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UNIwersYTET JANA DŁUGOSZA W CZĘSTOCHOWIE

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## WSTĘP

W 2026 r. periodyk „Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe” ukazuje się dziewiąty rok. Jest kontynuacją tytułu „Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie. Kultura Fizyczna”. W drugim numerze zostały zaprezentowane prace Autorów z różnych ośrodków naukowych w Polsce i na świecie.

W części I – *Dzieje kultury fizycznej i turystyki w Polsce i na świecie* – przedstawiono artykuły dotyczące następującej problematyki:

- Alojzy Ehrlich – wierny tenisowi stołowemu;
- działalność administracyjnych struktur Państwowego Urzędu Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego w południowo-wschodnich województwach II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w świetle lwowskiego czasopisma „Sport” (1932–1933);
- działalność i organizacja Związku Akademickiej Młodzieży Polskiej i Związku Młodzieży Polskiej w Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego w Warszawie w latach 1948–1956;
- miejsce i rola piłki nożnej w polityce współczesnych państw w świetle literatury przedmiotu.

W części II, zatytułowanej *Teoria i metodyka wychowania fizycznego i sportu*, zamieszczono dwa artykuły dotyczące zagadnień:

- wpływu treningu Crossfit na centralny profil hemodynamiczny u młodych zapasników;
- opinii nauczycieli szkół podstawowych na temat narciarstwa alpejskiego: popularność, częstotliwość i poziom umiejętności.

W części III – *Turystyka i rekreacja* – opublikowano dwa artykuły odnoszące się do następującej tematyki:

- ekologiczna i niszowa turystyka przygodowa: eksploracja jaskiń jako czynnik rozwoju destynacji turystycznej;
- 10 zasad skutecznego zarządzania turystyką (zunifikowany przewodnik szkoleniowy dla menedżerów i pracowników na czas kryzysów w turystyce).

W ramach części *Biogramy, dyskusje, polemiki, recenzje, przegląd wydawnictw, sprawozdania* dr hab. prof. US Renata Urban w recenzji *Sport w mieście nad Prosną* przybliżyła monografię Juliana Jaroszewskiego pt. *Dzieje sportu w Kaliszu do 1939 roku*.

Pragnę złożyć serdeczne podziękowania Recenzentom za cenne i życzliwe uwagi, podnoszące wartość niniejszego periodyku. Dziękuję za współpracę Autorom publikacji zamieszczonych w czasopiśmie naukowym. Jednocześnie wyrażam nadzieję, że poszerzy się liczba Osób zainteresowanych publikowaniem własnych osiągnięć naukowych w kolejnych wydaniach „Sportu i Turystyki. Środkowoeuropejskiego Czasopisma Naukowego”.

Eligiusz Małolepszy

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# **CZĘŚĆ I**

## **DZIEJE KULTURY FIZYCZNEJ I TURYSTYKI W POLSCE I NA ŚWIECIE**





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Wiesław PIĘTA\*, Aleksandra PIĘTA\*\*, Mikołaj MARSZAŁEK\*\*\*

## LOYAL TO TABLE TENNIS – ALOJZY EHRLICH<sup>1</sup>

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### Wierny tenisowi stołowemu – Alojzy Ehrlich

#### Streszczenie

Alojzy Ehrlich (1914–1992) – wybitny tenisista stołowy pochodzenia żydowskiego. Pierwszy złoty medal mistrzostw Polski zdobył w 1933 r. (Lwów). Triumfował w Igrzyskach Makkabi (Praga, 1933). Trzykrotny indywidualny wicemistrz oraz dwukrotny brązowy medalista w grze pojedynczej i drużynowej mistrzostw świata w latach 30. XX wieku. Przeszedł do historii światowego tenisa stołowego między innymi po meczu z rumuńskim tenisistą stołowym Farkasem Panethem, z którym walczył o pierwszy punkt przez 132 minuty na mistrzostwach świata w Pradze (1936). Delegat PZTS na Kongresy Międzynarodowej Federacji Tenisa Stołowego (ITTF). Korespondent „Przeglądu Sportowego”. Wybrany do dziesiątki najpopularniejszych sportowców Polski w Plebiscycie „Przeglądu Sportowego” (1934). W reprezentacji Polski rozegrał 46 spotkań. Na stałe mieszkał we Francji. Podczas II wojny światowej wspierał francuski ruch oporu przeciwko Niemcom. Schwyty i deportowany do obozów koncentracyjnych Auschwitz-Birkenau i Dachau. Przeżył w obozach 10 miesięcy. Po II wojnie światowej kontynuował karierę sportowca, trenera (w siedemnastu państwach) oraz wynalazcy robota pingpongowego i menadżera firm produkujących sprzęt sportowy do tenisa stołowego. Był częstym gościem największych imprez tenisa stołowego w Europie i na świecie. Władał sześcioma językami. Pozostał wierny piłeczce i rakietce do tenisa stołowego do końca życia.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kultura fizyczna, polski sport, żydowski sport, tenis stołowy.

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<sup>1</sup> The title was published in an abridged version in Polish in 2017, W. Pięta, A. Pięta, *Wierny tenisowi stołowemu – Alojzy Ehrlich*, [in:] E. Małolepszy, J. Kosiewicz, N. Organista, *Z najnowszych dziejów kultury fizycznej i turystyki w Polsce i w Europie (w okresie XIX–XX wieku)*, Częstochowa 2018, p. 119–136. In the period 2020–2022, the search was extended to include newly available sources. It was completed and translated into English in 2023.

## Abstract

Alojzy Ehrlich (1914-1992) – an outstanding table tennis player of Jewish origin. He won his first gold medal at the Polish Championships in 1933 (Lviv). He triumphed in the Makkabi Games (Prague, 1933). He was a three-time individual runner-up and a two-time bronze medalist in singles and team events at the World Championships in the 1930s. He made world table tennis history, among other things, after his match with a Romanian table tennis player, Farkas Paneth, with whom he battled for the first point for 132 minutes at the World Championships in Prague (1936). He was a delegate of the Polish Table Tennis Association (PZTS) to the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Congresses. He was a correspondent for “Przegląd Sportowy.” He was selected as one of the ten most popular Polish athletes in “Przegląd Sportowy” (1934). He played 46 matches for the Polish national team. He permanently resided in France. During World War II, he supported the French resistance against the Germans. He was captured and deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau concentration camps. He survived in the camps for 10 months. After World War II, he continued his career as an athlete, coach (in seventeen countries), inventor of a ping-pong robot, and manager of companies producing table tennis equipment. He was a frequent guest at major table tennis events in Europe and around the world. He spoke six languages. He remained faithful to the table tennis ball and racket until the end of his life.

**Keywords:** physical culture, Polish sport, Jewish sport, table tennis.

## Introduction

Table tennis as a competitive sports discipline has a tradition of over eighty years in Poland. In 1931, the Polish Table Tennis Association (*Polski Związek Tenisa Stołowego*, PZTS) was established.<sup>2</sup> In 1933, the PZTS was accepted into the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF). The objectives outlined in the statutes of the PZTS were centred around the popularisation of this sport across age categories. This was sought to be achieved by: 1) organising Polish championships and various forms of sports competitions in all age categories, 2) organising “showcase tournaments”, 3) selecting and appointing the best players to the national team, 4) submitting national teams and individual players to world championships, European championships and other international competitions, 5) making every effort to take care of the good image of Polish table tennis outside the country, 6) cultivating the tradition and history of the sport. Table tennis is one of the sports disciplines where the individual attitude of the player is of great importance. Talent, skills, preparation and playing technique determine the success of a player and the whole team. In the history of this discipline in Poland, individual successes of players at international and national competitions have inspired young people to intensify their training efforts in order to catch up with the best players. Pure sporting rivalry gave birth to champions.

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<sup>2</sup> W. Pięta, *Gramy dalej. 80 – lecie Polskiego Związku Tenisa Stołowego (1931–2011)*, Częstochowa 2011, p. 10.

Outstanding table tennis champions popularised new playing techniques and contributed to the development of the discipline. Alojzy Ehrlich had a prominent place among these champions. As a beginner in my playing career, I had the opportunity to meet this great champion in person. In 1978, he participated in the 18<sup>th</sup> International Polish Championships organised in Łódź. Unfortunately, I did not exchange a single word with him, because I was too busy preparing for my performance. However, the figure of the legendary champion, who was among the guests invited to the Championships, remained in my memory. For me, as a young athlete, the emotions generated by the sporting competition were so strong that I simply overlooked or forgot many of the events associated with these Championships. Yet, one event left a lasting mark. I played with a racket allocated by PZTS for a specific group of players from Silesia named after Alojzy Ehrlich. It was with this racket that I won the title of Polish junior vice-champion in 1967. The A. Ehrlich racket has a prominent place in my rich collection related to the history of this sport in Częstochowa.

As I started my research with the aim of familiarising contemporary young people with the sporting attitude, achievements and complicated life story of the outstanding table tennis champion, impacted by the turbulent political events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I reached for the literature on this sport, the contemporary press with A. Ehrlich's sporting successes. I also made an in-depth search of national and foreign archives. The article is considerably expanded by the additional sources I learned about. The first step, however, was a thorough search of my own collections.

The following interwar periodicals, own collections and monographs proved to be valuable source material in writing this article: *Table Tennis among Jews in Poland (1924–1949)*; *Gramy dalej. 80-lecie Polskiego Związku Tenisa Stołowego (1931–2011)*; *Od Alojzego Ehrlicha do Natalii Partyki, współzawodnictwo sportowe 1932-2016*; *Tenis stołowy w Polsce w latach 1919–1989*; *Vierliebt in einen kleinen Ball, ITTF 1926–2001*; *Table Tennis Legend*; *Z dziejów sportu żydowskiego – tenis stołowy 1900–2014*; *9 Dekad Polskiego Związku Tenisa Stołowego, L'ultima partita*. The best results were delivered by a search of the Lviv archives, the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute and the *Archiwum Akt Nowych*, Contemporary Records Archive within the Polish State Archives. Information obtained from the archives of The Wingate Institute for Physical Education and the International Table Tennis Federation in Rennes near Lausanne was a significant source supplement.

This article addresses the following research question: What influence did Alojzy Ehrlich have on the development of table tennis in Poland?

## Life in Lviv

Alojzy Ehrlich was born on 1.01.1914 in Komańcza belonging to the Israeli community in Bukowsko,<sup>3</sup> which was under Austrian administration. His father Ludwik Izrael Ehrlich was of Jewish origin and his mother Blina Brand was a Catholic. He received baptism, but was agnostic until the end of his life. At the age of four (when Poland regained independence) he became a Polish citizen. He had an older brother. In search of better living conditions, the Ehrlich family moved to Lviv. He combined his studies at a secondary school in Lviv with playing table tennis at the Lviv Jutrzenko (a club with Polish traditions), which he joined at the age of thirteen. In 1933, he matriculated and left for France to study at the Catholic University (Facultes Catholiques de Lille). The family home (owned by Ludwik Ehrlich) in Komańcza was burnt down during the Second World War. During his early years in France, he had a dilemma regarding the choice between studies and diplomacy or table tennis. In the end, he opted for table tennis. The last time he met his parents was in Lviv in 1939. In a piece of information given by Irena in Birkenau (1944),<sup>4</sup> his father Izrael, a professor at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv, was shot (1942) in the Lviv forest by the Germans, and the mother was deported to Treblinka (p. 183).

## Sports career before the Second World War

He made his debut in the tournament at the age of thirteen and won 14<sup>th</sup> place among 50 players. As a 14-year-old, he began his real sporting career at the prestigious Jewish Sports Club Hasmonaea Lviv (he was given a real table tennis racket with stick-on rubber and celluloid balls). He attended training sessions in ice hockey, football, tennis, and also in the table tennis lounge, located in Lviv on 1/3 Skarbowska Street. The oldest player, and at the same time manager of the section, Mateusz Hoch,<sup>5</sup> taught him how to play. He played in school games under the pseudonym Alex Dogilewski. At the age of 16, he played in the Lviv championships for the first time (first place with Hasmonaea)<sup>6</sup> and in the international competition in Łódź, which took place on Christmas Day 1930. These competitions featured, among others, the world champion V. Barna and Nitrau (Hun-

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<sup>3</sup> In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Komańcza is located in south-eastern Poland in Podkarpackie Voivodeship, in Sanok County in the valley of the Oślawica River and the Barbarka stream. Until 1914, it belonged to the municipality of Bukowsko. After 1918, it was located in Sanok county, within the Lviv province.

<sup>4</sup> E. Pedemonte, *L'ultima partita*, Milano 2022, p. 183

<sup>5</sup> W. Pięta, *Table tennis among Jews in Poland (1924–1949)*, Częstochowa 2008, p. 58.

<sup>6</sup> W. Pięta, *Z dziejów sportu żydowskiego – tenis stołowy*, Poznań 2018, p. 168.

gary). It was then that A. Ehrlich lost to V. Barna 1:2 (21:18, 9:21, 16:21) but defeated Nitrau 2:1.<sup>7</sup> A. Ehrlich also competed in the championships of Jewish clubs (Hasmonea Lwów, Hasmonea Łódź, ŻAKS Warsaw). A year later, in the international championships of Silesia in Chorzów, he succumbed to Laszlo Bellak (world champion) in the final, but won in the double game together with Fichtman.<sup>8</sup> On their way back from Silesia, the Lviv team with A. Ehrlich stopped in Kraków and played a propaganda match against KS Zorza Rudek.<sup>9</sup>

The first Polish team championship was held in Łódź (27 March 1932). Three matches were played in one day. At that time, five-man squads were played, and the first championship title was won by Makkabi Łódź, the second was won by Hasmonea Lwów with A. Ehrlich (with two victories).<sup>10</sup> In the second championship of Poland (1933), which took place in Lviv in the hall in Jabłonowskie Street, A. Ehrlich won two gold medals: team tournament with Hasmonea (A. Ehrlich, W. Lowenhertz, H. Kuehl, Fichtman, Fluk)<sup>11</sup> and individually in the final he defeated Fredy Weiss from Austria.<sup>12</sup> After the championships, A. Ehrlich went to Prague for the Maccabiah Games (held between the 1<sup>st</sup> (1932) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (1935) Maccabiah. A. Ehrlich did not perform in any Maccabiah Games organised in Israel. He returned from the Czechoslovakian capital with two titles in singles and in doubles paired with H. Kuehl.<sup>13</sup> After the summer holidays, he left for Lille to study. There, he had excellent conditions for table tennis, as well as a sparring partner – the titled French player Rene Grimonprez.<sup>14</sup> It was in this city that he learned of the World Championships being held in Paris in December 1933.

Together with the Pohoryles brothers, Simon and Hillel (fellow members of the Hasmonea Lviv club) who were in France,<sup>15</sup> he applied for approval to the Polish Table Tennis Association (PZTS) for Poland's participation in the Paris championships, but Warsaw refused. He then began to negotiate with the organiser – Marcel Corbilon, the president of the French Table Tennis Federation (FFTT), who was initially against it. Correspondence between the PZTS and the

<sup>7</sup> "Kurier Łódzki", 1930, No 352. "Polonia" 1930, No. 2236.

<sup>8</sup> W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> W. Pięta, *Z dziejów sportu żydowskiego -tenis stołowy*, Częstochowa 2007, p. 119 (typescript prepared for printing).

<sup>10</sup> W. Pięta, *From Alojzy Ehrlich to Natalia Partyka, sports competition 1932–2016*, Częstochowa 2016, p. 13. "Dziennik Łódzki", 1932, No. 68,

<sup>11</sup> W. Pięta, *Z dziejów sportu żydowskiego -tenis stołowy*, Poznań 2018, pp. 216–217.

<sup>12</sup> "Sports Review", 1933, No 18. D. Zastawny, *Sto lat w blasku Białej Gwiazdy*, Kraków 2006, p. 265. W. Pięta, *Z dziejów sportu żydowskiego – tenis stołowy*, Poznań 2018, p. 265.

<sup>13</sup> W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy wśród Żydów w Polsce (1924–1949)*, Częstochowa 2008, p. 52. "Przeгляд Sportowy" 1933, No. 64, No. 69, No. 70.

<sup>14</sup> "France Tennis de Table", 2011, No. 866.

<sup>15</sup> W. Pięta, *Z dziejów sportu żydowskiego – tenis stołowy*, Poznań 2018, p. 168. The Pohoryles brothers were already champions of Lviv in 1927 wearing the club colours of Jutrzenka Lwów.

FFTT resulted in no official permission for Poland to play in this competition. Eventually, after a private visit by A. Ehrlich to the FTTT headquarters, President M. Corbilon granted permission and Poland's debut in the championships became a reality. Without financial help from the PZTS (the 8-day stay of the representation in Paris was financed by M. Corbilon), they stayed at the Hotel Edouard VII, each representative had his own room and three meals a day.<sup>16</sup> The Poles were successful, winning fourth place. A. Ehrlich's performance in these championships was impressive: he won 2 games against the Netherlands, in a losing match against Latvia (2 wins), against Czechoslovakia (2 wins) against India (2 wins), England (2 wins), against Hungary (he suffered 2 defeats against V. Barna and M. Szabados), Austria (one match lost to Schedewig and one won).

In an evenly matched match, they defeated France 5:4 with three wins for A. Ehrlich, then defeated Yugoslavia and Belgium (he won two matches in each). In total, he won 21 singles matches and suffered only three defeats. Maybe, with a better organisational approach of the PZTS to the championships and sending at least one more valuable table tennis player to Paris, there would have been a medal, who knows? In the individual tournament, A. Ehrlich advanced to the quarter-finals and lost to M. Szabados 2:3 in the fifth set to 13. In this match he was already leading 2:1.<sup>17</sup> After the world championships, the nineteen-year-old A. Ehrlich became a well-known table tennis player of the world and an authority for young French table tennis players. He also received many invitations to tournaments from England, Switzerland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and India.

He prepared for the next season in Lille, worked as a manager at the Burken Six sporting goods factory and honed his form in tournaments abroad and during a training camp in Tarnów. In the Free City of Danzig (27.10.1934), the Polish table tennis players defeated the Germans 7:2. They looked presentable in the outfits consisting of long grey trousers and navy blue shirts with the national emblem on the chest. Three points were scored by A. Ehrlich.<sup>18</sup> The Austrian press reported that the Germans were beaten by the Judische Mannschaft (Jewish team).<sup>19</sup>

Ehrlich had been friends for two years with V. Barna – representing a recognised brand of table tennis in the world. In 1935, with V. Barna, L. Bellak and Raymond Verger, he played a number of showcase matches (for a cash equivalent). The tour of France was a great promotional and financial success. It was ended by V. Barna's car accident (after breaking his right hand, he did not regain his former glory).<sup>20</sup> He was suspended in a very inept manner by the PZTS for his

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<sup>16</sup> E. Pedemonte, *L'ultima partita*, Milano 2022, p. 97.

<sup>17</sup> "Przegląd Sportowy, 1933, No. 98, 99, 100, "Raz Dwa Trzy" 1933, No. 50.

<sup>18</sup> "Gazeta Gdańska" 1934, No. 247, 248, 249, 1934. "Kurier Łódzki" 1934, No. 288.

<sup>19</sup> "Wiener Jüdische Familienblatt" 1934, No. 251.

<sup>20</sup> E. Pedemonte, *L'ultima partita*, Milano 2022, p. 109.

participation in paid shows (alleged professionalism). Shortly before the London World Championships, the Germans followed the lead of the PZTS and applied to the ITTF with demands for total disqualification of A. Ehrlich, V. Barna and M. Szabados (the main reason for the intervention was their Jewish background).<sup>21</sup>

Prior to the World Championships in London, he won the English Open Championships and also played in tournaments in Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham, Doncaster, Leeds, Blackpool and Hull. His victories earned him a contract from Jacques to manufacture the Ehrlich racket. London (1935) hosted table tennis players from all over the world. Polish table tennis players presented themselves successfully: W. Loewenhertz, H. Pohoryles and A. Ehrlich won bronze medals together with Austria ("Gazeta Warszawska" wrote about Polish Jewish players).<sup>22</sup> In the team tournament, A. Ehrlich did not lose a game (he won 16), individually he defeated Waerenier and Corton from Belgium, the Lithuanian Duskis, the Czechoslovakian B. Vana, in the semi-final Hungarian – L. Bellak, and after losing to V. Barna in the presence of about 14.000 people he took the third position.<sup>23</sup> In doubles he paired with W. Loewenhertz and lost the advance to the quarter-finals. In London, he also acted as a correspondent for "Przegląd Sportowy". In the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of "Przegląd Sportowy" poll selecting the ten best Polish sportspeople for 1934, A. Ehrlich was ranked eighth.<sup>24</sup> On 25-27 October 1935 he played for the national team in a match against Hungary.

In 1936, the 10<sup>th</sup> World Championship was held in Prague.<sup>25</sup> It was played on six tables in the huge exhibition hall "Lucerna". Poles lost the first match to France 4:5, A. Ehrlich succumbed to M. Haguenuer after two wins, then they defeated Latvia and the Netherlands 5:0 each and lost to Hungary (two defeats by A. Ehrlich). In these championships, the Polish representatives accepted a financial gift of 600 francs from the French (for the 5:0 win against Romania).<sup>26</sup> In singles he defeated Fleischner (Czechoslovakia), Lazar (Yugoslavia), Tobiasch and B. Vana (Czechoslovakia), Marschal (USA), and R. Bergman (Austria). In the

<sup>21</sup> „Nowy Dziennik”, 1935, No. 38.

<sup>22</sup> „Nowy Dziennik”, 1935, No 47.

<sup>23</sup> "Przegląd Sportowy", 1935, No. 15,16. In singles A. Ehrlich defeated Carton (Belgium), Duskisas (Lithuania), Vana (Czechoslovakia), L. Bellak (Hungary) in a row.

<sup>24</sup> "Sports Review", 1935, No 20.

<sup>25</sup> W. Pięta, *Z dziejów sportu żydowskiego -tenis stołowy*, Poznań 2018, pp. 295-296.

<sup>26</sup> "Kurier Sportowy" of 12 December, 1936. "Przegląd Sportowy" 1936, No. 107. After explanations and the return of the "financial reward", the Polish team was cleared of all charges. Only Jakub Ajzenberg (sports captain) was suspended as a member of the PZTS for five years. The Poles were also accused of stealing French racquets, as well as smuggling racquets imported from Czechoslovakia. Ehrlich reveals the backstory of this duel in *L'ultima partita*, p. 51. Before the match, he went on a bet with V. Barna, M. Corbilon and M. Haguenuer and A. Ehrlich to win against Romania by causing fatigue to Romania's best player, F. Paneth.

final, he lost to S. Kolar (Czechoslovakia) 2:3 while leading 2:1.<sup>27</sup> The duel between A. Ehrlich and F. Paneth (Romania) went down in world table tennis history. In the first set at 0:0 after 132 minutes of play, the first point was scored by the Pole and he won the whole match in two sets.<sup>28</sup> Then Austria played the match against Romania for three days (eleven hours in total) and the meeting between V. Golberger and M. Haguenaur lasted 7 hours (the match was interrupted and the winner determined by a draw). Following these incidents, the ITTF Congress introduced a time limit of one set to last no more than 20 minutes. In late September and early October of this year, A. Ehrlich was in Poland enjoying several weeks of leave. During this time, he played in Lviv, Lodz, Silesia (he played, among others, with B. Puquet) and Częstochowa (he played 9 matches).<sup>29</sup> At the beginning of November, he returned to France.

Another significant success for A. Ehrlich was winning the English Open Championship. In the Empress Stadium Earls Court he won in three quick sets against M. Szaboados in the semi-final and in the final he gave no chance to M. Haguenauer (France), in the doubles together with M. Haguenauer they won the second place (they lost to L. Bellak and M. Szabodaos).<sup>30</sup> He was the double champion of France in 1937 (won again with M. Haguenauer 3:1 in the final and in doubles with Manchiska)<sup>31</sup> and in 1938.<sup>32</sup>

A. Ehrlich arrived in Baden, Austria (1937) after travelling for 24 hours, entering just 10 minutes before his match against Hungary (won 1 point), Czechoslovakia (won 1 game), Austria (3 victories), Romania (3 triumphs), France (3 points), Egypt (2 victories), England (2 wins), Germany and Belgium (2 points each), lost 2 games against Lithuania, won 2 duels with Yugoslavia. In the medal-deciding match Poland lost to the USA 2:5 (1 point). Both A. Ehrlich and S. Finkelstein lost the final points in the third sets to 19 and 20. Thus, out of twelve singles matches, they had nine victories, which gave Poland only fourth place. He started the singles tournament with wins over S. Boros (Hungary) and A. Barenbaum (Austria). In the second round, he defeated multiple world champion V. Barna (Hungary), in the fourth duel he avenged his defeat in the Prague final to S. Kolar (Czechoslovakia) 3:0, in the quarter-finals he defeated T. Hazi (Hungary), in the semi-finals he won outright against F. Soos (Hungary). On Sunday

<sup>27</sup> "Raz Dwa Trzy" of 17 March, 1936.

<sup>28</sup> M. Schafer, W. Stockmann, N. Wolf, *Ein Spiel fürs Leben- 75 Jahre DTTB*, Frankfurt am Main 2000, p.16. "Table Tennis", The Official Organ of the E.T.T.A. (1936) No. 5, 1936; Jerome Charyn, *Sizzling Chops & Devils Spins*, New York 2001, p.59. In this duel, A. Ehrlich changed his racket from right to left hand every ten minutes, and ate a sausage sandwich during the match.

<sup>29</sup> "Przegląd Sportowy", 1936, No 92, 94. The Częstochowa press "Goniec Częstochowski" did not record the stay of A. Ehrlich in Częstochowa.

<sup>30</sup> "Table Tennis" The Official Organ of the E.T.T.A., 1936 No 4.

<sup>31</sup> "Table Tennis" The Official Organ of the E.T.T.A., 1937 No 5.

<sup>32</sup> Z. Uzorinac, ITTF 1926-2001, *Table Tennis Legends*, Zagreb 2001, p.62.

night he fought in the final against Richard Bergman, leading 2:1 in sets, with a moment of 20:14 advantage in the second lost set.<sup>33</sup> In the doubles, he played with A. Liebster from Austria (they lost in the third round against the American-Austrian pair S. Schiff / A. Berenbaum). In Baden, he was part of the technical committee and voted for the women's world title match between T. Pritzi (Austria) and R. Aarons (USA) to be decided on the table. In the end, both players were disqualified in overtime.

London (1938) proved to be the place where A. Ehrlich's luck ran out, moreover, he played unevenly and on top of that he was sick. A record number of participants came to England despite the prevailing high cost. Performance of the Polish team was mediocre (fourth place in the group behind Austria, the USA and England). A. Ehrlich defeated the Belgian Ewalenko in singles, and already in the second round he fell to Solem Schiff from the USA 2:3.<sup>34</sup>

Two years earlier, he was invited by a casino owner to the Touquet-Paris-Plage in the north of France, where he was offered to play and teach table tennis for appropriate remuneration. There he met, among others, King Farouk of Egypt, with whom he discussed investments in Egyptian sport and table tennis over lunch. After some time, Sono Hussein Said Bey, the president of the Egyptian Table Tennis Federation, arrived at Marbeuf Street in Paris, where Ehrlich had his training venue. The topic of their discussion was the organisation of the world championships in Egypt. After a week, A. Ehrlich was already in London for talks with Ivor Montagu – President of the ITTF, and after a month Cairo became the official host of the 1939 championships.<sup>35</sup> Six months before the championships, A. Ehrlich arrived in the Egyptian capital (to assist with the organisation of the championships and the technical preparation of the men's and women's national teams for the competition).

At a similar time, the ITTF received Palestine's application for the championship. The ITTF Executive Committee faced a diplomatic problem. At the time, Palestine was a British protectorate, Egypt was under British rule and there was a political conflict between the two countries. Thanks to the sporting spirit, a great diplomatic success was achieved. Palestine (with three Polish Jews) performed in the championships. In the match between the two countries, Egypt won 5:2. In this championship, A. Ehrlich was the only Polish player and at the same time manager of the Egyptian national team.

Ehrlich fought his way up to the second place in the Egyptian capital – Cairo (1939). He was the only Polish table tennis player there (the others had already played for Palestine, sending a Polish team would have resulted in winning

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<sup>33</sup> "Raz Dwa Trzy", 1937, No 6,7,8.

<sup>34</sup> "Raz Dwa Trzy", 1938, No 6.

<sup>35</sup> E. Pedemonte, *L'ultima partita*, Milano 2022, pp. 115-123.

a team medal). He competed in singles, doubles and mixed doubles. In singles he decisively defeated his opponents Marcu (Romania), R. Bedoc (France), L. Hexner (Yugoslavia), V. Barna (England), Z. Dolinar (Yugoslavia). In the final held in the hall of the Automobile Club in the presence of King Faruk I and 3,000 spectators, he lost 0:3 to R. Bergman (A. Ehrlich admitted to a very poor performance on the pages of "Przegląd Sportowy"). In the doubles, he was paired with the Egyptian Tawhit Helal and in the medal game they lost to the Czechoslovakian-Luxemburg pair of M. Hamr and J. Tartakower. In the mixed game, the partner of A. Ehrlich was the Greek Constantuinailis. The hosts treated all participants to two trips to the pyramids and a boat ride on the Nile.<sup>36</sup>

For his outstanding sporting achievements for Poland, he was nominated for the second and third time in the "Przegląd Sportowy" poll (1937 – 11<sup>th</sup> place, 1938 – 15<sup>th</sup> place).

After the championships, he left for Romania, and on his way back to France he visited Kraków (to receive the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary badge of the Kraków District Table Tennis Association)<sup>37</sup> and Lviv (his last meeting with his parents and his beloved Irena). He had a tour planned in the 1939-1940 season (up to the planned world championships in Paris in 1940) in the United States (including a showcase at the national exhibition in New York), India and New Zealand. He intended, together with V. Barna and R. Bergman to travel to the Soviet Union for a series of showcase matches (at that time the Soviet Union was not a member of the ITTF).<sup>38</sup> The last plans were not realised due to the outbreak of the Second World War. He was a Polish delegate to the ITTF Congress three times (1933, 1938, 1939).

A. Ehrlich prepared for six world championships in France. Between 1933 and 1939 he played 46 matches for the Polish national team, for which he won 80 duels.<sup>39</sup>

## **Activity in the Resistance, arrest and imprisonment in concentration camps**

At the outbreak of the Second World War, he was in France at Le Touquet-Paris-Plage at the Atlantic ocean. In 1940, he wrote a letter to Dr Ignacy Schwarzbart (who was a member of the National Council of the Polish Republic

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<sup>36</sup> "Sports Review", 1939, No 21.

<sup>37</sup> Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute sygnn.108,86/1 (Communiqué of the Board of the KOZTS of 20 February 1939).

<sup>38</sup> "Przegląd Sportowy" of 27 March 1939

<sup>39</sup> W. Pięta, *Table tennis among Jews in Poland*, English Editions – Supplemented, Częstochowa 2009, p. 149.

in exile, first in France and then in England as a representative of the Jewish population) about helping to grant a Polish passport to Richard Bergman, a former world champion (his father was Polish). He also mentioned promotional matches in the USA and in the West and raising funds for former and current Polish soldiers stationed in Western Europe. In this letter, he also mentioned that he had volunteered to join the Polish army at the Polish embassy in France and had undergone a medical examination (A. Ehrlich was declared fit for service and had up to six months to wait for mobilisation).<sup>40</sup> He was originally preparing for a sporting tour to India, but the ship on which the place was booked never left Marseille. In May 1940, he was at the Eperneau front (near Reims). He then joined the Polish Army of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armoured Division in France. He left for Toulouse (with the intention of continuing his studies). There he was in charge of smuggling Polish servicemen across the Pyrenees to England and collecting information for broadcasting stations. During this time, he tried to continue his sporting career yet due to his Polish citizenship, he was not admitted to the French championships in Vichy in 1943. Then the French championship titles were won by Charles Dubouille and Yolande Logelin.<sup>41</sup> Prior to that, A. Ehrlich had won tournaments in the French Cup with Raymond Tringue (in the final). He spent the last years of the war hiding in the Vichy region in the Bourbon village of l'Archambault at the Quillier family. A. Ehrlich reported to the correspondent of the "Evening Express" that he was a supply officer (together with French athletes he was getting food for the South-East resistance group led by Colonel Gorecki).<sup>42</sup> Unexpectedly rounded up by German policemen, he and his friend Pierre Wildenstein were arrested on 12 June 1944 and imprisoned in a German prison in Moulins. He was suspected of resistance activities (probably betrayed). On that day, the life of A. Ehrlich changed forever. His first encounter with the Nazi officer Schulz was brutal, he was tortured, lost teeth for the first time (despite that he did not betray his colleagues), then was transported to the Gestapo headquarters in Vichy<sup>43</sup> and back to Moulins. Here Stefan (an SS officer) took over the interrogation and its style changed dramatically: there was a tray with tea, sugar and cake, the talk was mainly about table tennis as Stefan was passionate about the sport, and was mainly interested in the longest set in history of table tennis, i.e. the 132 minutes-long duel to get the first point between A. Ehrlich and F. Paneth. There, after interrogation by the SS (private sources say he was saved from being shot by being a medallist in the world table tennis

<sup>40</sup> Collection of Wiesław Pięta. Letter from Aloysius Ehrlich to Dr Ignatius Schwarzbart.

<sup>41</sup> J. Proust, *Berthe de Ping a Pong*, Paris 1990. p.38, p.175; J. Secretin, *Ping du Pong au Tennis de Table*, Paris 1972, pp.202-203. The French championships were not played between 1940 and 1942.

<sup>42</sup> "Evening Express", 1949 of 21 January.

<sup>43</sup> E. Pedemonte, *L'ultima partita*, Milano 2022, pp. 31-36.

championships), they returned his gold watch and wallet with documents and money. As he avoided being shot, he was handcuffed and together with other Jews taken by truck to the Moulins station, and from there by train via a circuitous route (the original line was bombed by the Allies), passing through Paris to the Jewish camp at Drancy (18 July 1944.), where he was assigned prisoner number 25138.

Being told by a railwayman that he was transported to a labour camp in Germany, he was taken to the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in transport 77 from the Drancy camp.<sup>44</sup> The whole transport consisted of about 1300 people. A. Ehrlich shared the wagon with 100 people including children, infants and the elderly, which gave him a lot of reason to think why children and the elderly would go to work.<sup>45</sup> The transport left France on 31 July 1944 and arrived at Auschwitz -Birkenau on 3 August 1944. After selection on the ramp at Birkenau, 391 men (A. Ehrlich was given the camp number B-3742 on the outside of his forearm, the B signifying that he was Jewish) and 183 women were moved to Auschwitz. The remaining 826 passengers were sent to die in the gas chambers. The first day consisted of removing lice with white powder, shaving off the hair, bathing and allocation of striped uniforms and clogs. In the camp, together with 40 prisoners, he was assigned to the *Kohlenkommando* (coal commando of Wilhelm Claussen group – one of the camp's most important officers), where he received socks, leather boots, warm clothing and an extra blanket.<sup>46</sup> He was mainly engaged in digging shelters against Allied air raids. After proving himself in this task, he was transferred to the *Bombenspringkommando* (bombing commando)<sup>47</sup> that specialised in disarming unexploded bombs (shells dropped by the Allies). His knowledge of languages (French, German, Polish and Russian) helped him a lot. A. Ehrlich said that life outside the camp, mainly in the Ostrava area (today's Czech Republic), was easier because of access to food and rest after work. He worked twelve hours a day throughout September and October 1944. After the two months the work was suspended, he was temporarily sent to *Essenfabres* delivering food to about 1500 Jewish women in Birkenau throughout November and December. There, he met his beloved Irena from Lviv. Meanwhile, the Russians were approaching Auschwitz, more and more unexploded bombs were landing near the camp, which he was supposed to disarm. He remained in Auschwitz until January 1945 (only his stay in the camp hospital

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<sup>44</sup> Drancy internment camp (German camp for Jews from France and Western European countries). Inmates waited there to be transported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp (operated from August 1941 to August 1944). A total of 67,000 people were deported to the extermination camps in 60 convoys.

<sup>45</sup> E. Pedemonte, *L'ultima partita*, Milano 2022, p. 69.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, pp. 111–114.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, pp. 126–127.

for prisoners is recorded). As a result of the hasty evacuation and removal of traces of the camp, on 28 January 1945 inmates, including Ehrlich and Irena who died in his arms that day, were forced to march 30 km to the railway station, and then were moved by train to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. There his fellow Jews worked at the quarries. They had no food for several days, spend the nights in freezing barracks, and were loaded onto a train in a transport that on 4 February 1945 set off for KL Dachau.<sup>48</sup> His entire food ration for the five-day journey on the freight train was half a loaf of bread, a piece of margarine and a sausage. Finally he and a group of Jews managed to finish the ca. 600–700 km route to KL Dachau.<sup>49</sup> In KL Dachau, A. Ehrlich was given the inmate number 1139264 (residence Paris). According to Ehrlich, the number was 63264,<sup>50</sup> block 19 (fenced with barbed wire). In Dachau there were no Kapos or SS officers with batons, the prisoners did not work but only shovelled snow in the roll call yard. After a while, with a group of prisoners, he was marched to Dachau station and embarked on another stage of the journey, this time to Waldlager V (a camp of dugouts) and another *Freitag-Sonntag* team (they made bricks from sand, water and cement, twelve hours a day, every day). During unit work on the railway tracks Ehrlich was hit with a shovel by an SS officer, was wounded and stayed in hospital in Waldlager V for a week. Then, he returned to Dachau and was deported further, this time towards Innsbruck, but stopped at Seeshaupt (a village in Bavaria on Lake Starnberg), as the railway tracks were destroyed, and there his war journey ended. There was hot milk and white bread served by nurses from the Red Cross. A. Ehrlich felt the months-long fever dropping.<sup>51</sup> Prisoners liberated by American troops were released on 29 April 1945. A. Ehrlich became a free man, which was the happiest day of his rich life. Due to exhaustion, he was admitted to an American hospital, where he remained until 18 May 1945. After a year of daily struggle to avoid death he returned via Austria (hospital in Innsbruck), Switzerland to France, to Bourbon-Archambault, where he had been captured on 12 June 1944. He again found himself in a hospital, this time for two

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<sup>48</sup> Archives of the Auschwitz -Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim. Transport list from Drancy to Auschwitz on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1944, ref. -RF 3/79, inventory no. 106530, p.76. Record book of the camp hospital for prisoners surgery, ref. D-Aul-5/3a, inventory no: 172898, p.148. List of prisoners transferred from Auschwitz to Gross- Rosen KL on 28 January 1945, ref. D-Daa 3/5, inventory number 161487, vol. 2, p. 65. List of prisoners transferred from Auschwitz Concentration Camp to Dachau Concentration Camp (via Gross-Rosen Concentration Camp) dated 4 February 1945, Auschwitz Transportlisten, ref. D-Aul-3/8/2, inventory number 149702, vol.2, p.37.

<sup>49</sup> Dachau concentration camp was located near Munich. The camp was built following A. Hitler's decision of 21 March 1933. It was initially intended for communists, Jews and Roman Catholic priests. From 1939 onwards, the Polish elite were sent to Dachau. In 1943, a crematorium was built.

<sup>50</sup> E. Pedemonte, *L'ultima partita*, Milano 2022, p. 232.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 250.

months in Moulins (Auvergne-Rhodan-Alpes region).<sup>52</sup> After the necessary hospitalisation, he returned to Paris, where he arranged all the formalities for his stay in France (hotel "Lutetia"). His authentication support was attested by, among others, Pierre Ceccaldi (then working for the Ministry of Justice).<sup>53</sup> Query data showed that, at 182 cm tall, he weighed only 37 kg.<sup>54</sup> After the war, A. Ehrlich managed to return to Lviv for only a week in 1989, at the time the city was within the territory of the Soviet Union, while he remained to live in France.

## Continuation of sports activities after 1945

As a result of miraculously surviving the Holocaust and recovering physically and mentally, he gradually began training. He received support from M. Hague-nauer and G. Amoureti, former friends from the table tennis arenas. His exceptionally strong will and the tremendous amount of work allowed A. Ehrlich to make his second debut in the French international championships, which took place on 2 and 3 January 1946 in the Wagram hall. At that time he lost to Michel Lankoy 2:3 despite leading 2:0 (due to poor physical condition). In doubles play, paired with G. Amoureti, he was third.<sup>55</sup> In the first post-war world championships, held in Paris (1947), A. Ehrlich represented Poland and limited his performance to singles play only. He climbed up as far as the quarter-finals.<sup>56</sup> He also entered into the mixed game with A. Adelstein (Romania)<sup>57</sup>. A search of the ITTF archives in Rennes near Lausanne revealed that he played in these championships with the permission of the ITTF as a French resident (he was a permanent resident of France).<sup>58</sup> Poland did not play in these championships. For his participation in these championships he was excluded from the Polish national team by a decision of the PZTS of 2 February 1947.<sup>59</sup> At the end of that year, A. Ehrlich wrote a letter to the English Table Tennis Association requesting a visa and ac-

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<sup>52</sup> "Evening Express" of 21 January 1949.

<sup>53</sup> J. Proust, *Berthe de Ping a Pong*, Paris 1990, p. 38, p. 175. J. Secretin, *Ping du Pong au Tennis de Table*, Paris 1972, p. 48. Pierre Ceccaldi president of the French Table Tennis Federation (FFTT) from 1959 to 1966.

<sup>54</sup> "Evening Express" of 21 January 1949.

<sup>55</sup> "France tennis de table" 2011, No 868.

<sup>56</sup> J. Schmicker, *Das große Buch vom Tischtennis*, Schwalmthal 2000, p.338. In the first round he defeated the Swiss Frel, then won against Hussein (Egypt), defeated unexpectedly I. Andreadis (Czechoslovakia) and Baiileul (France), and succumbed 0:3 to L. Pagliaro (USA) in the medal match.

<sup>57</sup> The Romanian Angelika Adelstein was not allowed to compete in these championships. Neither was Poland.

<sup>58</sup> ITTF archive in Rennes near Lausanne (Switzerland). Letter from the ITTF dated 1 July 1947 (no ref.). There is also information about R. Bergman and his efforts to obtain a Polish passport.

<sup>59</sup> "Table Tennis in Poland and the World", 1991 No 2; "Sport", 1947, No 10.

commodation – the only Polish table tennis player in the upcoming world championships. Eventually, in the season of 1947–1948, he opted out of most of the tests in France including the World Championships in London, 1948. He decided to work on endurance and mental strengthening.

In January 1949, after receiving a letter from the president of PZTS – Ryszard Górski, inviting him to participate in the IMP in Lublin, he went on the Orient Express train (carriages to Bratislava, Bucharest, Belgrade and Warsaw) on a 48-hour journey from Gare de l'Est to Poland with some misgivings. He stayed in Warsaw for several hours after nearly a decade away (1939–1949), and after a coffee with pre-war friends and a brief tour of Warsaw, he headed for Lublin. Already on the first day of his stay in Lublin, he had a 7-hour training session (he played about 80 sets).<sup>60</sup> He participated in the Polish senior championships in Lublin. He qualified for the finals (without preliminaries), in which he won four times (beating J. Krzysiek, H. Wider, W. Gaj, A. Otremba) and suffered one defeat against Witold Kawczyk from Siemianowice.<sup>61</sup> In the direct duel A. Ehrlich was better than W. Gaj (who also had one loss on his account). The PZTS authorities led by Kazimierz Matuszewski disqualified A. Ehrlich as he had no permanent residence in Poland, and stripped him of the champion title. As a result, the gold medal was given to Władysław Gaj.<sup>62</sup> This was one of the biggest embarrassments of the PZTS in its long history of existence. This championship ended on Sunday at 11.20 p.m. This was Ehrlich's first and last performance in the Individual Polish Championships in Polish People's Republic. He had been entered for these championships by Garbarnia Kraków. On his way back to Warsaw, he played the pre-planned exhibition matches against W. Gaj and Arno Gayer, and held consultations with the 10-member national team. He must have been afraid of restrictions from the Security Office: oral accounts by Franciszek Dobosz given to the author showed that he left the Warsaw consultations unexpectedly and in haste, without even saying goodbye.

In Sweden at the world championships, A. Ehrlich (competed with the permission of the ITTF president – I. Montagu, who, in a letter to J. Olszowski from the PZTS, expressed his disappointment at Poland's absence from the world championships despite its earlier application. In Stockholm, he qualified for the top 16 in singles play and was eliminated from further play by G. Amouretti of France. In doubles play, he was paired with W. Gaj and gave the game a walkover. For his voluntary participation in the championships, he was once again suspended by the Polish Table Tennis Association. After the championships, he played in various open tournaments in France and England.

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<sup>60</sup> "Przegląd Sportowy" 1949, No. 5, 6.

<sup>61</sup> "Życie Częstochowy" of 18 January 1949.

<sup>62</sup> "Sztandar Ludu" of 19 January 1949. Lublin press reported that A. Ehrlich had the best defence, and was the top player together with W. Kawczyk; W. Pięta (2016) *From Alojzy Ehrlich to Natalia Partyka, sports competition 1932–2016*, Częstochowa 2016, pp. 29–30.

He was still in conflict with the Polish Table Tennis Association. The sports captain Jerzy Czerniachowski did not appoint A. Ehrlich to the national team for the World Championships in Budapest (1950). At that time, letter diplomacy circulated between the ITTF President I. Montagu, the Director of the Polish Embassy in London, A. Słonimski and A. Ehrlich regarding his participation in the World Championships (December 1949). In the end, the mediation failed to produce a compromise. In the Hungarian capital, the three-time world vice-champion sat as a spectator and experienced the biggest defeat of his life (he then doubted his Polish citizenship). Called the Polish Frenchman, he went to India for the world championships in Bombay (1952). In the first game he defeated Dr D. Mauritz of Germany, and in the second game he succumbed to K. Sing-Ning of Honkong. In the doubles game, he was paired with his pre-war friend Stefan Cafiero. Fearing for his safety, he did not travel to socialist Romania. He came to London for the World Championships (1954) for the third time (previously in 1935, 1938), competed in singles only, defeated Sawyer from England and lost to Sebok from Hungary. Three years later in Stockholm, in another world championship, after wins against P. Belanger (Canada), F. Tokar (Czechoslovakia), P. Holusek (Germany) and B. Kennedy (England), he advanced to the best eight, where he succumbed to the later world vice-champion I. Ogimura.<sup>63</sup> He represented France at the world championships in Utrecht (1955) only in doubles with R. Bedoc. They recorded a good result, winning against the pairs M. Laine / G. Brandberg (Finland), A. Rhodes / H. Venner (England), P. Holusek / J. Seitz (West Germany) and losing to the Yugoslavs Z. Dolinar / V. Haragonzo. In singles, he won against D. da Motta (Brazil) and then succumbed to Josipov Vogrincovi (Yugoslavia). In singles he also played against L. Giraud (France).

He fought each season with health ailments related to his stay in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau. In French national tournaments, he was still considered a top athlete in 1960s, e.g. in Rennes (1962) and in Paris (1963). At the age of fifty in Evreux (1964), he won a bronze medal in doubles.<sup>64</sup> He ended his sporting career in Tours (1965) at the French championships. At that time, a defensive table tennis player Vincent Purkart became champion for the second time, and J. Secretin was beginning his world career (first French doubles championship).<sup>65</sup>

A. Ehrlich's international career (world championships) ended in Prague (1963) after losing to the Englishman C. Barnes 1:3. He was still entered by the French Table Tennis Federation for the 28<sup>th</sup> World Championships (Ljubljana 1965), which he took no part in.<sup>66</sup> In the early 1950s, he received approvals from

<sup>63</sup> "Sport" 1957, No 32.

<sup>64</sup> "France Table Tennis" 2011, No. 866.

<sup>65</sup> J. Proust, *Berthe de Ping a Pong*, Paris 1990, p. 175; J. Secretin, *Ping du Pong au Tennis de Table*, Paris 1972, p. 152, p. 209.

<sup>66</sup> Programme (1965) The 28th World Table Tennis Championships, Ljubljana, April 15-25, p. 39.

the ITTF to play only in singles and doubles (world championships). Then, recreationally as a semi-retired athlete, he enjoyed table tennis until the age of 75 at the AP Aulnay club near Paris, having previously represented the clubs ACBB, PPC Flandres, Roubaix, Cavigal Nice, Balmat de Paris. He visited European and world championship arenas as a spectator. He was the winner of the international championships of England (1953), Germany (Kiel, 1955) defeating K. Freundorfer 3:1 in the final,<sup>67</sup> and he was the Dutch (1951, 1956) and Swiss doubles champion (1950, 1951, 1953). In the summer break of 1957, he invited the best Polish team, Warsaw Sparta, to France for a preparatory camp for the new season. In Saint Tropez in the tournament he defeated the leading Polish table tennis players Z. Caliński and J. Kusiński<sup>68</sup>.

He first appeared in the world ranking as a 20-year-old in the 1933–1934 season in a high 9<sup>th</sup> place. The second time was in 1938 when he reached a top 6<sup>th</sup> position. After the war, he was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in 1950 and 10<sup>th</sup> in 1951. He was last ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in the ITTF ranking for 1957 (at the age of 43).

### Editor, trainer, rationaliser, promoter

He made his debut as a trainer in January 1939. He took up the offer by King Faruk I of Egypt. He acted as a consultant during the organisation of the championships and officially coached the Egyptian national team. His players won the bronze medal in the mixed game (Helal, Fahrny). Before arriving by boat in Cairo (where he had a table tennis table paid for by King Faruk I), he held exhibition matches with V. Barna and L. Bellak in Morocco and Tunisia. In Egypt alone, he stayed for 5 months and played exhibition matches for the elite there, including games with Queen Farida and King Faruk I. He also provided correspondence from these championships for the readers of "Sports Review". From mid-1946, he belonged to the circus group established by professional table tennis players.

At the age of 36, he started his coaching apprenticeship at the Parisian "Banville", and then in Lille. In the 1950s, he wrote for the French magazine "FFTT Magazine". He included tips in the "free opinions" column. He then undertook training work in Germany and Sweden.<sup>69</sup> In Germany, he published *Tischtennis Tips* (Table Tennis Tips).<sup>70</sup> This publication consists of an introduction and 16 chapters, chapter topics including: values in table tennis, social values of table tennis, working in a club section, sports equipment, the role of the coach in

<sup>67</sup> M. Schafer, W. Stockmann, N. Wolf, *Ein Spiel fürs Leben – 75 Jahre DTTB*, Frankfurt am Main 2000. p. 133.

<sup>68</sup> "Sport", 1957, No. 87.

<sup>69</sup> "Table Tennis ETTA" of 7 April 1956, p. 11.

<sup>70</sup> A. Ehrlich, *Tischtennis Tips*, Hannover 1959.

the club, cooperation of coaches in the club, women's table tennis, the organisation of table tennis competitions, training in the early stages of the game and competitive table tennis players, the way of life of a table tennis player. A. Ehrlich wrote, "...never give up – keep on trying..." In the publication, there is an advertisement for A. Ehrlich's table tennis racket, which could be bought in the late 1950s at a price of DM 10.35 (German marks).

He went to Sweden in 1954 to teach table tennis, these were short but cyclical visits. He offered professional training to table tennis players there by systematically improving selected elements of the game such as punch and half-volley backhand control drills, diagonal and straight forehand, and keeping the ball in play on the table for 20 minutes without a break. He also highlighted the footwork of the breakthrough, forehand attack at the table and from the second zone. He also introduced coordination exercises from backhand to forehand into the training methodology. His training philosophy was based on improving stroke confidence (repetition). He strengthened muscles by jumping on a skipping rope for 10 minutes each on the left and right leg and on both legs, he also applied running up and down stairs.<sup>71</sup> The basics of his training methods were based on his own experiences from his extensive sporting career. This was all refined into an offensive style that was undergoing a real evolution in the mid-1950s. He mobilised the trainers to do hard work. Scientific institutes became interested in his training methods. Financial assistance was provided by the Swedish sports authorities. At these institutes he held training seminars aimed at coaches and players. Under the auspices of the sports ministry, he also organised a camp in the countryside (10 miles from Stockholm).<sup>72</sup> He scheduled daily classes there from 8 a.m. to 5.15 p.m. There was learning and practice, and subject matters of youth psychology, human physiology, modern sports training theory, training with elements of technique and tactics, and conditioning training were dealt with in detail. The classes ended with a visit to the Finnish sauna. 3-6 evenings were devoted to watching films and socialising. A. Ehrlich proved to be an example of reliability and an authority for young Swedish table tennis players (among others Hans Alser, the 1962 European champion). The pioneering ideas introduced by A. Ehrlich into training made a significant contribution to the evaluation of table tennis (until then, training consisted solely of improving the style of play during control games). In 1956, he was already one of 12 regional coaches in France. In 1960 he married Inge Lieselotte-Kuhl, he had no offspring.

In Malmö, Sweden, in 1964, he presented a table tennis robot. This robot was manufactured by a French company. He lent his name to the names of table

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<sup>71</sup> G. Osth, *Wie wird man Nr1 im Tischtennis?*, Aachen 1995, p.29 (Schewen und die Entwicklung in Herren-Tischtennis von 1925-1991).

<sup>72</sup> "Table Tennis ETTA" of 7 April 1956, p.11.

tennis balls and rackets with a bevelled handle; the cost of this racket in 1954 in Sweden was 15 crowns, and in 1965 in Poland – 180 zlotys. The balls and rackets were distributed by, among others, Union Cooperative Sportive from Paris. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he was director of a recreational club in Saint Tropez run by the Olympic judo champion Anton Gesing. This centre had, among other things, four table tennis rooms, 22 table tennis tables, four ball-throwing robots and around 50 sparring coaches.

Based on the information provided by Zdenko Uzorinac, A. Ehrlich worked as a trainer and conducted weekly seminars in France, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, Egypt, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Greece, Spain, Norway, India and England.<sup>73</sup> In the late 1960s, he was accepted as a member of the Swaythling Club in France.<sup>74</sup> In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s he worked for the English company *Jacques*, the German *Gewo*, *Hanno*, the Swedish *Stiga*, and the Japanese *Butterfly*, of which he was the representative for France. He even had a company Mercedes, which he used to travel around Europe (this account was provided by Michał Reterski, an international judge from Poland).

He visited Poland many times. He came, among others, to Warsaw (1974) and Łódź (1978), Wrocław (1981)<sup>75</sup> for the International Polish Championships. He observed promising young Polish table tennis players: Witold Woźnica, Stanisław Frączyk, Andrzej Grubba and Leszek Kucharski. He pointed out the systematic work of 6-8 hours a day, demanded an increase in the number of training camps, a stationary training centre, proper management with a player's manager (the player should not have to deal with all the organisational formalities), a pure professional in a nutshell.<sup>76</sup> He was fluent in six languages: Yiddish, Polish, French, English, German and Swedish. In 1991, he wrote down the story of his life and gave it to Arnaldo Morino.<sup>77</sup>

He died of stomach cancer after a long illness at the Saint Denis Hospital, located in a district of Paris, on 7 December 1992, at the age of 78. The sporting and organizational talent and achievements of A. Ehrlich were recalled on the occasions of the 80<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Polish Table Tennis Association.

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<sup>73</sup> Z. Uzorinac, ITTF 1926-2001, *Table Tennis Legends*, Zagreb 2001, p. 62.

<sup>74</sup> SCI Booklet 1967-2011, *Swaythling Club International*, ITTF (2011), p. 100.

<sup>75</sup> "Gazeta Robotnicza", 1981, No 43. During this competition, A. Ehrlich was awarded the medal of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polish Table Tennis Association (the only award he received from the Polish Table Tennis Association).

<sup>76</sup> "Tempo", 1983, of 29th October. Interview with Alex Ehrlich by Witold Wieromiej in the Krakow sports daily paper *Tempo* (...Are there still amateurs...).

<sup>77</sup> E. Pedemonte, *L'ultima partita*, Milano 2022, p. 257.

## Conclusion

He was faithful to table tennis throughout his prolific sporting life. After his successful debut in the Paris World Championships (1933), he gave up his studies at the University and devoted himself exclusively to table tennis (financial problems forced him to give table tennis lessons for money). He became a true professional who worked according to the plan he had set. He left behind an attachment to the Polish flag and eagle, the national emblem, together with great respect for Poland, respect for his opponents and a place in the history of the world table tennis because of the longest exchange and the game for the first point. He popularised table tennis around the world through hundreds of showcase matches and also participated in the Bergman Circus. He also laid the foundation stone for modern training. He introduced conditioning preparation and specialised training on the elements of the game (repetition) as well as playing with a robot into the training cycle. He derived great satisfaction from his many years of training at the Saint Tropez centre.

As a table tennis player, he had a wide arm reach, defensive mind, was able to defend with backhand and forehand. He did not fulfil his biggest dream of winning the world title. In the decisive matches, there was a lack of experience (change of style of play from defensive to offensive) or maybe just sporting luck.

He worked on his equipment brand (rackets bearing his name were played all over Europe, and table tennis balls were used in France) and his personal image (sepia-coloured image cards). As a player, he owned two rackets: one for offensive, the other with a larger diameter for defensive play.

He was one of a small group of Jewish athletes who managed to survive the Holocaust and return to the table tennis salons (quarter-final of the World Championships in 1947). Although he lived a solitary life, he ran an open house, often hosting former players and coaches from Poland who had come to earn their pensions in France. Lively, talkative, comforting, he had a loud voice.

He was forgotten by Poland in the 1950s and 1960s. He did not live to see his compatriots officially revoke his exclusion from the national team, as well as his union and state honours. He left behind valuable tactical tips and records that have been permanently inscribed in the history of world table tennis.

He was never (for political reasons) offered to lead the Polish national team. A. Ehrlich had a huge impact on the development of Polish table tennis (world championship medals, showcase matches at home and in Europe). For the last few years, the PZTS had no idea how to bring the silhouette of this prominent table tennis player back to memory. To commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, the author of this article created the Alojzy Ehrlich Gallery of Polish Table Tennis Fame. The work took two years, Prof. M. Mielczarek from Jan Długosz University in Czeszochowa prepared the design of a sculpture-statue

of A. Ehrlich, and its casting was made at Częstochowa University of Technology. The first laureates in 2016 were Adam Giersz, a prominent Polish coach, Fima Borys, former representative of Poland and Israel, and Andrzej Grubba. Currently, the Hall of Fame consists of 32 people. A. Ehrlich did not live to see a tournament named after him in Poland. Thirty years have passed since his death. In Częstochowa (30 Kukuczki St.), in the AZS Sports and Table Tennis History Centre, there is an A. Ehrlich Hall of Fame including his dummy, racket and a ball, his sculpture, and biographies of 32 Polish table tennis celebrities.

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**Wiesław Pięta:** conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing – original draft, supervision, project administration;

**Aleksandra Pięta:** formal analysis, investigation, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing, supervision;

**Mikołaj Marszałek:** visualization.

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“Raz Dwa Trzy” 1933, 1937–1938  
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## DZIAŁALNOŚĆ ADMINISTRACYJNYCH STRUKTUR PAŃSTWOWEGO URZĘDU WYCHOWANIA FIZYCZNEGO I PRZYSPOSOBIENIA WOJSKOWEGO W POŁUDNIOWO- -WSCHODNICH WOJEWÓDZTWACH II RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ POLSKIEJ W ŚWIELE LWOWSKIEGO CZASOPISMA „SPORT” (1932–1933)

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## The Activities of the Administrative Structures of the State Office of Physical Education and Military Training in the South-Eastern Voivodeships of the Second Polish Republic as Reflected in the Lwów-Based Periodical “Sport” (1932–1933)

### Abstract

The aim of the article is to present the activities of the administrative structures of the State Office of Physical Education and Military Training in the territories of the Lwów, Stanisławów, and Tarnopol Voivodeships, as reflected in the Lwów-based periodical “Sport” in the years 1932–1933.

The articles and materials examined addressed the role of the administrative structures of the State Office of Physical Education and Military Training in the formation of Voivodeship, County,

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and Municipal Committees of Physical Education and Military Training; the activities of the District Offices of Physical Education and Military Training of Corps District Command No. VI in Lwów and Corps District Command No. X in Przemyśl; the development of sports infrastructure, particularly the construction of new sports facilities; the training of instructors in physical education, sport, and military training; the organization and conduct of physical education and military training camps; the organization of sporting competition, including the Festivals of Physical Education and Military Training; and the role and organization of tests undertaken to obtain the State Sports Badge.

In 1932–1933, new sports facilities were built, mainly in Lwów and Przemyśl, including sports halls and swimming pools. Courses, training sessions, and camps in physical education, sport, and military training were organized. The development of sporting competition was fostered, including the Festivals of Physical Education and Military Training, as well as competitions and tests conducted for the purpose of obtaining the State Sports Badge.

**Keywords:** physical education; sport; military training; Committees of Physical Education and Military Training; National Sports Badge; Second Polish Republic.

## Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie działalności administracyjnych struktur Państwowego Urzędu Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego na terenach województw lwowskiego, stanisławowskiego i tarnopolskiego w świetle lwowskiego czasopisma „Sport” w latach 1932–1933.

Artykuły i materiały publikowane w periodyku dotyczyły roli administracyjnych struktur Państwowego Urzędu Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego w kształtowaniu wojewódzkiego, powiatowych i miejskich Komitetów Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego; działalności Okręgowych Urzędów Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego Dowództwa Okręgu Korpusu nr VI we Lwowie oraz Dowództwa Okręgu Korpusu nr X w Przemyślu; rozwoju infrastruktury sportowej, głównie w zakresie budowy nowych obiektów sportowych; kształcenia instruktorów wychowania fizycznego, sportu i przysposobienia wojskowego; organizacji i przeprowadzania obozów wychowania fizycznego i przysposobienia wojskowego, organizacji współzawodnictwa sportowego, w tym Świąt Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego; roli i organizacji prób w celu zdobycia Państwowej Odznaki Sportowej.

W latach 1932–1933 wzniesiono nowe obiekty sportowe, głównie we Lwowie i w Przemyślu, m.in. hale sportowe i pływalnie. Organizowano kursy, szkolenia, obozy z zakresu wychowania fizycznego, sportu i przysposobienia wojskowego. Promowano rozwój współzawodnictwa sportowego, m.in. Świąta Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego, jak również zawody i próby w celu zdobycia Państwowej Odznaki Sportowej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wychowanie fizyczne, sport, przysposobienie wojskowe, Komitety Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego, Państwowa Odznaka Sportowa, II Rzeczpospolita Polska.

## Wprowadzenie

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie działalności administracyjnych struktur Państwowego Urzędu Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego (PUWF i PW) w południowo-wschodnich województwach II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w świetle lwowskiego czasopisma „Sport” (1932–1933). Jego redaktorem

naczelnym był Rudolf Wacek, ukazywało się w latach 1932–1934<sup>1</sup> – nieregularnie, najczęściej co tydzień. „Sport”, jako periodyk, za główny cel

[...] obrało odzwierciedlenie życia sportowego, wychowania fizycznego i przysposobienia wojskowego Kresów Południowo-Wschodnich, obok propagandy kultury i etyki sportowej, nadto racjonalnej gospodarki urządzeń sportowych [...]².

Gazeta docierała głównie do ludności południowo-wschodnich województw II Rzeczypospolitej, szczególnie do województw lwowskiego, stanisławowskiego i tarnopolskiego. Województwo lwowskie obejmowało obszar 28 402 km² i liczyło 3 126 300 ludności; województwo stanisławowskie obejmowało obszar 16 894 km² i liczyło 1 480 300 ludności; tarnopolskie obejmowało obszar 16 533 km² i liczyło 1 600 400 ludności³. Ludność polska stanowiła w województwie lwowskim 57,7%, ukraińska – 34,1 %, żydowska 7,5%⁴; w województwie stanisławowskim ludność polska stanowiła 22,4%, ukraińska – 68,9%, żydowska – 7,4%⁵; w województwie tarnopolskim ludność polska stanowiła 49,3%, ukraińska – 45,5%, żydowska – 4,9%⁶.

W zakresie stanu badań największe znaczenie poznawcze posiadają m.in. publikacje D. Dudka, J. Kęsika, A.A. Ostanka i L. Szymańskiego⁷. Warto zaznaczyć, iż wymienione prace stanowią przyczynek do omawianej problematyki.

<sup>1</sup> W zakresie kwerendy źródeł autorzy przebadali tylko jeden numer „Sportu” z 1934 r. – nr 41. Czasopismo „Sport” ukazywało się we Lwowie w latach 1922–1927, a jego redaktorem naczelnym był Rudolf Wacek. Ukazywało się nieregularnie – co tydzień lub co dwa tygodnie. W okresie 1922–1927 wydano 219 numerów, w latach 1928–1931 nie było wydawane.

<sup>2</sup> *Od wydawnictwa i redakcji*, „Sport” 1932, nr 1, s. 1.

<sup>3</sup> L. Gradowski (red.), *Polska 191–1988*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 1989, s. 16. Zob. też: *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Warszawa 1939, s. 12–14. Liczba ludności według spisu z dnia 9 grudnia 1931 r.

<sup>4</sup> [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojew%C3%B3dztwo\\_lwowskie](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojew%C3%B3dztwo_lwowskie) [dostęp: 9.05.2026]; L. Gradowski (red.), dz. cyt., s. 16.

<sup>5</sup> [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojew%C3%B3dztwo\\_stanis%C5%82awowskie](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojew%C3%B3dztwo_stanis%C5%82awowskie) [dostęp: 9.05.2026]; L. Gradowski (red.), dz. cyt., s. 16.

<sup>6</sup> [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojew%C3%B3dztwo\\_tarnopolskie](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojew%C3%B3dztwo_tarnopolskie) [dostęp: 9.05.2026]; L. Gradowski (red.), dz. cyt., s. 16. Tereny te były w znaczącej wielkości zamieszkałe przez ludność wiejską, m.in. w województwie tarnopolskim stanowiła ona 83,2%, w województwie stanisławowskim – 80,1%, w województwie lwowskim – 75,2%.

<sup>7</sup> D. Dudek, *Józef Piłsudski, wobec problemów kultury fizycznej (1910–1935)*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego im. Bronisława Czecha w Krakowie, Kraków 2004; J. Kęsik, *Naród pod bronią. Społeczeństwo w programie polskiej polityki wojskowej 1918–1939*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 1998; tenże, *Wojsko Polskie wobec tężyzny fizycznej społeczeństwa 1918–1939*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 1996; L. Szymański, *Kultura fizyczna w polityce II Rzeczypospolitej*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 1995; A.A. Ostank, *W służbie Ojczyźnie. Wojsko Polskie w systemie bezpieczeństwa województw południowo-wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej (1921–1939)*, Wydawnictwo Wojskowej Akademii Technicznej, Warszawa 2019; zob. też: I. Ciosek, *Rola Instytucji państwowych, samorządowych i organizacji społecznych w rozwoju*

## Metody i problemy badawcze

W przygotowaniu publikacji zastosowano metody badawcze: syntezy, analizy źródeł historycznych, indukcji, dedukcji oraz metodę porównawczą. Wyszukiwano następujące problemy badawcze:

1. Jaka była problematyka artykułów, materiałów i doniesień, odnosząca się do działalności administracyjnych struktur PUWFiPW w południowo-wschodnich województwach II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na łamach czasopisma „Sport” w latach 1932–1933?
2. Jaka była rola i osiągnięcia administracyjnych struktur PUWFiPW w kształceniu infrastruktury oraz w kształtowaniu kadr dla potrzeb kultury fizycznej?
3. Jaki był wkład administracyjnych struktur w organizację współzawodnictwa sportowego i propagowanie Państwowej Odznaki Sportowej?

## Wyniki i dyskusja

Na łamach „Sportu” ukazywały się artykuły, doniesienia i materiały odnoszące się do działalności administracyjnych struktur PUWFiPW. W dużej mierze dotyczyły one działalności tych gremiów w województwie lwowskim oraz w województwach stanisławowskim i tarnopolskim. Znajdujemy informacje o działalności Wojewódzkiego Komitetu Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego we Lwowie oraz działalności powiatowych i miejskich Komitetów Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego, a także Okręgowych Urzędach Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego, przy Dowództwach Okręgów Korpusu. Artykuły i materiały dotyczyły roli administracyjnych struktur PUWFiPW w rozwoju infrastruktury sportowej, głównie w zakresie budowy nowych obiektów sportowych; kształcenia instruktorów wychowania fizycznego, sportu i przysposobienia wojskowego; organizacji i przeprowadzania obozów wychowania fizycznego i przysposobienia wojskowego, organizacji współzawodnictwa sportowego, w tym Świąt Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego; roli i organizacji prób w celu zdobycia Państwowej Odznaki Sportowej<sup>8</sup>.

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*wychowania fizycznego i sportu w Kielcach (1918–1939)*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, Kielce 2004; J. Kapłon, *Początki narciarstwa polskiego. Karpackie Towarzystwo Narciarzy we Lwowie 1907–1939*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Wierchy, Kraków 2018; J. Wojtycza, *Przysposobienie wojskowe w odrodzonej Polsce do roku 1926*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej w Krakowie, Kraków 2001; S. Zaborniak, *Kultura fizyczna ludności ukraińskiej za ziemiami polskich (1868–1939)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2007.

<sup>8</sup> D. Dudek, dz. cyt., s. 142–144. W czerwcu 1930 r. ukazało się rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów w zakresie wprowadzenia Państwowej Odznaki Sportowej. Jak pisze D. Dudek, „Celem POS było podniesienie sprawności fizycznej najszerszych warstw społeczeństwa oraz podtrzymanie tej sprawności przez jak najdłuższy okres życia”.

W rozwoju wychowania fizycznego, sportu oraz przysposobienia wojskowego ważną rolę odegrał powołany na mocy Rozporządzenia Rady Ministrów z dnia 28 stycznia 1927 r. Państwowy Urząd Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego (PUWFiPW)<sup>9</sup>. Wraz z PUWFiPW powołano Radę Naukową Wychowania Fizycznego<sup>10</sup>. Utworzone je przy Ministerstwie Spraw Wojskowych.

Istotną rolę w tym zakresie spełniały administracyjne struktury PUWFiPW – powiatowe, miejskie i gminne Komitety Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego (KWFiPW), działające w ramach wojewódzkich Komitetów Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego<sup>11</sup>. Z tymczasowej instrukcji (1927 r.) w sprawie wojewódzkich i powiatowych KWFiPW wynikało, iż zakres działania Komitetów WFiPW był następujący:

[...] współpraca z miejscowymi władzami państwowymi w zakresie uzyskania poparcia i ułatwień dla miejscowych organizacji WF i PW i sportowych, współdziałanie ze związkami komunalnymi celem otrzymania pomocy dla potrzeb miejscowego ruchu WF i PW i sportowego, współpraca z miejscowymi stowarzyszeniami WF i PW i sportowymi, celem ustalenia ogólnych miejscowych potrzeb w zakresie wychowania fizycznego, przysposobienia wojskowego i sportu oraz planu realizacji, podejmowania działalności na rzecz wychowania fizycznego, przysposobienia wojskowego i sportu<sup>12</sup>.

Jak pisze L. Szymański,

[...] w kwietniu 1928 r. powołano w każdym Dowództwie Okręgów Korpusów Okręgowy Urząd Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego podporządkowany PUWFiPW, a w Korpusie Ochrony Pogranicza – Inspektorat Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> E. Małolepszy, *Działalność lokalnych struktur Państwowego Urzędu Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego w województwie łódzkim (1927–1939)*, [w:] E.A. Mierzwa (red.), *Dzieje kształtowania się Polskich Instytucji Oświatowych*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej im. Jana Kochanowskiego w Kielcach. Filia w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim, Piotrków Trybunalski 2002, s. 265–276. Do zadań PUWFiPW należało koordynowanie działalności w zakresie wychowania fizycznego, sportu i przysposobienia wojskowego, a w szczególności ustalanie wytycznych, przedstawianie wniosków i opinii, sprawowanie nadzoru nad instytucjami i organizacjami wychowania fizycznego i przysposobienia wojskowego, składanie propozycji budżetu państwa na powyższe dziedziny, a także publikowanie czasopism i wydawnictw.

<sup>10</sup> Tamże, s. 266. Do zadań Rady Naukowej Wychowania Fizycznego należało m.in. ustalanie zasad kontroli lekarskiej nad wychowaniem fizycznym, uzgodnienie i ujednolicenie metod wychowania fizycznego w szkolnictwie, wojsku i organizacjach sportowych, opracowywanie i opiniowanie projektów ustaw i rozporządzeń, opracowywanie wytycznych w zakresie sportu młodzieży, sportu kobiecego, kryteriów zawodniczych, metod treningu sportowego oraz prowadzenie badań doświadczalnych.

<sup>11</sup> E. Małolepszy, T. Drozdek-Małolepsza, *Kultura fizyczna i turystyka w województwie poleskim w latach 1921–1939. Zarys problematyki*, „Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne” 2014, nr 41, s. 127.

<sup>12</sup> Przewodnik Gimnastyczny „Sokół” 1927, nr 21; E. Małolepszy, T. Drozdek-Małolepsza, *Kultura fizyczna i turystyka w województwie wołyńskim w latach 1921–1939*, Wydawnictwo Nauka i Innowacje, Poznań 2020, s. 28.

<sup>13</sup> L. Szymański, dz. cyt., s. 28.

Wcześniej, bo już w lutym 1927 r., Dowództwa Okręgów Korpusów (DOK) wydały „wytyczne pracy dla Komitetów Powiatowych Wychowania Fizycznego i Przeprosobienia Wojskowego”. Według wytycznych

[...] praca przeprosobienia wojskowego i wychowania fizycznego będzie miała za zadanie wyrobienie tęgich fizycznie i silnych moralnie i duchowo obywateli, którzy w czasie pokoju będą z pożytkiem pracować dla Ojczyzny, a w czasie wojny potrafią skutecznie ją bronić<sup>14</sup>.

Powinna mieć charakter apolityczny i państwowy. W zadaniach dla powiatowych KWFiPW w zakresie wychowania fizycznego (wf.), sportu i przeprosobienia wojskowego (pw.) przewidziano m.in., że:

Komitety miały uzyskać tereny ćwiczeń – boiska, pływalnie, strzelnice i sale gimnastyczne – na użytek stały lub czasowy, bezpłatnie lub za odszkodowaniem; Komitety miały nabyć na własność przybory i przyrządy do gier i ćwiczeń; Komitety miały zorganizować pomoc dla szkolnictwa w sprawie ćwiczeń wf. młodzieży szkolnej oraz propagandę wf. przez wykłady, popisy, pokazy; Komitety miały zorganizować wf. młodzieży pozaszkolnej oraz ćwiczeń wf. dla dorosłych; Komitety miały zorganizować doroczne zawody lokalne, szerzenie idei pw. w słowie i piśmie i w ten sposób przygotowanie gruntu do rozwoju pracy; urządzanie zawodów strzeleckich, dorocznych „Świąt WF i PW” oraz większych ćwiczeń polowych połączonych oddziałów pw.; współpracę z władzami państwowymi, samorządowymi, zarządami stowarzyszeń i klubami sportowymi; organizację komitetów lokalnych we wszystkich miasteczkach i wsiach powiatu; udzielanie pomocy instruktorom pw., budowę boisk i strzelnic dla pw.; organizowanie kursów dla instruktorów pw.<sup>15</sup>

Redakcja „Sportu” relacjonowała w 1933 r. wizytę we Lwowie dyrektora PUWFIPW – płk. Władysława Kilińskiego, który m.in. wypowiedział się na temat celów i zadań Urzędu:

[...] powołano do życia Państw. Urząd WF i PW i skierowano natychmiast na właściwe tory wychowanie obywatelskie, fizyczne i wyszkolenie wojskowe [...] PUWF popierać będzie budowy wielkich obiektów sportowych, które byłyby codziennie, a nie tylko w święta używane przez obywateli, nadto Urząd kładzie obecnie główny nacisk na sporty mogące przynieść korzyści wojsku. Sportami tymi są boks, narciarstwo i sporty wodne. Pułkownik [...] podkreślił znaczenie Państw. Odznaki Sportowej, która przyciąga do sportu najszerze masy, a następnie omówił stan PW<sup>16</sup>.

Utworzenie PUWFIPW znacznie poprawiło stan i poziom kultury fizycznej w środowisku miejskim, a także w środowisku wiejskim<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> E. Małolepszy, T. Drozdek-Małolepsza, *Kultura fizyczna i turystyka w województwie wołyńskim...*, s. 28.

<sup>15</sup> Tamże.

<sup>16</sup> Pułk. Kiliński o wychowaniu fizycznym, „Sport” 1933, nr 40, s. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Zob. E. Małolepszy, T. Drozdek-Małolepsza, *Kultura fizyczna i turystyka w województwie wołyńskim...*, s. 27–49; E. Małolepszy, *Kultura fizyczna w działalności wiejskich organizacji młodzieżowych II Rzeczypospolitej*, Wydawnictwo Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Częstochowa 2015, s. 47–64.

Wojewódzki KWFiPW we Lwowie odbył posiedzenie 3 października 1932 r., pod przewodnictwem wicewojewody Jana Dychdalewicz<sup>18</sup>. W trakcie posiedzenia omówiono m.in. sprawozdanie z obozów wakacyjnych dla młodzieży pozaszkolnej (450 chłopców), która przebywała w Starzawie przez okres 10 dni; w kolejnych latach planowano obozy dla młodzieży miejskiej i wiejskiej; w sezonie zimowym 1932/1933 planowano zorganizowanie kursu narciarskiego w Rozłęczu; sprawę działalności Towarzystwa Zabaw Ruchowych; inwestycje sportowe w Jarosławiu i Przemyśle; planowano także powołać Miejskie KWFiPW w Jarosławiu i Przemyśle<sup>19</sup>.

Czasopismo „Sport” informowało o powołaniu nowych Komitetów WFIPW – w dniu 4 października 1932 r. powołano np. Miejski KWFiPW w Tarnopolu<sup>20</sup>. Prezesem Miejskiego KWFiPW został Włodzimierz Lenkiewicz (burmistrz Tarnopola), wiceprezesem – por. Świtlak, sekretarzem – kpt. A. Monkiewicz, skarbnikiem – ppor. Lehman, członkowie: płk Franciszek Polniaszek (dowódca 54 pp.)<sup>21</sup>, kpt. Eugeniusz Kopeć, mjr Reder, kpt. Kuligowski, mjr Bogotko<sup>22</sup>. Jednym z głównych celów działalności Miejskiego KWFiPW w Tarnopolu była budowa stadionu sportowego, rozwój współzawodnictwa sportowego, wysiłki na rzecz zdobycia POS oraz kształcenie kadry szkoleniowej poprzez organizację kursów instruktorskich: gimnastyki kobiet, boks, narciarstwa, hokeja na lodzie. Miejski KWFiPW w Tarnopolu, w porozumieniu z kołami wojskowymi, stworzył wytwórnię nart. Miasto przeznaczyło teren pod budowę stadionu sportowego, na tzw. „błoniach”<sup>23</sup>. W zakresie realizacji szkolenia kadr nie odbył się tylko kurs narciarstwa<sup>24</sup>.

W działalności administracyjnych struktur PUWFIPW ważnym i istotnym elementem były organizacja, finansowanie komitetów, jak również infrastruktura dla potrzeb wf., sportu i pw. W dniu 8 kwietnia 1932 r. odbyło się posiedzenie Miejskiego KWFiPW we Lwowie, któremu przewodniczył prezydent Lwowa – Wacław Drojanowski. Na program posiedzenia złożyły się dwie kwestie: budżet Miejskiego KWFiPW we Lwowie na rok szkoleniowy 1932/1933 oraz urządzenia sportowe we Lwowie<sup>25</sup>. Referujący sprawy budżetu dr Józef Nowak Przygodzki stwierdził, że

<sup>18</sup> *Z życia organizacyjnego PW i WF*, „Sport” 1932, nr 26, s. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Tamże.

<sup>20</sup> *Z prac organizacji PW i WF*, „Sport” 1932, nr 28, s. 3. W Tarnopolu prowadził działalność Powiatowy KWFiPW.

<sup>21</sup> [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franciszek\\_Polniaszek](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franciszek_Polniaszek) [dostęp: 6.05.2026]. Wiosną 1940 roku został zamordowany w Charkowie przez funkcjonariuszy NKWD.

<sup>22</sup> *Z prac organizacji PW i WF*, „Sport” 1932, nr 28, s. 3. Przewodniczącymi sekcji gospodarczo-administracyjnej zostali: inż. Lachowski i prof. Wagner, sekcji propagandy: Tadeusz Leszczyński i ppor. Reiser, sekcji WF i PW – prof. Józwa i Zbigniew Kuchar, sekcji lekarskiej – dr Schmidt i dr J. Czarkowska.

<sup>23</sup> Tamże.

<sup>24</sup> *Z prac organizacyjnych PW i WF*, „Sport” 1933, nr 3, s. 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Z Miejskiego Komitetu WF i PW*, „Sport” 1932, nr 1, s. 1.

[...] z powodu przeznaczenia jedynie 50 000 zł na cele komitetu, ograniczono zapotrzebowanie dla PW, PWK [Przysposobienie Wojskowe Kobiet – dopełnienie autorów] oraz poradni sportowej do minimum<sup>26</sup>.

Z budżetu komitetu przeznaczono 25 000 zł na wykończenie pływalni 26 pp.; 20 000 zł na urządzenie hali sportowej (zimowej); 400 zł na ewentualne pokrycie deficytu zorganizowania międzypaństwowego meczu w lekkoatletyce Polska-Czechosłowacja. Pozostałą kwotę przeznaczono dla instruktorów oraz na inwentarz wf. i pw. Referat dotyczący urządzeń sportowych we Lwowie wygłosił Tadeusz Kuchar, przedstawiając aktualny stan w tej dziedzinie, jak również plany rozwoju<sup>27</sup>.

Uroczyste otwarcie pływalni (kąpieliska) 26 pp. we Lwowie nastąpiło w dniu 4 sierpnia 1932 r. Inwestycja składała się z dwóch basenów (pływalni). Mniejsza pływalnia miała wymiary 30 m × 25 m, a głębokość od 40 cm do 120 cm; drugi basen miał wymiary 25 m × 50 m, a głębokość od 120 cm do 360 cm. Większy basen służył do zawodów pływackich i posiadał 8 torów po 3 m<sup>28</sup>. Swego rodzaju podsumowaniem dokonanych działań może być następujący cytat:

Wreszcie po długich oczekiwaniach, po całym szeregu planów, po konferencjach, komisjach [...] Lwów, dzięki usilnej pracy żołnierza polskiego, otrzymał wspaniałe kąpielisko. [...] Upośledzeni przez naturę, pozbawieni rzeki – doczekaliśmy się otwarcia obiektu pływackiego zakrojonego na wielką miarę europejską<sup>29</sup>.

Dość dobrze prezentowała się infrastruktura sportowa w Przemyślu. Miasto Przemyśl dysponowało halą sportową Ośrodka WF i PW, stadionem sportowym, strzelnicą oraz pływalnią<sup>30</sup>. Istotną rolę przy powstaniu hali sportowej odegrał Okręgowy Urząd WF i PW w Przemyślu (DOK nr X)<sup>31</sup>. Z hali korzystali przedstawiciele różnych dyscyplin sportu, m.in. lekkoatletyki, gier sportowych i boksu<sup>32</sup>. Obok Przemyśla stadiony sportowe na bardzo dobrym poziomie Okręgowy Urząd WF i PW posiadał w Kielcach, Drohobyczu i Borystawiu; stadion Strzelca w Jaworowie i Kolbuszowej; schronisko narciarskie w Rozłuczcu wraz ze skocznią narciarską<sup>33</sup>; wysokogórskie schronisko nad Pikujem k. Libuchowej (na wysokości ponad

<sup>26</sup> Tamże.

<sup>27</sup> Tamże.

<sup>28</sup> *Otwarcie kąpieliska 26 pp.*, „Sport” 1932, nr 17, s. 2. Ceny biletów wstępu na basen wynosiły: 1 zł 25 gr i 1 zł, bilety ulgowe zaś 50 gr.

<sup>29</sup> Tamże. W uroczystości otwarcia pływalni udział wzięli m.in.: ks. infułat Zajchowski, wicewojewoda lwowski – Jan Dychdalewicz, płk Bolesław Pytel – dowódca 26 pp., Wacław Drojanowski – prezydent Lwowa.

<sup>30</sup> *Prace Ośrodka WF w Przemyślu*, „Sport” 1933, nr 30, s. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Obszar działalności DOK nr X obejmował m.in. zachodnią część województwa lwowskiego oraz przeważającą część województwa kieleckiego.

<sup>32</sup> „Sport” 1932, nr 5, s. 6.

<sup>33</sup> S. Zaborniak, *Skoki narciarskie w Polsce w latach 1907–1939*, Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa im. Stanisława Pigońa w Krośnie, Rzeszów – Krosno 2013.

1100 m)<sup>34</sup>. Okręgowym Urzędem WF i PW w Przemyśle kierował płk Morawski<sup>35</sup>, według którego:

W każdej pracy sportowej organizator musi zadać sobie dwa pytania: z kim? I na czym będzie pracował? [...] Pracujemy wśród młodzieży miast i wsi, a więc obejmujemy wszystkie stany. Młodzież zrzeszona w PW, Hufcach Szkolnych, Związku Strzeleckim, młodzież robotnicza i harcerska, oto nasza masa i siła. To jest ten materiał, z którego tworzymy posąg na chwałę Ojczyzny<sup>36</sup>.

Z inicjatywy Okręgowego Urzędu WF i PW w Przemyśle, w 1933 r. przeprowadzono męskie obozy Hufców PW dla 800 uczestników z całego terenu DOK nr X; obozy Związku Strzeleckiego dla 700 osób; obóz WF dla 30 uczestników Straży Pożarnej z całej Polski; obozy „dla przodowników pływackich” w oddziałach PW, oraz dla podoficerów z terenu DOK X i DOK VI; w Skolem na Dąbrówce oraz w Rozłuczu zorganizowano obóz Przysposobienia Wojskowego Kobiet (PWK) dla 500 uczestniczek, w Skolem na Horbaniu obóz Żydowskiego Towarzystwa Gimnastyczno-Sportowego Makkabi; w Dąbrówce został zorganizowany obóz dla 400 robotnic. Obozy dla członków Związku Strzeleckiego zostały przeprowadzone w Bałtowie k. Ostrowca Kieleckiego (Świętokrzyskiego), Kolbuszowej, Starzawie i Żelaziance. Ponadto, Okręgowy Urząd WF i PW zorganizował dwa obozy „specjalne”: wędrowny obóz kolarski oraz wędrowny obóz kajakowy<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> *Prace Ośrodka WF w Przemyśle*, „Sport” 1933, nr 30, s. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Tamże. Lwowski „Sport” w następujący sposób scharakteryzował osobę płk. Morawskiego: „Na czele Okręgowego Urzędu WF w Przemyśle stoi nieoceniony kierownik p. płk Morawski, przyjaciel starych i młodych bez różnicy wyznań i narodowości – człowiek, któremu dobro Państwa i Społeczeństwa leży na sercu, a którego nazwisko winno być zapisane złotymi zgłoskami w księdze sportu przemyskiego”.

<sup>36</sup> Tamże.

<sup>37</sup> *I znów ambitny Przemyśl...!*, „Sport” 1933, nr 25, s. 2; *Prace Ośrodka WF w Przemyśle*, „Sport” 1933, nr 30, s. 1. W „Sporcie”, w numerze 25, znajduje się m.in. relacja z organizacji i przebiegu obozu kolarskiego: „Kolarski obóz wędrowny zorganizowany przez OUWFIPW OK X ppłk Morawskiego dla hufców szkolnych i pozaszkolnych, jako wyróżnienie za pracę w II stopniu pw – jakże odmienną nagrodę ustalił Pan Pułkownik Morawski od codziennych konwencjonalnych nagród w postaci zegarków, papierosów itd. «Żeś był lepszym w ciągu roku, wyróżniam Cię, ale szkol się nadal na dzielnego obywatela – hartuj swego ducha, poznawaj kraj i jego historię, jedź na trzy tygodnie szlakiem Sobieskiego i 2 brygady» – te słowa jakby mówił pułkownik, wyznaczając tę nagrodę”. Kadre obozu stanowili: por Steckowski – komendant obozu (6 Pułk Strzelców Podhalańskich; Powiatowy Komendant PW Drohobycz), por. pilot w stanie spoczynku Pilecki (kwaterymistrz obozu), Borzemski, Józef Dzikowski (lekarz). W obozie wędrownym uczestniczyli: Wacław Balbir, Michał Blechinger, Tadeusz Król, Leszek Kowal, Józef Krupa, Jan Latasiewicz, Adolf Mengold, Roman Popecki, Stanisław Rynuda, Tadeusz Tokarz, Włodzimierz Staw (młodzież szkolna); Ferdynand Frysiak, Leon Izdebski (członkowie Związku Strzeleckiego w Borysławiu), Stefan Pilach (kancelista pw w Drohobycz), Jan Trzaskowski (szofer), plutonowy Stanisław Szypuła. Szczegółowa trasa obozu była następująca: Przemyśl – Drohobycz (Zagłębie Naftowe) – Stryj – Baszków – Dolina – Kałusz – Stanisławów – Nadwórna – Rafajłowa – Krzyż Legionów (Przełęcz Legionów) – Nadwórna – Delatyn – Worochta – (wyjazd na Howerlę) – Ża-

Państwowy Urząd WFiPW subwencjonował w 1933 r. m.in. następujące inwestycje dla sportów zimowych: budowę skoczni w Worochcie, remont skoczni w Sławsku, rozbudowę schroniska w Zaroślaku, uruchomienie ośrodka PW w Beskidzie, budowę nowego toru saneczkowego oraz lodowiska hokejowego w Worochcie, a także trybun na 4000 osób na lodowiska we Lwowie. Ośrodki narciarskie dla młodzieży zostały wybudowane w Worochcie, Beskidzie, Brzechowicach i Pasiecznej. Najbliższy program zimowy (I kwartał 1934 r.) obejmował przedsięwzięcia urzędu, do których zaliczono: organizację granicznego trójmeczu wojskowego Czechosłowacja-Rumunia-Polska, obok Worochty; mistrzostwa narciarskie armii w Worochcie wraz z turniejem hokejowym; zawody przysposobienia wojskowego DOK nr VI, przy udziale sportowców z Czechosłowacji, w rejonie Sławska i Beskidu; w końcu lutego 1934 r. miały zostać przeprowadzone: zjazd gwiazdzysty w Żabiem (od 1962 r. Wierchowina) oraz konkursy hipiczne i skijöring hucutów<sup>38</sup>.

W 1932 r. na łamach lipcowego wydania „Sportu” ukazał się artykuł T. Kuchara<sup>39</sup> pt. *Reorganizacja Ośrodków Wychowania Fizycznego*. Według informacji zawartych w materiale, PUWFIPW projektował reorganizację Ośrodków WF. Od 1 kwietnia 1933 r. istniałyby – jako ośrodki utrzymywane przez PUWFIPW – w Brześciu nad Bugiem, Grodnie, Krakowie, Lublinie, Poznaniu, Przemyśle i Warszawie. Na czas trwania kursów instruktorskich funkcjonowałyby ośrodki we Lwowie, Łodzi, Łucku i Toruniu. Ośrodki miejskie wf. funkcjonowały w Bydgoszczy i Poznaniu. Planowano utworzenie miejskich ośrodków wf. w Białymstoku, Częstochowie, Grudziądzu, Katowicach, Kielcach, Królewskiej Hucie, Nowogrodzku, Radomiu, Równem, Stanisławowie, Tarnopolu, Warszawie i Wilnie. Jak pisze T. Kuchar:

Lwów, względnie DOK VI, które obejmowało nadto województwa tarnopolskie i stanisławowskie, stanie się ośrodkiem II klasy, tzn. dla spraw wf. w okręgu pozostanie referent,

bie – Kosów – Śniatyn – (wyjazd do Czerniowiec – Rumunia) – Horodenka – Zaleszczyki – Tłuste – Jazłowiec – Brzeżany – Przemyślany – Lwów – Gródek Jagielloński – Przemyśl. Uczestnicy obozu pokonywali dziennie około 90 km w 8 godz. Różnymi drogami, „przy czym szosy województwa lwowskiego były lepsze od stanisławowskiego, a tym bardziej od tarnopolskiego. Wszędzie na noclegach obóz był gościnnie przyjmowany – szczególnie niezatarte wspomnienia pozostawiła wśród uczestników gościnności polskiej Kolonii w Czerniowcach i w Monastyrzyskach w Państwowej Fabryce Tytoniu. Obóz na swej trasie zwiedzał wszystkie pamiątki historyczne, zakłady przemysłowe...”. Wędrowny obóz kajakowy został zrealizowany ciekami wodnymi Sanu, Wiśłoka, Wisły i Nidą do Tarnowa, Krakowa i Pińczowa, kończąc w Nowym Korczyniu, gdzie została wybudowana przystań wioślarska.

<sup>38</sup> „Sport” 1933, nr 40, s. 5.

<sup>39</sup> „Sport” 1933, nr 40, s. 2. Jak informowała redakcja „Sportu”, Tadeusz Kuchar, „jeden z najbardziej zasłużonych i prawdziwie ideowych działaczy sportowych lwowskich, opuszcza nasze miasto, przenosząc się na stanowisko Kier. Wydziału Inwestycyjnego Sportu przy PUWF. Świat sportowy lwowski z żalem żegna swego przewodnika, który przez długie lata świecił szczytnym przykładem młodemu pokoleniu”.

który będzie organizował kursy instruktorów i to tylko niższych stopni. Na kurs instruktorów wyższych stopni trzy wschodnie województwa będą musiały wysłać wybranych do Przemyśla<sup>40</sup>.

Mimo trudnych uwarunkowań finansowych, ówczesne władze, poczynając od centralnych po samorządowe, ogromną rolę przykładały do zagadnień wf. i pw., co było związane z obronnością państwa<sup>41</sup>. Lwów pozostał Ośrodkiem Wychowania Fizycznego I klasy, a na łamach „Sportu” możemy przeczytać:

Nasze miasto Lwów, dzięki usilnemu poparciu i zrozumieniu p. Prezydenta Drojanowskiego, dowódcy OK gen. Popowicza, kierownika Okręgowego Urzędu Wych. Fizycz. i Przysp. Wojsk., przez zaczęcie budowy hali sportowej, zostanie zaliczony w poczet ośrodków I klasy, która to decyzja zapadnie w końcu roku budżetowego i te ośrodki wych. fiz., które zostaną zachowane, będą miały za zadanie: szkolenie instruktorów całego kraju, a zaspokojenie potrzeb lokalnych zejdzie w ich programie na dalszy plan<sup>42</sup>.

Na łamach lwowskiego „Sportu” znajdujemy również informacje dotyczące kształcenia kadr z zakresu aktywności fizycznej. Okręgowy Ośrodek WF we Lwowie organizował w sierpniu 1932 r. dwa tygodniowe turnusy kursów przodowników pływania dla kadry kontraktowej pw.<sup>43</sup> We wrześniu 1932 r., z inicjatywy ośrodka, planowano zorganizować 3-tygodniowy kurs gier sportowych dla pań (uczestniczki dochodzące), dla organizacji cywilnych PW i sportowych. W kursie mogły uczestniczyć kandydatki z lwowskich klubów sportowych i organizacji wf. i pw.<sup>44</sup> Dość ważną rolę w organizowaniu kursów instruktorskich odegrała Obwodowa Komenda 40 pp. we Lwowie. W dniu 5 listopada 1932 r., przy współpracy z Państwową Szkołą Techniczną, został otwarty kurs domowego wyrobu nart, pod kierownictwem instruktora Kruka. W kursie uczestniczyli członkowie pw., hufców szkolnych i stowarzyszeń pw. Kurs domowego wyrobu nart dla organizacji i stowarzyszeń wf. miał zostać przeprowadzony w styczniu 1933 r.<sup>45</sup>

Oprócz kursów instruktorskich organizowano obozy sportowe i wędrownie. Przysposobienie Wojskowe DOK VI zorganizowało – latem 1932 r. – 3-tygodniowy wędrowny obóz kolarski na trasie Lwów–Krzemieniec–Zaleszczyki–Kołomyja–Stanisławów–Borysław–Lwów, pod dowództwem kpt. F. Bieleckiego z PW 40 pp., przy współpracy z Lwowskim Towarzystwem Kolarskim i Motorzystów<sup>46</sup>.

Lokalne Komitety WFiPW planowały działalność w zakresie dziedzin wf., sportu i pw. Przedstawiciele Miejskiego KWFiPW we Lwowie zaplanowali dzia-

<sup>40</sup> *Reorganizacja Ośrodków Wychowania Fizycznego*, „Sport” 1932, nr 15, s. 1.

<sup>41</sup> L. Szymański, dz. cyt., s. 71–72. Jak pisze L. Szymański: „Przysposobienie wojskowe, którego podstawą było wychowanie fizyczne, miało być służbą pomocniczą dla wojska i realizować cały cykl wstępnego szkolenia żołnierza. [...] System rozwinięto i utrwalono w latach trzydziestych”.

<sup>42</sup> *Z prac organizacji PW i WF*, „Sport” 1932, nr 31, s. 3.

<sup>43</sup> „Sport” 1932, nr 17, s. 2.

<sup>44</sup> „Sport” 1932, nr 21, s. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Z prac organizacji PW i WF*, „Sport” 1932, nr 31, s. 3.

<sup>46</sup> „Sport” 1932, nr 13, s. 2.

łałność na sezon zimowy 1932/1933. Uwzględnili takie dziedziny aktywności fizycznej, jak: hokej na lodzie, narciarstwo, łyżwiarstwo i saneczkarstwo. Z kwestii inwestycyjnych została uwzględniona przebudowa hali sportowej we Lwowie (DOK nr VI zatwierdziło plan przebudowy hali sportowej); Lwowski Okręgowy Związek Narciarski (LOZN) zwrócił się natomiast z prośbą o subwencję w sprawie przebudowy skoczni na Pohulance, tak aby można było osiągnąć skoki na poziomie 45 m. Miały zostać zorganizowane również kursy łyżwiarstwa i hokeja na lodzie dla instruktorów pracujących w szkolnictwie. Ponadto, planowano przeprowadzenie współzawodnictwa sportowego, w tym prób na POS<sup>47</sup>. Działacze Miejskiego KWFiPW – na przełomie listopada i grudnia 1932 r. – podjęli decyzję o subwencji w zakresie przebudowy skoczni na Pohulance, w wysokości 880 zł, natomiast na budowę skoczni treningowej – 195 zł. Warto zaznaczyć, iż nie pokrywało to pełnej kwoty, gdyż kosztorys robót wynosił 1990 zł<sup>48</sup>.

W styczniu 1933 r. nastąpiło oddanie do użytku nowych obiektów sportowych we Lwowie – hali sportowej oraz lodowiska. Uroczystości te odbyły się z udziałem przedstawicieli PUWFiPW, przedstawicieli wojska, władz wojewódzkich i samorządowych<sup>49</sup>. Kolejną inwestycję w zakresie infrastruktury sportowej we Lwowie oddano do użytku w dniu 3 września 1933 r. Było to kąpielisko na tzw. Żelaznej Wodzie, na które składały się 3 baseny pływackie. Dotychczasowy koszt budowy wyniósł 130 000,00 zł, natomiast koszt całej inwestycji planowano na kwotę 190 000,00 zł<sup>50</sup>.

Warto też odnotować wyremontowanie obiektów sportowych Towarzystwa Zabaw Ruchowych (TZR), leżących obok stadionu sportowego Pogoni Lwów. Przeżywające kryzys organizacyjny TZR wybrało nowe władze z dyrektorem Chelchlińskim na czele. Przy znaczącej pomocy finansowej i organizacyjnej Wojewódzkiego KWFiPW (m.in. płka Krzywoszyńskiego i inż. Tadeusza Kuchara) prze-

<sup>47</sup> *Plany Miej. Kom. WF i PW*, „Sport” 1932, nr 26, s. 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Przebudowa skoczni na Pohulance*, „Sport” 1932, nr 34, s. 2.

<sup>49</sup> „Sport” 1933, nr 3, s. 1; *Wielkie dzieło Miejsk. Komitetu WF i PW we Lwowie*, „Sport” 1933, nr 3, s. 3. Hala sportowa posiadała wymiary 45,17 m × 19,30 m. Hala sportowa posiadała m.in. 3 boiska sportowe do koszykówki; 3 boiska sportowe do piłki siatkowej; 1 boisko do hazy; 3 podesty plansz dla potrzeb szermierzy; pełny komplet urządzeń dla uprawiania boks; komplet urządzeń dla potrzeb lekkoatletyki; komplet urządzeń dla potrzeb łyżwiarstwa; przybory i przyrządy do uprawiania gimnastyki. Na reprezentacyjne urządzenia hali sportowej składały się: 2 boiska do piłki siatkowej, boisko do koszykówki, kort tenisowy, ring bokserski, urządzenia do lekkoatletyki i urządzenia dla łyżwiarstwa. Hala sportowa mogła pomieścić 2000 widzów.

<sup>50</sup> *Wielkie dzieło miasta Lwowa zrealizowane*, „Sport” 1933, nr 29, s. 1. M.in. basen sportowy o wymiarach 50 m × 18 m i głębokości od 1,70 m do 2,20 m; pod skocznią 3,50 m.; drugi basen pływacki o wymiarach 54 m × 33 m i głębokości od 0,60 m do 1,20 m, oraz trzeci – dla dzieci o wymiarach 10 m × 15 m i głębokości od 0,15 m do 0,40 m. Ponadto, obiekt był wyposażony w trampolinę 1 m i 3 m oraz 5-metrową wieżę do skoków; szatnie osobno dla kobiet i mężczyzn z gabinetami oraz restauracją z werandą na pierwszym piętrze.

prowadzono „konieczne prace” w zakresie oddania do użytku we wrześniu 1933 r. Parku Sportowo-Rekreacyjnego<sup>51</sup>.

Komitety WFiPW aktywnie działały na polu organizacji zawodów wf., sportu i pw. oraz Świąt WFiPW. Szczególną rolę w promocji i propagandy wf., sportu i pw. odgrywały Świąta WFiPW. W dniach 20–25 czerwca 1932 r. Miejski KWFiPW we Lwowie zorganizował Święto WFiPW oraz Święto Młodzieży Szkolnej. Na program zawodów składały się zawody strzeleckie, łucznicze, pływackie oraz lekkoatletyczne oraz próby na POS<sup>52</sup>. Oprócz zawodów sportowych, w ramach imprez przewidziano m.in. odczyty i pogadanki z zakresu pw. Zakończenie imprezy zaplanowano na 25 czerwca 1932 r. na boisku „Sokoła-Macierzy”, gdzie miała się odbyć msza św. polowa, rozdanie nagród, przemarsz oddziałów pw., pokazy gimnastyczne.

Na łamach „Sportu” ukazały się materiały, notatki odnoszące się do organizowania szeregu Powiatowych Świąt WFiPW, które w 1932 r. przeprowadzono m.in. w Jarosławiu, Borystawiu – powiat Drohobycz, Samborze (woj. lwowski); Brzeżanach, Złoczowie (woj. tarnopolskie); Kałuszu (woj. stanisławowski)<sup>53</sup>. W świątach wf. i pw. w przeważającej liczbie brała udział młodzież szkolna. Część imprez zgromadziła znaczącą liczbę uczestników (np. w Świącie WFiPW w Brzeżanach wzięło udział 674 członkiń i członków pw. oraz kilkadziesiąt osób w zawodach POS). W podsumowaniu Świąta WFiPW w Brzeżanach czytamy:

[...] osiągnięte wyniki tak w zawodach sportowych, jak i w działaniach wyszkolenia przez członków pw. i wf. dają gwarancję, że pieniądź i praca włożona na wychowanie i wyszkolenie oddziałów pw. był celowy, a młodzież zdobyła hart ciała i duszy, pełniąc służbę w szeregach przysposobienia wojskowego<sup>54</sup>.

W dorocznym Powiatowym Świącie WF i PW w Złoczowie w 1932 r. odbyły się zawody w celu zdobycia POS i Odznaki Strzeleckiej (OS), wyścig kolarski, zawody lekkoatletyczne oraz zbiórka (przegląd oddziałów) wszystkich hufców pw. i wf. Po przeglądzie oddziałów pw. i wf. odbyła się msza św., defilada i przyrzeczenie strzeleckie. W próbach na POS i OS wzięło udział 120 uczestników, natomiast w przeglądzie oddziałów pw. i wf. – 470 osób<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> *Wznowienie działalności TZR*, „Sport” 1933, nr 29, s. 2. W parku TZR czynne były boiska do uprawiania i ćwiczeń piłki nożnej i piłki ręcznej, boiska do koszykówki i piłki siatkowej, urządzenia do lekkoatletyki (bieżnia, skocznia i rzutnia), specjalne boisko dla kobiet i dziewcząt (do uprawiania hazeny, koszykówki i piłki siatkowej), korty tenisowe. Z boisk sportowych mogły korzystać organizacje i stowarzyszenia. Wynajem kortów tenisowych wynosił 50 gr dla dorosłych; dla młodzieży szkolnej – 30 gr.

<sup>52</sup> *Program Świąta WF i PW we Lwowie*, „Sport” 1932, nr 10, s. 3.

<sup>53</sup> „Sport” 1932, nr 11, s. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Tamże.

<sup>55</sup> „Sport” 1932, nr 25, s. 3; 1932, nr 27, s. 3. W zawodach lekkoatletycznych wzięło udział sportowcy WCKS Janina Złoczów, Polskiego TG „Sokół” Złoczów oraz Gimnazjum Państwowego. W zawodach koszykówki zwyciężył zespół „Sokoła”; w piłce siatkowej – drużyna Gimnazjum Pań-

W maju 1932 r. Powiatowy KWFiPW w Brzeżanach (woj. tarnopolskie) zorganizował zawody sportowe o mistrzostwo powiatu i POS z okazji Święta Narodowego Trzeciego Maja<sup>56</sup>. Na program zawodów złożyły się: bieg na przełaj na dystansie 3 km, marsz na dystansie 10 km z obciążeniem, gry sportowe (piłka siatkowa, koszykówka). W dniach 7–8 maja 1932 r. odbyły się w Brzeżanach – z inicjatywy Powiatowego KWFiPW – zawody strzeleckie i o POS. W tych imprezach sportowych i pw. uczestniczyli członkowie Związku Strzeleckiego w Brzeżanach, Klubu Sportowego (KS) Rodziny Wojskowej 51 pp., Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego (TG) „Sokół”, Hufców Szkolnych PW (Gimnazjum Państwowego, Seminarium, Szkoły Przemysłu Drzewnego) oraz harcerze<sup>57</sup>.

Miejski Ośrodek WF w Tarnopolu, w okresie zimowym 1932/1933, przeprowadził natomiast mistrzostwa Tarnopola w piłce siatkowej (dla mężczyzn), w których uczestniczyło 11 drużyn. Wśród nich należy wymienić 3 drużyny I, II i III Gimnazjum Państwowego, Seminarium Nauczycielskiego Męskiego, Szkoły Przemysłowej, Związku Strzeleckiego, TG „Sokół” „Tarnopolskiego i Zagrobelskiego”, Wojskowo-Cywilnego Klubu Sportowego (WCKS) Kresy, Podolskiego Klubu Sportowego (PKS) Legion, Żydowskiego Klubu Sportowego (ŻKS) Jehuda<sup>58</sup>.

Staraniem Ośrodka Wychowania Fizycznego w Przemysłu odbył się w 1933 r. turniej gier sportowych kobiet i mężczyzn (koszykówka, hazena, piłka siatkowa) o Puchar Okręgowego Urzędu WF i PW. W konkurencji kobiet najlepszą drużyną okazała się Polonia Przemysł, w konkurencji mężczyzn – Harcerski Klub Sportowy (HKS) Czuwaj Jarosław<sup>59</sup>.

Współzawodnictwo sportowe przeprowadzał Okręgowy Ośrodek Wychowania Fizycznego Okręgu Korpusu nr VI. Na początku września 1932 r. miały się rozpocząć rozgrywki hazeny kobiet. We współzawodnictwie mogły wziąć udział kluby sportowe z terenu Lwowa<sup>60</sup>. Próby i zawody na POS dla niestowarzyszonych – raz w tygodniu – przeprowadzała Obwodowa Komenda PW 40 pp. we Lwowie<sup>61</sup>.

Akcja zdobywania POS miała charakter zorganizowany i propagandowy w zakresie kształtowania aktywności i sprawności fizycznej. Te kwestie były realizowane poprzez struktury administracyjne PUWFiPW. Miejski KWFiPW, jak czytamy na łamach „Sportu”, w numerze 29 z 1933 r.:

[...] w porozumieniu z kierownikiem Okręgowego Urzędu WF i PW przystępuje do zorganizowania masowych prób o POS dla stowarzyszonych i niestowarzyszonych w czasie od

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stwowego. Największą liczbę POS zdobyli uczniowie Gimnazjum Państwowego. Warto podkreślić, iż 40 POS zdobyły uczennice Gimnazjum Państwowego i Seminarium Nauczycielskiego Żeńskiego.

<sup>56</sup> „Sport” 1932, nr 5, s. 6.

<sup>57</sup> Tamże.

<sup>58</sup> *Z prac organizacji PW i WF*, „Sport” 1933, nr 3, s. 6.

<sup>59</sup> „Sport” 1933, nr 12, s. 5.

<sup>60</sup> „Sport” 1932, nr 20, s. 3.

<sup>61</sup> „Sport” 1932, nr 26, s. 3.

6 września do 8 października br. Program prób, rozdział boisk i składy komisji zostały ustalone tak, by ułatwić jak najszerszym rzeszom dowolny wybór dnia i miejsca próby, Stowarzyszeni, którzy dzięki udziałowi ich w zawodach w jakiegokolwiek gałęzi sportu uzyskali minima określone regulaminem POS, zechcą postarać się o zaświadczenia w odpowiednich organizacjach, uzupełniając brakujące im ćwiczenia w okresie obecnie organizowanych prób<sup>62</sup>.

W myśl rozporządzenia dyrektora PUWFIPW, płk Władysława Kilińskiego, na 1933 r., prawo do przeprowadzenia całkowitych prób na POS przysługiwało komendantom obwodowym i powiatowym pw. i komendantom okręgowych ośrodków wf. We Lwowie takie prawo miały następujące organizacje: Organizacja Przysposobienia Kobiet do Obrony Kraju, Zrzeszenie Nauczycielek WF, Komenda Chorągwi Lwowskiej Związku Harcerstwa Polskiego (ZHP) i Komenda VI Okręgu Związku Strzeleckiego<sup>63</sup>. Mieszkańcy Lwowa w 1932 r. zdobyli tylko (oprócz młodzieży szkolnej) 407 odznak POS, co w Polsce wśród miast dało XXI miejsce. Lublin w tej klasyfikacji zajął I miejsce, zdobywając 1508 odznak POS (na 115 000 mieszkańców), natomiast Brześć nad Bugiem II miejsce, uzyskując 738 odznak POS (na 50 000 mieszkańców)<sup>64</sup>. Apel redakcji „Sportu” w zakresie promocji i zdobycia odznak POS odnosił się nie tylko do Lwowa, ale także do mieszkańców województwa lwowskiego oraz stanisławowskiego i tarnopolskiego.

## Zakończenie

Artykuły i materiały – w odniesieniu do działalności administracyjnych struktur PUWFIPW w południowo-wschodnich województwach II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w świetle lwowskiego czasopisma „Sport” – dotyczyły rozwoju infrastruktury sportowej, głównie w zakresie budowy nowych obiektów sportowych; kształcenia instruktorów wychowania fizycznego, sportu i przysposobienia wojskowego; organizacji i przeprowadzania obozów wychowania fizycznego i przysposobienia wojskowego, organizacji współzawodnictwa sportowego, w tym Świąt Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego; roli i organizacji

<sup>62</sup> *Wszyscy na start*, „Sport” 1933, nr 29, s. 1–2.

<sup>63</sup> Tamże, s. 1. Prawo do przeprowadzenia częściowych prób na POS posiadały m.in.: Kolejowe Przysposobienie Wojskowe (zarząd okręgu Lwów), Policja Państwowa (komisariat i komendy powiatowe), Lwowski Okręgowy Związek Bokserski, Lwowski Okręgowy Związek Broni Małokalibrowej, Lwowski Okręgowy Związek Gier Sportowych, Lwowski Okręgowy Związek Lekkiej Atletyki, Lwowski Okręgowy Związek Łuczników, Lwowskie Towarzystwo Żywiarskie, Lwowski Okręgowy Związek Narciarski, Lwowski Okręgowy Związek Piłki Nożnej, Lwowski Okręgowy Związek Pływacki, Lwowski Klub Siermierny, Lwowski Okręgowy Związek Kolarski, Związek Młodzieży Polskiej, Komenda Chorągwi Lwowskiej ZHP dla kobiet, Związek Oficerów Rezerwy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Komendy Powiatowe Związku Strzeleckiego, Dzielnica Małopolska TG „Sokol”.

<sup>64</sup> Tamże.

prób, w celu zdobycia Państwowej Odznaki Sportowej. „Sport” publikował artykuły, materiały i doniesienia m.in. o działalności Wojewódzkiego KWFiPW we Lwowie, miejskich KWFiPW we Lwowie i Tarnopolu oraz powiatowych KWFiPW.

W latach 1932–1933 zostały wzniesione nowe obiekty sportowe, jak również część infrastruktury została poddana remontom. Jak informowała redakcja czasopisma, działania te miały miejsce głównie we Lwowie i Przemyśle, m.in. hale sportowe i pływalnie, czy też wyremontowane obiekty TZR we Lwowie. Na terenie DOK nr VI we Lwowie oraz DOK nr X w Przemyśle prowadzono również kursy, szkolenia i obozy wychowania fizycznego, sportu i przysposobienia wojskowego, organizowane z inicjatywy Ośrodków Wychowania Fizycznego, oraz Komitetów WFIPW. Znacząca rola przypadła Komitetom WFIPW oraz Okręgowym Urzędom WFIPW w działalności na rzecz popularyzowania, propagowania współzawodnictwa sportowego oraz organizowania prób w celu zdobycia Państwowej Odznaki Sportowej.

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#### DEKLARACJA BRAKU KONFLIKTU INTERESÓW

Autorzy deklarują brak potencjalnych konfliktów interesów w odniesieniu do badań, autorstwa i/lub publikacji artykułu *Działalność administracyjnych struktur Państwowego Urzędu Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego w południowo-wschodnich województwach II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w świetle lwowskiego czasopisma „Sport” (1932–1933)*.

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#### WKŁAD AUTORÓW

**Teresa Drozdek-Małołepsza:** konceptualizacja, zarządzanie danymi, pozyskanie funduszy, przeprowadzenie badań, metodologia, administracja projektu, zasoby, walidacja, wizualizacja, pisanie – pierwszy szkic, pisanie – recenzja i edycja.

**Eligiusz Małołepszy:** konceptualizacja, zarządzanie danymi, pozyskanie funduszy, przeprowadzenie badań, metodologia, zasoby, nadzór, walidacja, wizualizacja, pisanie – pierwszy szkic, pisanie – recenzja i edycja.

**Jakub Małołepszy:** konceptualizacja, zarządzanie danymi, metodologia, zasoby, walidacja, pisanie – pierwszy szkic.

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## **‘YOUTH PARTY HELPERS’. ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITY OF THE ACADEMIC UNION OF POLISH YOUTH AND THE UNION OF POLISH YOUTH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN WARSAW IN THE YEARS 1948–1956<sup>1</sup>**

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### **„Młodzieżowi pomocnicy partii”. Działalność i organizacja Związku Akademickiej Młodzieży Polskiej i Związku Młodzieży Polskiej w Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego w Warszawie w latach 1948–1956**

#### **Streszczenie**

Artykuł przedstawia struktury organizacyjne i składy osobowe zarządów młodzieżowych organizacji polityczno-społecznych utworzonych na terenie Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego (AWF) im. gen. broni Karola Świerczewskiego (obecnie im. Józefa Piłsudskiego) w Warszawie: Związku Akademickiej Młodzieży Polskiej (1948–1950) i Związku Młodzieży Polskiej (1948–1956). W stopniu uzależnionym od zachowanej podstawy źródłowej została ukazana organizacja i działalność wymienionych organizacji oraz zakres zadań nakładanych na studentów AWF przez instancje partyjne, zarówno w sferze aktywności sportowej, czynów społecznych, jak i szkoleń ideologicznych.

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Związek Akademicki Młodzieży Polskiej przy AWF w Warszawie powstał w październiku 1948 r. i działał do października 1950, kiedy to na jego bazie utworzono Związek Młodzieży Polskiej. Kierownictwo obu organizacji, realizując wytyczne partyjnego kierownictwa, mobilizowało młodzież akademicką do udziału w imprezach masowych, akcjach politycznych i pracach społecznych, dążąc do wychowania w duchu socjalistycznych „wartości” i podporządkowania władzy państwowej.

Związek Akademicki Młodzieży Polskiej, a następnie Związek Młodzieży Polskiej był organizacją powszechną wśród studentów warszawskiej AWF. Wynikało to zarówno z potrzeby dostosowania się do realiów politycznej rzeczywistości, wdrażanych przez partyjne kierownictwo uczelni, ale także z korzyści i przywilejów dla jego członków. Dla zaangażowanych studentów ułatwiał i przyspieszał ścieżkę kariery zawodowej na macierzystej uczelni lub w urzędach związanych z kulturą fizyczną.

**Słowa kluczowe:** AWF Warszawa, historia, kultura fizyczna, organizacje młodzieżowe w Polsce w latach 1948–1956.

## Abstract

The article presents the organizational structures and personal composition of the boards of youth political and social organizations established at the University of Physical Education (AWF) named after General Karol Świerczewski (currently named after Józef Piłsudski) in Warsaw: the Academic Union of Polish Youth (1948–1950) and the Union of Polish Youth (1948–1956). To the extent dependent on the preserved source base, the organization and activity of the above organizations and the scope of tasks imposed on AWF students by party bodies, both in the sphere of sports activity, social activities, and ideological training, have been presented. The Academic Union of Polish Youth at the AWF in Warsaw was established in October 1948 and operated until October 1950, when the Union of Polish Youth was established on its basis. The management of both organizations, implementing the guidelines of the party leadership, mobilized the academic youth to participate in mass events, political actions and social work, striving to educate in the spirit of socialist “values” and subordination to state authority. The Academic Union of Polish Youth, and later the Union of Polish Youth, was a common organization among students of the Warsaw AWF. This resulted both from the need to adapt to the realities of political reality, implemented by the party leadership of the university, but also from the benefits and privileges for its members. For committed students, membership facilitated and accelerated the path of a professional career at their alma mater or in offices related to physical culture.

**Keywords:** AWF Warsaw, history, physical culture, youth organizations in Poland in 1948-1956

## Introduction

It is necessary to draw the widest possible mass of young people into the organization, because only here can they acquire organizational habits. If someone has not become convinced of our system within three years, then he will not become convinced later, and such a person cannot work positively for society.

Major Edward Barszcz, guardian of the Academic Union of Polish Youth on behalf of the AWF management<sup>2</sup>

As the communists took power, they sought to take control of individual youth groups. In order to achieve their own goals, they established an organiza-

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<sup>2</sup> Minutes of the extended meeting of the ZU ZAMP Plenum at the AWF on 6 May 1949, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number, p. 2.

tion dependent on the Polish Workers' Party: the Union of Struggle of the Young (ZWM), and in 1945: the Academic Union of Struggle of the Young 'Życie'. After the falsified results of the people's referendum in June 1946, and then the Legislative Sejm in January 1947, the communists accelerated the process of fully taking power and eliminating autonomous institutions in Poland. It was decided to 'integrate' the youth movement, preparing the ground for the action of unifying existing organizations. With the help of activists cooperating with the authorities, the resistance of activists who were negatively disposed towards the concept of 'uniformity' in the youth movement was overcome.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the ground was prepared for the implementation of the task of politicizing sport, which was to become one of the tools for indoctrinating youth and imposing ideological values on the entire society.<sup>4</sup>

The official merger of the pro-government Union of Struggle of the Young (ZWM), the Union of Democratic Youth (ZMD), the Youth Organization of the Workers' University Society (OMTUR) and the Union of Rural Youth (ZMW) of the Republic of Poland 'Wici' took place at the Youth Unity Congress in Wrocław on 20-21 July 1948. A few days earlier (17-18 July), the Academic Union of Polish Youth (ZAMP) was established. Its aim was to replace the Academic Union of Struggle of the Young (AZWM) 'Życie' and take control of the student environment, eliminating the influence of popular organizations: 'Bratniak', ZMD, ZMW RP 'Wici' and the Union of Independent Socialist Youth. As a result of two days of directed debates (20-21 July), the Union of Polish Youth (ZMP) was established, adopting the Ideological Declaration and the Statute of the ZMP prepared by the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party (KC PPR). The ideological assumptions of the new organization, the goals of its activities were strictly defined by the communist authorities and included in the ZMP Statute and the Ideological and Programmatic Declaration. The organization itself was to become a tool for indoctrinating the youth and mobilizing them to build a socialist state. Specific tasks were set for the members of the ZAMP and the ZMP: training in the spirit of Marxist philosophy, creating preparatory courses and assistance in recruitment for young workers, smallholders and medium-sized farmers along with appropriate financial support (scholarships), popularization of social, cultural and educational work, supervision over the introduction of the so-called scientific discipline, assistance in combating illiteracy, in tracking down the 'class enemy' and support for the process of collectivization of the countryside through contacts with rural youth in the action of connecting the city with

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<sup>3</sup> M. Wierzbicki, *The Union of Polish Youth and its members. A study of the history of the Stalinist youth organization*, Publishing house Trio, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Warszawa 2006, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> P. Godlewski, *Sport w Polsce na tle politycznej rzeczywistości lat 1944–1956*, Publishing house AWF in Poznań, Poznań 2006, p. 37.

the countryside. For better implementation and increased efficiency, competition in science and social work was promoted and the academic community was mobilized to join the ranks of the ZAMP (as the youth base of the PPR, then the Polish United Workers' Party – PZPR).<sup>5</sup>

In the first period after the establishment of the ZAMP, organizational activities were undertaken. Ten departments were established in the Main Board: Organizational Department, Social Work Department, Financial and Administrative Department, Ideological Education Department, Publishing Department, Propaganda and Press Department, Social Conditions Department, Scientific Circles Department, Science and Activism Department, and the Office of the Main Board. The establishment of district boards was also supervised (chairmen, heads of the Organizational Department, Organizational and Student Department, Ideological Education Department, and Cultural and Propaganda Department).<sup>6</sup> Secondly, the implementation of tasks set by the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party began. Thus, the issue of "entering the people" and organizing specific assistance for villages "in line" with the ZAMP was discussed at the meeting of the Presidium of the Main Board of the ZAMP on 1 February 1949.<sup>7</sup> In turn, at the meeting on 9 March 1949, the recruitment for the first year of studies (1948/49) and the guidelines of the Ministry of Education for the current recruitment (1949/50) were analyzed. It was assumed that 'youth of working class, small and middle peasant class' should be accepted even with minimal positive exam grades. The 'youth of working intelligentsia' associated with communists "ideologically", i.e. cooperating with the ZMP was placed second. At the end, the possibility of accepting the most talented youth 'from other classes' was granted, in a number not exceeding 15% of all places at a given faculty. Candidates also had to submit documents confirming social origin and performance of social work.<sup>8</sup> The entire recruitment process was to favor the classes recognized by the communists as the future social base, "The qualification system must have a class character, ensuring that assistance is provided primarily to young people of working-class and peasant origin."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Archive of New Records (AAN) in Warsaw, Academic Union of Polish Youth. Main Board, file no. 422/1, Plenary meetings of the Main Board of the Academic Union of Polish Youth, 1948–1950, pp. 62–63; M. Wierzbicki, *The Union of Polish Youth...*, pp. 30–31.

<sup>6</sup> AAN in Warsaw, Academic Union of Polish Youth. Main Board, file no. 422/2, Meetings of the Academic Union of Polish Youth, 1948–1950, pp. 1–6.

<sup>7</sup> AAN in Warsaw, Academic Union of Polish Youth. Main Board, file no. 422/3, Meetings of the Academic Union of Polish Youth, 1 January – 18 May 1949, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> AAN in Warsaw, Academic Union of Polish Youth. Main Board, file no. 422/3, Meetings of the Academic Union of Polish Youth, 1 January – 18 May 1949, pp. 71–72.

<sup>9</sup> AAN in Warsaw, Federation of Polish Student Organizations. Scientific Council, file no. 1/10, Principles of the scholarship system. Activities of scholarship committees at universities, 1948–1950, p. 25.

Since the ZMP was to be the 'transmission belt' of the party's message to youth circles, its centralized structures (from the ZMP Main Board to the district boards) included representatives of the PZPR (after the absorption of the Polish Socialist Party by the PPR), who controlled the implementation of the guidelines that were being sent. Additionally, a youth team was created at each level of party organization (the Central Youth Team operated at the Central Committee of the PZPR) to supervise the work of party teams via the ZMP authorities (from the ZMP Main Board to the district boards). Thus, the Party Team operated at the ZMP Main Board (ZG), and it was headed by a representative of the Central Youth Team. In this way, a centralized hierarchical structure was created, influencing the 'bottoms' of the party and individual youth circles.<sup>10</sup>

During the session of the ZMP Supreme Council (31 July – 2 August 1950), a resolution was passed to liquidate the ZAMP, which was to be incorporated into the Union of Polish Youth in the autumn of 1950.<sup>11</sup> The last VI Plenum of the ZAMP Main Board took place on 18 October 1950. It adopted a resolution of the ZAMP Main Board on the liquidation of the ZAMP autonomy, which was also adopted 'unanimously'.<sup>12</sup>

After the ZAMP was liquidated in August 1950, its tasks were taken over by the ZMP (Department of Student Youth), whose structure at universities matched the organization of education. The basic unit was a group (headed by a secretary) corresponding to a group of students in a given year (a practice or laboratory group). A separate group was created for young employees, usually university graduates. Several groups formed a group of a given year or an entire faculty. If there were few students (less than 100 people), a ZMP university group was created. All work was managed by the University Board (ZU), possibly also by the operating faculty boards. The University Board itself had its own internal structure. It consisted of an organizational department, agitation and propaganda department, and science department.<sup>13</sup>

For example, in the academic year 1952/53 and 1953/54, the structure of the ZMP at the AWF Warsaw included five circles. In the first year there were two circles (No. I and No. II), in the second year – one circle, one circle in the third year and one circle (Circle No. V), including assistants and representatives of the administration.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> M. Wierzbicki, *Union of Polish Youth...*, pp. 142 – 144.

<sup>11</sup> M. Wierzbicki, *Union of Polish Youth...*, p. 40.

<sup>12</sup> AAN in Warsaw, Academic Union of Polish Youth. Main Board, file no. 422/1, Plenary meetings of the Main Board of the Academic Union of Polish Youth, 1948-1950, p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> AAN in Warsaw, Union of Polish Youth. Main Board, file no. 451/VIII-1, Department of Student Youth. Instructions, 1950-1952, pp. 31-32; M. Wierzbicki, *Union of Polish Youth ...*, pp. 282 – 283.

<sup>14</sup> State Archives in Warsaw (APW), Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-4, Minutes of the

To date, there is a lack of reliable studies on the activities of the ZAMP and the ZMP on the premises of the AWF in Warsaw. This was primarily due to the destruction of archival materials of youth organizations, but also to the need to avoid presenting the university in a bad light, which ultimately ruined the possibility of fully settling accounts with the past of the Stalinist era. Unfortunately, the gaps were not filled by documents collected in the Archives of New Records in Warsaw (collections: Union of Academic Polish Youth. Main Board in Warsaw; Union of Polish Youth. Main Board). A few documents concerning the ZAMP survived, secured by Henryk Laskiewicz, a party activist and chairman of the Polish Students' Association in the years 1951-1954. Selective information was obtained from the minutes of the Academic Committee of the PZPR AWF collected in the State Archives in Warsaw (Milanówek Branch). When the AWF Memorial Book was published in 1960, the history of the aforementioned organizations was significantly reduced, citing only the names of the ZMP chairmen in the years 1950-1954. The Memorial Book of the Academy of Physical Education published in 2010 completely omits the activities of the ZAMP and the ZMP. It should be added here that among the youth and party activists there were many later distinguished employees of physical education universities (not only the Warsaw AWF), often holding managerial positions.

For these reasons, it is difficult today to fully explain to what extent the ZAMP and the ZMP at the Warsaw university carried out the tasks imposed on them by the central party bodies. We must also remember that even in these existing reports, data was falsified to fit the expectations of the authorities. Since they were official documents, information that was unfavourable to a given environment was avoided, adapting the content to the propaganda canon. Thus, the description of the events presented through the prism of ZMP reporting was more of an ideological "ritual" than a faithful representation of the university reality, both at the Warsaw University of Physical Education and at other universities.

One of the aims of the work was to recreate the organizational structure of the ZAMP and the ZMP at the AWF Warsaw, their personal compositions and the mutual dependence (relationships) between youth activists, usually party members, and the university executive of the Primary Party Organization. It was also important to present the activities of youth organizations, both those attributed to all academic environments, as well as those resulting from the specificity of physical education universities (including the popularization of sports among the local community).

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meetings of the University Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and general meetings of the POP and election meetings of the OOP 1 and 2, 1953, p. 46.

## Research methods and problems

The Basic Party Organization of the University of Physical Education in Warsaw controlled academic youth through the ZAMP, and later the ZMP and a group of students – members of the PZPR. Learning their organizational structure makes it easier to understand the level of supervision and to trace the careers of ZAMP/ZMP activists at the Warsaw university.

The historical method was used to write this paper, consisting in searching for and then selecting and critically analyzing archival sources and available literature relating to the issues under consideration. The induction, deduction and comparative methods were also used.

## Research results and discussion

The first youth organization established on the premises of the AWF after World War II (autumn 1946) was the Academic Union of Youth Struggle ‘Życie’ (AZWM), which was within the sphere of influence of the Polish Workers’ Party. Its chairman was Teodor Tarnowski, and then Bronisław Wyczyński. In February 1948, a circle of the Union of Independent Socialist Youth (ZNMS) was organized, supported by the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), with chairman Zbigniew Kmiec. In addition to the aforementioned socio-political organizations, the Bratnia Pomoc Studentów (Brotherly Help of Students) operated from autumn 1947, referring to the pre-war traditions of student self-help organizations (first chairman Benedykt Karowski, then Mirosław Jodłowski). In 1950, the Association of Polish Students was established on the premises of the AWF (first chairman Zbigniew Szteyn, then Henryk Laskiewicz).<sup>15</sup>

With the new academic year of 1948/49, the Academic Board of the ZAMP at the AWF began its activity under the supervision of Major Edward Barszcz – ZAMP supervisor on behalf of the AWF management, and at the same time deputy director of the AWF for socio-political affairs. The presidium consisted of: the chairman and four heads of departments (in 1950, the presidium consisted of 9 people). The organizational structure of the ZAMP included four departments: the Organizational Department (including the Social Work Team, the Information and Reporting Department, the Economic and Financial Department), the Ideological Training Department (the Speakers’ Section, from December 1948 as the Educational Commission), the Cultural and Propaganda Department (the Cultural and Entertainment Department: the Decoration Section, the

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<sup>15</sup> H. Laskiewicz, *Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego w najnowszych dziejach Żoliborza*, [in:] Zahorska J. (ed.), *Żolibórz. Wczoraj Dziś Jutro*, Książka i Wiedza, Warszawa 1970, p. 298.

Clubroom Section, the Event Section, the Dance Section, the Cinema and Theater Section, the Costume Section, the Press Section) and the General Student Organizations Department (the Science Department, the Social Conditions Department). At the meeting on 5 October 1948, members of the boards of the individual circles were elected (1<sup>st</sup> women's year, 1<sup>st</sup> men's year, 2<sup>nd</sup> women's year, 2<sup>nd</sup> men's year and 3<sup>rd</sup> men's year) as well as managers of: the Cultural and Propaganda Department (Kazimierz Chabura), the Cultural and Entertainment Department (Jerzy Starzyk, from 14 November 1948 – manager of the Recreation Department) and the Speakers' Team (Wiesława Szuch). The board of the ZAMP circle consisted of: chairman, vice-chairman and secretary (also as treasurer of the circle). Nothing is known about the election of the chairman of the university board. It probably took place earlier at a meeting of the POP executive. From the very beginning, the party body exercised full supervision over the organization and decided on candidates for prominent positions. It was similar in the case of other organizations. When, for example, on 21 November 1948, at a meeting of the ZU ZAMP, a new composition of the board of Bratnia Pomoc was established, with president Ignacy Dąbrowski (the ZAMP, a member of the Polish United Workers' Party since 1949), Major E. Barszcz, who supervised the "proper" selection of representatives of this body, took part in the meeting. All newly elected members of the board of Bratnia Pomoc also represented the ZAMP. The aforementioned Major E. Barszcz took part in every meeting of the ZU ZAMP, usually organized once a month, and in meetings of individual circles.

In addition to the board presidium (Table 1), the main assets of the ZAMP were the management of ZAMP circles and managers of individual departments of the organization, including Halina Bigosińska – head of the Financial and Economic Section (from November 21, 1948 to January 16, 1949, then Zofia Banasik), Władysława Kościńska (head of the Secretariat until November 14, 1948, then head of the Cultural and Entertainment Department, from January 16, 1949 – head of the Cultural and Propaganda Department) and Teresa Deręgowska (head of the Secretariat from November 14, 1948).<sup>16</sup>

On February 28, 1950, at the Plenum of the ZU ZAMP, new members of the University Board were elected and its organizational structure was changed. Ryszard Śledziecki was appointed chairman of the ZU ZAMP, replacing Tymoteusz Gowsz, who had previously been elected First Secretary of the University Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. Czesław Jodkiewicz remained in the position of the head of the Organizational Department (Financial Department – Tadeusz Breguła, Reporting Department – Maria Kabzińska, secretariat – Maria Kutzner, instructor – Wiktoria Sieja). Marian Siliniewicz became the head of the

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<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the meetings of the Presidium of the ZU ZAMP at the AWF, 1948-1950, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file numer.

Training and Education Department (Cultural and Education Department – Maria Róg, Training Department – Teodor Tarnowski), Erazm Wasilewski became the head of the Science and Organization of Studies Department (Studies Organization Department – Stanisław Marek and Henryk Laskiewicz), Andrzej Mazur became the head of the Human Resources Department (Registration Department – Józef Dempniak, Social Work Department – Aleksander Barański).<sup>17</sup>

**Table 1.** The members of the ZU ZAMP presidiums at the AWF in Warsaw (1948–1950)

| Date                  | Chairman            | Vice-President                                             | Members                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| November 21, 1948     | Bronisław Wyczyński | Jan Starościński - Head of the Organizational Department   | Kazimierz Chabura – Head of the Cultural and Propaganda Department (until 16 January 1949, then Władysława Kościńska)<br>Jan Mirowski – Head of the Asset Department<br>Zbigniew Kmiec – Head of the Department of General Student Organizations<br>Edward Szmidt – Head of the Ideological Training Department |
| March 2, 1949         | Ignacy Dąbrowski    | Jan Starościński - Head of the Organizational Department   | Władysława Kościńska – Head of the Cultural and Propaganda Department<br>Zbigniew Kmiec – Head of the Department of General Student Organizations<br>Edward Szmidt – Head of the Ideological Training Department                                                                                                |
| December 1949         | Ignacy Dąbrowski    | Jan Starościński - Head of the Organizational Department   | Teresa Deręgowska – Head of the Cultural and Propaganda Department<br>Zbigniew Kmiec – Head of the Department of General Student Organizations<br>Edward Szmidt – Head of the Ideological Training Department                                                                                                   |
| January-February 1950 | Tymoteusz Gówsz     | Czesław Jodkiewicz – Head of the Organizational Department | Marian Siliniewicz – Head of the Cultural and Propaganda Department<br>Andrzej Cegliński – Head of the Ideological Training Department<br>Aleksander Barański – Head of the Social Work Department                                                                                                              |
| February 28, 1950     | Ryszard Śledziecki  | Czesław Jodkiewicz – Head of the Organizational Department | Marian Siliniewicz – Head of the Training and Education Department<br>Eugeniusz Walczak – Head of the Department of General Student Organizations<br>Erazm Wasilewski – Faculty of Science and Organization of Studies<br>Andrzej Mazur – Human Resources Department                                            |

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of the Plenum of the ZU ZAMP, newly elected at the university conference, held on February 28, 1950, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file numer, k. 1-2.

**Table 1.** The members of the ZU ZAMP presidiums at the AWF in Warsaw... (cont.)

| Date         | Chairman           | Vice-President                                                | Members                                                                                                                                |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 15, 1950 | Ryszard Śledziecki | Czesław Jodkiewicz<br>– Head of the Organizational Department | Aleksander Barański<br>Józef Dempniak<br>Maria Kutzner<br>Marian Siliniewicz<br>Erazm Wasilewski<br>Andrzej Mazur<br>Eugeniusz Walczak |

Source: Minutes of the meetings of the Presidium and Plenum of the ZU ZAMP at the AWF, 1948–1950, collections of the WKFiZ US, no reference number; APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the PZPR. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, reference number 219/I-1, Minutes of the meetings of the POP PZPR and sessions of the executive and meetings of the Branch Party Organization No. 1 and 2 of the University of Physical Education, 1949–1950.

In the light of preserved sources, it is known that between March and May 1950, i.e. basically until the liquidation of the ZAMP, the close and active body of the ZAMP, i.e. the Presidium of the ZU ZMP, included: Ryszard Śledziecki, Czesław Jodkiewicz, Józef Dempniak, Aleksander Barański, Maria Kutzner, Andrzej Mazur, Marian Siliniewicz and Eugeniusz Walczak (Photo 1).<sup>18</sup>

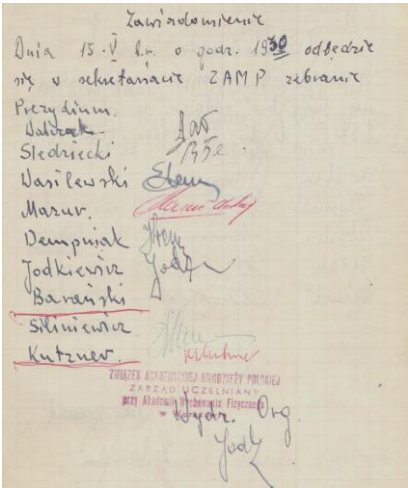


**Photo 1.** Notice of the meeting of the ZAMP Presidium, 15 May 1950.

Source: Journal of the Organizational Department of ZU ZAMP/ZMP AWF, 1950-1951, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number, no page number.

<sup>18</sup> The ZU ZAMP Plenum between March and May 1950 included: Ryszard Śledziecki, Czesław Jodkiewicz, Józef Dempniak, Aleksander Barański, Bolesław Białecki, Tadeusz Breguła, Maria Kabzińska, Maria Kutzner, Henryk Laskiewicz, Majerowicz, Andrzej Mazur, Maria Róg, Wiktoria Sieja, Marian Siliniewicz, Tarnowski and Eugeniusz Walczak. Work log of the Organizational Department ZU ZAMP/ZMP AWF, 1950-1951, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number, no page number.

At the AWF Warsaw, the PZPR party organization tried from the very beginning to supervise the activities of the Union of Academic Polish Youth (which brought together young people studying at the AWF) and the ZMP (which brought together young people from among the AWF employees up to the age of 25). At the POP meetings, the members were officially tasked with cooperating and providing assistance to the ZAMP and ZMP on the university premises, with particular emphasis on overseeing the 'important ideological direction'.<sup>19</sup> And so, when ZAMP was preparing a ceremony to celebrate the 32<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Great October Revolution, scheduled for November 5, 1949, at a POP meeting on November 3, 1949, members of the PZPR were mobilized to participate in the celebrations.<sup>20</sup> In addition to organizing various propaganda events, the ZAMP and the ZMP were also involved in preparing wall notice boards (e.g. on the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of J. Stalin's birth).<sup>21</sup> Of course, all the activities, including persuading students to join the ranks of the Polish United Workers' Party, were mainly the responsibility of student party activists (the organizer of the party student group in 1950/51: Jakub Szpringer).<sup>22</sup> They also constituted the majority in the composition of the Academic Board of the ZAMP AWF. As of March 31, 1950, out of 317 students, 258 male and female students belonged to the ZAMP, including 32 members and candidates of the PZPR.<sup>23</sup> The majority of people came from families of the so-called working intelligentsia, followed by working-class backgrounds (Table 2).

The important tasks of the ZAMP management included monitoring the views of its own representatives. This was achieved, among other things, by collecting members' biographies. Each candidate had to present themselves personally at the meeting of the circle. For example, on 23 November 1949, at the meeting of ZAMP Circle No. 1 (1<sup>st</sup> year of women), Maria Kutzner presented her

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<sup>19</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file reference number 219/I-1, Minutes of the POP PZPR meetings and executive sessions, as well as meetings of the Branch Party Organization No. 1 and 2 of the University of Physical Education, 1949–1950, pp. 10, 157.

<sup>20</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file reference number 219/I-1, Minutes of the POP PZPR meetings and executive sessions, as well as meetings of the Branch Party Organization No. 1 and 2 of the University of Physical Education, 1949–1950, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file reference number 219/I-1, Minutes of the POP PZPR meetings and executive sessions, as well as meetings of the Branch Party Organization No. 1 and 2 of the University of Physical Education, 1949–1950, p. 161.

<sup>22</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-2 1951, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file reference number 219/I-1, Minutes of the POP PZPR meetings and executive sessions, as well as meetings of the Branch Party Organization No. 1 and 2 of the University of Physical Education, 1949–1950, pp. 163, 196.

social background (working intelligentsia) and membership in the Polish Scouting Association before the war. However, she emphasised that this lasted only a few weeks, after which she withdrew from the organisation. Bożena Czerny asked, "Was the withdrawal from the ZHP caused by deeper issues, i. e. related to the ideological face of the old, pre-war scouting?" M. Kutzner replied that "these were only local reasons". Nevertheless, the new candidate was unanimously accepted into the circle.<sup>24</sup> The ZAMP Board, and later the ZMP Board, also issued opinions on students submitting various applications to the university management, including, for example, those seeking permission to go to study in the Soviet Union (Photos 2 and 3).

**Table 2.** Social composition of AWF students, March 31, 1950

| Origin<br>status as<br>of today | Worker origin | Rural origin | Working<br>intelligentsia | Other origin | Total |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|-------|
| March 31, 1950                  | 128           | 35           | 138                       | 16           | 317   |

Source: APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-1, Minutes of POP PZPR meetings and executive sessions, as well as meetings of the Branch Party Organization No. 1 and 2 of the University of Physical Education, 1949-1950, p. 196.

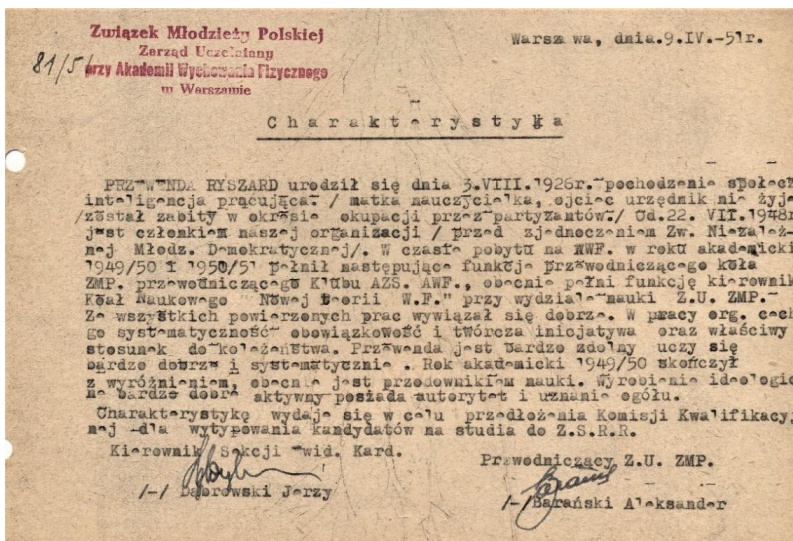


**Photo 2.** Characteristics of Ryszard Przewęda (with incorrectly spelled surname) made by the Board of the ZMP University at the AWF, April 9, 1951

Source: Collection of the WKFiZ US, no reference number.

<sup>24</sup> Minutes of the meetings of ZAMP Circle No. 1, 1st women's year, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number, pp. 13-14.

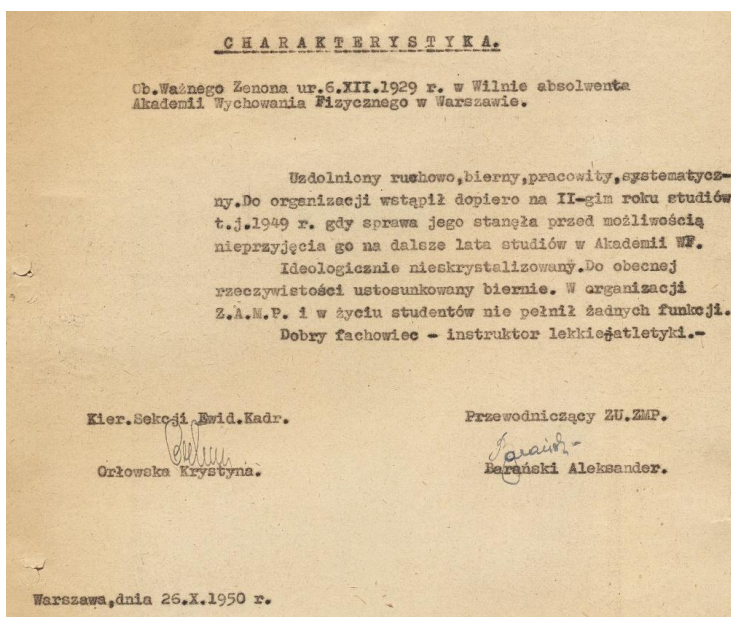


**Photo 3.** Characteristics of Zenon Ważny made by the ZU ZMP at AWF, 26 October 1950  
Source: Collection of the WKFiZ US, no reference number.

At meetings of individual groups, members were usually held accountable for fulfilling their obligations. The stigmatized shortcomings clearly indicated lack of full dedication to the implementation of party plans. In June 1950, after exerting strong pressure on the director of the Academy of Physical Education, Stanisław Górny, the youth activists began a campaign to hold students accountable for hindering and inhibiting 'creative work at the university, being hostile to the system of the People's Republic of Poland, or failing to fulfill their obligations'.<sup>25</sup> During the meeting on June 15, 1950, with the participation of Aleksander Gutowski (Director of the Human Resources Department of the GKKF), the previously appointed committee (head of the first year Wilhelm Filipowicz, students: Aleksander Barański, Alfred Monkiewicz, Karol Gutkowski and Lucjan Graczyk) presented motions to expel several students from the university, voted on by the POP activists.<sup>26</sup> The next meeting of the ZU ZAMP activists, at which the decision was made to expel from the AWF students who were "class-alien", hostile towards the socialist reality, the party and the ZAMP, was held on September 29, 1950.<sup>27</sup> Until the end of the Stalinist period, the youth organization

<sup>25</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the POP activists at the AWF, a group of students and teaching staff, 16/06/1950, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file reference, pp. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-2.

<sup>27</sup> A. Barański, Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the ZU ZAMP assets dated 29 September 1950, collection of WKFiZ US, no file number, pp. 1-2.

exerted strong pressure on the academic community, introducing an atmosphere of fear and distrust, even towards its closest colleagues (Photo 4).

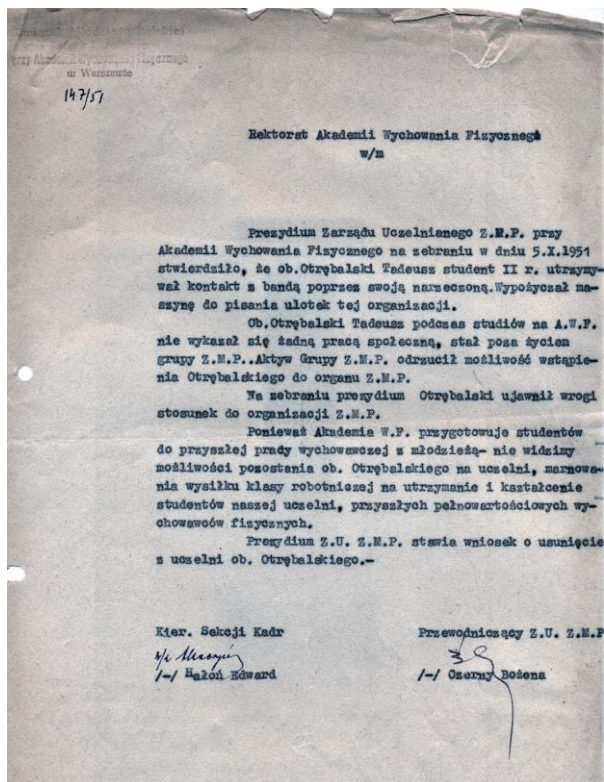


**Photo 4.** Letter from the Board of the University of the Polish Youth Union to the Rector of the Academy of Physical Education regarding the removal of Tadeusz Otrębski from studies.

Source: Collection of the WKFiZ US, no reference number.

Among the ZAMP activists and young members or candidates for the PZPR membership, in the AWF there were people who wanted to implement the revolutionary slogans of the representatives of the Main Board of the ZAMP. At the forum of the central youth body, during discussions at the very first meetings, among other things, the need for “changes in academic staff at universities” was put forward, so that “assistant and academic staff with a progressive approach to science” would emerge from the ZAMP members. It was postulated that the Ministry of Education should ensure the policy of taking care of staff, removing inappropriate assistants and replacing them with candidates indicated from the ZAMP.<sup>28</sup> At the Warsaw university, there were some bizarre situations. Students

<sup>28</sup> AAN in Warsaw, Academic Union of Polish Youth. Main Board, file no. 422/1, Plenary meetings of the ZAMP Main Board, 1948-1950, p. 10; APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of

– members of the University Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, criticizing the university management, summoned the director of the University of Physical Education, Stanisław Górny, to a meeting, holding him accountable for his actions. They also tried to influence the personnel policy, including the dismissal of selected academic teachers.<sup>29</sup>

The main task imposed on ZAMP members was to participate in the celebration of national holidays. In addition to political and propaganda celebrations (Photo 5), other events were also organized, including St. Nicholas' Day, St. Andrew's Day, dance evenings, not to mention sports competitions for attendees.<sup>30</sup> From the beginning of the academic year 1949/50, the ZAMP took over all areas of academic life, previously reserved for the student government and *Bratnia Pomoc*. In the case of the Warsaw university, however, this did not happen on material terms. Students at the AWF Warsaw took advantage of many amenities, including in particular free board and lodging. At the same time, however, they had to completely submit to the rules prevailing at the university, including a kind of military "drill". After the introduction of study discipline, the students were required to attend all classes. From 1 March 1950, in accordance with the rector's order, a student who missed a lecture without justification lost the right to all benefits.

In accordance with the guidelines from the party headquarters (PZPR Central Committee), ZAMP members were mobilized to participate in planned mass trainings, press releases (reading press releases and discussion), celebrations, and actions, especially political and social ones. The greatest emphasis was put on indoctrinating academic youth. Thus, the most important part of the ZAMP circle members' meeting was the reading of a political report, followed by a discussion with the participation of the circle members, with a summary by Major E. Barszcz or the current representative of the ZAMP presidium at the AWF. Of course, there was no possibility of choosing the subject. The reports were given to previously selected persons from the individual groups by the University Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR AWF). (Table 3).

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the PZPR. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-1, Minutes of the POP PZPR meetings and executive sessions, and meetings of Branch Party Organization No. 1 and 2 of the University of Physical Education, 1949–1950, p. 196.

<sup>29</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file reference number 219/I-1, Minutes of the POP PZPR meetings and executive sessions, as well as meetings of the Branch Party Organization No. 1 and 2 of the University of Physical Education, 1949–1950, pp. 23, 155, 216.

<sup>30</sup> Minutes of the meetings of the Presidium of the ZU ZAMP at the AWF, 1948–1950, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number.



**Photo 5.** Students of the AWF Warsaw at the May 1<sup>st</sup> parade, early 1950s  
Source: Collection of the Archives of the Józef Piłsudski AWF in Warsaw.

**Table 3.** List of political topics of papers read at the meetings of ZAMP circles at the AWF Warsaw in the academic year 1948/49

| Lp. | Date           | Titles of the paper                                                       |
|-----|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | October 1948   | The world in the fight for peace.                                         |
| 2.  | November 1948  | The role of the economy and class struggle in the development of society. |
| 3.  | November 1948  | The sources of capitalist exploitation.                                   |
| 4.  | December 1948  | The USSR as a socialist state.                                            |
| 5.  | January 1949   | Achievements of the Unification Congress.                                 |
| 6.  | January 1949   | Socialist industry and agriculture in the USSR.                           |
| 7.  | February 1949  | Imperialism as the highest stage of the development of capitalism.        |
| 8.  | February 1949  | 6-year plan.                                                              |
| 9.  | February 1949  | Day of Solidarity with colonial youth.                                    |
| 10. | March 1949     | Patriotism and internationalism.                                          |
| 11. | April 1949     | Labor race on the AWF premises.                                           |
| 12. | April/May 1949 | Thirty years of fighting for peace and democracy.                         |
| 13. | May 1949       | Prospects for the development of the Polish countryside.                  |

Source: Minutes of the ZAMP circles and the ZAMP University Board at the AWF, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number.

In addition to participating in ideological training, students were encouraged to participate in various practical activities. The first action imposed on AWF students, supervised by the ZAMP, from November 1948 was community service. It was carried out in student Social Work Teams that took part in the "fight" against illiteracy, helping ZMP circles from the Bielany area and executing cleaning works.<sup>31</sup> From the new calendar year it was known as a competitive event which all ZAMP members were to take part in.<sup>32</sup> It officially began on April 10, 1949 and lasted until the end of the academic year. It encompassed academic results in theoretical and practical subjects, social work and discipline.<sup>33</sup> In addition, great emphasis was also put on the saving campaign (campaign "O").<sup>34</sup>

The rules of the work race were developed for students. For individual achievements and contribution to work, an appropriate number of points were awarded, based on which each student was evaluated at the end. For three hours of community service, a student received one point. This included: organizational help, participation in meetings, participation in sports competitions, physical work, preparation for reports, physical work outside the AWF premises (unpaid). Each participant received a notebook in which they wrote down the actions taken and the number of hours worked. The entries had to be confirmed by the heads of the clubs or instructors. In the case of competition in science, the results were determined on the basis of grades in the grade booklet. Thus, for a very good grade 15 points were awarded, for a good grade 10 points, for a satisfactory grade 5 points, and for an unsatisfactory grade -15 points. In terms of discipline, the student's attendance at classes was assessed. For unexcused absence from a lecture, 2 points were deducted. (-2 points), for unexcused absence from a meeting -3 points, for unexcused lateness -1 point. For a reprimand issued by the AWF director, 20 points were taken away (-20 points), and the one issued by the year head resulted in -10 points. By the end of the academic year, each student had to complete 30 hours of community service.<sup>35</sup> At the meetings of the ZAMP circles, where the regulations of the work race were presented, Major E. Barszcz was present. At the end of each meeting, he spoke, justifying in propaganda rhetoric the need for hard work for the good of the university

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<sup>31</sup> Minutes No. 4 of the meeting of circle No. 3 of the ZAMP at the AWF in Warsaw, November 16, 1948, pp. 1-2, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number.

<sup>32</sup> As of 10 March 1949, out of 225 students at the AWF in Warsaw, 161 were members of the ZAMP. Minutes of the extended meeting of the ZU ZAMP Plenum at the AWF in Warsaw, collection of WKFiZ US, no file number, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Plenum of the Association of Polish Ambassadors to the Academy of Physical Education of April 4, 1949, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Minutes No. 9 of the meeting of the ZAMP circle No. 5 at AWF, collection of WKFiZ US, no. 1, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the ZAMP circle no. 2 at the AWF in Warsaw, 8 April 1949, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number 1-2.

and the future of the socialist state. At the same time, he warned (according to the person taking the minutes of the meeting),

The work race will raise our discipline, which is currently low, for example, lateness and missing lectures must be abolished. It will increase progress in science and practice. If the competition is successful, and it must be successful, because resistance will be broken, then our work will go smoothly.<sup>36</sup>

As part of the competition campaign, the following were created: scientific self-help teams (ZSN), preparing for exams and colloquiums, of which there were 21 groups in March 1950 (258 students) and 18 groups of ideological self-education teams in March 1950 (287 students). From March 28, 1950, long-term competition between students was introduced, both in social work and in science. ZAMP members were particularly active in social work. It included care for the circles of the People's Sports Teams (LZS), Sunday Universities, ZMP circles, community centers of the Society of Friends of Children (TPD) and assistance in the campaign against illiteracy.<sup>37</sup>

After the liquidation of the ZAMP, but after the academic year had already begun, on 29 October 1950, the ZMP AWF board was elected, headed by the tried and tested party activist and student Aleksander Barański. The organizational structure of the ZMP included the organizational department (information and reporting section, financial and economic section, personnel and records section, instructors section), science department (scientific circles section, teaching efficiency section), agitation and propaganda department (cultural and educational section, external work section, mass propaganda section, ideological training section).<sup>38</sup> From the available archival materials, it is known that Bożena Czerny became the Head of the Organizational Department, Katarzyna Orłowska the Head of the Records and Personnel Section, Andrzej Cegliński the Head of the Information and Reporting Section, Tadeusz Breguła the Head of the Financial and Economic Section, Jerzy Dąbrowski the Head of the Instructors Group, Mieczysław Krajewski the Head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department, Maria Kutzner the Head of the Ideological Training Section, Lucjan Graczyk the Head of the Mass Propaganda Section, Zofia Łazowska the Head of the Cultural and Educational Section, Maciej Łuczak the Head of the External Work Section, Erazm Wasilewski the Head of the Science Department,

<sup>36</sup> Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the ZAMP circle no. 2 at the AWF in Warsaw, 8 April 1949, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number 2.

<sup>37</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file reference number 219/I-1, Minutes of the POP PZPR meetings and executive sessions, as well as meetings of the Branch Party Organization No. 1 and 2 of the University of Physical Education, 1949–1950, p. 197.

<sup>38</sup> Work plan of the ZU ZMP at the AWF in Warsaw, 19 December 1950, collection of the WKFiZ US, pp. 1-6.

(later Ryszard Śledziecki), Stanisław Marek the Head of the Teaching Efficiency Section, Ryszard Śledziecki the Head of the Scientific Circles and Assistants, Bogusława Lewczak the Head of the Library.<sup>39</sup> The campaign of educating the youth in the spirit of submission to state authority was of course continued, in accordance with the ZMP "decatalogue":

A ZMP member loves the People's Republic of Poland, serves it and is ready to sacrifice everything for its independence and development. [...] does everything to strengthen people's democracy and the unity of the working people of the cities and villages (ZMP Law, Photo 6).

In the academic year 1950/51, with the increase in the number of young people studying, but also with the benefits of belonging to the ZMP, the ranks of the organization in question grew. As of March 31, 1951, it counted 319 members (out of a total of 362 students), including 113 women.<sup>40</sup> Among them, most people came from families of working intelligentsia and working-class environments (Table 4).

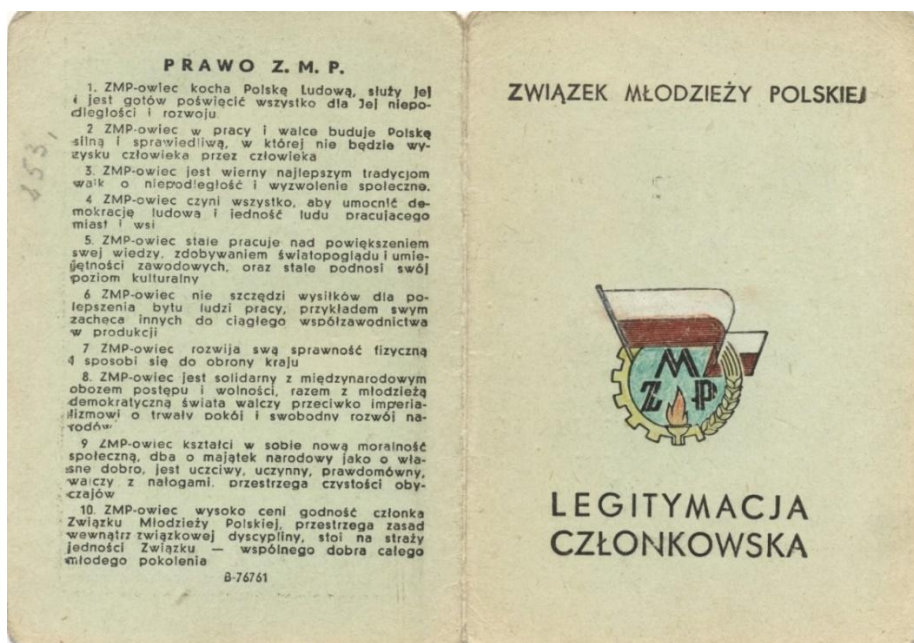


**Photo 6.** Cover of the ZMP membership card

Source: Collections of the WKFiZ US, no reference number.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from the ZMP activist at AWF to the POP AWF Executive, 9 October 1950, collection of WKFiZ US, no reference number, k. 1.

<sup>40</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-2, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee and meetings of the POP PZPR and meetings of OOP No. 1 and No. 2, 1951, p. 41.

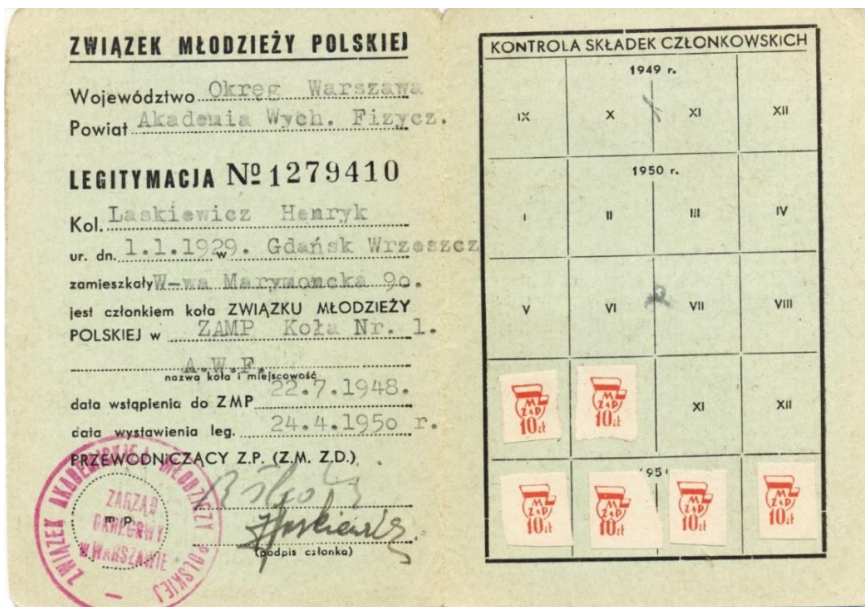


**Photo 7.** Page 1 and 2 of the ZMP membership card of Henryk Laskiewicz, a student of the Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw in the years 1949-1952  
Source: Collection of the WKFiZ US, no file reference.

**Table 4.** Social composition of ZMP AWF members, March 31, 1951

| Status as of today | Worker origin | Rural origin | Working intelligentsia | Other origin | Total |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|-------|
| March 31, 1951     | 132           | 39           | 133                    | 15           | 319   |

Source: APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-2, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee and POP PZPR meetings and OOP meetings no. 1 and no. 2, 1951, p. 41.

The main burden of organizational work rested on the PZPR members who maintained constant contact with the POP executive and held managerial positions in the ZMP University Board. In the academic year 1950/51, this group consisted of 13 people. It included: Aleksander Barański, Mieczysław Bilski, Bożena Czerny, Józef Dempniak, Teresa Deręgowska, Mieczysław Krajewski, Zygmunt Kuraś, Henryk Laskiewicz, Andrzej Mazur, Jakub Szpringer (organizer of the audience group), Jerzy Dąbrowski, Jan Tobolczyk and Erazm Wasilewski.<sup>41</sup> The

<sup>41</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-2, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee and meetings of the POP PZPR and meetings of the OOP No. 1 and No. 2, 1951, pp. 1-108.

group was complemented by active members of the ZMP, including Czesław Jodkiewicz, Tadeusz Breguła, Andrzej Cegliński, Tymoteusz Gowsz, Maria Kabzińska, Maria Kutzner, Mieczysław Krajewski, Ryszard Przewęda, Marian Siliniewicz, Wiktoria Sieja, Zbigniew Szteyn, Ryszard Śledziecki, Eugeniusz Walczak<sup>42</sup>.

From among the party activists, the members of the KU PZPR AWF were appointed by the strict ZMP body. This means that the elections of the University Board of this organization were strictly controlled by the POP executive. In June 1951, Bożena Czerny replaced Aleksander Barański as the chairman of the ZU ZMP, who was finishing his studies at that time (Table 5). In December 1951, the KU PZPR made a decision to make personnel changes in the ZMP board. The party's "Mother Commission" analyzed possible candidates, selecting appropriate people for the board, i.e. paying attention to, among other things, their worldview, social background, of course preferring workers' or peasants' background.<sup>43</sup>

**Table 5.** Personnel management of the ZU ZMP at the AWF Warsaw (1950–1956)

| Duration of office             | Chairman            | Head of the Organizational Department |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| October 1950 – June 1951       | Aleksander Barański | Bożena Czerny                         |
| June 1951 – December 1952      | Bożena Czerny       | Tadeusz Podlewski                     |
| December 1952 – September 1953 | Jerzy Borowski      | Bożena Czerny                         |
| October 1953 – September 1955  | Jerzy Skorowski     | No data available                     |
| October 1955 – October 1956    | Henryk Karoń        | No data available                     |

Source: APW, Milanówek Branch, University of Physical Education Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee and the POP PZPR meetings and OOP meetings no. 1 and no. 2, 1951, p. 179; reference number 219/I-3, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee and the POP PZPR AWF meetings and minutes of electoral meetings of the OOP PZPR no. 1 and 2, 1952, pp. 63, 72; reference number 219/I-4, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee PZPR and general meetings of the POP and electoral meetings of the OOP 1 and 2, 1953, pp. 46, 134, 204; reference number 219/I-5, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee and the POP PZPR general meetings and the OOP no. 1 and 2 PZPR AWF election meetings, 1954, p. 110; reference number 219/I-7, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee of the PZPR AWF and general meetings of the POP PZPR AWF. Minutes of the reporting and election meeting of the POP PZPR of the University of Physical Education, 1956-1958; W. Gniewkowski, *Chronicle*, [in]: *University of Physical Education named after Lieutenant General Karol Świerczewski in the years 1929-1959. Commemorative Book*, Warszawa 1960, 134.

<sup>42</sup> Work journal of the Organizational Department of ZU ZAMP/ZMP AWF, 1950-1951, collection of the WKFiZ US, no call number, no page number.

<sup>43</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, University of Physical Education, file reference number 219/I-2, Minutes of the University Committee meetings and POP PZPR meetings and OOP meetings no. 1 and no. 2, 1951, p. 179.

In December 1952, the party executive decided to change the “leader” of the youth organization and to give the chairmanship to the student Jerzy Borowski. It was decided that Bożena Czerny, a graduate employed at the Academy of Physical Education (assistant) might not have appropriate contact with the audience. However, she remained in the position of the head of the Organizational Department. On September 25, 1953, at a POP meeting, a new candidate for the chairmanship of the ZU ZMP was nominated. Among the members of the executive, Jerzy Skorowski, a third-year student, gained recognition.<sup>44</sup> Of course, all activists, as well as the entire youth organization, were controlled by appointed representatives of the POP executive (Table 6). In addition to members of the PZPR KU, supervision over the ZMP was entrusted to representatives of the executive of the 1<sup>st</sup> Department of the Party Organization (academic teachers). It is known that in the academic year 1952/53 such supervision was exercised by M. Stefanowicz.<sup>45</sup>

**Table 6.** Party activists from the KU PZPR AWF supervising the ZMP and youth affairs in the years 1950–1956

| Period                        | Name and surname                          | Function in the KU PZPR                  | Scope of duties                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 1950 – May 1952         | Aleksander Barański (student)             | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Secretary of the KU PZPR | Supervision over the activities of youth organizations                                                    |
| May 1952 – December 1953      | Maria Kwiatkowska (administrative worker) | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Secretary of the KU PZPR | Educational Director                                                                                      |
|                               | Jerzy Dąbrowski (student)                 | Member of the KU PZPR                    | Supervision over the ZMP                                                                                  |
| December 1953 – December 1954 | Maria Kwiatkowska                         | Member of the KU PZPR                    | Educational matters                                                                                       |
|                               | Edmund Kosman (rector)                    | Member of the KU PZPR                    | Supervision over the ZMP (from April 1953)                                                                |
| December 1954 – December 1955 | Andrzej Wohl (Deputy Professor)           | Member KU PZPR                           | Supervision over the ZMP<br>Supervision of youth organizations and the party group of third-year students |
|                               | Józef Braciszewicz (student)              | Member KU ZMP                            |                                                                                                           |
| December 1955 – November 1956 | Andrzej Wohl (Deputy Professor)           | Member KU PZPR                           | Supervision over the ZMP                                                                                  |

Source: APW, Milanówek Branch, University of Physical Education, reference number 219/I-1, Minutes of the POP PZPR meetings and meetings of the Executive and meetings of the Branch

<sup>44</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-4, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and general meetings of the POP and election meetings of the OOP 1 and 2, 1953, p. 134.

<sup>45</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-4, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and general meetings of the POP and election meetings of the OOP 1 and 2, 1953, p. 316.

Party Organization No. 1 and 2 of the University of Physical Education, 1949–1950, p. 171; reference number 219/I-2, Minutes of the University Committee meetings and POP PZPR meetings and the OOP meetings no. 1 and no. 2, 1951, pp. 64, 89; reference number 219/I-3, Minutes of the University Committee meetings and the POP PZPR AWF meetings and minutes of election meetings of the OOP PZPR no. 1 and 2, 1952, p. 80; reference number No. 219/I-4, Minutes of meetings of the University Committee of the PZPR and general meetings of the POP and election meetings of the OOP 1 and 2, 1953, p. 184; reference number 219/I-5, Minutes of meetings of the University Committee and general meetings of the POP PZPR and election meetings of the OOP no. 1 and 2 of the PZPR AWF, 1954, pp. 228, 230; reference number 219/I-7, Minutes of meetings of the University Committee of the PZPR AWF and general meetings of the POP PZPR AWF. Minutes of the reporting and election meeting of the POP PZPR University of Physical Education, 1956–1958, p. 59.

The current work of the youth organization was supported, apart from the members of the Polish United Workers' Party, by activists from the Polish Youth Union. In light of preserved sources, it is known that on March 27, 1953 (academic year 1952/53), this group included representatives of the University Board – chairman: Jerzy Borowski, senior organizational instructor Jerzy Skorowski, senior agitation and propaganda instructor Jerzy Jaworski, reporting instructor Teresa Pasterz, scientific circles representative Maria Malinowska, head of the secretariat Joanna Rzempoluch, member Zbigniew Bajorek, radio station instructor Janusz Podoski and member Kobrzyński. The activity was strengthened by representatives of the boards of circles of three age groups (chairman, organizational instructor, agitation and propaganda instructor) and group organizers (15 people).<sup>46</sup> In the next academic year (1953/54) the ZMP activists – members of the University Board were: chairman Jerzy Skorowski, senior organizational instructor Henryk Karoń, senior agitation and propaganda instructor Jerzy Jaworski, training instructors Maria Sieńkowska and Napoleon Wolański, radio station instructor Barbara Zur, TPPR (the Polish–Soviet Friendship Society) and press instructor Janusz Kawka, reporting instructor Teresa Krogulec, and the head of the secretariat Magdalena Kwiatkowska. This group was supported by representatives of the boards of the circles (No. I–IV), i.e. chairmen and members (in the number from three to five).<sup>47</sup>

At the meeting on 22 October 1954, a new Board of the ZMP University was formed. Jerzy Skorowski remained the chairman, and in addition to the chairman, ten other people joined the body (Photo 8). All the members were also assigned specific duties. Thus, Ireneusz Pisarski was responsible for group no. 1, Janusz Nowakowski for group no. 2, Janusz Borowiecki for group no. 3, Barbara Targowska for group no. 4. Henryk Karoń was responsible for cultural and educational work, Jerzy Kasproicz for the press, Jadwiga Kowalska for reporting, Stanisław Szczesny for the ZU newspaper, and Jerzy Pacholski held the position of chairman of the Polish Students' Association at the AWF.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Assets of the ZMP, 27 March 1953, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number, sheet 1.

<sup>47</sup> List of the ZMP assets, 1953/54, collection of WKFiZ US, no file number, sheet 1.

<sup>48</sup> ZU ZMP at the AWF in Warsaw, Information for the period from 20 October 1954 to 5 November 1954, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number, pp. 1–5.

**Stowarzyszenie ZU ZMP**

**Związek Młodzieży Polskiej**  
Zarząd Uczeń-ling  
przy Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego  
w Warszawie

| nr  | Imię i nazwisko         | Wiek | położenie          | data zapisu | przebiegiem post |
|-----|-------------------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1.  | Skorowski Jerzy         | 24   | intelig-proc. nau. | 1949        | PZPR             |
| 2.  | Targowska Barbara       | 23   | - " -              | 1949        | - " -            |
| 3.  | Pisarski Ireneusz       | 19   | - " -              | 1952        | PZPR - kandydat  |
| 4.  | Borowiński Janusz       | 20   | - " -              | 30.1.1949   | -                |
| 5.  | Kosporowicz Jerzy       | 19   | - " -              | 1949        | -                |
| 6.  | Stankiewicz Dorota      | 20   | - " -              | 15.12.1949  | PZPR - kandydat  |
| 7.  | Szczepanowski Stanisław | 21   | robotnic           | 1949        | -                |
| 8.  | Konarski Józef          | 18   | - " -              | 1.1.1950    | -                |
| 9.  | Karol Henryk            | 21   | - " -              | 30.1.1950   | PZPR - kandydat  |
| 10. | Pacholski Jerzy         | 20   | intelig-proc.      | 1950        | - " - " -        |
| 11. | Nowosielski Janusz      | 22   | - " - nau.         | 1950        | -                |

**Photo 8.** Composition of the ZU ZMP AWF, X 1954

Source: Collection of the WKFiZ US, no file reference.

Due to the sports nature of the university, from the very beginning, great emphasis was placed on participation in the Action connecting the city with the countryside, in this case it was about helping to popularize sports activities among rural youth. The first organizational activities were undertaken in 1949. At that time, the ZU ZAMP focused mainly on the village of Małocice, destroyed during the war. It postulated a collection of clothes, money, organization of a profit-making event, medical assistance, food for children, a village community center, sports activation of youth and cost-saving activities (reducing the number of purchased magazines, giving up one trip to the theater). The funds saved in this way were to be allocated to help the residents of the village.<sup>49</sup> From the beginning of 1950, the ZU ZAMP began to implement systematic contacts with the youth of villages near Warsaw. Undoubtedly, the Resolution of the Presidium of the Main Board of the Union of Polish Youth of 31 January 1950 on the work of the ZMP in the field of physical culture was of great importance. In addition to the need to popularise physical education and sport, the resolution imposed the obligation to strengthen the ideological side of physical culture and to prepare staff of young people, devoted to the authorities, recruited from working-class and rural environments, for work in sports circles and People's Sports Teams.<sup>50</sup> Students of the Academy of Physical Education (members of the

<sup>49</sup> Minutes of the extended meeting of the ZU ZAMP Plenum at the AWF of 17 May 1949, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> M. Ponczek, *Sport i kultura fizyczna w założeniach programowych Związku Młodzieży Polskiej (zarys problematyki)*, "Łódzkie Zeszyty Historyczne" 1985, z. 2 (6), p. 78.

Association of Polish Ambassadors), mainly first-year students, helped to create the People's Sports Teams, brought sports equipment, and organized training sessions, games and competitions (Photo 9).<sup>51</sup> The campaign was continued the following year by the university ZMP. 35 students took part in the activities, and were "assigned to serve" four communes. The managers of the individual teams were ZMP activists (the village of Leśna Wola included).<sup>52</sup>

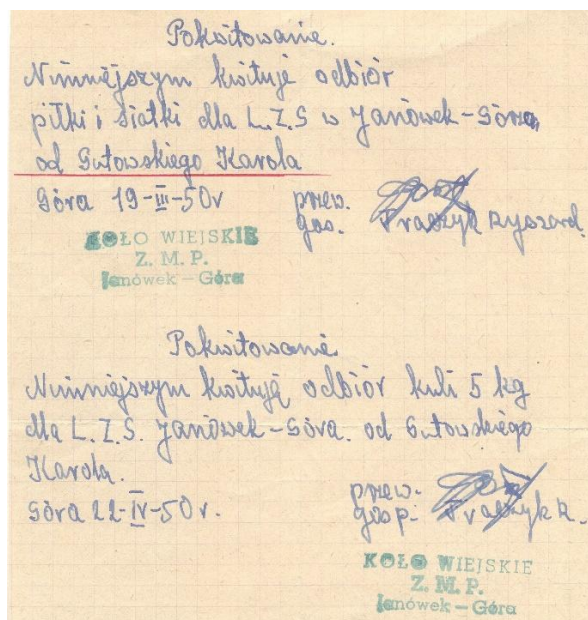


**Photo 9.** Receipt for equipment brought to the LZS Janówek Góra by a student of AWF Warsaw  
Source: Collection of WKFiZ US, no file reference.

In addition to exercises and sports games, students of the Warsaw University of Physical Education had to follow the guidelines for presenting ideological reports. There is more information on this subject in the archival materials of the Main Board of the ZMP, which contain instructions specifying the forms of political, cultural and educational work in the ZMP and LZS circles. Thus, in addition to sports activities, youth activists were to deliver previously made available reports (25-30 minutes), lectures on sports topics and conduct "talks" related to the presented problems (twice a month, before sports activities). Here, it was also possible to work in the after-school club, in this case preparing wall notice

<sup>51</sup> See more on this topic in R. Stefanik, *Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego w Warszawie w "Akcji łączności fabryk (miasta) z wsią" w latach 1949-1954*, "Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe" 2020, no 4, pp. 45-59.

<sup>52</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-2 1951, p. 169.

boards on sports topics, for example, presenting the profiles of Soviet and Polish athletes or the achievements of one's own LZS circle. The duty of activists (sports instructors) was also to prepare rural youth for participation in mass events, including National Runs and meeting the standards for the badges Fit for Work and Defense (SPO) and Be Fit for Work and Defense (BSPO).<sup>53</sup>

Other cultural and propaganda actions (apart from social work, care for the LZS, ZMP and SKS circles, mass gatherings and events on the premises of the AWF) carried out outside the university between 1 January 1950 and 28 February 1951 included: ceremonial events/ gatherings organised in villages during the harvesting works, artistic events at the Culture Centre in Żoliborz, in Zielona Góra (Polish-Soviet Friendship Month), a performance at the State Agricultural Farm in Czerwieńsk, artistic performances at the Municipal Transport Company (including the occasion of the 71<sup>st</sup> birthday of J. Stalin), a ceremonial event on the occasion of the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Red Army for two schools in Żoliborz, and an artistic performance at the school of the Society of Friends of Children (TPD) in Żoliborz.<sup>54</sup>

Since 1952, due to the poor results of ideological work in the opinion of the university party body, attempts were made to appropriately influence youth activity. According to instructions from the KU PZPR, the ZMP presidium issued a resolution regarding "the work of agitators on the territory of the ZMP". The most active members of the organization and all those belonging to the PZPR were selected. Their tasks included monitoring the teaching results, conducting ideological training, press readership, securing and monitoring the socialist discipline of teaching and mobilizing for cultural and educational activities. Additionally, in order to improve cooperation between the ZMP and the teaching staff, a ZMP unit was created in individual groups, consisting of four members (the group secretary, the starost, the person responsible for science and the science leader). The University Committee of the PZPR also decided to invite the chairman of the ZMP agitator group to the executive meeting.<sup>55</sup>

During the Stalinist era, the primary way for young people to demonstrate their political awareness and commitment was by participating in mass events and state (political) holidays, which had become a standard part of the party's "rituals." For example, on March 17, 1952, employees and students of the University of Physical Education took part in a mass rally to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> birth-

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<sup>53</sup> AAN in Warsaw, ZMP. ZG, file no. 451/IX-1, School Youth Department. Instructions, 1950-1953, p. 53.

<sup>54</sup> Report of the ZU ZMP at the AWF for the period 1 January 1950-28 February 1951, collection of the WKFiZ US, no file number, pp. 1-3.

<sup>55</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-3, Minutes of the University Committee meetings and POP PZPR AWF meetings and minutes of election meetings of the OOP PZPR no. 1 and 2, 1952, p. 15.

day of B. Bierut. The participants made a number of commitments, which was already a mandatory ritual at that time. In the case of students, individual ZMP groups (male and female) outdid each other in planning social activities. For example, the 1<sup>st</sup> female group of the ZMP Circle No. 1 committed to working 200 man-hours on arranging sports grounds for the spring and summer seasons and to organizing a ceremony to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of B. Bierut in the workers' hotel at 31 Krasińskiego St. In turn, the 10<sup>th</sup> group of the ZMP Circle No. 3 decided to prepare a handball pitch.<sup>56</sup>

The POP university executive also tried to mobilize the academic youth to participate in the Young Builders of the People's Republic of Poland Rally in 1952. Students practiced for sports shows at the summer camp in Giżycko. Just before the academic year 1952/53, the youth from the AWF, as members of a brigade in the State Agricultural Farm (PGR) (16 people), took part in the Harvest Action. They also took part in organized "evenings", whose program included songs and dances with local youth.<sup>57</sup> After the academic year began, preparations were made for an event as part of the pre-election campaign for the residents of Żoliborz (a meeting with candidates for the MP), participation in the May 1<sup>st</sup> parade and ceremony, and demonstrations at the parade on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. The autumn of 1953 was a time of further commitments undertaken during the ceremonial event on the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution and the Autumn Marches. The discipline of studies was controlled by threatening to remove "ideological" individuals from the ranks of the ZMP.<sup>58</sup> The social structure of AWF students was also carefully analysed, assessing the efforts made to make studies available to the "working and peasant class" (Table 7).

The tasks of the ZU ZMP included influencing the improvement of academic results, intensifying educational and "mass-political" work among students. The POP executive also profiled the activity of the youth organization. In the autumn of 1953, the KU PZPR approved the ZMP work plan for the academic year 1953/54.<sup>59</sup> Despite

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<sup>56</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-3, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee and meetings of the POP PZPR AWF and minutes of election meetings of the OOP PZPR no. 1 and 2, 1952, pp. 35-36.

<sup>57</sup> PW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-4, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and general meetings of the POP and election meetings of the OOP 1 and 2, 1953, p. 260.

<sup>58</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-4, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and general meetings of the POP and election meetings of the OOP 1 and 2, 1953, pp. 204-205.

<sup>59</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-4, Minutes of the meetings of the University

the steps taken and control by the party authorities, it was not possible to achieve satisfactory results in the “educational” work. According to archival sources, complaints about students’ lack of sufficient ideological awareness and engagement date back to 1953. At the executive meetings, compromising situations involving certain ZMP activists were discovered, including their ridicule by academic youth. Their incompetence, evasion of imposed duties and social work were pointed out. The ZMP activists themselves were said to have been lenient toward those who did not participate in political and educational work, and they did not protest when the organization’s mistakes were exaggerated.<sup>60</sup>

**Table 7.** Membership of the AWF Warsaw students in mass organizations and the Polish United Workers’ Party, as of March 25, 1953

| Year  | Number of students | PZPR | ZMP | ZSP | AZS |
|-------|--------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| I     | 201                | 6    | 160 | 167 | 71  |
| II    | 184                | 7    | 153 | 174 | 148 |
| III   | 130                | 20   | 119 | 125 | 88  |
| Total | 515                | 33   | 432 | 466 | 307 |

Source: APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-4, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party and general meetings of the POP and election meetings of the OOP 1 and 2, 1953, p. 249.

Despite frequent debates on the POP executive forum, the situation did not improve. At the meeting of the KU PZPR on May 5, 1954, it was reported that the ZMP did not enjoy authority at the AWF. Discrepancies between theory and practice in educational work were pointed out and there was talk of lack of enthusiasm for working among young people. Students’ opinions were also quoted. They complained about lack of opportunities to take their own initiatives.<sup>61</sup>

The ever-worsening atmosphere around the ZMP prompted the POP executive to conduct a thorough analysis of the problem at the beginning of 1955. The meeting of the PZPR KU on 12 and 15 January 1955 was devoted to educational

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Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party and general meetings of the POP and election meetings of the OOP 1 and 2, 1953, p. 134.

<sup>60</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-5, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee and general meetings of the POP PZPR and election meetings of OOP No. 1 and 2 PZPR AWF, 1954, pp. 207-208.

<sup>61</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-5, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee and general meetings of the POP PZPR and election meetings of the OOP No. 1 and 2 PZPR AWF, 1954, p. 110.

matters and the assessment of the ZMP's activities. In addition to the postulate of deputy professor Andrzej Wohl to seek "ZMP's work methods" and to give the youth "maximum initiative and freedom", Edmund Kosman suggested gathering a larger number of youth party activists in the ZMP collective.<sup>62</sup> We also have a note by Henryk Laskiewicz (a member of the POP executive in the academic year 1954/55) from a discussion at the party forum on March 12, 1955. However, there is no description of whether it was a meeting of the KU PZPR or perhaps the 1<sup>st</sup> OOP (most likely the University Committee). H. Laskiewicz noted, "Report of work in the ZMP. Lack of critical approach to new tasks. Lack of perspective at work."<sup>63</sup>

## Conclusion

The ZAMP/ZMP organizations at the Warsaw university strictly implemented the guidelines of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party addressed to academic circles. Support for the development of physical culture among working-class and rural youth was also provided for physical education schools. Students fulfilled the tasks imposed on them at the cost of enormous social work, which in many cases brought tangible benefits, both to the students themselves and to local communities. Youth activists also joined the party ranks, engaging in political work and ideological training. They could count on the chance to remain at the university, be employed as junior assistants and undertake a master's thesis. The rest, in accordance with the work distribution order, were sent to selected offices, institutions and schools in various regions of the country.

Intense propaganda, uncompromising study discipline and the constant search for the "class enemy" aroused an atmosphere of fear and destroyed interpersonal bonds. In October 1956, due to the spreading wave of criticism of political reality in society, but also among party members, students of the University of Physical Education announced a hunger strike and a rally in the fencing hall. Among other things, they postulated granting the school full academic rights, abolishing study discipline, payrises for assistants and liquidating the ZMP. On the same day, at night, student representatives of the Strike Committee (living in a dormitory on the premises of the University of Physical Education) were summoned to Dean Edmund Kosman (member of the POP executive). The

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<sup>62</sup> APW, Milanówek Branch, Warsaw Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. University of Physical Education in Warsaw, file no. 219/I-6, Minutes of the meetings of the University Committee and general meetings of the POP PZPR AWF and minutes of the Executive and general meetings of the OOP no. 1 and 2 PZPR AWF, 1955, p. 14.

<sup>63</sup> H. Laskiewicz, *Party Work Notebook*, collection of WKFiZ US, no signature, no page number.

meeting was also attended by a representative of the Main Committee of Physical Culture Aleksander Gutowski and the First Secretary of the Academic Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party of the University of Physical Education Andrzej Wohl. To the students' surprise, the strike demands were accepted ad hoc. They were asked to stop the strike and calmly wait for a decision at a "higher level". And indeed, most of the demands were met the following year. With the establishment of the Strike Committee, the University Board and the boards of the individual ZMP circles at the Warsaw AWF ceased to operate.<sup>64</sup> In December 1956, the highest authorities decided to liquidate the ZMP, which was officially announced on January 11, 1957 at the plenum of the ZMP Main Board. In place of the dissolved organization, the Union of Rural Youth was established (February 1957) and the Union of Socialist Youth (April 1957).<sup>65</sup>

This was the end of the political and social organization whose aim was to completely subordinate Polish youth to the party in power. Due to the fatigue of academic circles with intrusive ideological indoctrination, it was difficult to encourage young people to subordinate themselves to another organizational creation. The communists had to admit the failure of the implemented youth policy. Despite significant organizational outlays and ideological pressure on academic youth, the achieved effects were far from the intended ones. The ideological faces of AWF students were usually superficial and often simply feigned.

At the meeting of the POP executive with the executive of the District Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (6 people) on 16 March 1957, among other things, the establishment of a youth organization was discussed. However, it was still difficult at that time to persuade the academic youth of the AWF to get involved in the activities of another political machine. It was not until the spring of 1958, with the significant support of the KU PZPR, that a 7-person group of the Union of Socialist Youth was established, which, however, did not demonstrate any wider activity until June 1958. And so another period of progressive indoctrination and politicization of academic circles at the Warsaw AWF began.

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#### DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article 'Youth party helpers'. *Organization and activity of the Academic Union of Polish Youth and the Union of Polish Youth at the University of Physical Education in Warsaw in the years 1948–1956.*

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<sup>64</sup> I. Pisarski, *Październik 1956 na AWF*, "Absolwenci. Kwartalnik Stowarzyszenia Absolwentów AWF Warszawa" 2016, nr 1 (17), pp. 22–25.

<sup>65</sup> A. L. Sowa, *Historia Polityczna Polski, 1944–1991*, Literary Publishing House, Kraków 2011, p. 258.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

**Ryszard Stefanik:** Conceptualization, Funding Acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project Administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing;

**Arkadiusz Włodarczyk:** Investigation, Methodology, Validation, Visualization, Writing – Review & Editing

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## THE ROLE OF FOOTBALL IN THE POLITICS OF CONTEMPORARY STATES: A LITERATURE-BASED ANALYSIS

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### Miejsce i rola piłki nożnej w polityce współczesnych państw w świetle literatury przedmiotu

#### Streszczenie

W artykule przeanalizowano piłkę nożną z perspektywy zjawiska wykraczającego poza sportową rywalizację. Futbol, jako jedna z najpopularniejszych dyscyplin sportowych na świecie, stał się przestrzenią, w której ścierają się interesy państw, organizacji piłkarskich, piłkarzy oraz kibiców. Wykorzystywany jest nie tylko do budowania wizerunku państw i promowania idei politycznych, lecz także do wzmacniania tożsamości narodowej, legitymizowania władzy oraz odwracania uwagi społeczeństwa od kontrowersyjnych reform i problemów wewnętrznych. Szczególną rolę odgrywa jako narzędzie soft power, umożliwiające kształtowanie pozytywnego obrazu państwa na arenie międzynarodowej bez użycia środków przymusu. Może służyć jako środek komunikacji społecznej, wzmacniający więzi narodowe i mobilizujący obywateli, zwłaszcza w regionach dążących do niepodległości.

Analiza nie posiada sztywnych ram czasowych. Przykłady dobrano w taki sposób, aby uchwycić ewolucję zjawiska w różnych kontekstach społeczno-politycznych oraz kulturowych. Praca składa się z trzech części: zaangażowania organizacji, zawodników i kibiców w życie polityczne, piłki nożnej jako elementu siły państwa oraz jako szansy na uznanie międzynarodowe.

Celem pracy jest integracja rozproszonych wątków w literaturze przedmiotu oraz ukazanie mechanizmów, które łączą futbol i politykę. Artykuł wypełnia lukę badawczą, pokazując, jak trzy poziomy analizy dotychczas badane osobno, tj. organizacyjny, społeczny i państwowy, współdziałają ze sobą.

**Słowa kluczowe:** polityka, soft power, piłka nożna, uznanie międzynarodowe, organizacje sportowe.

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## Abstract

The article examines football from the perspective of a phenomenon that goes beyond mere sporting competition. As one of the most popular sports disciplines in the world, football has become a space in which the interests of states, football organizations, players, and supporters intersect and often clash. It is used not only to build state image and promote political ideas, but also to strengthen national identity, legitimize political authority, and divert public attention from controversial reforms and internal challenges. Football plays a particularly significant role as an instrument of soft power, enabling states to shape a positive international image without resorting to coercive measures. It may also function as a means of social communication, reinforcing national bonds and mobilizing citizens, especially in regions striving for independence. The analysis does not adopt rigid temporal boundaries. The selected examples aim to capture the evolution of the phenomenon across diverse socio-political and cultural contexts. The study is structured into three parts: the involvement of organizations, players, and supporters in political life; football as an element of state power; and football as an opportunity for achieving international recognition. The aim of the article is to integrate dispersed strands within the existing literature and to identify the mechanisms linking football and politics. The study fills a research gap by demonstrating how three levels of analysis – organizational, societal, and state-level – interact, whereas they have previously been examined separately.

**Keywords:** politics, soft power, football, international recognition, sports organizations.

## Introduction

Football – a team sport in which teams of eleven players each aim to score a goal against each other<sup>1</sup> – is one of the most popular sports disciplines in the world. It is proven by the results of Ipsos research conducted before the 2022 World Cup, showing that almost 40 percent of the world population regarded themselves as football supporters.<sup>2</sup>

For many years football has been more than just sports rivalry. It has become a political tool – a set of activities, as Marek Chmaj states, undertaken by a decision centre, aiming at achieving the intended goals with the help of appropriately chosen means.<sup>3</sup> Football has evolved into the space where political, economic and ideological interests clash. It is, among others, an element of building state image, strengthening national identity and developing soft power, i.e. a country's ability to exert influence and secure allies through the appeal of its own culture, policies and values, rather than through military or economic pressure.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> W. Lipoński, *Encyklopedia Sportów Świata*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Atena, Poznań 2001, pp. 367–371.

<sup>2</sup> *Pół świata zamierza oglądać mistrzostwa w piłce nożnej*, "Ipsos Global Advisor", 18.11.2022.

<sup>3</sup> M. Chmaj, *Przyczynek do wyjaśnienia pojęcia: polityka*, "Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio K. Politologia", 1995/1996, vol. 23, pp. 197–206.

<sup>4</sup> R. Łoś, *Soft power – definicja, źródła i sposób oddziaływania*, "Studia Polityczne", 2018, vol. 46, no 1, pp. 131–148.

The aim of the article is an analysis of the influence of football organisations, players and fan movements on national policy. It shows how football operates as a soft power tool. It also presents football as a means of social communication, often used to promote states, shape their image and as an element of maintaining or regaining national identity in the regions striving for political independence.

The article consists of three parts. The first one shows how football organisations and supporters engage in political life. The second one pertains to football as an element of state's power, whereas the third one attempts to answer the question whether football can be a path to international recognition.

Analysing football in a broader context, not only the sports one but as a cultural, social and political phenomenon, makes it possible to understand how it can serve political purposes and how it shapes national narratives. The topic takes on a special meaning in the context of contemporary events like the 2022 World Cup in Qatar or Russia's suspension from the FIFA following its invasion of Ukraine.

The research gap concerns an insufficient number of comprehensive studies combining three levels of analysis – organisational (FIFA, UEFA), social (football fans, players) and national (soft power, international politics). The current state of research indicates that football is widely recognised as a cultural, social and political phenomenon. Yet, the research focuses mainly on individual dimensions of the analysis: organisational, social or national. On the other hand, there are very few studies combining all the three levels into a comprehensive analysis, showing mechanisms thanks to which football serves as a political tool on a global scale.

The article was written on the basis of a master's thesis "Between sports and politics. A case study of football," which was defended in 2022 at Koszalin University of Technology and has not been published yet. The analysis does not have any fixed timeframe – the examples were selected to present the phenomenon holistically, which should make it possible to understand the evolution of the relationship between football and politics as a dynamic tool of influence that changes its functions and significance depending on the socio-political context.

## **Methods and research problems**

The hypothesis of the research was that football as part of popular culture has become a tool for political influence. Due to its enormous popularity it lets states, organisations and social groups promote their own ideals, improve their international image, build national identity, have an impact on public opinion and ease political tensions. To test the hypothesis, the following research questions were formulated:

- How do football organisations such as the FIFA and the UEFA influence states' decisions?
- Which mechanisms let football serve as soft power in international politics?
- To what extent do fan movements and players' attitudes contribute to the politicisation of football?
- Can football foster the development of national identity?

To prepare this publication and check how football functions as a tool for politics, communication and identity, the following research methods were used: historical method, case study, content and discourse analysis. A comparative approach and source triangulation made it possible to integrate three levels of analysis – organisational, social and national one – into one coherent whole.

## Results and discussion

### The influence of organisations, footballers and football fans on politics

The institutionalisation of football at the international level created conditions for its permanent use as an instrument of state policy. The key moments were: the establishment of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) in 1904, which facilitated the organisation of large-scale international competitions, and the opening of the 1930 World Cup. From that moment, football ceased to be merely a form of sports competition and became a vehicle for prestige, national identity and propaganda.

The 1934 World Cup in Italy is considered as one of the earliest examples of deliberate use of football for political purposes. The regime of Benito Mussolini used it to legitimise fascist rule and build the country's international image.<sup>5</sup> What is more, the establishment of the UEFA in 1954 and the development of European games strengthened the political dimension of football, making international sports federations independent actors in international relations.

With time, football organisations, especially international and continental ones – the FIFA and the UEFA, were becoming more and more important players on political stage. They choose the organiser of the World Cup and the European Cup – which is already a great source of prestige for a given country and helps to promote it – and they decide on the sale of broadcasting rights, the distribution of cash prizes for championship participants, and even the selection of the event's anthem and mascot.<sup>6</sup> A given country also receives from the FIFA and

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<sup>5</sup> 1934: *faszizm, sędziowie i włoski marsz*, "TVP Sport", 16.01.2014, <https://sport.tvp.pl/13668299/1934-faszizm-sedziowie-i-wloski-marsz> [access on 19.01.2026].

<sup>6</sup> A. Miazek, *MKOL i FIFA jako aktorzy stosunków międzynarodowych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2019, p. 27.

the UEFA detailed guidelines concerning the organisation of the event, stadium construction and related infrastructure such as parking places and access to public transport.

The role of a host country is limited and, as Renata Włoch rightly noticed, consists in being the franchisee of the event. It is the host that covers the costs of sports facilities and related infrastructure, organising and running the competition, and the federations decide on income distribution. The host country sets a scene while international federations make profit.<sup>7</sup>

The FIFA member nations have ceded some of their competencies to the judicial power. State football federations cannot make any appeals to state courts and all the disputes shall be settled only by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne.<sup>8</sup> It derives from the fact that the judiciary system should be neutral and any forms of political pressure should be avoided. For this reason, the FIFA created the Players' Status Committee and the Dispute Resolution Chamber. For undermining judicial independence, the FIFA and the UEFA can impose sanctions on states and state federations,<sup>9</sup> for example, for violating human rights. The exclusion of Yugoslav national team from the 1992 European Championship due to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an example of that case.<sup>10</sup>

Neither is football free from the phenomena that distort the essence of sports competition. The professional literature and law enforcement reports present many instances that undermine the integrity of the competition and negatively impact the fans' perception of football.

In Polish reality, the corruption scandal came to light in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its scale was enormous. It concerned referees, officials of the Polish Football Association, coaches and clubs' representatives.<sup>11</sup> Match results were bought by football officials who also had their say on the selection of referees and thereby contributed to the distortion of fair competition. The scale of corruption was so big that it covered not only top division but also lower league

<sup>7</sup> R. Włoch, *Międzynarodowe federacje piłkarskie jako nowi aktorzy ładu globalnego*, "Stosunki Międzynarodowe", 2012, vol. 46, no 2, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), *FIFA Statutes. September 2020 edition*, <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/4b2bac74655c7c13/original/viz2gmyb5x0pd24qrhrx-pdf.pdf> [access on 8.11.2023].

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>10</sup> *Rosja jak Jugosławia? Już kiedyś UEFA wykluczyła z turnieju reprezentację kraju-agresora*, "Sportowy24", 24.02.2022, <https://sportowy24.pl/rosja-jak-jugoslawia-juz-kiedys-uefa-wykluczyla-z-turnieju-reprezentacje-krajuagresora/ar/c2-16065527> [access on 8.11.2023].

<sup>11</sup> S. Jadcza, *Po dobroci, szantażem, na pewno nie na trzeźwo. Jak handlowano meczami polskiej ligi*, "Magazyn TVN24", 9.08.2023, <https://archiwum.tvn24.pl/magazyn-tvn24/254/tvn24.pl/magazyn-tvn24/po-dobroci-szantażem-na-pewno-nie-na-trzezwo-jak-handlowano-meczami-polskiej-ligi%2C254%2C4423.html> [access on 19.01.2026].

matches.<sup>12</sup> It resulted in hundreds of criminal proceedings, relegations of football clubs and financial penalties.<sup>13</sup> The scandal revealed the weakness of control mechanisms not only in football structures, but also at the highest government level as well as the authorities' long-standing tolerance of irregularities.

However, the phenomena observed in Poland are part of a broader, international context of corruption in football. Europol investigation called "Operation VETO" identified hundreds of people in Europe suspected of match-fixing, who were linked to international criminal groups.<sup>14</sup> A crucial element of these corruptive practices – which was also mentioned by the Polish Ministry of Sports and Tourism in its report on corruption in the sports world, also referring to operation VETO – is the role of the betting market, which has become an attractive tool for organised crime.<sup>15</sup>

The professional literature on the subject matter of sports management emphasises that it is precisely the passivity or selective response of public and sports authorities that contributes to the perpetuation of corruption and match-fixing.<sup>16</sup> Researchers point to the fact that weak mechanisms of state supervision over sports organisations, lack of transparency and insufficient cooperation between federations and law enforcement bodies create conditions that allow these problems to persist for a long period of time.<sup>17</sup> Thus, corruption in sport is treated not as a collection of individual instances of misconduct but as a structural issue deriving from institutional and regulatory deficits, which public authorities tolerating irregularities or reacting only in crisis situations are partially responsible for.<sup>18</sup>

Political pressure is also imposed by football fans. Yet, it should be emphasised that their political engagement is not uniform in nature. The literature differentiates among at least three dimensions:<sup>19</sup> symbolic-commemorative, pro-

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<sup>12</sup> A. Świderska, "Wszystkie mecze nasze są", czyli jak wygląda korupcja w niższych ligach, "Głos Wielkopolski", 8.11.2014, <https://gloswielkopolski.pl/wszystkie-mecze-nasze-sa-czyli-jak-wyglada-korupcja-w-nizszych-ligach/ar/3638222> [access on 19.01.2026].

<sup>13</sup> S. Jadcak, *Po dobroci, szantażem...*, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> *Raport Europolu: 380 ustawionych meczów!*, "TVP Sport", 4.02.2013, <https://sport.tvp.pl/9980720/raport-europolu-380-ustawionych-meczow> [access on 19.01.2026].

<sup>15</sup> R. Włoch, *Korupcja w środowisku sportowym. Przegląd literatury przedmiotu, badań empirycznych oraz dokumentów*, The Ministry of Sports and Tourism, 2014. <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/9de2d6e9-dfb7-435f-86da-fc90410ff39d> [access on 19.01.2026].

<sup>16</sup> W. Maennig, *Corruption in International Sports and Sport Management: Forms, Tendencies, Extent and Countermeasures*, European Sport Management Quarterly, 2005, vol. 5, no 2, pp. 198-200, 203-206.

<sup>17</sup> S. Gorse, S. Chadwick, *The prevalence of corruption in international sport*, Birkbeck Sport Business Centre, University of London, 2010, pp. 14–16, <https://www.jogoremoto.pt/docs/extra/G3jsJk.pdf> [access on 19.01.2026].

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> R. Kossakowski, *Kibice piłkarscy. Studium socjologiczne*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 2022, pp. 75–94.

test and instrumental. The first one pertains to maintaining historic narratives and the ones linked with national identity. It is manifested in match banners celebrating moments important for the whole nation. A good example is the annual commemoration of Warsaw Uprising prepared by Legia Warszawa football supporters, or Lechia Gdańsk staunch supporters' commemoration of martial law times in Poland. For example, in 2011 the inhabitants of Gdańsk commemorated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of introducing martial law with the help of the banner reading, "Instead of cartoons on TV, there were beatings and a roundup in the street" and "Being portrayed as heroes today – they brutally made so many pass away."<sup>20</sup> Thus, a stadium becomes a space for the politics of memory.<sup>21</sup>

The second dimension is the protest one. It refers to the reaction of football fan environments to the decisions of public authorities. For instance, football fan groups took part in social protests following the Constitutional Tribunal's ruling on abortion in 2021. The CT stated that the provision allowing abortion in cases where there is a high probability of severe and irreversible foetal impairment, an incurable disease threatening its life is unconstitutional.<sup>22</sup> In Łódź, a group consisting of 50 football fans was carrying a huge banner with an inscription, "Let women decide for themselves what to do with their bodies, and you brainless idiots don't go spraying all over the church." In this way, the fans tried to alleviate the situation, and to some extent show solidarity with those disagreeing with the ruling, as well as to show that, among other things, vandalising places of religious cult is wrong."<sup>23</sup>

The dimension of an instrumental nature concerns situation in which patriotic or national values are explored to legitimise the activities of groups operating on the fringes of the law.<sup>24</sup>

It is crucial in that case to differentiate between situations from the communist era and reality after 1989. At the times of socialism, a stadium constituted one of very few spaces of relatively free expression of dissent, which explains the presence of underground activists in football fan circles. It is worth recalling a situation that took place during the World Cup in Spain in 1982, when

<sup>20</sup> K. Gac, *Polityka stadionowa*, "Do Rzeczy", 3.08.2017, <https://dorzeczy.pl/kraj/37570/politykastadionowa.html> [access on 8.11.2023].

<sup>21</sup> R. Kossakowski, *Kibice piłkarscy*, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> TK: *aborcja m.in. w przypadku nieodwracalnego upośledzenia płodu – niezgodna z konstytucją*, "Polskie Radio Koszalin", 22.10.2020, <https://prk24.pl/50450441/tk-aborcja-min-w-przypadku-nieodwracalnego-uposledzenia-plodu-niezgodna-z-konstytucja> [access on 8.11.2023].

<sup>23</sup> Post on Facebook ŁKS FANS.pl, 28 November 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/lksfanspl/photos/3653234364716356> [access on 8.11.2023].

<sup>24</sup> J. Dudała, *Fani-chuligani. Rzecz o polskich kibolach. Studium socjologiczne*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie "Żak", Warszawa 2004, pp. 201-225.

the Polish team took third place and won the silver medal. There was martial law in our country at that time, and in Barcelona at Camp Nou during the third-place match of our team led by the coach Antoni Piechniczek against France, there were "Solidarity" flags among the spectators. It was Polish football fans who displayed them. Fearing a negative public reaction, the Polish camera operator tried not to show this display, but to no avail.

Similar occurrences were also noted in the 80s, in the environment of Lech Gdańsk supporters, who, due to the specificity of the region and a strong presence of opposition groups, constituted one of the most politically active football fan groups in Poland. The stadium in Gdańsk served as the space for manifesting dissent towards the authorities, and the presence of underground activists derived both from the local political context and a massive nature of the sports event.<sup>25</sup>

After the political transformation, the politicization of certain fan groups does not derive any more from the systemic limitations of citizens rights but is motivated by the desire to occupy a prominent space in the public sphere and compete for symbolic group capital. Above all, the fan movement has already taken on a protest-oriented character.<sup>26</sup> The modern fan movement in Poland is characterised by diversity of its activity forms and a clear difference in the motivation of individual groups. Apart from football fan groups focusing on match banners, developing club identity and charity activity, there are groups more confrontative in nature, for whom competing against other football fan groups is a crucial element of their activity.<sup>27</sup> In recent years, there has been a rise in the importance of social media that give football fans their own voice, promoting their own narrative, mobilising supporters and shaping the group's image off the field.

This phenomenon is also noticeable in other countries (or quazi-states) that are fighting for sovereignty. A good example can be an Israeli club, Beitar, whose most staunch supporters became infamous for their banners displaying threats, anti-Arab and racist slogans such as, for example, "Forever pure". One of the club owners tried to resist these practices by signing two football players, Chechen Muslims. However, this decision sparked outrage among the club's most loyal fans, who set fire to the club's headquarters. Finally, Beitar's owners backed down and the abovementioned players left the club.<sup>28</sup> In October 2023,

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<sup>25</sup> R. Kossakowski, *From Communist Fan Clubs to Professional Hooligans: A History of Polish Fandom as a Social Process*, "Sociology of Sport Journal" 2017, vol. 34, pp. 281-292.

<sup>26</sup> R. Kossakowski, T. Szlendak, D. Antonowicz, *Polish ultras in the post-socialist transformation*, "Sport in Society", 2018, vol. 21, no 6, pp. 854-869.

<sup>27</sup> T. Sahaj, *Kibicowanie, religia i sport. Między sacrum i profanum, wiarą i rozumem*, "Ethos. Kwartalnik Instytutu Jana Pawła II KUL", 2024, vol. 37, no 4, pp. 179-207.

<sup>28</sup> F. Zieliński, *Koszulka Roberta Mazurka wywołała burzę w sieci. Wyjaśniamy dlaczego*, "Przegląd Sportowy", 15.11.2023, <https://przegladsportowy.onet.pl/ofsajd/koszulka-roberta-mazurka-wywolala-burze-w-sieci-wyjasniamy-dlaczego/0jsvv73> [access on 27.11.2023].

when the conflict between Israel and Palestine escalated, many cities were bombed and hospitals attacked, in social media the club kept publishing more posts on the military conflict than on football. There were entries commemorating the football fans who died in the war. They were accompanied with their photos.<sup>29</sup>

Footballers also get politically engaged. They are not only celebrities and opinion leaders, but often role models for young people searching for figures to look up to. They also cause controversies. One of such examples is the behaviour of Ilkay Gündogan and Mesut Özil, multiple German national team players of Turkish origin. In 2016, in Germany, a heated debate erupted after they posted on social media a photo with the president of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The photo showed Özil presenting a T-shirt to the president, and a dedication in the post's description read, "For my president."<sup>30</sup> Many fans interpreted this gesture as open support for a politician who rejects the principles of democratic governance and fails to respect human rights. The national team coach at that time tried to make excuses for them, explaining that some footballers "have two hearts beating in their chests". He did not hesitate either to select them for the 2018 World Cup in Russia.<sup>31</sup> The footballers were also defended by then-Chancellor Angela Merkel, who appealed to fans to keep their emotions on check. In one of radio programmes she said she believed that posting the photograph was not a well thought-over decision and the players did not want to disappoint their fans. She also added that she is pleased to see them play regularly for the national team.<sup>32</sup>

### Football as soft power

Due to its popularity, football is regarded as a national treasure in many countries. If we add to this international success, then the government of a given country might use it as a tool for propaganda, a show of strength, or a way to cover up the country's problems: from economic to diplomatic ones.

The Brazilians performed in all world cups taking place till 2022. They triumphed five times – in 1958, 1962, 1970, 1990 and 2002, and in the meantime

<sup>29</sup> Posts on the official fanpage of Beitar Jerusalem, *ירושלים בית"ר הכדורגל* – F.C. Beitar Jerusalem, 1.10-27.11.2023, <https://www.facebook.com/BeitarFcJerusalem> [access on 27.11.2023].

<sup>30</sup> M. Szumański, *Ozil i Gundogan krytykowani po publikacji zdjęcia z Erdoganem*, "Sport.pl", 15.05.2018, <https://www.sport.pl/pilka/7,65080,23400058,ozil-i-gundogan-krytykowani-po-publikacji-zdjecia-z-erdoganem.html> [access on 10.11.2023].

<sup>31</sup> J. Kucharsky, *Koniec Özila, albo "spadaj do Anatolii, turecka świnió!"*, "Krytyka Polityczna", 2.08.2018, <https://krytykapolityczna.pl/swiat/ozil-erdogan-niemcy-futbolreprezentacja> [access on 10.11.2023].

<sup>32</sup> *Reprezentanci Niemiec Gundogan i Ozil poparli Erdogana. Dali mu koszulkę "dla mojego prezydenta" i wybuchł skandal*, "Dziennik.pl", 15.05.2018, <https://sport.dziennik.pl/pilka-nozna/artykuly/574407,erdogan-prezydent-turcja-niemcy-ozil-gundogan-reprezentacja-niemiec-mundial-mistrzostwa-swiata-w-pilce-noznej-loew.html> [access on 10.11.2023].

they kept winning other medals, though it was not considered a success. Almost throughout the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century, football was regarded in the “Country of Coffee” as an element integrating its citizens, as year after year it became increasingly popular among people living in poor neighbourhoods as well as among wealthy citizens.<sup>33</sup> It is worth noting that the best players such as Pele, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho or Rivaldo came from poor families. The “Canarinhos” successes at the world cups also helped to ease public discontent. Football became Brazil’s bridge to a better world.<sup>34</sup> That is why there were many investments in this sport, huge stadiums holding even a hundred thousand spectators, and visited by twice as many, such as Maracana in Rio de Janeiro were built.<sup>35</sup> Due to a great number of people playing football, more and more professional players, numerous successes of the national team and high attendance at stadiums, Brazil’s internal, economic and political problems took a back seat.<sup>36</sup>

It was different in China where football is not played at such a high level. For years, that league failed to produce any exceptional players and few outstanding coaches worked there. It changed in 2013, when Xi Jinping became the leader of the People’s Republic of China. The politician, who is a football fan,<sup>37</sup> noticed that this one of the most popular sports disciplines could help promote China and serve as an important factor in building its strength. Xi Jinping decided on introducing many reforms so that till 2050 Chinese football could become a global power. According to the plan, the signing of high-profile players for large sums of money and the offering of lucrative contracts were expected to result in a significant leap in both on-field performance and marketing appeal. For example, a Brazilian player, Hulk, was bought from London’s Chelsea for 55 million euro. Another team, Guangzhou Evergrande, signed his compatriot Paulinho from London’s Tottenham for a similar sum of money.<sup>38</sup> What is more, outstanding coaches went to China. Among others, these were an Italian, Marcello Lippi, who led the Italian national team to the World Cup title in Germany in 2006, and Luiz Felipe Scolari, a Brazilian who lead Brazil to the World Cup title in 2002 in Korea and Japan.

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<sup>33</sup> Z. Melosik, *Piłka nożna, mulatyzm i tożsamość narodowa w Brazylii*, “Studia Edukacyjne”, 2016, no 38, pp. 253–263.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>35</sup> M. Bobakowski, *200 tys. kibiców na meczu piłkarskim. Oto spotkania z największą liczbą widzów*, “WP Sportowe Fakty”, 7.11.2015, <https://sportowefakty.wp.pl/pilkanozna/558431/200-tys-kibicow-na-meczu-pilkarskim-oto-spotkania-z-najwieksza-liczbawidzow/8> [access on 10.11.2023].

<sup>36</sup> Z. Melosik, *Piłka nożna, mulatyzm*, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> *Piłka nożna i chiński duch patriotyzmu*, “Rzeczpospolita”, 18.05.2018, <https://www.rp.pl/plus-minus/art1950071-pilka-nozna-i-chinski-duch-patriotyzmu> [access on 10.11.2023].

<sup>38</sup> *Chinese Super League transferrekorde*, “Transfermarkt”, <https://www.transfermarkt.de/chinese-super-league/transferrekorde/wettbewerb/CSL> [access on 10.11.2023].

Such spectacular transfers also led to the purchase of broadcasting rights by the biggest world TV channels – in Poland it was “Polsat”, and meanwhile Chinese entrepreneurs were interested in purchasing European clubs. This would allow them to establish the so-called affiliate clubs in their home country, draft contracts in such a way as to transfer a well-known player from his home club, for example, in England – to a club in China on loan. Entrepreneurs allocated approximately \$ 2.5 billion solely to the purchase of shares in European clubs, with the aim of promoting Xi Jinping’s vision of establishing China as a football powerhouse.<sup>39</sup> The leader of the People’s Republic of China also decided on spending large sums on building modern sports infrastructure, not only stadiums, but also football academies, of which nearly 50 000 were established in China.<sup>40</sup>

However, Xi Jinping’s plan failed to produce results, and the quality of the domestic league did not improve. That is why the leader decided to change the football policy in China. To promote local players, improve the quality of training and prevent spending huge sums of money on foreign players’ salaries, a salary cap was introduced. A Chinese player could earn \$ 1.5 million annually, and a foreign one \$ 3.35 million a year.<sup>41</sup> The chairman of the Chinese Football Association, Xu Yuana Chena, justified this decision by arguing that “too much money had been squandered by the clubs” and “football was not run in a sustainable manner” and would collapse unless “appropriate measures were taken in timely manner.”<sup>42</sup> In China, the influence of billionaires in club management was also curtailed. A company’s name could not figure in a club’s name. For instance, Guangzhou Evergrande became Guangzhou FC. However, this policy had an even worse effect. The league’s standing and level have plummeted, making it seem unlikely that Chinese football will join the world’s elite anytime soon. It results mainly from all these big and fast changes. Instead of being Chinese soft power, football has become its weakness.

On the other hand, when Poland and Ukraine were chosen in 2007 to organise the European World Cup, it was the driving force behind the national sport which was dealing at that time with legal changes, lack of funds and deteriorating infrastructure. The Polish government regarded the EURO 2012 as a strategic project, and already the same year a task force was established to monitor the construction of infrastructure necessary for hosting the championships. Politicians from across the political spectrum supported the project, seeing it as an

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<sup>39</sup> M. Szatkowski, *Rynek transferowy w Chinach – ujęcie prawne i polityczno-społeczne*, “Gdańskie Studia Azji Wschodniej”, 2018, no 14, pp. 87–95.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>41</sup> *Nowe przepisy w Chinach. Koniec wielkich transferów?*, “Przegląd Sportowy”, 27.12.2019, <https://przegladsportowy.onet.pl/pilka-nozna/pilka-nozna-koniec-z-wielkimi-transferami-dochin/9b7r45s> [access on 12.11.2023].

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem.

opportunity for the country's development.<sup>43</sup> The EURO 2012 was the biggest sports event in the former Eastern Block countries since the time of the 1980 Summer Olympic Games in Moscow and the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo four years later.<sup>44</sup> Co-hosting the championships was viewed by politicians as a success and confirming Poland's status on the international stage as a mature and trustworthy nation capable of rising to the challenge, as well as the correctness of the chosen path of systemic transformation. The EURO was also regarded as the next goal, following its joining the NATO and the EU, requiring consensus across party lines.<sup>45</sup> For this reason, the "Act of September 7, 2007, on the Preparation of the Final Tournament of the UEFA EURO 2012 European Football Championship" was enacted.

During the preparations for the European football championships, sports infrastructure was developed. Not only was the National Stadium in Warsaw built, but also similar objects were erected in Gdańsk, Wrocław, and the one in Poznań was thoroughly modernised (four Polish arenas for the EURO 2012). What is more, there were renovation plans for the Silesian Stadium in Chorzów, and some objects like e.g. the ones in Cracow were expanded. Each of the four stadiums complied with the highest European norms, but above all, they became a symbol of modernity in Polish sport.<sup>46</sup>

The organisation of the European football championships also sped up many investments such as, among others, the renovation of airports in Warsaw, Gdańsk, Wrocław and Poznań, or the construction of new highways and express roads. The railway was also expanding. Central Warsaw and Central Gdańsk railway stations were renovated.<sup>47</sup> Infrastructure projects were accelerated by three to five years, and sports ones by as much as five to ten years.<sup>48</sup> The Department of Sports prepared also a report showing that hosting the championships will have not only economic but also social benefits. It was estimated that from 2008 to 2020, Gross Domestic Product (GDP—one of the most important indicators used to measure the size of the economy) will increase by 21.3 billion zlotys. What is more, the number of tourists would annually increase by 766 thousand of people. Poland's image on the international stage has also im-

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<sup>43</sup> W. Woźniak, *Euro 2012 i Kraków 2022. Polskie elity polityczne wobec wielkich imprez sportowych*, "Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej", 2015, vol. 11, no 2, pp. 60–83.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>46</sup> *Efekt Polski – Sukces Euro 2012 powyżej oczekiwań*, The Ministry of Sports and Tourism, 20.11.2012, <https://www.msit.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/5622,Efekt-Polski-Sukces-Euro-2012-powyzej-oczekiwan.html> [access on 15.08.2025].

<sup>47</sup> Ł. Malinowski, M. Tomanek, G. Pawlak, *Wpływ organizacji Mistrzostw Europy w Piłce Nożnej UEFA EURO 2012 na rozwój infrastruktury drogowej w Polsce*, "Journal of Health Sciences", 2014, vol. 4, no 10, pp. 46–56.

<sup>48</sup> *Efekt Polski – Sukces Euro 2012*, op. cit.

proved. As for social benefits, society united around the event, and thousands of volunteers were engaged in its organisation. What is more, it boosted national pride and improved trust in public institutions.<sup>49</sup> It is estimated that Poland spent as much as 84 billion zlotys on organising this event alone.<sup>50</sup>

The organisation of the European Football Championships also led to the creation of the programme “My pitch – Orlik 2012”. The programme was initiated in 2008 on the initiative of the government and local authorities. Till 2012, more than 2600 sports fields with changing rooms and lighting had been built. The aim of the project was to ensure access to sports infrastructure for children and teenagers, and first and foremost, to promote an active and healthy lifestyle. Although the programme officially ended in 2012, these sports fields still operate, especially in small places, as centres of physical activity.<sup>51</sup> In the following years the need for renovations arose as many of these facilities began to show signs of wear and tear. In 2022, the programme was re-activated. 181 investments were financed, and in 2025, the next edition was announced, which allowed not only for changing the playing area and lighting, renovating the changing rooms, but also building new facilities such as skateparks, running tracks, playgrounds and tennis courts.<sup>52</sup> Once the EURO 2012 was over, no strategy for the development of sports infrastructure was developed. There was no special policy for the use of the new sports infrastructure, but priorities changed. Instead of big events, the emphasis was put on recreational sports, education in schools and local initiatives. The importance of programmes promoting physical activity increased. Many stadiums and sports facilities are owned by local authorities that often struggle to maintain them.

Another example of using football as soft power is the case of Qatar. This state organised the 2022 championships that the Polish national team also took part in. It is in Qatar that some of the most expensive stadiums in history were erected,<sup>53</sup> and “Stadium 974”, where the Polish team played, was built with the use of recyclable materials. The number “974” refers to the number of transport containers used to construct the facility. That is also the area code for Qatar.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>50</sup> A. Kamińska, *Ile zyskamy na Euro*, “Rzeczpospolita”, 14.06.2012, <https://www.rp.pl/finanse/art6109741-ile-zyskamy-na-euro> [access on 15.08.2025].

<sup>51</sup> *100 lat Polsko. Program Moje Boisko – Orlik 2012*, “Przegląd Sportowy”, 12.08.2018, <https://przegladsportowy.onet.pl/pilka-nozna/100-lat-polsko-program-moje-boisko-orlik-2012/6nm0xpg> [access on 15.08.2025].

<sup>52</sup> *Program modernizacji kompleksów sportowych Moje Boisko – Orlik 2012 – Edycja 2025*, The Ministry of Sports and Tourism, 15.08.2025, <https://www.gov.pl/web/sport/program-modernizacji-kompleksow-sportowych-moje-boisko--orlik-2012--edycja-2025> [access on 15.08.2025].

<sup>53</sup> *Stadiony Mistrzostw Świata 2022 (Katar)*, “Stadiony.net”, <http://stadiony.net/turnieje/mundial/2022> [access on 12.11.2023].

<sup>54</sup> T. Sobura, *Katar 2022: Kontenerowy stadion już gotowy*, “Stadiony.net”, 22.11.2021, [http://stadiony.net/aktualnosci/2021/11/katar\\_2022\\_kontenerowy\\_stadion\\_juz\\_gotowy](http://stadiony.net/aktualnosci/2021/11/katar_2022_kontenerowy_stadion_juz_gotowy) [access on 12.11.2023].

In its structure, the stadium resembled a building made of LEGO bricks.<sup>55</sup> Although it was dismantled after the World Cup, before the event the state government boasted about the project knowing that Qatar national team would not achieve much success.<sup>56</sup> The government believed there would be numerous publications on the subject, especially in the media, which actually happened.

Football also played a crucial role in Russia's politics. This country organised the 2018 world championship. The Polish team led by Stanisław Czerczesow advanced to the quarterfinals of the tournament, and the national media hailed it as a huge success. What is more, the very Vladimir Putin<sup>57</sup> kept track of the players' progress. The organisation of the championships was positively evaluated, during the event the country was visited by three million fans, and its stadiums were nearly 98% full for almost every match.<sup>58</sup> Cezary Korycki stated that Russia with Vladimir Putin was the biggest winner of these championships (the title was given to France, which beat Croatia 4:1). "Amid the football frenzy, news broke that the European Union had extended its sanctions against Russia for another six months due to Russia's instigation of the first war in Ukraine in 2014. The news was overshadowed in the media by photos of fans from all over the world having a great time in the streets of Russian cities and by the Sbornaya's outstanding performance," he wrote.<sup>59</sup> Korycki also drew our attention to the fact that the World Cup had diverted media attention away from issues that matter to citizens. The increase in the retirement age and the VAT rate were announced on the opening day of the World Cup, and the Russian pro-government media did not publish any reports on the subject.<sup>60</sup> It also overshadowed to some extent the ongoing war in Ukraine (Russia's first invasion of Ukraine).

After the World Cup, the importance of Russian football in the world became to diminish. Journalists began reporting on how hackers had posted documents online – such as those from the account of a former football official, Sergei Kapkov – which allegedly showed that Russia had "bought" the World Cup.<sup>61</sup> In

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<sup>55</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>56</sup> S. Czernek, *Jedyny taki stadion w historii MŚ. Tu Polska zagra z Meksykiem*, "Sport.pl", 18.11.2022, <https://www.sport.pl/mundial/7,154361,29155317,jedyny-taki-stadion-w-historii-ms-to-tu-polska-zagra-z-meksykiem.html> [access on 12.11.2023].

<sup>57</sup> C. Korycki, *Hat-trick Władimira Putina. Znamy najlepszego zawodnika mundialu*, "Tygodnik TVP", 13.07.2018, <https://tygodnik.tvp.pl/38050334/hattrick-wladimira-putina-znamynajlepszego-zawodnika-mundialu> [access on 13.11.2023].

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>61</sup> P. Wilkiewicz, *Rosja kupiła sobie mundial? Hakerzy ujawnili skalę korupcji działaczy FIFA! Najdroższy jest Beckenbauer*, "Sport.pl", 31.10.2019, <https://www.sport.pl/pilka/7,64946,25366558,rosja-kupila-sobie-mundial-hakerzy-ujawnilikorupcyjne-dossier.html> [access on 13.11.2023].

2022, after Russia's second invasion of Ukraine, the FIFA suspended Russia's membership in the organisation, but it gradually began to backtrack on that decision, "bringing the youth teams back into the fold" (the senior team remains suspended).

### Football and fighting for independence

Football is also becoming a vehicle of collective identity, a means of manifesting national distinctiveness and the form of a symbolic struggle for international recognition.

Although it was not a direct political tool, football played a crucial role at the time difficult for Poland such as the Partitions as it shaped national awareness, laying the groundwork for the restoration of independence in 1918. The development of football on the Polish land was uneven and to a large extent dependent on the specificity of particular partitions. In the Austrian partition, especially in Galicia, relative political autonomy let sports clubs such as Cracovia, Wisła Kraków or Pogoń Lwów operate legally.<sup>62</sup> They were not only the centres of sports competition, but also an area for cultivating the Polish language, national traditions and local community. In the Prussian and Russian partitions, Poles' sports activity was limited by the occupants and football matches often took on the character of symbolic national rivalries, serving as a form of passive resistance against Germanisation and Russification.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, it was a form of indirect struggle for social space for Polish citizens and developing the sense of national community, which can be interpreted as a kind of attempt to prepare society for the restoration of statehood. It is proven by the fact that Cracovia, Wisła and other clubs joined the Austrian Football Association, gaining the right to participate in international FIFA games.<sup>64</sup> It is also worth noting that during WWI, despite hard circumstances, efforts were made to preserve sports traditions. In 1915, Cracovia organised a "war football season" with the participation of four civil and military teams, and the proceeds from the matches were donated to charity, including the Red Cross, which served as an example of solidarity through sports.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> 105 lat temu rozpoczęto rozgrywki piłkarskich mistrzostw Polski, "Dzieje.pl", 18.04.2025, <https://dzieje.pl/wiadomosci/105-lat-temu-rozpoczeto-rozgrywki-pilkarskich-mistrzostw-polski> [access on 27.01.2026].

<sup>63</sup> *Rozgrywki piłkarskie w Galicji do roku 1914 (lata 1912–1914)*, "Rocznik Piłkarski", <https://rocznikpilkarski.pl/historia-sportu/rozgrywki-pilkarskie-w-galicji-do-roku-1914-lata-1912-1914> [access on 27.01.2026].

<sup>64</sup> *Historia Małopolskiego Związku Piłki Nożnej*, Małopolski Związek Piłki Nożnej, <https://malopolskizpn.pl/historia> [access on 27.01.2026].

<sup>65</sup> T. Sahaj, *Aktywność stadionowa kibicowskich grup "ultras" jako przejaw specyficznej komunikacji społecznej*, "Kultura i Społeczeństwo", 2012, no 3, pp. 27-49.

Examples of how football functions in the absence of a sovereign state can also be found in the modern era. Football can serve a purpose going far beyond the realm of sports. In particular historical and cultural contexts it becomes a vehicle of collective identity, a way of manifesting national distinctiveness and a form of symbolic struggle for international recognition. The same applies to the organisation of world championships for unrecognised countries, which are political entities that despite lack of recognition are de facto independent states, i.e. they have their governments, citizens, national symbols and, theoretically, borders.<sup>66</sup> These are, for example, the Basque Country, Abkhazia, and Transnistria. Some of them see football as an opportunity to gain recognition of their independence and are trying to break out of international isolation.

Abkhazia is a good example. In 2016, it organised the world cup for unrecognised countries. The event was frequented by the following quazi-states: Lapland, Northern Cyprus, the Székely Land, Raetia or Somaliland. Its course was identical to the FIFA world cup – the opening ceremony in a freshly-renovated stadium and stands packed to capacity. Nearly eight thousand people came to the stadium, even though it could only hold 4,500.<sup>67</sup>

Tomasz Grzywaczewski, who witnessed the world cup of quazi-states reported that “the welcome ceremony for participants and spectators was held with great fanfare: flags were raised, choirs sang, and there were fireworks displays, all culminating in a two-hour presentation of the history of Abkhazia and its mythology.”<sup>68</sup> The ceremony featured, among others, the speech of Raul Khadzhimba, President of Abkhazia, who referred to politics,<sup>69</sup> “We are the witnesses of a spectacular event – Abkhazia is hosting the 2016 World Cup as organised by ConIFA (an international organisation representing football teams from all over the world that are not affiliated with FIFA – ed.). We are very happy to welcome the World Cup participants representing 12 nations, united by common values and mutual sympathy. Our soul is our nation that has built the independent Abkhazian state. We are a vibrant and distinct part of the great family of nations. No one will succeed in cutting us off from international contacts.”<sup>70</sup>

As Beslat TV noticed, the world championships for unrecognised countries are “a taste of international football for those who, for many reasons, cannot

<sup>66</sup> M. Sobczyński, *Państwa i terytoria zależne. Ujęcie geograficzno-polityczne*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2006, p. 241.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>68</sup> The archives of Radosław Zmudziński (henceforth called ARZ) An interview with Tomasz Grzywaczewski on the 2016 Championships of Unrecognised States in Abkhazia, March 2021.

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>70</sup> *Separatyści strzelają celnie. Na własnych MŚ w piłce nożnej*, “Belsat TV”, 9.06.2016, <https://naviny.belsat.eu/pl/news/separatysci-strzelaja-celnie-na-wlasnych-ms-wpilce-noznej> [access on 17.11.2023].

count on participating in it,” and above all these are political reasons.<sup>71</sup> It is worth emphasising that at the very beginning, there was no euphoria in Abkhazia over the event. Although there were banners promoting the event, the residents tried to keep their spirits in check, as evidenced by an excerpt from one of Tomasz Grzywaczewski’s conversations with an Abkhazian woman.<sup>72</sup>

Tomasz Grzywaczewski, “You can be proud of organising such championships.”

The woman, “Is Poland taking part in them? No. As a real country, it competes in a real championship, and Abkhazia has to play with some Somaliland or West Armenia. It is humiliating.”

It changed when Abkhazia started to win matches, also the final one and as a result became the world champion of unrecognised states. Spectators marched through the capital of Abkhazia, Sukhumi, singing, with faces painted with national symbols. Grzywaczewski also pointed to the fact that the Abkhazians had not played football since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the locals had to learn all over again how to cheer. There were even cheers in Russian, because they faced a major crisis of national identity due to intense Russification.<sup>73</sup>

The 2016 World Cup of unrecognised countries was undoubtedly an attempt to restore national identity for the Abkhazians, which is illustrated by cheering for their team and the euphoria following its triumph at the World Cup of unrecognised states. It could also have been a flashpoint for a national uprising. It did not happen, yet the event was the proof that football, for a short time, can unite a nation and become a struggle for independence or an attempt to call for help.

Football is a form of showing national identity in the Basque Country located at the border of Spain and France, on the Bay of Biscay. The Basques are an ethnic group with very strong nationalist and liberationists aspirations, as evidenced by the appearance of the separatist group ETA at the Spanish-French border, whose actions and pressure at the end of the 1960s on General Franco ruling Spain at that time contributed to his initial approval of the display of national symbols, and by the late 1970s, the Basques were granted autonomy.

The Spanish club Athletic Bilbao is a phenomenon in the Basque Country and around the world. Its history dates back to the end of 1890s. It was established in 1898 and 14 years later, the “cantera” rule was introduced and it remains in effect to this day.<sup>74</sup> The rule assumes that only Basques or people of Basque origins can play in the club. For example, one parent of a given player has to be Basque. The rule in question drew considerable criticism. The club was accused

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<sup>71</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>72</sup> ARZ, *Rozmowa z Tomaszem Grzywaczewskim...*, op. cit.

<sup>73</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>74</sup> *Kraj Basków – gdzie futbol wygrał z terrorem*, “Polskie Radio”, 31.05.2011, <https://polskieradio24.pl/43/265/Artykul/378493,Kraj-Baskow-gdzie-futbol-wygral-z-terrorem> [access on 20.11.2023].

of xenophobia and nationalism, and for many years the officials answered that supporting local footballers has nothing to do with xenophobia.

The symbols of the Basque Country can be also spotted on Athletic Bilbao outfits. An everyday T-shirt features red and white horizontal stripes and the trim is black. For many years, the T-shirt front did not bear any sponsor's logo, yet due to financial reasons, it finally appeared. What is worth noting is the fact that these are sponsors from the Basque Country, e.g. since 2008, it has been a Basque company, Petronor, and since 2014 – Kutxabank.<sup>75</sup>

In 2023, when the conflict between Palestine and Israel escalated, following Hamas's attack on Israel, the importance of football for the Palestinians, as Dawid Szymczak wrote, "went far beyond sport and is proof of Palestine's existence."<sup>76</sup> The Palestinian national team is affiliated with the FIFA, in recent years it qualified for the Asian championships, and once the number of world cup participants grew from 32 to 48, the chances for "a ticket to the world cup" increased considerably (it has not qualified for the 2026 event).<sup>77</sup> Susan Shalabi, Vice President of the Palestinian Football Association, cited by Dawid Szymczak, emphasised that it is thanks to football that Palestinian children can take pride in their identity, and the rest of the world can recall that there is a state like Palestine, which, incidentally, enjoys a status in the world of soccer that it has failed to achieve in the political sphere for decades.<sup>78</sup>

## Recapitulation

Football serves as an important political tool both in the local and international dimension. Football organisations such as the FIFA or UEFA have an impact on how various states operate, taking over some of their competencies, e. g. in the area of sports jurisdiction, and deciding whether to grant or revoke the right to organise tournaments. As a result, countries are often reduced to the role of implementing these organisations' decisions, while most financial proceeds, e.g. coming from the sale of media rights and tickets benefit supranational bodies.

For governments football constitutes a form of soft power, facilitating the promotion of the country's image on the international stage and stimulating its economic growth via investments into sports and related infrastructure. It can

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<sup>75</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>76</sup> D. Szymczak, *Pojechał grać dla Palestyny. Skończył w izraelskiej katowni. "Stracił wzrok, słuch, pamięć"*, "Sport.pl", 22.11.2023, <https://www.sport.pl/pilka/7,64946,30425430,przyjechala-obejrzec-zmasakrowane-cialo-syna-po-ataku-izraela.html> [access on 27.11.2023].

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>78</sup> Ibidem.

be used instrumentally as a tool for diverting public attention from domestic problems and political tensions. In case of Russia, the organisation of the 2018 World Cup helped legitimise the government and introduce additional taxes, and in Brazil football was a bridge to a better world, improving the country's image as a football powerhouse.

Football fans also become the actors of political life as they are used for achieving image-related goals. Their activity might favour polarisation like in case of Poland following the Constitutional Tribunal's ruling on abortion. For unrecognised states and those struggling for their sovereignty, football is a space for building community, and in some cases it could be a catalyst for national liberation movements.

In conclusion, football should be perceived not only as a sports discipline, but also as an instrument of political, social and cultural influence, reflecting power relations and the processes of identity formation on a global scale.

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## **CZĘŚĆ II**

# **TEORIA I METODYKA WYCHOWANIA FIZYCZNEGO I SPORTU**





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## THE EFFECT OF CROSSFIT TRAINING ON THE CENTRAL HEMODYNAMIC PROFILE IN YOUTH WRESTLERS

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### Wpływ treningu Crossfit na centralny profil hemodynamiczny u młodych zapaśników

#### Streszczenie

W celu określenia skuteczności opracowanego programu treningu Crossfit na centralny profil hemodynamiczny u młodych zapaśników, w eksperymencie pedagogicznym uczestniczyło 48 zapaśników w trakcie etapu specjalistycznego treningu podstawowego. Średni wiek badanych zapaśników wynosił  $14,5 \pm 0,3$  roku. Grupa Crossfit składała się z 24 zapaśników uczestniczących w treningu Crossfit, którego celem było poprawienie funkcjonalnego stanu układu sercowo-naczyniowego. Natomiast grupa kontrolna składała się z 24 zapaśników, którzy realizowali standardowy program. Zapaśnicy uczestniczyli w treningach Crossfit trzy razy w tygodniu przez godzinę przez sześć miesięcy, w ramach przygotowania fizycznego. Po interwencji Crossfit zaobserwowano znaczący wzrost w grupie głównej: objętości wyrzutowej serca o  $12,98 \text{ ml/uderzenie}$  ( $p < 0,001$ ); pojemności minutowej serca o  $0,92 \text{ l/min}$ ; wskaźnika wyrzutowego o  $0,43 \text{ ml/uderzenie/m}^2$  ( $p < 0,001$ ); mocy lewej komory serca o  $1,05 \text{ W}$  ( $p < 0,01$ ). Porównanie wskaźników hemodynamiki układu sercowo-naczyniowego po treningu wykazało obecność istotnych różnic między badanymi

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grupami ( $p < 0,05-0,001$ ). Przewaga była widoczna u zapaśników z grupy głównej we wszystkich wskaźnikach w porównaniu z zapaśnikami z grupy porównawczej. Wartość objętości wyrzutowej była lepsza u zapaśników z grupy głównej w porównaniu z grupą kontrolną o 10,26 ml ( $p < 0,01$ ), pojemność minutowa serca – o 0,62 l/min ( $p < 0,05$ ). Wyniki wskazują, że włączenie wielofunkcyjnych metod Crossfit o wysokiej intensywności podczas eksperymentu pedagogicznego skutkowało pozytywną dynamiką poziomu przygotowania zapaśników podczas etapu specjalistycznego treningu podstawowego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** funkcja sercowo-naczyniowa, przygotowanie, ćwiczenia Crossfit, sportowcy, hemodynamika centralna.

## Abstract

To determine the effectiveness of CrossFit training on the central hemodynamic profile in youth wrestlers, intervention study was attended by 48 wrestlers during the specialized foundational training stage. The average age of the studied wrestlers was  $14.5 \pm 0.3$  years. The CrossFit group comprised 24 wrestlers participating in the CrossFit training aimed at enhancing functional state of the cardiovascular system. Meanwhile, the control group comprised 24 wrestlers following the standard program. Wrestlers engaged in CrossFit workouts three times a week for one hour over a six-month period as part of their physical conditioning. After CrossFit intervention the significant increase was observed in the CrossFit group by actual stroke volume by 12.98 ml/beat ( $p < 0.001$ ); cardiac output by 0.92 l/min; stroke index by 0.43 ml/beat/m<sup>2</sup> ( $p < 0.001$ ); left ventricular power by 1.05 W ( $p < 0.01$ ). Comparison of the post-training indicators of the rheography cardiovascular system showed the presence of probable differences between the studied groups ( $p < 0.05-0.001$ ). Advantages were observed in the wrestlers of the CrossFit group by all indicators compared to the wrestlers of the comparison group. The stroke volume value was higher in the wrestlers from the main group compared to the control group by 10.26 ml ( $p < 0.01$ ), while cardiac output was higher by 0.62 l/min ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results have indicated that the incorporation of high-intensity multifunctional CrossFit methods during the study resulted in positive dynamics in the preparedness level of wrestlers during the specialized foundational training stage.

**Keywords:** cardiovascular function, preparedness, CrossFit regimen, athletes, central hemodynamics.

## Introduction

Contemporary wrestling imposes rigorous requirements on multiple facets of an athlete's training, encompassing functional conditioning and the enhancement of specific physical skills. These factors significantly impact subsequent success in technical and tactical training for athletes (Sazonov, 2017). While existing research primarily delves into the technical and tactical actions of wrestlers (Cieśliński et al., 2021; Demirkan et al., 2014), the ongoing challenge of improving the cardiovascular functional state during the initial basic training stage for youth wrestlers remains crucial and requires attention.

Modern pedagogical monitoring of athletes' readiness allows for timely implementation of necessary corrective interventions aimed at ensuring maximum

compliance of monitored indicators with their model values. However, pedagogical control should be carried out during training sessions at various stages of preparation (Chaabene et al., 2017; Cieśliński et al., 2021).

Cardiovascular health can be a key factor in achieving higher performance levels in wrestlers. Wrestling requires a combination of aerobic and anaerobic endurance. The cardiovascular system of wrestlers adapts to sustain prolonged periods of moderate activity during training sessions and sudden bursts of high-intensity effort during matches (Voronyi et al., 2020).

Theoretical analysis of contemporary publications (Zadorozhna, 2015; Monks, 2017) has indicated that the cardiovascular functional state has a significant impact on the performance of competitive activities for wrestlers. Additionally, it is a determining factor in ensuring physical performance and adaptive capabilities of athletes to physical loads (Voronyi et al., 2020).

During the specialized basic preparation stage, means are widely employed to significantly enhance the athlete's functional potential without the application of extensive loads and training work. These means closely resemble the nature of competitive activities (Voronyi et al., 2020).

In numerous works, e.g. by Pityn, 2015; Korobeynikov et al., 2020, it has been demonstrated that sports loads lead to the disturbance of homeostasis. The adaptation of the organism to muscular activity involves both immediate and prolonged adaptive processes, mobilization of energy resources, transportation of oxygen and oxidation substrates, energy metabolism reactions, and the creation of conditions for the plastic support of muscle work.

Simultaneously, Franchini et al. (2019) recommend integrating supplementary high-intensity interval training into the regular training regimen to improve wrestlers' anaerobic performance.

Experts emphasize the importance of individualizing and differentiating methods and approaches in sports training. Additionally, there is a focus on developing new strategies to enhance the effectiveness of training processes for qualified athletes during the specialized basic preparation stage. This stage is characterized by the orientation of the training process toward maximizing the realization of an athlete's potential in competitive activities.

In the context of wrestling, high-intensity functional training, such as CrossFit, has emerged as a potential method to enhance performance by improving the anaerobic energy supply system. It should be noted that many experts incorporate models of high-intensity interval training into their practice, performed over a short period, contributing to the enhancement of the anaerobic system (Gierczuk et al., 2018; Maia, 2019).

However, despite the documented benefits in terms of power and dynamic balance (Özbay et al., 2019; Voronyi et al., 2020), the impact of such training on the central hemodynamic profile of young wrestlers remains insufficiently ex-

explored. Central hemodynamics, which includes parameters such as cardiac output, stroke volume, and heart rate, plays a critical role in determining cardiovascular efficiency during both training and competitive performance.

Wrestling places significant cardiovascular demands on athletes due to its high-intensity and intermittent nature. This can result in elevated strain on the cardiovascular system, potentially affecting recovery and long-term health. While CrossFit training has been shown to improve functional preparedness and reduce recovery times (Caloglu & Yüksel, 2020), its specific effects on central hemodynamic parameters in young wrestlers are not well understood. Understanding these effects is crucial, as optimizing the central hemodynamic profile could lead to improved endurance, enhanced training efficiency, and better overall performance.

Wrestlers are encouraged to engage in individual CrossFit training to uphold their athletic performance and mitigate the decline in performance during the transitional phases of the annual training cycle. CrossFit workouts are considered a favorable alternative due to their practicality and the flexibility they offer in terms of time and space (Klimek, 2018; Maia, 2019).

There are also individual publications that emphasize the positive impact of individual CrossFit workouts among wrestlers during the transitional period of the training cycle and the rest period between competitions to maintain productivity and sports form (Caloglu & Yüksel, 2020).

The current gap in research highlights the need to investigate how CrossFit training influences the central hemodynamic profile of young wrestlers. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the effects of CrossFit on central hemodynamic parameters, providing a foundation for more targeted and effective training interventions for young wrestlers.

So, the aim of the study is to determine the effectiveness of CrossFit training on the central hemodynamic profile in youth wrestlers.

## **Material and Methods**

### **Participants**

This study was approved by the Bioethics Committee for Clinical Research and conducted according to the Declaration of Helsinki. All participants gave their written consent to research and were informed about the purpose and test procedures and about the possibility of withdrawal of consent at any time for any reason.

The intervention study was attended by 48 wrestlers during the specialized foundational training stage. The average age of the studied wrestlers was 14.5

$\pm 0.3$  years. The CrossFit group comprised 24 wrestlers participating in the CrossFit program aimed at enhancing functional state of the cardiovascular system. Meanwhile, the control group comprised 24 wrestlers following the standard program at Children's and Youth School No. 16 (Zaporizhzhia).

### **Measurement Methods**

Using impedance cardiography, the following parameters were evaluated: stroke volume (ml/beat), cardiac output (l/min), stroke index (ml/beat/m<sup>2</sup>), systemic vascular resistance (dyn·s/cm<sup>5</sup>), left ventricular work (m/beat), left ventricular power (W). Impedance cardiography parameters were assessed with the electrocardiographic complex KARDIOLAB (Scientific and Technological Centre of Radio-Electronic Medical Equipment and Technologies XAI-Medica of the National Aerospace University, Kharkiv, Ukraine, registration certificate number 6037/2007, conformity certificate number UA-MI/2p-2765-2009). The bioimpedance operator was thoroughly trained and had extensive experience in performing such measurements. This ensured the reliability and accuracy of the data collected during the study.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The recorded data (mean and standard error of the mean) underwent analysis using Statistica for Windows (version 8.00). Prior to concluding the analysis, we assessed the data for normality, homogeneity, and the presence of extreme scores. The distribution of recorded data was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. This preliminary analysis was conducted before parametric calculations for the analysis of differences. A dependent t-test was employed to examine cardiovascular parameters within a group between baseline and post-training. Independent sample t-tests were utilized to compare post-training cardiovascular parameters between two groups of wrestlers. A  $p < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant.

### **Study Design**

When designing the program, we considered the initial functional capabilities of the CrossFit group's wrestlers, which formed the basis for determining the volume and intensity of physical activity. The program adhered to the principles of gradually increasing physical activity and maintaining the unity of general, special, and technical training while considering long-term biological adaptation of body systems to external training stimuli. The wrestlers engaged in CrossFit workouts three times a week for one hour over a six-month period as part of their physical conditioning.

The structure and content of CrossFit sessions for wrestlers with different levels of physical fitness is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Structure and content of CrossFit sessions for wrestlers with different levels of physical fitness*

| Levels of physical fitness | General preparatory stage |                                   |                  | Special preparatory stage |                                   |                  |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
|                            | training duration         | intensity                         | training mode    | training duration         | intensity                         | training mode    |
| low level                  | 50 min                    | 50-60 % of the reserve heart rate | AMRAP<br>CHIPPER | 60 min                    | 60-70 % of the reserve heart rate | AMRAP<br>CHIPPER |
| below average              | 55 min                    | 60-70 % of the reserve heart rate | AFAP<br>EMOM     | 60 min                    | 70-80 % of the reserve heart rate | AFAP<br>EMOM     |
| average                    | 60 min                    | 70-80 % of the reserve heart rate | TABATA           | 60 min                    | 80-85 % of the reserve heart rate | TABATA           |

For wrestlers exhibiting lower physical fitness, the general preparatory stage involved 50-minute CrossFit sessions. Those with below-average fitness levels had sessions lasting 55 minutes, while wrestlers with average fitness trained for 60 minutes. During the special preparatory stage, the duration for all groups was standardized to 60 minutes. The intensity of the training for wrestlers with low fitness during the general preparatory stage was set at 50-60% of the heart rate reserve (determined by the Karvonen formula). For wrestlers with below-average fitness, the intensity was 60-70%, and for those with average fitness, it was 70-80%. In the special preparatory stage, the intensity levels were adjusted to 60-70% for low fitness, 70-80% for below-average fitness, and 80-85% for average fitness.

The proportion of CrossFit exercises varied according to the wrestlers' physical fitness levels and stages of preparation. During the general preparatory stage, wrestlers with a low fitness level performed 50% monostructural exercises, 30% gymnastics, 10% weightlifting, and 10% stretching. For those with below-average fitness, the distribution was 40% monostructural, 40% gymnastics, 10% weightlifting, and 10% stretching. Wrestlers with an average fitness level had a regimen of 30% monostructural, 40% gymnastics, 20% weightlifting, and 10% stretching. In the special preparatory stage, the breakdown for wrestlers with low fitness was 30% monostructural, 30% gymnastics, 30% weightlifting, and 10% stretching. For those with below-average fitness, it was 20% monostructural, 40% gymnastics, 30% weightlifting, and 10% stretching. Finally, wrestlers with average fitness levels had a routine consisting of 25% monostructural, 30% gymnastics, 40% weightlifting, and 5% stretching.

Wrestlers with lower physical fitness levels were engaged in both AMRAP and CHIPPER regimens throughout both the general preparatory and special preparatory stages of their training. For those with a below-average level, the AFAP and EMOM regimens were applied, and for those with an average level, a highly intensive TABATA regimen was used. These choices were influenced by the peculiarities of cardiovascular system and the necessity to improve physical fitness.

## Results

The results of the evaluation of the impact of the developed experimental program on the functional state of the cardiovascular system in wrestlers are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2

*Changes in cardiovascular system function indicators ( $M \pm m$ ) between wrestlers in the CrossFit and control groups during the specialized foundational training stage*

|                                                      |                | CrossFit group (n=24) |                            |        | Control group (n=24) |                            |       |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------|
|                                                      |                | Beginning             | After 6 months of training | p      | Beginning            | After 6 months of training | p     |
| Stroke Volume, ml/beat                               | Actual         | 48.33 $\pm$ 2.11      | 61.31 $\pm$ 2.27<br>**     | <0.001 | 48.08 $\pm$ 1.88     | 51.05 $\pm$ 1.81           | >0.05 |
|                                                      | % of predicted | 69.58 $\pm$ 3.41      | 93.37 $\pm$ 2.37<br>***    | <0.001 | 68.99 $\pm$ 2.44     | 72.98 $\pm$ 2.54           | >0.05 |
| Cardiac Output, l/min                                |                | 3.18 $\pm$ 0.16       | 4.10 $\pm$ 0.15<br>*       | <0.001 | 3.21 $\pm$ 0.13      | 3.48 $\pm$ 0.14            | >0.05 |
| Stroke Index, ml/beat/m <sup>2</sup>                 |                | 1.82 $\pm$ 0.08       | 2.25 $\pm$ 0.07<br>**      | <0.001 | 1.80 $\pm$ 0.06      | 1.82 $\pm$ 0.07            | >0.05 |
| Systemic Vascular Resistance, dyne·s·cm <sup>5</sup> | Actual         | 1707.44 $\pm$ 48.56   | 1689.76 $\pm$ 47.53        | >0.05  | 1709.09 $\pm$ 53.17  | 1718.00 $\pm$ 52.18        | >0.05 |
|                                                      | % of predicted | 97.81 $\pm$ 1.52      | 96.76 $\pm$ 1.44           | >0.05  | 99.36 $\pm$ 3.44     | 99.92 $\pm$ 3.18           | >0.05 |
| Left Ventricular Power, W                            | Actual         | 1.97 $\pm$ 0.07       | 3.02 $\pm$ 0.08<br>***     | <0.001 | 1.95 $\pm$ 0.06      | 2.12 $\pm$ 0.09            | >0.05 |
|                                                      | % of predicted | 74.54 $\pm$ 2.81      | 90.66 $\pm$ 2.21<br>**     | <0.001 | 72.85 $\pm$ 2.77     | 77.88 $\pm$ 2.55           | >0.05 |

According to the table, both dependent and independent t-test analyses demonstrated a significant enhancement in the cardiovascular function of the CrossFit group. Following the CrossFit intervention, notable increases were observed in the CrossFit group's actual stroke volume by 12.98 ml/beat ( $p < 0.001$ ), cardiac output by 0.92 l/min, stroke index by 0.43 ml/beat/m<sup>2</sup> ( $p < 0.001$ ) and left ventricular power by 1.05 W ( $p < 0.01$ ). Predicted values for stroke volume and

left ventricular power also showed significant improvements in the CrossFit group, increasing by 23.79% ( $p<0.001$ ) and 16.12% ( $p<0.001$ ), respectively. On the positive side, it is also necessary to note the increase in the minute volume of blood flow mainly due to the increase in the stroke volume and stable values of the total peripheral resistance of the vessels: in the CrossFit group systemic vascular resistance decreased by 20 dyne·s·cm<sup>5</sup> ( $p>0.05$ ).

Positively, it is important to highlight the increase in minute blood flow volume, primarily attributed to the rise in stroke volume, alongside stable total peripheral resistance values in vessels. Specifically, in the CrossFit group, systemic vascular resistance decreased by 20 dyne·s·cm<sup>5</sup> ( $p>0.05$ ).

In the control group of wrestlers, there was a notable yet statistically non-significant trend towards improvement in the functional indicators of the cardiovascular system. Specifically, there was a modest increase in actual stroke volume by 2.97 ml/beat ( $p>0.05$ ), cardiac output by 0.27 l/min, stroke index by 0.02 ml/beat/m<sup>2</sup> ( $p>0.05$ ) and left ventricular power by 0.17 W ( $p>0.05$ ). Predicted values for stroke volume and left ventricular power in the control group also exhibited improvements, albeit not statistically significant, with increases of 3.99% ( $p>0.05$ ) and 5.03% ( $p>0.05$ ), respectively.

A comparison of central hemodynamic parameters between groups at the end of the study is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Comparison in cardiovascular system function indicators ( $M\pm m$ ) between CrossFit and control group wrestlers after 6 months of training*

|                                                      |                | Groups         |               |        |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------|
|                                                      |                | CrossFit group | Control group | p      |
| Stroke Volume, ml/beat                               | Actual         | 61.31±2.27     | 51.05±1.81    | <0.01  |
|                                                      | % of predicted | 93.37±2.37     | 72.98±2.54    | <0.001 |
| Cardiac Output, l/min                                |                | 4.10±0.15      | 3.48±0.14     | <0.05  |
| Stroke Index, ml/beat/m <sup>2</sup>                 |                | 2.25±0.07      | 1.82±0.07     | <0.01  |
| Systemic Vascular Resistance, dyne·s·cm <sup>5</sup> | Actual         | 1689.76±47.53  | 1718.00±52.18 | >0.05  |
|                                                      | % of predicted | 96.76±1.44     | 99.92±3.18    | >0.05  |
| Left Ventricular Power, W                            | Actual         | 3.02±0.08      | 2.12±0.09     | <0.001 |
|                                                      | % of predicted | 90.66±2.21     | 77.88±2.55    | <0.001 |

Comparative analysis of post-training rheography indicators of the cardiovascular system revealed statistically significant differences between the studied groups ( $p<0.05$ -0.001). The wrestlers in the CrossFit group demonstrated su-

perior performance across all indicators compared to those in the control group. Specifically, stroke volume was significantly higher in the CrossFit group wrestlers by 10.26 ml ( $p<0.01$ ), cardiac output by 0.62 l/min ( $p<0.05$ ), stroke index by 0.43 ml/beat/m<sup>2</sup> ( $p<0.01$ ) and left ventricular power by 0.90 W ( $p<0.001$ ). Relative indicators for stroke volume and left ventricular power were also notably greater in the athletes of the CrossFit group, showing increases of 20.39% ( $p<0.001$ ) and 12.78% ( $p<0.01$ ), respectively.

## **Discussion**

The primary findings of this study demonstrate that CrossFit training significantly improves the central hemodynamic profile in young wrestlers. Specifically, we observed enhancements in parameters such as cardiac output and stroke volume, which are critical indicators of cardiovascular efficiency. These changes likely result from the combined effects of sustained high-intensity efforts and dynamic recovery periods inherent to CrossFit training, which stimulate both myocardial adaptation and vascular responsiveness.

From an athletic perspective, these adaptations hold significant importance. Enhanced cardiac output and stroke volume can improve oxygen delivery to working muscles, thereby supporting greater endurance and recovery during high-intensity bouts. For wrestlers, this translates into sustained performance in competitive settings characterized by intermittent bursts of maximal effort. From a health-related standpoint, such improvements may reduce cardiovascular strain during training and competitions, potentially lowering the risk of exercise-induced cardiovascular complications.

These findings emphasize the dual role of high-intensity functional training in optimizing athletic performance and promoting cardiovascular health, offering a promising approach for the structured development of young athletes.

Specifically, our results show statistically significant increases in stroke volume, cardiac output, stroke index, and left ventricular power in the CrossFit group compared to the control group. These findings indicate enhanced cardiovascular efficiency, which is critical for athletic performance and overall cardiovascular health.

The observed 10.26 ml increase in stroke volume ( $p<0.01$ ) and 0.62 l/min increase in cardiac output ( $p<0.05$ ) suggest that CrossFit training enhances the heart's ability to pump blood more effectively per beat and per minute. Additionally, a 0.43 ml/beat/m<sup>2</sup> increase in stroke index ( $p<0.01$ ) and a 0.90 W rise in left ventricular power ( $p<0.001$ ) further support the notion that high-intensity functional training stimulates myocardial adaptation, likely through a combination of sustained high-intensity efforts and dynamic recovery periods.

The functional state of the cardiovascular system in wrestlers is a complex interplay of various physiological adaptations influenced by their rigorous training, intense physical activity, and overall health. Wrestlers often exhibit increased cardiac output, the volume of blood pumped by the heart per minute. This is partly due to elevated stroke volume, the amount of blood ejected by the heart in each contraction. These adaptations support the increased demand for oxygen and nutrients during intense physical exertion.

Thus, summarizing the above-mentioned features of applying CrossFit functional training to enhance athletes' physical preparedness, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- the issue of scientific justification and development of training programs with an optimal ratio of physical training means requires further refinement, considering the specifics of the chosen sport and individual athlete characteristics;
- among the means of physical training, it is advisable to frequently use those that are structurally as close as possible to combat practice, varying the load by changing volume and intensity;
- contemporary challenges in wrestlers' physical preparation determine the modernization of CrossFit means, incorporating aerobic and anaerobic exercises performed at high intensity;
- CrossFit prioritizes exercises of moderate and high intensity, promoting the balanced development of athletes' physical attributes such as endurance, strength, flexibility, speed, and coordination;
- most experts identify the positive characteristics of CrossFit as accessibility, flexibility, diversity, quick results, functionality, the possibility of individual and group sessions, and time efficiency.

There are individual publications providing scientifically grounded data on the potential use of the CrossFit exercise system in wrestlers' training processes, which requires further study and analysis (Caloglu & Yüksel, 2020; Maia, 2019).

Our research findings support the assertions of researchers (Sazonov, 2017; Voronyi et al., 2020), emphasizing the critical importance of contemporary high-performance sports standards and the individual characteristics of wrestlers, particularly their functional state and level of physical fitness.

This underscores the imperative to revamp current training programs for Greco-Roman wrestlers during the specialized foundational training stage.

The results of our research confirm the views of the researchers such as Caloglu & Yüksel (2020), Gierczuk & Sadowski (2021), Lisenchuk et al. (2019), Omelchenko et al. (2020), Voronyi et al. (2020), Odynets et al. (2024). In the development of new training programs for wrestlers, it is crucial to consider modern elite sports standards and the individual characteristics of wrestlers, including their functional state and level of physical preparedness.

Our research is also supplemented by the findings of Dehnou et al. (2020) regarding strength-focused exercises tailored to varying volumes and intensities according to physical fitness levels, and findings from Özbay et al. (2019) on the dynamics of functional indicators of key physiological systems (cardiovascular and respiratory) during CrossFit training among wrestlers.

Understanding the hemodynamics of wrestlers is essential for optimizing training programs, enhancing performance, and safeguarding the overall cardiovascular health of athletes. Regular health assessments, individualized training plans, and a focus on recovery contribute to a comprehensive approach to managing hemodynamics in the context of wrestling. Factors such as age, fitness level, and previous health conditions should be considered when developing personalized cardiovascular training programs.

The findings of Akcan and Olmez (2024) demonstrate that a four-week program of high-intensity sprint training, conducted twice weekly, significantly enhances both aerobic and anaerobic power in athletes. These results provide valuable insights into the optimization of high-intensity training protocols, particularly regarding rest interval duration. In the future, our research will focus on investigating the effects of training-induced changes with different rest intervals in wrestlers, aiming to enhance our understanding of how rest interval duration influences physiological adaptations and performance outcomes.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the focus on young athletes restricts the generalizability of the findings to other age groups or populations with different training backgrounds. Additionally, while the study provides valuable insights into the hemodynamic adaptations induced by training, it lacks direct performance measures that could establish whether these changes translate into improved exercise capacity during competitive activities. Furthermore, potential variations in biological age among participants may have influenced the observed outcomes, given the physiological differences that can exist even within a narrow age range. These factors highlight the need for future studies to include diverse age groups, incorporate comprehensive performance metrics, and account for individual developmental differences to enhance the applicability of the findings.

## **Conclusions**

The results have indicated that the incorporation of high-intensity multi-functional CrossFit methods during the intervention study resulted in positive dynamics in cardiovascular functional state of wrestlers during the specialized foundational training stage.

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### STATEMENT OF ETHICS

This study was conducted in accordance with the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Ethical Committee of Khortytsia National Academy, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine (№ 847/OD, April 08, 2023). All participants provided written informed consent to participate in this study.

### DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *The Effect of CrossFit Training on The Central Hemodynamic Profile in Youth Wrestlers*.

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### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

**Tetiana Odynets:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Original Draft;

**Nadiia Koliada:** Data Curation, Review & Editing;

**Vladyslav Rymyk:** Analysis, Visualization, Validation;

**Dmytro Piatnychuk:** Analysis, Visualization;

**Anzhelika Yefremova:** Data Curation;

All authors approved the final version of the manuscript

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## OPINIONS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON ALPINE SKIING: POPULARITY, FREQUENCY AND SKILL LEVEL

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### Opinie nauczycieli szkół podstawowych na temat narciarstwa alpejskiego: popularność, częstotliwość i poziom umiejętności

#### Streszczenie

Zimowe sezonowe aktywności fizyczne stanowią integralną część wychowania fizycznego i sportowego, w ramach którego w szkołach podstawowych powszechnie organizowane są kursy narciarskie. Podobnie jak we wszystkich szkolnych aktywnościach fizycznych, rola nauczyciela jest tutaj kluczowa. Celem niniejszego badania była identyfikacja i analiza opinii nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego i sportowego w szkołach podstawowych na temat popularności, częstotliwości oraz poziomu umiejętności w narciarstwie alpejskim. Badanie przeprowadzono za pomocą internetowego kwestionariusza, a dane zbierano od marca 2023 do marca 2024 roku. W badaniu wzięło udział łącznie 653 nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego uczących na drugim etapie edukacyjnym szkół podstawowych na terenie całej Słowacji. Do analizy zastosowano statystykę opisową oraz testowanie hipotez przy użyciu programu IBM® SPSS® Statistics w wersji 29. Wyniki pokazują, że narciarstwo alpejskie jest najpopularniejszym sportem zimowym wśród nauczycieli. Niemal 49% respondentów zadeklarowało, że uprawia rekreacyjne narciarstwo alpejskie 1–2 razy w miesiącu, podczas gdy jedynie 12,86% robi to w każdy weekend. Nie stwierdzono statystycznie istotnych różnic między płcią a częstotliwością uprawiania narciarstwa. Wyniki te potwierdzają, że narciarstwo alpejskie pozostaje powszechnie preferowaną aktywnością zimową, oferującą liczne korzyści fizyczne i istotnie wspierającą cele wychowania fizycznego w szkołach.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kursy narciarskie, opinie nauczycieli, sporty zimowe, narciarstwo alpejskie.

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## Abstract

Winter seasonal physical activities are an integral part of physical and sports education, within which ski training courses are commonly organized at primary schools. As with all school-based physical activities, the teacher's role is crucial. This study aims to identify and analyze the opinions of physical and sports education primary school teachers regarding the popularity, frequency and skill levels in alpine skiing. The research was conducted using an online questionnaire with data collected from March 2023 to March 2024. A total of 653 physical and sports education teachers teaching at the lower secondary level of primary schools across Slovakia participated in the study. Descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing were conducted using IBM® SPSS® Statistics v29. The results show that alpine skiing is the most popular winter sport among teachers. Nearly 49% of the respondents reported participating in recreational skiing 1–2 times per month, while only 12.86% engage in it every weekend. No statistically significant differences were found between gender and the frequency of recreational alpine skiing. These findings confirm that alpine skiing remains a widely favored winter activity, offering numerous physical benefits and contributing meaningfully to the physical education objectives within schools.

**Keywords:** ski training, teachers opinions, winter sports, alpine skiing.

## Introduction

The personality traits of a teacher have been the subject of various studies. According to Magno & Sembrano (2007), multiple external and internal factors influence a teacher's performance. According to Mesiarik's (2013) report, physical education and sports teachers play a key role in the educational process of physical education, where they should not only demonstrate expertise and a professional approach, but also promote a positive attitude among students towards physical activity and sports. Peráčeková et al. (2013) state that individuals who regularly engage in physical activities tend to perform better in various life situations and possess more energy. We align with the views of several experts Bírešová (2015), Dvořáková (2012), Michal (2013) and Strýčková (2011) who claim that a physical and sports education teacher should primarily be a good motivator. In contrast, the authors Adamčák et al. (2016) argue that physical and sports education teachers have the least influence on children's participation in physical activities. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in an active use of leisure time. In addition to summer sports, winter sports such as alpine skiing, snowboarding, and cross-country skiing have also become popular. Winter sports offer numerous benefits for young people—not only physical but also mental health benefits. According to Kampmillerová (2015), winter sports also positively influence the development of a relationship with mountains and winter nature. Michal et al. (2019) note that winter sports differ from others primarily because of the unique environment which they take place in. This environment can be intimidating for some teachers; therefore, it is important that the future physical education teachers are sufficiently pre-

pared during their studies to ensure the organization of alpine skiing activities, which are an essential part of ski training courses. From a recreational point of view, skiing is one of the most popular winter sports among millions of people worldwide (Thiel et al., 2009). We agree with Michal's (2013) assertion that alpine skiing is currently a very popular sport and the most sought-after among recreational athletes during the winter season. One of the reasons for its popularity is the good availability of ski equipment and the large number of accessible ski resorts, both at home and abroad. Hébert-Losier & Holmberg (2013) state that skiing is a physically demanding sport and although it takes place in a beautiful winter environment, being in mountainous environments may deter some people from choosing it as their preferred recreational sport. We also agree with Pighetti et al. (2022) that education in winter sports is a crucial tool for maintaining this sector as it not only brings health benefits, but also positively influences interpersonal relationships. This study aims to provide an overview of how lower secondary school physical and sports education teachers perceive the popularity of seasonal winter physical activities — specifically, their attitudes towards alpine skiing. It also examines how frequently these teachers engage in alpine skiing during their leisure time and how they assess their practical skills in this sport. The results may serve as a foundation for planning and implementing seasonal winter physical activities with the focus on alpine skiing. The study's main limitation is that since the research was conducted only among lower secondary school physical education teachers, the findings cannot be generalized to other educational levels. The aim of the study is to determine and analyze the opinions of physical and sports education teachers on the popularity, frequency and skill level related to alpine skiing. The intent is to understand and present the role of seasonal winter physical activities—focused on alpine skiing—in the lives of physical education teachers at the lower secondary level.

We formulated two hypotheses that were tested using statistical methods:

- Hypothesis 1: There are statistically significant gender differences in the frequency of recreational alpine skiing.
- Hypothesis 2: The length of teaching experience influences practical skills and the performance level in alpine skiing.

Winter seasonal physical activities focused on alpine skiing are a part of the physical and sports education curriculum and significantly contribute to the development of students' motor skills. Teachers play a vital role, which is why we aimed to explore their perspectives on the popularity, frequency and skill level associated with alpine skiing.

## Materials and Methods

### Participants

In line with the research objective, physical and sports education teachers at lower secondary schools across Slovakia were contacted via email. A total of 653 teachers participated in the study. All of them were responsible for teaching seasonal winter physical activities with a focus on alpine skiing. Of the 653 participants, 327 were women (50.08%) and 326 were men (49.92%). The majority, i.e. 69.22% ( $n=452$ ) worked in urban schools, while 30.78% ( $n=201$ ) were employed at rural schools. Most participants were between the ages of 31 and 40 (33.08%,  $n=216$ ), followed by those aged 41–50 (30.32%,  $n=198$ ), under 30 (18.53%,  $n=121$ ), aged 51–60 (15.77%,  $n=103$ ), and over 60 (2.30%,  $n=15$ ). Regarding teaching experience, most teachers had up to 5 years of practice (22.97%,  $n=150$ ), followed by 6–10 years (21.44%,  $n=140$ ), and 11–15 years (18.38%,  $n=120$ ). The smallest group consisted of those with more than 36 years of experience (2.76%,  $n=18$ ).

### Research Design

The study was conducted from March 2023 to March 2024 with the aim of determining and analyzing the opinions of primary school physical education teachers regarding the popularity, frequency, and skill level of alpine skiing. A purposive sampling approach was used, targeting only teachers of physical education at the lower secondary level. Data collection was carried out using a self-constructed online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed and semi-closed questions and focused on the popularity of winter sports, practical skill levels in alpine skiing, and the frequency with which the teachers practiced alpine skiing in their free time. Two hypotheses were tested using statistical methods:

- Hypothesis 1: There are statistically significant gender differences in the frequency of recreational alpine skiing.
- Hypothesis 2: Teaching experience influences practical skills and performance level in alpine skiing.

### Statistical Analysis

Data collected from the online questionnaire were tabulated and processed using descriptive statistics. To verify the hypotheses, inferential statistical methods were applied. Specifically, the asymptotic version of the chi-square test of independence (for  $r \times s$  contingency tables) was used. In cases where the conditions for the asymptotic version were not met, the Fisher–Freeman–Halton exact test, calculated using the Monte Carlo method, was applied.

The effect size was measured using Cramér's  $V$  coefficient, interpreted according to the following thresholds:

- $V = 0.10$  – small effect,
- $V = 0.30$  – medium effect,
- $V = 0.50$  – large effect.

Statistical analysis procedures were carried out using IBM® SPSS® Statistics v29, in accordance with the guidelines presented in Pivovarníček (2021).

## Results

In our research, we examined which winter sports teachers most frequently engage in during their free time. The respondents were allowed to select multiple answers to this question. As illustrated in Figure 1, 566 teachers identified alpine skiing as their most preferred winter sport during their leisure time. The second most popular activity was ice skating, practiced by 289 teachers, followed by cross-country skiing, chosen by 240 teachers. Less popular winter sports included snowboarding, ski mountaineering and ice hockey.

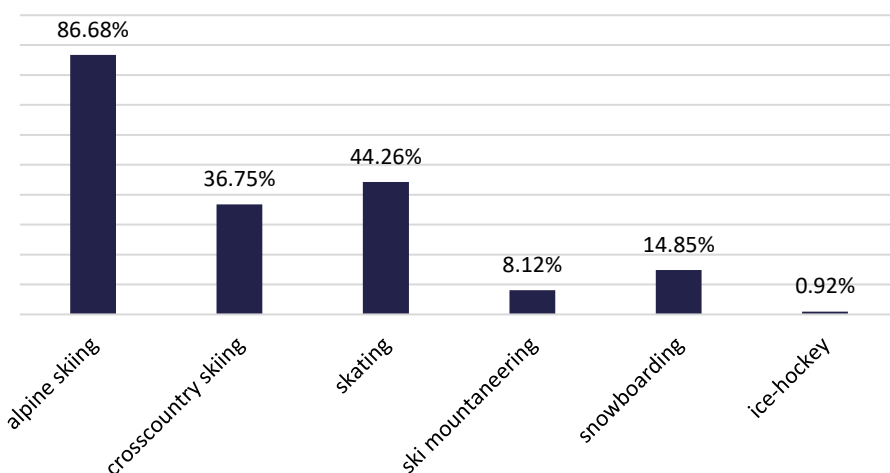


Figure 1

The respondents' favorite winter sports

In the next part of the questionnaire, we were interested in how teachers assess their practical skills and proficiency level in alpine skiing. The majority of respondents rated their practical skills as advanced ( $n = 393$ ), while 226 teachers assessed themselves as intermediate. A concerning finding is that 8 respondents stated they cannot ski, and 26 respondents identified themselves as beginners (Figure 2).

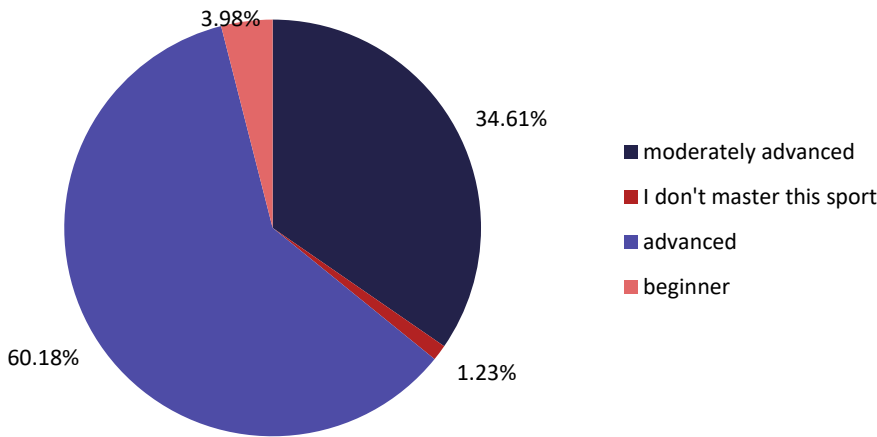


Figure 2  
The respondents' practical skills and proficiency level in alpine skiing

When examining the practical skills and proficiency levels in alpine skiing, it is essential to understand how frequently teachers engage in skiing during their leisure time to improve their abilities. This led to the next question, where we asked the teachers how often they go skiing in their free time. Based on the results, only 84 teachers reported skiing every weekend, which suggests that only a small proportion actively work on improving their skills (Figure 3). The majority of the respondents indicated that they go alpine skiing only once or twice a month or once or twice per winter season.

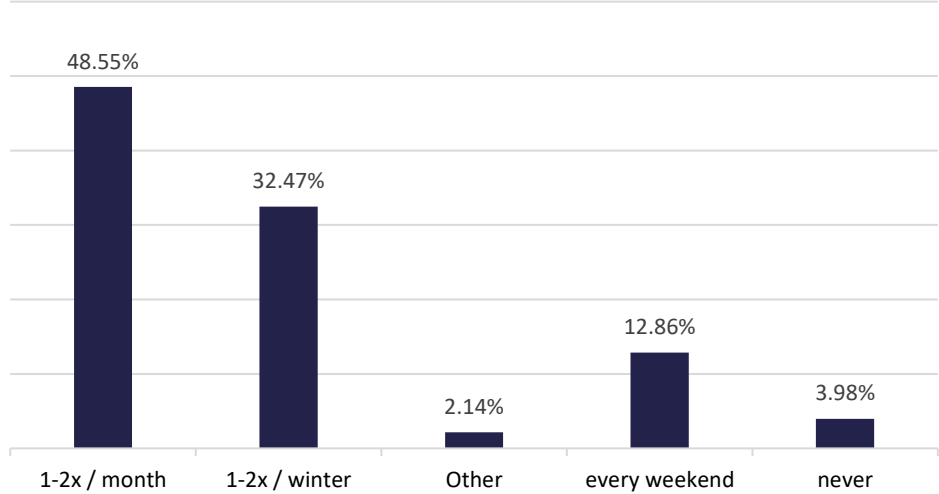


Figure 3  
Frequency of alpine skiing participation in free time

The largest proportion of the respondents engage in skiing 1-2 times per month (48.55%), while the second most common response was skiing only 1-2 times per winter season (32.47%). This frequency is insufficient for significantly improving practical skills and proficiency in alpine skiing. No statistically significant differences were found between the genders ( $\chi^2(4) = 5.146$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ,  $V = 0.089$ ,  $p > 0.05$  (Table 1).

Table 1

*Frequency of alpine skiing participation in free time by teachers' gender*

| <b>Gender * How often do you do downhill skiing in your free time in the winter?</b> |              |               |           |                |           |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|------------|
| How often do you practise alpine skiing in your free time in the winter?             |              |               |           |                |           |            |
|                                                                                      | 1-2x / month | 1-2x / winter | other     | every week-end | never     | Total      |
| male                                                                                 | 160          | 112           | 4         | 36             | 14        | 326        |
| female                                                                               | 157          | 100           | 10        | 48             | 12        | 327        |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                         | <b>317</b>   | <b>212</b>    | <b>14</b> | <b>84</b>      | <b>26</b> | <b>653</b> |

In our research, we hypothesized that the length of teaching experience influences the practical skills and proficiency level in alpine skiing. The length of teaching experience was divided into eight groups. The largest group of the teachers in our study consisted of those with up to 5 years of experience (22.97%). The second largest group included the teachers with 6 to 10 years of experience, accounting for 21.44%. The third largest group were the teachers with 11 to 15 years of experience, representing 18.38%. The least represented group consisted of the teachers with more than 36 years of experience, making up only 2.76%. The teachers with 16 to 20 years of experience accounted for 10.87%, those with 21 to 25 years of experience were 9.80%, and those with 26 to 30 years of experience made up 7.96%. The second smallest group, in terms of the teaching experience, was the group with 31 to 35 years, comprising 5.82%. Regarding practical skills and proficiency in alpine skiing, the majority of the respondents rated their skills as advanced of a total 60.18%. The further 34.61% teachers rated themselves as intermediate, 3.98% considered themselves beginners, and 1.23% reported not being able to ski at all. Among those who identified as beginners or non-skiers, the largest proportion were teachers with the shortest teaching experience, i.e. those with up to 5 years of experience. Chart 2 presents the comparison of the respondents' proficiency levels in alpine skiing according to their length of teaching experience. Based on the calculated values ( $F = 23.290$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ,  $V = 0.117$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), no difference was found

in the reported level of skiing skills among the teachers depending on the length of their teaching experience.

Table 2

*Proficiency level in alpine skiing according to the teachers' length of experience*

| The length of your teaching practice * What are your practical skills and level of downhill skiing? |                     | What are your practical skills and level of downhill skiing? |                           |          |          | Total |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|-------|
|                                                                                                     |                     | moderately advanced                                          | I don't master this sport | advanced | beginner |       |
| The length of your teaching practice                                                                | up to 5 years       | 51                                                           | 5                         | 86       | 8        | 150   |
|                                                                                                     | from 6 to 10 years  | 49                                                           | 0                         | 85       | 6        | 140   |
|                                                                                                     | from 11 to 15 years | 46                                                           | 2                         | 67       | 5        | 120   |
|                                                                                                     | from 16 to 20 years | 19                                                           | 1                         | 49       | 2        | 71    |
|                                                                                                     | from 21 to 25 years | 32                                                           | 0                         | 31       | 1        | 64    |
|                                                                                                     | from 25 to 30 years | 15                                                           | 0                         | 34       | 3        | 52    |
|                                                                                                     | from 31 to 35 years | 11                                                           | 0                         | 27       | 0        | 38    |
|                                                                                                     | more than 36 years  | 3                                                            | 0                         | 14       | 1        | 18    |
| Total                                                                                               |                     | 226                                                          | 8                         | 393      | 26       | 653   |

## Discussion

In our research, we concluded that most physical education teachers at the upper level of elementary schools show the greatest interest in alpine skiing compared to other winter activities. We can assert that alpine skiing is an attractive sport for teachers, which they also enjoy doing in their free time. Similarly, Reichert & Musil (2008) and Michal (2013) found in their studies that despite the growing interest in snowboarding, alpine skiing remains the most popular winter physical activity. Cigrovski et al. (2014) confirmed that the program their subjects completed positively influenced their attitude toward alpine skiing. In another study, Cigrovski et al. (2018) investigated the impact of the psychological traits on individuals' motor skills. They examined whether courage or fear affect skiers with different skill levels. It was shown that psychological factors and gender should be taken into account when learning to ski. Kuna et al. (2018) emphasize that a teacher should be able to properly apply and adapt appropriate teaching tools based on students' skills to make the teaching process as effective as possible. Our hypothesis related to the frequency of alpine skiing in free time suggested that statistically significant differences exist between genders in this frequency. This hypothesis was not confirmed. Similarly, Budak's

(2023) study concluded that gender does not influence active leisure time, but the individuals who engage in alpine skiing during their free time tend to spend their leisure time more actively compared to those who do not ski. We also hypothesized that the length of teaching experience influences practical skills and proficiency in alpine skiing. We examined the differences in skiing skills and levels based on the length of teachers' experience and whether these differences were statistically significant.

## **Conclusions**

The results of our research indicate that the teachers prefer alpine skiing in their free time the most. Based on this finding, we believe that this is one of the reasons why alpine skiing is the most commonly offered and taught seasonal physical activity to students at elementary schools. At the same time, our findings indicate that teachers allocate limited time to developing their alpine skiing skills, typically skiing only once or twice per month, or in some cases, merely once or twice during the entire winter season. These findings are concerning. However, one of the reasons why teachers do not engage more frequently in skiing or skill improvement is the inaccessibility of ski resorts due to their distance or financial constraints, as well as often poor or unsuitable snow conditions at ski resorts. This situation was further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, during which ski resorts remained closed for an entire season, thereby limiting teachers' opportunities to practice and enhance their alpine skiing skills. Despite the low frequency of skiing, a large group of the respondents rate their skiing skills at an advanced or intermediate level, with only a few respondents unable to ski, which we consider a positive outcome. Teachers should be offered retraining and improvement courses where they could enhance their skiing skills. Most respondents in our study have a teaching experience of up to 5 years. The majority of the participants expressed a preference for residential ski courses—that is, trips that include accommodation—over daily commuting to ski resorts. However, some respondents are open to a combined form of ski trainings. Since there are few studies focusing on the winter seasonal physical activities with an emphasis on ski trainings from the perspective of teachers, we recommend continuing such research. Based on the findings, general recommendations can be developed for organizing winter seasonal physical activities in elementary schools. Furthermore, given the importance of continuing winter sports education in schools, it is essential to support the training of specialists in these sports and to invest in their professional development to ensure they acquire necessary expertise.

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### STATEMENT OF ETHICS

This study was conducted in accordance with the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Matej Bel (Ref. No.: 710/2025, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia). All participants provided written informed consent to participate in this study.

### DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Opinions of Primary School Teachers on Alpine Skiing: Popularity, Frequency and Skill Level*.

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### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

**Jiří Michal:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing, Supervision

**Stanislava Straňavská:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing, Visualization

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# **CZĘŚĆ III**

## **TURYSTYKA I REKREACJA**





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## ECO-FRIENDLY AND NICHE ADVENTURE TOURISM: CAVING EXPERIENCES AS A FACTOR OF TOURISM DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

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### Ekologiczna i niszowa turystyka przygodowa: eksploracja jaskiń jako czynnik rozwoju destynacji turystycznej

#### Streszczenie

Rozwój turystyki stworzył możliwość rozwoju specjalnych form turystyki dostosowanych do konkretnych zainteresowań turystów, które jednocześnie promują zrównoważony rozwój turystyki wiejskiej i przyczyniają się do dobrobytu ekonomicznego destynacji turystycznej. W artykule zbadano hipotezę, że doświadczenia speleologiczne, gdy są zgodne z ekologicznymi i niszowymi zasadami turystyki przygodowej, mogą znacznie zwiększyć zrównoważony rozwój turystyczny destynacji, w szczególności wykorzystując Grotte di Castellana jako model i eksplorując potencjał jaskiń Sokobanja. Badanie zidentyfikowało trzy kluczowe czynniki motywacyjne dla turystów odwiedzających Grotte di Castellana: mityczne ścieżki, przygodę z celem oraz poznanie jaskini, które podkreślają różne sposoby, w jakie turyści nawiązują relację ze środowiskiem jaskiniowym. Dodatkowo, analiza obejmuje ocenę efektywnej infrastruktury turystycznej w Grotte di Castellana jako punktu odniesienia dla rozwoju turystyki jaskiniowej w Sokobani. Na tej podstawie przedstawiono rekomendacje mające na celu poprawę zrównoważonego rozwoju i atrakcyjności zasobów speleologicznych Sokobani poprzez inicjatywy z zakresu turystyki ekologicznej. Przyszłe badania po-

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winy koncentrować się na tworzeniu i monitorowaniu strategii rozwoju, aby zapobiec dalszemu niewłaściwemu zarządzaniu zasobami speleologicznymi Sokobani. Zarówno samo badanie, jak i jego wyniki, powinny zachęcić lokalne władze oraz zarządzających destynacją turystyczną Sokobani do postrzegania turystyki jaskiniowej jako potencjału rozwojowego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** turystyka jaskiniowa, motywacje, ekologiczna zrównoważoność, turystyka przygodowa, Grotte di Castellana.

## Abstract

The development of tourism has created an opportunity to enhance special forms of tourism tailored to specific interests of tourists, which also promote the sustainability of rural tourism and contribute to the economic prosperity of the tourist destination. The paper investigates the hypothesis that caving experiences, when aligned with eco-friendly and niche adventure tourism principles, can significantly enhance the sustainable tourism development of destinations, specifically using Grotte di Castellana as a model and exploring the potential of Sokobanja's caves. The study identifies three key motivational factors for tourists visiting Grotte di Castellana: Mythic Trails, Purposeful Adventure, and Cave Insights, which highlight the various ways tourists connect with cave environments. Additionally, the research evaluates the effective tourism infrastructure at Grotte di Castellana as a benchmark for developing caving tourism in Sokobanja and offers recommendations to improve the sustainability and appeal of Sokobanja's speleological resources through eco-friendly tourism initiatives. Future research should focus on creating and monitoring development strategies in order to prevent further inadequate management of Sokobanja's speleological resources. The research and the study itself should encourage the local government and the management of the Sokobanja tourist destination to look at show cave tourism as a potential for development.

**Keywords:** cave tourism, motivation, ecological sustainability, adventure tourism, Grotte di Castellana.

## Introduction

Ecological and personalized adventure tourism is increasingly being recognized as a significant factor in the development of tourist destinations (Chiarini et al., 2022). This market niche not only meets the growing demand for sustainable travel options, but also enhances the appeal of destinations by offering unique and individualized experiences (Buckley et al., 2025). Among its various forms, speleological tourism—or cave tourism—emerges as a distinctive blend of adventure and ecotourism, involving the exploration of natural cave systems for recreation, education, and scientific interest (Houge Mackenzie & Kerr, 2013). It typically takes place in sensitive underground environments, requiring responsible visitor behavior and sustainable management practices. As such, cave tourism aligns with the principles of sustainability by promoting environmental education, conservation, and community-based benefits, while offering immersive and often physically engaging experiences in natural settings. There

is a growing need for tourism offerings that allow modern tourists to connect with nature while also engaging in meaningful and adventurous travel. Research on adventure tourism is expanding, with scholars focusing on four broad areas: risk, motivation, experience, and product development (Deb et al., 2023). According to Bojović et al. (2024), there is significant demand potential for these types of experiences, with an estimated 60 million adventure-oriented tourists active on the international market. Within this spectrum, speleological tourism caters to a specific segment of environmentally conscious and experience-driven travelers seeking both intellectual enrichment and emotional engagement with the natural world.

Outdoor adventure tourism, including caving, has the potential to promote sustainable practices and well-being by fostering connections with nature, which can in turn lead to environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviors (Yeh et al., 2025; Arsić et al., 2025). Abdurakhmanova and Ahrorov (2025) emphasize that ecotourism should achieve outcomes such as nature conservation, sustainability education, and local community benefits. Speleological tourism, when developed according to these principles, can serve as a model for integrating environmental stewardship with adventure-based experiences. The incorporation of environmentally friendly practices and customized activities attracts eco-aware tourists and supports long-term, sustainable economic development (Apollo et al., 2023). This form of tourism, however, must be carefully managed to avoid overuse and environmental degradation. Instead, it should remain small-scale, environmentally responsible, and tailored to the unique characteristics of cave environments (Piano et al., 2022). By focusing on ecological sustainability and personalized experience design, destinations can tap into a growing market of environmentally conscious travelers (Vujko et al., 2025). This approach enhances not only the sustainability of tourism development but also the competitive appeal of the destination. Bojović et al., (2024) argue that adventure tourism can support sustainability goals when embedded within socio-ecological systems and tailored to achieve specific outcomes in conservation and development. Adventure tourism globally is valued at \$263 billion and is the fastest-growing sector in tourism, often involving longer, more immersive stays in remote locations by skilled travelers in search of authentic nature and culture-based experiences (Antón et al., 2014; Buckley & Mossaz, 2018). When aligned with local landscapes and managed appropriately, speleological tourism can support both conservation and economic goals (Beames et al., 2022). It draws tourists who are motivated by a desire to experience natural phenomena and cultural narratives in a responsible and meaningful way (Dashchuk et al., 2024). However, as Buckley et al. (2025) caution, enjoyment and well-being alone do not guarantee environmental protection—visitor behavior and evidence-based management are critical. Well-crafted speleological tourism experiences can en-

hance visitor awareness, authenticity, and satisfaction, potentially contributing to long-term conservation goals (Câmara et al., 2023).

This paper begins with the hypothesis (H) that caving experiences, when developed under eco-friendly and niche adventure tourism principles, significantly contribute to the sustainable tourism development of destinations, as exemplified by Grotte di Castellana, with potential application to the caves of Sokobanja. The main aim is to explore how this form of tourism can act as a catalyst for destination development, using Grotte di Castellana as a benchmark and assessing the applicability of its practices to Sokobanja, Serbia. The research first analyzes the motivations and attitudes of tourists who visited Grotte di Castellana, identifying three core motivational factors: Mythic Trails, Purposeful Adventure, and Cave Insights—each reflecting emotional, physical, and intellectual engagement with cave environments. It further evaluates the site's management and visitor experience as a model for developing similar offerings in Sokobanja. Finally, recommendations are proposed to improve the attractiveness and sustainability of Sokobanja's speleological assets—such as the Ozren, Sesalac, and Ledenica caves—through eco-friendly and adventure-based tourism strategies.

## Cave tourism

Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, caves have been utilized for tourism, contributing to local economies and benefiting various stakeholders (Antić et al., 2022b). Caves serve as motivators for rest and escape from daily routines, offering adventure, mystery, natural beauty, knowledge, and outdoor experiences (Chylińska, 2024). As a form of geotourism (Farsani et al., 2011), cave tourism is increasingly popular due to its nature-based appeal, although it poses challenges for sustainable management (Cvijanović et al., 2025). Research on Polish speleologists emphasizes physical motivation, effort, and satisfaction derived from cave exploration (Chylińska, 2024). Attractions such as cave formations and accessibility influence tourist appeal. Show caves are important tourism assets in many developed countries, generating substantial revenue—\$850 billion annually (Piano et al., 2024). In Spain, Las Güixas cave demonstrates the role of guides in conservation and safety (Giménez et al., 2024). Romanian caves showcase history and natural beauty while ensuring heritage preservation (Meleg et al., 2018). Slovenia's Postojna and Škocjan caves are prominent examples with historical and UNESCO recognition. Environmental protection is essential, with emphasis on carrying capacity to prevent degradation (Bolechová et al., 2022). Caves in Slovakia support both tourism and speleotherapy.

Grotte di Castellana in Italy exemplifies good cave management (Parise, 2003). Discovered in 1938 and opened to tourists soon after (Iannace & Trematerra, 2014), it is noted for its acoustics and cultural uses, biodiversity (Marzo et al., 2016), and environmental resilience to tourism (Cigna & Forti, 2013). It attracts over 250,000 visitors annually. Sustainable cave tourism requires geoethical practices and long-term strategies (Antić et al., 2022a). In Serbia, cave tourism is less developed. Most caves are unknown and inaccessible to tourists, though they interest hikers, recreationists, and scientists (Antić et al., 2022b). Only about 18,000 tourists visit Serbian caves annually, with Resava Cave being a notable site. Eastern Serbia, including Sokobanja, holds untapped potential with various speleological features (Milojević et al., 2015). However, many are not protected or guided. Responsible cave tourism depends on proper management (Antić et al., 2022b). Guidelines for converting caves into show caves are vital to preserve their value (Cigna & Burri, 2000; Cigna & Forti, 2013).

## **Methodology**

The research was conducted in August 2024 among tourists visiting Grotte di Castellana, one of the most renowned and frequently visited tourist caves in Italy, located in the Puglia region. The site receives approximately 250,000 visitors annually, with August being the peak month, attracting around 150,000 tourists. This high volume underscores its importance as a flagship destination in European cave tourism. The sample consisted of 388 respondents, which satisfies the recommended sample size for a population of 250,000 visitors, based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error (Ahmed, 2024). A convenience sampling method was used, as researchers approached tourists at the cave entrance and exit points during multiple visits across August. Participants were invited to voluntarily complete the questionnaire on-site after their cave tour, ensuring they had direct and recent experience with the attraction. The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire comprising 20 items measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire was pre-tested in a pilot study with 25 visitors prior to the main data collection, to ensure clarity, reliability, and content validity. Minor revisions were made based on feedback from the pilot to improve question wording and response flow. The final instrument demonstrated acceptable internal consistency across items, and the results of the main survey were subjected to factor analysis, which identified three core motivational dimensions: Mythic Trails, Purposeful Adventure, and Cave Insights. These constructs represent the emotional-symbolic, physical-experiential, and cognitive-educational aspects of cave tourism motivation, respectively. Understanding how tourists

engage with these dimensions offers practical insights for developing tailored, sustainable, and experience-rich speleological tourism products.

The first factor reflects tourists' interest in mystical and less-explored caves, exemplified by Ozren Cave. Located at 540 meters above sea level, it features several chambers and five galleries, with a walkable stretch of 580 meters. Historical findings include Neolithic pottery and cave bear remains. Due to its unique microclimate and presence of radioactive particles, it has been considered for asthma therapy, although tourism projects initiated in the 1980s were never completed (Milojević et al., 2015). The second factor emphasizes adventure and social experiences, illustrated by Sesalac Cave, located 19 km from Sokobanja. It is a well-studied speleological site, visited by about 15,000 people annually (Tourist Organization of Sokobanja). It features a 200-meter illuminated path, various karst formations, and one of Europe's largest colonies of protected bats. In 2022, a request was submitted to designate it as a category III protected area due to its ecological and scientific value (Milojević et al., 2015; Nešić et al., 2022). The third factor addresses educational and intellectual motivations for cave visits, represented by the Ledenica Pit, a karst feature near Mt. Rtanj. Documented since 1836, the pit is 96 meters deep with a year-round ice presence, offering a unique natural phenomenon. Despite the lack of tourist infrastructure, it attracts adventurers who descend to experience the ice firsthand (Milojević et al., 2015).

The paper started from the initial hypothesis H that Caving experiences, when developed with eco-friendly and niche adventure tourism principles, significantly contribute to the sustainable tourism development of tourist destinations, as exemplified by Grotte di Castellana and with potential application to the caves of Sokobanja. The study conducted by Psatha (2024) on caves as tourist attractions in Greece suggests that benchmarking and sharing best practices can improve the management and promotion of cave destinations. The example of a tourist cave in Italy, which was included in the research, should serve as a foundation for further development of show cave tourism in Sokobanja. The results of the analysis identified three key factors that can be compared across multiple caves and pits in the Sokobanja area.

To test the initial hypothesis, it was necessary to formulate several supporting sub-hypotheses.

H1: Tourists are significantly motivated by the cultural and mythic narratives associated with cave environments (Mythic Trails). This hypothesis is based on findings that emphasize the role of cultural symbolism, mythology, and storytelling in enriching the tourism experience, particularly in heritage and nature-based settings (Chronis, 2005; Kim et al., 2008). Caves, often steeped in local legends and spiritual significance, provide a rich narrative landscape that appeals to tourists seeking symbolic meaning and emotional engagement.

H2: Tourists prefer caves that offer active, adventurous, and immersive physical experiences (Purposeful Adventure). Adventure tourism literature frequently highlights the importance of physical challenge, exploration, and experiential immersion as key motivational factors (McIntosh, 1999; Buckley, 2007). Caves that involve guided exploration; climbing, or navigating complex underground paths attracts tourists looking for purposeful, physically engaging experiences that go beyond passive sightseeing.

H3: Tourists show high interest in caves with educational, scientific, or natural uniqueness (Cave Insights). Nature-based tourists are often driven by a desire for learning and intellectual stimulation through direct encounters with natural phenomena (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011). Caves that feature rare geological formations, paleontological artifacts, or educational interpretation panels meet this demand by offering insight into the natural world, scientific discovery, and environmental processes.

These three dimensions—Mythic Trails, Purposeful Adventure, and Cave Insights—are conceptually aligned with broader categories of tourist motivation: emotional-symbolic, physical-experiential, and cognitive-educational. As such, the sub-hypotheses serve as a theoretically informed framework for investigating how different motivational drivers influence tourist engagement in cave environments.

Following the identification of key motivational dimensions through **exploratory factor analysis**, the study proceeded with **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)** to further examine the relationships between the extracted factors and their influence on tourist engagement in caving experiences. SEM was employed as a robust multivariate technique that allows for the simultaneous analysis of multiple dependent relationships. This method enabled the researchers to test the theoretical model developed from the factor analysis, assess the strength and direction of the relationships between the factors—namely *Mythic Trails*, *Purposeful Adventure*, and *Cave Insights*—and evaluate the overall appropriateness of fit. The application of SEM contributed to a deeper understanding of how these motivational constructs interact and shape tourists' perceptions and behaviors, providing a solid analytical foundation for formulating destination development recommendations for Sokobanja.

This study adopts a **positivist epistemological approach**, which is based on the premise that knowledge can be acquired through objective observation, measurement, and analysis of empirical data. By employing a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale and analyzing the responses of a statistically valid sample of 388 tourists who visited Grotte di Castellana, the research aims to identify consistent patterns in tourist motivations and behaviors. The use of quantitative methods enables the researchers to uncover underlying motivational factors and draw generalizable conclusions. This approach aligns with

the research goal of providing evidence-based recommendations for the development of eco-friendly and niche adventure tourism in Sokobanja, based on the successful example of Grotte di Castellana.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the factors (see Table 1) produced a model that classifies the variables into three distinct factors, which together represent 77.27% of the variance. Examination of Table 1 reveals that there are three factors with an Eigenvalue greater than 1, indicating that the extracted factors are both adequate and sufficient. Although standard diagnostic tests such as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett’s test of sphericity are commonly reported in exploratory factor analysis, they were not emphasized in this study due to the theory-driven design of the instrument. The analysis aimed to confirm the alignment of predefined motivational constructs with respondent data rather than to uncover unknown factor structures. The factor solution, based on Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation, yielded three factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1, accounting for 77.27% of the total variance, thus supporting the adequacy of the construct classification.

Table 1  
Total Variance Explained

| Factor | Initial Eigenvalues |               |              | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings |               |              | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings |               |              |
|--------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|        | Total               | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total                               | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total                             | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1      | 5.862               | 48.846        | 48.846       | 1.756                               | 14.631        | 14.631       | 4.571                             | 38.093        | 38.093       |
| 2      | 1.871               | 15.592        | 64.438       | 5.323                               | 44.356        | 58.988       | 2.085                             | 17.375        | 55.468       |
| 3      | 1.540               | 12.832        | 77.270       | 1.310                               | 10.918        | 69.906       | 1.733                             | 14.438        | 69.906       |
| 4      | 0.586               | 4.882         | 82.153       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 5      | 0.99                | 4.161         | 86.314       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 6      | 0.476               | 3.970         | 90.284       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 7      | 0.392               | 3.267         | 93.551       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 8      | 0.273               | 2.278         | 95.829       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 9      | 0.232               | 1.936         | 97.765       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 10     | 0.143               | 1.193         | 98.958       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 11     | 0.081               | 0.677         | 99.636       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 12     | 0.044               | 0.364         | 100.000      |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |

Table 2  
Factor Matrix

|                     | Factor        |                      |               |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
|                     | Mythic Trails | Purposeful Adventure | Cave Insights |
| Natural Marvels     | -0.014        | 0.574                | 0.717         |
| Cave Chronicles     | 0.042         | 0.321                | 0.620         |
| Shared Moments      | 0.047         | 0.874                | 0.145         |
| Captured Depths     | 0.108         | 0.808                | 0.006         |
| Inner Triumph       | 0.022         | 0.732                | 0.053         |
| Green Journey       | 0.049         | 0.613                | -0.065        |
| Hidden Escapes      | 0.852         | -0.043               | -0.014        |
| Underground Wonders | 0.054         | 0.719                | -0.032        |
| Guided Exploration  | 0.070         | 0.975                | -0.107        |
| Mythic Echoes       | 0.999         | -0.003               | 0.000         |
| Cave Conquest       | 0.061         | 0.935                | -0.135        |

The content identifies three main motivational factors driving tourists to visit Grotte di Castellana. The first, Mythic Trails, appeals to visitors seeking mystical, cultural, and lesser-known aspects of the cave, including the exploration of hidden, authentic environments and engaging with local legends and myths. The second, Purposeful Adventure, emphasizes active participation, personal achievement, and social connection, with motivations such as capturing memories, overcoming physical challenges, supporting sustainability, and discovering underground wonders through guided tours or conquering the cave's obstacles. The third, Cave Insights, reflects an intellectual curiosity about the cave's natural history, geological formations, and cultural significance, attracting visitors eager to learn about its scientific and historical background. Overall, these factors highlight a diverse range of motivations, from mystical exploration and adventure to education and environmental consciousness.

The structural equation model presented (Graph 1) illustrates the relationships between tourists' motivations and three latent factors—Mythic Trails, Purposeful Adventure, and Cave Insights—in the context of visiting Grotte di Castellana. Each factor is represented as a latent variable (F1, F2, F3) and is associated with a set of observed variables that reflect specific motivational constructs. Factor 1: Mythic Trails (F1). This factor encapsulates tourists' motivations related to exploring the cave's mystical, cultural, and less commercialized aspects. Tourists driven by this factor are drawn to the hidden, spiritual, and mythical dimensions of the cave experience. Hidden Escapes (HE): Tourists seek to discover places off the beaten path, immersing themselves in a more authentic, raw environment. Grotte di Castellana, while a known attraction, provides

an opportunity for such exploration, offering a break from heavily commercialized tourist experiences. This reflects a desire to connect more deeply with nature and less-known destinations. Mythic Echoes (ME): Tourists are motivated by the folklore, legends, and historical myths surrounding the cave. The cultural narratives and supernatural elements associated with the cave add a rich, mystical dimension to the visit, transforming it into a spiritually and culturally enriched experience. This factor highlights a strong intellectual and emotional connection to the cave's intangible heritage. The structural model shows a strong loading for Mythic Echoes (1.29) and a moderate loading for Hidden Escapes (0.66), indicating the strength of these motivations in defining this latent construct. Furthermore, F1 is positively correlated with Cave Insights (F3), suggesting that mythic curiosity often accompanies a desire for learning and understanding. This confirmed the sub-hypothesis H1 that tourists are significantly motivated by the cultural and mythic narratives associated with cave environments.

Factor 2: Purposeful Adventure (F2). This factor reflects a multifaceted motivational profile that includes personal challenge, bonding, sustainability, and experiential engagement. Tourists associated with this factor are actively involved in shaping their experience and often seek both emotional satisfaction and physical achievement. Shared Moments (SM): Visitors seek to bond with friends or family during the adventure, using the cave setting to create meaningful shared experiences; Captured Depths (CD): Motivation to document the cave experience through photography or video. The visual appeal of cave formations drives the desire to preserve and share memories; Inner Triumph (IT): Represents the challenge and accomplishment tourists feel by physically navigating the cave environment; Green Journey (GJ): Reflects tourists' interest in sustainability and eco-conscious tourism. These visitors are mindful of their environmental impact and value the conservation efforts in place; Underground Wonders (UW): Captures the aesthetic and emotional impact of the cave's geological features. Visitors are intrigued by the mystery and beauty of the underground world; Guided Exploration (GE): Indicates the preference for structured, informative tours led by experts, which provide deeper knowledge and safety; Cave Conquest (CC): Emphasizes the physical effort required to explore the cave, appealing to thrill-seekers and adventure enthusiasts. This factor is heavily defined by high loadings for Guided Exploration (0.98) and Cave Conquest (0.94), suggesting that the blend of physical and intellectual stimulation is a key component of the cave tourism experience. Purposeful Adventure also moderately correlates with Cave Insights (F3) (0.46), indicating an overlap between adventure and educational interests. This confirmed the sub-hypothesis H2 that tourists prefer caves that offer active, adventurous, and immersive physical experiences.

Factor 3: Cave Insights (F3). Cave Insights represents the educational and intellectual motivations that draw tourists to the cave. This includes an interest

in the geological, natural, and cultural significance of the site. Natural Marvels (NM): Tourists are fascinated by the cave's geological features, such as stalactites, stalagmites, and crystals. These formations reflect natural processes and evoke a sense of wonder; Cave Chronicles (CC): Captures the desire to learn about the history, science, and cultural relevance of the cave. Visitors want to understand how the cave was formed, its role in the ecosystem, and its place in local or human history. The model shows a particularly high loading for Natural Marvels (1.24), indicating a strong attraction to the cave's natural beauty. Cave Chronicles has a lower, though still significant, loading (0.58), showing that while intellectual curiosity is present, the aesthetic experience may be more dominant. This confirmed the sub-hypothesis H3 that tourists show high interest in caves with educational, scientific, or natural uniqueness. The correlation between Mythic Trails (F1) and Cave Insights (F3) is shown to be 0.00, indicating that these two motivational factors are independent rather than overlapping. This suggests that tourists interested in myths and hidden stories (Mythic Trails) do not necessarily also prioritize learning about the cave's natural and historical significance (Cave Insights). Purposeful Adventure (F2) and Cave Insights (F3) share a moderate correlation (0.46), suggesting that the drive for adventure and social connection often coexists with an educational interest. The correlation between Mythic Trails (F1) and Purposeful Adventure (F2) is weak (0.06), indicating these two sets of motivations are largely distinct. The structural equation model confirms that cave tourism motivation is a multidimensional construct. Tourists visiting Grotte di Castellana are influenced by a complex interplay of motivations that span mystical and cultural curiosity (Mythic Trails), experiential and social adventure (Purposeful Adventure), and educational interests (Cave Insights). Understanding these motivational dimensions allows for better-targeted interpretation strategies, tour planning, and sustainable management of cave tourism experiences.

Mythic Echoes (loading = 1.744): This is the strongest defining indicator for Factor 1, emphasizing that the core motivation for this factor is the tourist's curiosity about folklore, legends, and the mystical dimensions of the cave. The high loading shows this is central to the experience.

Hidden Escapes (loading = 0.488): Tourists are also motivated by the desire to discover less commercialized and authentic places, although this is a moderate influence compared to the mythic aspect. It reflects the appeal of hidden, tranquil, and raw environments away from mass tourism. Factor 1 appeals primarily to those seeking mystery, folklore, and authenticity. These visitors value spiritual enrichment, hidden stories, and less mainstream experiences. "Mythic Trails" tourists are drawn to the cultural and symbolic significance of the cave. Guided Exploration (loading = 0.974): Tourists greatly value structured, informative experiences through guided tours. This is the strongest loading in the model,

underscoring the importance of educational and secure exploration. Cave Conquest (loading = 0.939) & Shared Moments (0.872): These suggest visitors are motivated both by the physical challenge of exploration and the social bonding that occurs during group activities. Captured Depths (0.820), Underground Wonders (0.728), Inner Triumph (0.738): These emphasize the significance of documenting experiences, aesthetic appreciation, and personal achievement through overcoming challenges.

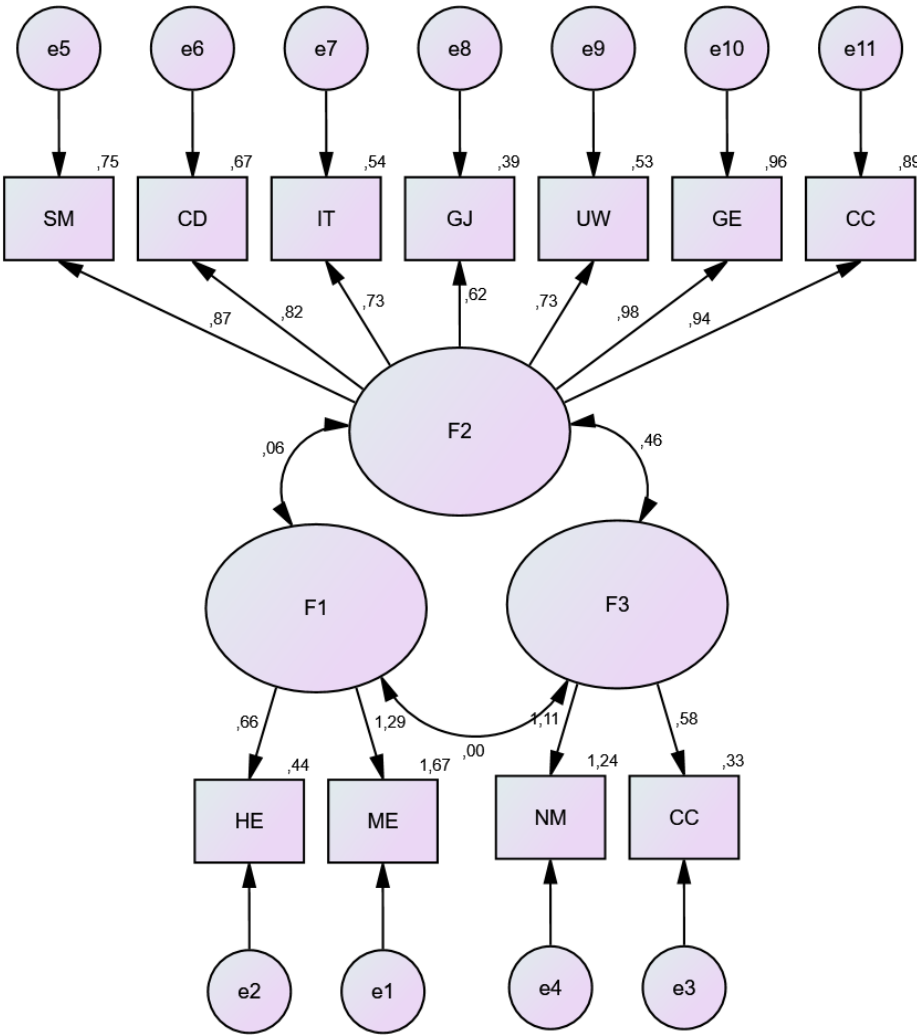


Figure 1  
Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Source: Prepared by the authors (2025)

Table 3  
*Summary of Tourist Motivation Factors in Cave Tourism*

| Factor                         | Motivational Indicator | Estimate (Standardized Weight) | Interpretation                                                   |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Factor 1: Mythic Trails        | Mythic Echoes          | 1.744                          | Strong attraction to folklore, legends, and mystical stories     |
|                                | Hidden Escapes         | 0.488                          | Seeking non-commercial, authentic, tranquil cave experiences     |
|                                | (Low influence on F3)  | -0.001                         | Little to no connection with intellectual motivations            |
| Factor 2: Purposeful Adventure | Guided Exploration     | 0.974                          | Preference for structured, informative, and safe tours           |
|                                | Cave Conquest          | 0.939                          | Seeking physical challenge and exploration                       |
|                                | Shared Moments         | 0.872                          | Social connection through group experiences                      |
|                                | Captured Depths        | 0.820                          | Desire to document and share cave experiences                    |
|                                | Inner Triumph          | 0.738                          | Emotional reward and personal accomplishment                     |
|                                | Underground Wonders    | 0.728                          | Visual/aesthetic appreciation of cave formations                 |
|                                | Green Journey          | 0.626                          | Interest in sustainability and environmental responsibility      |
|                                | (Drives Factor 3)      | 1.000                          | Intellectual interest stems from this adventure-centered mindset |
|                                | Natural Marvels        | 0.520                          | Attraction to geological formations and natural beauty           |
| Factor 3: Cave Insights        | Cave Chronicles        | 0.287                          | Interest in learning cave history and scientific facts           |
|                                | (Derived from F2)      | 1.000                          | Strongly predicted by Purposeful Adventure                       |

Green Journey (0.626): Indicates a meaningful concern with sustainable practices and environmentally responsible tourism. Factor 2 captures tourists who are seeking meaningful, action-oriented, and socially conscious adventures. The combination of physical, social, and environmental motivations shows a well-rounded, purpose-driven mindset in their cave visits. Natural Marvels (loading = 0.520) and Cave Chronicles (0.287): Tourists are drawn to the beauty of geological formations and the scientific/historical knowledge about the cave, although the relatively lower loadings suggest these are fewer central motivations compared to other factors.

Interpretation: Factor 3 represents a more reflective, educational type of tourist—those interested in learning about natural processes and cultural contexts. However, this factor seems to play a supporting role rather than a dominant one in shaping tourist motivations.

Factor F3 is fully predicted by F2 (1.000), suggesting that intellectual/educational motivations (F3) emerge from purposeful adventure (F2). Factor F1 has a very low and negative link to F3 (-0.001), meaning mystical/cultural interests are largely independent of intellectual motivations. Mythic Echoes is strongly predicted by F1 (1.744), reinforcing its importance as a unique dimension. Mythic Trails (F1): Appeals to those seeking mystery, cultural depth, and spiritual connection. Purposeful Adventure (F2): Dominates the model, appealing to adventure-seekers, eco-conscious tourists, and those desiring connection and growth. Cave Insights (F3): Offers an educational layer, but it is often embedded within the broader adventure experience.

The model demonstrates good fit based on conventional SEM thresholds: **CFI (0.965)** and **TLI (0.918)** indicate strong incremental fit, while **GFI (0.902)** reflects acceptable absolute model fit. The **RMSEA value (0.087)**, though slightly above the optimal <0.08 benchmark, remains within the acceptable range for moderately complex models. Together, these indicators suggest that the proposed model is robust and adequately captures the relationships among the motivational constructs of speleological tourism.

To justify the transferability of insights from the Grotte di Castellana case study to the caves of Sokobanja, it is necessary to establish a clear comparative framework. Both regions are characterized by karst landscapes featuring notable underground formations, chambered passages, and unique speleological biodiversity. While the Grotte di Castellana has long been developed for tourism—with structured pathways, lighting, trained guides, and over 250,000 annual visitors—Sokobanja's caves remain underdeveloped, lacking infrastructure and visibility despite their similar geological and ecological value. The tourism potential of Sokobanja is further supported by existing interest from niche markets such as adventure tourists, recreational hikers, and cultural tourists, mirroring the profiles of visitors to Castellana. Both sites appeal to overlapping motivational dimensions, including the pursuit of natural beauty, intellectual enrichment, personal challenge, and cultural immersion. These shared attributes form a solid foundation for adapting the successful interpretative, educational, and sustainability strategies used at Castellana to the Sokobanja context, particularly in shaping future development trajectories and visitor engagement frameworks.

## **Conclusion**

Cave and pit visits represent a promising segment of cave tourism by attracting tourists with diverse interests, ranging from adventure and education to novelty and socialization. The karst formations in Sokobanja hold significant potential as tourist attractions that can drive sustainable tourism development if managed with eco-friendly and niche adventure tourism principles. Our research confirms the hypothesis that well-developed caving experiences contribute positively to the local economy and community. The underground sites in Sokobanja currently remain underexplored and inaccessible, limiting their tourism potential. Addressing this requires targeted financial investment to improve infrastructure, develop tailored visitor routes, and implement effective promotion strategies. Efforts such as the Ministry of Environmental Protection's planned third-category protection for Sesalac Cave and local investments in guide training highlight ongoing progress toward sustainable tourism growth. Our findings demonstrate that tourists' motivations cluster around three key factors: adventure, mystery, and education. The strongest motivation involves shared adventurous experiences with friends or family, complemented by guided tours and opportunities to capture memorable moments. Visitors also value green, protected speleological sites that encourage responsible behavior. Sesalac Cave, in particular, stands out as a site with high potential to develop show cave tourism that can benefit both tourists and the local community.

To unlock this potential, we recommend the following practical strategies: Developing thematic guided tours that emphasize local legends (Mythic Trails), adventure and sustainability (Purposeful Adventure), and educational insights (Cave Insights); Improving accessibility through safe pathways and lighting while preserving natural cave features; Strengthening community involvement by training local guides and supporting complementary tourism services; Enforcing protection measures to maintain ecological and cultural integrity; Promoting integrated multi-site itineraries and leveraging digital marketing to attract niche tourist segments. By implementing these recommendations, Sokobanja can transform its underground sites into attractive, sustainable tourist destinations that meet modern travelers' diverse motivations while supporting local economic development and environmental preservation.

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### **STATEMENT OF ETHICS**

This study was conducted in accordance with the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of Singidunum University, Belgrade, Serbia (protocol code 169, 16 May 2024).

### DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Eco-Friendly and Niche Adventure Tourism: Caving Experiences as a Factor of Tourism Destination Development*.

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### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

**Martina Arsić:** Data Curation, Investigation, Review & Editing.

**Aleksandra Vujko:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Original Draft.

**Petar Bojović:** Analysis, Visualization, Validation.

All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

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## 10 PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL TOURISM MANAGEMENT. A UNIFIED GUIDE FOR TRAINING MANAGERS AND STAFF TO OVERCOME CRISES IN TOURISM

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### 10 zasad skutecznego zarządzania turystyką. Zunifikowany przewodnik szkoleniowy dla menedżerów i pracowników na czas kryzysów w turystyce

#### Streszczenie

Globalny przemysł turystyczny nadal stoi przed poważnymi wyzwaniami wynikającymi z niedawnych i trwających kryzysów, w tym pandemii COVID-19, presji inflacyjnej oraz niestabilności geopolitycznej. Jednym z najbardziej palących problemów jest brak jednolitego i praktycznego systemu szkoleniowego dla menedżerów i pracowników branży turystycznej. Ta luka ogranicza zdolność sektora do szybkiego i skutecznego reagowania na kryzysy, narażając przedsiębiorstwa na większe ryzyko. Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia dziesięć uniwersalnych zasad skutecznego zarządzania turystyką, łącząc podstawy teoretyczne z praktycznymi strategiami mającymi na celu poprawę odporności, wydajności operacyjnej i zdolności adaptacyjnych. Zasady te stanowią elastyczną podstawę do tworzenia programów szkoleniowych przygotowujących pracowników branży turystycznej do działania w warunkach niepewności, przy jednoczesnym zachowaniu wysokich standardów obsługi. W artykule poruszono kluczowe obszary, takie jak integracja innowacji, technologii cyfrowych, spersonalizowanej obsługi klienta, rozwój kadry oraz zaangażowanie społeczności lokalnych. Zastosowanie tych zasad może wzmocnić zdolność przedsiębiorstw turystycznych do prze-

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widywania zmian, reagowania na zakłócenia i szybszego wychodzenia z kryzysów. Szczególny nacisk położono na długoterminowe korzyści wynikające ze zrównoważonego rozwoju, inwestycji strategicznych i zarządzania ryzykiem. Artykuł stanowi zatem cenne źródło wiedzy dla środowisk akademickich i praktyków dążących do budowy bardziej elastycznych i odpornych na kryzysy struktur w turystyce, w coraz bardziej niestabilnym globalnym środowisku.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zarządzanie turystyką, odporność na kryzysy, zrównoważona turystyka, planowanie strategiczne, innowacje w turystyce

## Abstract

The global tourism industry continues to face significant challenges stemming from recent and ongoing crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, inflationary pressures, and geopolitical instability. One of the most pressing issues is the lack of a unified and practical training framework for tourism managers and staff. This gap reduces the sector's ability to respond swiftly and effectively to crises, placing businesses at greater risk. This article presents ten universal principles for successful tourism management, combining theoretical foundations with actionable strategies aimed at improving resilience, operational performance, and adaptability. The principles serve as a flexible framework for developing training programs that prepare tourism professionals to handle uncertainties while maintaining high service standards. The key areas addressed include the integration of innovation, digital technologies, personalized customer service, staff development, and community engagement. By applying these principles, tourism businesses can strengthen their ability to anticipate change, respond to disruptions, and recover more efficiently. Emphasis is placed on the long-term benefits of sustainability, strategic investment, and risk management. Ultimately, this article offers a consolidated resource for both academics and practitioners seeking to build more agile and crisis-resilient tourism operations in an increasingly volatile global environment.

**Keywords:** tourism management, crisis resilience, sustainable tourism, strategic planning, innovation in tourism.

## Introduction

One of the main challenges in the tourism industry is the lack of a unified training program for management and staff. This results in inefficiencies when handling crises and adapting to unexpected situations. If there were a standardized, universally applicable training program, it would be much easier for managers and staff to apply these skills to overcome crises effectively. Given the wide variety and frequency of issues in the tourism business, the training should be based on a set of fundamental principles that are easy to implement in different scenarios.

This article aims to synthesize 10 universal principles of tourism management, grounded in academic literature and industry practices, to equip businesses with a framework for crisis resilience and operational excellence. In this article, we propose 10 universal principles designed to support management and employees in the tourism industry. By adhering to these principles, busi-

nesses can become more resilient to crises and improve overall performance. If this concept is adopted and implemented, we are confident that the results will be remarkable.

The tourism industry has always been shaped by external factors, but in recent years, the scale and complexity of these challenges have intensified. The COVID-19 pandemic, which led to worldwide lockdowns, travel restrictions, and a dramatic decline in tourism activity, exposed the vulnerabilities of the sector. Even as the world is recovering from the pandemic, new risks have emerged, such as inflation, economic downturns, and political instability, particularly in Europe. These factors have combined to create a highly unpredictable environment for tourism businesses.

Inflation has driven up operational costs, making it more expensive to maintain services while also reducing the disposable income of potential travellers. At the same time, political unrest and conflicts in key regions, particularly in Europe, have disrupted travel routes, increased safety concerns, and led to fluctuating demand in certain destinations. These risks, combined with the ongoing recovery from the pandemic, present significant hurdles for tourism operators.

To navigate this complex landscape, tourism businesses must rethink traditional management strategies and adopt innovative approaches. The key to survival lies in flexibility, creativity, and a willingness to take calculated risks. This article outlines 10 essential principles of successful tourism management, designed to help businesses adapt to these challenging times. Each principle is aimed at addressing the core issues facing the industry today, from managing rising costs to enhancing customer satisfaction and implementing technological solutions.

In an era of uncertainty, tourism operators must not only focus on short-term survival but also position themselves for long-term growth. This requires a forward-thinking mindset, embracing digital transformation, and being open to new market trends. The 10 principles presented here provide a practical framework for tourism managers to follow, helping them stay resilient, improve customer engagement, and make strategic decisions that will ensure their business thrives in an increasingly volatile global environment.

## **Literature Review**

Effective tourism management has become a critical area of focus for both researchers and industry professionals due to the rapidly changing global environment. Scholars have increasingly explored how businesses can adapt to crises such as pandemics, economic downturns, and geopolitical instability while optimizing operations to maintain growth.

Tourism management has become an essential focus for both academics and industry professionals, particularly in light of recent global crises. Existing research extensively discusses the importance of technology, customer satisfaction, and innovation in tourism, but it often falls short in addressing how these concepts can specifically contribute to crisis management and long-term resilience.

While Buhalis (2020) and Sigala (2020) provide valuable insights into how digital tools transform customer engagement and service optimization, they do not offer a comprehensive framework for integrating these tools into a crisis management strategy. Buhalis focuses on technology's role in enhancing the customer experience but lacks a discussion on how these same tools can be leveraged during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, when customer needs and behaviours shift drastically.

Similarly, Sigala (2020) emphasizes the potential of digital transformation, but her study overlooks the operational challenges that small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMEs) face when trying to implement these technologies during uncertain times. The rapid adoption of digital tools is critical, but the literature needs to better address the question how these technologies can be used to maintain operational efficiency and manage financial pressures in a crisis context.

Another gap in the existing literature is the lack of consensus on how to balance risk-taking with sustainability in tourism management. Tussyadiah et al. (2017) argue that risk-driven decisions foster innovation and market differentiation, yet other researchers such as Pappas (2018) warn that excessive risk-taking, especially in times of crisis, can lead to long-term financial instability for tourism businesses. The literature is divided on how to effectively manage risk without compromising sustainability, and there is limited empirical evidence on the success of these strategies during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pechlaner et al. (2004) highlight the importance of building resilience to future disruptions, recommending that tourism operators diversify their business models and proactively plan for external shocks. However, their work does not provide a detailed roadmap for how SMEs in tourism can realistically achieve this diversification, especially when resources are already stretched thin. More critical analysis is needed to explore how theoretical models of resilience can be practically applied in real-world tourism settings.

Gössling et al. (2020) offer valuable insights into the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on global tourism, stressing the importance of rapid decision-making and flexibility. However, their study lacks a clear focus on the long-term strategies that businesses can employ to recover sustainably. While short-term measures are critical, the literature must place greater emphasis on developing frameworks that ensure long-term viability and growth in the tourism sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the most disruptive events in the history of the tourism industry. Research by Gössling et al. (2020) highlights how the pandemic forced tourism businesses to rethink their operations and adopt innovative strategies to survive. The authors stress that successful management during such crises requires a blend of flexibility, rapid decision-making, and the ability to navigate complex logistical challenges. Additionally, Pechlaner et al. (2004) point out that tourism management must also focus on building resilience to future disruptions, recommending that operators prepare for external shocks through diversification and proactive planning. The Covid-19 pandemic is proving to be a key factor in the reorganization of the activities of organizations from all branches that strive to create products for the mass market. Even with the temporary suspension of business operations, many of them have been able to innovate and organize planned activities in readiness for new pandemics.

Improving customer satisfaction is a recurring theme in tourism management literature. According to Buhalis (2020), technology plays an integral role in enhancing customer experience, allowing businesses to deliver personalized services that meet the evolving needs of travellers. The importance of measuring and responding to customer feedback is also noted by Zhang and Fu (2020), who suggest that continuous feedback loops can help businesses optimize their service offerings. This aligns with our principle of actively trying the product from a customer's perspective to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

The ability to take calculated risks is crucial for tourism businesses in uncertain times. Studies by Tussyadiah et al. (2017) emphasize that innovation often comes from risk-driven decisions that enable businesses to stand out in competitive markets. Risk-taking, combined with the adoption of emerging technologies like virtual and augmented reality, has become a powerful strategy for tourism businesses seeking to diversify their offerings and tap into new markets.

Optimization in tourism is another key focus of research. According to Koutoulas et al. (2009), optimization strategies should be designed to improve cost-efficiency, resource allocation, and overall productivity. This is particularly relevant for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism industry, which often struggle with limited resources. While optimization strategies are critical for SMEs, Buhalis and Amaranggana (2015) extend this concept by emphasizing that technological integration not only improves efficiency but also elevates customer experiences through personalization. Moreover, Buhalis and Amaranggana (2015) argue that smart tourism destinations – those that leverage data analytics and digital tools – are better positioned to optimize operations and provide superior customer experiences.

The rapid adoption of digital technologies has transformed tourism management. Literature by Sigala (2020) underscores the importance of digital tools in helping tourism operators streamline processes, enhance customer engage-

ment, and achieve higher levels of operational efficiency. In particular, the integration of AI, big data, and cloud computing into tourism management systems has been shown to drastically improve decision-making capabilities and allow businesses to react to real-time market trends.

Buhalis (2020) discusses the role of technology in transforming tourism and highlights the importance of digital tools in creating personalized experiences for travellers. The impact of global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism has been extensively analysed by Gössling et al. (2020), who emphasize the need for flexibility and innovation to adapt to such disruptions. Sigala (2020) notes that the pandemic accelerated digital transformation in the tourism industry, leading to changes in both consumer behaviour and business practices.

In their study, Tussyadiah et al. (2017) highlight the role of virtual reality in shaping traveller perceptions and providing immersive tourism experiences, showing how technology can enhance customer satisfaction. The resilience of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism industry during external crises is explored by Zehrer and Raich (2016), who argue that proactive planning and diversification are key to survival.

Buhalis and Amaranggana (2015) emphasize that smart tourism destinations leverage personalized services and technological innovation to improve the overall visitor experience.

The importance of customer experience in the sharing economy and tourism is highlighted by Chandra et al. (2022), who found that personalization plays a crucial role in customer satisfaction within accommodation services. Ritchie and Jiang (2019) offer a comprehensive review of crisis management in tourism, providing insights into how businesses can mitigate risks and recover from disasters. Choi and Sirakaya (2006) identify key sustainability indicators that are essential for managing community-based tourism, stressing the need for long-term planning and resource management. In a study on decision-making during crises, Pappas (2018) discusses how hotels can adapt their operations to handle multiple challenges at once, providing a framework for effective crisis management.

Casal-Ribeiro et al. (2023) conducted a meta-analysis of crisis management frameworks in the tourism and hospitality sector, highlighting the importance of proactive planning and long-term resilience in the industry. The role of stakeholder-centred approaches in managing tourism crises is emphasized by Ritchie and Jiang (2019), who advocate for collaboration among stakeholders to build resilient tourism systems.

According to Yuleva-Chuchulayna (2021), the crisis has clearly shown that many business models need to change, that many business and administrative procedures can be made more efficient. The crisis also shows the great dependence of modern society on information and communication technologies and clearly outlines the upcoming processes of digitization and automation, which

require timely adaptation by society. Rockström et al. (2023) discuss the importance of building a resilient future in tourism as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, stressing the need for sustainable and innovative strategies. Spenceley et al. (2021) explore how tourism in protected areas has been impacted by the pandemic, emphasizing the need for sustainable tourism practices to maintain ecological balance.

Wright and Sharpley (2016) introduce the concept of dark tourism, exploring how disaster-struck areas can attract tourists and contribute to economic recovery in those regions. Farmaki et al. (2022) point out the significant negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on international tourism, while also discussing potential recovery strategies for the sector. Kuckertz and Brandle (2022) propose that disaster management in tourism requires creative reconstruction to help destinations recover and rebuild after crises.

Saarinen and Tervo (2006) focus on the adaptation strategies of tourism businesses in response to climate change, offering insights on resilience in the nature-based tourism sector. Sharifi (2016) critically reviews various tools used to assess community resilience in tourism, offering suggestions for strengthening resilience frameworks.

Overall, the literature on tourism management reflects a strong consensus that successful businesses must be adaptable, customer-focused, and technologically innovative. By applying these principles, tourism managers can better navigate current challenges and position themselves for long-term success.

## The 10 Principles of Successful Tourism Management

In an industry as dynamic and competitive as tourism, effective management requires more than just reacting to immediate challenges. To achieve long-term success, businesses must adopt strategies that address both the current demands of travellers and the evolving landscape of the tourism sector. The following **10 principles of successful tourism management** offer a comprehensive framework to help tourism operators navigate these complexities, improve customer satisfaction, and build resilient, forward-thinking operations. Each principle is designed to provide practical insights and actionable advice, backed by real-world examples that highlight the importance of innovation, customer focus, and sustainability in today's global tourism market. These principles, systematically summarized below, integrate theoretical insights from contemporary research with actionable strategies validated by industry practitioners, ensuring a balance of academic rigor and practical relevance:

1. Use undercover people to detect problems.
2. Take calculated risks through strategic investments.

3. Experience your product firsthand.
4. Embrace technology to enhance customer experience.
5. Prioritize long-term sustainability.
6. Stay ahead of industry trends.
7. Provide continuous staff training.
8. Build strong local community relationships.
9. Prioritize personalization and customization.
10. Monitor feedback and continuously improve.

Each principle is elaborated in detail, combining theoretical underpinnings with illustrative case studies to demonstrate its applicability across diverse tourism contexts.

### **Principle 1: Use undercover people to detect problems**

One of the most effective ways to evaluate the quality of service and identify operational issues is to employ undercover methods, such as mystery shoppers or anonymous inspectors. These individuals pose as regular customers and interact with various aspects of the business without staff knowing they are being assessed. This allows management to obtain a true picture of how services are delivered, identifying potential issues that might be overlooked in formal evaluations.

Mystery shopping can reveal gaps in customer service, operational inefficiencies, or even detect ethical issues such as overcharging or poor handling of complaints. This method is especially important in the tourism and hospitality industry, where customer satisfaction is key to repeat business and positive reviews (Fig. 1).

This principle highlights the importance of gathering genuine customer feedback through mystery shoppers and undercover evaluators. It aligns with Zeng and He (2018), who emphasize the need for continuous feedback loops to optimize service offerings in the tourism industry.

However, the use of undercover evaluations goes a step further by providing more detailed insights into operational inefficiencies that might be missed through standard customer feedback channels. While Buhalis (2020) stresses the role of technology in enhancing customer experiences, the mystery shopper approach addresses deeper issues related to service quality that technology alone may not capture. Zeng and He (2018) suggest that continuous feedback from customers can help businesses refine their offerings, but this principle expands on that idea by employing direct, undercover evaluations to capture more subtle service deficiencies.

Example: A leading hotel chain in the U.S. routinely hires undercover guests to stay at their properties. One such guest observed that although the hotel's amenities were excellent, the staff's response time to guest requests was slower than expected. Based on this feedback, the hotel management adjusted their

staff allocation during peak hours, significantly improving guest satisfaction and overall reviews.

In another instance, a tour operator discovered through undercover evaluators that the local guides they employed were not following the agreed-upon itineraries, resulting in customer complaints. After this discovery, the company retrained its guides and introduced stricter monitoring to ensure compliance.

**Key Takeaway:** This principle emphasizes the importance of seeing your business through the eyes of a customer. By gathering feedback through undercover evaluations, tourism managers can proactively address issues and fine-tune operations to enhance the overall customer experience.



*Fig. 1*

The process of using undercover evaluations to detect operational problems in tourism businesses.

Source: The authors

Table 1 presents an illustrative step-by-step breakdown of the mystery shopping process, from the recruitment of undercover personnel to implementing improvements.

Table 1

*Detailed step-by-step process of organizing mystery shopping*

| Step                                   | Objective                                                                                           | Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Recruitment of Undercover Personnel | Select individuals who match the profile of typical customers to perform the mystery shopping task. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop a detailed profile of the ideal "mystery shopper" (e.g., demographic, behaviour).</li> <li>– Partner with a third-party agency that specializes in mystery shopping, or recruit in-house by offering temporary roles to external testers.</li> <li>– Ensure that selected personnel are trained on how to objectively assess different service aspects without revealing their identity.</li> </ul> |

Table 1 (cont.)

| Step                                       | Objective                                                                                                                   | Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2. Assignment of Specific Tasks            | Clearly define what the mystery shoppers are expected to evaluate (e.g., customer service, cleanliness, product knowledge). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Create a checklist of specific tasks or interactions the mystery shoppers will need to perform (e.g., booking a room, requesting information from staff, dining at a restaurant).</li><li>– Outline specific situations to evaluate, such as how complaints are handled or how staff respond to inquiries.</li><li>– Provide guidelines on how to document each interaction objectively.</li></ul> |
| 3. Conducting the Mystery Shopping         | Mystery shoppers execute their tasks without revealing their purpose.                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Mystery shoppers visit the location, interact with staff, and experience services as normal customers.</li><li>– They take notes (discreetly) or record observations immediately after each interaction to ensure accuracy.</li><li>– They remain anonymous and avoid giving any indication that they are evaluating the service.</li></ul>                                                        |
| 4. Gathering Data and Feedback             | Collect the insights and experiences gathered by mystery shoppers.                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Mystery shoppers submit detailed reports based on their observations (using the pre-defined checklist and adding any additional notes).</li><li>– Reports include both quantitative data (e.g., time taken to address a query) and qualitative feedback (e.g., tone of voice, attitude).</li><li>– All reports are collected for review by the management team</li></ul>                           |
| 5. Analyzing Data and Identifying Problems | Analyze the mystery shoppers' feedback to identify strengths and weaknesses.                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Compare the findings across different mystery shoppers to look for patterns or recurring issues.</li><li>– Analyze service performance based on criteria such as response time, quality of service, product knowledge, and overall experience.</li><li>– Identify areas where performance falls below expectations, as well as aspects that customers respond positively to</li></ul>              |
| 6. Implementing Improvements               | Use the data to make actionable improvements.                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Develop a plan for addressing the identified problems (e.g., additional staff training, changes to processes or service offerings).</li><li>– Implement changes to improve service quality, based on the feedback gathered.</li><li>– Set measurable goals to track the success of the changes, ensuring ongoing improvement in the areas highlighted by the mystery shoppers.</li></ul>           |

Table 1 (cont.)

| Step                                   | Objective                                                              | Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7. Follow-up and Continuous Monitoring | Ensure the improvements are effective and maintain ongoing monitoring. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Schedule follow-up mystery shopping sessions to evaluate if the changes have been successfully implemented.</li> <li>– Continuously monitor customer feedback and staff performance to ensure improvements are sustained.</li> <li>– Adjust strategies as necessary based on ongoing feedback.</li> </ul> |

Source: Authors' own work

## Principle 2: Take calculated risks through strategic investments

In times of uncertainty, many tourism businesses may feel tempted to cut costs and avoid risky investments. However, long-term success often requires strategic risk-taking and calculated risks. Investing in technology, improving customer experience, and expanding services can help businesses stand out in competitive markets. Rather than holding back, successful tourism operators take measured risks that can lead to growth and differentiation.

Smart investments during challenging times can future-proof a business, positioning it to emerge stronger when conditions improve. While risky decisions carry potential downsides, failing to invest can also lead to stagnation and missed opportunities.

In an uncertain tourism environment, strategic risk-taking and calculated risks are necessary to foster innovation and differentiation. Tussyadiah et al. (2017) support this viewpoint, arguing that innovation often stems from risk-driven strategies. However, our principle also considers the financial sustainability of such risks. While Pappas (2018) warns of the dangers of excessive risk-taking, this principle advocates for strategic investments in technology and customer experience, which are necessary for long-term success.

Tussyadiah et al. (2017) focus on how risk-taking leads to differentiation in competitive markets. This principle builds on that idea by offering practical examples of how calculated risks, such as investing in technology, can help businesses stay competitive while ensuring sustainability according to the Center for Internet Security (n.d.).

### Risk-Reduction ROI Equation

**ROI = (reduction in risk '\$' – cost of control) / cost of control**

$$ROI = \frac{(Rr - Cc)}{Cc}$$

Where:

- **ROI** = Return on investment
- **Rr** = Reduction in risk
- **Cc** = Cost of control

Thus:

**Reduction in risk = Annualized rate of occurrence x Expected monetary loss for a single event x reduction in probability of risk occurrence with the implemented control**

Example: During the global travel slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a small hotel in Portugal decided to invest in refurbishing its property and enhancing its website. The investment included high-quality photos, virtual tours, and online booking optimization. When tourism began to recover, the hotel saw a significant increase in bookings from new markets, thanks to its improved online presence.

Similarly, a safari lodge in Kenya took a risk by investing in live virtual safaris during travel restrictions. These virtual experiences generated revenue, increased global visibility, and attracted new customers who later booked physical trips once restrictions were lifted.

**Key Takeaway:** Risk-taking is an essential component of successful tourism management. Strategic investments, even in uncertain times, can help businesses differentiate themselves and position for long-term growth.

### **Principle 3: Experience your product firsthand (to identify operational gaps)**

While data-driven decisions are crucial, there is still value in trusting your instincts as a business leader. As a tourism manager, one of the best ways to understand your product is by experiencing it firsthand. Testing your own services gives you the opportunity to identify areas of improvement, experience customer pain points, and discover what sets your offering apart from competitors.

This principle emphasizes the value of firsthand experience for tourism managers. By personally experiencing their own services, managers can better identify gaps and areas for improvement. This approach is supported by Sigala (2020), who highlights the importance of personalization in the customer experience. However, this principle adds a personal, intuitive layer that complements data-driven decisions. Managers must combine personal insights with customer feedback and technological tools to deliver optimal service. While Sigala (2020) discusses the role of technology in improving customer experience, this principle emphasizes the need for managers to personally experience the product to detect issues that may not be captured through digital tools alone.

This principle also emphasizes the importance of intuition in decision-making. While feedback and metrics are vital, your personal experience and industry knowledge should guide key business strategies.

Example: A travel agency owner decided to take one of the guided tours offered by their company. During the experience, the owner noticed that certain activities were rushed, and guests were not provided with sufficient time to explore key landmarks. Based on this insight, they adjusted the itinerary, which led to higher customer satisfaction and improved reviews.

In another case, the founder of a boutique hotel chain regularly stayed at their properties to test room comfort, service quality, and food offerings. This firsthand experience enabled the founder to make immediate adjustments to the guest experience, contributing to the chain's success.

**Key Takeaway:** Leverage managerial intuition. Using your professional intuition and experiencing your product firsthand allows you to see it through the eyes of the customer. This approach fosters continuous improvement and ensures that your service meets the highest standards.

#### **Principle 4: Embrace technology to enhance customer experience**

The integration of technology in tourism management is no longer optional but essential for staying competitive. From AI-powered chatbots to virtual reality tours, technology enhances the customer experience and streamlines operations.

By embracing technology, tourism businesses can offer personalized services, reduce operational costs, and improve customer engagement (Fig. 2).

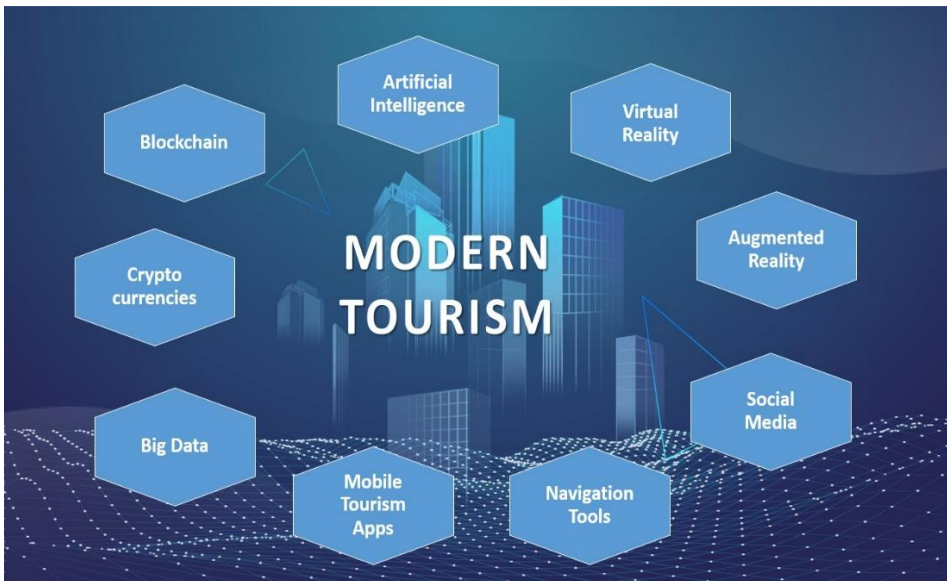


*Fig. 2*

Technological tools and their role in enhancing customer experiences in the tourism industry

Source: The authors, 2024

The role of technology in tourism management has been widely acknowledged, with Buhalis and Amaranggana (2015) discussing how smart tourism destinations utilize personalized services and digital innovation. However, this principle goes beyond the adoption of technology to stress the need for businesses to continuously upgrade and integrate new tools, such as AI and virtual reality, to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving market.

This principle aligns with Buhalis and Amaranggana (2015) but also highlights the practical steps tourism managers can take to embrace cutting-edge technology as a way to enhance customer satisfaction and streamline operations.

Technology also allows tourism operators to collect valuable data on customer behaviour, preferences, and satisfaction. This data can be used to optimize services, design personalized offers, and address customer needs more efficiently.

Example: A large cruise line introduced a mobile app that allowed guests to book shore excursions, order room service, and communicate with staff directly. This technology not only improved customer satisfaction but also reduced the workload for the staff, allowing them to focus on higher-priority tasks.

Another example comes from a theme park that introduced a virtual queuing system. Guests could book their spot in line through an app, allowing them to enjoy other attractions while waiting. This technological upgrade led to shorter wait times and a more enjoyable guest experience.

**Key Takeaway:** Embracing new technologies is critical for delivering a superior customer experience. From mobile apps to virtual experiences, tourism businesses that integrate technology into their operations will better meet the needs of modern travellers.

### **Principle 5: Prioritize long-term sustainability**

Sustainability is becoming increasingly important in the tourism industry as travellers become more aware of their environmental impact. Implementing eco-friendly practices not only helps preserve destinations but also appeals to environmentally conscious travellers. Sustainability should be embedded in business strategies, from reducing waste to supporting local communities and promoting responsible tourism.

Sustainability in tourism is a key topic in current literature, with a focus on minimizing environmental impact while ensuring long-term business viability. Weaver (2012) emphasizes the rise of "organic mass tourism" as a growing trend that balances the mass tourism model with ecological sustainability. However, the application of sustainability in crisis situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has not been extensively addressed. This principle stresses the importance of not only adopting sustainable practices during stable periods but also maintaining these practices in times of crisis. This expands upon the work

of Fennell (2008), who critiques the often romanticized notion of sustainable tourism and highlights the difficulties of maintaining ecological stewardship when businesses face economic pressures. Weaver (2012) discusses the potential of sustainable tourism models, but this principle highlights the need for a consistent commitment to sustainability, even during financial downturns or crises.

Long-term sustainability ensures that tourism businesses can thrive without depleting the resources or harming the environments that make their destinations attractive.

Example 1: An eco-resort in Costa Rica implemented several sustainable practices, such as using solar energy, reducing plastic waste, and sourcing food locally. These efforts not only reduced the resort's environmental footprint but also attracted a growing number of eco-conscious travellers.

Example 2: In addition, a tour company in Iceland began offering carbon-neutral tours, allowing guests to enjoy the beauty of nature without contributing to its degradation. The company partnered with local environmental organizations to offset carbon emissions, which helped attract environmentally responsible tourists.

Case study: The Jungle Bay Eco-Resort, located on the Caribbean island of Dominica, is a small-scale sustainable tourism enterprise that has successfully integrated eco-friendly business practices while maintaining profitability (Jungle Bay Dominica, n.d.). The resort focuses on responsible tourism, minimizing its environmental footprint while offering a high-quality guest experience (Slinger-Friedman, 2009).

The resort has implemented several sustainability initiatives to minimize its environmental footprint while enhancing its operational efficiency. It has fully transitioned to renewable energy, relying on 100% solar-powered electricity and rainwater harvesting systems to reduce dependency on non-renewable resources. Additionally, energy-efficient LED lighting and a passive cooling design further optimize energy consumption.

A strong focus has been placed on waste reduction and the elimination of single-use plastics, which have been replaced with biodegradable alternatives. To promote a circular economy, all organic waste is composted and utilized in the resort's on-site organic farm, providing fresh, locally sourced produce for guest meals.

The resort is deeply committed to local community engagement and economic support, with 85% of its workforce consisting of local employees, ensuring that tourism revenues benefit the surrounding region. It actively collaborates with local artisans and farmers, helping to preserve traditional craftsmanship while boosting the local economy.

Environmental conservation is also a priority, as the resort encourages guests to participate in tree-planting programs aimed at offsetting their carbon

footprint. Since 2018, over 1,500 trees have been planted, contributing to on-going reforestation efforts.

These sustainability initiatives have led to notable business and environmental benefits. According to guest satisfaction surveys, 87% of visitors selected the resort specifically for its strong sustainability policies. Additionally, its energy and water conservation strategies have resulted in a 22% reduction in operating costs. Recognized as a model for eco-tourism best practices, the resort has earned Green Globe certification, further solidifying its commitment to responsible tourism (Green Globe, 2023).

Jungle Bay demonstrates that small-scale eco-tourism ventures can be both environmentally sustainable and financially viable. By investing in green technologies and fostering community partnerships, SMEs in the tourism sector can attract responsible travellers, improve operational efficiency, and contribute to long-term sustainability.

**Key Takeaway:** Focusing on sustainability is not only the right thing to do for the environment, but it also makes good business sense. Tourists increasingly prefer eco-friendly businesses, and sustainable practices can boost a company's reputation and profitability.

### **Principle 6: Stay ahead of trends**

The tourism industry is constantly evolving, with new trends emerging regularly. To remain competitive, tourism businesses need to stay ahead of these trends and adapt their offerings accordingly. This could mean responding to shifting customer preferences for sustainable travel, experiential tourism, or wellness retreats. By being proactive and recognizing emerging trends early, businesses can position themselves as leaders in their markets.

Remaining adaptable and flexible in your product offerings ensures that your business stays relevant and meets the demands of future travellers. Monitoring social media, attending industry events, and engaging with customer feedback can provide valuable insights into upcoming trends.

Customer behaviour in tourism is dynamic, and crisis situations significantly alter customer priorities and preferences. Richards (2011) discusses cultural tourism and the evolving expectations of tourists, especially in heritage-rich regions. However, crises like pandemics demand even more flexibility in understanding and adapting to changes in customer needs, such as an increased preference for local or virtual experiences. This principle emphasizes the importance of real-time customer feedback and adjusting services to meet these changing expectations, which is not always a focus in traditional tourism literature. Richards (2011) discusses shifting customer expectations in the context of cultural tourism, but this principle extends the conversation by focusing on how businesses must rapidly adapt to crisis-induced changes in customer behaviour.

Example: A resort in Bali noticed the growing popularity of wellness tourism and decided to shift its focus to offer more wellness programs, such as yoga retreats, meditation workshops, and organic dining. This change attracted a new segment of health-conscious travellers and significantly increased occupancy rates during the low season.

Another example is a tour operator in Iceland that capitalized on the rising demand for sustainable tourism by offering eco-friendly tours that highlight natural beauty while minimizing environmental impact.

**Key Takeaway:** Staying ahead of industry trends helps tourism businesses adapt and thrive in a constantly changing market. Recognizing emerging trends early can lead to innovative offerings that attract new customer segments.

### Principle 7: Continuous training for staff

The success of any tourism business is closely tied to the skills and competence of its staff. Regular training ensures that employees stay up-to-date with industry trends, technological advances, and evolving customer expectations. Well-trained staff are more capable of delivering high-quality services, which directly impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Ongoing training programs also motivate employees by providing them with opportunities for professional development, resulting in improved job performance and lower turnover rates (Fig. 3).

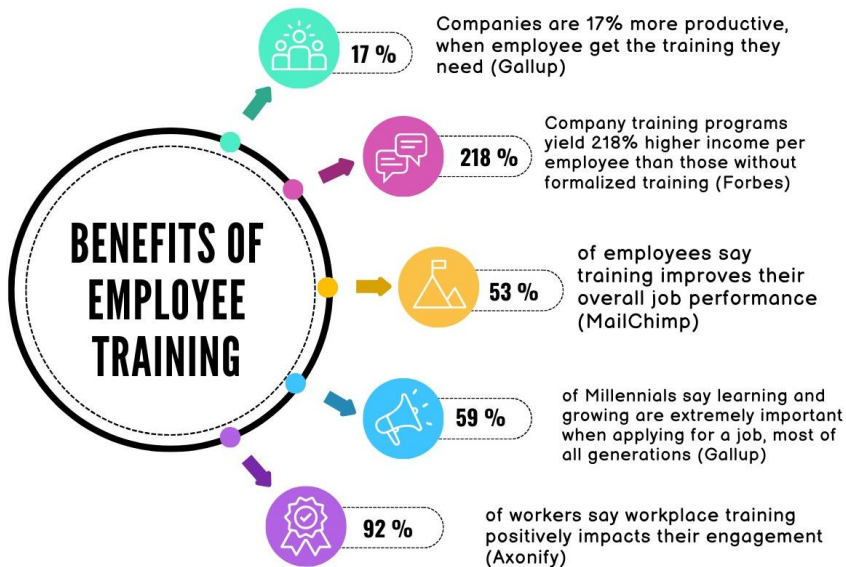


Fig. 3

Benefits of employee training

Source: The authors (based on external sources)

Employee training is critical in maintaining service quality and operational efficiency, especially during crises. Fennell (2008) argues for continuous investment in employee training to promote sustainability in tourism. This principle extends that argument by emphasizing the need for crisis-specific training that equips employees with the skills to manage sudden changes, such as handling health and safety protocols or implementing new technologies quickly. This builds a more adaptable workforce that can respond to crises effectively. Fennell (2008) highlights the importance of training in sustainability, but this principle emphasizes the need for training that specifically prepares employees to handle crises, ensuring operational continuity.

Here are presented some key conclusions of a survey focused on employee training, conducted by The Growth Blueprint Newsletter (2024).

- Companies are 17% more productive when employees get the training they need (Gallup).
- Company training programs yield 218% higher income per employee than those without formalized training (Forbes).
- 53% of employees say training improves their overall job performance (Mail-Chimp).
- 59% of Millennials say learning and growth opportunities are extremely important when applying for a job (Gallup).
- 92% of workers says workplace training positively impacts their job engagement (Axonify).

The results are obvious and clear. Staff training is a key factor in the success of a business. This is especially true in today's fast-paced and ever-changing world, where customers can immediately leave reviews on social media and apps regarding the quality of service they have received, thus impacting the overall image and rating of the company. Every good manager must be able to rely on well-trained staff who regularly update their skills and abilities, increase their motivation and loyalty, and thus contribute to the success of the business as a united team.

Example: A luxury hotel chain implemented a quarterly training program to update employees on the latest customer service techniques, hospitality trends, and technology tools. As a result, the hotel saw a significant improvement in guest satisfaction scores, with guests praising the professionalism and knowledge of staff.

A tour operator in Italy offered language and cultural sensitivity training to its guides, allowing them to better engage with international travellers and improve the overall guest experience. This helped the company attract a more diverse clientele and increase bookings from overseas.

**Key Takeaway:** Continuous training is essential for maintaining high standards of service. Investing in staff development ensures that employees are

equipped to handle the evolving demands of the tourism industry and deliver exceptional customer experiences.

### **Principle 8: Build strong relationships with local communities**

Tourism businesses that build strong relationships with local communities can create more authentic and sustainable experiences for travellers. By collaborating with local residents, businesses can gain access to local knowledge, support local economies, and create a positive impact on the destination. This fosters goodwill between the business and the community, making it easier to operate sustainably and ethically.

Collaborating with local communities is crucial for building resilient tourism businesses. Bramwell and Lane (2011) stress that partnerships between tourism businesses and local stakeholders are essential for sustainable tourism development. This principle builds on that idea by focusing on how these partnerships can enhance crisis recovery. Local communities often provide the cultural, environmental, and human resources needed to create authentic tourism experiences, but during crises, these relationships become even more important as they can help businesses re-engage with their core markets. Bramwell and Lane (2011) explore the role of local partnerships in sustainability, and this principle extends that concept to emphasize how these relationships can support businesses during and after crises.

Engaging local communities also allows tourism businesses to offer unique, culturally immersive experiences that set them apart from competitors.

Effective tourism management requires staying informed about external factors, such as political shifts, economic changes, and global trends. Hall and Page (2014) highlight the importance of understanding the broader geographical and environmental context in tourism. However, their work does not fully address how businesses should respond to rapidly changing external conditions during crises.

This principle suggests a proactive approach – monitoring these factors continuously to anticipate disruptions and adapt strategies accordingly. Hall and Page (2014) provide a foundational understanding of external influences on tourism, but this principle pushes further by recommending continuous monitoring to ensure businesses remain adaptable in crisis situations.

Example 1: A boutique hotel in Thailand collaborated with local artisans to offer workshops on traditional crafts and cuisine. This partnership not only provided guests with an authentic cultural experience but also supported the local economy and preserved traditional knowledge.

Example 2: In another case, a tour company in South Africa hired local guides and worked with community leaders to ensure that tourism revenue contrib-

uted to conservation efforts and local development projects. This approach strengthened the company's reputation for responsible tourism and earned the trust of the community.

Case study: Andes Paths, a small adventure tourism company based in Cusco, Peru, specializes in sustainable trekking tours along the Inca Trail and alternative routes to Machu Picchu (Andes Paths, n.d.). Unlike larger tour operators, Andes Paths prioritizes community-based tourism, ensuring local Quechua communities benefit directly from tourism revenues (Mitchell & Eagles, 2021).

Andes Paths has established a strong model of community collaboration, ensuring that its tourism operations provide tangible benefits to local populations. The company employs over 120 Quechua porters and guides, offering them wages that are 30% higher than the industry standard. In contrast to many larger tour operators, Andes Paths provides its employees with life insurance, healthcare benefits, and access to educational opportunities, enhancing their quality of life and long-term economic security.

Beyond employment, the company is committed to preserving and promoting indigenous culture. Guests are invited to engage in Quechua weaving workshops, pottery making, and traditional Andean cooking classes, which not only offer immersive experiences but also create alternative income sources for local families. These activities play a crucial role in sustaining indigenous knowledge and ensuring that cultural traditions remain vibrant and relevant.

Environmental responsibility is another pillar of Andes Paths' mission. The company enforces strict "Leave No Trace" policies on its trekking routes to minimize ecological impact. Additionally, it organizes annual clean-up treks aimed at removing waste left by less responsible operators. A portion of the company's profits is allocated to reforestation projects in the Sacred Valley, further reinforcing its commitment to sustainability.

The economic and social impact of these initiatives has been significant. More than 200 rural families in Andean villages directly benefit from Andes Paths' operations, and the company has experienced an impressive 35% year-over-year growth, driven by increasing demand for authentic and ethical travel experiences. Its efforts in sustainable tourism have earned it the "Best Sustainable Tour Operator" Award from the Peruvian Ministry of Tourism in 2022, further validating its role as a leader in responsible tourism practices (Peruvian Ministry of Tourism, 2023).

Andes Paths showcases how community-based tourism can foster economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism growth. SMEs can gain a competitive edge by emphasizing authenticity, fair labour practices, and environmental responsibility, which align with the growing global demand for ethical travel experiences.

**Key Takeaway:** Building strong relationships with local communities enhances the authenticity of tourism experiences and ensures long-term sustainability. Businesses that collaborate with locals can offer unique experiences while contributing to the well-being of the destination.

### **Principle 9: Focus on personalization and customization**

Today's travellers expect personalized experiences tailored to their preferences. Tourism businesses that offer customized services – whether through personalized travel itineraries, room amenities, or dining options – can stand out in a crowded market. Personalization can be achieved through data analytics, guest feedback, and technology that allows for tailored services.

By understanding individual customer preferences, businesses can deliver more meaningful experiences, increase customer satisfaction, and encourage repeat bookings.

**Example:** A luxury cruise line used data analytics to track guest preferences and create personalized travel itineraries. Guests were offered personalized shore excursions based on their interests, resulting in higher satisfaction and repeat bookings.

A boutique hotel in Paris offered customized room packages for honeymooners, families, and solo travellers, each tailored to the specific needs and preferences of those groups. This approach led to higher occupancy rates and positive reviews, as guests felt that their experience was uniquely catered to them.

**Key Takeaway:** Focusing on personalization and customization allows tourism businesses to create more meaningful and memorable experiences for their customers. Tailored services can lead to higher satisfaction, increased loyalty, and stronger brand differentiation.

### **Principle 10: Monitor feedback and continuously improve**

To stay competitive in the tourism industry, it is essential to continuously monitor customer feedback and use it to make improvements. Whether through online reviews, social media, or direct feedback, listening to what your customers say provides valuable insights into areas that need improvement and what aspects of your service are working well.

Monitoring feedback allows businesses to identify patterns in customer preferences, address complaints quickly, and make adjustments that enhance the overall guest experience. Continuous improvement should be a cornerstone of any tourism management strategy.

Innovation is a crucial driver of competitiveness in tourism. Buhalis and Amrangana (2015) discuss the role of smart technologies in enhancing tourism

experiences. However, innovation during crises must go beyond technological improvements. This principle focuses on fostering a culture of continuous innovation that encourages businesses to adapt their entire operational model when necessary. Whether through new service offerings, operational efficiencies, or adopting new market strategies, continuous innovation is essential for resilience. Buhalis and Amaranggana (2015) discuss the role of technology in driving innovation, and this principle broadens the scope by stressing the need for continuous, holistic innovation, especially in response to crisis situations.

Example: A family-owned bed and breakfast in Scotland used guest feedback from online reviews to improve its breakfast offerings and room amenities. After implementing the suggested changes, the B&B saw a sharp increase in guest satisfaction and repeat bookings.

A global hotel chain actively monitored its social media channels for feedback and comments, responding to customer concerns in real-time. This quick response to guest feedback helped build a positive brand reputation and fostered stronger customer loyalty.

Key Takeaway: Regularly monitoring customer feedback is essential for identifying areas of improvement and ensuring continuous growth. A commitment to improvement demonstrates that a business values its customers and is dedicated to providing the best possible experience.

## Conclusion

The tourism industry faces a range of challenges that demand innovative and resilient management strategies. By applying the 10 principles of successful tourism management, businesses can navigate uncertainties, enhance customer satisfaction, and build sustainable operations that stand the test of time. These principles emphasize the importance of embracing technology, investing in staff training, fostering strong community relationships, and continuously improving services through customer feedback (Fig. 4).

As tourism businesses continue to evolve, the ability to adapt quickly to market changes and customer demands is more critical than ever. The 10 principles provide a roadmap for navigating these complexities by fostering agility and innovation. Implementing data-driven strategies, coupled with a customer-centric approach, allows tourism operators to predict market shifts and respond proactively. Moreover, by embracing sustainability practices, businesses not only preserve their long-term profitability but also contribute to the conservation of the destinations they rely on.

Ultimately, the integration of technology, personalized experiences, and strong community ties will differentiate successful tourism enterprises in the

years to come. These principles are not only vital for short-term recovery from crises but also for building a resilient and future-proof tourism model.



*Fig. 4*

Overview of the 10 principles of successful tourism management

Source: The authors, 2024

By remaining focused on continuous improvement and aligning operations with global trends, businesses can thrive in a competitive landscape while offering unparalleled value to both their customers and the destinations they serve.

This paper contributes to the ongoing discourse in tourism management by presenting 10 universal principles designed to help businesses navigate crises while improving operational performance. These principles offer a unique theoretical contribution by integrating crisis management strategies with daily operational practices, particularly focusing on adaptability, customer satisfaction, and sustainability.

The managerial implications of the 10 principles are significant. Tourism managers are encouraged to implement undercover evaluations, embrace technology, and maintain resilience through strategic investments in staff training and customer engagement. These measures, when applied consistently, can lead to improved crisis readiness and overall business stability.

However, there are some limitations to the study. The proposed principles focus primarily on specific sectors within tourism, such as hospitality and tour operators. Future research could extend these concepts to other niches like eco-tourism or adventure tourism.

Additionally, future studies should explore how the principles perform in different cultural and regional contexts, providing further validation and refinement.

In conclusion, the 10 principles outlined in this paper represent a robust framework for improving the tourism industry's resilience to crises. Future research should focus on testing these principles across a broader range of businesses and environments to ensure their applicability and long-term success.

In an ever-changing landscape, tourism operators must balance risk-taking with strategic planning, remain flexible to emerging trends, and focus on long-term sustainability. By following these principles, businesses can not only survive crises but also emerge stronger, better positioned to offer exceptional experiences to travellers. Ultimately, success in tourism management hinges on the ability to innovate, adapt, and prioritize the evolving needs of both the destination and the customer.

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#### DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *10 Principles of Successful Tourism Management. A Unified Guide for Training Managers and Staff to Overcome Crises in Tourism*.

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#### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

**Vladimir Karadzhov:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Analysis, Validation, Original Draft, Review & Editing.

**Adriana Atanasova:** Data Curation, Investigation, Visualization.

All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

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**BIOGRAMY, DYSKUSJE, POLEMIKI, RECENZJE,  
PRZEGLĄD WYDAWNICTW, SPRAWOZDANIA**





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Renata URBAN\*

## ***SPORT W MIEŚCIE NAD PROSNĄ – RECENZJA MONOGRAFII NAUKOWEJ AUTORSTWA JULIANA JAROSZEWSKIEGO PT. *DZIEJE SPORTU W KALISZU DO 1939 ROKU*, KALISKIE TOWARZYSTWO PRZYJACIÓŁ NAUK, KALISZ 2025, ss. 602***

**Jak cytować [how to cite]:** Urban R., *Sport w mieście nad Prosną – recenzja monografii naukowej autorstwa Juliana Jaroszewskiego pt. Dzieje sportu w Kaliszu do 1939 roku, Kaliskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, Kalisz 2025, ss. 602*, „Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe” 2026, t. 9, nr 2, s. 189–196.

Badania źródłowe, dotyczące rozwoju aktywności sportowej społeczności konkretnego miasta, w tym przypadku Kalisza, stanowią istotną część badań regionalnych, a te z kolei uzupełniają badania ogólnopolskie. Często są one niedoceniane, ale w moim przekonaniu ich efekty, zwłaszcza w postaci monografii naukowych, mają ogromne znaczenie, szczególnie dla lokalnego środowiska. Dlatego uważam, że inicjatywa podjęta przez Autora wydanej w końcu 2025 r. monografii pt. *Dzieje sportu w Kaliszu do 1939 roku* jest nie tylko ze wszech miar uzasadniona, ale też niezwykle wartościowa i bardzo potrzebna. Zaprezentowanie dziejów sportu w mieście nad rzeką Prosną, która warunkowała rozwój niektórych form aktywności, od jego zarania aż po 1939 r., stanowi istotny i cenny wkład Autora w uświadomienie znaczenia aktywności sportowej – jako przejawu działalności społecznej – dla mieszkańców Kalisza w trudnym okresie niewoli narodowej, a potem tworzenia podstaw niepodległego państwa.

Monografia dra Juliana Jaroszewskiego to monumentalne dzieło, nie tylko ze względu na jej obszerność, liczy bowiem aż 602 strony, łącznie z materiałem ilustracyjnym, ale przede wszystkim na jej wartość merytoryczną. Nie jest to określenie na wyrost, co postaram się uzasadnić w moim recenzyjnym omówieniu tej monografii. Jej konstrukcja jest mocno rozbudowana – zawiera sześć roz-

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działów głównych – i bardzo szczegółowa – każdy rozdział posiada po kilka lub nawet kilkanaście punktów. W przypadku tego typu opracowań, uważam, że jest to zaletą, ponieważ Czytelnik – po jej pobieżnym przejrzeniu – jest świadomy, czego może oczekiwać w treści. Już na wstępnym etapie analizy monografii otrzymuje informacje, jaka była geneza aktywności sportowej w Kaliszu, jak rozwijała się ona przed odzyskaniem niepodległości, jak został zorganizowany i jak był zarządzany ruch sportowy na terenie miasta pomiędzy dwiema wojnami światowymi, jakie kluby sportowe prowadziły działalność (są one wymienione z podziałem na kluby polskie i kluby mniejszości narodowych), jakie dyscypliny sportowe rozwijały się w mieście (Autor omawia je w grupach dyscyplin, np. gry sportowe, sporty indywidualne, sporty motorowe, sporty walki, sporty wodne) i w których kaliszanie odnosili największe sukcesy. Ponadto, Autor przedstawił także rozwój sportu szkolnego. W przypadku opracowań regionalnych taka precyzja w konstrukcji jest wskazana, ponieważ Czytelnik, zanim przeczyta całą książkę, często najpierw zapoznaje się z jej fragmentami, dotyczącymi osób, klubów lub dyscyplin, które są mu szczególnie bliskie.

W końcowej części opracowania Autor zawarł podsumowująco-oceniające zakończenie, a w części dokumentacyjnej – szczegółowe zestawienie bibliograficzne, wykaz skrótów, indeks nazwisk oraz streszczenia w języku polskim i angielskim.

Wstęp ma charakter metodologicznego wprowadzenia i został skonstruowany prawidłowo. Zawiera wszystkie elementy niezbędne dla tej części opracowania naukowego. Po ogólnych informacjach, dotyczących miejsca i znaczenia kultury fizycznej w życiu społecznym, Autor dokonał szczegółowej analizy i oceny stanu badań nad rozwojem ruchu sportowego w Kaliszu. Wymienił liczne opracowania, odnoszące się do działalności poszczególnych kaliskich klubów sportowych, np. Kaliskiego Klubu Sportowego<sup>1</sup>, KS Prosna<sup>2</sup>, Kaliskiego Towarzystwa Wioślarskiego<sup>3</sup>, osiągnięć reprezentantów konkretnych dyscyplin sportowych, m.in. boksu<sup>4</sup>, kolarstwa<sup>5</sup>, strzelectwa<sup>6</sup>, aktywności stowarzyszeń sportowych<sup>7</sup> czy rozwoju sportu wśród mniejszości narodowych<sup>8</sup>. Słusznie jednak Autor zauważył, że:

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<sup>1</sup> M. Małaszczek, *75-lat Kaliskiego Klubu Sportowego*, „Kalisia Nowa” 2000, nr 3(68), s. 23

<sup>2</sup> S. Eleganńczyk, *Pięćdziesięciolecie Klubu Sportowego „Prosna”*, „Rocznik Kaliski” 1974, t. 7, s. 384–390.

<sup>3</sup> T. Krokos, *Sto lat Kaliskiego Towarzystwa Wioślarskiego*, „Rocznik Kaliski” 1994/1995, t. 25, s. 221–228.

<sup>4</sup> Z. Kościelak, *Kaliszcy bokserzy: 80 lat 1932–2012*, Kalisz 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Tenże, *Kaliszcy kolarze na torze i na szosie*, Kalisz 2016.

<sup>6</sup> *Jednodniówka Strzelecka*. Wydana z okazji 10-iej rocznicy istnienia oddziału imienia Józefa Piłsudskiego w Kaliszu, Związek Strzelecki, Kalisz 1933.

<sup>7</sup> P. Szymański (oprac.), *Z falami Prosny. 115 lat Kaliskiego Towarzystwa Wioślarskiego 1894–2009*, Wydawnictwo Edytor, Kalisz 2009.

<sup>8</sup> „Makabi” 1913–1938. XXV lat istnienia Ż.T.G.S. „Makabi” w Kaliszu, Kalisz 1938.

Dzieje sportu w Kaliszu do 1939 roku nie doczekały się dotychczas syntetycznego opracowania, [a] problematyka ta poruszana była okazjonalnie. Najczęściej ograniczała się do przedstawienia wąskiego wycinka działalności sportowej, tradycji poszczególnych klubów lub dyscypliny sportowej<sup>9</sup>.

Stanowi to niewątpliwie wystarczające uzasadnienie podjęcia przez dra Juliana Jaroszewskiego opracowania dziejów sportu w Kaliszu.

Autor określił cel pracy, osadzając go w szerszym kontekście uwarunkowań powstania i działalności organizacji sportowych, a także wpływu stowarzyszeń społecznych na upowszechnienie aktywności fizycznej wśród społeczności Kalisza. Dążąc do jak najpełniejszego przedstawienia podjętego zagadnienia, wskazując cezury badań, Autor odniósł się do najstarszych relacji, sięgających średniowiecza, a zakończył narrację na wrześniu 1939 r. W dalszej kolejności sformułował cztery pytania badawcze, na które odpowiedź znajdujemy w kolejnych rozdziałach opracowania.

Na uznanie zasługują przeprowadzone przez Autora badania źródłowe. Mimo że treść monografii dotyczy zagadnienia regionalnego, konkretnie jednego miasta, to dr Julian Jaroszewski przeprowadził kwerendę archiwalną zakrojoną na bardzo szeroką skalę, rzadko spotykaną w tego rodzaju badaniach. Uważam to za ogromny walor pracy. Autor wykorzystał dokumenty pochodzące z trzech archiwów centralnych – Archiwum Akt Nowych, Wojskowego Biura Historycznego – Centralnego Archiwum Wojskowego, Narodowego Archiwum Cyfrowego oraz ośmiu regionalnych, co do których miał słuszne przypuszczenie, że mogą one zawierać cenne informacje na podjęty temat, a także z kilku innych instytucji, jak muzea, biblioteki czy instytuty naukowe. Na uwagę i podkreślenie zasługuje fakt, że Autor dokonał analizy treści 33 źródeł drukowanych, w tym np. dokumentu *O założeniu Szkoły Rycerskiej Kaliskiej z 1816 r.* oraz 71 tytułów prasy i czasopism, zarówno regionalnych, jak i ogólnopolskich, sportowych i o problematyce ogólnej. Wykorzystał także blisko 120 tytułów różnego rodzaju opracowań naukowych, trzy prace doktorskie, osiem prac magisterskich, materiały ze zbiorów prywatnych oraz źródła internetowe.

W drugiej części wstępu Autor omówił wykorzystane metody badawcze, a następnie scharakteryzował poszczególne rozdziały monografii.

Rozdział pierwszy jest typowym rozdziałem wprowadzającym w główne zagadnienie monografii. Autor zaprezentował w nim przejawy aktywności fizycznej społeczeństwa Kalisza od najdawniejszych czasów do okresu XIX w., zanim została ona ujęta w ramy organizacyjne. Szczególne miejsce zajmowało strzelectwo, propagowane przez Bractwo Kurkowe, założone w Kaliszu w 1475 r. Istotny wkład w rozwój aktywności w zakresie szermierki, pływania, tańców i musztry

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<sup>9</sup> J. Jaroszewski, *Dzieje sportu w Kaliszu do 1939 roku*, Kaliskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, Kalisz 2025, s. 8.

wniósł Korpus Kadetów, powołany przez władze pruskie w 1795 r.<sup>10</sup>, a w późniejszym okresie Gimnazjum Żeńskie, Szkoła Handlowa i Szkoła Realna, których nauczyciele promowali szeroko pojętą gimnastykę i przekonywali o jej pozytywnym oddziaływaniu na organizm człowieka. Dużym zainteresowaniem cieszyły się w Kaliszu pokazy sprawności grup cyrkowych, które odwiedzały miasto. Autor wymienił ponad 50 tego rodzaju pokazów w okresie między 1799 a 1857 r. Niewątpliwą zasługą Kaliszan – mieszkańców miasta nad Prosną – była inicjatywa powołania w 1894 r. Oddziału Kaliskiego Cesarskiego Towarzystwa Ratowania Tonących. Była to pierwsza na ziemiach polskich organizacja, zapewniająca bezpieczeństwo osób przebywających nad wodą.

W rozdziale drugim Autor przedstawił trudny – ze względu na sytuację wynikającą z zaborów – etap genezy i tworzenia podstaw rozwoju ruchu sportowego w mieście w II połowie XIX i na początku XX w. Omówił w nim powstanie i aktywność trzech towarzystw, które w programie swojej działalności promowały aktywność fizyczną. Były to: Towarzystwo Cyklistów, Cesarskie Towarzystwo Ratowania Tonących oraz Towarzystwo Gimnastyczne „Sokół” w Kaliszu. Określił liczebność tych organizacji, przedstawił bazę sportową, omówił zasady finansowania działalności oraz współzawodnictwo sportowe. Istotna była również aktywność turystyczno-rekreacyjna oraz kulturalna tych organizacji. W dalszej części Autor ukazał pionierskie lata rozwoju piłki nożnej w Kaliszu w drugiej dekadzie XX w. W końcowej części tego rozdziału przedstawił wkład społeczności żydowskiej miasta w rozwój aktywności sportowej, zainicjowanej w mieście w 1912 r.

W rozdziale trzecim Autor zaprezentował uwarunkowania organizacyjne i sposoby zarządzania ruchem sportowym w Kaliszu po odzyskaniu przez Polskę niepodległości i przez cały okres międzywojenny. Wskazał znaczenie powołania w 1919 r. Polskiego Komitetu Igrzysk Olimpijskich oraz kolejnych polskich związków sportowych poszczególnych dyscyplin (lekkoatletyki, wioślarstwa, piłki nożnej, narciarstwa, kolarstwa, tenisa, łyżwiarstwa) i w konsekwencji – w 1921 r. – Związku Polskich Związków Sportowych dla organizacji i rozwoju ruchu sportowego w Kaliszu. Istotną rolę odegrały także zmiany administracyjne na tym obszarze. Przez blisko dwie dekady (od sierpnia 1919 r. do 1 kwietnia 1938 r.) powiat kaliski wraz z miastem powiatowym, jakim był Kalisz, a także powiaty: kolski, koniński i turecki należały do województwa łódzkiego, które było jednym z pięciu, utworzonych z ziem Królestwa Polskiego. W 1938 r., na skutek przesunięcia granic województwa łódzkiego na wschód, wymienione powiaty zostały włączone w granice województwa poznańskiego<sup>11</sup>. Ta zmiana komplikowała działania, ponieważ nie była zgodna ze strukturą organizacyjną w innych obsza-

<sup>10</sup> S. Rutkowski, *Zarys dziejów polskiego szkolnictwa wojskowego*, Warszawa 1970, s. 41.

<sup>11</sup> M. Bandurka, *Rozwój administracyjno-terytorialny powiatu kaliskiego oraz powiatów sąsiednich w XIX i XX wieku (do 1945 roku)*, „Rocznik Kaliski” 1976, t. 9, s. 185–213.

rach, np. społecznym, kościelnym czy wojskowym. Niemniej jednak, przez blisko dwadzieścia lat udało się w Kaliszu zorganizować sprawny system rozwoju sportu – funkcjonowały powiatowy i miejski Komitet Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego, a przy każdym Dowództwie Okręgu Korpusu – Okręgowe Urzędy Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego. Autor opisał najważniejsze zawody, które odbywały się cyklicznie w Kaliszu, przedstawił znaczenie Państwowej Odznaki Sportowej, ustanowionej w 1930 r., dla upowszechnienia aktywności fizycznej w społeczeństwie Kalisza. To zainteresowanie sportem w mieście zmobilizowało władze do zwrócenia większej uwagi na potrzebę wykształcenia specjalistycznej kadry do prowadzenia zajęć sportowych z różnych dyscyplin w klubach i towarzystwa sportowych, a także na konieczność zbudowania odpowiedniej infrastruktury sportowej.

W rozdziale czwartym Autor scharakteryzował działalność klubów i stowarzyszeń sportowych w Kaliszu w latach 1918–1939, dokonując słusznego podziału na kluby polskie oraz kluby mniejszości narodowych, w tym żydowskie i ukraińskie. Zgodnie z zasadami, Autor przedstawił działalność tych klubów i stowarzyszeń w kolejności chronologicznej – od najstarszego do najmłodszego (w każdej z grup narodowych). W okresie międzywojennym Kalisz był miastem powiatowym liczącym 52 426 mieszkańców, w tym Polacy stanowili 68,78% (36 061) ogółu ludności, Żydzi – 28,5% (14 950), Niemcy – 2,1% (1125), Rosjanie – 0,66% (350). W obozie dla internowanych przebywała grupa ludności ukraińskiej – oficerowie z rodzinami w liczbie 3772 osób. Społeczeństwo Kalisza było więc zróżnicowane nie tylko narodowościowo, ale z pewnością także pod względem preferencji i zainteresowań sportowych, o czym świadczy duża liczba klubów i stowarzyszeń sportowych. Autor scharakteryzował ich łącznie 30, w tym polskich było 17, żydowskich – 8 i ukraińskich – 5. Zastanawiający jest brak zorganizowanej formy aktywności sportowej Niemców. Jestem jednak przekonana, że gdyby taka pojawiła się, nie umknęłaby uwadze dra Juliana Jaroszewskiego, ponieważ wielokrotnie udowodnił on, że jest bardzo dokładnym, skrupulatnym badaczem. Opisując podstawowe cele działalności zewidencjonowanych klubów i stowarzyszeń, kadrę zarządzającą i szkoleniową, źródła finansowania aktywności, bazę sportową i rekreacyjną oraz inne istotne dla funkcjonowania klubów elementy, Autor wprowadził Czytelnika w dalszą część sportowych dziejów Kalisza, mianowicie w rozwój poszczególnych dyscyplin sportowych.

Rozdział piąty – ze zrozumiałych względów – jest najobszerniejszą częścią opracowania, liczy bowiem 341 stron, co stanowi blisko 57% całości. Autor przedstawił prawdopodobnie wszystkie dyscypliny sportowe, zarówno sportów letnich, jak i zimowych, których przejawy udało się zaobserwować w Kaliszu i zostały one potwierdzone w dokumentach archiwalnych lub na łamach lokalnej prasy. Można powiedzieć, że jest to *clou* całej monografii, a obszerność tego rozdziału potwierdza wieloletnią, żmudną i bardzo dokładną pracę dra Juliana Jaro-

szewskiego, mającą na celu ukazanie jak najpełniej dziejów sportu w Kaliszu. Autor, słusznie, zaprezentował dyscypliny, łącząc je w grupy (jak to robili poprzednicy<sup>12</sup>) – gry sportowe, sporty indywidualne, sporty motorowe, sporty walki, sporty wodne oraz sporty zimowe. Omówił genezę i rozwój poszczególnych dyscyplin sportowych, najważniejsze zawody sportowe, osiągnięcia zawodników, przytoczył najcenniejsze wyniki. To głównie w tym rozdziale wielu mieszkańców Kalisza – Czytelników monografii, odnajdzie nazwiska swoich przodków – rodziców, dziadków, pradziadków, którzy budowali tradycje sportowe i tworzyli podstawy dla rozwoju współczesnego sportu w mieście nad Prosną.

W ostatnim rozdziale Autor opisał sport szkolny. Zgodnie z Okólnikiem Ministra Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego z dn. 2 września 1927 r.<sup>13</sup>, sport dzieci i młodzieży rozwijał się wyłącznie w szkołach i pełnił funkcje prozdrowotne. Uczniów obowiązywał zakaz przynależności do klubów sportowych, a władze szkół – zakaz korzystania z pomocy instruktorów z klubów sportowych. Miało to służyć ochronie młodych organizmów przed nadmiernym obciążeniem i jednostronnym treningiem w jednej dyscyplinie. Ten dokument nie rozwiązał sytuacji, a wręcz przeciwnie. Zmobilizował młodzież do szukania innych rozwiązań, które nie zawsze zgodne były z duchem *fair play*. Nie ulega jednak wątpliwości, że sport szkolny w Kaliszu miał swoje osiągnięcia. Bez udokumentowania wkładu młodzieży w rozwój poszczególnych dyscyplin sportowych na poziomie szkolnym, dzieje sportu w Kaliszu w okresie międzywojennym nie byłyby pełne.

Monografię dra Juliana Jaroszewskiego wieńczy zakończenie i część dokumentacyjna. Zakończenie – zgodnie z zasadami – stanowi podsumowanie i ocena przedstawionego zagadnienia. Autor w syntetycznym opisie przedstawił dzieje sportu w Kaliszu od czasów najdawniejszych po 1939 r., zidentyfikował najważniejsze czynniki, które miały wpływ na rozwój aktywności sportowej w mieście, wskazał działaczy, którzy w szczególny sposób przyczynili się do rozwoju sportu w Kaliszu, podkreślił najcenniejsze osiągnięcia kaliskich sportowców. Na podstawie wszechstronnie przeprowadzonych badań, po szczegółowej analizie źródeł i opracowaniu tekstu, Autor pozytywnie ocenił rozwój ruchu sportowego w Kaliszu, uwzględniając zarówno czynniki wewnętrzne – regionalne, jak i zewnętrzne – ogólnopolskie.

W części dokumentacyjnej Autor przygotował – w obszernym zestawieniu bibliograficznym – uporządkowany wykaz wszystkich wykorzystanych materiałów. O solidnej podstawie źródłowej świadczy także imponująca liczba 2028 przypisów dolnych, zarówno dokumentacyjnych, jak i rzeczowych i polemicznych.

<sup>12</sup> M.in.: B. Woltmann, J. Gaj, *Sport w Polsce 1919–1939*, Gorzów Wlkp. 1997; T. Jurek, B. Woltmann, *Kultura fizyczna w województwie zielonogórskim 1950–1989*, Urząd Wojewódzki w Zielonej Górze, Zielona Góra 1990.

<sup>13</sup> *Okólnik Ministra Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego z dn. 2 września 1927 r.*, Dziennik Urzędowy MWRIOP, Nr 12 z dn. 24 października 1927 r., poz. 204.

Ta część monografii została wzbogacona o dodatkowe wykazy – skrótów i nazwisk. Bardzo wartościowym, ale też niezwykle pracochłonnym i czasochłonnym był z pewnością indeks nazwisk – umożliwia on Czytelnikom szybkie odszukiwanie konkretnej postaci. To ważne, bo każdy mieszkaniec Kalisza chciałby znaleźć na kartach tej książki jeśli nie swoje nazwisko (ze względu na upływ czasu to mało prawdopodobne), to swoich rodziców, dziadków czy pradziadków. Autor mógłby przygotować także wykaz fotografii i spis tabel, które byłyby pomocne, zwłaszcza dla Czytelników zainteresowanych konkretnymi informacjami. Nie jest to jednak obowiązek, więc ich brak nie jest zarzutem, a raczej sugestią na przyszłość. Do opracowania zostały dołączone streszczenia – w języku polskim i angielskim. Mogą z nich skorzystać osoby, które zanim przeczytają całą – obszerną przecież – monografię, chciałyby zapoznać się z jej skróconą wersją.

Na szczególną uwagę zasługuje materiał ilustracyjny zgromadzony przez Autora i wykorzystany w monografii. Fotografie są fantastyczne, niesamowite, wyjątkowe i w niezwykle sposób uzupełniają opis, czyniąc go jeszcze bardziej wiarygodnym. Pokazują mieszkańcom Kalisza, choć nie tylko im, miasto, które tak bardzo zmieniło się w okresie niemal 100 lat, że czasem trudno je rozpoznać. To piękna historia zapisana w obrazach.

Jestem pełna podziwu i uznania dla Autora za jego benedyktyńską wręcz pracę, która doprowadziła go do zaprezentowania wszechstronnych uwarunkowań ewolucji aktywności sportowej w Kaliszu na przestrzeni dziejów, przedstawienia działalności klubów sportowych, zarówno polskich, jak i mniejszości narodowych, ukazania rozwoju kilkudziesięciu dyscyplin sportowych, letnich i zimowych oraz szczegółowej analizy współzawodnictwa sportowego, w którym uczestniczyli Kaliszanie, organizowanego nie tylko w Kaliszu, ale także poza jego granicami. Wierzę, że ta książka będzie ważną pozycją nie tylko w zbiorach miejscowych bibliotek, ale znajdzie się także na półkach domowych bibliotek mieszkańców Kalisza jako świadectwo ich osobistych, rodzinnych historii i dziejów miasta.

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#### DEKLARACJA BRAKU KONFLIKTU INTERESÓW

Autorka deklaruje brak potencjalnych konfliktów interesów w odniesieniu do badań, autorstwa i/lub publikacji artykułu *Sport w mieście nad Prosną – recenzja monografii naukowej autorstwa Juliana Jaroszewskiego pt. Dzieje sportu w Kaliszu do 1939 roku, Kaliskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, Kalisz 2025, ss. 602.*

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**WKLAD AUTORÓW**

**Renata Urban:** konceptualizacja, formalna analiza, pisanie – pierwszy szkic, pisanie – recenzja i edycja.

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