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FROM THE HISTORY OF FOOTBALL OF SLOVAK POPULATION OF HUNGARIAN NATIONALITY

In years 1918-1945, the population of the Hungarian citizenship in Czechoslovakia, respectively in Slovakia, had a possibility to develop autonomously in the area of physical education and sport. Football was the most popular among all national groups. The Hungarian nationality had its own organizational forms. It was ČSAF-MLSZ (Czechoslovak Football Association, Hungarian Football Association- Magyar Labdarúgó Szövetség) in years 1918-1938 and Szlovákiai Magyar Testnevelő Szövetség Labdarúgó Szakosztálya (SZMTSZLSZ) in years 1939-1945. In spite of tense relations between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, respectively Slovakia and Hungary, our representatives from Hungarian Union of Physical Education in Czechoslovakia (Csehszlovákiai Magyar Testnevelő Szövetség, CSMTSZ), respectively Hungarian Union of Physical Education (Magyar Testnevelő Szövetség, MTSZ), were successful in developing this area what we can be seen in the growth of membership and in the results achieved. This statement refers to the period 1939-1945 as well. The author of this article adds new information to those already published facts with the aim to offer more coherent and more complex view of this area.

Football is one of the most group-based and the most popular sports in Slovakia. As one of few sports, it has written its history. The history of football in Slovakia was published by many authors. We can consider the book called *Zlatá kniha futbalu na Slovensku*, Šport, Bratislava, 1988 by authors Mašlonka Štefan and Kšíňan Jozef as one of the best. However even this publication is not processed completely. The aim of our article is to add new information to this previously published material and create a more complex view on this area which is the subject of our article.

The beginnings of the organized football in Slovakia are connected with the end of the 19th century. The first modern sports club in Slovakia, where football was played, was Eperjesi Torna és Vívó Egylet (ETVE) from Prešov. Other important moment in the development of football in our country was the creation of Hungarian Football Association (Magyar Labdarúgó Szövetség, MLSZ) in Budapest on 19th January 1901. PTE (Pozsonyi Torna Egylet) from Bratislava was one of the thirteen founding members. From the season 1907/1908, there was countryside championships played in 4 counties from the beginning. Football was spread progressively to other clubs or better said, its supporters were creating new ones. In the eastern part of Slovakia, in Košice, there were clubs KAC (Kassai Atlétikai Club), KSJE and KASE¹. In the western part, there were PULE (Pozsonyi Újvárosi Labdarúgó Egyesület), FC Terézváros, Ligeti SC, PMTK (Pozsonyi Magántisztviselők Torna Köre), Törekvés, VAS, Makkabea SC and PAC (Pozsonyi Atlétikai Club). In the season 1912/1913, MLSZ allowed to create Pressburg sub-group in which these clubs were. It was no surprise that PTE (Pozsonyi Torna Egylet) became the winner of this new sub-group and in the next season they won it again.² In the eastern group, there was successful KAC which won the group five times from the season 1908/1909 but in addition, it became the winner of the MLSZ countryside championship in the seasons 1909/1910 and 1910/1911. In the last season 1913/1914, before the outbreak of the 1st World War, LAC (Losonci Atlétikai Club) Lučenec became the winner of the MLSZ countryside championship. It was a clear sign that football has based in many other towns in the northern part of Kingdom of Hungary.³

¹ MAŠLONKA, Š., KŠIŇAN, J.: Zlatá kniha futbalu na Slovensku, Šport : Bratislava, 1988, p. 18-21.

² MACHAJDÍK, I.: Športové hry starej Bratislavy. Bratislava. Perfekt.2011, p.47.

³ MAŠLONKA, Š., KŠIŇAN, J.: Zlatá kniha futbalu na Slovensku, Šport : Bratislava, 1988, p. 22-23.

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This worldwide conflict caused not only the interruption of the sport life but also the end of Austro-Hungarian Empire. New nation states were created on the ruins of this kingdom. Czechoslovakia was one of these countries which was a state with a variety of nationalities. From the population of 13 613 172, according to the population census in 1921, 8.7 million (65.5%) were Czechoslovaks, 3.1 million (23.4%) were Germans, 745 435 (5.7%) were Hungarians, 461 846 (3.4%) were Ukrainians and Russians, 180 855 (1.3%) were Jews and 75 853 (1.3%) were Poles. The rest were other nationalities and foreigners.⁴ Czechoslovakia gave its minorities many rights because it was a signatory of the Treaty of Saint-Germain which guaranteed the autonomous development in the area of culture and education for national minorities. These international laws to protect the minorities were also based in the Czechoslovakian constitution from 29th February 1920 (head VI. § 121-134).⁵

Difficult post-war situation, in which the set-up of borders of the new state was discussed, slowed down the normalisation of social life. In this situation, Bratislava officials declared the creation of Pozsonyi Sportegyesületek Szövetsége (Union of Bratislava Sport Clubs) on 3rd February 1919. It was an establishment of Pressburg group of championships of the western county MLSZ. As the situation hadn't changed in the next months, the officials of the Union of Bratislava sport clubs decided to create Szlovák Labdarúgó Szövetséget (Slovak Football Association, SZLSZ) on 12th October 1919 and 86 clubs joined this union in a short period of time. SZLSZ started to organize a competition in Slovakia because Czechoslovak Football Association (Československý svaz fotbalový ČSSF) didn't accept its statutes. To avoid national tensions, the representatives of sport didn't accept the principle of the territorial division and they applied the national principle. By this, the Hungarian clubs were forced to create ČSAF-MLSZ in Slovakia. It later created the Czechoslovak Football Association (Československá asociace fotbalová, ČSAF) with German, Jewish and Czech football associations which was accepted by International Federation of Football Associations FIFA in 1923.⁶ ČSAF-MLSZ was officially created on 11th September 1921.⁷ Mayer Samu was elected as a chairman and Zsáry Gyula was elected as a secretary. The chairman of the union, Mayer Samu, became the third vice-chairman of ČSAF after the entry of MLSz to ČSAF.⁸ In 1929, Leberfinger Frigyes was elected as a chairman of ČSAF-MLSz. ČSAF-MLSZ had 34 clubs and 700 members when it was created and it was divided into counties. At the beginning, there were counties: Bratislava, Košice, Nové Zámky, Lučenec and Užhorod.⁹ In 1936, the residence of some of these counties had changed and the divisions were following: Bratislava, Košice, Levice, Rimavská Sobota and Užhorod.¹⁰ ČSAF-MLSZ started to organize regular competitions from 1922. The winners of every division played in the championship finals of ČSAF-MLSZ. The most successful club in this competition was Ligeti SC which was the winner in years 1922, 1924-1926, 1928-1929 and 1931-1932. Other winners were VAS SK Bratislava in 1923, AC Rapid Bratislava in 1927, UMTE Užhorod in 1933, FTC Fiľakovo (Fülek) in 1934-1937 and KAC Košice (Kassa) in 1938. The winner of ČSAF-MLSZ championship played a match with the winner of ČFS in Slovakia. The winners of this match from ČSAF-MLSZ were Ligeti SC in 1931, FTC Fiľakovo in 1937 and KAC Košice in 1938.¹¹

In 1928, Hungarian Union of Physical Education in Czechoslovakia (Csehszlovákiai Magyar Testnevelő Szövetség, CSMTSZ) was created of which ČSAF-MLSZ was a founding member.¹² The creation of CSMTSZ had great importance on the development of sport among the Hungarian minority in Slovakia because new sport unions were created in

⁴ MARTULIAK, P., FREMAL, K.: Dejiny Slovenska v rokoch 1914-1945. Duma. Banská Bystrica. 1998, p.55.

⁵ Kol. Encyklopédia Slovenska zv. 4., Veda. Bratislava 1980, p.71.

⁶ MAŠLONKA, Š., KŠIŇAN, J.: Zlatá kniha futbalu na Slovensku, Šport : Bratislava, 1988, s. 26-46. As this union had the same name as in

Hungary, its official name was modified to ČSFA-MLSz

⁷ NÚA, fond Policajné riaditeľstvo Mat. 126/360 Zápisnica valného zhromaždenia MLSz.

⁸ MAŠLONKA, Š., KŠIŇAN, J.: Zlatá kniha futbalu na Slovensku, Šport : Bratislava, 1988, p. 42. p. 49.

⁹ MUTŇANSKÝ, L., JAKUBEC, Š.: Futbalový šport a jeho organizácia na Slovensku: Bratislava, 1933, p.119-121.

¹⁰ Slovenský východ, č.2, 1936, p.6.

¹¹ MAŠLONKA, Š., KŠIŇAN, J. 1988. Zlatá kniha futbalu na Slovensku, Šport : Bratislava, 1988, p. 108. p. 417.

¹² BRÜLL, G.: Jubileumi évkönyv. Pozsony, 1932.p.8.

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addition to the football association. It had a positive effect on the activity of MLSZ in which number of members started to grow dynamically. In 1930, the union had 2 419 members in 56 clubs.¹³ In 1935, the number of members was 5 636 in 139 clubs.¹⁴ In 1934, the ČSAF reorganized the competitions. Divisional competitions were created in addition to the league competition. One of those was Slovak-Carpathian-Russian division which had western and eastern group. The winners of ČSSF counties and ČSAF-MLSZ districts participated in the qualifying cup to promote to the Division. ČSAF-MLSZ did not have its representative in the highest league competition but in the Division they had some representatives from which the most successful was FTC Fűfakovo from the western group (won the group in the seasons 1935/1936, 1936/1937 and 1937/1938). In the eastern group, it was KAC Košice which won the group in the season 1937/1938). Specific part in the activity of ČSAF-MLSZ was the representation meetings of this union. The premiere of the meeting of ČSSF and MLSZ was on 29th September 1922. The team of ČSSF was composed of 1. Československý športový klub (1. ČsŠK) and Slavia Bratislava players and the team of ČSAF-MLSZ were composed of PTE and Ligeti SC players.¹⁵ To support the activities of MLSZ, there was created the Group of Hungarian Football Referees (Magyar Futballbírák Testülete) soon after. The inaugural meeting was realized on 17th June 1922. Stahl Lajos was elected as a chairman.¹⁶

Geopolitical situation in Czechoslovakia started to change in the late thirties because of fascism in Germany. The result of this was the acceptance of Munich Agreement from 29th September 1938 and Vienna Arbitration from 2nd November 1938. Czechoslovakia had lost extensive territories and the number of minority population decreased significantly after these two agreements.¹⁷ In case of Hungarian minority, it was decreased to 67 000 inhabitants.¹⁸ This situation in Czechoslovakia accelerated the process of declaration of Slovak autonomy on 6th October 1938.¹⁹ The pretext of the suspension of all half-military organizations on 28th October 1938 by the Slovak government was to enhance the defence of Slovakia. Few days later, on the 5th December 1938, the same destiny affected physical education organizations as well.²⁰ (Author's note: it was not related to MTSZ and German Deutscher Turn- und Sportverbund, DTSV). However, the situation of sport was different. New Slovak national sport unions were created progressively. Boxers were the first who created their federation.²¹ Slovak Football Association (SFS) was created on 26th November 1938 and then others.²² This process culminated by the creation of Central Slovak Sport Council (SÚŠR) on 7th March 1939. Azór Géza, the representative of MTSZ, was elected as a member of SÚŠR.²³

Only a week after, Slovak state was declared on 14th March 1939 and it was given the name Slovak Republic on the basis of the constitution from July 1939.²⁴ Although the constitution contained protection of all the minorities, there was accepted only the existence of Hungarians, Germans and Rusyns.²⁵ The significant reduction of the number of inhabitants of the Hungarian minority had its results even in sport and it meant the end of many Hungarian sport unions. At the beginning, the sport life of the Hungarian minority reduced only to the area of Bratislava.²⁶ The sport life in Bratislava hadn't renewed without complications. Mainly it was the loss of Petržalka (Pozsonyiligetűfalú) which fell into German hands after the Munich Agreement. Many sport clubs, for example PTE, had lost their sport venues.²⁷ Despite of

¹³ MUTŇANSKÝ, L., JAKUBEC, Š.: Futbalový šport a jeho organizácia na Slovensku: Bratislava, 1933, p.121.

¹⁴ Slovenský východ, č.2, 1936, p.6.

¹⁵ MAŠLONKA, Š., KŠIŇAN, J.: Zlatá kniha futbalu na Slovensku, Šport : Bratislava, 1988, p.64, p. 108. p. 414-419.

¹⁶ NÚA, fond Policajné riaditeľstvo Mat. 20/85 1922-Zbor maďarských futbalových sudcov.

¹⁷ RYCHLIK, J.: Česi a Slováci v 20.storočí. Bratislava. AE Press, 1997 p. 145 – 149.

¹⁸ PODOLEC, O.: Národnostné menšiny na Slovensku 1938-1945. História, č.6,2006,p.23.

¹⁹ MARTULIAK, P., FREMAL, K.: Dejiny Slovenska v rokoch 1914-1945. Duma. Banská Bystrica. 1998, p.66.

²⁰ PERÚTKA, J. Dejiny telesnej výchovy a športu na Slovensku. Bratislava: Šport, 1980,p..137.

²¹ ŠÚA Bratislava f. Policajné riaditeľstvo, šk.135, Mat 20/159

²² PERÚTKA, J.: Dejiny telesnej výchovy a športu na Slovensku. Bratislava: Šport STV, 1980, p..142.

²³ Slovák 9. 3. 1939, p. 10

²⁴ KAMENEC, I. Spory o 14.marec 1939. Historická revue. 1999, č. 3, p. 14 - 15

²⁵ PODOLEC, O.: Národnostné menšiny na Slovensku 1938-1945. História, č.6,2006, p..22.

²⁶ TURCEL, L.: Magyar Sportélet Cshslovákiában 1918-1938. Bratislava. Madách, 1992, sp. 92.

²⁷ MACHAJDÍK, I.: Športové hry starej Bratislavy. Bratislava. Perfekt, 2011,p..47.

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this difficult situation, the normalization of social life was successful in Slovakia. Szlovákiai Magyar Testnevelő Szövetség (SZMTSZ) restored its activities with a partially changed name. Révay János was elected as a chairman of SZMTSZ and as vice-chairmen were elected Nagy Dezső, Reichart Dezső, Takách Béla, Gut Ferenc and Azór Géza.²⁸ Szlovákiai Magyar Testnevelő Szövetség Labdarúgó Szakosztálya (SZMTSZLSZ) restored its activities shortly after the formation of Slovak state and it started to organize its county championship in spring 1939.²⁹ The chairman of SZMTSZLSZ was D. Nagy. The permanent members of this organization were Bratislavai Vas-és Fémmunkások Sport Klubja (VAS SK), Bratislavai Munkás Testgyakorló Egyesület (MTE), Püspöki TK Biskupice, Bratislavai Polgári Torna Egyesület (PTE), Bratislavai Főrévi Torna Club (FTC) a Bratislavai Törekvés Sport Club.³⁰ In 1942, SZMTSZLSZ was divided into two counties. Alongside Bratislava County, Nitra County was created. This new county, except the town of Nitra, was formed by sport clubs from the surrounding villages: Királyi, Egerszeg, Gerencsér, Berencs, Vicsápapáti and Lédec.³¹ SZMTSZLSZ had its representative in Slovak Football Association as well. It was I. Schurmann who was the secretary of SZMTSZLSZ.³² The most successful club of this association was VAS SK Bratislava which entered the highest competition of Slovak Football Association.³³ VAS SK Bratislava played very attractive football in this competition and the attendance on its matches was up to 4 000 spectators what was very high at that time. This club got two new players in the season 1942/1943 from Hungary, Szalay and Babincsák, but it was no success, as only one foreign player could play in the league in each club, VAS SK lost 5 points from 3 matches by default after the protests in Žilina and it had to leave the league. In the next season they played in the Division.³⁴ The champions of SZMTSZLSZ in each season were: PTE in season 1939/1940 and 1940/1941, MTE in season 1941/1942 and Püspöki TK Biskupice in seasons 1942/1943 and 1943/1944. Alongside the federal championship, there was played junior championship as well.³⁵ The season 1944/1945 was not played to the end because of the Slovak National Uprising.³⁶ It is necessary to mention that VAS SK participated in the championship with its reserve team because its first team played in SFS (Slovak Football Association) competitions.³⁷ Matches were played between the associations in Slovakia in this period as well. The first match was on 7th December 1941 between SZMTSZLSZ and DTSV.³⁸ The match between SZMTSZLSZ and SFS was on 18th April 1943.³⁹

Although the Kingdom of Hungary was one of the first countries which took the modern sport from England, it started to spread in Slovakia in the second half of 19th century.⁴⁰ As its propagation was connected to the process of industrialization, it is understandable that it firstly became popular in the most important agglomerations, in Bratislava and in Košice and later in other towns. In case of Bratislava and Košice, a very important role had the closeness of Budapest which was the centre of sport life in the country. First sport clubs which had restored their activities after the change of the constitutional arrangement were in the above mentioned towns where Hungarian minority had a significant share. After the restoration of these sport clubs came the creation of new clubs and when the representatives of sport in the new state had decided to create ČSAF-MLSZ on the national principle.

²⁸ GOSIOROVSKÝ, F., ŠIMKO, J., KOCUM, V.: Športovcový kalendár, Melantrich. Žilina, 1943, p. 12-13.

²⁹ Slovák, č. 70, 1939, p. 10.

³⁰ Slovák č. 168, 1939, p. 12.

³¹ Magyar Néplap č. 25, 1942, p. 8.

³² JANÍČEK, Š.: Kalendár pre slovenského futbalistu na rok 1944. SFS. Bratislava, 1945, p. 36 a 42.

³³ Slovák č. 168, 1939, p. 12.

³⁴ MAŠLONKA, Š., KŠIŇAN, J.: Zlatá kniha futbalu na Slovensku, Šport : Bratislava, 1988, p. 166. p. 423.

³⁵ Slovák č. 125, 1941, s. 10. Magyar Néplap č. 25, 1942, p. 8., č. 25, 1943, p. 8., Magyar Hírlap č. 198, 1944, p. 8.

³⁶ MAŠLONKA, Š., KŠIŇAN, J.: Zlatá kniha futbalu na Slovensku, Šport : Bratislava, 1988, p. 64, p. 108. p. 414-419.

³⁷ Magyar Néplap č. 25, 1942, p. 8., č. 25, 1943, p. 8., MAŠLONKA, Š., KŠIŇAN, J.: Zlatá kniha futbalu na Slovensku, Šport: Bratislava, 1988, p. 64.

³⁸ Slovák č. 202, 1941, p. 16.

³⁹ Slovák č. 85, 1943, p. 8.

⁴⁰ GREXA, J., NOVÁK, M.: Naši olympionici, STN: Bratislava, 1978, p. 10.

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SUMMARY

The tense relations between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, respectively between Slovakia and Hungary, were translated to the area of sport.⁴¹ Despite the mentioned statement, the area of sport life was developed on a very high level what can be demonstrated on the increased number of members.⁴² And even the number of inhabitants of the Hungarian minority decreased significantly after the Vienna Arbitration, football retained its organizational existence in the next period. After the end of the 2nd World War, the national system was suspended by the territorial system it meant the definite termination of national sport unions throughout Czechoslovakia.

Key words: 1st First Vienna Arbitration, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungarian nationality, football history

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⁴¹ ZELENÁK, P. a kol.: Slovensko-maďarské vzťahy v 20. storočí. Bratislava, 1992. Slovenský východ č.167, 1935, p.6, Slovák č.70, 1940, p. 20.

⁴² BUREŠ, Prokop- PLICHTA, Jan. : Šport a telesná kultúra v RČS. Praha: 1931, p.273.

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