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СОВРЕМЕННЫЙ ИЗРАИЛЬСКИЙ СПОРТ И РЕЛИГИОЗНЫЙ ФАКТОР

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Аннотация. Действие религиозных факторов в современном израильском спорте анализируется на основе данных историков и социологов, а также собственных данных, полученных в Израиле методом включенного наблюдения и интервью. Теория и практика сионизма, а также нормы иудаизма влияют на общественную жизнь в Израиле. Секулярные и религиозные факторы действуют одновременно, причудливо проявляясь как в массовом, так и в профессиональном спорте. От ученых требуются новые подходы к пониманию прогресса и традиции.

Ключевые слова: спорт в Израиле, религия, иудаизм, идеология, идентичность.

RELIGIOUS FACTORS IN MODERN ISRAELI SPORTS

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Abstract. National and religious factors in modern Israeli sports are displayed through scrutiny of sports history and sociology publications, as well as personal observations of the Israeli sports scene. Zionism and Judaism both influence sports in Israel. Peculiar character of the impact those secular and religious factors have on mass and professional sports make us reconsider the relation between progress and tradition.

Keywords: Israeli Sports, identity, religion in sports, Judaism, ideology.

Introduction

Different aspects of Jewish identity are displayed in modern Israeli sports, both at the mass sports level and on the level of professional sports. A historical background is an important factor in understanding the development of sport in Israel. The current state of physical education and sports is analyzed using an example of physical education initiatives in the traditional religious communities in Jerusalem, Israel participation in the Tokyo-2020 Olympics, as well as the peculiarities of organizing an international professional sports event during the Holy Days of the Jewish calendar in 2022.

Methodology

This research is based on multidisciplinary approach to research that included analysis of the sociological and historical publications in English and Hebrew, combined with personal observations and in-depth interviews with experts conducted in Israel during my participation in professional tennis events in the role of an international tennis referee.

Results

Religious factors continue to play an important role in modern societies, influencing the way sports is perceived and practiced [Baker, 2009]. For a detailed account of the Islamic perspective on modern sports is presented in [V.Lutkov, 2019]. Various social and religious groups within Israeli society, in spite of existence of common Jewish identity, interpret it very differently [Kaufman, 2005]. Contradictions that stem from different social and political views affect various spheres of public life, sports being no exception [V.Lutkov, 2022].

The concept of 'Muscular Judaism' formulated by Max Nordau, one of the founders of Zionism, was a foundation

stone for development of physical education and sports among Jews both in diaspora and in Palestine Yishuv, consequently in the State of Israel as well [Y. Sorek. 2007]. The ideas of Zionism were not received in a uniform manner across the Jewish and Israeli society [H. Kaufman, Y. Galili, 2014]. For instance, attitude to sport as a predominantly secular activity is quite lukewarm among orthodox Haredi communities. However, taking care of human body and keeping it healthy is has high esteem among traditional Judaism.

A vivid example is represented in the structure of the Sports Department in the Municipality of Jerusalem. There are 3 branches catering for specific needs of different groups of population: alongside the general sports department one can see the department of sports for Haredim (orthodox Jews) and another department for sports among the Arab population. My interviews with the officials from those departments showed the diversity of approaches towards promoting physical activity among orthodox Jewish population (separation of sexes, choice of specific terminology, compliance to religious norms regulating decency).

Changes in the attitudes of modern businesses can be exemplified by the decision of Adidas to diversify their target audience and make Beat Deutscher, an orthodox Jewish woman from the USA who is known for her long distance running accomplishments, as one of the worldwide brand ambassadors in 2021 [B. Azoulay, 2021].

Israel joined the Olympic Movement in 1952 (the National Olympic Committee of Eretz-Israel was established in 1933). The recent Olympic Games in Tokyo (2021) showcased two controversial events involving Israeli athletes. Artyom Dolgopyat (who emigrated to Israel from Ukraine) won a gold medal in floor exercises in sports gymnastics (one of the three gold medals won by Israel so far). Israeli media hailed him as an Israeli success story. At the same time, media commented that the athlete was

not considered as halachic Jew and, therefore could not get married in Israel [Y. Kahan, 2021]. Another controversial case was related to the Israeli baseball team. Most of the team members (16 out of 20) were American Jews who received Israeli passports not long time before the games, many of them never visited Israel. The decision of the Israeli NOC to recruit those players was questioned inside the country [Ha-Aretz Podcast, 2021].

The most recent example of the challenges that Israeli sports events could be facing was staging an ATP Tour professional tennis tournament Tel Aviv Open (25.09. – 02.10.2022). As an international tennis official, the author was a tournament referee there and could witness the challenges that the organizers had to face in adjusting the tournament schedule to the Jewish religious laws. The tournament week coincided with the Jewish High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah), as well shabbat falling over the final weekend. Mikhail Mirilashvili, the tournament owner and the Vice-President of the World Jewish Congress, decided to accommodate the tournament schedule in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the Jewish law. There were no tickets sold for sessions starting from Sunday and ending at sunset on Tuesday (Rosh Hashanah holiday), no play was scheduled during sabbat (from Friday evening till 7 pm on Saturday). According to M. Mirilashvili, “the presence of spectators is very important. However, the Holy Days are holy. If we observe the holiness [of Rosh Hashanah], then we will be rewarded with great success”. In such a way, the organizers were using the platform of an international sports event to disseminate their views and agenda. The reception of such religiously motivated decisions was controversial among the secularized sports community [A. Anbar, 2022].

Conclusion

Religious factor plays an important role in modern Israeli sports. Depending on varied socioreligious identities of Israeli society, these factors manifest themselves differently. Sports enjoys considerable popularity in Israel. International events have strong appeal for public and are held within the framework of existing religious and social norms. Jewish calendar, norms and traditions influence spatiotemporal structure of sports events. Various socio-political agents

exploit the opportunities presented by international sports events in order to broadcast and disseminate their agenda. It is a live process, presenting interesting material for sports historians and sociologists. The notions of progress and tradition are fluid in sports and religious discourse and need to be interpreted over and over again.

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ОСНОВНЫЕ АКСИОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ КАТЕГОРИИ СОВРЕМЕННОГО ОЛИМПИЙСКОГО ДВИЖЕНИЯ: ПРОБЛЕМЫ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ И РЕАЛИЗАЦИИ

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Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются основные аксиологические категории современного Олимпийского движения: соперничество, дружба, уважение. Анализируется их интерпретация в современной этике и спортивной сфере, а также проблема их практической реализации, в частности посредством сопоставления с актуальными проблемами спорта высших достижений.

Ключевые слова: этика, аксиологические категории, спорт, Олимпийское движение.