
Football and State-Building between National frustrations and Imperial Ambitions. The case of the Moldovan SSR (1944-1989)

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Résumé

In the 1970s some Moldovan football players protested to the Moldovan Soviet authorities against bringing players and coaches from other republics and called them to support local football. After the meeting one of the local leaders was visited by employees of the KGB, who have announced that among Moldovan players a nationalist current emerged and that there was a need for undertaking measures to that effect.

The case was a reflection of the Soviet organization of football and sport in the Moldovan SSR, created by the Soviet Union after annexing Bessarabia from Romania in 1940. From the beginning of occupation, in the Moldovan football has been maintained a tradition established over the Soviet period - the discrimination of the local, autochthon, footballers and specialists, and the massive presence of the players and coaches from other republics, particularly from the Russian Federation. The ethnic composition of "Burevestnik" (the main club of the republic) in 1951 is very suggestive in this sense: from 20 members of its staff, 15 were Russians, 2 were Georgians, 1 was from Belorussia and only 2 were Moldovans.

During the research were studied the football historiography of Moldova and Romania, the archival documents and information from newspapers of time, which reflected the development of football in the Moldovan SSR. The second step was based on the narrative method, a narrative history of football, through various interviews and dialogues with coaches, players, journalists, party activists of Soviet era, involved in football of Soviet era.

The present paper explains the complexity football policies of the Soviet authorities in the Moldovan SSR, focusing especially on the football as an instrument of the 'Russification' and imperial dominance over local population, but also on the riots, the frustrations and resistance of the local population to these discriminatory policies.

Mots-Clés: Nationalism, Imperialism, Football, Moldovan SSR, Soviet Union

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