

**NATIONAL SPORTS ACADEMY  
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**SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL MATCHES  
OF SLAVIA IN THE CONTEXT OF FOREIGN POLITICAL  
SITUATION (1913-1944)**

**ABSTRACT BOOK**

**of dissertation for awarding of educational and scientific degree  
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*The dissertation comprises 256 pages. It is illustrated with 19 tables, 6 figures, and 35 photos. The reference list includes 290 sources (233 in Cyrillic, 33 in Latin, 12 in Greek, and 12 internet sources).*

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## INTRODUCTION

Football is undoubtedly the sports phenomenon of the XX century. The most popular game attracts the attention of millions of people all over the world. Logically, international games become a field of expression enabling the people from the neighboring and remote countries not only to try their strength on the sporting arena but also to be connected through sport. Thus, they overcome not only their geographical borders but also their differences and prejudice built over the years.

Slavia itself is one of the flagmen of our national organized sport, and currently it is the oldest really existing sports club in Bulgaria without any transformations and license tricks. The football players belonging to this club were one of the first to compete against foreigners.

The choice of the topic “Significant International Football Matches of Slavia in the Context of Foreign Political Situation (1913-1944)” was motivated by several reasons. On the one hand, during that period Bulgaria took part in four wars and because of that it fell into a situation of foreign political isolation several times. On the other hand, the football players from Slavia played a serious number of international matches – 90 during that time. Their holding in Bulgaria and abroad once again shows the role of sport and of football in particular as a social phenomenon which can overcome borders between different countries – not only geographically but also politically.

The title contains the term “significant” which can be explained with the fact that not all matches played by footballers from Slavia fall into this category. But, for the needs of this research we had to look for all football matches played by the club. Afterwards, with certain examples for particular games, we pointed out the matches which are the most important for the theses of this dissertation. Another aspect of the significance of these international relations is their role in sports context for raising the level of Slavia as a football team. It is expressed both in borrowing play schemes and in attracting foreign specialists, and as a result championship titles were won.

The topic has been weakly researched and less popular among the general public which makes such a dissertation useful for the Bulgarian sports historiography. The examined documents from that period and some publications in the press at the time – Bulgarian and foreign, are among the main archive sources for writing this dissertation. Some data were taken from Slavia’s archive, the chronicles of the club, the first minute book of

the club, memories of eyewitnesses of the events, photographs with documentary value, materials from surveys on Slavia and football materials or materials related to Bulgarian sports history, etc.

Last but not least, the motive for choosing the topic can be also connected with the author's prolonged work on examining the history of sports club Slavia. This can be seen not only in his publications, but also in the published monograph research or articles in co-authorship, the documentaries and TV programs he took part in. As a result of these research activities, the author possesses a great number of photos and documentary materials related to Slavia's past which were also used.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **FORMULATON OF THE PROBLEM**

The initial basis of the research is presented in several paragraphs. In the first paragraph: **I.1.1. Establishment of sports club Slavia (Sofia)** the author discusses the founding of sports club Slavia on 10 April 1913. The first line-up of the football team is presented as well as the success achieved in Sofia and National tournaments. The contribution of the players from Slavia to the national team is also mentioned. It is expressed with the participation of 30 players from the club. Of the 68 matches played by the representative team of the country, only in two there were no players from Slavia.

In the second paragraph: **I.1.2. Appearance of different disciplines and turning Slavia into a universal sports club** the author presents, in a chronological order, the inclusion of gymnastics, cricket, athletics, winter sports, boxing, basketball, volleyball, hockey, handball, swimming, which determines Slavia as a universal sports club.

In the next part of this chapter: **I.1.3. Main characteristics in the development of Bulgarian sport and in the club** the author points out some highlights in the development of Bulgarian sport and of Slavia in particular. We can see the role of the club in establishing the Referee Union in Sofia and in founding Sofia Sports League on 31 July 1921. The participation of the club in establishing the Bulgarian National Sports Federation on 16 December 1923 is also mentioned. The author discusses the re-registration of Slavia on 12 June 1934 and the participation of the club in the National Division (1937-1940).

The fourth paragraph: **I.1.4. Slavia's cultural identity** traces the community-cultural activities of the club. They were expressed in the foundation of a choir of the same name on 25 December 1915, a club library, talks, and social evenings organized by the department of culture and enlightenment functioning from 1924. From January 1922, the club Slavia organized traditional Christmas mornings dedicated to orphans. They were held under the Royal patronage and included handing out of clothes and gifts to children from four orphanages, three primary schools and two secondary schools located in the region near Slavia stadium.

In the period 1913-1944 some of the chairmen of the club were the prominent opera singer Stefan Makedonski (2.12.1928-12.10.1930), Stoyan Omarchevski (4.01.1939-2.01.1941) who established, as a member of the cabinet, the official celebration of the Day of the Leaders of the Bulgarian National Revival, and Todor Kojuharov (8.11.1926-11.12.1927), who was also a minister. Among the club members the presence of the two most famous primes of the operetta Mimi Balkanska and Tinka Kraeva should also be pointed out, as well as the future world-famous basso Boris Hristov, the prominent artist Konstantin Shtarkelov, his colleague and editor in chief of the satirical newspaper "Shturets" Raiko Aleksiev, editors in chief of the magazine "Sports Review" Atanas Malinkov and the newspaper "Sport" Ivan Selveliev, and so on. The presence of persons-representatives of the intellectual, spiritual, and political elite of the nation, as well as the activities done by Slavia show that this is much more than merely an ordinary sports club. With its diverse cultural-educational and charity work, with its responsible work with adolescents in educational aspect, with the examples of voluntarism, respect for traditions, the members of Slavia became a sports-cultural role model of this era.

In the next paragraph: **I.2.1. Foreign political situation and its context related to Bulgaria** the author presents in a chronological order important events for the country and their influence on matches played by Slavia. The club was founded in the period of Balkan War (26 September 1912 – 17 May 1913). Due to our participation in World War I (15 October 1915 – 29 September 1918), as part of the Central Powers, Slavia played a match in Sofia with a team of allied German army. One of the clauses following Bulgaria's leaving the war and preceding the Treaty of Neuilly from 27 November 1919 was the presence of an occupation army corps in the capital city. Slavia played two matches with British military teams in 1918 and 1919.

Slavia players had their debut match abroad, in Istanbul in October 1924, prior to the Ankara Agreement. This pact of friendship and collaboration of the two countries became a fact on 18 October 1925 in the Turkish capital. The foreign political situation was even more complicated upon Slavia's playing in Thessaloniki in October 1926. Only a year earlier there was a conflict between the two countries known as "The incident at Petrich". The military tension in the period 19-29 October 1925 was successfully resolved in favor of our country by the League of Nations. In September 1927 Slavia played for the second time in Thessaloniki. At that moment the relations with our south neighboring country continued to be quite complicated and the agreement "Mollow-Kaphantaris" was not signed until 8 December. Prior to the signed agreement for friendship between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria on 24 January 1937, the management of Slavia had such an agreement with sports club "Yugoslavia" (Beograd) from 1935, according to which the Cup "Comradeship" was established.

The last significant political factor from the period discussed in the dissertation was World War II. During it, in August 1940, Slavia was the host of Spartak (Moscow), and in September it was on a tour in USSR. The formal inclusion of Bulgaria in the war was done on 1 March 1941 after our joining the Tripartite Pact. For Slavia, the international football cooperation after that date was expressed in matches in Sofia with the allied German military teams in 1941 and 1942 and in guest matches in 1941 and 1943 with Gradjanski (Zagreb) from the newly made Independent Croatian country.

Besides the above-mentioned five paragraphs, chapter one makes a detailed review of different sources related to the topic of the research. They are presented in a chronological order of publication and are united in **three main categories**: official issues of Slavia, surveys of the history of the club and of the Bulgarian football.

The first group comprises several kinds, starting from the magazine of the same name "Slavia" first issued in 1925. With valuable information, presented on 20 pages, it is an important document for the first decade. The next club's editions were the Bulletins of the sports club, issued from 1960 to 1990. They had different periods of publication – there were years when ten issues were published, and there were some when only two were published. The serious thirty-one-year period of their existence makes them an extremely valuable source for tracing the history of Slavia. The last official issues were monograph ones and collections of research. Two of them were created by a team and were dedicated to anniversaries of the

club. They were issued as follows: „75 Years Slavia” (1988) and „85 Years Slavia” (1998). The author’s ones were: “With the White Shirt” by Dimitar Pishtiyski and “Seventy Years through Sport Serving the People. Club Slavia 1913-1983” by Ilia Stoichev. They were dedicated to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the club. The first article was entirely related to football, and the second one presented football and the other sports in the club.

The second category of six sources are surveys on the history of Slavia which were not published by the club. They were made by journalists from the team of the newspaper of the same name. Collective issues are “90 Years Slavia” (2004) and „100 Years Slavia” (2014). Kamen Ognyanov was the author of two surveys: “Slavia on International Pitches” (2006) and “A Century of Football in White” (2015). „The Chronicles of Slavia (1910-1944)” from 2013 was written by Nikolay Krastev, and their mutual work was named “The Roots of Slavia” (2008).

The third group in the analysis of the literary sources are surveys dedicated to the history of the Bulgarian football which include data about the matched of Slavia with foreign teams. We should point out the collected issues: “Football Almanac” (1954), „50 Years Football in Bulgaria” (1960), „Bulgaria on the Football Globe” (1970), „To the Roots of the Bulgarian Sport” (2016), among others. The research by Silvester Milchev: “Bulgaria’s Football Romance” (1998), „On the Crest of the Bulgarian Football” (2003), „Bulgarian Football Roots” (2005). The monographs by Ivan Kurtev: “On the Football fields of the 5 Continents” (1971), by Kliment Simeonov “Football in Bulgaria” (1984), by Nikola Hristov “Football Almanac” (2015), by Teodor Borisov “How King Football Conquered Bulgaria” (2019), etc.

There is one more category of issues. They are dedicated to foreign clubs which played matches with Slavia. But they lack important facts or there are few facts in the form of informational details. An important stipulation is the fact that their review is not completely exhaustive unlike the review of the Bulgarian issues.

Upon the analysis of the sources, the author outlines the following **indicators**:

- International matches of Slavia
- Results from the matches
- Geographical location of the rivals
- Influence of foreign political factors on the matches
- Unresolved controversial issues
- Sports-technical issues

- Role of the matches in social-political aspect

We should point out that so far there have not been any dissertations on topics related to the international matches of the football team Slavia in the period 1913-1944. In the accessible scientific literature, no detailed works dedicated to the relation of the foreign political situation and Slavia's matches with foreign teams have been found.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **HYPOTHESES, AIM, TASKS, METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH**

#### **II.1. Hypotheses of the research**

On the basis of the literature review and the surveys carried out, we outlined the following hypotheses:

- We assume that sport, football in particular, plays a significant part for establishing and developing contacts between countries with different from Bulgarian political regime and government, building a positive image of our country, maintaining the national spirit and Bulgarian traditions.
- We assume that international football relations led to appearance of foreign football coaches in Slavia, to development of educational methods, sports-technical parameters, and systems of play.
- We assume that international matches influence Slavia's performance at the National Championship.

#### **II.2. Aim of the research**

The aim of this research was to examine the participation of the football team of the Bulgarian sports club Slavia (Sofia) in international matches in the period 1913-1944 and to reveal their contribution to the positive image of our country despite its participation in a number of wars, to maintaining the national spirit and the Bulgarian traditions, as well as the relation to Slavia's performance at national championships.

#### **II.3. Tasks of the research**

In order to fulfil the aim, the following tasks were set:

1. To examine and analyze historical documents from Slavia's archive.
2. To make a review on the topic – publications and press announcements, memories of participants and managers of the team.



3. To make a list of all international matches of Slavia in the period 1913-1944 consisting of the accurate name of the rival team, the city, the country it came from, dated with a day, month, year, and the exact score.
4. To outline the ways and stages of organizing matches with international teams and to present the financial aspects for Slavia.
5. To draw conclusions about the relations of Slavia and the teams from the other countries in different matches.
6. To examine the role of the international matches in social-political aspect.

## **II.4. Subject, object, period of the research**

**Subject** of this research is the international matches of Slavia. For such a football match in the researched historical period, we accept a match between two teams consisting of players with different nationality. The second condition, important mostly for the club teams, is that the teams had registration, headquarters or structure which administrated their activities in different foreign countries.

**Object** of this dissertation is the football team of sports club Slavia which played its first match as early as 1913 when the club was officially found. It was among the founding bodies of Sofia Sports League on 31 July 1921. In the seasons to follow, Slavia became champion 10 times: 1921, 1922, 1923, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1932, 1934 and 1936. The club qualified 12 times in the National Championship which started in 1924 and in the National Football Division (1937-1940) and won 11 medals. Being a national champion five times, Slavia deserved the Royal Cup which is an eternal possession of the club.

**The period** of the research is from 1913 to 1944. The beginning coincides with the founding of the club. The end coincides with the beginning of the communist regime in Bulgaria. This choice was made, because there was a transformation not only in the political regime of the country but also in sport. Besides there are clear time borders of the research, the period of 31 years allows for analyzing a great number of matches. This also enables the representative character of the research because the general sample is quite big – 90 matches.

## **II.5. Methodology of the research**

In order to fulfil the aim and tasks of this research, we used a complex methodology which consisted of:

## Content analysis

We surveyed *36 media, of which 14 Bulgarian and 22 foreign*. The different newspapers and magazines where we could find information about matches of Slavia with football players from other countries were *specialized and providing general information*. The publication period of the edition taken for the needs of the research is given in parentheses.

- Some of the Bulgarian editions were: Zora (1919-1944), Illiustrovana sedmica (1923-1936), Levski (1933-1936), Mir (1913-1944), Severo-Bulgarski Sporten List (1924), Slavia (1925), Sport (1923-1944), Sportnen List (1921-1923), Sporten pregled (1922-1935), Utro (1913-1944), etc.
- Some of the foreign editions were: Austrian: Der Morgen (1927-1934) and Sport-Tagblatt (1925-1927), Greek: Macedonia (1926-1929) and Tahidromos (1926), Italian: Il Messaggero (1927) and L'Impero (1927, 1930), Polish Kurjer Warszawski (1926-1927), Romanian Gazeta Sporturilor (1925), Soviet Union: Komsomolskaya pravda (1940), Krasnoi sport" (1940), Pravda (1940), Hungarian: Nemzeti Sport (1923-1931) and „Sportthirlap” (1923-1926), Yugoslavian: Dan (1939), Vreme (1926-1938), Politika (1926-1939), Pravda (1926-1939), Sportista (1926-1927), Jutarnji list (1929-1934), Ilustrovani list (1929), Zagrebacki sportski list (1926), Subotichki Shportski list (1939).

## Research and analysis of the historical sources

The analysis of the historical documents includes an overall review of the preserved archives of the club:

- **Annual archives of Slavia, bound in seven volumes for each year:** (1914-1920, 1924, 1925, 1928, 1929, 1930 and 1933).
- **Outgoing letters of the club** in the period 1940-1943.

On the basis of these historical sources consisting of 5,600 pages, we can outline the following kinds of examined sources on the topic:

- *Correspondence between foreign clubs and Slavia.*
- *Telegrams to and from the foreign clubs arranging the matches.*
- *Outgoing and ingoing letters to and from different institutions.*
- *Lists of teams with the names and positions of the players.*
- *Other evidence for matches: bulletins, advertisements, etc.*

- **The first proceedings book** (1913-1922). It encompasses a period of nearly a decade and comprises about 200 pages. It provides information about significant events from the history of the club:
  - *Constituent written statement of Slavia from 10 April 1913.*
  - *Written statements of 86 meetings of the Managing Council.*
- **Chronicles of Slavia** (1913-1932). It includes all important events in the period. It comprises about 600 pages and provides precious information about the club's life, including foreign matches:
  - *Information, correspondence, and reports about played matches.*
- **Original photos**, related to a particular international match. These images should not be perceived just as illustrative materials for a certain event but as an evidence for its holding. The photos show the spirit of those matches which is valuable for the theses of this research. The photos were autographed for each match and dated, which adds to their documentary character. They are:
  - *Mutual photo of the two teams and officials before the matches.*
  - *Photo from the welcoming/sending off the guests.*
  - *Photos of the match itself between the two opponents.*
  - *Photos of the official dinner or reception during the visit.*

### **Use of memoir evidence**

Besides the classical documents in the preparation of this research, we also used memories of direct participants in the life of the club. Referring to memoir should generally be taken with a pinch of salt because of the later description of past events. It is possible that not all details be presented accurately, but as a whole, the information is useful and valuable. We used the memories of five people, indisputable authorities not only in the club annals of Slavia but also with their community service:

- Emanuil Geshev, co-founder of the club, with great contributions for the development of Bulgarian pension plans. He was also head of the National Archive.

- Georgi Grigorov, co-founder of the club. He worked at Commercial Bank for many years. He was the first Bulgarian international football referee.

- Dimitar Manolov, a player in the club for many years and the first national player in the history of Slavia. He was an opera singer for many years.

- Luben Sokerov, chairman of Slavia (8.04.1936-10.01.1938). He was also head of the football union of BNSF (28.04.1940-23.04.1942). He was a vice mayor of Sofia in the early 1990s.

- Dimitar Konstantinov was a secretary of the club for many years. He was part of the management board several times in 1920s and 1930s.

### **Comparative analysis**

*It includes several categories with the aim to verify the data:*

- The first category – different **documentary evidence for holding a certain football match**. We used at least two independent sources, if possible, with the aim to establish exactly the day, month, and the year of the match, the name of the rival, its origin, the score, and the nature of the match.
- The second type of comparison is between **Slavia's performance and that of other teams**. We used data about the number of the matches of the Bulgarian national team in the period 1913-1944. Such kind of supposition was applied in the analysis of the quantity of the played matches or their general win-loss record according to wins, losses, and draws. To analyze the performance of the “white” team during different matches, we made a comparison with the performance of the same or similar rivals of the other most respectable Sofia club from the researched period – Levski.
- The third **comparison** was made **between the different theses** about facts related to holding the matches. They were examined by other researchers who wrote on the topic of this research.

### **Statistical analysis**

It is sports-statistical and includes analysis of the teams against which Slavia played in the international matches and the scores. The data are presented in tables or graphs depending on the following criteria:

- Type of the team: club, military, mixed.
- Origin of the club - continent: Europe, Asia, Africa.
- List of European countries and regions of the rivals.
- Team clubs according to country of origin.
- Political regime in the country where the rival came from.
- Win-loss record of Slavia by years according to the activity of the club – number of matches, wins, losses, draws, goal difference for the period as a whole and for decades to establish dependencies.

- Relation host/visits in the international matches by years. The differences were illustrated graphically. The matches played as hosts and as guests with representatives of different countries were analyzed.

## **II.6. Organization of the research**

The preparation, organization, and carrying out of the research was organized in the following stages:

**First stage:** January 2019 – June 2019.

The contents and scope of the dissertation was determined. The literature review was made. The work hypotheses were outlined. A detailed design of the dissertation was made outlining the activities which should be done for the purposes of the research. The instruments for carrying out of the research were made clear.

**Second stage:** July 2019 – June 2020.

The theoretical part of the dissertation was written. The statistical analysis was performed. The tables and figures which would illustrate the text were designed. Analyses and interpretation of the obtained results were done. The photos and facsimiles which would be used as a documentary and illustrative evidence of the information were selected.

**Third stage:** July 2020 – February 2021.

The results were analyzed, and conclusions drawn. The dissertation was structured and made ready technically in order to be presented for discussion.

## **CHAPTER THREE ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS**

### **III.1. International matches of football club Slavia in the period 1913-1944**

On the basis of the conducted research and the performed analyses and specifications, we made a chronological list of all international matches of the football club Slavia in the researched period. They are presented in Table 1 with a date, month, year, and venue. The correct name of the rival team was specified together with the city and country it came from. The real exact score is also provided. This is the most important basis for all the analyses of the matches from this period which follow.

**Table 1. International matches of the Slavia (Sofia) football team in the period between 1913-1944**

<b>№</b>	<b>Date Place</b>	<b>Opponent (location, country)</b>	<b>Res</b>	<b>№</b>	<b>Date Place</b>	<b>Opponent (location, country)</b>	<b>Res</b>
<b>1</b>	23.09.1913 Sofia	Turnverein German Gymnastics Society in Sofia	1:0	<b>2</b>	01.05.1916 Sofia	German Soldiers Team in Sofia (Germany)	0:4
<b>3</b>	20.10.1918 Sofia	English Soldiers Team in Sofia (Great Britain)	3:1	<b>4</b>	06.11.1919 Sofia	English Soldiers Team in Sofia (Great Britain)	3:0
<b>5</b>	02.05.1922 Sofia	Gallipoli – Russian White Guard Club (Russian Council)	4:0	<b>6</b>	27.08.1922 Sofia	Gallipoli – Russian White Guard Club (Russian Council)	3:2
<b>7</b>	04.07.1923 Sofia	Tricolor (Bucharest, Romania)	2:0	<b>8</b>	08.08.1923 Sofia	Rus (Prague, Czechoslovakia)	1:2
<b>9</b>	28.09.1923 Sofia	FC 33 (Budapest, Hungary)	1:5	<b>10</b>	10.10.1924 Istanbul	Fenerbahce (Istanbul, Turkey)	2:0
<b>11</b>	12.10.1924 Istanbul	Fenerbahce (Istanbul, Turkey)	1:2	<b>12</b>	16.06.1925 Sofia	Central Hungary United Team	2:0
<b>13</b>	04.08.1925 Sofia	Slavia (Prague, Czechoslovakia)	0:1	<b>14</b>	23.08.1925 Sofia	Fenerbahce (Istanbul, Turkey)	2:1
<b>15</b>	25.08.1925 Sofia	Fenerbahce (Istanbul, Turkey)	1:2	<b>16</b>	05.09.1925 Bucharest	Unirea (Bucharest, Romania)	5:1
<b>17</b>	06.09.1925 Bucharest	Juventus (Bucharest, Romania)	0:3	<b>18</b>	01.05.1926 Belgrade	Gradjanski (Zagreb, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSCS)	3:3
<b>19</b>	02.05.1926 Belgrade	Cracovia (Krakow, Poland)	2:0	<b>20</b>	13.05.1926 Sofia	Kapfenberger SC (Styria, Austria)	3:3
<b>21</b>	14.05.1926 Sofia	Kapfenberger SC (Styria, Austria)	6:1	<b>22</b>	10.06.1926 Sofia	Kecskemeti TE (Kecskemet, Hung.)	1:5
<b>23</b>	08.08.1926 Sofia	Graz AK (Graz, Austria)	2:3	<b>24</b>	16.10.1926 Thessaloniki	Iraklis (Thessaloniki, Greece)	3:1
<b>25</b>	17.10.1926 Thessaloniki	Aris (Thessaloniki, Greece)	4:1	<b>26</b>	22.04.1927 Sofia	Atlas (Thessaloniki, Greece)	2:0
<b>27</b>	15.06.1927 Sofia	Slovan (Wien, Austria)	1:0	<b>28</b>	16.06.1927 Sofia	Slovan (Wien, Austria)	2:2
<b>29</b>	19.07.1927 Sofia	Brigittenauer AC (Wien, Austria)	1:3	<b>30</b>	21.07.1927 Sofia	Brigittenauer AC (Wien, Austria)	2:2
<b>31</b>	24.07.1927 Sofia	Cracovia (Krakow, Poland)	0:1	<b>32</b>	26.07.1927 Sofia	Cracovia (Krakow, Poland)	1:4
<b>33</b>	03.09.1927 Thessaloniki	Iraklis (Thessaloniki, Greece)	1:0	<b>34</b>	04.09.1927 Thessaloniki	Atlas (Thessaloniki, Greece)	3:1
<b>35</b>	10.09.1927 Naples	SSC Napoli (Naples, Italy) – II team	7:0	<b>36</b>	11.09.1927 Naples	SSC Napoli (Naples, Italy)	3:2
<b>37</b>	16.09.1927 Roma	AS Roma (Roma, Italy)	2:1	<b>38</b>	18.09.1927 Roma	AS Roma (Roma, Italy)	4:5

<b>39</b>	15.09.1928 Thessaloniki	Aris (Thessaloniki, Greece)	3:2	<b>40</b>	16.09.1928 Thessaloniki	Iraklis (Thessaloniki, Greece)	0:5
<b>41</b>	18.09.1928 Thessaloniki	Aris (Thessaloniki, Greece)	4:6	<b>42</b>	05.05.1929 Belgrade	SK Jugoslavija (Belgrade, KSCS)	5:3
<b>43</b>	06.05.1929 Belgrade	BSK (Belgrade, KSCS)	2:3	<b>44</b>	09.05.1929 Осијек	Gradjanski (Osijek, KSCS)	2:1
<b>45</b>	11.05.1929 Zagreb	Gradjanski (Zagreb, KSCS)	2:4	<b>46</b>	12.05.1929 Zagreb	Gradjanski (Zagreb, KSCS)	1:2
<b>47</b>	23.06.1929 Sofia	Maccabi (Bucharest, Romania)	2:0	<b>48</b>	04.08.1929 Sofia	National SC (Cairo, Egypt)	4:1
<b>49</b>	07.09.1929 Thessaloniki	Makedonikos FC (Thessaloniki, Greece)	1:0	<b>50</b>	08.09.1929 Thessaloniki	Iraklis (Thessaloniki, Greece)	1:2
<b>51</b>	10.09.1929 Thessaloniki	PAOK (Thessaloniki, Greece)	1:2	<b>52</b>	22.09.1929 Sofia	SK Jugoslavija (Belgrade, KSCS)	0:0
<b>53</b>	06.05.1930 Sofia	Vojvodina (Novi Sad, Yugoslavia)	1:3	<b>54</b>	29.06.1930 Sofia	Iraklis (Thessaloniki, Greece)	3:0
<b>55</b>	06.07.1930 Sofia	Brigittenauer AC (Wien, Austria)	1:0	<b>56</b>	09.09.1930 Sofia	Obilić (Belgrade, Yugoslavia)	4:2
<b>57</b>	28.10.1930 Roma	AS Roma (Roma, Italy)	0:5	<b>58</b>	25.05.1931 Sofia	Bástya (Szeged, Hungary)	1:2
<b>59</b>	08.06.1931 Sofia	Eintracht (Leipzig, Germany)	1:2	<b>60</b>	19.09.1932 Sofia	English Marine Squadron team (Great Britain)	15:1
<b>61</b>	25.03.1933 Tel Aviv	Hapoel (Tel Aviv, Mandatory Palestine)	1:1	<b>62</b>	26.03.1933 Jerusalem	Jerusalem United Team (Mandat. Palestine)	2:0
<b>63</b>	29.03.1933 Haifa	Haifa United Team (M. Palestine)	5:0	<b>64</b>	01.04.1933 Tel Aviv	Maccabi (Tel Aviv, M. Palestine)	4:2
<b>65</b>	04.07.1933 Sofia	BASK (Belgrade, Yugoslavia)	0:2	<b>66</b>	11.03.1934 Belgrade	SK Jugoslavija (Belgrade, Yugas.)	1:4
<b>67</b>	09.06.1934 Sofia	FC Wien (Wien, Austria)	1:1	<b>68</b>	17.07.1934 Sofia	SK Jugoslavija (Belgrade, Yugas.)	0:1
<b>69</b>	29.04.1935 Belgrade	SK Jugoslavija (Belgrade Yugas.)	2:1	<b>70</b>	01.05.1935 Novi Sad	Vojvodina (Novi Sad, Yugoslavia)	2:3
<b>71</b>	02.06.1935 Sofia	Racing (Strasbourg, France)	3:2	<b>72</b>	21.06.1936 Sofia	Olympique (Marseille, France)	2:0
<b>73</b>	05.07.1936 Sofia	SK Jugoslavija (Belgrade, Yugas.)	3:3	<b>74</b>	24.04.1938 Banja Luka	ŠK Krajišnik (Banja Luka, Yugoslavia)	2:2
<b>75</b>	25.04.1938 Banja Luka	ŠK Krajišnik (Banja Luka, Yugoslavia)	2:3	<b>76</b>	10.09.1938 Sarajevo	NK Đerzelez (Sarajevo, Yugas.)	3:1
<b>77</b>	11.09.1938 Sarajevo	Slavia (Sarajevo, Yugoslavia)	1:4	<b>78</b>	29.05.1939 Novi Sad	Vojvodina (Novi Sad, Yugoslavia)	0:2
<b>79</b>	30.05.1939 Novi Sad	Vojvodina (Novi Sad, Yugoslavia)	1:0	<b>80</b>	09.09.1939 Sofia	SK Jugoslavija (Belgrade, Yugas.)	2:4
<b>81</b>	11.08.1940 Sofia	Spartak (Moskow, USSR)	1:6	<b>82</b>	15.09.1940 Москва	Spartak (Moskow, USSR)	0:4

<b>83</b>	21.09.1940 Москва	Dynamo (Moskow, USSR)	0:4	<b>84</b>	29.09.1940 Ленинград	Dynamo (Leningrad, USSR)	2:2
<b>85</b>	04.05.1941 Sofia	German Soldiers Team (Germany)	3:1	<b>86</b>	08.05.1941 Sofia	German Soldiers Team (Germany)	4:1
<b>87</b>	25.10.1941 Sofia	Gradjanski (Zagreb, ISC)	1:4	<b>88</b>	21.06.1942 Sofia	Luftwaffe team (Germany)	1:5
<b>89</b>	13.06.1943 Zagreb	Gradjanski (Zagreb, ISC)	1:2	<b>90</b>	14.06.1943 Zagreb	Gradjanski (Zagreb, ISC)	0:1

### **Number of matches in the period**

In the researched period 1913-1944 Slavia played 90 matches with foreign teams. This number is not small at all taking into consideration the following few facts:

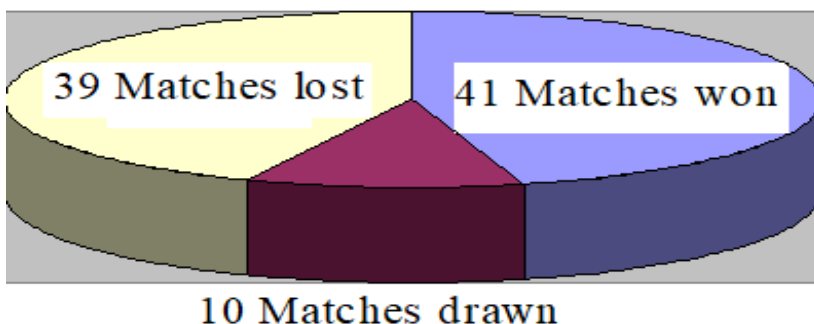
- Lack of annual European club tournaments and other competitions in which Slavia took part in the following decades.
- Complicated foreign political situation.
- Military conflicts in part of the period.
- Necessity to pay a fee to the visiting-teams and other financial expenses on behalf of the club.
- Permission for absence from workplace, school, or military service for the players of Slavia when going abroad.
- As comparison, the national team had 68 matches during the same period.

### **III.2. Quantitative and structural analysis of the matches played**

#### **Total win-loss record according to the indicator final score**

Slavia players had a positive win-loss record from the matches they played. The result from the 90 matches was as follows: 41 wins, 10 draws and 39 losses. The goal relation was also in their favor: 188-174. In the same period, for example, in its 68 matches our representative team had 18 wins, 9 draws and 41 losses. The result concerning the ratio of the successful goals was also serious: 114-207 (Popdimitrov, 1969). Of course, we have to take into consideration the fact that Slavia played not only with club teams but also with military and mixed teams, while the national team played only with selected teams from other countries. Nevertheless, we should point out the positive win-loss record on the background of the general state of the Bulgarian football during that period.





*Figure 1. Number of wins, draws and losses of Slavia in the 90 international matches played in the period 1913-1944.*

*Table 2. Win-loss record of matches played by Slavia (1913-1944).*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Played</b>	<b>Won</b>	<b>Drawn</b>	<b>Lost</b>	<b>Goal Diff.</b>
1913	1	1	0	0	1-0
1916	1	0	0	1	0-4
1918	1	1	0	0	3-0
1919	1	1	0	0	3-1
1922	2	2	0	0	7-2
1923	3	1	0	2	4-7
1924	2	1	0	1	3-2
1925	6	3	0	3	10-8
1926	8	4	2	2	24-17
1927	13	7	2	4	29-21
1928	3	1	0	2	7-13
1929	11	5	1	5	21-18
1930	5	3	1	1	9-10
1931	2	0	0	2	2-4
1932	1	1	0	0	15-1
1933	5	3	1	1	12-5
1934	3	0	1	2	2-6
1935	3	2	0	1	7-6
1936	2	1	1	0	5-3
1938	4	1	1	2	8-10
1939	3	1	0	2	3-6
1940	4	0	1	3	3-16
1941	3	2	0	1	8-6
1942	1	0	0	1	1-5
1943	2	0	0	2	1-3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>188-174</b>

Analyzing table 2 we can see that in the first decade *the team played only one match* per year, not every year. The reason is the participation of Bulgaria in the wars: the Balkan War, the Second Balkan War, and World War I. Slavia players won three of the four matches. The period 1921-1930 was by no means *the most attractive decade*. The total win-loss record of the matches was *positive*: 28 wins, 5 draws and 21 losses, and it was negative only in two years. The team won the cups of the tournaments „15 Years BSK” in Beograd and „The First Thessaloniki Fair” in 1926. The result from 1927 was also impressive. The 7 wins were over the *respectable clubs* from Italy, Austria, and Greece. We can see that throughout three years the team scored over 20 goals which is indicative for the abilities of the players. As for the years, when there was an equal win-loss record, we should make the following specification: it was recorded after playing with *popular and strong clubs*. Only in 1925, that was the champion of Czechoslovakia Slavia (Prague), the champion of the region of Istanbul Fenerbahce (Turkey) and the second-best team of Romania Juventus (Bucharest).

In the total win-loss record in 1930s there was *parity in the goal difference 57-57*, and the losses this time outnumbered the wins, even only with four. This was due mostly to the weak results at the beginning and at the end of the decade. The *three losses* from the Moscow Spartak and the two losses against Dinamo in 1940 had their share. In the successful 1935 and 1936, *the wins* against the French Racing (Strasbourg) with 3:2 and Olympique (Marseille) with 2:0 *were outstanding*. It is important to point out that the next 1937 was the only year in which Slavia *did not play* with foreigners. The positive ratio from 1933 was formed only after a successful tour in Palestine. In the previous 1932, Slavia had *the best score* in its club history – 15:1 against a team of the English Marine Squadron team. Again, as in the first decade, in the last one *the matches were few* because of a military conflict – World War II. There were players from the team who had to do their military service. This influenced the results as well.

### **Analysis of the geographical location of the rivals**

In table 3 we can see that Slavia played with teams from the Old Continent. With its participation in 1933 in matches on the territory of the English Protectorate Palestine, Slavia was the only Bulgarian club to play with a representative of Asia in that period. The match in 1929 in Sofia with the team of Egypt was with a representative of Africa.

**Table 3. Distribution of 90 international matches of Slavia by continents, regions and countries.**

<b>Continent</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>Continent</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>Continent</b>	<b>no</b>
Europe	85	Asia	4	Africa	1
<b>Region</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>Region/part</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>Region/part</b>	<b>no</b>
Balkans	45	Middle East/		Middle East/	
Central Europe	18	Southeast Asia	4	North Africa	1
Western Europe	16	<b>Political subject</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>no</b>
Eastern Europe	6	Mandatory Palestine	4	Egypt	1

**Table 4. Distribution of the 85 matches of Slavia with European teams by regions, according to the countries and the political subject.**

<b>Balkans</b>		<b>Central Europe</b>		<b>Western Europe</b>		<b>Eastern Europe</b>	
Yugoslavia	22	Austria	9	Germany	6	USSR	4
Greece	12	Hungary	4	Italy	5	Russian Council	2
Turkey	4	Poland	3	Gr. Britain	3		
Romania	4	Czechoslovak.	2	France	2		
Independent State of Croatia	3						
<b>Total:</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>6</b>

The analysis of table 4 shows that the team of Slavia played with representatives from *almost all parts of Europe*. Slavia athletes played with teams from 14 of the existing countries of that time, as well as with the white guard emigration club – representative of political subject. Logically, the greater number of matches (45) were played with *teams from the Balkans*. It is important to point out that they were held with all countries on the peninsula at that time. Albania did not play any international matches during that period. Another important fact is that Slavia was a guest and host of *the five countries*. We should pay special attention to the matches played with clubs from the contemporary country North Macedonia in the period 1941-1943. At that time, these countries were administered by Bulgaria that is why it is not correct to consider them international contacts. Slavia had 6 matches with SC Macedonia (Skopje):

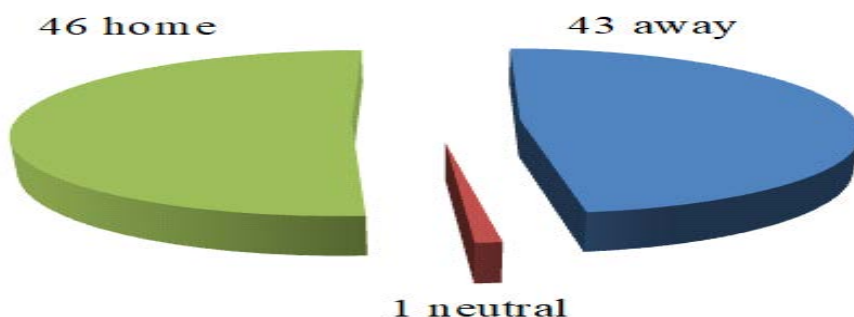
4 in Sofia Regional Division and 2 in the National Championship. In this tournament it played one match with SC Macedonia (Bitola).

The second region by number of matches played (18) was the Central European region. This can be explained with two reasons. On the one hand, at the time they were leading power in football and were attractive opponents. Moreover, *the distance was not too long*. On the other hand, Austria had positions in the Bulgarian football. They were in several directions: the local federation organized the first match in the history of our national team, several *Austrians coached our local teams*, and quite a lot of teams *visited our country* for friendly matches. The number of the matches (16) with teams from Western Europe is also impressive. It is curious to point out that all of them, except for the Italian representatives, were visiting teams in Sofia.

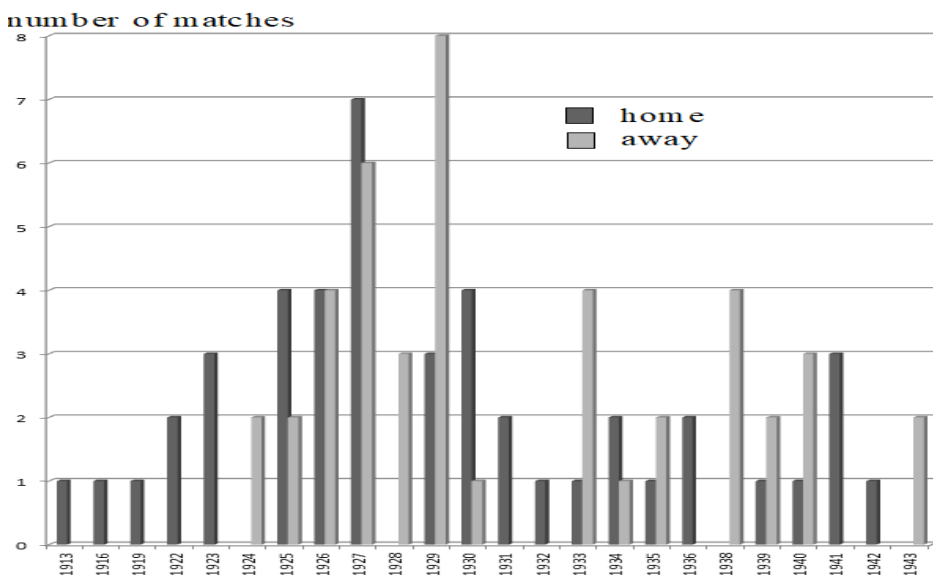
### **Total ratio host/visit matches**

Out of 90 matches, 46 were in Sofia, and the other 44 were held abroad, there was almost a parity (fig. 2). This shows that the people from the international relations department managed to organize a serious number of matches as a host, and the team had built a respectable image and that was why it was invited so often as a guest team.

One match was played on no man's land: with the Polish Cracovia (Krakow) in Beograd on 2 May 1926. It was won by the Bulgarian club with 2:0.



**Figure 2. Ratio of host/visit matches and matches on no man's land in the 90 international matches of Slavia.**



**Figure 3. Dependence of the matches with factor host matches by years.**

### **Ratio host/visit matches by years**

In the analysis of the number of matches by years (fig. 3) we can see that in the initial and final years there were lower values. Apart from that, over nine years the team Slavia played *only host* matches. During the first seven years *there were a small number of matches*. This is logical because of the participation of Bulgaria in three wars: the Balkan War, the Second Balkan War, and World War I. In this period *there were matches only in Sofia*, which can also be explained with the foreign political situation and with the fact that the club had not made his stable organization yet. In the period 1921-1930 they played the most matches (53) compared to all the other decades. This is due to two factors: postwar increase in each and every respect in Europe and the raised structural-organization level of Slavia's activities. During the first three years there were *matches only in Sofia*, which is normal, because until then "The whites" had not left the country yet. The opposite trend can be observed in 1924 and 1928. In the first year, Slavia made its *debut abroad*. In the second year, *lack of any matches* in Bulgaria can be explained with another thing – the grave earthquake in Chirpan. A very strong *host year* was 1930. *The most matches abroad* – 8 were played in 1929. As a whole, Slavia players played the *most matches* in 1927 – 13.

The third decade of XX century started with a serious economic crisis whose sequences, even in a smaller extent, reached our country. This, together with the postmilitary situation on the Old Continent led to a decrease in international competitions. Compared to the previous period their number was almost half as many – 27 matches. In 1931 and 1932, as well as in 1936 *matches were played only in Sofia*. At the end of the decade there were only *visiting matches*: 1938, 1939 and 1940. The balance 4:1 in favor of the matches abroad in 1933 is impressive. This was due to the tour of the English Protectorate of that time – Palestine. Logically, both during the first decade and in the last years the *small number of the matches* was due to foreign political reasons. In Europe, the World War II was ongoing. That is why there was one visiting match in 1943, in one country only – the Independent Croatian country. *The host matches*, on the other hand, were held only with military German teams and again with one Croatian club. In 1944 the grave situation did not allow for holding even a single match.

***Table 5. Number of matches played, and host matches by country or political subject of government in the period 1913-1944.***

<b>Country or Political subject</b>	<b>Played</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>Away</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
KSCS/Yugoslavia	22	7	15	0
Greece	12	2	10	0
Austria	9	9	0	0
Germany	6	6	0	0
Italy	5	0	5	0
Hungary	4	4	0	0
Turkey	4	2	2	0
Romania	4	2	2	0
USSR	4	1	3	0
Mandatory Palestine	4	0	4	0
Great Britain	3	3	0	0
Poland	3	2	0	1
Ind. State of Croatia	3	1	2	0
France	2	2	0	0
Czechoslovakia	2	2	0	0
Russian Council	2	2	0	0
Egypt	1	1	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1</b>

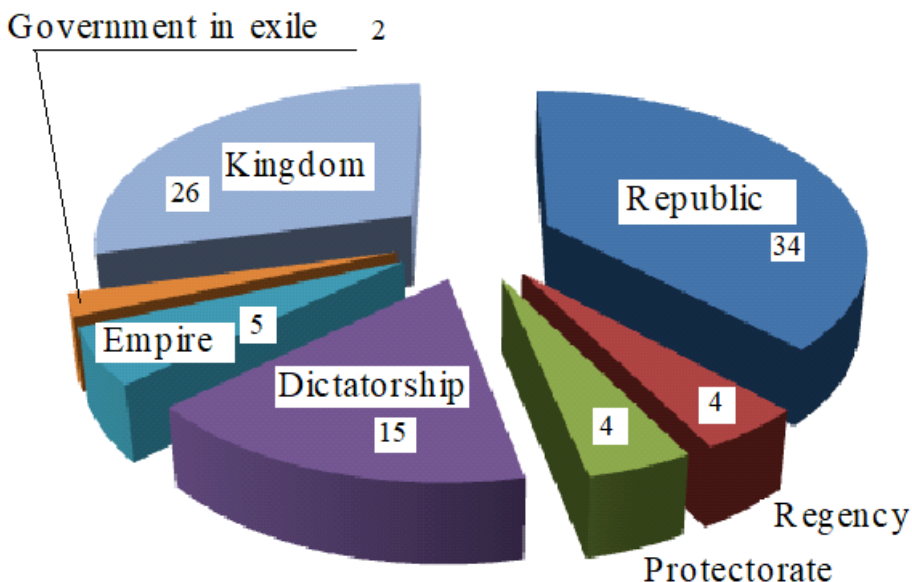
Table 5 shows *the leadership* based on the matches played (22) with clubs from the Kingdom of Serbians, Croats, and Slovaks and *Yugoslavia* which inherited it. The visits of Slavia there were the most (15). Slavia players took part in a lot of tournaments there. The next *preferred destination was Greece* with 10 matches. The Greek teams came only twice to Sofia. In the 1920s the Bulgarian football players were desired guests in Thessaloniki for which they were paid a fee. There was a parity with the other Balkan countries Turkey and Romania: two visiting matches and two host matches.

We can notice that the greatest number of times (9) Slavia played with Austrian teams in Sofia. Relations with Vienna clubs were established, and they arrived in the Bulgarian capital against certain fees. Such was also the case with the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian teams. During that period, our teams could not be invited in these countries because the play level was different. The distance, on the other hand, did not allow for travelling to Poland, for example. That was related to a lot of expenses and the players' absence from work and school. The matches with representatives of Great Britain were only with military teams, and they were played in Sofia for political reasons. The same can be said about the German military teams but there were two exceptions. These are the matches with the mixed teams of Turnverein and Eintracht (Leipzig), again held in the Bulgarian capital. The farthest distance in Europe was Italy. In 1927 a tour to Italy was arranged but it was impossible to be made from economic point of view. Six years later the team travelled to Protectorate Palestine. It received an external financing and was not a burden for the club. The fact that Slavia players played both with white guard team and Soviet Union team is interesting from political point of view. The first matches were in Sofia, and the second with USSR – on an exchange principle.

### **Distribution by number of matches and by the indicator polit. subject**

Figure 4 shows that:

- Slavia football players played with teams of different nature and managerial structure.
- We cannot say that the type of government of a country was a major obstacle in the selection/opportunity of holding matches.
- There were more matches with teams from countries – republics (34); we take into consideration that fact that at the time Bulgaria was a monarchy.



**Figure. 4.** *Number of international matches played by Slavia in the period 1913-1944 according to the kind of the political subject of the rival*

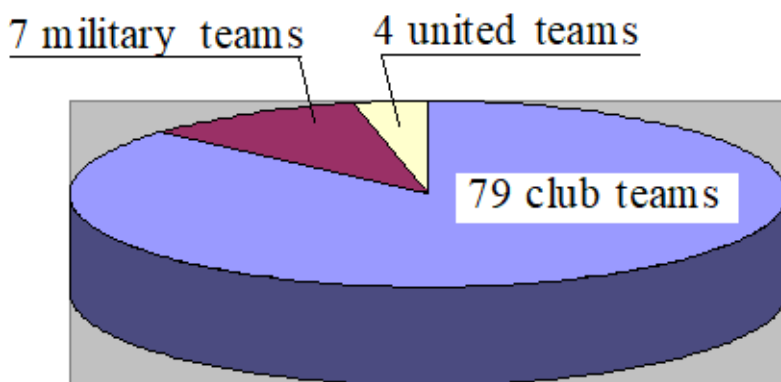
#### **Slavia's rivals by kind of teams**

In the course of the research, the need for clarification of the kind of teams which played with Slavia became obvious. They can be grouped into three categories: *club*, *military*, *mixed*. The first were part of a certain sports club or independent football club. They had their name, address, offices, management, emblem, seal, colour of the outfit, indexed players, and they played in the local championships. The matches with these teams were the most significant statistically because Slavia also met those criteria.

The second type was the military teams. They can be characterized in two directions: structural and political. In the first case, there are two subcategories: random selections and traditional formations. The first ones were teams selected from members of the armed forces situated at one place. The second ones were clubs belonging to a certain type of army which a chosen name who took part in competitions in cycles. From political point of view, we can divide the teams Slavia played with into three categories: allies (1916, 1941, 1942), neutral (1932), and occupational (1918 and 1919).



The third type of teams was the united type. These are usually selections from a certain town or region or a team-combination between the representatives of two clubs. These teams could be of both traditional representative nature and event nature. The town and regional selections were representative of the first kind. They had their emblem, official outfit, and often played in matches. Such case was the match with the united team of Middle Hungary held in 1925 in Sofia. The matches with the united teams of Jerusalem and Haifa were eight years later. The last two examples were for teams organized for a certain event.



***Fig. 5. Distribution of football matches played by Slavia with foreigners in the period 1913-1944 according to the type of team of the rival.***

The analysis of figure 5 allows for several important conclusions:

- The matches played by Slavia were with three categories of teams.
- The most – 79 were with club teams, the same as Slavia.
- The military teams were next – 7. The matches with such kind of formations were determined by the hist. period full of military conflicts.

### **Slavia's balance by clubs and countries**

The team of Slavia played 79 matches with representatives of 44 club teams (table 6). The score was 32 wins, 10 draws, 37 losses, and the goal difference: 149-161. The win-loss record was negative; however, it should not be neglected. The losses were as few as five more. There are three more important facts. First, Slavia players who were amateurs played with quite a lot of professional players. Second, a great number of the rival clubs had been found before Slavia, some of them in XIX century. This led

to some organizational and play experience accumulated with a number of international matches. Third, some of the countries were in their most successful period. Italy was the world leader in 1934 and 1938, as well as Olympic champion for 1936. Czechoslovakia was the vice champion on the planet in 1934, and Hungary was the vice champion four years later. Austria was an Olympic finalist in 1936 and held the fourth place at the World Championship in 1934. Other countries such as France and Germany, traditionally great powers nowadays as well, had a lot of success too. The French took part in the three World Championships during that period, and in 1938 they won the sixth place. The German took a bronze medal in 1934. Egypt participated in the same Mondial and in 1928 won the fourth place at the Olympic Games.

The rivals from the Balkan were also more experienced and had qualified on a national level which reflected on the level of the club. Yugoslavia was the fourth in the world in 1930. Romania participated in the three championships on the planet in the period. To compare – Bulgaria did not make its debut at such a forum until 1962 in Chile. If we take into consideration the club and national football level of its rivals, the win-loss record of Slavia was quite good.

***Table 6. Balance in the matches played with club teams (1913-1944).***

<i>Country/ number of club teams</i>	<i>Pld</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>G. D.</i>
<b>KSCS/Yugoslavia – 10 clubs</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39-51</b>
<b>Greece – 5 clubs</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>26-20</b>
<b>Austria – 5 clubs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19-15</b>
<b>Romania – 4 clubs</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9-4</b>
<b>USSR – 3 clubs</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3-16</b>
<b>Hungary – 3 clubs</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3-12</b>
<b>Italy – 2 clubs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16-13</b>
<b>France – 2 clubs</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5-2</b>
<b>Mandatory Palestine – 2 clubs</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5-3</b>
<b>Czechoslovakia – 2 clubs</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1-3</b>
<b>Turkey – 1 club</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6-5</b>
<b>Poland – 1 club</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-5</b>
<b>Independ. State of Croatia – 1 club</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2-7</b>
<b>Russian Council – 1 club</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7-2</b>
<b>Egypt – 1 club</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4-1</b>
<b>Germany – 1 club</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1-2</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>149-161</b>

### **Slavia's win-loss record in the matches with military teams**

In the researched period there were 7 matches with military teams. The score was: 5 wins and 2 losses; the goal difference was: 29-13. Table 7 shows the most matches were played with German teams. This is logical due to the allied character of the two World Wars. The win-loss record was even which should not be underestimated because in those teams sometimes there were professional football players who had played before the wars. The win-loss record with teams from Great Britain was positive. Here we can see the most significant score from a matched played not only with foreigners but also in the whole history of Slavia. On 19 September 1932 the team of the English Fleet was defeated in Sofia with 15:1.

***Table 7. Balance in the matches played with military teams (1913-1944)***

<i>Country/number of teams</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>G. D.</i>
<b>Germany – 2 types</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8-11</b>
<b>Great Britain – 2 types</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21-2</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>29-13</b>

### **Slavia's win-loss record in the matches with united teams**

In the period of the research - 1913-1944 the team of Slavia played 4 matches with mixed teams (table 8) and had only wins. The goal difference was also quite explicit: 10-0. It is important to point out that some of the rivals were not constant structures but were formed specially for those matches.

In the analysis we can see that the most matches – two were played during the tour in Protectorate Palestine in 1933. In one of them against the mixed team of Haifa, Slavia had the most explicit win - 5:0. But the most significant one, not as a score, was the win with 2:0 against the team of Middle Hungary on 16 June 1925. The guests went on the field in the outfit of their national team and were defeated by the Slavia players before the eyes of the fans who filled the stands of “Unak” stadium.

***Table 8. Balance in the matches played with united teams (1913-1944).***

<i>Country/number of teams</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>G. D.</i>
<b>Mandatory Palestine – 2 teams</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7-0</b>
<b>Hungary – 1 team</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2-0</b>
<b>Germany – 1 team</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1-0</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10-0</b>

### III.3. Specification of missed or nonexistent matches, mistaken names of rivals and scores

Before indicating the total number of matches played by Slavia, we had to clarify the misses and inaccuracies noticed in previous publications. As a whole, we did not observe any correct dating. It was limited mostly to the year in which the match was played and in reality, it was first presented accurately in this work. The analysis also led to an inclusion of matches not mentioned so far, removal of nonexistent matches or those played by other teams, as well as corrections in the scores.

#### III.3.1. Missing matches

The most general examples were presented, and their absence was explained in different ways: lack of information (the matches in Palestine in 1933), some patriotic motives (two losses against Fenerbahce in 1924 and 1925), mistake of Slavia for the mixed team of Sofia (the second match with Slovan (Vienna) in 1927, etc.



**Photo. 1. Photo from the second match with Fenerbahce in 1925 in Sofia.**

#### III.3.2. Nonexistent matches

There are a lot of matches mentioned in some editions which were neither played by Slavia nor played at all. The misunderstanding could be due to different reasons. We present only the most important examples.

- the first group consists of *matches which were not played*: FK Sindelić (Nish) - 1923, BSK (Beograd) – 1926, and SK Prostějov (Czechoslovakia) - 1929.

- The second group of matches consists of matches *which were not played by Slavia* but by a united or mixed team. Such is the case with the white guard team Gallipoli on 11.11.1922, played with a united team of Sofia,

two matches in Beograd on 31.05 and 1.06.1936 of the union Slavia-Shipka, or the match with Rapid (Vienna) on 20.06.1937 in Sofia with the united team Slavia-Levski.

### **III.3.3. Correction of the scores of the matches**

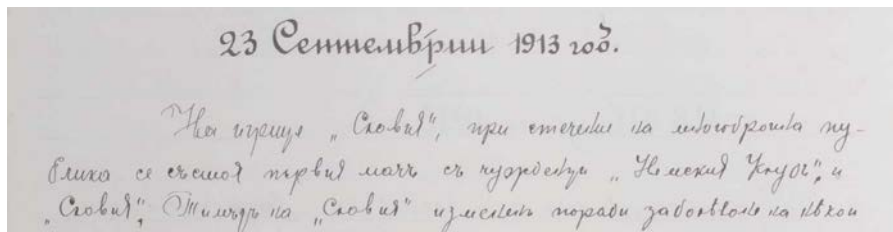
Another obligatory element when presenting the matches accurately is the correct score. In this respect, the analysis showed about 20% difference. They were corrected and here we will present examples only for matches with Hungarian teams played in Sofia: 28.09.1923 with FC 33 (Budapest) the given score was 0:5, but it was 1:5; 10.6.1926 with Kecskemeti TE instead of the given 5:0, the real score was 1:5; 25.05.1931 with Bástya (Szeged) the given score was 1:3, instead of 1:2.

### **III.3.4. Specification of the names of the rivals**

Due to lack of reliable information, there was a difference in the names of some of the rivals which were specified. For example, on 5.09.1925 Slavia played not with the mixed team of Bucharest, but with the local club Unirea. In the next 1926 the Austrian rival on 13 and 14 May in Sofia was not Memferger, but Kapfenberger. On 9.5.1929 Slavia played in Osijek with the local team Gradjanski, not with the team of the same name. The four rivals during the tour in the English Protec. Palestine in 1933 were also specified, because they had been given up to the moment differently.

### **III.4. First football match of Slavia with foreigners**

The question when the first international match of Slavia was played has long been a subject of discussion. There are four versions: 1.05.1916 a match with a German military team in Sofia; 6.11.1919 a match with an English military team; 27.08.1922 a match with white guards Gallipoli; and 23.09.1913 a match against a mixed team of the German Gymnastics Society in Sofia. In the course of this research, it was confirmed that those were really played matches, but chronologically the last one of the above-mentioned was the earliest (Annals of Slavia, 1913).

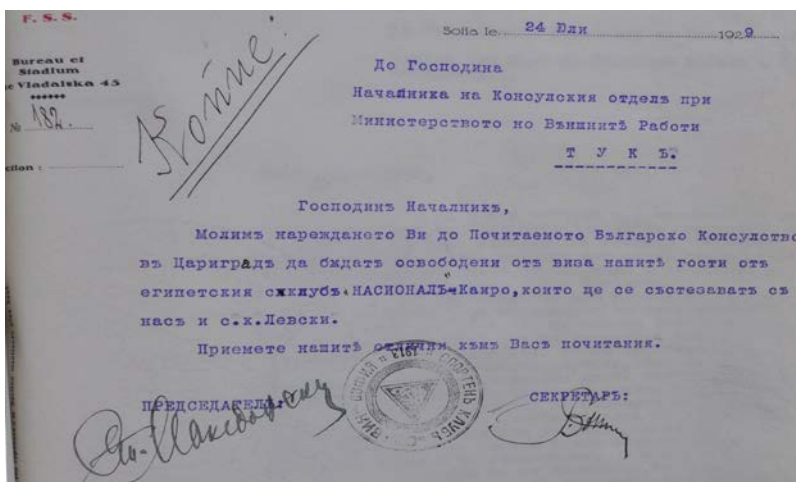


**Photo 2. Facsimile from Annals Book of Slavia for the first match.**

### III.5. Ways for organizing matches with foreign teams

Unlike today when the communication between football clubs is easy to make, in the early 1990s it was not something routine. Besides, there were a lot of organization activities of different nature.

- Communication with foreign clubs with letters, telegrams, radiograms.
- Creating lobbies among foreign political or economic circles.
- Seeking assistance on behalf of our ambassadors when going abroad.
- If necessary, obtaining permission for an international match from certain state or municipal authorities.
- Granting agreement of the governing body of sport in Bulgaria for holding the matches (BNSF, BFU, SSL, SSF).
- Providing fee for the visiting team if the match was in Sofia.
- Paying rent for a stadium and security by Slavia.
- Providing the necessary number of officials for the matches in Sofia.
- Paying the accommodation and nutrition expenses of the visiting team.
- Organization of the visa liberation regime in favor of the visiting team when the match was played in Sofia.



*Photo 3. 24 July 1929, letter by Stefan Makedonski - the head of Slavia for visa liberation of National SC (Cairo).*

- Organization for issuing international passports of the members of the club.
- Obtaining permission for absence from work, university, or school for the players of Slavia if the match was held abroad.
- Temporarily liberation from military service for mobilized players from the club.
- Postponement or not of matches played by Slavia from the national sports calendar.

### **III.6. Significant highlights and the role of international matches**

The football matches between Slavia and foreign teams in the researched period are very important for the history of the club. Apart from their sports-technical importance, they were significant for realization of other different activities. For the aims of the analysis, we summarized them in seven subcategories.

#### **III.6.1. Maintaining the Bulgarian spirit and image accumulation**

One of the most significant contributions is maintaining the Bulgarian national spirit. It is something quite explicable since the club adopted this philosophy from the moment it was founded. Slavia's moto, adopted right after the end of the World War I, was "Sport for the youth, youth for Bulgaria!" It was inscribed around the round seal of the club and on the official forms. Slavia members stuck to this nationally oriented mission both in the matches played at home and at all their visits abroad. Here, we will mention only a few of the numerous examples.

**- 1 October 1924** first visit of our football team to Turkey: "After arriving at the station, we will march accompanied by music to the Bulgarian school. Having in mind that in this case both our honor and the honor of Bulgaria are concerned, and of all Bulgarians, we hope you will cooperate so that we can be helped by the whole Bulgarian colony to preserve the high Bulgarian sports and national honor." (Letter of the management of Slavia to youth group "Sila").

**- 23 July 1925** before the match with Slavia (Prague): "We are convinced that you value the efforts we invest in the comprehensive education of our youth and desire to make Bulgaria popular abroad." (Letter of the management of Slavia to Georgi Madjarov, mayor of Sofia).

- **September 1926** after the success in Greece: “The echo of the winning march did not fade out on the whole way to Sofia. In Demir Hissar, St. Vrach, Gorna Djumaya, Dupnitsa, and Samokov athletes and citizens welcomed Slavia players and gave them flowers.” (Konstantinov, 1962).

- **September 1927** after a tour in Italy: “When we approached Vidin, we saw the Bulgarian flag fluttering at the frontier post. Unconsciously, the whole team burst into singing “My dear country”. The soldiers at the frontier post replied with a loud “Hurray” and three cannon shots. This was the biggest praise for everything we have done for the fame of our sport and our Bulgaria.” (Selveliev, 1927).

- **May 1929** in the Kingdom of Serbians, Croats, and Slovaks: “The parting with our compatriots – Bulgarian students and gardeners was especially kind and moving. These nice people accompanied us all the time and did not leave us for a moment. They brought the injured athletes on stretchers to the railway station and accommodated them in the carriages. They gave us two wonderful bunches of flowers wrapped in our national flag.” (Konstantinov, 1929).

- **September 1929** after the win in Thessaloniki: The Bulgarians from Macedonia were the most pleased and the happiest from our success.” (Konstantinov, 1961).

- **28 March 1933** at the British protectorate of that time Palestine: “We set off to Galilee Lake by bus and on the top the Bulgarian flag was fluttering. We visited the colony Beit Hanan. We were welcomed with the words: Even if we are connected to this earth forever, our hearts are there, in Bulgaria and with Bulgarian people that taught us to love labor, be thrifty, and love our earth.” (Vasilev, 1933).



*Photo 4. 28.03.1933, Slavia players in the Bulgarian colony Beit Hanan.*

- **June 1943** after a visit in the Independent Croatian country: Slavia rehabilitated the Bulgarian sport and washed our face in Zagreb.” (Yordan Mechkarov, minister plenipotentiary).



### III.6.2. Overcoming “borders” among peoples

In quite a big part of the researched period the football players had to cope with our country’s isolation, with the accumulated mistrust due to foreign political reasons.

This introduction is important to clarify the situation in which the matches were played and to see the change in the attitudes of the opponents towards Slavia, and towards Bulgaria as a whole, in particular. For this reason, we selected and presented a few facts related to the topic:

- **5 December 1918 and 6 November 1919** Slavia played matches with the English teams formed from the occupational army in Sofia.
- **10 October 1924:** „Everybody was happy about the victory of our youth sport in Constantinople! These competitions are a powerful means for making friends with other peoples, for getting to know them, and for forgiving mistakes from the past.” (Dosev, 1925).
- **25 July 1925** before the visit of Slavia (Prague) to Sofia: “This visit is going to try out the Bulgarian sporting honor and to help the difficult political situation of our country. It is necessary that the Czechs leave Sofia with the most favorable impression about the Bulgarian culture with good memories from a cordial welcome.” (Letter from Angel Gadev, chairman of Slavia (Sofia) to the mayor of Sofia).



*Photo 5. 3 August 1925, solemn procession along Sofia streets during the visit of Slavia (Prague).*

- **May 1926** first visit to Beograd: „Let people know those were years soon after the war and the attitude to Bulgaria was bad. We, with our good performance and wins, created conditions for good neighboring relations.” (Manolov, 1972).

- **16 October 1926** before a match in Thessaloniki with Iraklis: „I am so glad that the young people of two neighboring countries reached their hands to get close. You, Bulgarians, and Greeks fight now, but let your fight for victory be only within the boundaries of this field and never out of it. Slavia won not only the two matches but also the hearts of Thessaloniki spectators.” (general Kalevras, governor of the region of Macedonia).

- **5 May 1929 Beograd:** „Sporting youth of the two neighboring countries had their word – this is the end of the intrigues, the end of military ventures.” (Dr. Andreevich, chairman of Bulgarian Sports Union).

- **30 October 1934** – a contract for friendship between Slavia and SK Jugoslavija was signed and the Cup “Fraternity” was established.

- **11 August 1940** after the match with Spartak (Moscow) in Sofia: “What you, athletes, have done today on the field for an hour and a half, we, the diplomats cannot achieve in 3 or 4 years, and often – almost never”. (Alexander Lavrishev, ambassador of USSR).

### **Presence of significant political figures**

- **In the period after World War I** Bulgarian ministers and ambassadors attended the matches of Slavia. The same can be said about representatives of foreign missions in Sofia. An example is the match with Spartak (Moscow) on 11 August 1940. „Among the 15 thousand spectators on the stadium we could see the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Petar Gabrovski, the war minister, general Teodosi Daskalov, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Dobri Bojilov, the Minister of Commerce and Labor, Mr. Slavcho Zagorov, the Minister of Railways, Mr. Ivan Goranov. From the foreign assistant ministers we could see the Soviet Union minister, Mr. Lavrishev, the German minister, baron Von Richthofen, the Japanese minister, Mr. Hachiya, the USA and Yugoslavia minister, Mr. Milanovich. The representatives of the Palace were lieutenant-colonel Bardarov, Mr. Hadjiev, and Mr. Morfov.” (newspaper Sport, 12 August 1940).

- **10-12 October 1924** Slavia's visit to Istanbul was on occasion of the first year from founding modern Turkey and was under the patronage of the president of the country Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

- **4 August 1925** the visit of Slavia (Prague) to Sofia was held under the

patronage of the Czech minister of foreign affairs Edvard Benesh, member of the club who would be president of the club twice in the future.

- **17 September 1927** Pope Pius XI gave an audience of the delegation of Slavia and that was the only case of the kind for a Bulgarian team.
- **13 June 1943.** In honor of the name day of the leader of the Croatian country Ante Pavelic, Slavia was a guest for a friendly match in Zagreb.

### **III.6.3. Sports-technical benefits**

Besides the political aspects, some of the international matches from the researched period can be analyzed as important for the development of the football team of Slavia in play sense. Play schemes and model trainings which were popular at the time were taken from the rivals. The most famous examples in this relation were in the late 1920s, as well as in 1940.

- **19 July 1927** – a statement after a match with foreigners: “We lost against Brigittenauer AC with 1:3. But in return we received an excellent lesson in football from the real Vienna school.” (B. Slavia, 1965).

- **24 and 26 July 1927** – a conclusion after international matches: “Our football players by no means gained some precious knowledge. In the competitions with Cracovia (Poland) different systems of play with new successful maneuvers were shown which were unknown to us because we had been moving in a close circle without any contact with the European football.” (Dimitar Konstantinov, member of the management board of Slavia).

- **11 August and 15 September 1940 r.** – matches with Spartak (Moscow):

- **About the play scheme:** „We were surprised by their play formation built on the basis of the modern at the time system WM. There was an opposing player by each of our player’s side who warded off and won every fight for first ball and in that way they managed to take control over the central area. The central midfielder and the central forward were very good on the pitch. They both were the main pillars of the play formation of the team. On this background our play seemed sluggish and slow following an old-fashioned scheme. This match as well as the second one helped us a lot to improve our play and to include new tactical elements. Later we implemented their system of play and success followed.” (Dimitar Baikushev, captain of Slavia).
- „The main thing about the system of play WM was the movement in a wider perimeter of two of the five forwards and of two of the

midfielders. There were two Bulgarians, habitually, in front of the goalkeeper, three midfielders and five forwards. They moved slowly and not much. So, the big losses are not so inexplicable. That is why the most important thing was getting to know a new and progressive for its time game formation. Upon our visit there, our players were impressed by the modern sports facilities and the grassy fields in Moscow.” (Bojkov, 2001).

- ***About the model of the training process:*** „Their training session was a complex one. The simultaneous use of many balls, the unusual time for this activity – at noon, before the evening match, and the very good technique of the players. Our visit became a crucial moment for the development of football in Bulgaria. After these matches, we tried to implement for the first time two training sessions per day.” (Todor Baikushev, 1973).

#### **III.6.4. Significant contribution of Austrian coaches. A debut of a foreign football player in Slavia.**

Besides taking from the training models and play schemes, the international matches were in the basis for attracting two Austrian coaches in Slavia, as well as the first appearance of a foreign player on the field in an official match.

- The Austrian **Willibald Stejskal** was the first full-time coach of the club. He took that position in the period 19 April – 21 November 1924. He led the team in 14 official matches in Sofia championship and had: 10 wins, 3 draws, and only 1 loss. The goal difference was: 57-12. „He gave another image to the club. We applied a typical Vienna play – low with short passes and long corridors in attack.” (Manolov, memories, 1972).
- The German **Teo Wetzler** was the first foreign player to participate in an official match of the club. On 14 September 1941 he was in the startup in the semi-final return match for the National Championship in Sofia against the winner in Plovdiv region Levski (2:0). His appearance in Slavia was due to the friendly matches played in May with a team of German army in the Bulgarian capital.
- The Austrian **Franz Köhler** was a coach of Slavia in the period 12 May 1938 - 30 November 1943. His relationship with the club was established in 1927 when on 19 and 21 July in Sofia his team

Brigittenauer AC played with Slavia. Köhler took part as a goalkeeper in the match between the two teams on 6 July three years later, again in the Bulgarian capital. As a coach, he led Slavia in 128 official matches and had 70 wins, 26 draws, and 32 losses; the goal difference was: 229-160. With this win-loss record, Köhler took first place among all coaches of the club in the period of this research. He led the club to 3 titles and 2 bronze medals from the championship, as well as to the Royal Cup in 1943.

### **III.6.5. Organization-structural and financial benefits from matches with foreigners**

Besides in sports-technical respect, the effect from the international matches is measured also in organization-structural and financial respect.

About the first one, which could be seen in only one match, it was very important for the Bulgarian football. An indicative example for this can be found in the visit of Rus (Prague) in Sofia in August 1923: „A delegation from the Czech Football Union, whose member is Rus, arrived together with the football players to greet Sofia athletes and exchange some thoughts about Bulgaria's joining the International Football Union.” (newspaper Zora, 6 August 1923). These acts on behalf of the guests were extremely useful for the creation of the management structure of our sport – the Bulgarian National Sports Federation on 16 December the same year and it's approaching joining FIFA (1924). The Czech had experience because they were accepted in the International Football Association in 1906 as part of Austria-Hungary. Later, their membership was reconfirmed as an autonomous country.

In many cases the international matches brought serious income in the club's budget. This was a key income for the budget because the club was self-supported unlike during the socialistic period when all Bulgarian clubs were financed from the state. The possibilities for financial incomes from an international match were in several directions:

- A bigger income from entrance fees in matches with a foreign team in two directions: higher price of the tickets and greater interest on behalf of the spectators compared to the matches from the national calendar.
- No excise duty on the tickets for the matches.
- Free (if possible) security provided by the government.
- Shared expenses when two clubs from Sofia invited together a foreign club.

- Possibility for additional income for Slavia when there were two matches arranged with the visiting team.
- Possibility for a secondary profit when the team was a host, but the visiting team played more matches with other teams, and Slavia, after a signed contract, received a percentage from the income.
- Slavia received a fee when visiting a team abroad.

### **III.7. Negative consequences from international matches**

Along with the indisputable positive things, the international matches had their drawbacks. They were mainly in four directions.

- **Injuries of major** players and their absence in forthcoming matches from the National Championship.
- **Not postponing matches from Sofia** Tournament, sometimes, when Slavia was abroad. That led to technical defeats or inclusion of lots of youngsters, substitutes or retired veterans in the team list for some of the matches. All these led to negative results and failure to get prize places in the ranking.
- **Exhaustion after a long tour.** It was observed in cases of a prolonged absence of the team because of the matches abroad.
- **Negative psychological effect in the team after a crashing loss.** Rarely observed, only in isolated cases.

### **III.8. Relation between matches with foreigners and Slavia's performance at the National Championship**

At the final phase of the National Championship the football players from Slavia participated 12 times in all the 18 tournaments held in the period of the research. In some of the matches there was a connection with the international matches. They can be classified in two aspects:

*Positive:*

- **The summer of 1927** the final stage of the National Championship was not held and that enabled Slavia players to make a long tour in Greece and Italy.
- **In 1930** Slavia won the title by playing five matches with foreigners and only one of them was abroad.
- **In 1932** there was only one international match after Slavia had played for the title on the finals.

- **In 1936** the team became the winner after two matches held in Sofia. In the three cases from 1930s there was a connection between lack of going abroad and the better performance in the National Championship. The club was not distracted and achieved success.
- **The engagement in 1938** of the most successful, as it turned out, coach of the club – the Austrian Franz Köhler after the matches with Vienna team Brigittenauer AC and the established good relations between the clubs.
- **The period 1940-1943** led to the deserved two titles, the Royal Cup and a bronze medal from the championship as a result of the implemented play scheme and training model from Spartak (Moscow) after the matches in the summer of 1940. Due to the complicated foreign political situation in the above-mentioned period a few matches with foreign teams were played and that poor international calendar helped the concentration of the team of Slavia in the national matches.

*Negative:*

- **In 1929** there were 11 matches played with foreigners and Slavia was not able to qualify for the final stage. There was a relation with the busy calendar which affected the team's performance in the matches played with Bulgarian teams.
- **The autumn of 1930**, after a long trip to Rome and a crashing loss from "Roma" (0:5) the team experienced a psychological failure in its performance at Sofia Championship. This, as well as not postponing two matches, turned out to be crucial for the team's not qualifying for the forthcoming National Championship in the summer of 1931.
- **The spring of 1933**, the team of Slavia was on a tour in Protectorate Palestine and lost three matches from Sofia Championship while there, because the team that played consisted of substitutes and adolescents. That did not lead to qualification for the National Championship in the summer of the same year.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis made and the obtained results from the research enable us to draw the following *conclusions*:

1. The club Slavia is a universal sports club, amateur by character with no professional players on the team. With its activities in different social areas Slavia was an example of the social and cultural level of Bulgaria in the era when the club reached European positions in the sphere of its social-cultural identity.
2. The important role of sport, and of football in particular, was confirmed for overcoming borders (geographical and political) among peoples; the role of significant international matches of Slavia was established which helped building the positive image of our country and maintaining the Bulgarian spirit in the country and among our compatriots abroad in times when Bulgaria took part in four wars with a complex political situation in between.
3. In the organization and holding quite a lot of the matches played by Slavia, we found a lot of politicians (Bulgarian and foreign) involved: prime minister, ministers, ambassadors, members of parliament, and generals. The political regime was not the leading factor for sports relations. The football players from Slavia played with teams from countries with different governmental structure. The most matches were played with teams from countries – republics although during the researched period Bulgaria was a monarchy (Kingdom or a statute of regentship).
4. The activities of the management led to turning Slavia into a flagman of the Bulgarian sport. There was a total of 90 matches in the poor calendar during this period and lack of real European club tournaments. To compare, the number of the matches played by the National team of Bulgaria in the same period was 68. Slavia played with teams of different character – club teams, military teams, united teams.
5. We established significant benefits for Slavia from the international matches as regards sports-technical (schemes of play and models of the training process) and financial parameters as well as the appearance of foreigners (coaches and players) in the list of the team. The role of two Austrian coaches was fundamentally important for the development of the club.



6. There were some isolated cases and negative consequences after matches with foreign teams. They were expressed in injuries of competitors from the team, appearance of bad microclimate in the team after crashing defeats and losses in the national championship because of the visits or tours abroad and not postponing matches in Sofia Championship.
7. We established a relation between participation in international matches and the performance of the team of Slavia at the National Championship in some seasons.

Due to the historical, not applied nature of this research, the *recommendations* are only in the field of research activities:

1. The future researchers of similar issues should use mainly documentary sources. This has to be done because of differences in the information found and the facts in different publications on the topic.
2. It is desirable that there should be at least two authentic sources for each event. This would enable the comparison of the data. In order to achieve this, the sources must be independent.

## **SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION**

1. A large-scale research was done encompassing the period of 31 years, comprising documentary and archive sources of OSC Slavia and PFC Slavia, as well as publications in 36 sports media and general informative media including 14 Bulgarian and 22 foreign publications.
2. All 90 international matches of Slavia were introduced for the first time with verified data for the period 1913-1944, presented in a chronological order with correct dating – day, month, year.
3. The first visit abroad in history of the football team of Slavia was given with dates and exact scores.
4. The venues of all 90 matches in the period were given with the real name and the exact origin of the rivals.
5. The correct score of each match was found, the character of the matches and the type of the team of the rivals.
6. The international matches were viewed for the first time in the context of foreign political situation by providing the political subject where the rivals came from.
7. The ways for organizing and holding international matches in the research period were viewed.
8. The significant aspects in Slavia's matches with international teams we pointed out.

## **PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION**

**1. Ognyanov, K. (2004).** Slavia's matches with Spartak Moscow outside the political situation. 90 years Slavia, NCS, Sofia, 42-43. ISBN 954-91413-1-4.

**2. Ognyanov, K. (2016).** Slavia in Italy in 1927 or how the Pope received the "choir singers". Towards the roots of the Bulgarian sport. Volume 2, NSA PRESS, Sofia, 63-75. ISSN-2367-8550.

**3. Binbelov, K. (2020).** 95 years since the first matches between club teams from Bulgaria and Turkey in the context of foreign political situation. Person. Motivation. Sport, Volume 24, NSA PRESS, Sofia, 281-290. ISSN-2682-9495.