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GERMAN-POLISH RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FIELD OF SPORT – FROM THE LONG CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY – AN OVERVIEW

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Abstracts

Topicality. The development of sports and physical education have become one of the important instruments for the economic modernization and development of civil society in Poland and Germany. Sport discourse between Germans and Poles before World War I is a discourse of alienation and national conflict between the countries. Despite the difficulties of post-war formation, countries were able to develop and intensify sports activities, which became key in establishing cultural and social relations, integrating them into the European space. **The Aim of the Research** is to determine the international nature and specificity of German-Polish sports relations through a historical and legal analysis of their origin and formation on the European continent. The following research methods were used in the paper: analysis of literary sources in sports and physical education, methods of comparative analysis, systematic approach, historical method. **The Results of the Research.** A retrospective analysis of sports, in particular the football experience of Germany and Poland in the post-war period and to the present, showed its importance in the development of international relations of both countries, as evidenced by a sufficient number of sports games, competitions, football matches, and as a result – reaching mutual understanding between peoples and successful bilateral cooperation. **Conclusions.** In the postwar period, the factors that led to an increase the role of sports and physical culture in society were preserved in Germany and Poland. At the same time, the tendency to intensify the intervention of state structures, political parties, public and regional organizations in spreading physical culture and using it for their own interests, including as a means of ideological influence, was clearly manifested. Physical education developed in close dependence on the political and economic conditions of these countries. At the same time, democratic transformations in Eastern Europe have led to the emergence of new trends in physical education and sport.

Key words: sport, football match, sports game, sports club, Germany, Poland.

Дітхельм Блекинге. Німецько-польські спортивні відносини – із давніх часів до сьогодні (огляд). **Актуальність.** Розвиток спорту та фізичного виховання стали одними із важливих інструментів економічної модернізації та становлення громадянського суспільства Польщі та Німеччини. Спортивний дискурс між німцями та поляками до I світової війни – дискурс відчуження та національного конфлікту між двома народами. Незважаючи на труднощі післявоєнного становлення, країни зуміли розвинути та активізувати спортивну діяльність, що стало ключовим у встановленні культурних та соціальних відносин, їх інтеграції до європейського простору. **Метою дослідження** є визначення міжнародного характеру та специфіки німецько-польських спортивних відносин за допомогою історико-правового аналізу їх зародження й становлення на Європейському континенті. У роботі використано такі **методи дослідження:** аналіз літературних джерел зі спорту та фізичного виховання, методи порівняльного аналізу, системного підходу, історичний метод. **Результати дослідження.** Ретроспективний аналіз спортивного, зокрема футбольного, досвіду Німеччини та Польщі в післявоєнний період і до сьогодні продемонстрував його значущість у становленні міждержавних відносин обох країн, про що свідчить достатня кількість проведених спортивних ігор, змагань, футбольних матчів і, як результат, – досягнення взаєморозуміння між народами та успішна двостороння співпраця. **Висновки.** У післявоєнний період у Німеччині та Польщі збереглися фактори, що зумовили зростання ролі фізичної культури в житті суспільства. Одночасно чітко проявилася тенденція до посилення втручання державних структур, політичних партій, громадських і регіональних організацій у поширенні фізичної культури та використанні її у своїх інтересах, у тому числі як засобу ідеологічного впливу. Фізична культура розвивалася в тісній залежності від політичних й економічних умов цих країн. Водночас демократичні перетворення в Східній Європі, призвели до появи нових віянь у фізичному вихованні та спорті.

Ключові слова: спорт, футбольний матч, спортивна гра, спортивний клуб, Німеччина, Польща.

Дитхельм Блекинг. Германо-польские спортивные отношения – с давних времен до сегодня (обзор). **Актуальность.** Развитие спорта и физического воспитания стало одним из важных инструментов экономической модернизации и становления гражданского общества Польши и Германии. Спортивный дискурс между немцами и поляками в Первой мировой войне – дискурс отчуждения и национального конфликта между двумя народами. Несмотря на трудности послевоенного становления, страны сумели развить и активизировать спортивную деятельность, стало ключевым в установлении культурных и социальных отношений, их

интеграции в европейское пространство. **Целью исследования** является определение международного характера и специфики немецко-польских спортивных отношений при помощи историко-правового анализа их зарождения и становления на Европейском континенте. В работе использованы следующие **методы исследования**: анализ литературных источников по спорту и физическому воспитанию, методы сравнительного анализа, системного подхода, исторический метод. **Результаты исследования.** Ретроспективный анализ спортивного, в частности футбольного, опыта Германии и Польши в послевоенный период и сегодня, продемонстрировал его значимость в становлении межгосударственных отношений двух стран, о чем свидетельствует достаточное количество проведенных спортивных игр, соревнований, футбольных матчей и, как результат, – достижение взаимопонимания между народами и успешная двустороннее сотрудничество. **Выводы.** В послевоенный период в Германии и Польше сохранились факторы, обусловившие рост роли физической культуры в жизни общества. Одновременно четко проявилась тенденция к усилению вмешательства государственных структур, политических партий, общественных и региональных организаций в распространении физической культуры и использовании ее в своих интересах, в том числе как средства идеологического воздействия. Физическая культура развивалась в тесной зависимости от политических и экономических условий этих стран. Вместе с тем, демократические преобразования в Восточной Европе привели к появлению новых веяний в физическом воспитании и спорте.

Ключевые слова: спорт, футбольный матч, спортивная игра, спортивный клуб, Германия, Польша.

Nationalism

In the 19th century sport on the European continent developed in the context of national movements especially in Eastern Europe [1]. This was also true for that part of the former Polish state which had been allocated to Prussia after the division of Poland: after the foundation of the German Reich in 1871 with Prussia as the dominant state, the Polish part of the population began to mobilise on a national(ist) basis. This was a reaction to the efforts of the Reich to impose a policy of ethnic homogenisation that meant germanisation, which was particularly directed against Catholic Poles [2].

By contrast the Polish part of the population began a process of economic modernisation and began to organise itself along the lines of a Polish civil society [3]. In this process the Poles took up an idea from Czech Prague and set up an organisation which linked a physical culture with a national culture or nationalist intentions under the sign of the falcon or «Sokol» as it was known in Polish [4]. From its foundation in Inowrocław in 1884 the Sokol became a part of the Polish civil society in the German Reich. It was not long before an umbrella organisation for Sokol was set up in Poznań (1893), and after a short period of hesitation it directed its efforts towards the Polish National Democracy (Narodowa Demokracja), a political party with national Polish solutions for the problems of society. So it issued appeals to Poles in all three divided areas, the German Reich, Austria/Hungary and czarist Russia, and the Diaspora. The Poles made no attempt to conceal that their ultimate aim was to re-establish the Polish state. The national Polish sporting movement also organised itself in Berlin and the Ruhr area, as well as with Polish immigrant minorities in the smaller industrial areas in the German Reich [5].

From the point of view of the Prussian German administration Polish athletes had deliberately put themselves on the side of the so-called «enemies of the Reich», i.e. on the side of groups whose aim was to create a mass opposition to all the homogenisation policies of the Reich. The opposing attitudes of Polish athletes, of German athletes and other protagonists caught up in nationality struggles were therefore set on the road to conflict. The upshot was not only conflicts but also a hermetic separatism which debarred any sporting meetings or common celebrations. Sport under the aegis of a nationalist-cultural gymnastic movement – the Germans called it «Turnen» – effectively meant ethnic exclusion. Thus, before the First World War in an age where sporting organisations embodied the aspirations of a nation, sporting discourse between Germans and Poles was essentially a discourse of exclusion and national conflict [6].

Sport in a Border Area: the Case of Silesia

The restoration of the Polish national state after the First World War led to the creation of national minorities especially in the border areas of Poland. Now Germans were in the minority. In the years between the two world wars Poland was regarded as the most multicultural country in Europe with huge Jewish, Ukrainian and German minorities – one third of the population [7]. In Silesia the First World War had resulted in the division of the region into the autonomous Wojwództwo (or county) of Polish Upper Silesia and German Lower Silesia. The border between the two ran right through the middle of the region whose inhabitants were probably more enthusiastic about football than anywhere else in Europe [8]. The Silesian Football Association was set up in the Polish county of Silesia as early as 1920. It underlined its claims to autonomy by rapidly setting up its own football team. After 123 years of division of Poland, matches like the first ever game against

Czarni Lwów from Galicia in June 1920, which they lost by 3 goals to 8, were used to promote the integration policies of the Second Republic.

The nearly unknown twenty matches which took place against teams from the German part of Silesia between 1924 and 1939 were little other than an expression of national competitiveness. The first game in Katowice on the 7th of December 1924 ended in a three-all draw. Games between teams from the two areas became even more potentially explosive after the Nazis seized power in Germany; and a match in the Hindenburg stadium in Bytom which ended in a nil-nil draw, drew a crowd of 20.000. In September 1935 a representational team from the Wojwództwo won a remarkable match in Katowice by nine goals to one. The last match, on the 8th January 1939 took place before a meagre crowd of 4.000 in the Hindenburg stadium in Bytom and ended in victory for the Poles by 5 goals to 3 [9].

Inclusion through Football

During the Weimar Republic, the sport organisations of the Polish diaspora in the German Reich were on the road to assimilation [10]. After the First World War the multi-ethnic dimension of football became increasingly important in the Ruhr area, the long-established centre for immigrant Polish workers and also the Polish nationalist Sokół movement. Passive and active members with Polish names can now be found in many clubs in the area, for example, Rot-Weiß Essen. The first members with Polish names joined the club in 1919 and some of them also became officials or employees. Indeed Poles made up around 10 % of the membership until 1939. In 1931 the club engaged a groundsman by the name of Hermann Greszick, who promptly changed his name to Kress one year later in 1932. Changing one's name was a clear sign of the development towards social assimilation and there was no alternative to this development. The same holds true for members of the famous Schalke 04 football club, where Zurawski became Zurner, Regelski Reckmann, Czerwinski Rothardt and Zembrzyki became Zeidler. In this way around 240.000 Polish or Masurian people living in the Ruhr area had germanised their names by 1937 [11]. It is therefore all the more astounding that this process seems to have been forgotten in the collective consciousness of the nation. Indeed scarcely anyone seems to be able to remember neither the time when ethnic sports clubs existed in the Ruhr nor the the players of Polish or Mazurian origin as members of German clubs - before civilisation broke down in the Third Reich. Thus there was no narrative to explain the reason for the «foreign» names in the German National football team Also the field of sport was dominated by the «suggestion of an absence of history» [12].

The Sporting Mask of Hypocritical Peace. International Matches between Germany and Poland from 1933 to 1938

Even more surprising than the Silesian duels were the five international matches between German and Poland which took place between 1933 and 1938 [13]. Two of them were in Warsaw in 1934 and 1936 and the other three in Germany (Berlin in 1933, Breslau in 1935 and Chemnitz in 1938) in front of crowds of up to 60,000. To cater for the crowds the stadium in Warsaw even had to be enlarged from a capacity of 32,000 to 40,000. The overall result for the Germans was positive, with four victories and one draw. But even more remarkable for both sides was the fair play on the pitch and the fairness of the reports. For both nations international matches had an eminently political significance and this was the reason for the almost annual fixture. During the period when the Nazi regime was trying to stabilise the country and at a time when it was militarily weak and in the process of rearming itself Germany was interested in pursuing a policy of détente with Poland in order to avoid provoking a possible alliance between France and Poland. The upshot was a German-Polish bilateral treaty of non-violence signed in 1934 which was to be valid for the following ten years, and which also seemed to guarantee the Poles a period of peace and security. In this light we can understand more clearly the impeccable behaviour of the athletes on the sports field, the clubs and the media [14].

Having said that the Germans clearly felt themselves to be superior to their neighbours who had become a nation state much later in history. In 1935 the Germans even played two international matches in which they fielded two different teams on the same day – one against Poland which they won one-nil, and the other against Estonia (five-nil). By contrast Polish journalists noted «the lack of a tradition of victory» [15] on their side, a psychological momentum which evoked Poland's profound lack of security caused by the fact that the nation has been the loser over a long period of modernisation, even in the case of modern sports.

In May 1939 in the prelude to the outbreak of war, the masks of sport were removed and the head of the Reich sports chamber Hans von Tschammer und Osten banned German athletes from competing in Poland.

From the Post-War Period to European Integration – from the «Water Battle» to Polonia Dortmund

Germans are not the only ones who talk about a football miracle: in the German case it was the so-called «Miracle of Berne» when the German team surprisingly won the World Cup in 1954.

Almost twenty years later the Poles would also celebrate their own miracle: a draw against England at Wembley which ensured that the outsiders, the Polish team would travel to the World Cup finals in Germany in 1974. This was the start of the dream decade for the Polish national team, a period of sporting success which gave not only Polish football but the whole nation a new sense of pride and prestige [16].

The so-called «water battle» in Frankfurt in 1974 has even been turned the stadium into a place of remembrance for both teams, complete with its own mythology and conspiracy theories. The last game in the preliminary round of this particular group was between the host nation, Germany and the Polish team and the result would decide which team would proceed to the final round of the 1974 World Cup. Shortly before the start of the match the heavens opened and the field was flooded to such an extent that it was practically unplayable. Nonetheless the game began after a 30 minute delay. The Polish team who were noted for their speed were naturally handicapped by having to play on such a wet surface and lost the game one-nil despite their clear superiority. Back home in Poland the whole nation was outraged that their team had lost under such grotesque circumstances [17].

The German team went on to win the tournament. The Polish team earned great sympathy in Germany not only for their brilliant play during the tournament but also for the fact that they ended the championships in third place after defeating the team from Brazil. The mass daily newspaper, the «Bild Zeitung» praised the dynamic Poles and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt even invited the team to a banquet. In doing so Schmidt continued the policy of his Foreign Minister Walter Scheel who had personally congratulated the Poles after their success at Wembley. The «Ostpolitik» laid down in the 1970 Warsaw Treaty bore fruit but the Cold war prevented a broader development of Polish-German relations especially in the field of scientific research and sport history [18].

First since the revolutionary spring of nations in Eastern Europe 1989/90 following the Polish revolution in 1980 and the German reunification there are organised attempts to overcome language barriers and set up a dialogue between the historians. The 2012 European Championship in Poland and the Ukraine has given scholars a new boost, and a conference in Berlin finally unrolled the history of German-Polish football relationships [19]. As early as 2011 in a conference at the Wannsee Memorial House scholars were discussing names like Kusociński, Lokajski, Czech and Marusz, completely unknown summer and winter sports athletes who had fought in the resistance against the Nazis and who were utterly unknown in both German states before the German Reunification [20]. The Communist GDR had never bothered about trans-national sporting history and although Germany was divided at the time it was united in one aspect: its ignorance with respect to the German-Polish relations in sport (but not only in sport).

Things have changed radically since then. The best example occurred April 2013 in the semi-finals of the European Club Championship when Borussia Dortmund, known in Poland as Polonia Dortmund, has won over the star team from Real Madrid by four goals to nil. All four goals were scored by the Polish centre forward Robert Lewandowski and the Dortmund team also included the Polish captain Jakub Błaszczykowski and the right back Łukasz Piszczek. Not only the Germans but the whole of Poland celebrated the victory as if it were their own and the headlines in the newspapers and on television were full of pride [21]. This was the same when the German national-team won the World Championships in Brazil in 2014 with players from Polish immigrant surroundings. The Polish newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* described the victory of the German team as «an extra satisfaction for us» (meaning Poland), [22] when it noted that the record goal scorer in the history of the world championships was the Polish-born Miroslaw Klose.

In October 2014 in the shadow of the match between Poland and Germany in Warsaw (the Poles won the first time in history against the German World-Champions) there was organised in the German Embassy in Warsaw a Polish-German Dialogue about sport history and in September 2015 when the two teams met again in Frankfurt the dialogue has been continued in the historical town hall of Frankfurt the so called «Römer». In 2016 the teams met in a qualification group during the European Championships in France and Poles and Germans celebrated in the same time the 100 birthday of Ernst Willimowski. The player scored for the Polish and the German National Football Team, he is a remembrance place for both Germans and Poles and could be a bridge between the nations [23].

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