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concerned about the power of corporations." If Americans seem to be giving up on the national organizations, many are turning to their local counterparts—to groups that stress personal services. These organizations' offerings range from the "redress assistance" of local media "action lines" to the information pools and bargains of buyer co-ops.

In sum, say the authors, the American public is shifting from its past role as "cheering spectators" to participation on the community level.

Don't Blame the Japanese

"Japanese Steel in the American Market: Conflict and Causes" by Kiyoshi Kawahito, in *The World Economy* (Sept. 1981), Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co., Box 211, 1000 AE Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

In 1976 and 1977, American steelmakers complained strongly about the "predatory dumping" of Japanese steel on the American market. Capitalizing on lower labor costs and friendly government subsidies, the Japanese were out to wreck the American steel industry by undercutting American prices—or so the charge went. Kawahito, a professor of economics at Middle Tennessee State University, argues that the competitive advantage of Japanese steel results not from unfair trade practices but from the Japanese ability to produce cheaper steel.

The story of how the Japanese acquired that ability is a miniaturized version of Japan's struggle for postwar economic recovery. In 1956, before the United States became a net importer of steel, producing a ton of the metal cost the Japanese \$8 more than it did the Americans. By 1960, the Japanese had reversed the situation and could make a ton for \$32 less. By 1976, their cost advantage was \$120.

The Japanese government was not responsible for the turnaround. (Indeed, Tokyo has actually hurt steelmakers with its pampering of farmers and support for the faltering coal-mining industry.) Japanese steelmakers became competitive by constantly monitoring technological innovations around the world and then adopting them. They were helped also by the declining relative costs of buying and delivering raw materials. This was not simple luck: During the 1950s and '60s, Japanese steelmakers helped lower those costs by finding and exploiting overseas iron mines, joining in designing new bulk carriers, and constructing new steelworks along their seacoasts. And, true enough, low labor costs provided an additional boost: In 1976, the Japanese hourly labor cost was \$5.25, less than half the U.S. figure of \$12.14.

The U.S. steel industry is in for harder times, says Kawahito. Over the next few years, the newly industrializing nations, paying much the same prices for resources as the United States does, but far lower ones for labor, will rapidly expand their steelmaking capacity. American steelmakers will simply not be able to match their prices. Thus, he concludes, the best policy in the United States would be not to mount a

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futile attempt at full-scale "revitalization" of steel but to plan for an "orderly contraction," scrapping outmoded plants while upgrading those that now are most competitive.

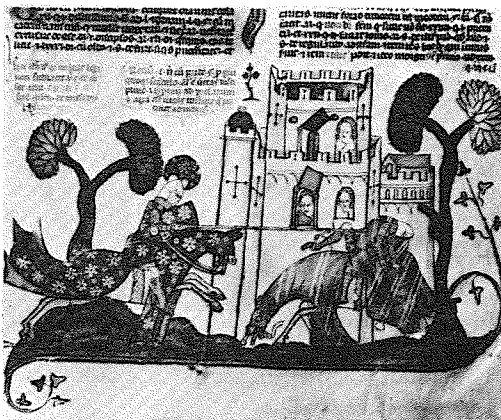
SOCIETY

*Sports Fans
in History*

"Sports Spectators from Antiquity to the Renaissance" by Allen Guttman, in *Journal of Sport History* (Summer 1981), North American Society for Sport History, 101 White Building, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa. 16802.

Mindlessly partisan, doltishly passive, prone to abusiveness, drink, and riot—such has been the image of the sports fan for hundreds of years. Tertullian, the second-century Church Father, railed against the excesses of the Circus-goer. More recently, neo-Marxists have condemned Western spectator sports as a dehumanizing sop to worker discontent. Guttman, a professor of American Studies at Amherst, looks at sports aficionados in history.

In the classical Greek city-state, participation in games was an expression of citizenship; and, as the skimpy seating in early stadia suggests, many of those who came to observe also came to play. Though the atmosphere was probably not "quietly literary," the games were still sedate enough to allow for the recitation of poetry. This began to change even before Roman influences contaminated the games, as professional athletes came to dominate Greek sports festivals. By the second century A.D., spectators had acquired a nasty reputation: "When



*Set in countryside,
12th-century
tournaments were
mortal battles waged by
unruly parties of
knights. By the 16th
century, weapons had
been blunted and stands
erected for the ladies.*

*From Pageantry of Sport:
From the Age of Chivalry to the Age
of Victoria by John Arlott and Arthur Daley.
Paul Elek Productions, London, 1968.*