

The Bosses Use of Sports

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THE capitalist class, its sport writers, its sport "leaders," constantly tell the sport-loving workers that "Sport is neutral." On the ball field, they say, every one is equal, Andrew Mellon's grandson and one of Andy Mellon's steel workers; the Harvard football player and the worker who slaves in the mill owned by the father of the football star.

Everywhere the illusion is peddled that sport is something "apart from politics," "above politics," etc. But is this so? Certainly not! Sport is no more neutral than, for instance, the movies.

Anti-Labor Company Sports

Sport is an instrument in the hands of the capitalist class to distract the attention of the workers from their daily needs and to keep them tied to capitalism. Moreover, sports often serves as a direct means of strike-breaking in the hands of the bosses.

Examples are numerous. In the city of Binghamton, through which I passed only a few weeks ago on my election tour, there are the great factories of the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Co. Nearby stands the Endicott-Johnson baseball field with a good set of stands, bleachers, etc. The president of the Endicott-Johnson Corporation, some years ago, built this baseball field for his employees and at the same time issued the slogan, "Where there is factory baseball there are no strikes." This practical individual knew the value of sports. He knew

the demoralizing effect of a number of company teams on some of his workers. He was investing in what he fondly believed to be another form of strike insurance.

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ANOTHER example: A few days before March 6, 1930, when there were demonstrations throughout the country for unemployed relief and insurance, Father Walsh, anti-Soviet liar, spoke before a crowd of 500 athletes in the New York Athletic Club, urging them to go down to the Union Square demonstration on March 6 and break up the workers' meeting.

In the present election campaign, the boss political parties are making good use of sports. A number of football stars have been gotten to endorse both Hoover and Roosevelt. Albie Booth, ex-Yale halfback, has sprung into national prominence by visiting Hoover and pledging the support of the "red-blooded sportsmen of America" to Hoover. Roosevelt's campaign managers, in retaliation, have hired the services of Joe Sovoldi, a former Notre Dame bruiser, and Mohler, a California football player.

The Socialist Party, thus far, has not been able to get any athletes to endorse it. Besides, "discretion is the better part of valor," for, as figures published in the Daily Worker on October 18 show, the Socialist rulers of Milwaukee have reduced the money spent on mass recreation from 82 cents per capita in 1930 to 65 cents per capita in 1931—with a consequent closing down of public gymnasiums, swimming pools, etc.