



MATEUSZ ROZMIAREK<sup>\*</sup>  
ARKADIUSZ WŁODARCZYK<sup>\*\*</sup>

### The conspiratorial and sporting role of the Greyhound Society in the Grand Duchy of Posen

#### Rola konspiracyjno-sportowa Towarzystwa Charciarskiego w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim

**Abstract:** Shortly after the Society for the Improvement of Horse, Cattle and Sheep Breeding in the Grand Duchy of Posen organized horse races in 1845 in Prussian-partitioned Poland, a Jockey Club was established by the Poles, later renamed the Greyhound Society. Although its dominant activities included hunting and shooting, the members of the organization were also involved in underground independence movements. Given the scope of its activities and date of establishment, the Greyhound Society may be considered a pioneering organization. Other existing Polish organizations that combined the need for physical exercise with patriotic activism were founded later, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Shooting exercises and military drills practiced by the Greyhound Society were evidence of the preparation of the organization's its members for revolution-

---

\* Wydział Nauk o Kulturze Fizycznej Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego im. E. Piaseckiego w Poznaniu, ul. Królowej Jadwigi 27/39, 61-871 Poznań, rozmiarek@awf.poznan.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-5955-0790.

\*\* Wydział Wychowania Fizycznego Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego Józefa Piłsudskiego w Warszawie, ul. Marymoncka 34, 00-968 Warszawa, arkadiusz.wlodarczyk@awf.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0003-2263-2474.

ary anti-Prussian actions, as confirmed by numerous accounts presented during the 1847 Berlin Kammergericht trial of Polish conspirators.

**Keywords:** greyhound, society, conspiracy, Grand Duchy of Posen, Poland

**Streszczenie:** Wkrótce po tym, jak Towarzystwo ku Ulepszaniu Hodowli Koni, Bydła i Owiec w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim zorganizowało w 1845 r. wyścigi konne na ziemiach polskich zaboru pruskiego, Polacy założyli Jockey Club, który później przemianowano na Towarzystwo Charciarskie. Chociaż do jego dominujących aktywności należały polowania oraz strzelectwo, to jednak członkowie organizacji byli również zaangażowani w podziemną działalność niepodległościową. Biorąc pod uwagę zakres jego funkcjonowania oraz datę powstania, Towarzystwo Charciarskie można uznać za organizację pionierską. Inne polskie organizacje, które łączyły potrzebę doskonalenia sprawności fizycznej z aktywnością patriotyczną, zostały stworzone później, w drugiej połowie XIX w. Ćwiczenia strzeleckie i musztra wojskowa praktykowane przez Towarzystwo Charciarskie były dowodem na przygotowanie jego członków do rewolucyjnych działań antypruskich, co potwierdzają liczne relacje przedstawione podczas procesu polskich spiskowców przed berlińskim Kammergerichtem w 1847 r.

**Słowa kluczowe:** chart, towarzystwo, konspiracja, Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie, Polska

In Poland as well as in many other European countries, besides falconry, the main type of hunting was with dogs, a rich tradition dating back to the early days of the Polish state. After the final partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795 by the three neighbouring powers – Russia, Austria and Prussia – the traditional Polish hunting culture began to decline, along with the sporting nature of hunting with greyhounds. At the same time, the status of hunting itself changed both legally and economically, bringing about a shift in its philosophical perception.<sup>1</sup> To uphold the national spirit, Poles in all three partitioned territories made various attempts to unite and to maintain physical fitness to be prepared for possible uprisings against the partitioners. Also hunting trips, still prac-

---

<sup>1</sup> W. Dynak, *Łowiectwo w kulturze polskiej. Obszary i kształty obecności*, Wrocław 2012.

ticed by Poles and combined with other pastimes, provided opportunities for meetings of a political and paramilitary character.<sup>2</sup>

Authors indicate that almost all hunting societies in partitioned Poland were established in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and were, in principle, neither patriotic, sport-related nor recreational in nature. The first such Polish hunting society practicing hunting with greyhounds as a sport was established in 1860 in the Prussian-controlled Grand Duchy of Posen.<sup>3</sup> It was much later that the Posen Hunting Society founded in 1906 conducted secret national-patriotic activities.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that those groups were established in the Polish territories partitioned by Prussia. In the other annexed parts of Poland, despite numerous functioning hunting societies, little information is available regarding their sporting or ideological activities.

Research on 19<sup>th</sup>-century Polish hunting societies that used greyhounds gains a new perspective after an analysis of documents and press releases concerning the 1847 Berlin trial of Polish conspirators (*Berliner Polenprozess*) – participants in a Polish conspiracy seeking to instigate an anti-Prussian uprising in the Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) region. Initially, the conspiracy leaders, headed by Karol Libelt and Ludwik Mierosławski, planned to organise an insurrection in all three partitioned territories. However, their plot was uncovered, and they were arrested by the Prussian authorities.<sup>5</sup> Insurgent hostilities eventually occurred, albeit to a limited extent, and were quickly

---

<sup>2</sup> Importantly, there was significantly more space for activities of this nature in the territory of the Grand Duchy of Posen, as various landed gentry associations and societies operated there. These organisations, partially tolerated by the government due to their seemingly harmless objectives, in reality served to awaken and stimulate national sentiments hostile to the Prussian government and the German population among Poles, to spread democratic-revolutionary principles, and to prepare for uprisings. Among them, in addition to hunting organisations, one could list reading clubs, agricultural circles, support societies, and casinos. For more, see, for example: *Außerordentliche Beilage zum Publizisten*, no. 30, 1847, p. 7–8.

<sup>3</sup> *Statuta Towarzystwa Łowczego w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim*, “Rocznik Towarzystwa Łowczego w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim”, Poznań 1861.

<sup>4</sup> B. Miśkiewicz, *Z dziejów łowiectwa w Wielkopolsce*, Poznań 1994.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on this topic, see, for example: S. Kieniewicz, *Czyn polski w dobie Wiosny Ludów*, Warszawa 1948, or S. Kieniewicz, *Oblicze ideowe Wiosny Ludów*, Warszawa 1948.

suppressed by the Prussian army. The Berlin trial involved 254 defendants, 117 of whom were convicted (including eight sentenced to death).<sup>6</sup> However, the sentences were not carried out due to the outbreak of the March Revolution in Berlin in 1848, and all the imprisoned Poles were released.<sup>7</sup>

The trial proceedings were widely reported in the press. The present study is based on an extensive content analysis of all 1847 issues of the “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” (“Gazette of the Grand Duchy of Posen”), the only daily newspaper published in Posen (present-day Poznań) until 1848, at the initiative of the Prussian partitioning authorities. The press coverage of the trial indicates that in the area of Greater Poland by the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there had already existed a greyhound society, also known as a hunting society, engaged in “ordinary hunting, hunting with greyhounds and *par force* hunting” activities.<sup>8</sup> In addition to its sporting mission, the aforementioned society was clandestine, and during its meetings, the society’s members discussed the possibility for Poles to regain their freedom, including national independence by any means necessary. This sheds new light on the hitherto widely unknown history of hunting with greyhounds, not only in Prussian-controlled Poland but also in the other Polish territories.

Research on said greyhound society was first conducted by Teresa Ziółkowska, who mentioned its existence in her papers and gave a broad overview of its work.<sup>9</sup> She did not, however, manage to access all available sources regarding the type of activities in which the greyhound (hunting) society was involved, and made no reference to other such societies functioning in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Poland, both in terms of chronology or activity.

This topic has not been subject to any comprehensive research by sociologists or historians. The present study aims to fill these research gaps by

---

<sup>6</sup> The 1847 Berlin Kammergericht trial of Polish conspirators was described for example in: A. Guttry, *Pamiętniki z lat 1845, 46, 47*, Poznań 1891.

<sup>7</sup> A witness to the 1848 March Revolution in Berlin was Henryk Szuman, later a member of the German parliament, who gave an account of these events in: H. Szuman, *Luźne kartki z wspomnień życia własnego. Dział trzeci: rok 1848*, Poznań 1898.

<sup>8</sup> *Proces przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 2, p. 856.

<sup>9</sup> T. Ziółkowska, *U źródeł nowoczesnego sportu w Poznaniu*, “Kronika Miasta Poznania: Naczelna Rada Ludowa 1918–1920” 1998, vol. 4, p. 281–293.

investigating the activities of the Greyhound Society in Prussian-controlled Poland in the 1840s and its profile of activity as well as by verifying the chronological sequence in which hunting societies were established in Poland in the partition period (1795–1918). To this end, a thorough content analysis was conducted of surviving sources from the period (including accounts published in the Polish-language press in the Prussian-controlled territories) and of various recollections of eyewitnesses. The available sources offer a reliable (in our opinion) presentation of the historical events as well as a more accurate insight into the research issue. Besides sources such as editions of the “*Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego*” (“*Gazette of the Grand Duchy of Posen*”), a German-language document mentioning the Greyhound Society was found in the State Archives in Poznań, within the records of the Presidium of the Police. The document, entitled *Acta betreffend den Polenprozess 1846*, refers to the Society’s activities.<sup>10</sup> Additional information comes from the memoirs of Aleksander Guttry, as well as German newspapers that also covered the trial.

The first part of the paper provides a brief overview of Polish hunting traditions from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, considering the changing socio-political background. The second part describes the circumstances for physical culture practices<sup>11</sup> in Prussian-partitioned Poland in the years 1815–1845. Finally, the third part charts, on the basis of surviving historical records, the sporting and clandestine activities of the Greyhound Society in the Grand Duchy of Posen.

---

<sup>10</sup> State Archives in Poznań, fonds: Prezydium Policji w Poznaniu, A. betr. den Polenprozess 1846, reference code 53/294/0/2.1/492, 203.

<sup>11</sup> In accordance with Polish terminological tradition, the concept of *physical culture* is used in a broad sense to encompass leisure-time activities known as recreation, physical exercises conducted in schools – formerly referred to as gymnastics – as well as those disciplines that English speakers refer to as sport. Wojciech Lipoński distinguished several meanings of the term *disport/desport* and the later-derived word sport in the English tradition: *desport* – engaging in physical recreation and amusement; *sport* – play or active leisure involving physical effort for recreational purposes or to improve well-being or health; *sport* – activities, states, and situations of a trivial, playful, or even erotic nature; *sport* – bodily competition performed in front of an audience; *sport* – a term for hunting or fishing. For more, see: D. Dudek, *Polska myśl o kulturze fizycznej od czasów dawnych do roku 1939*, Kraków 2018; W. Lipoński, *Historia sportu*, Warszawa 2012.

The following revision is important from the perspective of the humanities of physical culture, in particular, the history and sociology of sport. This is because by matching the newly established information with the current state of research, it is possible to fill an important gap in the history of Polish hunting societies in the Partitions period and to determine their role in the political and social context of the time in the Prussian-annexed part of the former Polish state.

### Polish hunting traditions

The beginnings of Polish hunting culture can be traced to the earliest years of Polish statehood. Until about the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, all forest and game resources could be used without restriction by the general populace. After the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when the feudal system was firmly established in Poland, restrictions on hunting began to be imposed due to the growing social awareness of game theft by non-community members as well as for reasons of economy and prestige. These restrictions were called *jura regalia* and were modelled on German regulations providing rulers with the exclusive right to practice certain types of hunting, e.g. big game hunting of bears, boars or deer. During this period, the monarchs also began to grant hunting rights to lesser knights in exchange for their military services. Feudal lords, however, usually retained their right to hunt deer and boar, and falconry remained their exclusive privilege.<sup>12</sup> Although the term “falconry” both in Poland and in Western European countries is associated with one particular species of bird, i.e. falcons, other birds of prey, for example, eagles, hawks, sparrowhawks or kestrels were also used in hunting. In Poland, whole villages specialised in training birds of prey – an elaborate craft as evidenced in numerous present-day Polish place names, which refer to specific species of predatory birds.<sup>13</sup> The royal hunting monopoly was ended in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, when hunting privileges were incorporated into knightly law protecting lesser no-

---

<sup>12</sup> M. Kościelniak-Marszał, *Polska kultura łowiecka jako niematerialne dziedzictwo kulturowe*, “Santander Art and Culture Law Review” 2021, vol. 7, no. 1, p. 119–144.

<sup>13</sup> W. Lipoński, *Rochwist i palant. Studium etnologiczne dawnych polskich sportów i gier ruchowych na tle tradycji europejskiej*, Poznań 2004.

bles. On the other hand, peasants were successively restricted in their legal opportunities to hunt, first by losing the right to hunt in ducal lands under *jura regalia*, then in estates granted to knights, the Church, and magnates distinguished by their service to the ruler.<sup>14</sup> When caught hunting, a peasant had to surrender his prey, hunting equipment, and pay a fine.

The Polish privileged elite entitled to hunt constituted about 10% of the general population, which, combined with the hunting restrictions imposed on peasants, made hunting a prestigious form of leisure pursued by knights and nobles – an outstanding feature that distinguished them from other social groups. Hunting at the royal court developed rapidly during the reign of Polish king Casimir IV Jagiellon (1447–1492), who was a great lover of hunting with birds and especially with dogs, and royal kennels and falcon aviaries reached their heyday at that time. His successors, John I Albert (1492–1501), Alexander Jagiellon (1501–1506), and Sigismund I the Old (1506–1548) were equally keen on pleasure hunting. Sigismund I's reign witnessed the greatest flourishing of hunting pursued by middle and petty nobles, who indulged in hunting with dogs and birds. Ownership of a particular bird of prey species for hunting was a status symbol.<sup>15</sup>

In the period of elective monarchy of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1573–1795) the royal traditions of hunts with dogs and birds of prey were continued. In addition to going to hunts alone or with a small party, some kings, such as John III Sobieski, organised large hunting trips involving up to several hundred people. The enduring popularity of the hunt led to an expansion of hunting customs and culture, as exemplified by the festivities in honour of St. Hubert, which during the reign of Augustus II the Strong (1697–1706, 1709–1733) lasted eight days according to a strictly prescribed schedule.<sup>16</sup>

The Polish elective monarchy period abounds in literary works containing references to hunting with greyhounds, e.g. *Łów Dyanny* (Diana's Hunt) by Jan Achacy Kmita (1588), or *Flis* (Timber Rafting) by Sebastian Klonow-

---

<sup>14</sup> K. Mielnikiewicz, *Łowiectwo ludowe w Polsce z ilustrowanym słownikiem tematycznym*, Ostrów Mazowiecka 2018.

<sup>15</sup> M. Kościelniak-Marszał, op. cit., p. 125–126.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, p. 126–127.

wic (1595). The first full description of a traditional Polish hunt with greyhounds can be found in the work *Myslistwo z ogary* (Hunting with Hounds) (1618), and the first description of a greyhound appeared in *Gospodarstwo jezddeckie, strzelcze, y myśliwczę* (Riding, Shooting and Hunting Economy) by Anzelm Gostomski. According to Polish dictionaries, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onward there were nineteen terms in the Polish language for greyhounds, attesting to their popularity and recognition. In the Polish 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature on hunting, the “Polish greyhound” was also known as “the common greyhound”, “our greyhound” or simply “the greyhound”.<sup>17</sup>

The collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the final partition of Polish territories by Austria, Russia and Prussia, led to a significant decline in hunting. The cause lay in the partitioners’ policies towards the Polish population. In the Russian-controlled area, the magnates and wealthy nobles were stripped of their privileges and lost their estates, and many of the petty nobles who made up hunt servants were killed or exiled. The partitioning authorities also confiscated household equipment, and repression against Poles intensified after the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte and subsequent Polish national uprisings, especially the January Uprising of 1863–1864. Consequently, the first hunting associations in the Russian partition were only founded in the 1880s (the St. Hubertus Hunting Society in Otwock in 1884, and the Warsaw Chapter of the Russian Imperial Society for the Propagation of Game, Hunting Dogs and Lawful Hunting in 1889).<sup>18</sup> After the 1864 abolition of serfdom in the Russian Empire, a significant number of Polish peasants were able to go on hunts as they ceased to be regulated in any way.<sup>19</sup>

In most of the Austrian-incorporated former Polish territories, lawlessness prevailed with regard to hunting, causing game to become extinct very quickly. Rational breeding or wildlife conservation were completely unknown in the area.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, in 1838 the Municipal Hunting Society

<sup>17</sup> M. Szmurło, I. Szmurło, *Chart polski*, Warszawa 1993.

<sup>18</sup> W. Przybylski, *Łowiectwo – historia, obyczaje, etyka, kultura*, Warszawa 1998; F. Różyński, E. Schechtel, *Ekonomiczne znaczenie łowiectwa dla naszego kraju*, Warszawa 1923.

<sup>19</sup> K. Mielnikiewicz, *Łowiectwo ludowe...*, p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> F. Różyński, E. Schechtel, op. cit., p. 4.

was founded in the city of Lviv (according to some authors in 1862<sup>21</sup>). After the military and political failures that weakened the internal structure of the multinational Habsburg Empire, the conquered territories within the Austrian state, including the Polish region of Galicia, gained a number of freedoms. This gave rise to the foundation of more hunting societies, such as the Lisowice Society (Lisowittzer Jagdverein) in 1859 (founded first by Austrians, and after 1871 the Society's hunting grounds were leased to Polish hunters, who "Polonised" the organisation), the Galician Hunting Society and the St. Hubert Hunting Society in Lviv in 1876.<sup>22</sup>

In the Polish lands under Prussian rule, all hunting-related issues were subject to strict government regulations. Unlike in the other partitions, only residents with hunting certificates were allowed to go hunting, and peasants were prohibited to hunt. In addition, the German lawmakers issued specific regulations on game conservation, including protection periods, banned the use of snares and gin traps, and instituted penalties for illegally obtained game.<sup>23</sup> Farming in Prussian-controlled Poland was both mechanised and modernised. Prussia's advanced agriculture and rational economy had a great impact on hunting. In 1860, the Hunting Society was founded in the Grand Duchy of Posen, which, in addition to practicing all types of hunts, organised – at least twice a year – greyhound races, horse races, and shooting competitions. The Society quickly gained in popularity, as one year later it already had more than 80 members.<sup>24</sup> Other hunting organisations included the Hunting Society of the Grand Duchy of Posen, established in 1873,<sup>25</sup> and the Society for the Preservation of Hunting in Ostrow founded in 1896.<sup>26</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, two more organisations were established in the German-controlled Polish territories: the Hunting Society of Posen (1906), which enacted a secret statute and conducted national-patriotic ac-

---

<sup>21</sup> Such a date is given, for example, in: R. Wacek, *Łowiectwo w Małopolsce*, "Łowiectwo Polskie" 1921, vol. 9, no. 3, p. 38.

<sup>22</sup> S. Krogulski, *Pół wieku. Zarys działalności Małopolskiego Towarzystwa Łowieckiego 1876–1926*, Lviv 1926; R. Wacek, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>23</sup> K. Mielnikiewicz, *Łowiectwo ludowe...*, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> *Statua Towarzystwa Łowczego...*, p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> *Ustawy Towarzystwa Myśliwskiego w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim*, Lissa 1873.

<sup>26</sup> *Statut Towarzystwa Ochrony Myślistwa w Ostrowie*, Ostrów 1896.

tivities, and the Posen Mounted Hunting Society (1909) with a sporting and recreational character, aimed at reviving the equestrian movement in the Grand Duchy of Posen.<sup>27</sup>

When it comes to the depiction of hunting among the landed gentry of Greater Poland in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, available accounts are relatively scarce. This is primarily due to the absence of a dedicated hunting press (with the exception of the journal “Sylwan”, which, however, published texts that did not include reports on past hunts) as well as the limited number of preserved memoirs focused on hunting. Nevertheless, it is known that hunts were organised in rotation in Śmiłów, Szczodrzewo, Dębno, and Krzekotowice, with none other than Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855) himself taking part,<sup>28</sup> or the “famous throughout the Duchy” *par force* hunts, starting from the Hotel Polski in Leszno, held by the Rydzyna estate lord, Prince August Sułkowski (1820–1882).<sup>29</sup> These hunts, organised between 1844 and 1858, brought together the elite of the Greater Polish landed gentry and took place in the surrounding forests, accompanied by lavish receptions at Rydzyna Castle. This, however, led to the financial collapse of the Rydzyna estates.<sup>30</sup> Interesting information regarding hunts on the estate of Włodzimierz Wolniewicz (1814–1884) in Dębicz,<sup>31</sup> held between 1835 and 1841, was cited in the journal “Łowiec Wielkopol-

<sup>27</sup> B. Miśkiewicz, op. cit., p. 50–51, 82–83.

<sup>28</sup> T. Ziemba, *Adam Mickiewicz podczas podróży w roku 1830–1831*, “Biblioteka Warszawska” 1886, vol. 177, no. 1, p. 28–59. For information on how hunting traditions in Greater Poland influenced certain themes and characters described by Adam Mickiewicz in *Pan Tadeusz*, see: W. Dynak, *Z Mickiewiczem na łowach*, Wrocław 2009.

<sup>29</sup> S. Karwowski, *Historia Wielkiego Księstwa Poznańskiego*, vol. 2, Poznań 1919. See more on August Sułkowski in, for example: S. Borowiak, *Ostatni ordynaci rydzynscy*, “Rocznik Leszczyński” 2010, vol. 10, p. 15–35.

<sup>30</sup> L. Preibisz, *Zamek i klucz rydzynski*, Rydzyna 1938; H. Palkij, *Sułkowscy herbu Sulima*, in: *Sułkowscy – życie i dzieło: materiały z sesji naukowej „Sułkowscy – życie i dzieło”*, *Zamek w Rydzynie, 23–26 września 1998*, ed. Z. Moliński, Rydzyna–Leszno 1999, p. 15–28.

<sup>31</sup> Władysław Wolniewicz was an agronomist, journalist, and independence and social activist. In the context of our discussion, it should be added that Wolniewicz was involved in the 1846 uprising. See: *Władysław Adolf Wolniewicz: wspomnienia pośmiertne razem zebrane i wydane*, Gródek 1887.

ski”, where the hunting practices of the time were detailed, including the use of greyhounds, among other methods.<sup>32</sup> In addition to the written rules governing the hunts, a list of dogs on Wolniewicz’s estate was provided, along with a record of the game hunted from 1835 to 1841, including a breakdown of who had killed each animal. Both the list of dogs and the record of the game hunted indicate that greyhounds made up a significant portion and were frequently used in the hunts.<sup>33</sup>

The diarist Adam Turno (1775–1851) also wrote about his feats and successes in greyhound hunting, which he considered “the greatest fun” and “the only solace” in the face of numerous troubles and sorrows. As noted by the Greater Polish regionalist and expert on the history of the landed gentry, Stanisław Borowiak, Turno mentioned hunting with greyhounds nearly one hundred times in his memoirs, starting with the acquisition of dogs in 1800, through his hunting-rich stay at his son’s in Objezierze beginning in 1829, up to the end of his life in 1851, when he no longer had the strength to participate in his beloved pastime. In his entries, he often meticulously recorded the game he hunted and the numbers he managed to capture.<sup>34</sup>

It seems that hunts, belonging to the customs and traditions of the Polish landed gentry and aristocracy, were frequently held in Greater Poland, with some taking on an exclusive character, such as par force hunts, in which greyhounds were successfully used.<sup>35</sup> In the context of the national structure and Polish-German relations, it should be added that in 1841, out of 1,364 knightly estates, 410 (30%) were owned by Germans, while 954 (70%) were owned by Poles. Seven years later, this ratio shifted to 40%

---

<sup>32</sup> *Polowanie w Dębiczu w latach 1835 i w następnych*, “Łowiec Wielkopolski” 1912, no. 19, January, p. 316–321; *ibidem*, no. 20, p. 337–341.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 21, p. 353–360.

<sup>34</sup> Although many of the notes left by the diarist are incredibly brief, some details are known, including the preferred methods and most frequent hunting locations, as well as the numerous donors of greyhounds and the partners involved in this pastime. See more: S. Borowiak, *Myśliwskie pasje Adama Turny jako przyczynek do dziejów ziemiańskich polowań w Wielkopolsce w 1. połowie XIX wieku*, in: *Myśliwskie pasje ziemian. O polowaniach w polskich majątkach ziemskich w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. S. Borowiak, Dobrzyca 2023, p. 154–194.

<sup>35</sup> W. Molik, *Życie codzienne ziemiaństwa w Wielkopolsce w XIX i na początku XX wieku. Kultura materialna*, Poznań 1999.

to 60%. During this period, there was no uniform stance among the Polish aristocracy and landed gentry regarding their German neighbours. Some landowner families did not allow Germans to enter, and when a representative of the occupying authorities was received, it was without any special ceremony. On the other hand, there were Polish landowners who invited representatives of the German authorities or neighbours to hunts or events, though these gatherings were free of political overtones, which did not necessarily indicate closer relations. The aristocracy, while adhering to Polish tradition, also, due to cosmopolitanism or international family connections, did not limit itself exclusively to Polish circles, but combined their equestrian and hunting passions with the German aristocracy.<sup>36</sup>

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, despite the initial rivalry and the Prussian nobility's reluctance towards the bourgeoisie acquiring landholdings, there was a gradual rapprochement, which contributed to cooperation both economically and socially. A key social and political factor in this integration was hunting, which enjoyed great respect both in Prussia proper and in the partitioned territories. Prussian aristocrats and bourgeois landowners would meet for hunts, which undoubtedly served as a strong bonding factor for both communities, while simultaneously distinguishing them from Polish landowners, who, during Hubertus hunts, held their own parallel hunting sorties. An additional factor reinforcing this distinction was Prussian hunting law, which at the time linked the ability to organise a hunt solely with owning a sufficient amount of land and forest.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the fading of the old Polish art of hunting during the Partitions period, some culturally significant literary works on hunting were written at that time. Two of them remain important books on cynology and hunting. The first was Wiktor Kozłowski's *O psach myśliwskich a w szczególności o Charcie* (Hunting dogs and, in particular, the greyhound), which contains a famous and often reproduced engraving of a Polish greyhound from 1823

---

<sup>36</sup> K. Grysińska-Jarmuła, *Wielkopolskie ziemiaństwo polskie i niemieckie w XIX i początkach XX wieku. Współpraca, rywalizacja czy koegzystencja?*, in: *Od konfliktu do współistnienia i współpracy*, vol. 1: *Bliscy i dalecy sąsiedzi*, eds. K. Grysińska-Jarmuła, T. Marasz, Bydgoszcz 2017, p. 68–86.

<sup>37</sup> F. Mudzo, *Niemiecka wielka własność ziemiska w Wielkopolsce w latach 1815–1914*, "Przegląd Zachodni" 2016, vol. 2, p. 23–41.

as well the term “rough-coated greyhound” to indicate a Polish greyhound.<sup>38</sup> The other is a two-volume book *Nauka łowiectwa* (Hunting Lessons) by Ignacy Bobiatyński published in 1823 and 1825, which contains the following description of the Polish greyhound: “The greyhounds familiar to us are of various colours: white, fawn, black and tan. Some have black paws and the end of the nose. There are also piebald-black, piebald-yellow and black piebald-grey greyhounds.”<sup>39</sup> Previously, Remigiusz Ładowski had discussed the possibility of crossbreeding greyhounds with other dogs for hunting purposes, stating – for example – that crossbreeds of greyhounds with Danish mastiffs are the best for wolf and fox hunting, and that the Polish nobility, passionate about hunting, kept many dogs of this type.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, it can be assumed that the original Polish greyhound was crossed with other greyhound breeds in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it can be inferred from some descriptions in literature that those breeds included rough-coated Nordic-type deerhounds.<sup>41</sup>

## Physical culture in the Grand Duchy of Posen, 1815–1845

According to the provisions of the Congress of Vienna, approving the partitions of Poland in 1815, most of the territory of the former Polish western region of Greater Poland was ceded to Prussia under the official name of the Grand Duchy of Posen. Although the Prussian authorities formally declared their consent to uphold the Duchy residents’ Polish nationality, the territory of the Duchy became, in fact, an integral part of the Prussian monarchy. Due to the Duchy’s integration with other Prussian provinces, physical culture was also subject to the influence of existing German sports organisations. Some of them, especially those with a more liberal attitude,

---

<sup>38</sup> W Kozłowski, *O psach myśliwskich a w szczególności o Charcie*, Warszawa 1823.

<sup>39</sup> I. Bobiatyński, *Nauka łowiectwa w dwóch tomach*, Vilnius 1823.

<sup>40</sup> R. Ładowski, *Historia naturalna Królestwa Polskiego, czyli zbiór krótki przez alfabet ułożony zwierząt, roślin i minerałów, znajdujących się w Polsce, Litwie i prowincjach odpadłych. Zebrana z pisarzy godnych wiary, rękopismów i świadków oczywistych*, Kraków 1804.

<sup>41</sup> M. Szmurło, I. Szmurło, op. cit., p. 11.

had no problem accepting Poles into their ranks, although they were not always comfortable doing so. As the years passed, Polish or Polish-German sports associations were established either formally or informally.

At the forefront stood organisations called *Turner* gymnastic clubs, which flourished thanks to two German educators – Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths and the Turnvater (“father of gymnastics”) Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, who introduced systematic physical exercises, often performed on special outdoor grounds, into German school curricula. Such gymnastic grounds also appeared in the Polish territories, including the Grand Duchy of Posen, for example, in Bocianowo near Bydgoszcz, where as early as 1818 a gymnastics ground was set up for students of Bydgoszcz schools, which was also used for training by the Prussian army stationed nearby.<sup>42</sup> Due to the ban on the Turner movement in Prussia from 1820 to 1842, its expansion was also discontinued in the Polish territories. After that time, the Turner movement returned to its roots, but the first official society in the Duchy called the Männer-Turnverein Bromberg was only established in Bydgoszcz in 1859. In addition to gymnastics, the Turner societies also practiced athletics, ball games, swimming, fencing, and even organised sightseeing trips.

The turn of the 1840s also coincided with a school reform in Prussia implementing compulsory physical education (in the form of broadly defined gymnastics) in secondary schools (made mandatory in 1843, i.e. many years before similar reforms were implemented in the Russian-controlled Congress Kingdom of Poland in 1862 or in Austrian-controlled Galicia in 1868, where, moreover, they were only recommendations). The addition of physical exercises to school curricula was, however, quite problematic.<sup>43</sup> At that time also the first municipal swimming pools in Poland, for instance, in Posen or Schrimm (present-day Śrem), which offered swimming lessons to middle school students.<sup>44</sup> Ice skating, practiced since the 1830s, was

---

<sup>42</sup> A. Bogucki, *Bydgoscy turnerzy*, “Kalendarz Bydgoski na rok 1997” 1996, vol. 30, p. 251–252.

<sup>43</sup> W. Lipoński, *Początki kultury fizycznej w Wielkopolsce 1839–1887 (cz. I)*, “Kultura Fizyczna” 1971, vol. 3, March, p. 100–106.

<sup>44</sup> *Rozmaite wiadomości*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1844, May 28, p. 974.

also very popular, as indicated in newspaper reports of drownings from ice breaking as well as in advertisements for sales of wooden ice skates.<sup>45</sup>

An immensely important role in the development of modern sports in the Grand Duchy of Posen was played by the Society for the Improvement of Horse, Cattle and Sheep Breeding, which propagated equestrian sports. Its inception dates back to 1838, and the organisation's concept was attributed to Eduard Heinrich von Flottwell, the then Oberpräsident of the Duchy.<sup>46</sup> The Society was tasked with associating – under the banner of agricultural and animal breeding improvement – aristocrats and landowners loyal to the Prussian government. Members of the Society included both Poles and Germans.<sup>47</sup> The main objective of the Society was the organisation of annual horse races in Posen, usually at the end of June and the beginning of July (during the traditional Saint John's Fair which attracted large numbers of Polish nobles to the city). The horse racing competitions were held on a specially designed track in ten disciplines, e.g. flat racing, jump racing, thoroughbred races, and pony races. Each event consisted of two or three races, and the winners were determined after totalling the results. The judges included prominent Poles and Germans.<sup>48</sup> The first such races were held in 1839 and lasted three days, each featuring numerous competitions. At the end of the three-day festivities, a grand ball was staged.<sup>49</sup> Subsequent editions of the races were more varied, included more disciplines, and were attended by even more spectators.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> W. Lipoński, *Początki kultury fizycznej w Wielkopolsce 1839–1887 (cz. III)*, "Kultura Fizyczna" 1971, vol. 5, May, p. 209–215.

<sup>46</sup> F. Paprocki, *Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie w okresie rządów Flottwella (1830–1841)*, Poznań 1970.

<sup>47</sup> M. Rozmiarek, A. Włodarczyk, C. Gärtner, *the olympic circus, and the origins of equestrianism in the Grand Duchy of Posen*, "The International Journal of the History of Sport" 2021, vol. 38, no. 16, p. 1710–1728.

<sup>48</sup> T. Ziółkowska, *Niemiecki sport w Poznaniu do 1918 roku*, "Kronika Miasta Poznania: Sport" 2010, vol. 1, p. 24–35.

<sup>49</sup> *Pierwsze wyścigi konne w Poznaniu*, ed. J. Grabowski, "Jeździec i Hodowca" 1939, vol. 15, May 20, p. 322–323.

<sup>50</sup> T. Ziółkowska, *Początki sportu jeździeckiego w Wielkopolsce*, "Przegląd Wielkopolski" 1989, vol. 3, p. 40–46.

Horse racing played a significant role in the development of physical culture in the Grand Duchy of Posen. During the politically peaceful years, especially during the first edition of the races, there was great public interest in the event, also shared by the participants themselves. Those events also brought economic benefits as they encouraged efforts to breed horses more rationally and intensively. From the perspective of the Prussian partitioning authorities, the three-day races were a disadvantage as the assumed process of widespread Germanisation of the Polish lands was hardly implemented in the first years of the organisation of the races. Polish solidarity also deepened in a national liberation and anti-government spirit as evidenced by the predominance of Poles on the Society's board of directors and by the organisation of horse races in later years in other former Polish towns, e.g. Gnesen (present-day Gniezno).<sup>51</sup>

Another activity, serving not only a purely practical function related to the procurement of game but also playing an important role in social life and the traditions of the landed gentry and nobility, was hunting. These were often events for families and neighbours, bringing together representatives of different generations and providing an opportunity to strengthen interpersonal bonds.<sup>52</sup> Particular importance was placed on the educational aspects, as the participation of young people in such gatherings played a key role in shaping the moral attitudes typical of the landed gentry and the ethos of honor. Through involvement in hunting, young men (and often even children, as pointed out by Aldona Cholewianka-Kruszyńska<sup>53</sup>) acquired hunting skills, while also learning responsibility, respect for nature, and the social hierarchy. Moreover, hunting allowed younger family members to interact with experienced hunters who not only passed on hunting techniques but also knowledge about the functioning of estates

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, p. 45.

<sup>52</sup> T. Kargol, *Łowiectwo polskiego ziemiaństwa na ziemiach zabranych w drugiej połowie XIX wieku (1864–1918)*, "Studia i Materiały Ośrodka Kultury Leśnej" 2017, vol. 17, p. 171–191.

<sup>53</sup> A. Cholewianka-Kruszyńska, *Polowania małych ziemian. Przystosowanie dzieci do myślistwa w polskich siedzibach ziemiankich w XIX i 1. ćw. XX wieku*, in: *Mysliwskie pasje ziemian. O polowaniach w polskich majątkach ziemskich w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. S. Boroński, Dobrzyca 2023, p. 6–21.

and the duties associated with belonging to the social elite. In this way, this activity became not only a sporting, recreation or economic practice but also an important element of education and socialisation.

### **The activities of the Greyhound Society in the Grand Duchy of Posen, 1845–1846**

In the Grand Duchy of Posen, despite numerous conciliatory tendencies and Polish landowners' adherence to the principle of loyalty to the Prussian authorities, the ruthless policy of Germanisation and national oppression made it significantly more difficult for local Polish communities to hold hunting parties. The authorities consistently exacerbated class antagonisms, which effectively led to numerous annoyances, unrest, and disruptions of daily life. One of the most widespread restrictions was a halt in the issuance of gun ownership permits. Soon proprietors of hunting grounds were banned from holding communal hunting gatherings. Thus, the interference of local authorities restrained the cultivation of Polish customs, and their enforcement of administrative regulations was very strict.<sup>54</sup> The severity of these restrictions may have been caused by the palpable national liberation atmosphere among Poles.

Until the late 1830s, the residents of the Grand Duchy of Posen did not see the need to develop physical fitness, often considering it unimportant or useless.<sup>55</sup> Apart from the centuries-old traditions of Polish shooting societies (called *bractwa kurkowe*), the only professional sports-related activities were the mentioned horse races, held since 1839 in Posen by the first Polish Equestrian Club founded as part of the Society for the Improvement of Horse, Cattle and Sheep Breeding in the Grand Duchy of Posen.<sup>56</sup> After the 1845 horse races, a distinct organisation was founded in Posen under

---

<sup>54</sup> M. Mazaraki, *Łowiectwo w Polsce*, Warszawa 1993.

<sup>55</sup> K. Uściński, *Sport w Polsce jako element „kultury złe obecnej”*, in: *Historia polskiego i niemieckiego sportu w XIX i XX wieku. Idee, ludzie, polityka i kultura*, eds. D. Wojtaszyn, W. Stępiński, J. Eider, Poznań 2016, p. 31–44.

<sup>56</sup> W. Lipoński, *Początki kultury fizycznej w Wielkopolsce 1839–1887 (cz. II)*, “Kultura Fizyczna” 1971, vol. 4, April, p. 154–159.

the name of Jockey Club.<sup>57</sup> Its founders included Bronisław Dąbrowski, Apolinary Kurnatowski, Alfons Białkowski, Władysław Łącki, Aleksander Brause-Brudzewski and Count Ignacy Bniński.<sup>58</sup> The Jockey Club held a government-confirmed charter, and its purpose was to organise horse races and *par force* hunts.<sup>59</sup> It soon became apparent, however, that widespread resentment of the club's foreign-sounding name – associated with the exclusivity of bright foreign clothing – and the high membership fee of 5 Louis d'or resulted in great public dissatisfaction towards, and criticism of, the club. This probably contributed to an immediate backlash and a number of amendments in the club's charter allowing non-members to participate in hunting as well as reducing the compulsory membership fee to 1 thaler (in addition, members were not required to attend horse races, and those interested could only wager money among themselves) resulting in a surge of new members and more frequent and lively proceedings. The name of the club also changed, and after the revision of its charter, it became known as the Greyhound Society, initially considered a sort of branch association of the Jockey Club.<sup>60</sup> In public communication, in addition to the name Greyhound Society, the name Hunting Society was also used interchangeably.<sup>61</sup> The establishment of the society was therefore an attempt to frame one of the characteristic elements of the landed gentry's lifestyle – hunting, in this particular case using greyhounds – within an

---

<sup>57</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, August 5, p. 733.

<sup>58</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, August 11, p. 759; *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, August 30, p. 840; *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, September 2, p. 856; *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, September 13, p. 897–898; *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, September 14, p. 904; *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, September 21, p. 927.

<sup>59</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, September 2, p. 856.

<sup>60</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, August 5, p. 733.

<sup>61</sup> *Akta i czynności sądowe dotyczące się processu Polaków oskarżonych w roku 1847ym o zbrodnię stanu. Tom 1*, Berlin 1848.

organisational structure. Moreover, the Greyhound Society was a landed gentry organisation that emerged in a specific political context, just before the failed revolution of 1846, and its members regarded their gatherings as a platform for independence-related activities.<sup>62</sup>

No documents in the form of statutes, laws, resolutions or minutes of the Greyhound Society have survived. The only references to it can be found in the acts and reports of the 1847 Berlin trial, confirming that such club documents actually existed. Apolinary Kurnatowski was the Greyhound Society's director. Alexander Brudzewski was the treasurer, and Władysław Łącki – the secretary.<sup>63</sup> The former presided over the debates

---

<sup>62</sup> Ten years earlier, in Poitiers, the *Manifest* of the Polish Democratic Society was proclaimed – an action plan that was a consequence of and enriched by the experience of the failed November Uprising and the disappointments of the early years of the Great Emigration. The creators of the program were inspired, on one hand, by the freedom and social movements of Western Europe, and on the other, they referred to the native democratic national tradition. The main goal was set as a free Poland, and the means to achieve this goal was to be a one-time, nationwide uprising against all the partitioning powers. To accomplish this, the aim was to encourage the lowest social classes to take part in the uprising through various privileges, particularly the enfranchisement of peasants, while also limiting the leading role of, among others, the landed gentry. In Greater Poland, from the early 1840s, there was a shift in Prussian policy. The new king, Frederick William IV, seeking popularity, decided to make slight concessions to the Poles. Censorship was eased, the establishment of Polish journals and associations was permitted, the policy of Germanisation was halted, and the police were less zealous in tracking down conspiracies. In socio-economic matters, serfdom had been abolished in Greater Poland in 1807, and in 1823 a land reform favourable to the nobility was carried out, gradually eliminating corvée labor. Some peasants received land as their property, while most smallholders and landless peasants lost their right to land. Under these conditions, the principles of the *Manifest* did not discourage the upper social strata from striving towards independence, as they harboured a natural resentment toward the partitioning power. Although aristocrats and leading landowners were not supporters of conspiracies and adhered to the concept of organic work led by Karol Marcinkowski, many collaborated with Karol Libelt, supported progressive journals, and even helped shelter emissaries. As a result, democratic propaganda found relatively favourable support within these social groups. More about the revolution of 1846, its causes, course, and consequences can be found in, for example: S. Kieniewicz, *Rewolucja polska 1846 roku: wybór źródeł*, Wrocław 1950; idem, *Historia Polski 1795–1918*, Warszawa 1998.

<sup>63</sup> “Düsseldorfer Zeitung” 1847, August 4, p. 4.

and collected votes, the second was responsible for finances, and the latter drafted the resolutions and final minutes of meetings.<sup>64</sup> The Greyhound Society admitted its members by vote, and each new member was required to officially sign the society statute (each time read aloud by the secretary). The main goal of the Greyhound Society was to hold “ordinary hunts, hunts with greyhounds, and *par force* hunts”,<sup>65</sup> and the secretary gave verbal assurance that in addition to its primary goal, “the Society’s intention was to unite the nobility of the province more closely in order to prepare them for national struggle”.<sup>66</sup> He also confirmed that the Jockey Club had had no political ambitions, and that the Greyhound Society itself “was not secretive, but open and supportive”.<sup>67</sup>

The first Greyhound Society hunt took place on 12 November 1845 on the estate of Józef Zdębński – heir to the Czewujewo estate. The gathering lasted several days<sup>68</sup> and was attended by about 30 participants including, among others, the founding members of the Jockey Club, Aleksander Guttry,<sup>69</sup> and four participants who were admitted to the Society during the hunt.<sup>70</sup> One such person, who had applied for membership and was later told that he had been accepted, was Włodzimierz Wilczyński.<sup>71</sup> He was accompanied to the town by Antoni Kowalski, who also received permission to join the organisation.<sup>72</sup> The bulk of the Society consisted of Prussian vol-

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, p. 33.

<sup>65</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 2, p. 856.

<sup>66</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, August 5, p. 733.

<sup>67</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 13, p. 897–898.

<sup>68</sup> *Akta i czynności sądowe...*, p. 33.

<sup>69</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 16, p. 913.

<sup>70</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 2, p. 856.

<sup>71</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 4, p. 864.

<sup>72</sup> State Archives in Poznań, fonds: Prezydium Policji w Poznaniu, A. betr. den Polenprozess 1846 [Acta betreffend den Polenprozess 1846], reference code 53/294/0/2.1/492, 203.

unteers and officers who had served in the Polish campaign against Russia.<sup>73</sup> As Apolinary Kurnatowski himself pointed out, “they did not want to admit only the impeccable, but also the well-liked, so a ballot was employed. The question on the ballot was: Do you want this person to be admitted to the Greyhound Society?”<sup>74</sup> A candidate had to secure the support of the majority of voters who cast their ballots using black and white balls.<sup>75</sup> The assembly also enacted the rule, raised by Alfons Białkowski, of a second ballot on membership in the event that at least six members of the society protested a person’s remaining in the assembly, and instituted a penalty of 2 Louis d’or for non-attendance at assemblies without showing a valid excuse.<sup>76</sup> It seems likely that the meeting in Czewujewo was preceded by an unofficial gathering in Samostrzel at the home of Count Ignacy Potocki from 1 to 4 November 1845, as pointed out by Bniński himself, when he talked about organising a hunt there,<sup>77</sup> as well as by Aleksander Brause-Brudzewski, one of the heirs of Wierzenica and Kobylnica near Posen.<sup>78</sup>

According to the defendants at the Berlin trial, the hunting held by the Greyhound Society was aimed solely at military training. It was not without reason that Apolinary Kurnatowski, a drill master who had served in the Polish army for many years, was appointed director of the Society. Each time he took part in a hunt, he directed drill exercises. The sources demonstrate that Bronisław Dąbrowski was also “an active organizer of riding events”.<sup>79</sup> The hunt, including the trip to the location where military exercises were held, lasted from two to three hours. The exercises involved all the assembled forming two rows of riders or riding to a designated spot.

---

<sup>73</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 3, p. 859.

<sup>74</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 2, p. 856.

<sup>75</sup> *Akta i czynności sądowe...*, p. 33.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>77</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 21, p. 927.

<sup>78</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 14, p. 904.

<sup>79</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, August 11, p. 759.

The training sessions were held one-on-one, in threes or in sixes, and any kinds of errors made were corrected on an ongoing basis by Kurnatowski.<sup>80</sup> During the assemblies of the Greyhound Society the participants also engaged in target practice shooting.<sup>81</sup> The director denied all armed conspiracy charges during the Berlin trial stating that the assembly members who were returning home on horseback were not preparing for a revolution, but were rather holding various games along the way, such as equestrian quadrilles or hour-long drills, “customary not only in Poland but in other countries as well”.<sup>82</sup> Kurnatowski himself presided over hunting games with greyhounds, *par force* hunts, or hunts with shotguns or rifles,<sup>83</sup> and he saw absolutely nothing wrong with them. In his view those activities had no purpose contrary to the interests of Prussia, which “...is evident from the fact that hunting with greyhounds can only take place for two months of the year, i.e., in October and November; in December, for the frost, it is no longer possible, and in the summer there are crops in the field. The brief hunting season demonstrates that our drills cannot be considered preparations for an uprising.”<sup>84</sup>

The accusation against Włodzimierz Wilczyński, who went on a hunting trip from Uzarzewo to Czewujevo on November 11, along with a Antoni Kowalski and Woytowski, offers a significant insight into the activities of the Greyhound Society.<sup>85</sup> Kowalski told him on the way that they were going to “riding shows”, which Wilczyński called “childish games” at first, but later realised that the Society members also included older ones, and

---

<sup>80</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, August 5, p. 733.

<sup>81</sup> *Akta i czynności sądowe...*, p. 33.

<sup>82</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 3, p. 859.

<sup>83</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 6, p. 867.

<sup>84</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 3, p. 859.

<sup>85</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 7, p. 873.

that studying horse manoeuvres can be used for the purpose of a future anti-Prussian uprising.<sup>86</sup>

Another source confirming the use of hunting for national-liberation purposes was the diary of Aleksander Guttry, who also attended the Greyhound Society's meetings. Guttry recalls that hunts were arranged in early February 1846 so that Ludwik Mierosławski could hold briefings without drawing the suspicions of the Prussian police.<sup>87</sup> Only invitees were allowed to participate in the hunts. One such meeting was held in Świniary and another in Srebrna Góra, after which Mierosławski returned to Świniary, where he was apprehended by Prussian police on February 12<sup>88</sup> following a denunciation by Henryk Poniński, one of the Society's members and also a participant in the conspiracy against Prussia.<sup>89</sup>

The Greyhound Society met once a month, since according to its charter, each full member was required to invite others to take part in a hunt to be held every four weeks.<sup>90</sup> At each gathering, the venue for the next one was determined and, consequently, subsequent assemblies were held in Chraplewo and in Glesno (home of Count Konstanty Bniński, Ignacy's brother), and at one of the last assemblies Henryk Poniński was admitted to the Society.<sup>91</sup> All assemblies and votes on the admission of new members were presided over by Apolinary Kurnatowski. He also "commanded the military equestrian shows performed by the members of the hunting party".<sup>92</sup> According to Kurnatowski's defence attorney at the Berlin

---

<sup>86</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, September 4, p. 864.

<sup>87</sup> Ludwik Mierosławski (1814–1878) was a Polish military officer, general, participant in the 1830–31 November Uprising, leader of two Polish independence uprisings in Greater Poland – in 1846 and 1848 – and the first dictator of the 1863–1864 January Uprising. For more on Ludwik Mierosławski, see, e.g. B. Limanowski, *Ludwik Mierosławski, naczelnik powstania poznańskiego w 1840 i bohater z pod Miłostawia i Wrześni*, Kórnik 1913.

<sup>88</sup> A. Guttry, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>89</sup> *Kronika powstań polskich 1794–1944*, ed. M. Michalik, Warszawa 1994.

<sup>90</sup> *Akta i czynności sądowe...*, p. 114.

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem, p. 445.

<sup>92</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, "Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego" 1847, September 2, p. 856.

trial, “the prosecution ignored two grounds for suspicion: hunting with greyhounds and pistols”. Other trial testimonies also contained numerous contradictions, and the defence requested that the defendant be acquitted, which eventually happened.<sup>93</sup> Although the name of the Greyhound Society was not directly mentioned during the trial, it is very likely that the conspirators had met during its assemblies. It can also be concluded that after Mierosławski’s and other conspirators’ arrests in the following days, the Greyhound Society ceased operating. The Society finally shut down in February 1846 after a plot against the Prussian partitioning authorities was uncovered and a number of society members were arrested.

In addition to his involvement in the Greyhound Society, in August 1846, Alfons Białkowski founded a shooting society in the town of Schroda (present-day Środa) promoting training with shotguns, rifles and pistols in case of the outbreak of a Polish-Prussian war. Białkowski organised target practice, urged people to sign association letters, and served them wine during society meetings.<sup>94</sup> This demonstrates that the influence of the original Greyhound Society must have been considerable, and that the establishment of similar societies was probably intended to develop organisations ready to fight for independence in other parts of the region as well.

## The Greyhound Society and its conspiratorial and sporting roles

In 1795, following the Third Partition, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth vanished from the map of Europe for 123 years. Its large territory, and population, was divided between Austria, Russia and Prussia. In all three partitioned areas, social, cultural and political conditions, combined with the partitioners’ large-scale anti-Polish activities, meant that any initiatives taken in the area of physical culture, especially until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, were met with a negative reception from the partitioning authorities. When it became possible to obtain permission for sporting societies,

---

<sup>93</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, September 3, p. 860.

<sup>94</sup> *Process przeciw Polakom*, “Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego” 1847, August 30, p. 839–840.

the partitioners paid special attention to the activities of the members of a given society. In the Prussian-controlled Grand Duchy of Posen, the first organisation to conduct sporting activities was the aforementioned Society for the Improvement of Horse, Cattle and Sheep Breeding founded in 1838. In 1845, after horse races had been held, a Jockey Club was established, later to be renamed the Greyhound Society also known the Hunting Society, which was involved in official sporting activities and clandestine pro-independence initiatives.

The Greyhound Society was a pioneering organisation in partitioned Poland, which can be confirmed by two facts. The first pertains to the date of the Greyhound Society's founding, given in historical sources as November 1845. This means it was, in all likelihood, the first society of this type in Poland. In fact, all other known Polish hunting societies were founded in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the case of the Municipal Hunting Society of Lviv, there have been discrepancies in the date of its establishment. Some authors indicate 1838,<sup>95</sup> which would make it the oldest Polish hunting society, while others claim it was founded in 1862.<sup>96</sup> However, these authors do not quote any primary sources so this issue requires further research and revision. Even if one accepts the earlier date, it makes the Greyhound Society of the Grand Duchy of Posen chronologically the second organisation of this type in Poland, and certainly the first in the Prussian- and Russian-controlled territories.

The other fact was the profile of the Greyhound Society's work. Its sporting activities mainly included traditional hunts, hunts with greyhounds, and *par force* hunts. In addition, the members of the Greyhound Society developed their riding skills by performing, for example, equestrian quadrilles, but they also performed shooting exercises and drills, which raised suspicions among the Prussian authorities as to the Society members' anti-Prussian revolutionary undertakings aimed at organising a national uprising. The grounds for the Prussian suspicions were not unfounded as the accounts from the Berlin trial confirm that this was indeed the case,

---

<sup>95</sup> For example, K. Mielnikiewicz, *Kolekcjonerstwo Łowieckie w Polsce*, Ostrów Mazowiecka 2020; S. Krogulski, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> R. Wacek, op. cit., p. 38.

although efforts were made by the charged members of the Greyhound Society to deny such action in order to avoid punishment.

The Greyhound Society, also called the Hunting Society, was one of the oldest organisations of its kind in Poland. Its scope of work was truly ground-breaking as it was the first time a sporting association was used on this scale for national-liberation purposes. Other Polish societies combining the need for physical exercises with patriotic initiatives aimed at maintaining the national spirit would only be founded in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The largest of these, the most active and pioneering in the development of modern Polish sports, was the Sokol Gymnastic Society, established in 1867 in Lviv with branches in all three partitioned areas of Poland.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> A number of studies have been published about the Sokol Gymnastic Society, including: D. Dudek, *Działalność wojskowa Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” przed I wojną światową*, Nowy Sącz 1994; idem, „Sokół” na tle przygotowań niepodległościowych w Galicji, in: *Z dziejów Towarzystw Gimnastycznych „Sokół”*, ed. Z. Pawluczuk, Gdańsk 1996, p. 39–44; K. Toporowicz, *Zarys dziejów „Sokoła” na ziemiach polskich w latach 1867–1947*, in: ibidem, p. 7–19; S. Zaborniak, *Wkład Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w rozwój kultury fizycznej na ziemiach polskich pod zaborem austriackim w latach 1867–1914*, in: *Szkice z działalności Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” (1867–2006)*, eds. S. Zaborniak, P. Kowal, Rzeszów 2010, p. 11–35.