

Dreams of the Olympic Warsaw: Uncompleted projects of Olympic infrastructure in the capital of Poland in the 20th century - an outline.

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to attempt to synthetically describe the activities performed in Warsaw in order to prepare the city for the organisation of the summer Olympic Games. Dreams and plans for the capital of Poland to become an Olympic city were presented just after regaining the independence and the establishment of Polish Olympic Committee in the early 1920s, under the rule of the charismatic city mayor Stefan Starzyński in 1930s, during the capital's restoration after WWII destruction in 1940s, and after the political transformation in 1990s. However, none of them has been achieved due to logistical, economic and political difficulties. In the article, it is attempted to recap and compare these unfulfilled investment plans based on archival, printed, press and memoiristic sources.

Keywords

Infrastructure, Warsaw, Olympic Games, Olympism, investments.

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Introduction

In 1795, after the 3rd and final partition between Russia, Prussia and Austria, the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth disappeared from the maps of Europe. The majority of Poles never truly accepted the necessity to live under foreign administration. Therefore, a number of uprisings were held, with the longest one – the January Uprising – in 1863. After the collapse of this uprising, Warsaw, which was an intensively developing city, was turned into a Russian fortress. Therefore, the economic and demographic development in the Polish largest city was not followed by satisfactory urban progress. The city, closed within narrow strips of forts, developed chaotically “upwards”, challenged by overcrowding and a growing deficit of green, recreation and sports areas. Therefore, after the Russians left Warsaw in August 1915 due to their defeats against the German imperial army on the Great War fronts, concepts of a profound redesign of the capital’s urban space were raised. Such ideas were also stimulated by the ‘great incorporation’ of suburbs as recommended by Hans von Beseler, the German governor of the General Gouvernement – the occupational form administration that was created above central Poland between 1915 – 1918 .

The year 1916 marked a new period in the history of Warsaw, characterized by the times of relatively free development of the city, which would soon become the capital of independent Poland. In Warsaw of the 20th century, being successively the capital of the Second Republic of Poland, the People’s Republic of Poland and the Third Republic of Poland, bold investment plans have been undertaken for several times. Among them there was also an idea of creating the Olympic District, connected with the hypothetical application of Warsaw for the organization of the Summer Olympic Games. Such an idea was undertaken several times in Warsaw. The fate of such a concept will be discussed in this study. Pioneering plans, with no chance of realization, were already made in the early 1920s. In the next decade, Stefan Starzynski, who in the historical *communis opinio* was regarded probably the most splendid mayor of the capital in the past century, also thought about the Warsaw Olympics. Starzynski’s dreams of Olympic Warsaw were interrupted by the war. The vision of the Olympics in the capital also affected the architects and urban planners of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office during the post-war restoration. However, it turned out to be impossible for the enormity of the capital’s more urgent investment needs. The last attempt in the 20th century

history of Warsaw to organize the Olympic quarter was a vision of the “Vistula Games” proposed by Ryszard Parulski and Wojciech Zabłocki in 1990s. However, they also failed to overcome the bad luck of the Polish capital to the Olympic-like facilities.

This paper was written based on historical sources of various types. Several extensive press articles from 1921 published in a couple of magazines were used to reconstruct the assumptions of the “Amusement and Sports Garden”, being the first proposal of the Olympic Park in the capital of Poland. The basis for the explorations of the idea of the Olympic District of Siewierski from 1930s were printed sources, including Stefan Starzynski’s speeches to the City Council, his lectures at various ceremonies, collective studies prepared for the municipal office, catalogues of two large urban exhibitions from 1936 and 1938, and statistical studies. The postwar attempts to continue this project were mainly reconstructed based on the documents of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office, preserved in the State Archive of Warsaw. The main source of information about the idea of the Vistula Games of the 1990s are the memories, both published and presented orally, of the creator of the project, Wojciech Zabłocki, as well as a printed prospect “Igrzyska olimpijskie w Warszawie” [Olympics in Warsaw] written by him. This text is preliminary in nature and does not intend to exhaust the subject as a whole.

Pioneering ideas of the Olympic Games in IN Warsaw

After the incorporation of large suburbs into the city of Warsaw, the “Preliminary draft of the regulatory plan for the capital city Of Warsaw from December 1916” were prepared by the group of architects under the supervision of Tadeusz Tołwi ski, an architect, urban planner and academic scholar at Warsaw University of Technology (Gadomski 1988, 57). The plan concerned, among other things, the organisation of a large park in the south of the city, in the area of Siewierski, Near the Vistula River. The draft reads: “In the Vistula knee in Siewierski, the Great National Park was designed, with a stadium, connected to the Vistula river, Czerniakowskie Lake and old Vistula backwaters (Zachwatowicz 1971, 275)”. A forum for parades and ceremonies, recreation areas and sports squares, as well as the horse – racing track, were planned in the park.

Figure 1. The ‘Great National Park’ in the perspective of the whole Warsaw. ‘Preliminary draft of the regulatory plan for the capital city of Warsaw’, December 1916



The assumption that the great national park was the first suggestion in the history of Warsaw to build an Olympic quarter does not seem justified as it is not confirmed by any of the known sources. However, this is the first noteworthy idea of the development of a representative sports and leisure infrastructure in the future capital of the reborn Republic of Poland.

Figure 2. The ‘Great National Park’ in detail. ‘Preliminary draft of the regulatory plan for the capital city of Warsaw’, December 1916.



In early 1920s, the suggestions were made to expand the representative sports infrastructure in Warsaw. For example, in 1920, the Council for Physical Education and Physical Culture proposed that the government should make it easier for sports associations to organize football pitches in the country and to build a sports stadium in Warsaw, where Olympic Games could be organised in the future (APAN, 2, 171, III - 92). Another Polish idea, referring to an earlier project by Elwood Brown, which ended in failure (The IOC. One Hundred Years – 1994, 163-64), was to start organizing regional games of Central European countries, with Warsaw as one of its first hosts. This idea was affirmed by the Polish Olympic Committee and unsuccessfully promoted by the chairmen of POC Stefan Lubomirski, who

in the documents of the IOC signed the French version of his name 'Etienne', together with Edward Wittig at the IOC in Lausanne (1921) and Paris (1922) (B-ID05-LUBOE, file 27).

Edward Wittig (1879 – 1941) was a Polish sculptor and academic scholar mostly known for a number of his Warsaw statues, especially an Aviator from 1932, and his teaching activity at Warsaw University of Technology and Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts. Although he was not a member of POC, he engaged himself in promoting the idea of Central European Games. Unfortunately, he failed to find support of the International Olympic Committee. Pierre de Coubertin personally expressed number of reservations, arguing that such an event would have disturb the preparations for the exact Olympics, it is unnecessary in Europe, where competitive sport is already established and should be perceived as unjustified manifestation of Polish imperialism in international Olympic movement (APAN, 30 – 40, 133, III - 92).

Despite the international failure of the Central European Games, a bold concept of a sports and entertainment investment emerged simultaneously in Warsaw, termed "Amusement and Sports Garden". The originator of this plan (1921) was Colonel Marian Dienstl – Dabrowa, Polish military officer and journalist, a veteran of the First World War, who had been known as an experienced and successful organizer since he has been the head of a fruitful recruitment campaign in Italy to the so – called Blue Army, Polish military force named after the colour of the uniforms, that was established in France in 1917. Dienstl - Dabrowa's Italian recruitment action led to approximately 20.000

recruited volunteers (Grzegorzczak 1974, 111). After regaining independence, joined the re-established Polish Army and paid special role in successful campaign against the Bolshevik Red Army (Lipinski 1990, 403-6). Since 1918 its commander was Józef Haller, who is considered as one of the founding fathers of Polish independence (Orłowski 2007, 260).

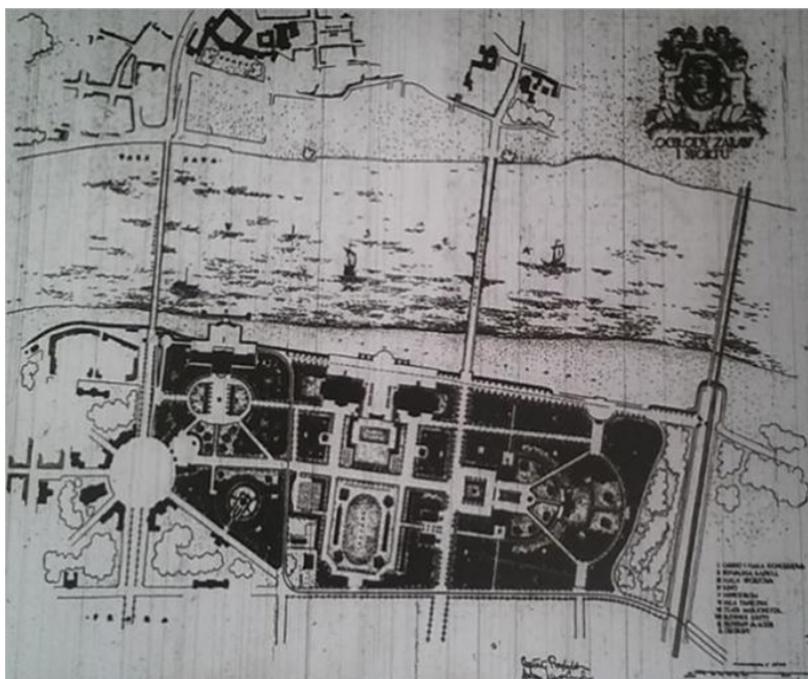
In 1921 Dienstl – Dabrowa invited architects Czesław Przybylski and Antoni Jawornicki for preparing the initial plan of a new grand-scale sporting facilities. They were both excellent professionals. Przybylski was later a long-time teacher of monumental architecture at Warsaw University of Technology (Jonkajtys – Luba 1996), whereas Jawornicki was mostly known for his general plans of the garden – city Podkowa Le na, the best recognizable example of Ebenezer Howard’s idea reception in Poland (Wittels 2006, 49 – 50). Moreover, Dienstl – Dabrowa recruited many influential figures of the world of politics, military and culture into the emerging Society for the Construction of the Amusement and Sports Garden, including Józef Haller, Arnold Szyfman: playwright, director and theater’s chairman who was a founder and a long time chairman of the Teatr Polski [Polish Theater], the most important capital’s theater to present Polish classic plays or Kornel Makuszyński: novelist, poet, journalist, literature and theater critic famous mostly for his books for youths and children, especially creation of a first Polish comics “Przygody Koziołka Matołka” [“The Adventures of Goatie the Dumb”] in 1932 (Urbanek 2017), which helped ennoble the initiative. A preliminary agreement was reached with the magistrate on the transfer of land. The plans were presented to the public opinion in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, *Rzeczpospolita* and *wiat*.

As a sidenote, ‘*Tygodnik Ilustrowany*’ was a Polish weekly journal established in Warsaw in 1859 that was appearing up to 1939. It was considered as apolitical and presented mostly historical essays, poems, epics, travel reportages and the fine art reproductions. The journal was arguably the most popular Polish weekly between 1880 – 1900 and remained popular in the interwar period (Gajkowska 2002, 99 – 101). *Rzeczpospolita* was a daily newspaper established in 1920 by Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Polish pianist and politician, a Prime Minister after the liberation. It was a daily newspaper of a conservative and Christian – democratic profile printed in Warsaw, but with national significance. Number of

broadly recognizable Polish authors, including Stefan Zeromski, cooperated with it, however, the financial problems led to closing the newspaper in 1931 (Paczkowski 1980). *Swiat* was a socio – cultural weekly journal that was printed in Warsaw between 1906 – 1939. It was focused on publishing illustrated reportages and serialized novels (Encyklopedia Warszawy, 1994, 858).

The dominant feature of the “Amusement and Sport Garden” was a huge “stadium for competitions and sports games with an amphitheatre for tens of thousands of spectators” (Czerwinski 1921, 30, 483). Other planned elements of the infrastructure were a roofed indoor arena for several thousand spectators, a concrete indoor swimming pool with a 60-metre long heated swimming pool, an equestrian hippodrome, and facilities for leisure, recreation and culture. In order to facilitate access to the park, the originator of the idea proposed to create internal communication network, composed not only of buses and trams using the Kierbedz Bridge, but also ships and aerial tramway.

Figure 3. Amusement and Sports Garden by the Vistula river, *Swiat*, June 25, 1921.



Although it was initially announced that the construction of the “Amusement and Sports Garden” would begin in August 1921 and would be completed by the middle of the following year (optimistic estimates were around May 1, 1922), the Warsaw press failed to mention of the project, which turned out to be a pipe dream. The last sources that mention the “Amusement

and Sports Garden” informs us, that in 1926 the Society for the Construction of the Garden are yet to reach the grounds at Praski Park (CAW, I.300.63.63, 101). The analysis of the development of sports infrastructure in interwar Warsaw reveals that the concept of “Amusement and Sports Garden” had no chance to be realized. The burden of this investment in the early 1920s was too heavy for both private and public investors. Therefore, the justified hypothesis is that the whole idea could only be an intellectual provocation aimed to draw attention to the need for more accurate and bolder urban planning in Warsaw, and the need for extending green, sports and recreation areas in the city.

The concept of building the Olympic district in Siekierki in 1934-1939

The period of the late 1930s marked a special period for the history of Warsaw. In 1934 Stefan Starzynski became the head of the capital magistrate.

Starzynski (1893–1939) was an economist and a politician. During the Great War he served in the Legiony Polskie, Polish military troops established with the cooperation of the Austro – Hungarian authorities that are broadly considered as the takeover for the future restored independent Polish Army. After May Coup 1926 he was a member of the governmental wing and active supporter of Józef Piłsudski. After serving many years as a State secretary in the Ministry of Treasury, he was designated to a dignity of Warsaw’s mayor in 1934, that he followed up to October 1939. Under his rule a number of significant investments were completed (e.g Central Railway Station completion, the Old Town restoration). During the so-called September Campaign in 1939 Starzynski served as a Civil Commissioner of the Capital Defense as well as coordinator of social help and civilians support. After the capitulation he started to coordinate the restoration, but after a month was arrested by the III Reich officials and soon, most likely before Christmas 1939, murdered in Warsaw or somewhere nearby (Piatek 2016).

Starzynski’s ambition was to make Warsaw a real metropolis. The modernization efforts were supposed to be culminated with Warsaw Olympics. The Mayor Starzynski revealed his Olympic plans, speaking as the host of the IOC plenary session held in Warsaw in 1937.

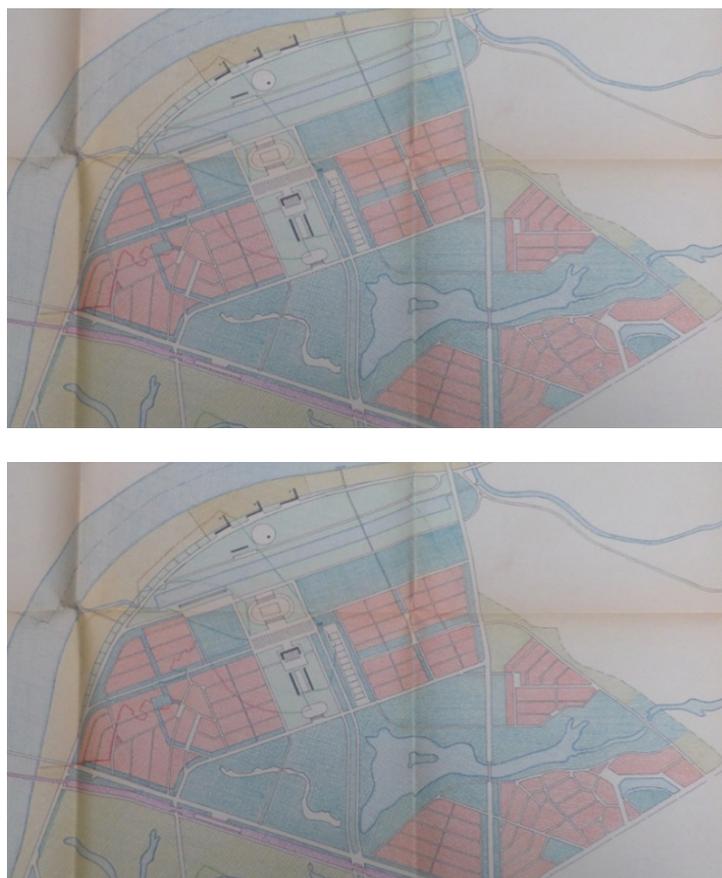
The Olympic district was to be located in a rather vast, undeveloped and wet space between the Vistula arch and Lake Czerniakowskie. The exhibition “Warsaw of the Future” from 1936 presented “the model of the sports park at Siekierki, which illustrates a great initiative, including a rowing course and a sports stadium’ (Warszawa Przyszłości 1936, 28-29). Starzynski, in a lecture given in 1938, informed that “a great undertaking is the beginning of a campaign to promote organisation of sports parks in Siekierki” (Starzynski 1938, 2). In 1936-1938, the sports park in Siekierki was the responsibility of the City Planning Department, which prepared a detailed investment plan. This document assumed that the sports district in Siekierki would be connected with the planned airport in Gocław, and, through the riverside boulevard, a water tram station and railway line, would offer a convenient communication with the city centre.

Figure 4. The Olympic District in Siekierki in the perspective of the whole Warsaw. Detailed regulatory plan for the capital city of Warsaw’, late 30.



Until the outbreak of the war, the most important measurable achievement of the magistrate was the acquisition of 160 hectares of land in Siekierki, which in the future ensured freedom of construction work, as well as building a drainage system, a land amelioration and preparation of some initial plans by architect Kazimierz Marczewski.

Figure 5. The Olympic District in Siekierki in detail, late 30.



The Siekierki complex was expected to include a rowing course, a multifunctional sports stadium, 50 meter outdoor swimming pool, velodrome, sport and entertainment hall, tennis courts, auxiliary and practice sporting facilities as well as warehouses, changing rooms, hotels etc. In its central part, the dominant feature would be a large square, called the Sports Forum. In 1939, a board showing the Siekierki complex was one of the materials prepared for the World Exhibition in New York (*Gazeta Polska* 1939, 53, 8).

There is little evidence of the Polish Olympic Committee's attitude to the concept of Warsaw Olympics. However, there are few documents that suggest the national POC was generally supportive to the idea the whole interwar period (APAN, 1928, 50, 312, III - 92). However, in opposition to Starzynski, Kazimierz Glabisz, POC President, have not raised the question of Olympic Games in Warsaw in the speech while opening the session of IOC in Warsaw in 1937 (APAN, 298, 315, III - 92). No information about the activities of IOC members from Poland – Ignacy Matuszewski and Stanisław Rouppert – in supporting the idea of Warsaw Olympics was found in neither Polish nor IOC archives as well.

Dreams of the capital of the Second Polish Republic being a host of the Olympic Games were buried by the IIIrd Reich's aggression on Poland, although it is difficult to determine whether they could be realised if not the outbreak of World War II.

Reconstruction of warsaw and the Olympic Games: plans to develop an olympic infrastructure in the documents of the warsaw reconstruction office

After the liberation of Warsaw, when the decision was made to rebuild the capital, the engineers and architects involved in this task seriously thought about the implementation of some of the initiatives planned by the prewar magistrate. One of them was the Olympic District.

On January 1945, after the six year long Nazi German occupation, the unsuccessful Warsaw Uprising (August 1st – October 3rd 1944) and the action of methodical destruction of the city between October 1944 and January 1945, Warsaw was destroyed or seriously damaged in 85% of its pre-war urban tissue. Some districts - the Old Town, and former Jewish quarters - were razed to the ground (Straty Warszawy, 2005, 225). Nevertheless, the decision was made to reconstruct the Polish capital. On February 14, 1945, the Warsaw Reconstruction Office was established by the decree of the State National Council in order to coordinate the reconstruction process. The Office served until 1951 (Sikorska 2011, 9-14). The Information Bulletin for the Service of the National and Foreign Press of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office No. 105 from 7 August 1945 contains information that the general plans of the Office that assumed an investment surprisingly similar to the prewar concept of the Olympic District. The bulletin reads: "To the south of the city, at the foot of the slope, future sports events' facilities are planned. Among them, the main place is occupied by the Main Stadium, by the Warsaw Escarpment becoming its natural tribunes. The stadium is planned by the Warsaw Reconstruction Office to reach the scale of the Olympic Games, and it will also be a nationwide sporting area. In addition to a huge stadium with a capacity of 100,000 seats, smaller facilities for tennis and water sports are also planned. (...) In the immediate vicinity, the Warsaw Reconstruction Offices designs the appropriate communication facilities to ensure the efficiency of large movement of people" (APW, BOS, 1945, 2056, 125).

Even more extensive passage can be found in the article published in the Chronicle of Warsaw Reconstruction of December 1945. The article, entitled "Sports Quarter" reads: "One of the most important landmarks of the new Warsaw, playing an outstanding role in the layout of the city and in the life of its inhabitants, will be the newly designed Sports District. (...) This assumption is based on two main landscape elements (...). These elements are the Vistula and the Warsaw Escarpment. The southern section of the escarpment between Królikarnia and Służew, which forms an amphitheatre-like arch at this point, was selected for the location of this concept, embracing a vast arch, stretching through Czerniakow to Siekierki, where it is again closed with the Vistula buckle" (APW, BOS, 2060, 19-20).

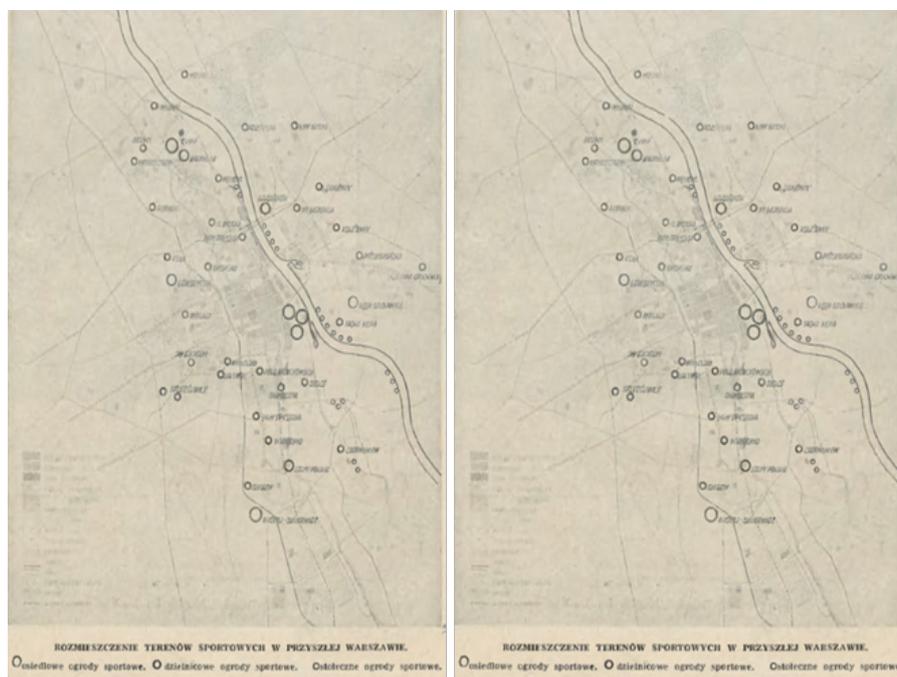
The Sport District, as we can be read further in this material, was supposed to have an axial layout, referring to the great historical urban initiatives of the capital of such a character: The Saxon Axis or Stanisław August Axis. The dominant features of the Sports District would be the Warsaw escarpment together with the Sports Stadium based on the escarpment, the Manifestation Square, where the opening ceremonies of major sports events could take place, Lake Czerniakowskie, Great Indoor Area which would be the second most important component of the sports infrastructure, and the Vistula river. The article emphasized that the wet, marshy areas of Siekierki would be regulated, as a result of which small artificial lakes would be created. One of them would become a rowing and sailing course. Another area was supposed to contain the indoor area producing the "touch of boulevards". The Sports District was to be complemented by two smaller stadiums adjacent to the Olympic facilities. Furthermore, the design of the sports district included taking into account monuments of the area other than Królikarnia such as: The Church and the Monastery of Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in Czerniaków and the Church in Służew Poduchowny (APW BOS, 1945, 2060, 19-20).

The description is much similar to the prewar sports district plans. The analogies concern the large scale of the project, reflecting the 1945 concept planned with even greater scale (an area of 373 hectares) its complexity, and communication solutions (the planned bridge and airport in Gocław). The elements of the project are also similar - for example, noteworthy is a large, representative square presented in both assumptions.

In 1945, it was probably a dream that a project created in the laboratories of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office could become the arena of the Olympic Games in the future. Although no specific date was planned, some remarks in the source texts reinforce this assumption. Consequently, it was mentioned in the fifth issue of the Chronicle of Warsaw Reconstruction that “huge sports facilities will be built in Czerniaków and Siekierki with Olympic proportions (APW, BOS, 1945, 2060, 73)”. Furthermore, the material from 1945, entitled “So that the city can breathe clean air” reads: “The existence of this group of green areas is determined by the character of the capital city. With this scale, it is predicted that this area will be, for example, the Olympic grounds (373 ha) (...) These projects do not, to a large extent, concern the immediate future, given the enormity of more urgent needs of the Warsaw society” (APW, BOS, 1945, 2060, 73).

Therefore, the doubts about the possibility of building the Olympic facilities in the face of “the enormity of more urgent needs” accompanied the specialists since 1945. Indeed, in the following years, less and less was mentioned about the Olympic district, probably realizing that the idea was illusory. However, on 20 October 1948, a conference was held at the headquarters of the Spatial Planning Directorate of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office, concerning sports grounds in Warsaw, during which one of the most important topics was the issue of the location of the future Olympic arenas. The need to create a sports district was emphasized. “The Olympic stadium should be built as soon as possible. In 1951, there will be an exhibition of the reconstruction in the Olympic grounds, the rubble dump for the grandstand would be free”. The document also shows that in 1948, the hypothetical location of the Olympic stadium was more often not Siekierki, but Powisle, in the central part of the city (APW, BOS, 1948, 2806, 562 – 562).

Figure 6. The supposed location of Olympic Park in Powisle, central Warsaw. Stolica, 1948.



Plans to create an Olympic sports district therefore existed in the Warsaw Reconstruction Office until 1948. However, other documents of those days contain information that the Olympic facility was an unrealistic plan. Already in 1947, the Ministry of Reconstruction decided to withdraw funds for the stadium project, arguing that in the near future there was no chance for its completion. One of the preserved letter reads: “Confirming the receipt of the projects for the division of the items of the investment plan for 1947, we would like to inform that the chapter (...) for sports grounds are included in the annual loan allocation list determined by the Ministry of Reconstruction with the exception of item 1 million PLN for the project of the Olympic Stadium. Given the extent of the investment, it cannot be foreseen in the three-year plan and it is therefore not appropriate to allocate a significant amount for this purpose”. (APW, BOS, 1947, 2779, 117).

The BOS documents, which can be found do not provide a clear answer to the question when the concept of the Olympic district was definitively rejected. Moreover, it is difficult to suppose to what extent the ultimate rejection of the idea of Olympics in Warsaw was connected with the consolidation of communistic political system in Poland. However, despite the obvious

dependency of Soviet Union, who did not take part in the international Olympic movement at times, Polish communists were not entirely opposing the concept of Warsaw Olympics. In 1946 "Przegląd Sportowy" even informed that the State Office for Physical Education and Military Preparation plans Warsaw to host Olympics in 1956 (Przegląd Sportowy, no 22, 1947, 1-3). Of course, an interesting question is what caused the plan drawn almost directly from "Starzynski's briefcase", who was a member of the Piłsudski's political environment, criticized very much in later years of the People's Republic of Poland, to be openly used in 1945. Perhaps it was important that the majority of BOS employees were Polish prewar architects, some even cooperating with the magistrate already before 1939. This group included Roman Piotrowski, the head of the BOS, Szymon Syrkus, Jan Zachwatowicz, Piotr Bieganski, Józef Sigalin. Furthermore, in the period of 1945-1949, there was still no room for full ideologization and propaganda of life, and the only national legacy to which reference could be made were prewar concepts. However, these are only hypotheses, while the answer to such a question goes beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, challenged by the enormity of current needs, such an ambitious project as creation of Olympic facilities within the restoration process turned out to be impossible to be realized anyway.

Vistula Games: the last project in the past century to build Olympic facilities in Warsaw

The idea of preparing the capital of Poland for the organization of the Olympic Games at the beginning of the 21st century was firstly presented by Ryszard Parulski at 1992's Easter meeting of Polish Olympians Society. At the same meeting Parulski asked Wojciech Zabłocki for cooperation and preparation of general architectonic plans and got his acceptance.

Ryszard Parulski was a Polish fencer, lawyer, sporting and social activist. He was team world champion and team Olympic medalist in fencing in 1960s. After finishing sporting career he was working as an attorney, following his own chancellor in Warsaw. Moreover, Parulski was as founder and between 1987 - 2000 a CEO of "Gloria Victis" Foundation which aim was to financially support the former sportsmen in difficult situation. He also serve as the chairmen of Polish Fencing Association and vice – chairman of Polish Olympic Committee (1990 – 1992).

Wojciech Zabłocki is a Polish former fencer and an architect. He is multiple Olympic medalist and world championship from 50s and 60s in fencing, mostly in team competition in sabre. After finishing sporting career he started working as an architect, specialising in sporting facilities. His main accomplishments are the Centre of Olympic Preparations in Warsaw and especially the Mediterranean Games complex in Aleppo, where the Games were held in 1987. He is also an academic scholar and a former chairman of "Polish Olympic Studies Academy".

The so – called Vistula Games concept was firstly presented on 1992 Polish Olympians Society Easter Meeting and it was not until the death of Ryszard Parulski in 2017 when the idea definitely perished. The concept was immediately affirmed and transformed to the structures of Polish Olympic Committee, which were also supportive. A special commission affiliated to the POC, as well as the "Olimpiada Warszawa 2012" Foundation, headed by Ryszard Parulski, were established. The person responsible for the design and logistic problems was Zabłocki and for legal problems, promotion and external support was Parulski. The date of the hypothetical Vistula Games was to be 2012.

Zabłocki proposed the construction of Olympic facilities along the Vistula River in the four centres – 10th Anniversary Stadium – the largest Warsaw sporting area at a time, opened in 1955 for the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the liberation from Nazi occupation; Central Military Sporting Club 'Legia' stadium, ski jumping hill and Spójnia Sporting Club (Zabłocki 2007, 87-97). The main olympic village was to be located in Siekierki district – the same area in which Starzynski planned to locate Olympic District in 1930s. The "ecological and sports corridor" designed in this way by Zabłocki (1999) could serve the active recreation of the inhabitants after the Games and would allow to connect sports buildings with valuable fragments of the Vistula nature. It would be complemented by the creation of walking arteries along both banks of the Vistula River within Warsaw, and, in the long term, the entire Poland. Urban studies assumed concentration of most of the games facilities on the left bank of the Vistula - on Kepa Potocka (Olympic swimming pool), by the Mokotów ski jumping hill and in the area of Warszawianka (baseball fields or field hockey, tennis courts), Służewiec (horse riding hippodrome), Bemowo (shooting

range), Citadel (fencing boards), Torwar and Legia stadium (boxing, weightlifting and football arenas). Some of the sports (rowing, canoeing, triathlon, beach volleyball, track cycling) were planned to have their infrastructure situated in towns near Warsaw, in the Zegrze Reservoir and in Pruszków, and some even far outside the capital: sailing in Sopot, canoeing and mountain biking near Nowy Sacz. The main Olympic stadium with a capacity of about 60,000 spectators (designed as a football stadium, but with the possibility of adapting the athletic equipment for the time of the Games, equipped with a retractable roof and a retractable pitch) and a sports and entertainment hall with a capacity of 15,000 spectators, was intended to be built on the right bank of the Vistula River in the area of the former 10th Anniversary Stadium. The project assumed the demolition of the stadium considered as non-reconstructable building and the creation of a terraced leisure park around the sports hall within its area. Numerous shopping malls, offices or luxurious hotels would be situated in the nearby location in in the Port of Praga. Zabłocki (1999) also took communication issues into account when planning an underground car park under the stadium for 7,500 parking spaces, providing general guidelines for solving the telecommunications infrastructure, training facilities, accommodation for tourists, volunteers, referees (accommodation places for them were planned to be prepared at the University of Physical Education in Warsaw) or the Olympic Family, for which a luxurious Olympic village - a residential district was to be prepared in the region of Siekierki. This district therefore appears also in this Olympic dream.

Figure 7. Olympic stadium and main Olympic centre in the project of Wojciech Zabłocki, 1999.



The Zabłocki's project was of a study character, but it was developed in the form of a compendium and prepared for publication by the Municipality of Warsaw-Centre. It was obviously completely different from the concepts developed half a century earlier by the group of Starzynski's collaborators or by the designers of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office. Zabłocki attached greater importance to the reasonable use of the existing infrastructure. He addressed the issues of ecology, sustainability, utility and cost-effectiveness of the facilities after completion of the Olympics, which had not yet been considered in the 1930s. However, due to the lack of political support and general economic struggle of Poland within the first ten years of transformation from socialism to capitalism, the project failed to be continued and realized. The last, and final up to know, initiative of establishing Olympic facilities in Warsaw, despite strong support in Polish olympic movement, failed to reach broad financial municipal and state support and therefore perished. The concept of Vistulian Games and their political and economic context deserve further research, although due to 30 years grace period many of the documents referring to the idea remained unavailable.

In 2011, in the location of the former so-called 10th Anniversary Stadium, the National Stadium, one of the most important arenas of the Polish-Ukrainian UEFA EURO 2012 was raised. Unfortunately, due to lack of track and field facilities it could not serve as an Olympic Stadium. Therefore, the organisation of the Olympic Games in Warsaw, an unrealised dream of several generations of the capital, seems to be difficult to imagine in the foreseeable future (Olechno 2008).

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