

Physical culture in Tarnów in the years 1867 – 1918

Abstract

The physical culture in Poland boasts a very rich history and is an important sub-discipline of historical science oriented towards a specific type of human and social activity, combined with physical activity in the broadest sense. The concept of physical culture comprises such areas as physical education, sport, physical recreation, rehabilitation and tourism. Due to the dynamic and diverse nature of the development of physical culture, which has become a social phenomenon, the necessary infrastructure necessary for its cultivation began to be created. The history of Polish physical culture consists of its local history, such as that concerning physical activity in Tarnów. Tarnów was one of many Galician cities where physical culture played an important role in social and cultural life. Distinguished advocates contributed to its development. Thanks to them, we discover the process of organizing and co-creating various forms of physical activity, which is the quintessence of native physical culture.

The inhabitants of Tarnów are often unaware that they encounter relics of physical culture almost every day, passing by landscape elements, squares, plazas, ponds, or architectural monuments. These sites conceal the memory of places where various forms of physical culture were born and developed, thanks to the contributions of numerous physical activity enthusiasts – local heroes such as M. Baranowski, S. Dubelski, W. Gadowski, A. Małkowski, K. Nowak, I. Przybyłkiewicz, M. Starzewski, J. Starkel, T. Tertil, K. Trochanowski, B. Trzaskowski, and many others.

The main purpose of the paper is to present and attempt to assess the development of physical culture in Tarnow during the period of Galician autonomy. This includes the development of various forms of physical activity during a time when the Polish state did not exist. By considering issues related to physical culture, the paper highlights the important role of publications related to physical activity. An attempt was made to look at the problem from various angles in order to show it as comprehensively as possible, especially in terms of the evolution of ideological concepts, resulting from the level of development of forms of physical activity accepted by the society of Tarnów. The specificity of the 19th century meant that the technical progress slowly reaching Tarnów encouraged physical inactivity. Therefore,

the counteracting measures taken by educated Tarnów residents, which laid the foundations of native physical culture, were extremely important.

While considering the issue in its various forms (physical education, recreation, tourism, sport) and at different stages of development, under various conditions, issues not always comparable to each other were also examined, sometimes being purely theoretical in nature, sometimes related to general education, sometimes only to practice, and also lying within the psyche of Tarnów residents who either accepted or did not accept physical activity (Israelites).

Chronologically, the thesis covers the years 1867-1918. This periodization is supported by the fact that physical culture acquired a widespread and dynamic character throughout Europe at that time. This phenomenon is also seen in Tarnów. This is the period of the so-called Galician autonomy. It was during this period that Galicia, one of the many provinces of the Austrian Empire, was granted socio-political rights which enabled educational, economic, social, cultural, and physical culture to flourish. This was confirmed, among other things, by the possibility to associate and establish various societies, which the Tarnów residents eagerly took advantage of in the dissemination and realization of physical activity.

In the thesis, a description of the physical culture of the national minorities living in the city is highlighted. The paper discusses, at least minimally, the organizational status of physical culture.

The topic of physical culture is so extensive that the thesis has been narrowed down to the most essential issues.

The thesis practically does not deal with the hygienic issues that contributed to the development of physical culture. It focuses on educational activities, disseminating knowledge on the importance of physical activity for health, well-being, and physical beauty.

The development of the city during the period of autonomy addresses the issues of the city's social and economic flourishing, the state of education and Austria's physical culture policy, which the development of physical activity depended on. Part of the thesis is devoted to physical education as it developed in Tarnów's schools of various levels. An attempt was made to discuss this issue in depth, demonstrating that physical education was not merely an integral part of education but a basis for the development of various forms of physical activity, which constituted the content and essence of Tarnów's physical culture. The development of extracurricular forms of physical culture, promoted by dynamically operating organizations and associations such as the "Sokół" Gymnastic Society (Towarzystwo

Gimnastyczne "Sokół"), the "Gwiazda" Handicraftsmen's Association (Stowarzyszenie Rękodzielników „Gwiazda”), the Folk School Association (Towarzystwo Szkoły Ludowej), Scout Groups (Drużyny Skautowe), the Cyclists' Association (Towarzystwo Cyklistów), the Riflemen's Association (Towarzystwo Strzeleckie), and paramilitary organizations, was also discussed. Their contribution to the dissemination and realization of physical culture among Tarnów residents was very important.

The paper presents the physical culture of national minorities living in Tarnów, which is mainly associated with the Jewish community, reaching about 40% of the population. The emphasis was on Jewish organisations and their role in maintaining national identity among the Polish population, which was shown against the background of the general situation of the Israelites in Tarnów.

The description of the material foundations for the development of local physical culture is an infrastructure which, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, was a consequence of the development and popularity of various forms of physical activity. Initially, there were amateurs, who were able to instil a passion for physical activity in others and later concentrated on organising places for these passions. The paper presents activists working for local physical culture. It is a unique array of Tarnów's luminaries, to whom short biographical notes have been dedicated, highlighting their contributions to physical activity. The discussion of the history of Tarnów's physical culture also covers the period of the First World War, which, due to the specific nature of the times, has been included in the afterword. This was due to the scarcity of information and the impossibility of realizing physical activity needs on a pre-war basis. The destroyed base, the lack of teachers, instructors and the ever-present danger of warfare decided to devote a separate section of the thesis to this period. The thesis is based on a wealth of source material. The archival search involved Polish, foreign and private archives of Tarnów residents.

An important source of information was magazines, which, over several decades, described in detail the life of the town's residents, reported on various events related to physical culture, for example: sports celebrations organised by associations, gymnastic competitions, jubilee celebrations, and the development of infrastructure related to physical culture. Studies on the history of the city were helpful, but in most of these publications, the issue of physical culture was either omitted or discussed very superficially. The authors omitted the issue of physical education, limiting it to information that such classes were conducted. The thesis makes use of a number of terms to describe the issue: physical culture, physical activity, gymnastics, physical education, recreation, tourism, hygiene.

The thesis does not give a full picture of the history of Tarnów's physical culture, as it concentrates on issues that seemed the most representative. The intention of the study was to show the past phenomena, which are still inherent in Tarnów's physical culture. The thesis presents the development of physical culture in Tarnów during the era of autonomy, as accurately as possible according to the data found in source materials, used critically, impartially, and objectively.