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Socio-political, Economic and Image-related Aspects of Representational Sports Investments in the Second Republic of Poland with Particular Emphasis on Warsaw

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Społeczno-polityczne, gospodarcze i wizerunkowe uwarunkowania budowy reprezentacyjnych inwestycji sportowych w II Rzeczypospolitej ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Warszawy

Streszczenie

Po odzyskaniu przez Polskę niepodległości powstały nowe możliwości finansowania polskiego ruchu sportowego. Zaowocowało to stworzeniem pierwszych społecznych, samorządowych i państwowych rozwiązań w zakresie finansowania sportu. Możliwości wspierania ruchu sportowego środkami samorządowymi i państwowymi pozwoliły w znacznej mierze pokonać istotną przeszkodę dla rozwoju sportu w II Rzeczypospolitej, jaką był brak odpowiedniej liczby obiektów sportowych. Proces ten był szczególnie intensywny w latach 1926–1929 ze względu na klimat gospodarczy i polityczny. W okresie międzywojennym powstało kilka reprezentacyjnych obiektów o ran-

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dze międzynarodowej. Głównym lub jedynym inwestorem w tego typu przedsięwzięciach było państwo, które dostrzegło korzystne konsekwencje rozwoju sportu wyczynowego i organizowania międzynarodowych imprez sportowych dla promowania wizerunku kraju na forum międzynarodowym. W przypadku obiektów sportowych o znaczeniu lokalnym i regionalnym inwestorami często były organizacje samorządowe lub społeczne oraz kluby sportowe. Po 1926 roku na ogół realizowały one projekty, zabiegając o wsparcie środkami państwowymi. Inwestowanie w tego typu infrastrukturę pozwalało poprawić kondycję fizyczną i stan przysposobienia wojskowego społeczeństwa. Duże, reprezentacyjne stadiony i urządzenia sportowe powstawały niemal wyłącznie ze środków publicznych, ewentualnie w formie partnerstwa publiczno-prywatnego. Można postawić tezę, iż Państwo było głównym sponsorem rozwoju sportu polskiego w okresie międzywojennym, szczególnie w zakresie tworzenia monumentalnej infrastruktury sportowej o znaczeniu międzynarodowym.

Słowa kluczowe: infrastruktura, sport, inwestycje, finansowanie, II Rzeczpospolita.

Abstract

After Poland regained its independence, Polish sports achieved beneficial conditions for development. It resulted in the creation of the first community and government sports management solutions. The opportunity of the State's financial support helped to overcome one of the significant obstacles to the development of sports at that time – the lack of an adequate number of sports facilities. This process was incredibly intensive during the years 1926–1929 due to the economic and political circumstances. Several representative facilities of international importance were erected during the interwar period. The main or the only investor in this type of projects was the State, which was aware of the beneficial consequences of sports for promoting its image on the international forum. Local and regional investors in sports facilities often included the self-government or community organisations and sports clubs. Even then, they usually completed their projects with the support of state funds. It was the State – independently or as a principal partner in the public-private partnerships - that was the main sponsor of sports in the Second Republic of Poland, especially in terms of the symbolic facilities of international significance.

Keywords: sporting infrastructure, investments, funding, the Second Republic of Poland.

Introduction. An outline of Warsaw and the history of Polish sports before 1918

The date that symbolises the beginning of modern sports on the territory of Poland is 7 February 1867, when the first outlet of the 'Falcon' Gymnastics Society was built in Lviv. The 'Falcon' [Sokół] promoted physical education through physical activities based on the achievements of the methodology of German and Swedish gymnastics. They also organised cultural and educational events, such as lectures, theatre plays etc., to celebrate national anniversaries. Towards the end of the 19th century, modern Anglo-Saxon sports paradigms and disciplines started reaching the Polish Falcon nests, primarily through Germany.¹

¹ E. Małolepszy, Z. Pawluczuk, *Zarys dziejów Sokolstwa Polskiego w latach 1867–1997*, Częstochowa 2001, p. 298.

During that period, the elite sports associations for adult members of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie were created, particularly for the circles that had a large influence in the Kingdom of Poland, where the Falcon Gymnastics Society had few development opportunities due to political limitations.² The turn of the centuries was also when the first sports parks and gardens for school youth were created in Polish lands, executing the extra-curricular model of physical education through sporting competitions, especially in team sports, including football, based on English sports parks. The person to initiate their creation was a physician from Cracow, dr Henryk Jordan, considered the Polish pioneer of modern physical education.³ Reception of current sports paradigms was accelerated by creating the first structures called sports clubs – sports associations that had their authorities, statutes and legal personality. The first clubs were made in the Polish lands in the years 1903–1906 in Lviv (‘Lechia’, ‘Pogoń’, ‘Czarni’) and then in Cracow (‘Cracovia’, ‘Wisła’), later in Warsaw (‘Korona’, ‘Polonia’) and in other cities. Before the First World War, physical education and sports were already familiar in Poland, even though their social impact was undoubtedly far from universal. However, the existing Polish sports movement had relatively modest material support. Sporting facilities, which were located almost only in large cities like Cracow, Lviv or Warsaw, were generally sparse, and their technical condition left a lot to desire.⁴

Regaining the independence of the Polish State was also a breakthrough moment for the development of Polish sports. Sports clubs could now be registered and operate lawfully, and nothing was in the way of establishing sports management structures. The Polish Olympic Games Committee was established in 1919. That, however, did not mean that the course of this process was progressing without any trouble. One of the most severe barriers hindering both obtaining mass popularity of exercising and increasing the best athletes training level was the lack of proper quantity and quality of sports facilities.

The date that is considered to mark the beginning of the history of sports in Warsaw is 1878. In that year, Warsaw Rowing Society [Warszawskie Towarzystwo Wioślarskie – WTW] was established. This Association, along with the similar ones established in the following years – Warsaw Cycling Society [Warszawskie Towarzystwo Cyklistów – WTC, 1886] and Warsaw Skating Society [Warszawskie Towarzystwo Łyżwiarskie – WTL, 1893] played a unique role in the broadly understood popularisation of sports among upper and middle class in Warsaw. Societies managed to organise their sporting facilities – WTC’s cycling velodrome Dynasy (est. 1892),⁵ WTL ice skating rink in Dolina

² S. Wilk, *Warszawskie Towarzystwo Cyklistów*, “Roczniki Naukowe AWF w Warszawie” 1977, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 293–306; I. Gryś, *Warszawskie Towarzystwo Wioślarskie*, “Wychowanie Fizyczne i Higiena Szkolna” 1982, vol. 7, no 1, pp. 276–279.

³ R. Wroczyński, *Henryk Jordan – propagator gier i zabaw ruchowych*, Warszawa 1975, p. 32.

⁴ J. Chełmecki, S. Wilk, *Zarys historii sportu*, Warszawa 2013, p. 344.

⁵ P. Kubkowski, *Sprężyści. Kulturowa historia warszawskich cyklistów*, Warszawa 2020.

Szwajcarska, WTW's rowing harbour were one of the few sporting facilities in Warsaw before 1914. The beginnings of youth sports in Warsaw were associated with creating the sporting gardens – similar to a certain extent to the Jordan's Park in Kraków – established in 1899 thanks to the funds allocated in his will by a member of Warsaw's bourgeoisie Wilhelm Ellis Rau.⁶ The largest and most important of them was called Agricola. Similar processes could be observed in other large cities of the 2nd Republic of Poland.⁷ In there, 1906 the Warsaw Sports Club [Warszawskie Koło Sportowe – WKS] – the first sports association addressed to the young generation, was established. In the former capital, 'Falcon' did not play any significant role due to the political obstacles.⁸ It functioned legally only for several months between 1905 and 1906 and was quickly outlawed.⁹ First Warsaw sports clubs – Korona and Polonia, were established between 1909¹⁰ and 1911.¹¹ However, up to 1915, they were not officially registered. The sporting clubs in Warsaw had no sporting facilities before the regaining of independence. Similar processes could be observed in other large cities of the 2nd Republic of Poland.

During the years of parliamentary democracy (1919–1926), changes in sports were mainly the result of efforts of the community, sports clubs, sports associations with only minor involvement of the State. Due to the economic weakness of community sports structures, the results of those activities could not be satisfactory. A breakthrough came with the May Coup d'Etat in 1926, which put the power into the hands of a political group attaching particular importance to promoting sports fitness in the society.

The author of this paper attempts to analyse the development of sports infrastructure in interwar Poland. The paper includes mostly references to Warsaw's sports facilities built during the interwar period. Deliberations also have general

⁶ J. Dżereń, *Zarys dziejów Ogródów Raua w Warszawie (do 1907 roku)*, [in:] J. Chelmecki (ed.), *Spoleczno-edukacyjne oblicza współczesnego sportu i olimpizmu*, t. 2: *Wychowanie patriotyczne przez sport*, pp. 44–49.

⁷ K. Potzusi, *Infrastruktura sportowa dużych miast II Rzeczypospolitej – zarys tematyki*, [in:] E. Małolepszy, J. Kosiewicz, N. Organista (eds.), *Z najnowszych dziejów kultury fizycznej w Polsce i Europie (w okresie XIX–XX wieku)*, Częstochowa 2018, pp. 41–60.

⁸ S. Wilk, *Sport warszawski u źródła. Jaki był?*, [in:] J. Chelmecki, S. Wilk (eds.), *Sport w Warszawie w służbie Niepodległej. 140 lat sportu w Warszawie. 100 lat sportu w Polsce*, Warszawa 2019, pp. 39–49.

⁹ J. Chelmecki, *Sport w działalności TG "Sokół" w Warszawie w latach 1905–1939*, [in:] J. Nowak (ed.), *100-lecie Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego "Sokół" w Raciborzu*, Racibórz 2014, pp. 113–125.

¹⁰ R. Gawkowski, *KS Korona Warszawa. Meandry dziejowe jednego z najstarszych klubów sportowych Warszawy*, [in:] S. Zaborniak (ed.), *Z dziejów kultury fizycznej w Polsce*, Rzeszów 2005, pp. 268–298.

¹¹ J. Chelmecki, *Kontrowersje wokół datowania powstania klubu sportowego Polonia w Warszawie*, [in:] M. Kazimierzczak, J. Kosiewicz (ed.), *Sport i turystyka – uwarunkowania historyczne i wyzwania współczesności*, Poznań 2013, pp. 528–536.

tendencies for developing material sports resources in Poland in the years 1918–1939. The problem of funding sports investments and the interdependencies between state support and the possibilities for creating stadiums and other types of sports facilities are also discussed. The analysis also includes the process of sports popularisation, constituting an element of the State's internal and defence policy, and the matters of developing representative sports infrastructure and hosting international sports events, which were to promote the positive image of Poland on the international forum.

Historical sources for the research

The basic source-based for the paper is constituted by the documents available in Polish archives. The most crucial archive resources used in this text are those from the State Office for Physical Education and Military Training (SOPEMT), [Polish Państwowy Urząd Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego, (PUWFiPW)] stored at the Central Military Archive [Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe, (CAW)] in Warsaw. This authority, responsible for coordinating the increase of physical fitness of the entire society in the context of readiness to defend the country in case of war, was also responsible for funding Polish sports from state funds.¹² Apart from that, materials stored in the city archives of large Polish agglomerations were used, including those from Cracow, Katowice, Bydgoszcz and Warsaw, encompassing the files of city halls, collections of maps and architectural plans. My research in the Personnel and Payroll Documentation Archives in Milanówek near Warsaw provided certain exciting information. It contains a set of files of the University of Physical Education from the years 1929–1939. The University was the flagship state institution of interwar Poland, funded almost entirely from state funds. Printed publications and the press also provided additional sources.

Funding sports in the Second Republic of Poland – general remarks

In the years 1918–1926, the Second Republic of Poland was a democratic state. Its constitution, adopted in March 1921, included provisions introducing tripartite separation of power and ensuring the dominance of the legislative control over the executive one.¹³ However, the parliamentary rule was not effective.

¹² P. Rozwadowski, *Państwowy Urząd Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego*, Warszawa 2000, p. 179.

¹³ M. Borucki, *Konstytucje polskie*, Warszawa 2002, p. 351.

Social moods were strongly polarised, and none of the dominant political movements could obtain an independent majority in the Sejm (Lower House of Parliament). There were frequent changes in cabinets.

In May 1926, Józef Piłsudski¹⁴, the former leader of the independence-supporting socialists, the founder of so-called ‘Legiony Polskie’ – Polish military troops during the Great War and temporarily the State Leader between 1918–1922 – decided to stage a military coup and after three days of fighting in the streets of Warsaw caused the lawful president and government to resign.¹⁵ The coup started the thirteen years of the Second Republic of Poland’s functioning as an authoritarian state.¹⁶

Piłsudski’s regime attached particular importance to the society’s physical fitness, associating it with the State’s defence capacity. The slogan ‘an armed nation’ (‘naród pod bronią’) was promoted, stating that each citizen should be able to take up the effort to defend the State in case of a war threat. The SOPEMT was founded and established in the structures of the Ministry of Military Affairs. It had its budget, which created an opportunity for new growth prospects for sports clubs and associations. The needs in terms of the development of sporting facilities were enormous. Juliusz Ulrych, the head of PUWFiPW for many years, estimated that expenditure on physical education should amount to at least PLN 24 million per year over 20 years to “satisfy the needs in this field”¹⁷. Unfortunately, in the conditions of the time, it was completely impossible due to the economic situation of the country and significant limitations of the construction facilities available (materials, transport, labour, utilities, construction of access roads).

Nevertheless, the SOPEMT played a considerable role in supporting the construction of sporting facilities in Poland. However, a detailed analysis of this contribution would go beyond the scope of this article, as would the study of the assistance of the Ministry of Military Affairs to the development of broadly understood physical culture related to military training, including the development of infrastructure of disciplines such as shooting, gliding and ballooning. Describing the contribution of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment in terms of developing physical education facilities in schools would also go beyond the scope of this article. Readers interested in this subject should be referred to selected publications.¹⁸

¹⁴ D. i T. Nałęcz, *Józef Piłsudski – legendy i fakty*, Warszawa 1986, p. 319.

¹⁵ A. Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy*, Warszawa 1987, p. 405.

¹⁶ A. Chojnowski, *Piłsudczycy u władzy: dzieje Bezpartyjnego Bloku Współpracy z Rządem*, Wrocław 1986, p. 294.

¹⁷ “Wychowanie Fizyczne” 1928, no. 177, pp. 7–8. All transl. – author.

¹⁸ A. Chmiel, *Wychowanie fizyczne i sport w wojsku polskim 1918–1939*, Lublin 2017; L. Nowak, *Wychowanie fizyczne i sport w państwowym szkolnictwie ogólnokształcącym w latach 1918–1939*, Poznań 1996; K. Potrzuski, *Infrastruktura sportu strzeleckiego w Warszawie międzywojennej i jej współczesne pozostałości*, [in:] W. Borkowski, W. Brzeziński, J. Borkowski (eds.), *Konserwacja zapobiegawcza środowiska*, t. 5: *Dziedzictwo militarne*, Warszawa 2017, p. 63–77 etc.

In the years 1918–1926, sports were highly underfunded. Funds for supporting physical education and sports in the state structures were available in the budgets of the Public Health Ministry, Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment Ministry and the Military Affairs Ministry. However, in each of those ministries, the funds were scarce. In 1925 the military officials spent 0.1% of their budget on sports, whereas the Ministry of Education only spent 0.02% of its funds.¹⁹ Regional and city self-governments were also unable to subsidise the sports movement as required. Therefore the burden of developing infrastructure was laid on the shoulders of the sports clubs, associations and the community of athletes and activists, who could not take up the investment effort on a large scale. There was hardly any new sports infrastructure created in Warsaw in the years 1918–1926. The only significant exceptions were a few football pitches (e.g. several pitches of the Military Sporting Club ‘Legia’) and the meagre stadium of the leftist, socialist club Workers Sporting Club ‘Skra’, which was built in the so-called community action work. However, the stadium still left a lot to be desired, with some of its equipment revealing severe structural defects. The situation could only be significantly improved after 1926.

The SOPEMT faced the challenging task of creating material resources for Polish physical education, military training and sports. The scale of the tasks was enormous. Despite the considerable funds provided for the Office’s disposal, its capacity to stimulate the development of sports infrastructure in Poland was limited. In 1928, Józef Piłsudski commented that the SOPEMT received 10 million zlotys from the state budget for its purposes, stated ‘you have to remember, that we are poor. Poland is working its way up. We have to fight with the mania to build an exceptional palace [...] You have to build a modest paragon that we may follow’.²⁰ Despite implementing a strategy of savings, Juliusz Ulrych, who was the head of the Office for many years, assessed that ‘to meet all the needs, Poland needs at least 24 million every year for 20 years.’²¹ Following 1929 state spending on sports investments, which was already considered low, will drop even further due to the great crisis²². Despite this, the construction of extensive sports facilities in Poland will be finalised.

Despite Piłsudski’s declarations that small and medium scale sports infrastructure facilities are the priority, large amounts of money were invested in developing sports facilities on a nationwide or international scale. However, this spending was by no means lavish both for practical reasons and as an element of improving the State’s image in the international forum.

¹⁹ L. Szymański, *Kultura fizyczna w polityce II Rzeczypospolitej*, Wrocław 1995, p. 40–41.

²⁰ J. Gaj, B. Woltmann, *Zarys historii sportu w Polsce 1867–1997*, Gorzów Wielkopolski 1999, p. 76–80.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² Z. Landau, J. Tomaszewski, *Zarys historii gospodarczej Polski 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1999, p. 352.

Representative sports facilities of the Second Polish Republic and their funding

Three significant sports investments were completed in Warsaw in the years 1926–1939, though each was related to entirely different aspects of sports. Those were the Central Physical Education Institute, the Polish Army Stadium and the Horse Racing Track. In the case of the two first facilities, the State was the only investor, whereas the last one was executed with a public-private partnership. However, without the involvement of state funds, it would have never been completed.

The Central Physical Education Institute (CPEI, Polish: Centralny Instytut Wychowania Fizycznego – CIWF) was created as a teaching and research facility to educate physical education schoolteachers, military instructors, military training instructors, sports instructors and coaches. Its creation was motivated by the need to increase the level of physical fitness of the society in case it is necessary to defend against the aggression of an external enemy. Those plans could be completed. However, it was necessary to train experts who would be able to provide physical education classes both for the young and for adults throughout the country. The head of the State, Józef Piłsudski, got involved in the construction of the CPEI himself. He led the CPEI construction project receiving in 1928 the large amount of 5 million zlotys from the 81 million zlotys from the extraordinary budget reserve designated for strategic importance investment projects.²³ That allowed me to take up grand construction projects. The works were progressing at a swift pace. So as early as 29 November 1929, the official inauguration of the first academic year was organised, and several dozen students started their classes.²⁴ The complex, designed by Edgar Norwerth, was erected in the style of moderate, classicising modernism. Its final cost was 10 million zlotys. In many opinions of the Polish architecture historians, the CPEI complex constitutes an architectural achievement of European significance.²⁵ Completing it included an example of the State investing a very high amount into developing the broadly understood sports or physical culture. That was an investment that mainly was meant to pursue internal goals. Foreign delegations were shown both the architecture of the University and the teaching methods used there. Correspondence of the CPEI management with scientific workers from Stanford University in California is fascinating, as they were vividly interested in the training and organisational solutions used in Poland.²⁶

²³ K. Hądzelek, M. Rotkiewicz, J. Chełmecki, W. Dorcz, D. Dudek, *Rola Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego w rozwoju kultury fizycznej w Polsce i powołaniu Centralnego Instytutu Wychowania*, "Sport Wyczynowy" 1998, no. 1–2, p. 7–15.

²⁴ W. Dorcz, *Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego w Warszawie. Przewodnik*, Warszawa 2015, p. 156.

²⁵ J. Zieliński, *Bielany – przewodnik historyczno-sentymentalny*, Warszawa 2003, p. 232.

²⁶ ADOP, collection Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego Józefa Piłsudskiego 1929–1939, sign. 1033, no. 129, p. 15.



Image 1. Central Institute of Physical Education in Warsaw (1929–1939)

Source: NAC-1-S-3440.

Until 1926 Warsaw did not have any representative sports complex. That changed only after the May Coup. In 1928 a fifty-meter Olympic swimming pool was completed near the MSC 'Legia'. Subsequent years brought about the construction of a representative Warsaw sports stadium with a football field, athletics tracks, concrete cycling track, auxiliary facilities and grandstands that could hold approximately 25 thousand spectators, which consumed a considerable amount of several million zlotys. In 1930 the Polish Military Stadium was handed over for use, being the representative facility of the army, namely the First Corps District Command in Warsaw. That was the most prominent sports facility of the Second Republic of Poland. Until the start of the Second World War, it served as the informal national stadium. In 1936, it registered the record number of spectators for the Poland-Germany football match, which attracted almost forty thousand spectators. Such a facility could have been only built with public funds. It is characteristic that following the handover of the Polish Army stadium for use, administration and maintenance were transferred to the management of the 'Legia' MSC, which led to the club losing its financial liquidity over several crisis years and forced the SOPEMT to take responsibility for administration and to fund the facility.²⁷ Sports clubs or associations were not prepared to deal even with maintaining this scale of a sports facility, not to mention funding the investment itself.

²⁷ CAW, collection Państwowy Urząd Wychowania Fizycznego i Przeposobienia Wojskowego 1927–1939, sign. I.300.69.134, p. 254.

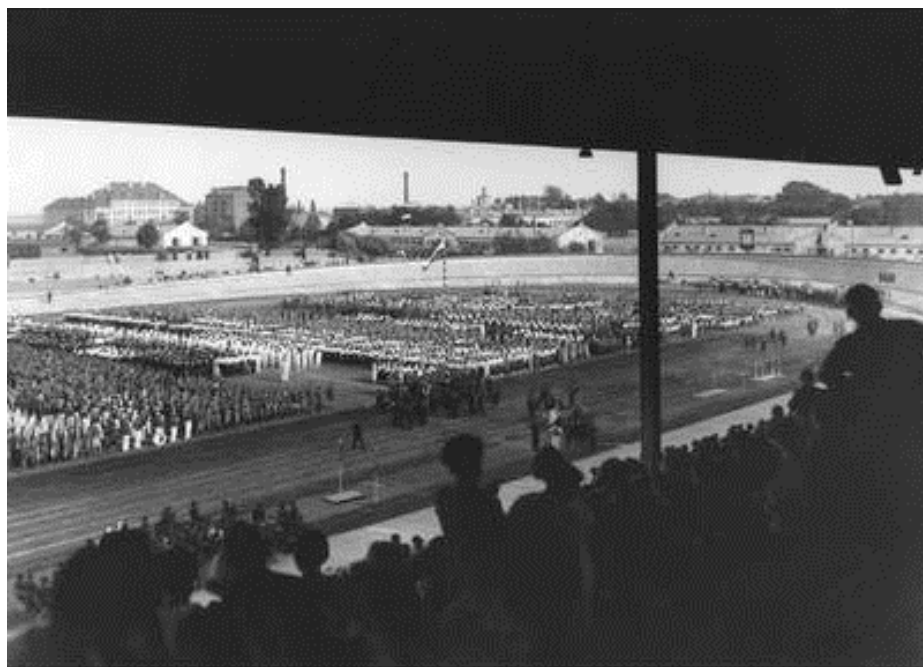


Image 2. Celebration of Physical Education and Military Preparation at Polish Army Stadium in Warsaw, May 1934

Source: NAC 1-W-2492-6.

The reservations above also apply to the most influential and wealthiest associations, such as the Horse Breeding Encouragement Association in Poland [HBEAP, Polish: Towarzystwo Zachęty do Hodowli Koni w Polsce – TZHKP]. In the middle of the 20s, this institution, composed mainly of wealthy landowners, started its efforts to have a horse racing track built in Warsaw to replace the old one, located too close to the city centre. For those reasons, both the HBEAP and the city's self-government, and state authorities were interested in moving the track to a new location. In 1925 the Association purchased approximately 140 hectares of land in Sluzewiec near Warsaw. Works related to the construction of the new racing track were initiated in the same year. Unfortunately, when faced with the Great Depression, the Association was unable to finish the investment independently. Construction works almost came to a halt. At that time, the State went to the aid of the HBEAP. The acquisition, designed by the architect, Zygmunt Plater-Zyberk, was completed with considerable support from the SOPEMT. Its total cost amounted to approximately 15 million zlotys, making it probably the most expensive investment in interwar Warsaw related to the broadly understood sport. Complexes of this scale could not have been completed without budgetary funds.



Image 3. Warsaw derby on Służewiec horse racing track, July 1939

Source: NAC 1-S-443-1.

A question could be asked, why did the State invest such large amounts of money in a project that was most beneficial for a small elite, namely the land-owning aristocracy. The answer to that question is connected with the fact of Józef Piłsudski's death. After 1935 there was a time of intensive commemoration of the Marshal's memory started in Poland. He was portrayed by his co-workers, who remained in power, as the country's saviour and the person who protected the Second Republic of Poland from chaos and destabilisation of parliamentary rule.²⁸ Therefore many public institutions were named after Marshall. The most significant commemoration of Piłsudski was, however, related to the restoration of Pole Mokotowskie (former racing track). Authorities planned to build a residential district with a complex of monumental buildings in that area named after the Marshall. To be able to consider this concept, it was necessary to free up Pole Mokotowskie. Therefore finishing the investment in Służewiec became a priority for the city and the state authorities.

It is worth mentioning that the representative complex named after Piłsudski was one of three investment concepts of a large scale that were planned in Warsaw before September 1939. The second one was the exhibition district in Saska Kępa, an area of a planned international exhibition for the 25th anniversary of the regained independence, which was to be held in 1943 and 1944. The third one was an Olympic district, located in Sierakowice, a southern district of Warsaw. If accomplished, the area was to host the Summer Olympic Games in 1952 or

²⁸ P.P. Wiczorkiewicz, *Ostatnie lata Polski niepodległej*, Łomianki 2013, p. 403.

1956.²⁹ Documents of this project are preserved in the Warsaw Municipal Archive.³⁰ The example of this investment project proves how great importance for the promotion of the country was noticed in sports investments.



Image 4. Project of the Olympic District in Siekierki, Warsaw, 1930s

Source: APW, 3/8834.

It should also be noted that sports investments included not only representative sporting complexes, such as those mentioned above, which were the monuments of modernisation and the showcases of Warsaw and Poland, but also minor sporting facilities with local or regional importance. About 20 minor stadiums and sporting pitches, 7 indoor swimming pools, about 40 tennis courts, 25 rowing harbours and several other facilities were built in interwar Warsaw.³¹ Between 1926–1929, the representative facility of the Academic Sports Association in Park

²⁹ K. Potrzuski, *Dzielnica Olimpijska na warszawskich Siekierkach. Losy niezrealizowanego projektu w świetle akt nieruchomości m.st. Warszawy z lat trzydziestych XX wieku*, “Rozprawy Naukowe Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego we Wrocławiu”, no 65/2019, p. 16–34.

³⁰ APW, collection Akta nieruchomości m.st. Warszawy, sign. 3.

³¹ R. Gawkowski, *Infrastruktura sportowa międzywojennej Warszawy – zarys tematyki*, [in:] J. Chelmecki (ed.), *Spoleczno-edukacyjne oblicza współczesnego sportu i olimpiizmu*, t. 2: *Wychowanie patriotyczne przez sport*, Warszawa 2007, s. 187–195.

Skaryszewski³², the stadiums of Polonia,³³ Makabi,³⁴ Orzeł [The Eagle]³⁵ or Dom Ludowy [The People's House]³⁶ were built. Even during the Great Crisis, some sporting facilities – such as the YMCA building³⁷ or Warszawianka stadium³⁸ – were accomplished. However, due to their primarily local significance, these investments did not play a significant role in creating the image of Poland on the international stage. They were erected mainly by the sporting associations or municipal funds, rarely supported by the State. After obtaining the land for the construction of the stadium from the municipality, the club was usually obliged to secure funds to construct sports infrastructure on its own. That meant that for many, especially small clubs, having your facility was merely a dream. There were many critics of this State of affairs. Dr inż. Czesław Kłóś, in the brochure „Sports fields”, argued that the city, and even the State, should subsidise the construction of sports parks and stadiums, including stadiums for high-performance sports. Kłóś pointed out that the more significant amount of green, recreational, and sports areas increases the population's health and quality of life. However, voices such as that of dr Kłóś, did not change the fact that in the interwar period, most clubs, wishing to move to their facilities, had to take care of the construction process and the funds on their own.³⁹ Similar processes were noticed in other large cities of the 2nd Republic of Poland.⁴⁰

Investment in representative sports facilities outside Warsaw

During Pilsudski's rule, there have been several international masters' competitions hosted in Poland. In 1929, the European Rowing Championships were organised in the course in Bydgoszcz, two years later, the World Championships in Ice Hockey were organised in Krynica Zdroj (the mountain resort also hosted international championships in luge in 1935 on a track designed by an officer of the Polish Army and gifted architect Roman Loteczka, who also designed several ski jumping hills in interwar Poland).⁴¹ In 1934 the European Championships in

³² “Stadion” 1927, no. 40, p. 4. The first minor sporting pitch was organized there already in 1917, see: “Ogrodnik” 1917, no. 16, p. 209; “Godzina Polski” 1918, no. 2, p. 3.

³³ “Polska Zbrojna” 1928, no. 273, p. 2.

³⁴ “Przegląd Sportowy” 1933, no. 85, p. 4.

³⁵ “Kurier Polski” 1928, no. 279, p. 5.

³⁶ “Głos Prawdy” 1929, no. 224, p. 5.

³⁷ “Przegląd Sportowy” 1931, no. 1, p. 4.

³⁸ “Gazeta Warszawska” 1931, no. 216A, p. 9.

³⁹ Cz. Kłóś, *Boiska sportowe*, Warszawa 1923, p. 12–17, 35.

⁴⁰ K. Potrzuski, *Infrastruktura sportowa dużych miast II Rzeczypospolitej – zarys tematyki*, [in:] E. Małolepszy, J. Kosiewicz, N. Organista (eds.), *Z najnowszych dziejów kultury fizycznej w Polsce i Europie (w okresie XIX–XX wieku)*, Częstochowa 2018, p. 41–60.

⁴¹ R. Krasowski, W. Nadolski, *Roman Loteczka – budowniczy obiektów sportowych i organizator życia sportowego okresu międzywojennego w Polsce*, [in:] J. Nowocięń, K. Zuchora (eds.), *Spo-*

Fencing were organised in Warsaw, and the World Classic Skiing Championships (FIS World Championships) were organised twice in Zakopane (1929 and 1939)⁴². Facilities built for each of those events (rowing course in Bydgoszcz – Brdujście, Torkat – the artificial ice rink in Katowice or Wielka Krokiew – the ski jumping hill in Zakopane) either newly built or modernised, were co-funded by the State, often in the form of public-private partnerships, most often through the SOPEMT, and the amounts spent on their execution were at the same time investments into promoting the image of Poland in the international field. The Pilsudski's political camp wanted to show the Second Republic of Poland as a country undergoing modernisation, catching up on the civilisation gap to so-called Old Europe. Most of those visiting sports cards in interwar Poland were started before 1926 (e.g. the ski jumping hill in Zakopane designed by Karol Stryjeński). The course in the estuary of Brda in Bydgoszcz underwent its first significant modernisation in 1924. The Bydgoszcz Rowing Association (BRA, Polish: Bydgoskie Towarzystwo Wioślarskie – BTW) was the principal investor.⁴³ In 1929 those grandstands were enlarged, and additional boat hangars were built, designed in the elegant, functional modernism style due to the support of city hall. The European rowing championships in 1929, held in Bydgoszcz, provided a possibility for improving the international image of Poland due to the successful organisation of the international sporting event. This goal, according to the vast majority of the opinions, was accomplished⁴⁴.

The arena for the ice hockey world championships in 1931 was the natural ice rink in Krynica Zdroj, which was equipped with artificial lighting, had a roof and central heating. A training ice rink with facilities was located nearby. The entire village was preparing meticulously for the visit of foreign teams, who were especially impressed by the decorations, including the ice sculptures. The condition for obtaining consent for hockey championships in Krynica was for Poland to a synthetic back-up facility that could host the championships in case of bad weather in the resort, which Poland did not have. The project was started in Katowice, wherein 1930, the 'Torkat', a synthetic ice rink built for the considerable amount of 1,200,000 zlotys, was opened. 'Torkat' – a skating rink and an elegant modern building were created as part of a public-private partnership with the support of SOPEMT, and it became the most modern facility in its class in Poland. The ice-hockey championships were held in Krynica and became a success that improved Polish image internationally. Even though in later years 'Torkat' caused problems due to high costs of maintenance, the investment supported by the State was executed for image reasons.

leczo-edukacyjne oblicza współczesnego sportu i olimpizmu. Praktyczny i teoretyczny wymiar aktywności fizycznej i sportu dla wszystkich, Warszawa 2015, p. 485–494.

⁴² K. Szujewski, *Sportowe życie II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 2013, p. 203.

⁴³ A. Perlińska, *Bydgoszcz – miasto wioślarzy*, "Kalendarz Bydgoski" 1981, no. 1, p. 83.

⁴⁴ "Dziennik Bydgoski" 1929, no. 190, p. 5–6 and others.

The last international competition that was organised in interwar Poland was the FIS world championships that took place in February 1939 in Zakopane. Despite the bad weather, it was widely assessed as organisational success. Financial reports from the event were recovered and allowed us to know that money for the organisation of the event was provided mainly by state institutions, the Ministry of Communication, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the SOPEMT⁴⁵. However, the incurred costs was an investment into at least partially improving the international image of Poland as a stable, predictable state. This was important in 1939, as the image of the Second Polish Republic deteriorated significantly in connection with the government's activities from autumn 1938 and the incorporation of a part of Czechoslovakia ('Zaolzie'), inhabited chiefly by Poles, which was interpreted in the West as working alongside with Hitler. As a side note, a modern cableway designed by Aleksander Bobkowski, one of the most fantastic attractions of Zakopane at that time, has already been launched in the city.

Funding the development of sports infrastructure of local and regional importance

It should be noted that the years 1926–1939 is also a time for developing sports facilities on a small and medium scale with local and regional importance. The motivation for supporting the development of such facilities was mainly to promote physical activities that would serve military training. Resources of the SOPEMT still contain various statistics to support this.

The condition of Warsaw's sports infrastructure at the beginning of the Second Polish Republic was inadequate.⁴⁶ Moreover, gaps in sports infrastructure could have been seen in every bigger city in Poland.

During the 9th Polish Cities Convention, which took place between 21 and 23 October 1927 in Poznan, the discussion topics included developing the network of Polish sports facilities in the city tissue. The matter of developing small and medium scale sports facilities was raised to the rank of one of the priorities of urban policy. The cities were assured that they would be able to use the assistance of the SOPEMT'.⁴⁷ A hypothesis can be made that reason for such a policy lied in correctly deciphering the expectations of the new government, requiring the city self-governments to extend sports facilities. Self-governments, which back in the twenties were often in the hands of the political opposition and were

⁴⁵ W. Szatkowski *Mistrzostwa świata FIS 11–19 lutego 1939 w Zakopanem*, <https://z-ne.pl/s,doc,23177,5,1728,,,html> [accessed: 6.06.2018].

⁴⁶ R. Gawkowski, *Infrastruktura sportowa międzywojennej Warszawy – zarys tematyki*, [in:] J. Chelmecki (ed.), *Spoleczno-edukacyjne oblicza współczesnego sportu i olimpizmu*, t. 2: *Wychowanie patriotyczne przez sport*, Warszawa 2007, s. 187–195.

⁴⁷ CAW, PUWFiPW, sign. I.300.69.201, p. not numbered.

therefore forced to fight the difficult struggle to retain their sovereignty, had to make concessions in such situations.

The importance of the development of sports equipment was also fully appreciated in the military, which played a unique role in Piłsudski's Poland's social and political life. In a report drafted at the end of 1927 for the 1st vice-minister for military affairs, the author, whose personal details remain unknown, informed that 'Poland, as a country almost entirely devoid of sports equipment, carries out work in the field of physical education in nearly primitive conditions [...]. Therefore the most important task for the works taken up by the SOPEMT is the performance of investment projects consisting of building indoor swimming pools, gyms and halls and the initiative in building sports swimming pools. [...] All investments will be under the scrutiny of the SOPEMT'.⁴⁸

Between 1926 and 1939, Warsaw witnessed the construction or extension of the stadiums of the biggest, most efficient sports clubs. Most of them could rely on different forms of support from the State or the city, which was highly praised by the state authorities. What is characteristic, those subsidies were also provided to sports associations sympathising with groups that were in opposition to the authoritarian government. This allowed facilities that sympathised with the national movement of the Academic Sports Union; the apolitical, though leaning towards the left, liberal 'Polonia' and 'Warszawianka'; biggest sports association of the Jewish minority, Makabi, the socialist 'Dom Ludowy' and 'Skra', as well as 'Orzel' sports club, which was taken over by the city due to the club's financial troubles. Documents were retained that provided some information on the scale of financial support provided to the clubs by the SOPEMT. These were significant amounts which led to a significant increase in the number of sports facilities in the capital⁴⁹. It should also be added that in the thirties several smaller sports complexes were created in Warsaw, belonging to relatively well-organised clubs functioning at large industrial plants that could rely on the financial support of the plant's management. Those clubs were most often politically connected or at least force to ensure good relationships with the authorities. Supporting plant clubs was an element of Piłsudski's supporters' building popularity among the working class. Despite this strategy being only partially efficient, it led to the development of sporting facilities available at industrial plants in Warsaw. Plant clubs in other large Polish cities could also enjoy better perspectives for the development of their facilities than their middle-class counterparts. The club owned a large sports complex at the Hipolit Cegielski machine and metallurgy plant in Poznań; in Bydgoszcz, the 'KS Kabel Polski' club, played with the logo of the cables factory on its shirts, had the best equipment,⁵⁰ in Upper Silesia some coal

⁴⁸ CAW, sign. I.300.69.201, p. not numbered.

⁴⁹ CAW, sign. I.300.69.204, p. not numbered.

⁵⁰ APB, collection Akta miasta Bydgoszczy 1920–1939. Akta budowlane, dokumentacja techniczna, sign. 183, no. 1414 IV.

or foundry conglomerates were patrons of and also invested in several sports clubs and the 'Garbarnia' from Cracow, which had the strongest football section from among all the plant clubs in the Second Polish Republic, winning the Polish championship in 1931, was able to establish a football stadium which, untypically in those days, didn't have the facilities for other disciplines.

The growth in sports infrastructure, registered in the twenties and thirties, and the increase in the numbers of physical education staff, entailed a significant increase in the number of persons involved in different forms of extra-curricular physical education and sports. However, it was still a relatively small percentage of society. 'During 11 years, that is between the budget year 1928/1929 until 1938/1939, the number of people working in the field of physical education, military training and sports increased from 364,000 to 1,200,000, whereas the quantity of physical education and the army training equipment increased by 260%. However, this constitutes only 10% of the total number of youth and 5% of the necessary physical education and military training equipment, as the state reports mentioned.⁵¹ Also, the number of sports facilities did not meet the requirements. A report drafted for the SOPEMT in 1934, which surveyed some of the sports facilities in voivodship and county cities, indicates that almost no larger town in the country had several sports areas that would meet the standards, set at 3 m² per citizen⁵². The standard set forth by the government was met on average at 37.7%.⁵³ A year before Hitler's German aggression in Poland, the number of indoor swimming pools satisfied the need of society in 3%, fields and playing courts in 30%, gymnastic halls in 12%, sport gardens in 10% and outdoor swimming pools in 35%⁵⁴. Those shortages fully justify the involvement of the State in the development of sports infrastructure.

Conclusion

To summarise, the Polish sports movement entered the 20th century with shortages in its resources, inherited from the partitions period. During the years 1918–1939, it was possible to significantly increase the quantity and quality of sports infrastructure in Poland. The principal investor for the material resources of Polish sports was the State. With Jozef Pilsudski in the lead, the authorities were willing to support sports construction projects, noticing its connection with military training and increasing the society's defence capacity. Sports investment projects were executed with the highest intensity in 1926–1929, which was connected with Pilsudski and his followers coming to power, and with a more bene-

⁵¹ CAW, I.300.69.94, p. not numbered.

⁵² CAW, I.300.69.94, p not numbered.

⁵³ L. Szymański, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

⁵⁴ J. Gaj, B. Woltmann, *op. cit.* p. 76.

ficial investment setting. Considering that the most crucial reason for the state authorities investing in sports was internal reasons and the country's defence capacity, an essential aspect of developing sports infrastructure was to promote Poland's image abroad as a modernising country that is, catching up on civilisation gap against western Europe. This was confirmed by the three great sports investments in Warsaw: Central Physical Education Institute, Polish Army Stadium, Sluzewiec Horse Racing Track, which were mainly funded or only from state funds. It is also represented by facilities that became arenas for international sports competitions at the master level - the ski jumping hill in Zakopane, the synthetic ice rink in Katowice, the rowing course in Bydgoszcz, the completion of which was also supported by the State. Despite the considerable quantitative and qualitative improvement of the condition of sports infrastructure in interwar Poland, which is primarily the result of the State's financial support, until 1 September 1939, its condition remained inadequate for the society's demand.

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