

INTERNATIONAL SPORT IN THE STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL COOPERATION

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Political importance of sport seems to be widely understood and accepted. Sport competitions and sports events are perceived from the political perspective exceptionally often. Rivalry is the most common dimension of this politics of sport. Since the time sport as a social phenomenon gained sufficient popularity, it became interesting for politicians and political leaders. Consequently, more or less evident examples of making use of sport for political sake began to occur. These political sakes were in particular nationalism and promoting particular political systems and ideologies (especially during the Cold War era). Sports victories were meant to legitimize superiority of a country, both internationally and domestically in respect to its own society. Therefore governments aim to enhance the performance of their athletes in hope of achieving political goals. The situation is similar if organizing sports events are considered, especially the most prestigious ones. For instance, Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936, in Moscow in 1980 and in Beijing in 2008 were all meant to testify about the superiority of the states each of the host-cities are located in. Sports boycott, one of the most evident aspects of politics of sport, is also bound with international conflict. The essence of a boycott is disagreeing with something, for example with the policy of the country hosting particular

sports event. On the other hand, young states – former colonies, eagerly used sport in the struggle to achieve their political objectives, most of all to fight against contested white minority governments in Africa: South Africa and Rhodesia. Such aims would be hard to fulfil otherwise due to political weakness of those countries.

The most obvious aspects of politics of sport have been listed above. Strong relations between sport and politics occur in most cases in connection with widely understood conflict. This brings a question whether sport actually is politically significant only as a matter of transferring political conflict into another dimension? According to the main hypothesis of the article, sport can also play an opposite role in politics. The aim of the article is to investigate the examples of consensual role sport, by which situations when sport was used in order to bring states closer to each other, especially when they could be described as mutually hostile.

There is a number of examples that seem to confirm the assumption of the consensual role of sport in international politics. Despite the fact, that sport is important from the political perspective, it is not strictly a part of the world of politics itself. This gives sport a certain advantage in comparison to strictly political tools in terms of capability of evoking international cooperation. Some activities, which would seem completely unacceptable in respect to political reality, in the world of sport in some cases proved to be possible and effective. This applies particularly to establishing contacts between states. In the recent history there were many situations, when states because of various reasons resigned from maintaining bilateral relations. In such circumstances sports events were frequently an exclusive and only possible mean of establishing contact. Later such sports contacts could be transformed into political relations. Some countries even conducted characteristic “sports diplomacies” aiming to enhance their capability of affecting the international system. What is more, sport also served as a mean of making the already existing relations closer. This applies mostly to at least theoretically unfriendly countries. For instance during the detente era in the East – West relations during the Cold War, friendly sports events were organized, with the aim of sustaining better relations. Examples of such form of sport politics will be presented in the article.

1. OLYMPIC VALUES AND PACIFISM

It is worth mentioning that modern sport, coming to existence in the latter half of XIXth Century, from the very beginning had pacifist character. As a result, consensual role of sport in a way could be evaluated as fulfilling the original aims of sport. These thoughts are connected with Pierre de Coubertin¹, the creator of the modern Olympic Movement and promoter of the Olympic Idea.

Pierre de Coubertin, inspired by the ancient Olympic Games as well as educational systems of the United States and England, began to promote his assumption that *sport competitions should substitute wars and the youth from around the world instead of fighting against each other in the wars should compete on the sports stadiums*². He also claimed, that *wars break out because nations do not understand each other and that there will be no peace unless prejudices between different races pass away*³. Coubertin promoted these views since 1880^s. His view about sports capability in promoting peace was partly shaped by contacts with pacifists of that time,

¹ Pierre de Coubertin was born on 1 January 1863 in Paris. Pedagogy was his great passion, as well as physical exercises. His views on sport were influenced by trips to England and the United States between 1883 and 1884, which he made in order to learn educational systems of those countries. It is believed that during these trips Coubertin got interested in the fair play principle (taken from the thought of William Penny Brookes) and in interuniversity sports competitions, popular in the USA. W. Lipoński, *Od Aten do Atlanty. Minihistoria nowożytnych igrzysk olimpijskich 1896–1996*, Warszawa-Poznań 1996, p. 8–10; J. Kosiewicz, *Narodziny Myśli Coubertinowskiej*, [in:] *Oblicza sportu*, Z. Krawczyk (ed.), Warszawa 1990, p. 100; Z. Porada, *Starożytne i Nowożytne Igrzyska Olimpijskie*, Kraków [no date of publishing], p. 85; D. Miller, *Historia igrzysk olimpijskich i MKOl. Od Aten do Pekinu 1894–2008*, Poznań 2008, p. 32–33; A. Guttmann, *The Olympics. A History of Modern Games*, Illinois 2002, p. 10; S. Wassong, M. Czechowski, *Studia Pierre de Coubertina nad Amerykańskim Systemem Edukacyjnym i ich Wpływ na Wznowienie Igrzysk Olimpijskich*, [in:] *Fair Play w Europejskiej Kulturze i Edukacji*, Z. Żukowska, R. Żukowski (eds.), Warszawa 2004, p. 103.

² T. Olszański, *Olimpiady letnie. Wszystko o...*, Warszawa 1976, p. 5.

³ B.J. Keys, *Globalizing Sport. National Rivalry and International Community in the 1930s*, Cambridge 2006, p. 34.

such as Jules Simon. Besides, pacifist activists described emerging Olympic Movement as an example of *peaceful internationalism*⁴.

Speech of Pierre de Coubertin during a session of Union des Sociétés-Françaises de Sports Athlétiques in 1892 in Paris was especially important in terms of recognizing the peaceful role of sport. As he claimed, *we should export our rowers, runners, fencers – this is the free trade of the future. And on the day when it takes the place it deserves among European customs, the case of peace will receive a new and powerful support... So please, help me in reviving the Olympic Games*⁵. Characteristic „idealistic Olympic internationalism” can be seen in this statement. At the sametime, at least in theory, it defines the International Olympic Committee’s attitude, especially during the first period of its existence⁶.

The Olympic Values of Pierre de Coubertin were established at the end of 1880^s and at the beginning of 1890^s. They transcended pure pedagogy, originally the main area of interest of the father of the Olympic Movement. Not only he stood for developing personality and life attitude of the youth through practicing sport, but also for promoting peace by fostering international cooperation through sport competition. Another worth mentioning thought formulated by de Coubertin is called neo-olympism⁷. Accordingly, actions should be undertaken in order to enable people to coexist despite conflicts between them. People should acknowledge the divisions between them and begin to appreciate their foes, as *appreciated foe becomes a partner*⁸. At the same time Coubertin warned of nationalism in sport, foreseeing its possible negative influence on promoting peaceful coexistence⁹. He also

⁴ J. Harvey, J. Horne, P. Safai, S. Darnell, S. Courchesne-O’Neil, *Sport and Social Movements. From the Local to the Global*, London 2014, p. 103.

⁵ W.K. Osterloff, *Historia Sportu*, Warszawa 1976, p. 84.

⁶ J. Hoberman, *Toward a Theory of Olympic Internationalism*, “Journal of Sport History”, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1995), p. 6.

⁷ Coubertin changed the word *olympism* into *neo-olympism*. A. Bodasińska, *Czysta gra w sporcie i życiu codziennym*, Biała Podlaska 2007, p. 40.

⁸ Z. Krawczyk, *Sport in changing Europe*, [in:] *Sports Involvement in Changing Europe*, J. Kosiewicz, K. Obodyński (eds.), Rzeszów 2004, p. 12.

⁹ T.M. Hunt, *Drug Games. The International Politics of Doping and the Olympic Movement 1960–2007*, Ann Arbor 2007, p. 55.

supported the freedom of an individual during the Olympic Games and condemned any type of discrimination. These thoughts were articulated by the slogan *all nations- all games*¹⁰.

The concepts and slogans listed above were obviously noble, thus peace can be recognized as one of the most important merits. International cooperation fostered by the Olympic Games and sport in general were supposed to support it. Such thoughts of Pierre de Coubertin are a clear sign of his love of pedagogy. He was in favour of the idea that athletes from around the world should meet each other during the peaceful celebration, by which he meant the Olympic Games. By getting to know representatives of other countries, races and religions they were supposed to learn tolerance and mutual respect. It is worth mentioning though, that despite the fact the creator of the modern Olympic Movement supported the idea of common participation of the athletes from different countries in the Olympic Games, he himself was against participation of ladies. However this should be seen more as a peculiarity of the times he lived in than as an expression of anti-feminism.

Nowadays the Olympic Games belong to the most important and most popular sports events in the world, what is a prove of a success achieved by Pierre de Coubertin's initiative that came to live in 1894 during the Olympic Congress in Paris. It is worth noticing that in the works of de Coubertin on sport there are no references about using it in order to pursue political fights, as it actually happens often. On the contrary, the father of modern olympism stressed the pacifist role of sport, which was to lead to putting an end to war as a mean of solving international problems. The hypothesis about realizing the intentions of the creators of modern sport during situations, when sport has a consensual role, seems to be legitimate.

¹⁰ Z. Porada, op.cit., p. 86–87.

2. ATHLETIC CONTACTS AS A SOURCE OF INTERNATIONAL RAPPROCHEMENT

The Cold War era was a time, when political significance of sport was exceptionally strong. In this particular period most of the sports boycotts took place, and the two international superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union – tried to make use of international sport in order to prove their superiority over the opponent. On some occasions competitions between athletes from those two countries were given political importance as well, as if they were to resolve the Cold War rivalry. Nevertheless, such accentuating of mutual hostility was not the only way of using sports contacts between the USA and the USSR for political sake. There were also situations, when dialogue was the main political aspect of athletic contacts between the two superpowers.

Ice hockey was one of the team sports, that most commonly was accompanied by political emotions. The most evident example could be seen during the Olympic semi-final match in 1980 in Lake Placid, when Americans faced the favoured Soviets. Surprisingly, the match ended up with the win of the United States¹¹. However, ice hockey competitions were accompanied by the dialogue just as often as the rivalry. One of the matches between the USA and the USSR during the Olympics in Squaw Valley in 1960 could work as an example. The clash between the two teams was very even and the atmosphere extremely tensed, both on ice and among the viewers. In the end Americans won 3–2¹². However, the match was not one of the typical examples of sports rivalry between the two Cold War superpowers. Despite the dramatic and even character of the match, both American and Soviet players, surprisingly for the onlookers, not only contacted each other, but even established friendships. One of the American players is claimed to have said about the Soviet counterparts,

¹¹ A film was made on the basis of this story. See *Miracle on Ice*, directed by Gavin O'Connor, 2004.

¹² *Kronika Sportu*, M.B. Michalik (ed.), Warszawa 1993, p. 544.

that *they're real friends. They don't talk about Communism. Like us, they talk about hockey – and girls*¹³.

The situation mentioned above reveals, that even the rough sports competition during the Cold War could sometimes rise opportunities for the rapprochement between representatives of the East and the West, at least in a grassroots form, concerning the athletes only. This example also shows the pacifist ideals of Pierre de Coubertin in practice. As Coubertin claimed, owing to international sports contacts athletes would personally get to know representatives of other, sometimes politically hostile nations, and consequently would be able to see them as partners instead of foes. This exact function of sport can be identified in this particular situation on the basis of statements of American players, who seemed to be surprised by the friendly behavior of the Soviet players, demonized in media in the USA. What is more, the relation described above could play a role in changing the attitude of both societies towards the Cold War rival.

3. FRIENDLY SPORTS CONTACTS BETWEEN THE COLD WAR RIVALS. HOCKEY DIPLOMACY

During the Cold War international sport could be used as an element of dialogue between communist and capitalist states also by organizing exhibition sportsevents. Their aim was among others to emphasize the tendency of detente in international political relations. At the end of 1950^s and at the beginning of 1960^s such detente period appeared in the East – West relations. As a result, a number of bilateral sports events have been organized. As a part of it in theSpringof 1958 Soviet wrestlers visited the United States and in the Summer of the same year American athletes participated in competitions in Moscow, for the first time on the Soviet soil. This visit was only the beginning of a whole series of bilateral athletic events of the two superpowers. They were taking place annually between 1958 and 1966, alternately in the Soviet Union and in the United States. The

¹³ J. Soares, *Cold War, Hot Ice: International Ice Hockey 1947–1980*, “Journal of Sport History”, Summer 2007, Vol. 34, No. 2, p. 211.

Soviet visit in Stanford in the USA in July 1962, shortly before the Cuban missile crisis, is regarded as one of the most important ones. The exhibition athletic match was viewed by 81 000 people who came to the Stanford stadium. Such events occurred many times until 1985¹⁴. Not surprisingly, communist – capitalist sports friendly contacts did not apply to major superpowers only, but also to their allies. For instance, in August 1958 a Polish – American friendly match in hockey took place¹⁵.

All those sports friendly events can surely be regarded as an element of East – West dialogue. What is more, one of such exhibition games in Philadelphia paved way for the visit Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in the USA in Autumn 1959¹⁶. It was the typical way of making direct use of sports contacts for political sake – political meetings were often organized with sports events, which on other occasions could have been difficult to be arranged. There are many examples of such circumstances. They will be mentioned in the latter part of the article.

Friendly sports events between communist and capitalist states had a very interesting form in case of ice hockey. In order to understand the context, different attitudes towards the amateur principle, especially in the Olympic sport during the Cold War must be mentioned. According to the principle, athletes participating in amateur events, which at that time were the most prestigious, were not allowed to consider sport as their main source of income, but as an additional activity. Accordingly, there were many accusations called by the Western states against their communist counterparts, which at that time dominated in amateur ice hockey¹⁷. They claimed that players from the Soviet Union and other communist countries were in fact professionals, who were employed on positions disconnected

¹⁴ G. Cavali, *Cold War, Warm Welcome*, [in:] “Stanford Magazine”, May/June 2005, <http://www.stanfordalumni.org/news/magazine/2005/mayjun/features/track.html>, [accessed: 16.07.2011], J.M. Turrini, “*It Was Communism Versus the Free World*”: *The USA – USSR Dual Track Meet Series and the Development of Track and Field in the United States, 1958–1985*, “Journal of Sport History”, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2001), p. 427.

¹⁵ A. Pasko, *Sport wyczynowy w polityce państwa 1944–1989*, Kraków 2012, p. 244.

¹⁶ W.J. Baker, *Sports in the western world*, Illinois 1988, p. 271.

¹⁷ The Soviet Union won 14 World Championship titles during 17 tournaments between 1963 and 1979. The other 3 titles were won by Czechoslovakia. *Kronika Sportu*, p. 899, J. Soares, op.cit., p. 220.

with sport only pro forma¹⁸. On the other hand the best hockey players from the West (this applies to some other sports as well) most often had a professional status as they played in professional sports leagues such as NHL in case of ice hockey. As a result, Western officials claimed that communist states gained an unfair advantage in the Olympic Games and World Championships. For instance Canada in protest against such situation decided to leave the International Ice Hockey Federation, resigned from hosting the ice hockey World Championships in 1970 and decided not to participate in 1972 and 1976 ice hockey Olympic contests¹⁹. Considering these facts, as a part of detente tendencies between East and West, exhibition matches between Eastern “shamateurs” and Western professionals were organized.

Another detente era appeared at the end of 1960s. In relation with it, the USSR ice hockey national team played a series of 8 exhibition matches against top Canadian NHL players in 1972. The hosts proved to be slightly better. An agreement concerning the series was signed in Prague in April 1972, what was considered as an important diplomatic event²⁰. Apart from this, the Soviet Union played a friendly match against the team of stars of the International Ice Hockey Federation. Organization of all those events was a great success of diplomats, Canadian in particular. The significance

¹⁸ They were called *shamateurs*. The term means a kind of professionalism in sport, when formally amateurs are supported by the state. Such athletes were employed in the army, police or civil service but all their responsibility was to train. T. Chandler, M. Cronin, W. Vamplew, *Sport and Physical Education. The Key Concepts*, New York 2007, p. 196; D. Porter, *Amateur Football in England, 1948–1963: The Pegasus Phenomenon*, [in:] *Amateurs and Professionals in Post-War British Sport*, A. Smith, D. Porter (eds.), London 2000, p. 25; E. Dunning, *Sport Matters. Sociological studies of sport, violence and civilization*, London 1999, p. 115. Compare: P. Godlewski, *Problem amatorstwa państwowego w sporcie w okresie PRL*, [in:] *Społeczno-edukacyjne oblicza współczesnego sportu i olimpiizmu. Sprawność fizyczna dzieci i młodzieży*, J. Chełmecki (ed.), vol. II, Warszawa 2009.

¹⁹ D. Macintosh, M. Hawes, *Sport and Canadian Diplomacy*, Montreal–Buffalo–Lodnon 1994, p. 30; J. Soares, *Cold War, Hot Ice*, p. 217; idem, *The Cold War on Ice*, “Brown Journal of World Affairs”, Spring/Summer 2008, Vol. XIV, Issue 2, p. 81.

²⁰ After a series of 8 matches a decisive one was organized in Moscow. It was won by Canadians who scored the winning goal at the very end. The series is regarded as one of the most important events in the history of Canadian sport. D. Macintosh, M. Hawes, *op.cit.*, pp. 32–33.

of it was that big, that in order to coordinate all the organizational issues and to prepare the series, a special department have been established – International Sport Relations desk as a part of Canadian Department of External Affairs²¹.

The term **hockey diplomacy** should be mentioned. It was created in order to describe Soviet – Canada relations in the post-war period. The Canadians came up with the idea, that ice hockey in considered in many parts of Europe as a synonym of Canada. Consequently, as this is sport is the most obvious element of Canada's presence in some countries, it should be perceived as one of the main “diplomatic weapons”. As a result, both in Canada and in the USSR sport was recognized as a tool connecting the countries that could be used for strengthening mutual relations. The best known effect of the hockey diplomacy was the already mentioned series of matches in 1972. One of the direct results of it was a visit of Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau in the USSR. The series of matches also showed how big the potential of international sportis, ice hockey in particular, in international diplomacy²². Moreover, the hockey diplomacy can be seen as another example validating the hypothesis, that sport can serve not only as a tool of international conflict, but also of rapprochement.

East – West ice hockey contacts took place in the latter period as well. In 1975 and 1976 two club teams from the Soviet Union played a series of exhibition matched against the NHL teams. 5 of the matches were won by the Soviets and 8 ended with a tie. Another such exhibition match took place in 1979, a year before Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. Soviets won against the team of NHL stars 6–0²³.

One of the friendly matches of the Soviet series in the USA and Canada in 1975 is regarded as a moment of greatest detente on ice hockey rinks. On December 31th, 1975 a match that many perceive as the best in the history of ice hockey between Montreal Canadiens and CSKA Moscow took place. The final result was 3–3²⁴. In another match that

²¹ Ibidem, p. 33.

²² Ibidem, p. 31–36.

²³ J. Soares, *The Cold War on Ice*, p. 78.

²⁴ J. Soares, *Cold War, Hot Ice*, p. 213.

is worth mentioning Soviet national team played against Philadelphia Flyers. The second team was famous for its aggressive style of play. North American team played so brutally, that in the middle of the first period Soviet players resigned from further play in protest against the referees not penalizing American players. Eventually the match was finished, but unfair Flyer's play was a crack on the diplomatic success – inviting Soviet hockey teams to North America²⁵.

Another dimension of ice hockey being used for the sake of political rapprochement between communist and capitalist countries was the Canada Cup, a tournament played in the Summer of 1976. Professional teams of stars from the Western states and national teams of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia participated in the event²⁶. As can be seen, there were plenty of hockey friendly contacts between Eastern and Western teams. Most of them were used as an element of bringing the Cold War rivals closer.

Soviet – Canadian hockey diplomacy was not the only example of using sport for the sake of peaceful rapprochement. In the detente period of the 1970^s there was a number of various cases concerning other sports as well. The best known is obviously the ping-pong diplomacy, which will be described below. Another example of sports diplomacy that deserves mentioning applies to the USA and Cuba- countries that did not have diplomatic relations. In April 1977 American senator George McGovern accompanied the American basketball team during its visit in Havana and had a meeting with Cuban leader Fidel Castro²⁷. These events also legitimize the hypothesis claiming that sport can be considered as a tool of gaining political rapprochement, especially in the situations when other ways of bringing hostile states closer were not available.

²⁵ Idem, *The Cold War on Ice*, p. 83.

²⁶ Idem, *Cold War, Hot Ice*, p. 220.

²⁷ G. Młodzikowski, *Polityka i sport*, Warszawa 1979, p. 146.

5. POLITICAL INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL SPORTS CONTACTS. THE CASE OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. PING-PONG DIPLOMACY

Ping-pong diplomacy is one of the most important aspects of making political use of sports contacts in order to build international relations. Its implementation was deeply connected with China's international situation, both in the areas of sport and politics. Since 1958 PRC remained beyond international sports structures, what was caused by participation of Republic of China (Taiwan) in for instance International Olympic Committee²⁸. For the following years communist China did not participate in almost any international sports competitions. Meanwhile in the area of politics, China was not recognized by Western countries which were supporting Taiwan. On the other hand, PRC was recognized and supported by the communist countries led by the Soviet Union. However, Chinese – Soviet relations began to deteriorate since 1956 after Joseph Stalin was criticized by Nikita Khrushchev during 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Chinese leaders disagreed with this critics. The relations became even more tensed in 1958 when China proposed new economic program, competitive to the Soviet one. Consequently, in 1963 Soviet – Chinese relations went even worse²⁹. This led leaders of the People's Republic of China to try to open into the West and sport was to be a tool to achieve this goal.

In April 1971 communist China sent its team to table tennis World Championships in Japan, during which a contact with Americans has been made. The Chinese proposed American team organizing several exhibition matches on the Chinese soil with all expenses covered. Americans found the offer extremely surprising³⁰. Nevertheless, Ameri-

²⁸ X. Guoqi, *Olympic Dreams. China and Sports 1895–2008*, [no place of publishing] 2008, pp. 85–86.

²⁹ W. Roszkowski, *Półwiecze. Historia Polityczna Świata po 1945 roku*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 120–121, 156.

³⁰ J. Stradling, *More than a Game. When history and sport collide*, [no place of publishing] 2009, p. 115.

can government immediately lifted the ban to travel to PRC³¹ so the exhibition matches could be held. In the end, 9 American table tennis players, 4 officials, 2 accompanying persons and 10 journalists visited communist China in April 1971. During the visit United States decided to lift trade embargo on China which has been in force for 20 years³². Chinese – American relations that were established at that time are called the **ping-pong diplomacy**.

The series of exhibition table tennis matches initiated further negotiations which led to a visit of American president Richard Nixon in communist China between 21 and 28 February 1972³³. The impetus to tighten relations between the two countries was brought by sports contact. It must be mentioned though, that both sides searched for a possibility of rapprochement anyway, especially after Richard Nixon took power in the USA³⁴. Communist China on the other hand was looking for the possibility of opening to international relations. Sports exhibition matches were a convenient opportunity of establishing contact, what was difficult due to lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries. It was much easier to invite athletes to PRC and on this occasion to begin political talks than to start them directly. The role of sport in establishing international cooperation and dialogue is more than clear in this situation, as most of the other methods would not be as successful.

From the moment of establishing contact with Americans international situation of People's Republic of China began improve rapidly. In November 1971 the country has been accepted as a member of the United Nations. At the same time Republic of China (Taiwan) was excluded. The events of the ping-pong diplomacy have been commented in China as follows: "Chinese have learned from the ping-pong diplomacy that sport and politics are inseparable. The athletes have taken a great responsibility. They are our ambassadors in track suits". What is characteristic, even

³¹ R. Terrill, *Mao. A Biography*, Stanford 2000, p. 394.

³² *Ejournal USA. Significant Events in U.S. Foreign Relations 1900–2001. Foreign Policy Agenda*, M.D. Kellerhals Jr. (ed.), April 2006, p. 35.

³³ R. Espy, *The Politics of the Olympic Games. With Epilogue, 1976–1980*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1981; p. 147, G. Młodzikowski, op.cit.

³⁴ X. Guoqi, op.cit., p. 119.

later Chinese used sport in order to get closer to other countries. Chinese athletes sometimes received instructions according to which they should loose important competitions, especially against athletes from communist states, in order to deepen the friendship. Also, PRC funded stadiums in the Third World countries in order to get closer with them as well³⁵. Apparently leaders of communist China knew how to gain political benefits using sports competitions. However, it was happening in a way at the expense of the purity of sport. Using it in order to create the atmosphere of international friendship is usually regarded as a positive thing – the purest form of realizing the Olympic values. However, loosing intentionally in order to deepen international political friendship is considerably different than simply using sport contacts to establish cooperation and dialogue.

6. UNITED TEAM OF GERMANY

A completely different dimension of the consensual role of sport is connected with the United Team of Germany in the Olympic Games, which was created in the middle on 1950^s despite the fact that at that time two separate German states existed – democratic Federal Republic of Germany and communist German Democratic Republic, which were described as West and East Germany. Both states were antagonistic and did not recognize each other.

After the end of World War II Germany were split into 4 occupation zones. In April 1949 western zones controlled by the United States, Great Britain and France were bound into Trizonia and shortly after, on 24 May 1949 transferred into a country – West Germany. On 7 October 1949 the same happened to the Soviet occupation zone, which was transformed into East Germany. International sports organizations seemed to back the first of them as it was the Federal Republic of Germany to gain recognition

³⁵ F. Hong, X. Xiaozheng, *Communist China. Sport, Politics and Diplomacy*, [in:] *Sport in Asian Society. Past and Present*, J.A. Mangan, F. Hong (eds.), Oxon–New York 2003, pp. 335–337.

in majority of them. This was particularly regarded to the International Olympic Committee, a sport organization that recognized West Germany in 1950³⁶. Meanwhile, the National Olympic Committee of East Germany did not gain recognition until the middle of 1950s, partly due to its own fault, as in the GDR media the IOC was strongly criticized and because in 1952 East German sports officials failed to come to an appointed meeting concerning participation of this country in the Helsinki Olympic Games, due to unknown circumstances. Because of these facts members of the IOC were rather skeptical about accepting the GDR in the International Olympic Committee³⁷.

The opinion of international sports organization towards the German issue was characteristic. In general their representatives claimed, that there should not be two separate sports teams from the two German states. Officials from East Germany did not agree with this view, whereas in the West it was perceived rather positively³⁸, what is actually understandable. According to West Germans, GDR was no more than a part of their country that was temporarily separated, so the united sports team would only reaffirm such situation.

The International Olympic Committee represented by its president Avery Brundage imposed on East Germany conditions that need to be fulfilled in order grant the country recognition. GDR was expected to establish a new National Olympic Committee that would obey the IOC rules. GDR officials conformed and despite their demand to receive full recognition during the IOC Session in Paris in 1955, they accepted a provisional recognition and agreed to form an all-German Olympic team for the 1956 Olympic Games³⁹. According to the IOC, the recognition would be

³⁶ A. Jucewicz, *Trzy olimpiady*, Warszawa 1972, p. 76.

³⁷ C.R. Hill, *Olympic Politics. Athens to Atlanta 1896–1996*, Manchester-New York 1996, p. 38, V. Tikander, *Helsinki 1952*, [in:] *Encyclopedia of the Modern Olympic Movement*, J.E. Findling, K.D. Pelle (eds.), Westport 2004, p. 141, D. Miller, op.cit., p. 151.

³⁸ D. Miller, op.cit., p. 164.

³⁹ The settlement was very detailed and consisted of agreements in aspects like the flag (West German), uniforms, national emblem and accommodation. The team was to be bigger than other teams, the champions were supposed to hear anthems of their country and in case of a team win there was supposed to be no anthem. The relation

invalid if the common team would not be formed in 1956⁴⁰. The settlement has been concluded by the IOC as a great success and Brundage claimed that “we have obtained in the field of sport what politicians have failed to achieve so far”⁴¹ and announced “an important victory of sport over politics”⁴².

According to Avery Brundage, the Olympic Movement managed to achieve something extraordinary and this opinion can be regarded as at least partly justifiable. Two states that did not recognize each other and belonged to antagonistic geopolitical constellations decided to participate in the Olympics as one, united team. As it was settled, in the Olympic Winter Games in Cortina d’Ampezzo and Summer Olympics in Melbourne Germans from East and West side of the iron curtain participated together. Formally it was a team of Federal Republic of Germany, so East Germany was in worse position at that time.

The accepted solution proved to be relatively lasting, although within time a number of changes concerning the functioning of United German Team have been introduced. Accordingly, the all-German team was formed for Winter Games in Squaw Valley and Summer Games in Rome in 1960, but this time it was not in favour of West Germany as much as 4 years earlier. For example, a neutral flag and anthem have been selected instead of FRG’s, as in 1956⁴³. Despite some politicians in the West Germany concentrated around Konrad Adenauer opposed to such settlement, it was eventually put into practice⁴⁴. As a result, during the second consecutive Olympiad a United German team has been formed. IOC officials again regarded it as their great success. The situation was similar in 1964, at this

between West and East Germans in the team was to be 3 to 1 in favour of West Germany. Ibidem.

⁴⁰ D. Wojtaszyn, *Sport w cieniu polityki. Instrumentalizacja sportu w NRD*, Wrocław 2011, p. 93.

⁴¹ R. Espy, op.cit. p. 43.

⁴² 1956. *European and Global Perspective*, C. Fink, F. Hadler, T. Schramm (eds.), Leipzig 2006, p. 292.

⁴³ The flag was supposed to have three colours: black, red and golden and have golden Olympic rings. D. Miller, op.cit., p. 177.

⁴⁴ R. Espy, op.cit., p. 67.

time the united team was sometimes called the “Pan-German contingent”. The problems with forming it were arising though. For instance the president of West German National Olympic Committee Willi Daume commented the possible separation of East and West German sports teams as “practically nothing else than legalization of an existing state of affairs”⁴⁵. The final decision was made in October 1965 during the IOC Session in Madrid. GDR was granted the possibility of creating its own national team to the Olympics in 1968. Such settlement was strongly influenced by international sports federations, the International Amateur Athletics Federation in particular. The IAAF decided, that two separate German teams were entitled to participate in European Championships in 1966⁴⁶. The International Olympic Committee imposed only one condition on its acceptance of separate German teams for the 1968 Olympics – both teams were supposed to march together during the opening ceremonies and use the same flag, emblem and anthem (neutral ones).

The German issue in international sport was an untypical and characteristic example of political dialogue with the use of sport, for the initiative of such solution did not come from any of the German states, but from a sport organization – the International Olympic Committee, which expressed a deeply political attitude. The IOC expressed lack of acceptance to the political *status quo* in Europe after the end of World War II, in this case the establishment of two separate German countries. Consequently the IOC members supported the idea of the United German Team in the world of sport, which obviously was contradictory to the political reality. It appears that the case of all-German sports team is not purely an example of establishing international dialogue using sport, but an example of the desire of such dialogue expressed by a third party, the IOC. In the end the German rapprochement has not been achieved yet and the solution imposed by the International Olympic Committee was unsuccessful in the long period.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 78–79.

⁴⁶ G.A. Carr, *The Involvement of Politics in the Sporting Relationships of East and West Germany, 1945–1972*, “Journal of Sport History” 1980, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 49, T. Taylor, *Politics and the Olympic Spirit*, [in:] *The Politics of Sport*, L. Allison (ed.), Manchester 1986, p. 225.

7. PEACEFUL POLITICAL GESTURES IN INTERNATIONAL SPORT

International sport is a convenient forum for making political gestures that would be hard to be made elsewhere. In this case, symbolic actions of political significance are meant by political gestures. Opening ceremonies of sports mega-events, such as the Olympic Games or World Championships, are especially adequate for such gestures that symbolize dialogue and cooperation between states that often have hostile attitude towards each other.

One of the most important examples of such political gestures concerns the two Korean states, which are legally at war. It has been decided, that during the opening ceremony of the Olympic Summer Games in Sydney in 2000 both teams would march together. Moreover, they were marching under the same flag – a neutral one with a blue shape of Korean Peninsula and a white background. Members of both teams were dressed homogeneously as well, although some of the North Korean athletes wore lapel pins with colors of the North Korean flag⁴⁷. This settlement was only in effect during the opening ceremony and in the sports competitions both states participated separately. It was however an extraordinary symbol of cooperation between the two countries formally at war, probably impossible in the pure world of politics. It is also worth mentioning, that this symbolical gesture was probably possible due to mutual rapprochement of the Korean states in respect to the Sunshine Policy of South Korean president Kim Dae Jung.

Another important political gesture in the world of sport applies to the Palestinian Authority. Although Palestine is not an independent country, the International Olympic Committee and International Federation of

⁴⁷ J. Gittings, *Two Koreas will march as one into Olympic stadium*, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/sep/11/northkorea.sydney>, [accessed: 15.01.2014], http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/olympics/news/2000/09/14/koreas_marchers_ap/, [accessed: 15.01.2014], <http://abcnews.go.com/Sports/story?id=100609>, [accessed: 15.01.2014], <http://english.pravda.ru/news/world/07-02-2006/75571-olympic-0/>, [accessed: 15.01.2014].

Association Football (FIFA) accepted it as their member⁴⁸. As a result, Palestinian athletes participate in the Olympic Games since 1996. Their participation is in a way symbolic as they never won a medal and there are little chances this situation may change soon, considering lack of professional training facilities in the Palestinian Authority. In this case it is the participation in the Olympic Games that matters and allowance to this by the IOC is most of all a symbolic gesture towards the Palestinians, despite their official political status.

8. CONCLUSIONS

A number of situations when sport was used for the sake of establishing political dialogue and cooperation have been presented. The most typical dimension of it was exploiting athletic contacts in order to establish or intensify political relations. It was especially important in the situations, when a simple meeting of politicians representing two countries was out of question as official relations between the states were unfriendly or there were no established relations at all. Under such circumstances it was much easier to propose a sports exhibition match or a series of them than a visit of politicians. However, using the opportunity of sports contacts, most often political meetings were arranged, such as the visit of president of the United States Richard Nixon in communist China 1972, Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau in the Soviet Union in 1971 or Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in the USA in 1959. All those high-profile meetings were possible due to diplomatic use of sport.

So called sports diplomacy is obviously not the only dimension of the consensual role of sport in international politics. There were also some occasions, when contact of athletes representing hostile countries resulted in a way in falsifying negative stereotypes of a nation regarded as an enemy. This way sport realized the ideas of the father of the modern Olympic

⁴⁸ M. Chance, C. Cheese, *Palesinian female Olympian: 'Miracles do happen'*, <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/05/17/sport/olympics-palestinian-london-2012/>, [accessed: 15.01.2014].

Games Pierre de Coubertin. This could be seen when American ice hockey players described their Soviet counterparts as friendly and similar to them. Sometimes even political gestures aimed to promote peace and international cooperation were introduced in the world of sport. Actions of the International Olympic Committee aimed to create United German Team despite functioning of two separate German states was one of them.

An overview of all those situations seems to legitimize the hypothesis, according to which political significance of sport does not apply to political conflict only, what is widely understood, but sport may also be a tool for cooperation and dialogue.

SUMMARY

Political significance of sport is usually bound with international rivalry and conflict. However, sport tends to have a role in fostering international dialogue and cooperation as well. The aim of the article is to present the most important examples of this role of international sport.

There is a number of examples verifying the hypothesis about consensual role of sport in international politics. Despite political significance, sport is not purely a part of the world of politics. This situation grants sport with an advantage in possibility of establishing international cooperation. Some actions that could seem completely impossible concerning political reality, turned out to be possible in sport. Sports contacts can pave the way for a further, political agreements. For instance a number of specific 'sports diplomacies' have taken place, that were used by some countries in order to enhance their capabilities of impacting the international political system.

Keywords: sport and politics, pacifist role of sport, international cooperation and dialogue through sport