness is not to be denied, in as much as modern hygiene has made a great contribution to the disappearance of many disastrous illnesses. However, the achievements of modern hygiene were also used for the promotion of a much wider world view based on the idea of a rational, civilised and orderly life and even eugenics, to which the case of J.P. Muller testifies.

Niels Bukh and masculine revolt

Gymnastics and eroticism? I have no experience with or name for this. I mean, I can’t combine these two words with each other.⁵⁹

The Danish gymnastics pedagogue Niels Bukh (1880–1950), together with his performance teams of young gymnasts, became known as representatives of the people of Denmark. In terms of Danish popular culture of the countryside, Bukh and his gymnastics occupied a level equal to that achieved within the arts by Bournonville and the Royal Danish Ballet under Harald Lander’s internationally renowned leadership from 1932. The acrobatic and powerful male body that Bukh promoted became a symbol of the Danish nation far beyond Denmark’s national borders. Bukh showed his gymnastics to big audiences in remote settings as the Soviet Union, Manchuria, Korea and Japan in 1931, Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina in 1938, and South Africa in 1939. He also gave displays in the US in 1923, 1926, 1931 and 1939. Traditionally, gymnastics has been presented, not least in its Danish rural variant, as a relatively de-sexualised zone, complete with cold shower after training, where anxious parents might securely send their children far away from the temptations of the big city. But—as will be shown—gymnastics also had room for erotic, beckoning undercurrents.

Bukh’s early years were the prototype of a childhood and adolescence in a Grundtvigian farming community. His childhood home was beside the school, Vallekilde Folk high school, where his father was a teacher. Niels and his brothers and sisters went to the small, newly established Grundtvigian independent school, where emphasis was placed on the joy of living, songs and ‘the living word,’ a Grundtvigian tradition for awakening and enlightening the farming communities through a language filled with images rather than the ‘dead letters’ from a culture written words.

As a young man, Niels Bukh for many years taught Lingian gymnastics to local associations, whereby he achieved a reputation through his springtime displays. Since Bukh’s teams usually won, the various associations competed to get Niels Bukh as their trainer. The revolution in Niels Bukh’s conception of gymnastics happened whilst training a young men’s team in 1916 and 1917. Euphorically, he wrote to his

⁵⁸ Muller (1908).

⁵⁹ Niels Bukh in an interview, published in *Berlingske Tidende*, July 26, 1939.

students about the development of a new form of gymnastics, which in contrast to Lingian gymnastics would be a demanding, working gymnastics that would radically change young men's bodies. At a later point, measurements of the burn-off of calories in Bukh's gymnastics showed that it was a highly intensive form of gymnastics, especially when compared to Lingian gymnastics, but also when compared to dance and running.⁶⁰

Bukh did not believe that Lingian gymnastics was effective against true physical problems, such as those that marked young male farmers because of "the hard, often repetitive tasks they had to perform [...] The ordinary farm worker is stiff and bent in his back and shoulders, the muscles in his chest are short, those of his front are not suitable for work, and his hamstrings are too short, all a consequence of his hard labour, which early on makes him awkward and restricted in movement."⁶¹ Therefore, Bukh created his new so-called 'primitive' gymnastics (Figure 2). He deliberately chose the word "primitive" in order to emphasise the 'back to nature' or back to 'the natural body' elements of his programme. To combat the bodily stiffness of the young farm men, he applied techniques such as the so-called passive flexing. This was a form of stretching exercise in which one student would stretch out another's muscles and then push or press quickly and with great force. Niels Bukh's description of primitive gymnastics was: "One is seeking, in the quickest way possible, by strong rhythmic swings, flexing, twisting and stretching, passive or active [...] to get rid of stiffness, flabbiness and awkwardness."⁶²

The dynamic, primitive gymnastics, with its muscular contact between men, comprised an entirely new gymnastics concept. Bukh's primitive gymnastics went beyond the focus on physical posture by Swedish gymnastics by emphasising the method's potential for achieving suppleness. Indeed, suppleness became the main avenue to a general straightening and unfolding of the body. On top of this, there was Bukh's display gymnastics, in which the men working in pairs lifted, pulled and supported each other. Put briefly, Bukh revolutionised men's movement, contact and dress forms. The male gymnasts performed at one and the same time delicate and powerful movements.

During Bukh's gymnastics training sessions, the floor could become wet with sweat, and, with the elite gymnasts, sweat could be sprayed onto those who stood behind anyone doing violent arm swings.⁶³ The hard tempo made it impossible for muscles to become stiff while the exercise was underway. The gymnastics had a rhythmic, flowing character, and the practitioners' ability to give themselves wholly to the particular movement was fundamental.

The aim of the exercises was that the students, after several months of primitive gymnastics, would become so supple that they were qualified to begin practising display gymnastics, which Bukh preferred to call sports gymnastics. During the displays of primitive gymnastics, the male gymnasts were dressed only in an item known as the "little black," a type of boxer shorts inspired by the French gymnast educationist Georges Hébert (1875–1957), but shorter. The result was that Bukh's male gymnasts exposed their strong, well-trained, sweating and often sun-tanned torsos

60 Johannes Lindhard, *Den specielle gymnastikteori* (Copenhagen: Levin og Munksgaard, 1927), 110.

61 *Ungdom og Idræt*, March and April 1916.

62 Bukh in *Ollerup Højskoles Elevforening, Årsbog* (Ollerup: s.n., 1917), 89.

63 Cf. interview with Bukh-gymnast W. Andersen.

to the different audiences, which was an entirely new feature among adult men. The displays of sports gymnastics had the gymnasts dressed in white one-piece suits that were taken from Lingian gymnastics but made so tightly fitting that nothing regarding the genitals of the performers was left to the imagination, neither for Bukh nor for the spectators.



Figure 2. Niels Bukh's so-called primitive gymnastics with close body contact between the half nude young gymnasts in black boxer shorts. Source: Niels Bukh's archive at Ollerup Gymnastics high school.

Bukh's sports gymnastics was influenced by the Lingian system, but Niels Bukh had developed a series of new exercise forms, including the so-called "working in twos," where the exercise required the men to work in tandem.⁶⁴ For an example, one gymnast might sit on the shoulders of another and slowly, almost in surrender, lean back with arms outstretched to both sides. Another central position was when two men stood side-by-side, bowed heads towards each other and with outstretched arms took hold of each other's hands, after which they bent away from each other letting their arms describe a circle for the audience. It was precisely the dual combination of a strong muscular masculinity and feminine rhythm and elegance in movement that comprised the core of Bukh's men's gymnastics. If the feminine element achieved a general acceptance, it was due to its being counterbalanced by a strong masculine quality. Due to Bukh's exploration of extremes, his gymnastics for men was at one and the same time both more masculine and more feminine than any previous Danish gymnastics.

For a section of young men, primitive gymnastics became a type of rebellion, which rejected the older Lingian male ideal, which was more static and physically weaker. In his manifesto *Primitiv Gymnastik* (1922), Bukh claimed to have fulfilled the Lingian ambition for gymnastics that was to create "young men as beautiful as

64 Cf. Ejnar Skovrup, "Niels Bukh og hans Gymnastik," *Nær og Fjern* (1923).

the Greeks and with manly character.”⁶⁵ Bukh’s supporters maintained that the reason for the tough primitive gymnastics lay in the difference between the sexes. To quote one of Bukh’s pupils, primitive gymnastics was “in every way an entirely real-man’s gymnastics [...] It does not suit women or the weak, this is true. For them it would in every way be a ‘gymnastics of torture.’”⁶⁶

Bukh’s male gymnasts were supposed to be masculinised by the training. The girls, as well as the boys, could have an eye for the young men’s bodies. As one young girl gymnast said, “A lot of the ‘country clods’ got a ‘nice shape’ by doing Bukh’s gymnastics, especially one young man that all the girls took a shine to.”⁶⁷ In this vein, a male elite gymnast from Niels Bukh’s international team admitted the benefits: “We definitely had a certain advantage. But that’s something I never went in for [...] but there were certainly some who made use of what they had.”⁶⁸

In summary, gymnastics became a forum where the young men and women could meet under presumably reassuring conditions, but at the same time gymnastics allowed the two sexes to get a closer look at each other’s physical appearance at displays or at the parties held afterwards. Beyond this, Bukh’s choice of dress for the gymnasts of both sexes was so tight-fitting that anyone so inclined would have a clear idea of what they were hoping to get involved with. With regard to the female gymnasts this was made even clearer during movement which clearly revealed the shape of their breasts.

Love between men

For some years until 1920 Bukh had a relationship, much resembling a marriage, with his former student Alfred Jørgensen, who apart from becoming the school’s inspector was a trusted colleague and friend to the Gymnastics High School. It puzzled one of Bukh’s nieces why there was a double bed in Uncle Niels’s bedroom, and she asked her mother, Bukh’s sister, Kirstine Bækthøj, why that was. The mother answered, according to the niece, that the bed was for Niels Bukh and a man, whom she called “Niels Bukh’s wife.”⁶⁹

Only few students knew of Bukh’s sexual orientation. Although even Bukh tried to treat his homosexuality as an entirely closed subject, it is unthinkable that instructors at the gymnastics school were unaware of that side of Bukh’s nature. Bukh’s own mother and sister would tease him by calling him by the Danish girl’s name of Ebba, taken from his middle name Ebbesen.⁷⁰

Bukh’s cultivation of a masculine aesthetic, the many classical Greek statues of naked male youths at the school and even in Bukh’s private quarters, could indicate a quite positive relationship to his sexuality. Added to which is the fact that Bukh, at least until 1933, was not afraid of showing his affections for his partners in public and on school photographs.

One reason that Bukh was attracted by gymnastics was presumably because

65 Niels Bukh, *Primitiv Gymnastik*, (Ollerup: s.n., 1922).

66 *Ungdom og Idræt*, January 28, 1916.

67 Interview with Bukh-gymnast K.H. Gaardsted.

68 Cf. interview with Bukh-gymnast H. Mortensen.

69 Interview with Bukh’s niece E. Haastrup.

70 Interview with E. Haastrup’s daughter.

it provided him with a free space, where comradeship and a love of strong, well-formed young men could be pursued without raising suspicions of homosexuality. Moreover, we have evidence that he had relationships with his pupils.⁷¹ But bearing in mind the strict heterosexual moral norms of his time, his sexual orientation must have provided fertile soil for the anxiety of being discovered, which in one instance would have ruined his career as a gymnastics educationist, not the least since homosexuality was illegal until 1933 in Denmark on the charge of so-called sodomy.

Bukh's homosexuality likely played a role in his development of a new masculine aesthetic from 1916/17 in the field of gymnastics. It is hard to explain the development of Bukh's revolutionising gymnastics without taking into consideration his sexuality. As the sociologist Henning Beck puts it, homosexual men tend to cast a more direct glance at other men.⁷² Bukh undoubtedly experienced the male aesthetic differently from heterosexual men since he could also see men as objects of desire: and this helped him to evolve new and revolutionary men's exercises that were distinguished by both beauty and power, both masculinity and femininity.

There are striking similarities between Bukh's male aesthetics and the revolution in the inter-war period initiated by the likewise homosexual American dance choreographer Ted Shawn, who mainly selected his dancers from the universities and from sport.⁷³ Furthermore, there can be observed a parallel between Bukh's relations with his male friends and partners—who often became his close junior colleagues as gymnastics teachers—and relations between homosexuals in ballet such as between the ballet impresario Diaghilev and the dancer Nijinskij.

Bukh did not feel totally restricted by his homosexuality but, on the contrary, had connections to other homosexuals and actually made his school a free zone for homosexual artists. This was especially evident at the so-called Nordic Olympics which Niels Bukh arranged in 1935 attended by 14,000 gymnasts, 40,000 spectators and the Danish royal family.⁷⁴ Bukh collaborated, for instance, with the homosexual ballet dancer, Svend Aage Larsen, who was part of a show for 2,000 Danish spectators at the gymnastics high school in Ollerup prior to Bukh's participation in the Berlin Olympics in 1936.⁷⁵

From a sociological point of view, the gender-divided sports culture in modern society can be interpreted as a space where homosexuality is repressed to a large degree.⁷⁶ If homosexuality were to become present as a conscious possibility, sport with the prevailing sexual norms would no longer in the same way be able to function as a space where heterosexual men, too, can touch each other and pursue a sense of close masculine comradeship, because homosexuality would threaten to sexualise the relationships. The possibility of close physical and psychological contact in sport makes it an obvious zone for homosexual men and women to be close to heterosexuals of their own gender but it might render it necessary that their homosexual

71 Hans Bonde, "Niels Bukh's Gymnastics School in Denmark, 1912–1933: Gymnastics, Erotics, and Male Bonding," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 6 (2015), 800–14.

72 Henning Bech, *When Men Meet: Homosexuality and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

73 Ted Shawn, *Thirty-Three Years of American Dance* (Pittsfield: Eagle Printing & Binding Company, 1959).

74 Interview with Bukh's niece Inger Markvardsen.

75 *Årskrift for Gymnastikhøjskolen* (Ollerup: s.n., 1936).

76 Bech (1997).

orientation remains undisclosed.⁷⁷ Paradoxically, the taboos in rural Denmark made it easier for Bukh to keep his homosexuality concealed.

In the perspective of gymnastics, Bukh changed the stereotypical male expression in Ling rural Danish gymnastics from an almost military, relatively static and linear bodily expression in the direction of rhythmic movement and with a level of nudity and intimacy of the bodies that was until then unheard of in the Danish countryside. In doing so he made an important contribution to the personal emancipation of many young farming men.⁷⁸ In the aesthetic history of masculinity, it has often been male homosexual aestheticians, designers, musicians, dancers and so on who have opened new avenues for the expression of male emotions, and this was also the trademark of Bukh's achievement. His gymnastics was even criticised for being too 'feminine,'⁷⁹ which was a dangerous criticism for Bukh, who had to hide his homosexuality.

Bukh's relations with Nazi Germany

Bukh was very keen on expressing Danish national sentiment by portraying gymnastics as a collective expression of the bodily excellence of the Danish "imagined community."⁸⁰ He showed his gymnastics in many European countries, in USA and Canada, in Asian countries and in South Africa under the Danish flag, with Danish songs, H.C. Andersen story-telling and Danish folk dance, and in this endeavour he was actively supported by the Danish Foreign Service.⁸¹ However, he also flirted with National Socialism.

Bukh was very keen on experiencing Nazi Germany at first hand. In October 1933, he was invited to undertake a tour of Hungary and Austria with both a men's and a women's team, and he took the opportunity on both the outward-bound and the homeward journey to visit Berlin. On the trip home from Hungary, the troupe was invited by a section for physical education of the German national socialist teachers' federation to present a display in Berlin. On the day prior to the display, the troupe were shown around the city by a man from the German SA, who focused not least on the various mythical sites for German Nazism such as the Reichstag building, as well as the building being carried out for the coming Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936.⁸²

The German organisers gave Bukh a warm welcome, and must have known about Bukh's right wing political leanings. When his team entered a large gymnastics' stadium bearing the Danish flag, Dannebrog, they received a tumultuous reception from the around 3,000 uniformed spectators, primarily German Nazi teachers of physical education, giving 'Heil Hitler' salutes in traditional Nazi fashion. The display took place in the middle of the hall on a massive podium, surrounded by "young brown-shirted Nazis carrying swastika banners."⁸³

77 A general introduction to the theme of "homoeroticism" in sport is given in Arnd Krüger, *The International Politics of Sport in the Twentieth Century*, eds. J Riordan and A Krüger (London: 1999), 191–216.

78 Bonde (2015), 800–14.

79 Bonde (2015), 800–14.

80 Anderson (2006), 6.

81 Hans Bonde, "Nationalism in the Age of Extremes: Taking Danish Gymnastics to the World," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no. 10 (2009), 1414–435.

82 Niels Bukh in *Fyns Venstreblad*, October 29, 1933.

83 Kristian Krogshede, *Årsskrift for Gymnastikhøjskolen i Ollerup* (Ollerup: s.n., 1933), 47–49.

Returning to Denmark, Bukh was completely open about the process of forming a new set of opinions that this tour had instilled into his students. Bukh said that “[t]hose of my countrymen who, on the journey down, were not convinced about the order and capacity” that reigned in Germany became “certainly convinced by the return journey.” Bukh described how he had been asked by a German border guard whether the newspaper Bukh had in his pocket contained mostly lies or the truth. Bukh “replied calmly ‘mostly the truth,’ since it carries Hitler’s letter to the German people and his collected radio speeches.” The students and Bukh read “Hitler’s collected letters and radio broadcasts—a marvellous expression of an ideal and inspired coordination of home and foreign policy, and we, or at least I, felt that we stood before something here that was noble and true.”⁸⁴ Bukh’s affinity for Nazi Germany was apparent for his contemporaries. The correspondent of the Conservative newspaper *Nationaltidende*, who was present at the display given in Berlin, sent out a press release that landed, on 20 October, on the front page of his paper in an article entitled “Niels Bukh is Denmark’s Hitler – but he came into the world 20 years too early.”⁸⁵

Bukh’s position on Nazi Germany caused a press uproar in Denmark that should be evaluated in the light of the fact that Bukh provided a concrete occasion for a wider public discussion in Denmark about what was actually happening in Germany. The general groundswell caused by the Nazi seizure of power caused rumours to travel over the southern border about the true causes of the Reichstag fire, concentration camps, Germany’s withdrawal from the League of Nations, the creation of a Danish committee to help refugee Jewish intellectuals—which included Albert Einstein—the pressure on Austria’s Chancellor Dollfuss and the forthcoming ‘election’ in Germany (set for 12 November). On top of this, during the previous spring and summer period, a certain pressure had been applied to Denmark’s southern border through excitable public remarks by Nazis from the South Schleswig region who had been animated by the Nazi takeover of power. Although the authorities in Berlin at this time had little intention of disturbing the otherwise friendly relations to a small ‘Aryan’ nation to the north over the rights to govern the North Schleswig region, the commotion created a very vigilant attitude—not least in South Jutland—towards the Nazi regime.⁸⁶

The sharp criticism provoked a typical reaction from Bukh, who through a further radicalisation went on the offensive, and this time in an anti-Semitic direction as well. Towards the end of October, Niels Bukh submitted an account of “my view of the new Germany” to 12–14 daily papers and periodicals.⁸⁷ Bukh found it “hard for the many noble and valuable forces within the Jewish people, who must suffer in innocence” but if “such a gigantic task as the one undertaken by the new Germany be achieved at a fast pace” then:

84 *Berlingske Aftenavis*, October 28, 1933.

85 *Nationaltidende*, October 20, 1933.

86 Cf. Henrik Sandø Nissen, “Folkelighed og frihed 1933: Grundtvigianernes reaktion på modernisering, krise og nazisme,” in *Dansk identitetshistorie*, vol. IV, ed. Ole Feldbæk (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag 1992), 607–15.

87 *Berlingske Aftenavis*, October 28, 1933.

a distinction between the beneficial and less beneficial foreign elements was perhaps impossible, and unfortunate violence therefore difficult to completely avoid. It would have been different in a small nation where every person almost knows the other. If the new Germany requires all its damaging, foreign blood removed, then Germany must pay and bleed for it, but—trust in this—the operation is necessary and the pain worth it.⁸⁸

It might seem strange that Niels Bukh, a homosexual, could be an avid supporter of a system that would carry out the modern world's most barbaric assault on homosexuals and the elimination of a very strong homosexual culture that had existed in the large cities of the Weimar Republic. Bukh's 'visit' to Berlin took place, however, at a point when the Nazi terror against homosexuals was still in an embryonic state, and in the SA in particular there was a good deal of tolerance for homosexual friendships. But when Hitler liquidated the leaders of the SA in the so-called *Röhmputsch*, blaming them for a widespread homosexuality among the corps, this acted as a green light for further extremely violent persecutions of homosexuals. Bukh's visit occurred before that "night of the long knives," which took place on June 30, 1934.⁸⁹ Bukh may therefore have gained the impression that Nazism had less of a homophobic attitude than it really had. Perhaps the Nazi pursuit of male fellowship gave Bukh the feeling that, here, he was not an outsider but an integrated part of the people's fellowship.

Bukh's impression of Nazism had, however, a basis in the ambiguity of the Nazi conception of relations between men. On the one side, these relations were held high. On the other side, they certainly led to persecution as soon as the relationship crossed over into homosexuality.⁹⁰ The Nazi ideology contained a revolt against the cold, calculating relationships between men in bourgeois society. Instead, a strong feeling of loyalty, idealism and self-sacrifice was to be cultivated among groups of comrades, which was an essential building block for a military upbringing, and which was placed on a par with suitable historical all-male fellowships, such as the Knights Templars. Therefore, the Nazi hatred of the Freemasons fraternity should be seen against the background that it was regarded as a cosmopolitan, liberal, instrumental and class-divided bourgeois organisation, and it was in competition with the Nazi idea of *Männerbund*, or a league of men, such as the SS and the SA. The artist Josef Thorak was most instrumental in the visual mediation of heroic comradeship in the Third Reich.⁹¹

The notion of comradeship also played a crucial role in Bukh's gymnastics, not least in two men's intense collaboration in the very physically demanding and aesthetic working in pairs. To provide a symbol of comradeship, Bukh had a statue set

88 *Berlingske Aftenavis*, October 28, 1933.

89 Cf. the classic book on the persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany: Burkhard Jellonek, *Homosexuelle unter dem Hakenkreuz* (Paderborn: Verlag Schöningh, 1990), 95–100.

90 Klaus Theweleit indicates this opposition in his book *Männerphantasien* (Frankfurt: Verlag Roter Stern, 1977), 61–66. However, we know very little about men as a specific category in Nazi society. An attempt has been made, though, in Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann "Men in the Third Reich," in *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945*, ed. Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 267–303.

91 Cf. Bent Fausing, Steffen Kiselberg and Niels Senius Clausen, *Billeder af mændenes historie* (Copenhagen: Tiderne Skifter, 1984), 116–19.

up in 1937, called *fellowship*, which according to Bukh portrayed “two young men hurrying forward. The one has momentarily stumbled but the other stretches out a helping hand, while he continues to point forward towards the goal that they both struggle to attain.”⁹²

Nazism’s selection of a strongly anti-homosexual profile led to internal problems within the Nazi party—an organisation built up around men spending a great deal of time around each other, separated from women and children and, with the enormous priority set for sports and paramilitary training, in constant close physical contact with one another. Levels of homophobia and anti-homosexual legislation was constantly increased, almost as a form of pre-empted defence against fears that Nazi fellowships might have some elements of homosexuality about them. Nazism’s entire approach to male solidarity was also responsible for the much tougher regulations against male homosexuality than the regulations against lesbianism.

If the Nazis did draw up such a brutal policy towards homosexuality, it might have something to do with the fact that, in the first years of Nazi government, the widespread point of criticism in the anti-Nazi press against the *Männerbund* was that these leagues of men were based on homosexuality. With the murder of Röhm in 1934, the coupling of Nazism with homosexuality became less frequent in the German anti-Nazi press in exile.⁹³

In Danish Labour circles there was so much indignation at Bukh’s agitation on behalf of the Third Reich that it was decided untraditional means would be required. In the first instance, a group consisting of three newspaper journalists from the Labour press started investigating Bukh on Funen, doubtless in the hope that they could show that Bukh practised political propaganda at his high school. But they found something far more piquant. As part of the general polemic, the Labour newspaper *Socialdemokraten* had “received a series of notifications” with compromising material concerning Niels Bukh.⁹⁴ In short, they discovered that Bukh was homosexual and started to blackmail him politically to make him abstain from Nazi propaganda.

Bukh was under inhumane pressure and, because of the measures taken by the Labour figures including the Social Democratic Minister of Education, Frederik Borgbjerg, it would seem that a political hold on Bukh was established. Given that one of the proponents of the hard option, H.P. Sørensen, was editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Socialdemokraten* right up to 1941, there is no doubt that the paper continued in its strong desire to hinder Bukh’s political agitation. On several occasions *Socialdemokraten* went in hard against Bukh, who was clearly affected by the criticisms.

After the Labour restraints were applied, Bukh did not altogether renounce his opinions of the Third Reich in public, but he did put a strong curb on them. However, after some years Bukh felt confident enough to take up his relations with Nazi Germany again. The Nazi authorities on the other hand were so pleased with Bukh that they invited him to present displays in the Third Reich, rushed off to Bukh’s

92 Niels Bukh, *Årsskrift for Gymnastikhøjskolen i Ollerup* (Ollerup: s.n., 1937), 119.

93 Alexander Zinn, *Die soziale Konstruktion des Homosexuellen Nationalsozialisten* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 1998), passim.

94 Letter from H.P. Sørensen to Borgbjerg November 7, 1933, Privatarkiv nr. 37, Undervisningsministeriets gruppeordnede sager, Rigsarkivet.

little cult refuge in the North and introduced his gymnastics into German sports education. For the Nazis, Bukh's gymnasts were the incarnation of a perfection of the Aryan race.

During the German occupation of Denmark Bukh had hopes for the creation of a European bloc, based on a German victory, up until the spring of 1943. He laid plans for a Danish youth federation and a Danish labour service that could well have posed a threat to Danish democracy, given his pro-German attitudes. He entered negotiations—without the knowledge of the Danish government—with the head of the German *Reichsarbeitsdienst* for the introduction of a Danish labour service in April 1942. And we know, too, that he laid plans for a world rally in celebration of peace, to be staged after the expected German victory.

Bukh's vision was nothing less than to turn Ollerup and Denmark into a world centre for physical education and training. This was why he built on a large scale that horrified even his own architect. In the event of a German victory, all evidence indicates that Germany's little Aryan-cult centre in the North would have had an important role in the newly re-organised European culture. The struggle for control of the youth of Denmark would have had an entirely different outcome.⁹⁵

Though Bukh definitely had a great affinity with the totalitarian states, it should be remembered that he also gained recognition in democratic societies, which has not been the topic here. As a sole example, his tour of Great Britain in February 1937 may be mentioned. In the Royal Albert Hall two separate displays with orchestral music were sold out and presented to a public of around 7,500 spectators. According to *The Observer*, the young farm-lads made the Royal Albert Hall “boil over with excitement.”⁹⁶

All in all, the great paradox of Bukh's life is that he created a liberating male gymnastics that made the young men rhythmic and bodily audacious but in the end he tried to use it for totalitarian purposes. According to the chief architect for the Third Reich, Albert Speer, Hitler the former (failed) painter understood himself in the role of an artist much more than in that of a politician. And Nazism's enormous gravitational pull stemmed from a damnably competent aestheticisation of politics. Without a realisation of the power that a cult exerts, it is impossible to understand, let alone resist the appeal of Nazism to the human subconscious. Bukh was a master at playing on exactly these emotional strings. In this way his attempt to contribute his gymnastics to Danish national identity became a dangerous leaning towards a National Socialist interpretation.

Conclusion and comparison

The article has focused on the latent erotic dimensions of gymnastics which offer new inspiration to international research. It is remarkable that Denmark has produced two gymnastics educators with international impact who followed each other chronologically. Even more remarkable is the fact that both their systems had international ramifications, not least when it comes to the culture of masculinity through Bukh's many international displays and Muller's displays in Europe and the publication of his book *My System* in 1.5 million copies.

95 Hans Bonde, “The Struggle for Danish Youth: Fascism, Sport, Democracy,” *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26, no. 10 (2009), 1453–454.

96 Bonde (2009).

Of course Muller's and Bukh's erotic gymnastics systems did not emerge out of the blue. Muller turned his inspiration from the German Life Reform-movement into a very practical guide to daily exercise whereby he could bring central ideas of nakedness and "naturalness" out to the world at an until then unprecedented scale. Similarly, he created a transformation of core values of his other source of inspiration, the founder of modern bodybuilding, Eugene Sandow. Whereas Sandow praised the muscular development of the body, Muller focused on the clean skin and the training of the inner organs as a source of health. Niels Bukh was likewise in his celebration of the nakedness of young gymnastic men inspired by the French educationist Hébert and in his praise of rhythmic and plastic movements by the Finnish gymnastics teacher Elli Björkstén.

Today we speak of "the sexual revolution" as something that happened from about 1968 onwards, but it is obvious from the example of J.P. Muller and Niels Bukh alone that the first decisive change to the gendered male role did not come in our own times. There have been many revolts against prevailing sexual norms since the end of the Victorian era. It is evident that gymnastics has given the cultivation of nudity, touching and free movements in the Foucauldian sense an innocent touch that paved the way for an erotic liberation. The stories of Muller and Bukh hereby confirm the thesis of Allen Guttman that sport from the end of the nineteenth century and onwards has worked as a catalyst in the erotic field.

Muller created an amalgamation of on the one hand ascetic training and hardening of the body and on the other the erotic pleasure of nudity and self-touching. In this way Muller succeeded in creating his own synthesis of Protestantism and libertinism. Niels Bukh was like Muller raised in a Protestant home, although his upbringing was influenced by the brighter and more optimistic Grundtvigian variant. Ling gymnastic formed an important part of his childhood and youth, and from 1916/17 he used his phenomenal capabilities to create a new sweat-giving, rhythmic and aesthetic gymnastics that dressed the young, muscularly-defined men in only boxer shorts. Although he maintained his original protestant Christian beliefs and made the pupils and staff regularly attend sermons in the nearby church, he nevertheless launched a daring form of gymnastics that broke with all core concepts of the body in traditional versions of Protestantism. However, to Bukh this did not seem to pose a discrepancy.

Whereas Muller propagated his gymnastics as heterosexual and would exclude homosexuals from nude culture facilities, Niels Bukh as a homosexual could use his aestheticising glance at the young men to create totally new and beautiful choreographies just as the American ballet choreographer Ted Shawn did in the same period with his young male dancers. Besides the difference in the understanding of sexuality between Muller and Bukh, there was also the difference in time, since homosexuality was decriminalised in 1933 and Bukh thereafter lived in a more tolerant Danish culture than Muller.

Despite the fact that Muller and Bukh agreed on the importance of gymnastics in order to improve humanity there were significant differences between them. Muller hailed the individual through his home gymnastics while Bukh paid tribute to a group of young people though increasingly under the leadership of the great leader. Muller appealed to the urban population, while Bukh had his base in the countryside. Muller praised health through a comprehensive external and internal cleansing

of the body, whereas Bukh paid tribute to beauty. Muller worshipped skin as man's most important organ, while Bukh celebrated the flexibility of the body. Whereas Muller was a cosmopolite that addressed people of all nations, Bukh was more nationally oriented in his creation of a scheme of gymnastics that was interpreted as particularly Danish and rounded by Danish rural culture.

Bukh's nationalistic sentiments eventually became so extreme that he moved from an extreme right wing position towards a genuine veneration of National Socialism. In fact, J.P. Muller despite being contrary to Nazi ideology, flirted with eugenics, however not in the Nazi racial version in which people of a foreign race should be prevented from reproducing or worse.

The development from Muller to Bukh also reflected the general development in society where Muller's optimistic faith in the emancipation of the enlightened individual from disease and suffering before the outbreak of the Great War was replaced by Bukh's dreams about the robust collective that eventually culminated in the 1930's uniformity and veneration of the strong man. However, both of them contributed to the dissemination of the ideal of a relatively liberated and undressed body: Muller through the tireless performances on European soil and the sale of millions of his books, Bukh through displaying his ideas by traveling with his team of gymnasts across the globe.

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Interviews

54 interviews with people with firsthand experience from Niels Bukh and the gymnastics high school in Ollerup have been conducted between 1992 and 2000. The raw material is preserved at Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sports in Copenhagen.