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RELATIONSHIP DINAMO – GRADJANSKI FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF VARIOUS PRINTED PRESS OUTLETS OUTSIDE YUGOSLAVIA

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The aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between the Građanski nogometni klub Dinamo – GNK Dinamo (Dinamo Citizens' Football Club) and the First Croatian Citizens' Sports Club (I. HŠK Gradjanski) and the perception that followed this relationship in the first international matches after the Second World War in printed news outlets outside Yugoslavia. Given the official claims of its leaders, in the first few years after Dinamo was founded in 1945, there are many interesting aspects of the club's perception in neighbouring countries that were familiar with the interwar Zagreb football clubs and football players who played for them. The paper will mostly cover Austrian, Hungarian and Romanian newspaper sources, but it will also try to present other available sources relevant to the subject topic.

Keywords: Dinamo Zagreb; I. HŠK Gradjanski Zagreb; Football; Politics; Cultural Identity; 20th Century

Introduction

The club that is now officially known as “Građanski nogometni klub Dinamo Zagreb” [Dinamo Zagreb Citizens' Football Club] has a very turbulent and interesting past. The official policy and management of the club has long argued that Dinamo was founded on 9 June 1945 on new socialist

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social foundations and that it is a completely new club compared to the no longer active Zagreb football clubs. The football club was part of the then prevailing model of physical culture associations that were created throughout the country based on a Soviet model. However, over time, even in socialist Yugoslavia, data emerged that revealed that FC Dinamo did not come to be as a self-grown unit within a physical culture association, but that its predecessors should be looked for in interwar clubs. This fact later sought to be generally presented as the continuation of the rich Zagreb football tradition, from which no club was explicitly singled out to be referred to, but with the same starting point – 1945. Such a policy has been conducted and enforced by official club media since 1951, although at first, albeit shyly, there emerged an increasing need to emphasize this particular former tradition. During the 1990s, the name of the club was changed, first in 1991 to “HAŠK Građanski” and then in 1993 to “Croatia”. Although fans had been demanding a name change since the late 1940s until the early 1990s, this clumsy change, that is, the merger of the names of two of the city’s biggest rivals into one, and immediately after the change to “Croatia,” had not sat well with the fiercest fans (Bad Blue Boys – BBB) who had been calling for the return of the name “Dinamo” ever since. The name was restored in 2000, and since 2011 it has been given the adjective Građanski (Citizens’) to serve as a reminder to the glorious past of Zagreb football. But what was “Gradjanski”¹ and why did “Dinamo” finally decide for that club to be its (only) predecessor?

First Croatian Citizens’ Sports Club (popularly called only Gradjanski) was founded in 1911 and until after the First World War it was in the shadow of the older and then better Zagreb clubs “HAŠK” and “Concordia”. In the 1920s, the club began to rise in every segment, winning a total of five championship titles of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, the championship of the Banate of Croatia (Banovina Hrvatska) and the Independent State of Croatia (NDH). It gathered a true loyal following of fans from all parts of the population,² and due to its distinctly Croatian characteristic, the club was often targeted by the Belgrade regime.³ After the end of the Second World War, in 1945, due to the participation in the NDH championship, but also because of the name and what that name represented, its management was dissolved together with other Croatian and Yugoslav football clubs. The

¹ The name of the club will be written with a digraph *dj* (and not with a single-letter *đ*), as for most of its existence this was the manner in which it was written in official publications, and in the press at the time. Of course, when it comes to GNK Dinamo, the current official name of the club will be adhered to: Građanski (Citizens’).

² Cf. by Ivica Šute, *Kibici ‘Purgera’. Fenomen ‘Građanski’ i njegovi kibici: između masovne zabave, strasti i svjetonazora u međuratnome Zagrebu* (2nd Edition Zagreb: FF press, 2023).

³ *Ibid.*, 111.

establishment of new physical culture associations based on a Soviet model, which were supposed to represent the sports vision of the new social system, began in Zagreb immediately after the decision was made to dissolve the management of these clubs.⁴ In August 1945, in the announcement of the “Prvi fizikturni slet Hrvatske” [“First Physical Culture Mass Games of Croatia”], the newspapers already published the basic premise: “Physical culture is no longer a luxury for the elected and privileged few, but is now within the reach of all workers and the entire youth under the general motto: be capable of working for and defending the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia”.⁵ For such a goal, it was necessary to cover a wide area of activity, and the best one for such is “that which is versatile politically, spiritually and physically educated, therefor physical culture with thousands of its centres of work in all federal units, in every village, in every factory, in every school, and in a remote mountain nest must train and improve the workers and heroic defenders of our freedom.”⁶ Thus, the task was the (re)education of the entire society, from students and peasants all the way to workers, through “physical culture”.⁷

One of the newly established associations was the “Physical Culture Association Dinamo” (FD Dinamo), which also had its own football section. Due to the (forced)⁸ departure of the best Zagreb footballers to the newly formed Partizan in Belgrade immediately after the war, the new management sought to bring all the top players who remained in Zagreb to Dinamo. Although, according to the testimony of Mirko Kokotović, there was an order that “no more than 5-6 players from the former Građanski or HAŠK” could join the club, it wasn’t long before those very players formed the backbone of Dinamo’s team and even its management.⁹ With their blue jerseys, Dinamo also evoked

⁴ Cf. “Odluka ministra narodnog zdravlja federalne Hrvatske,” *Narodni list*, June 5, 1945., 8.

⁵ “Osnovi naše fizkulture,” *Ilustrirane fizkturne novine*, August 9, 1945, No. 1, 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷ See more about the physical culture movement and sport in post-war Yugoslavia in: Igor Stanić, “Sport za svakoga. Sportske aktivnosti radničke klase u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do početka 1960-ih,” *Historijski zbornik LXIX* (2016), br. 1: 121-140; and in: Hrvoje Klasić “Fiskultura u službi naroda. Uloga tjelesnog odgoja u stvaranju jugoslavenskog socijalističkog društva 1945. – 1952,” in: *Stvaranje socijalističkog čovjeka: Hrvatsko društvo i ideologija jugoslavenskoga socijalizma*, Duda, Igor (ed.). Pula – Zagreb: Srednja Europa; Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, 2017, 201-220; Nikola Mijatov, *Sport u službi socijalizma. Jugoslovensko iskustvo 1945.-1953.* (Beograd: Čigoja štampa : Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2020, 219-220).

⁸ Players from Zagreb clubs who were taken to Partizan included Stjepan Bobek, Zlatko Čajkovski, Franjo Glaser, Miroslav Brozović, Franjo Šoštarić, and Florijan Matekalo. These were players who had represented the national team of the Independent State of Croatia during the war and most certainly had little choice regarding their transfer to Belgrade.

⁹ “Uz obljetnicu prvog nastupa Dinama 23. lipnja 1945. 39 godina od početka,” *Dinamo*, July 8, 1984, No. 300, 36.

memories of Gradjanski, although at the time, this choice was justified by the claim that it was the colour of the city of Zagreb. Besides some of the players and the colour of the jerseys, fans might have been drawn by the fact that Dinamo played its matches at the former Gradjanski stadium, where the club also won its first championship title in the new Yugoslavia in 1948. If there were any doubts about which club Dinamo was referencing when its official bulletin mentioned the rich tradition of Zagreb's interwar football, they were likely dispelled in 1970 when the new Dinamo coat of arms was introduced, and finally in 1971 when it appeared on the jerseys. Without any doubt, the coat of arms was designed based on Gradjanski's coat of arms.

Coats of arms of Gradjanski and Dinamo



Coat of arms of Gradjanski from 1923 to 1945 Coat of arms of Dinamo from 1970 to 1990

Yugoslav media on the relationship Dinamo – Gradjanski

Before turning to foreign press that mentioned Dinamo in the context of Gradjanski, we will recall an example from Yugoslav media here. The difficulty of packaging a new product from old production lines, even under socialist, controlled conditions, was demonstrated by an announcement in *Slobodna Dalmacija* for Dinamo's first (post-war) match in Split. This announcement is important for understanding how Dinamo was perceived in sports circles after the war. In *Slobodna Dalmacija* from August 3, 1945, it states: "There is great interest in this match within our sports circles. 'Dinamo' is the former 'Gradjanski' (...)"¹⁰ Also, according to some sources, the walls of Split's houses were plastered with posters announcing Gradjanski lineup.¹¹ The posters pro-

¹⁰ "Zagrebački 'Dinamo' igra u nedjelju protiv splitskog 'Hajduka,'" *Slobodna Dalmacija*, August 3, 1945, No. 190, 4.

¹¹ Cf. Freddy Kramer, "Povijest Dinama, Klub bogate tradicije (5)," *Dinamo*, June 1, 1984, No. 299, 19, and Miroslav Tomašević, *Dinamo. Povijest i zlatnih 10 godina* (Zagreb: GNK Dinamo, 2015).

moting the match in Split listed the following lineup: Glazer, Brozović, Dubac, Lechner, Jazbinšek, Kokotović, Cimermančić, Wölfl, Lešnik, Antolković, and Pleše.¹² Given that the announced lineup consisted exclusively of Gradjanski players, it's no wonder that the people of Split expected this club to be Hajduk's opponent. Kramer mentions the lineup that actually played in Split, which was different from the one announced: Urch (replaced by Majdić), Horvat D., Lojen, M. Žigante (replaced by Reiter), I. Horvat, Kokotović, Stanković, Cimermančić, Lešnik, Marold, Ž. Žigante.¹³ We can see that the lineup differed significantly from the one announced. A curious detail about this first Dinamo match in Split is that the team was hastily assembled, including one veteran (Stanković) and one handball player (Marold), while only four players (Urch, Kokotović, Cimermančić, and Lešnik) reminded people of Gradjanski.

Regardless of the lineup with which Dinamo eventually performed in Split, it had to be clarified to the readers of *Slobodna Dalmacija* and Hajduk fans who is this new FD Dinamo from Zagreb because, probably, even the most enthusiastic football fans had never heard of them before. But they very well knew the identity of the biggest football rival of the Split club in the interwar period, so by explaining that it was essentially the same club, they tried to animate the fans. In other news and announcements of the match in *Slobodna Dalmacija* we no longer find a direct connection between the then FD Dinamo and the former Gradjanski. In the announcement of the match of August 5, 1945, the mention of Gradjanski was avoided in an interesting manner: "Dinamo has several of the most famous Zagreb players such as Kokotović, Lešnik, Cimermančić, Urch, Lojen, the Horvat brothers and others, so it is certain that the Zagreb team, who have recently achieved great success, will show good form".¹⁴ Although most of the listed football players were players of Gradjanski, the unnamed author counts them all as players of the city of Zagreb, thus avoiding mentioning the name of the club as was done in the previous issue. Also, in the continuation of the sentence, the author of the text exaggerates Dinamo's successes (if even talking about them) because Dinamo played six matches before coming to Split, of which two were a win, one was a draw and three were a defeat.¹⁵

Here we will also mention the match in Zagreb between these two competitors. Namely, in the report after the match played on September 30, 1945, at the end of the article, a review of the announced lineup of Dinamo was made public:

¹² According to Kramer "Povijest Dinama," 19.

¹³ Ibid., 19.

¹⁴ "'Dinamo' (Zagreb) – 'Hajduk' J. A.," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, August 5, 1945, No. 191, 4.

¹⁵ Cf. Fredi Kramer, *GNK Dinamo: stoljeće kluba. Leksikon Dinama* (Zagreb: Topical and GNK Dinamo, 2011), 300.

In the end, something else needs to be underlined. In the pre-publications of this match, the lineup of 'Dinamo' was written about. Cimermančić, Reiss and Čajkovski were to play. However, they did not play. We think that this promotion should be stopped and that viewers should not be deceived. Čajkovski is not in Zagreb. If he was for a few days, that is no reason to announce his performance. Then Reiss plays for Narodna obrana [National Defence]. This type of false promotion should not be repeated.¹⁶

The confusion over the players who were announced in the Dinamo lineup and those who really played can be seen lasting throughout that year, and in particular, it would obviously be intensified in meetings with the greatest Croatian rival of the former Gradjanski.

Although the fans of the Blues in Dinamo's *Bulletin* in 1953 called for the return of the club's old name (they mostly do not mention it directly, but from other letters, it is clear that they are referring to Gradjanski), the club's stance was unwavering. Certain Dinamo fans referenced the break with the Soviet Union in 1948, as they clearly could not understand how the name Dinamo survived:

This matter particularly interests us members from this area, because we believe that the 'Blue' club from Zagreb should get its rightful name. We would like to hear more about this in the next issue of the Bulletin, and believe me, the word 'Dinamo' would simply disappear, precisely because we received that name before the infamous Informbiro resolution, with a small letter 'd', considering that in that era (before the resolution) Moscow's 'Dinamo' had a capital letter 'D', as if it were something higher and more significant than our little Dinamo in Yugoslavia.¹⁷

A few months later, the *Bulletin's* editorial staff responded to readers, explaining how the name came about, denying that it was modelled after its namesake in Moscow:

(...) some employee of the Electric Plant proposed the name 'DINAMO' as a reflection of energy, movement, and progress, intent on giving a symbol and soul to this new association. Thus, the given name did not arise from looking at some role models or as a copy of clubs in the Soviet Union, but rather as a reflection of the environment in which the idea of founding the association was born.¹⁸

¹⁶ "Od tri odigrane utakmice od oslobođenja u Zagrebu 'Hajduk' je dao najbolju u nedjelju protiv 'Dinama,'" *IFN – Ilustrirane fizikulturne novine*, October 2, 1945, No. 9, 1.

¹⁷ Ivica Berać, "Dragi naši plavi! Zašto Dinamo ne mijenja ime?," *Bilten Nogometnog kluba 'Dinamo'*, October 1953, No. 8, p. 2.

¹⁸ "Zašto Dinamo ne mijenja ime," *Bilten Nogometnog kluba 'Dinamo'*, January 1954, No. 11, 4.

However, this clearly did not satisfy their readers and supporters, as the call for the return of the old name persisted, with the club's management discussing it not only in 1948, but also in 1955 and 1969.¹⁹

Probably the most direct link between Dinamo and Gradjanski in Yugoslavia, after the article in *Slobodna Dalmacija*, appeared in the book *Zlatni jubilej ZNS 1919.-1969*. [*Golden Jubilee of the ZNS [Zagreb Football Association] 1919-1969*], which provides an overview of the development of Zagreb football from the early 20th century. In that book, unusually for the time, the interwar Gradjanski and postwar Dinamo are quite clearly connected because, as the text states,

it's not all about the name. The tradition remained. And it is a great and glorious one. (...) Dinamo, like its predecessor Gradjanski, took blue as its jersey colour, and many Gradjanski supporters overnight became Dinamo fans, a club that was admittedly founded in a liberated homeland, but in terms of its players, represented the continuation of the exceptionally rich tradition of Zagreb football.²⁰

The publication of the book coincided with the adoption of the new Dinamo coat of arms, which was modelled after Gradjanski's coat of arms, so perhaps this event, on the eve of the Croatian Spring, sparked hope in people that the time had finally come to correct past mistakes and restore the club's old name. However, the upcoming political events showed that this optimism was premature, as Dinamo's management soon came under fire due to the above-mentioned coat of arms, which some saw as an expression of nationalism, leading to efforts not to change the name but rather to find a way to preserve that coat of arms itself.²¹

In addition to these printed press outlets in Yugoslavia, the Croatian emigrant press also wrote about the relationship between Dinamo and Gradjanski. Thus, *Danica [The Morning Star]* from Chicago mentions Dinamo as Gradjanski on two occasions. The first instance of this can be found in 1956 article titled "Brotherhood and Unity' in the Occupied Homeland", where events from 1951 were recounted, following a match in Belgrade played between the Belgrade Sports Club (BSK) and Hajduk from Split, where the home fans insulted the people of Split and Croats in general, as well as a kind of "re-match" of the Belgrade club in Zagreb against Dinamo. Among other things, it is stated: "Shortly after that, a match was held in Zagreb between the same

¹⁹ "Još bez novog imena," *Dinamo*, December 1990, No. 377, 7.

²⁰ Roman Garber, ed., *Zlatni jubilej ZNS 1919. - 1969*. (Zagreb: Zagrebački nogometni savez, 1970), p. 137.

²¹ Cf. Davor Kovačić, "Borba za ravnopravne odnose u nogometu 1971. godine", *Olimp / Povijest hrvatskog sporta* 52, no. 82 / 200 (2000), 38-39.

Belgrade club and Zagreb's 'Dinamo' (formerly 'Građanski'), which was to decide who would take the national championship."²² After the match and Dinamo's victory, the participant of these events, as presented in *Danica*, wrote that patriotic Croatian songs were sung, but everything was interrupted by the arrival of the police, who immediately started beating and arresting the gathered crowd. Despite the proclaimed unity and intense party pressure, fan insults towards opposing players and clubs in Yugoslavia began as early as the late 1940s (right after the creation of the unified football league), culminating in a series of incidents throughout the 1950s.²³

The second instance of *Danica* mentioning Dinamo in the context of Gradjanski is from a 1962 short report "Success of Croatian Sport" which briefly states: "Dinamo', as is now the name of First Croatian Citizens' Club, beat the German team from Landshut 4 : 1 in Zagreb. This German team is coached by the former player of Gradjanski, Željko Čajkovski."²⁴ Aside from the obvious mention that Gradjanski is "now called" Dinamo, the second sentence is also interesting, as it emphasizes that Čajkovski played for Gradjanski, not Dinamo, since 1945, with which, the author once again equated the two clubs, since Čajkovski played for Zagreb's HAŠK until 1945, and for Dinamo from 1945 onwards.

It is known that *Nova Hrvatska* [*New Croatia*], the most influential political newspaper of the Croatian diaspora in London, also wrote about Dinamo as the successor of Gradjanski. In 1975, an article titled "Na ruševinama 'Gradjanskog' gradili 'Dinamo'" ["On the Ruins of 'Gradjanski', They Built 'Dinamo'"] explicitly stated: "It is impossible to talk about the football club 'Dinamo' without placing it in close connection with 'Gradjanski'. 'Dinamo' is the successor of 'Gradjanski' – in every way, in its essence, and in the masses it relied upon. Both clubs were ambassadors of Croatian football."²⁵ These sentences are content-wise similar to those in the book *Golden Jubilee of the ZNS 1919–1969*, so it is not excluded that the author might have used that source as well.

²² A. Tenek, "Bratstvo i jedinstvo' u okupiranoj Domovini," *Danica (The Morning Star)*, April 18, 1956, year 36, No. 16, 2.

²³ Cf. Richard Mills, *Nogomet i politika u Jugoslaviji. Sport, nacionalizam i država* (Zagreb: Profil, 2018), 97-98; 115-121. and Davor Kovačić, *Hrvatski nogomet u doba cara, kralja, poglavnika i maršala* (Zagreb: AGM, 2019), 184-187.

²⁴ "Uspjeh hrvatskog sporta," *Danica (The Morning Star)*, July 11, 1962., year 42, No. 28, 3.

²⁵ Marko Iglica, "Na ruševinama 'Gradjanskog' gradili 'Dinamo'. Uz 30. obljetnicu zagrebačkih plavih", *Nova Hrvatska*, June 8, 1975, No. 11 (125), 18.

While it was somewhat logical for the Croatian emigrant press, which followed events in the homeland, to identify Dinamo with Gradjanski in terms of identity, the same cannot be said for the foreign press, as they did not have an emotional connection with these clubs.

Foreign media on the relationship Dinamo – Gradjanski

In Zagreb, in the first years after the communists came to power, efforts were made to erase even the memory of former football clubs by destroying documentation and property. Given that Gradjanski played a significant role in interwar Yugoslav football and had many successful tours in European countries, it could be expected that someone in the press outside of Yugoslavia would remember the club when Dinamo began playing its first international matches.

It should be noted that the newspapers from one Eastern European country first warned about some new phenomena in Yugoslav sport. The Czech newspaper *Slovo národa*²⁶ on 26 October 1945, in a brief note as an interesting titbit, mentioned that the names of once-famous football clubs had disappeared in Yugoslavia: “It is interesting that names like Beogradski, Gradjanski, Jugoslavija, etc., no longer appear in Yugoslav football.”²⁷ Although this was a passing mention of former clubs, it was clear that new circumstances had arisen in Yugoslav football. Slovak newspapers *Čas* likely picked up this news, as two days later, on 28 October 1945, they published an almost identical text.²⁸ That the situation in Yugoslavia was followed closely and understood is also evidenced by a much more detailed article from 16 November 1945, in *Neues Österreich*, which explained to Austrian readers the fate of the abolished clubs, as well as the example of Split’s Hajduk, the only famous club allowed to keep its name:

As a result of the political upheavals in Yugoslavia, when the victorious partisans took the initiative on all fronts, the football system in the country also changed. A leading politician explained to your correspondent that in Yugoslavia, at least for the next few years, the focus would not be on quality but on quantity, guided

²⁶ I would like to thank Ms. Dagmar Winklerová and Mária Manoušková from *Moravská zemská knihovna* for the material provided from the Czech newspapers *Slovo národa*, *Svobodné slovo* and *Volné Slovo* (www.mzk.cz).

²⁷ “Mužstvo Bělehradu do Prahy”, *Slovo národa*, *Orgán československé strany národně – socialistické*, October 26, 1945, No. 143, 4.

²⁸ Cf. “Odvětný zápas Belehrad – Praha”, *Čas*, *Ústředný orgán Demokratickej strany*, October 28, 1945, No. 156, 5.

by a single desire: to promote mass sports in all areas. It is necessary to break away from professional sports and sports stars. This is the reason why old clubs like Gradjanski, HAŠK, and Concordia in Zagreb, as well as Belgrade Sports Club and Jugoslavija, have disappeared as clubs. Currently, there are three clubs in the country that play a leading role, and they are 'Hajduk', Split, which was allowed to keep its name because at that time the entire first team and management joined Marshal Tito's liberation movement, as well as 'Crvena zvezda' [Red Star], Belgrade, and 'Dinamo', Zagreb, which play first-class football. The championship will be opened after the formation of new workers', factory, and academic clubs.²⁹

The author was evidently well-informed about the newly established situation in Yugoslav sports, emphasizing exactly what was outlined in the physical culture guidelines (quantity over quality, i.e., mass participation and amateurism rather than professionalism). They were especially knowledgeable about the situation in football, hence the mention of the abolished clubs and the highlighting of Split's Hajduk, which was the only one to avoid their fate by aligning itself in time with Tito's movement. In the same vein is an article from 1949, written in new circumstances following Yugoslavia's split with the USSR, in the newspaper *Arbeiter Zeitung*, which attributes the situation to Yugoslavia's copying of the Soviet model. It is emphasized that Yugoslavia was the first country to apply that model to sports. Another interesting point is the mention of the renaming of clubs in Yugoslavia, with a comparison to Slavia and Sparta from Prague, whose names were changed in 1949: "Yugoslavia was the first country to organize its sports in line with the Moscow's guidelines. Except for Split's Hajduk, which distinguished itself during the partisan era, all clubs had to change their names—Gradjanski, Concordia, HAŠK, and Belgrade SK disappeared, just as Slavia and Sparta did."³⁰ As a curious fact, it's worth noting that Slavia was given the name Dinamo (Základní sportovní jednota Dynamo Slavia Praha), which remained the club's only name from 1953 (when political circumstances allowed for it, they restored the club's original name in 1965).

²⁹ Weiß, D., "Vienna in Jugoslawien," *Neues Österreich* November 16, 1945, No. 176, p. 4, highlighted in the source. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nos&datum=19451116&seite=4&zoom=43&query=gradjanski>&ref=anno-search (accessed June 13, 2024).

³⁰ O. H., "Der kominformier Sport," *Arbeiter Zeitung*, January 18, 1949, No. 14, 5. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=aze&datum=19490118&seite=5&zoom=47&query=grad%2Aansk%2A&ref=anno-search> (accessed July 2, 2024).

The first mention of Dinamo in the context of Gradjanski, although it is not explicitly stated that they are one and the same club, but rather clarified that former players of Gradjanski are playing for Dinamo, can be found in the Slovak newspaper *Národné Noviny* from 22 February 1946, which states: “Dinamo Zagreb, in the lineup of which there are most of the former players of Gradjanski, is coming to Czechoslovakia.”³¹ In a similar context, Dinamo is also mentioned by other Slovak newspaper *Demokrat* in its 28 February 1946 issue: “The Dinamo team, which includes former players of Gradjanski, will meet Slavija Prague on Saturday, March 2, and will play against AC Sparta Prague on Sunday, March 3.”³² This concerns Dinamo’s (and Hajduk’s) tour and matches against the best Czech clubs. As a curiosity, we can highlight that the Zagreb club, just like in its domestic league matches, displayed a large ‘DINAMO’ inscription on their jerseys, presumably to help players and spectators more easily accept the new name.

The confusion caused by the decision to dissolve the administrations of football clubs in Yugoslavia, followed immediately by the formation of new sports associations within which football clubs operated, is evidenced by a publication in the Czech newspaper *Osvobozený Nášinec* in 1946. During these encounters with the best Czech clubs, it seems that FD Dinamo particularly puzzled Czech journalists: “The Yugoslav Dinamo club has no history. We do not know what is behind the name. After two games, we realized that it brings together 11 very good football players and more.”³³ Thus, the Zagreb club was presented rather unflatteringly as a club without a past that, while having a good team, left it unclear what was behind its name or whether it had any ties to pre-war Zagreb football clubs.

The greatest enigma of Dinamo’s inaugural year lay in the very origins of the Zagreb club and the team, specifically the players who represented it. Journalists from the Czech newspaper *Svobodné slovo* attempted to uncover who this “new” Yugoslav club was by focusing on the origins of the players in Dinamo: “As we can see, the football team of the new Yugoslav club Dinamo Zagreb, composed of players from the former Concordia, HAŠK, and Gradjanski, was supposed to play in Prague.”³⁴ This appears to have been a

³¹ “Dynamo Záhřeb do Prahy,” *Národné Noviny*, February 22, 1946, No. 45, 4. The source text says: “ČSR”.

³² “Dynamo Záhřeb do Prahe,” *Demokrat: Organ demokratickej strany*, February 28, 1946, No. 50, 4.

³³ “Zahájili jsme...,” *Osvobozený Nášinec*, March 7, 1946, No. 56, 6. <https://dk.uzei.cz/vkol/view/uuid:72b88714-78b9-44dc-9ac0-a33f76b4ca17?page=uuid:e7d22f0d-18d6-11e9-a984-90b11c419e63> (accessed July 12, 2024).

³⁴ “Dynamo Záhřeb do Prahy,” *Svobodné slovo*, January 31, 1946, No. 26, 6.

brief telegram-style news piece, as an identical text was also published by the aforementioned newspaper *Slovo národa*.³⁵ It seems the journalists were on the right track, recognizing that the newly established Dinamo included players from all three major Zagreb interwar clubs. Similarly, reporters from the Luxembourg paper *Escher Tageblatt* reported that Dinamo was a fusion of the most important Zagreb interwar football clubs: “Among Yugoslav clubs, Dinamo Zagreb (a merger of the pre-war clubs Gradjanski, Concordia, and HAŠK) defeated Slavia 2:1 in Prague, only to lose 0:2 to Sparta.”³⁶

The first, so far found, indisputable mention of Dinamo as the former Gradjanski in a foreign newspaper is found in the Slovak newspaper *Bojovník*³⁷ from 24 February 1946, in the announcement of Dinamo’s visit to Czechoslovakia, it states: “The famous Zagreb football club Dynamo (formerly Gradjanski) will play in Prague on March 2 and 3.”³⁸ A month later, in the Czech newspaper *Volné Slovo*, on March 24, 1946, there is an article in which the authors not only link Dinamo to Gradjanski but also correctly note that the Zagreb club derived its name from its Moscow namesake: “The former Zagreb club Gradjanski adopted not only the name but also the style of play from Moscow’s Dinamo.”³⁹ An interesting case is the mention of the relationship between Dinamo and Gradjanski in the Slovak newspaper *Čas*, which in the subtitle of one article states that Partizan from Belgrade defeated Dinamo from Zagreb, and then in two different sections within that article first refers to Gradjanski, and immediately thereafter to Dinamo.⁴⁰ Although there would be further confusion regarding the connection between Dinamo and Gradjanski after this mention, Hungarian, Austrian, and Romanian journalists would soon align with this perspective.

Given that Gradjanski often played against Hungarian clubs and had a direct link to Hungary through its coach Márton Bukovi, it is somewhat sur-

³⁵ Cf. “Dynamo Záhřeb do Prahy,” *Slovo národa, Orgán československé strany národně – socialistické*, February 1, 1946, No. 27, 4.

³⁶ “Fußball in der Tschechoslowakei,” *Escher Tageblatt*, March 18, 1946, No. 63, p. 5. <https://viewer.eluxemburgensia.lu/ark:70795/n2qgf3/pages/5/articles/DTL69?search=gradjanski> (accessed July 12, 2024).

³⁷ I express my gratitude to Mr. Jozef Liška from the Slovak National Library for the material provided (<https://www.snk.sk/>).

³⁸ “Dynamo Záhřeb do Prahy,” *Bojovník: denník čs. vojakov a dôstojníkov*, February 24, 1946, No. 47, 6.

³⁹ “Nezvrtná zkušenosť: Musíme sa učiť! Co tomu říkáte, footballisté?,” *Volné Slovo*, March 24, 1946, No. 71, 4.

⁴⁰ “Futbalová liga zo šiestich kútov Európy,” *Čas: ústredný orgán Demokratickej strany na Slovensku*, October 29, 1946, No. 242a, 2 <https://dikda.snk.sk/view/uuid:2c000a94-eae3-4d63-8d3b-0413feff079a?page=uuid:c1a0f498-8a71-4c62-9c33-d53ab77462ae>

prising that the first reports in Hungarian newspapers after World War II associated Gradjanski with Lokomotiva from Zagreb. Although this connection initially appeared in several different publications, it mostly revolved around the same news regarding the Easter football tournament in which Lokomotiva was also supposed to participate.⁴¹ On 17 April 1946, journalists from *Népsport*, in the same article under the subtitle (“Zagreb’s Lokomotiva (former Gradjanski) will be a sensation at this year’s Easter tournament”),⁴² mention twice more that Lokomotiva is the former Gradjanski: “Organized by the railway union, the tournament will feature Zagreb’s Lokomotiva (the former, well-known Gradjanski), FC Wien, a railway representative team that recently achieved two impressive victories in Vienna, and a workers’ team.” (...) “Zagreb’s Gradjanski, now playing under the name Lokomotiva, remains a team of extraordinary abilities.”⁴³ The same newspaper continues to link Lokomotiva with Gradjanski on 19 and 21 April 1946. In the latter issue, they mention Lešnik, Jazbinšek, and Glaser as players of Lokomotiva: “The other foreign participant in the Easter tournament in Budapest is Zagreb’s Lokomotiva, formerly Gradjanski. Only the name of this extraordinary team has changed; the talent certainly has not, as almost the same players who, under the name Gradjanski, made this team formidable are playing. Lešnik, Jazbinšek, Glaser, and others are still players of the Zagreb team.”⁴⁴ Considering that teams often loaned players to each other in the post-war period to better represent Yugoslav football abroad, the mentioned players may have been announced as Lokomotiva players in those matches, which could explain the connection between Lokomotiva and Gradjanski. A similar association between Lokomotiva and Gradjanski is found in the newspaper *Kossuth Népe* (19, 21, and 24 April 1946), with the 24 April article noting that Lokomotiva, despite announcements, did not arrive at the tournament: “A bitter taste remains as Zagreb’s Lokomotiva (former Gradjanski) did not make it to the tournament, and at the last minute, a hastily assembled team from Budapest stepped in.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ In addition to this newspaper, compare also: *Szabad Szó*, April 18, 1946, No. 85, 4; *Néplap*, April 19, 1946, No. 88, 4; *Kossuth Népe*, April 19, 1946, No. 89, 2; April 21, 1946, No. 90, 6.

⁴² “A zággrábi Locomotiv (volt Gradjanski) lesz a húsvéti torna szenzációjai”. I would like to thank my colleague from the Institute for Migration Research Vjekoslav Blazsetin for his help with Hungarian sources and with the translation and interpretation of certain texts.

⁴³ “Kispéter részére játékedélyt kér a vasutasválogatott,” *Népsport*, April 17, 1946, No. 54, 1.

⁴⁴ “Az FC Wien megérkezett, a zággrábi Lokomotív érkezését minden percben várják,” *Népsport*, April 21, 1946, No. 56, 3.

⁴⁵ “A magyar labdarúgás sikere Bécsben, Bukarestben és itthon,” *Kossuth Népe*, April 24, 1946, No. 91 (287), 2.

The connection between former players of Gradjanski as a key criterion for identifying the successor club is also evidenced by the Burgenland Croatian newspaper *Naš Tajednik*. In its 1948 edition, it published a brief news piece about the plans of the football club Rapid to hold a match on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. In this short form, it informs: “It is expected that the English team Glasgow Rangers and Partizan, the successor of the former glorious Yugoslav master Gradjanski, will come”.⁴⁶ Although it was somewhat possible to associate the newly established club Partizan with players from Gradjanski who, after the war, were drawn to the Belgrade club through various “incentives”, the journalist overlooked the fact that Partizan, aside from a few incoming players, had nothing else in common with the former Gradjanski—neither fans, nor city, nor the stadium, nor the emotions. To make matters worse, the journalist also misrepresented Glasgow Rangers as an English club, likely oversimplifying the situation since the club originates from the British Isles. Regardless, this text remains a good example that a club is made up of more than just players, and in the case of Dinamo, these other characteristics will prevail.

To somewhat clarify this situation, we can mention the example of the aforementioned coach Márton Bukovi, who gave an interview to the Hungarian newspaper *Népsport* in 1947. When asked directly by Hungarian journalists, who regarded Dinamo as the former Gradjanski, to explain the relationship between Dinamo and Gradjanski, he responded that they were not the same club. He elaborated, according to the official Yugoslav narrative, that Dinamo was a club composed of players from the clubs Šparta and ZET, to which some players from Gradjanski were added, while a good number of Gradjanski players ended up at Partizan:

Then we talk about what Zagreb Dinamo actually is. In Hungary, it is commonly thought that Dinamo is the same as the former Gradjanski. On this topic our friend Marci says: “These two clubs have nothing to do with each other! When the big change happened, Gradjanski was dissolved and free transfers of players were allowed. In the second league, there were two clubs, Šparta and ZET, teams from Elektroprivreda and the Zagreb Electric Tram. These two teams merged, and thus the newly formed club entered the first league, with several former Gradjanski players moving to this team. So, it is incorrect to say that all former Gradjanski players play for Dinamo because, for example, six or seven former players from Gradjanski transferred to Partizan”.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ “Plani Rapida,” *Naš Tajednik*, October 2, 1948, No. 39, 4. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=hrv&datum=19481002&seite=4&zoom=33&query=%22gradjanski%22partizan%22&ref=anno-search> (accessed June 30, 2024).

⁴⁷ “Beszélgetés Bukovi Mártonnal,” *Népsport*, January 16, 1947, No. 9, 3. The first part of the sentence up to the word Dinamo is highlighted in the source.

To give the whole picture of what happened to the players from Gradjanski, we can list the lineups⁴⁸ of Dinamo and Partizan during their first match in 1946 in Zagreb. The following players played for Dinamo: Monsider, Cimermančić*, Lojen, Reiss*, Horvat II., Pleše*, Beda, Kacian, Golob, Reberski, Kokotović*. The following performed for Partizan: Šoštarić*, Popescu, Brozović*, Atanacković, Gjurgjević, Simonovski, Matekalo*, Bobek*, Palfi, Mihajlović.⁴⁹ While other Gradjanski players played either for Dinamo or for Partizan, in that first match they were equally divided, with four players in each team, and the players from “Zagreb’s Gradjanski” won 1 - 0.

Given that the interview took place in Zagreb, Bukovi’s stance, which aligned completely with the socio-political moment of the conversation, is not surprising. A year and a half after the football revolution in Zagreb and Yugoslavia, his response could not have been much different. Later, as we will see, Bukovi would revise his views on the relationship between Gradjanski and Dinamo.

Although it was quite some time after the occurrence in the Hungarian newspapers, we also found a reference in the Austrian press linking Lokomotiva with Gradjanski. Specifically, on 21 and 22 February 1953, Lokomotiva played in Vienna against the clubs Sportklub and Simmeringer SC, and in the *Wiener Kurier*, we find the following: “The Dornbach team has committed to play two matches with the Yugoslav league team Lokomotiva-Zagreb (formerly Gradjanski) in Vienna”.⁵⁰ While we can understand that Hungarian journalists, less than a year after the football revolution in Zagreb, were initially uncertain about which club continued the rich tradition of interwar Gradjanski, it is harder to comprehend the Viennese newspapers which, eight years later, linked Lokomotiva and Gradjanski—especially since, as we will see, they had previously connected Dinamo with Gradjanski as well.

⁴⁸ The lineups are listed according to the match report published by *Narodni sport – Ilustrirane fizikulture novine* from 25 March 1946, No. 34, 1.

⁴⁹ Dinamo’s official bulletin lists the lineup of Partizan: Šoštarić*, Popescu, Brozović*, Atanacković, Čajkovski Z., Matekalo*, Krnić, Bobek*, Simonovski, Mihajlović, Palfy (cf. “Unforgettable blue goals. Reberski: There was no offside!” *Nogometni klub Dinamo*, no. 289, July 1983, 40). The names of Gradjanski’s players are marked with asterisk, both here and in the text.

⁵⁰ “Sportklub und Simmering empfangen Lokomotiva-Zagreb,” *Wiener Kurier*, January 30, 1953, 5. <https://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wku&datum=19530130&seite=5&zoom=33> (accessed May 30, 2024).

Hungarian newspapers

Hungarian journalists, after some initial confusion, were among the first to undeniably link Dinamo with the former Gradjanski, as we can also see in the aforementioned newspaper *Népsport*. On May 10, 1946, they published an article about the potential return of Márton Bukovi to Hungary, to Ferencváros, and wrote: “For years now, Márton Bukovi has been successfully coaching the Gradjanski team (currently Dinamo)”.⁵¹ Less than a month after the first news, *Népsport* journalists corrected their initial stance that Lokomotiva was Gradjanski, and from then on, they exclusively associated Dinamo with Gradjanski. The same newspaper, in 1948, on the occasion of a match between football teams from Budapest and Zagreb, emphasized the players’ origins by stating: “The majority of Zagreb’s team is made up of Dinamo players. That team is the successor of the old Gradjanski”.⁵²

In February 1947, Dynamo visited Budapest and played with Vasas. Although much was expected from Dinamo’s team, Vasas emerged victorious. On *February 15, Szabad Nép* wrote: “Dinamo’s team, which was called Gradjanski before the liberation, often played matches against Hungarian teams before the war, and in most cases, they left the field as winners”.⁵³ Dinamo was also linked to Gradjanski by the *Népszava* newspaper, which did not hide its disappointment in the blue team’s performance, from whom much more had been expected in Budapest: “The successor of Croatian Gradjanski, Dinamo, arrived in Budapest with glowing recommendations, and experts expected Dinamo to win by one or two goals. However, the Zagreb team *did not meet the expectations placed upon them*”.⁵⁴

Márton Bukovi, coach of Gradjanski before and during World War II, and later of Dinamo after the war, was a favourite topic among Hungarian journalists, and he often appears in writings about Dinamo. In the monthly magazine *Labdarúgás*, the official publication of the Hungarian Football Federation, we read a brief description of the Zagreb club from 1958: “Dinamo Zagreb. Successor of the former Gradjanski, whose coach for many years was Márton Bukovi”.⁵⁵ Although it was noted that Dinamo is the successor of

⁵¹ “Bukovi Márton hazajön és valószínűleg a Ferencváros edzője lesz,” *Népsport*, May 10, 1946, No. 67, 1.

⁵² “Válogatott a kapitány a zágrábi és splíti mérkőzésre,” *Népsport*, June 22, 1948, No. 123, 1.

⁵³ “A jugoszláv Dinamo Budapesten,” *Szabad Nép*, February 15, 1947, No. 38, 4.

⁵⁴ “Főlényes magyar győzelmek,” *Népszava*, February 18, 1947, No. 40, 8 (highlighted in the source).

⁵⁵ “Az EK 1858—59. évi mezőnye,” *Labdarúgás*, August 1958, No. 8, 4 (incorrectly entered year in the source in part of the article title - 1858-59, instead of 1958-59).

Gradjanski, the text later only mentions the championship titles that Dinamo won in the second Yugoslavia, concluding with the most recent one in 1958.

In 1962, the highlight event was the World Cup in Chile, but football matches were still being played across Europe. One such match was announced by the Hungarian newspaper *Népsport*, where Dinamo, or rather Gradjanski, was mentioned: “The third guest at Népstadion is the successor of the famous Gradjanski, Dinamo Zagreb, which already played at Népstadion last August as an opponent of the Hungarian national team in a training match”.⁵⁶

The following year, in the preview of the first leg of the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup semifinal, Ferencváros – Dinamo, *Magyar Nemzet*, describing Dinamo’s team, highlighted: “Dinamo Zagreb arrived on Monday evening. The successor of the former Gradjanski is still one of the internationally renowned teams”.⁵⁷

On the occasion of Márton Bukovi’s 70th birthday, *Magyar Hírlap* shared his words in which he explains his time at Gradjanski: “From 1936, I took charge of coaching at Zagreb’s Gradjanski. I spent eleven unforgettable years there. By 1941, the team had won the championship three times”.⁵⁸ Thus, Bukovi stated that from 1936, he spent a total of 11 years at Gradjanski, meaning he also included his time at Dinamo until 1947. With this, Bukovi, who coached both Gradjanski and Dinamo, corrected his 1947 statement in which he denied any connection between Dinamo and Gradjanski, now believing that they were, in fact, the same club with two different names.

Bukovi was also remembered by Rudolf Kralj, then the technical secretary of the Argentine national team, during a conversation with Hungarian journalists in 1975 while the Argentine team was preparing in Hungary. In that conversation, when introducing Rudolf Kralj, the newspaper’s editors added a note that the Gradjanski he used to play for is today’s Dinamo: “Then, the sports veteran, who has been living in Buenos Aires for over four decades, and a former centre forward of the famous Gradjanski (now the team plays under the name Dinamo Zagreb – editor’s note) recalled matches against Ferencváros and Márton Bukovi, who later became the coach of his team”.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ “Kupamérkőzések sorozatban a Népstadion gyepén,” *Népsport*, June 1, 1962, No. 106, 5. Part of the sentence “successor of the famous Gradjanski, Dinamo Zagreb” is highlighted in the source.

⁵⁷ “A VVK-döntőbe jutásért küzd ma a Ferencváros és a Zágrábi Dinamó,” *Magyar Nemzet*, April 24, 1963, No. 94, 6.

⁵⁸ “Bukovi Márton hetven éves,” *Magyar Hírlap*, December 8, 1973, 12.

⁵⁹ V. D., “Budapestre készül az argentin futballcsapat,” *Népsport*, June 14, 1975, No. 139, 1 (and 8).

It is also worth mentioning two non-European Hungarian newspapers that wrote about Dinamo in the context of Gradjanski. In the first example, we have the Hungarian newspaper published in Toronto, *Kanadai Magyarország* [*Canadian-Hungarians*], which in 1952, in one article, wrote that Hajduk won the championship, while Gradjanski, or rather Dinamo, won the cup. The order in this news is interesting because Gradjanski is mentioned first: “The Yugoslav championship was won by Hajduk Split, and the cup by the former Gradjanski, currently Dinamo Zagreb”.⁶⁰

Another non-European Hungarian newspaper was the bimonthly *Független Magyarországnak*, published in Sydney, Australia, which on 25 July 1959, reported that Bukovi had become Dinamo’s technical director: “After much speculation, the future of Márton Bukovi, an excellent Hungarian football expert and, in recent years, the coach of MTK, has suddenly been revealed; he signed a three-year contract for the position of technical director of Zagreb’s Dinamo (formerly Gradjanski)”.⁶¹

Lastly, a depiction from a specialized newspaper dedicated to Ferencváros, *Fradi műsorlap*, which in 1981 published a history of Ferencváros’ encounters with Dinamo up to that point. In brief, the Zagreb club was first introduced with its then-current coat of arms, and although it states that Dinamo was founded (“Alapítva”) in 1945, below it, it mentions that the club is the legal successor (“Jogelődje”) of Gradjanski, listing their mutual encounters since 1930.⁶² At a time when Dinamo’s publications were struggling with the club’s identity and timidly writing about Zagreb’s football past before 1945, we see that the Hungarians had no such issues, clearly linking Dinamo with Gradjanski.

Romanian newspapers

Unlike Hungarian newspapers, which were familiar with and followed Gradjanski even before World War II, primarily thanks to Bukovi, Romanian newspapers wrote about Dinamo in the context of their matches against their own club, C.F.R.⁶³ from Bucharest. For example, on 3 June 1946, *Gazeta*

⁶⁰ “Az év legérdekesebb mérkőzése,” *Kanadai Magyarország*, December 13, 1952, No. 50, 7. https://library.hungaricana.hu/en/view/KanadaiMagyarsag_USAHUN_1952-2/?query=gradjanski&pg=222&layout=s (accessed June 10, 2024).

⁶¹ “Hirek,” *Független Magyarországnak*, July 25, 1959, No. 16, p. 9. In the newspaper, the year in the header is mistakenly written as 1957, although it is a 1959 edition.

⁶² “Dinamó Zágráb,” *Fradi műsorlap*, No. 73, p. 18. https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/Fradi_musorlap_1980-1983/?pg=695&layout=s (accessed June 10, 2024).

⁶³ C. F. R. (Căile Ferate Române – Romanian Railways).

Sporturilor, in the aftermath of C.F.R.'s victory in Zagreb, explicitly stated that Dinamo was Gradjanski: "Let's not forget – here's another interesting detail – Dinamo is the former SK Gradjanski, many times the champion of Yugoslavia, with whom C.F.R. (then F.C. Rapid) last faced in the Central European Cup".⁶⁴

Another Romanian newspaper, *Sportul Popular*, on 5 June 1946, reported on C.F.R.'s matches in Yugoslavia. On the front page, they announced the successful performances against Crvena zvezda and Dinamo, and next to Dinamo, they included "Gradjansky" in parentheses. It is interesting to note that in both reports, Dinamo was considered the champion of Yugoslavia, even though Dinamo would not win its title until two years later (1948); in the then current 1946, they were only the champions of the Zagreb Championship, which qualified them for participation in the Croatian league. Again, it is emphasized that Dinamo was the former Gradjanski: "In Zagreb, C.F.R. defeated Dinamo, the champion of Yugoslavia, the former Gradjanski, and this speaks above all to the great mastery of the C.F.R. team".⁶⁵ In the continuation of the article, on the third page, there is also news that Dinamo would be a guest in a return match in Bucharest. In this news, the previous statements are repeated: "Dinamo, the former Gradjanski, the champion of Yugoslavia, will be there".⁶⁶ Given that the Romanians emphasized so much that Dinamo was the former Gradjanski, as well as the fact that they considered it the champion of Yugoslavia, it can be assumed that they were referring to the championship titles that Gradjanski had won before World War II, as the first post-war Yugoslav championship was only played in 1947, and as was already mentioned, Dinamo won their first post-war title in 1948.

The aforementioned Romanian newspaper *Gazeta Sporturilor*, also on 5 June 1946, on the front page, prominently announced Dinamo's upcoming arrival in Bucharest on August 15 and 18. Above that announcement, in a smaller font, but still in all caps, it read "FOSTUL GRADJANSKI" ["THE FORMER GRADJANSKI"]. The text mentions two more times that Dinamo was the former Gradjanski, and includes the subheading "Gradjanski, la București" ["Gradjanski in Bucharest"], announcing Dinamo's arrival and their matches with

⁶⁴ "Victorie românească la Zagreb," *Gazeta Sporturilor*, June 3, 1946, No. 124, 3. I would like to thank my colleague from the Institute for Migration Research, M.Sc. Boris Nikšić for help with Romanian sources and with the translation and interpretation of certain texts.

⁶⁵ "In Jugoslavia. C. F. R. a arătat foot-ballul românesc," *Sportul Popular*, June 5, 1946, No. 364, 1.

⁶⁶ "C. F. R. în Jugoslavia. Dinamo va veni la București," *Sportul Popular*, June 5, 1946, No. 364, 3.

C.F.R. on August 15 and 16.⁶⁷ The same date was announced in the following issue, but the matches against C.F.R. from Bucharest never took place.⁶⁸

Austrian newspapers

In 1947, *Salzburger Nachrichten* reported on the international success of the Zagreb club against a Marseille city selection: “The football team Gradjanski (Zagreb), now playing under the name Dinamo Zagreb, defeated the Marseille city team, bolstered by French national team members, 6-0.”⁶⁹ Interestingly, even in this news, preference is given to the name Gradjanski, as if the reporters believed Dinamo was only a temporary name for the club. During this tour, Dinamo played two more matches (Nimes and Montpellier), both of which it also won. As a curiosity, it’s worth noting that in these three matches, the *Blues* scored 19 goals and conceded only 4.

In 1948, in the year of Dinamo’s first championship title in the new Yugoslavia, *Neues Österreich*, in a brief report previewing a match between Admirala and Lokomotiva, also announced a match between Wiener SK and Dinamo: “Wiener Sportklub will also play against Dinamo (formerly Gradjanski) that day.”⁷⁰ A few weeks later, in *Welt am Abend*, we learn that Lokomotiva’s match was postponed, but that the game against Dinamo would go ahead: “As reported from Yugoslavia, Wiener Sportklub is set to play against Dinamo (formerly Grandjanski⁷¹) in Zagreb on November 3.”⁷²

⁶⁷ “Fostul Gradjanski: Dinamo-Zagreb joaca la București la 15 și 18 august. C. F. R. a revenit din Jugoslavia,” *Gazeta Sporturilor*, June 5, 1946, No. 125, 1.

⁶⁸ Dinamo, due to commitments in the championship, had to cancel their trip to Bucharest and informed the Romanian club via a letter, but that letter “got lost” when it arrived at the C.F.R. club offices, leading to confusion over the team’s non-arrival. For more on this, see: “O scrisoare... Ratacita..., Dece n’a primit CFR răspunsul clubului jugoslav Dinamo”, *Gazeta Sporturilor*, No. 193, p. 4; “Dynamo (Zagreb) va juca cu I. T. A. și C. F. R. la 15. și 18 august”, *Adevărul*, August 2, 1946, No. 16628, p. 2; “Cupa fulger ARLUS”, *România Liberă*, August 8, 1946, No. 609, 2.

⁶⁹ “Sport-berichte. Sport=kurznachrichten,” *Salzburger Nachrichten*, June 20, 1947, No. 138, 2. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=san&datum=19470620&seite=2&zoom=42&query=grad%2Aansk%2A&ref=anno-search> (accessed July 2, 2024).

⁷⁰ “Admira erst am 20. Oktober nach Belgrad,” *Neues Österreich*, October 6, 1948, No. 1053/234, 5. [https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nos&datum=19481006&seite=5&zoom=33&query=gradjanski"&ref=anno-search](https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nos&datum=19481006&seite=5&zoom=33&query=gradjanski) (accessed May 30, 2024).

⁷¹ It is obvious that this is a spelling error and that it should state *Gradjanski*.

⁷² “Admira fährt heuer nicht mehr nach Jugoslawien,” *Welt am Abend*, October 23, 1948, No. 249, 7. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=waa&datum=19481023&seite=7&zoom=33> (accessed May 30, 2024).

In 1949, Dinamo visited Vienna to serve as a training partner for the Austrian national football team, and newspaper reports regarding that visit regularly mentioned Dinamo's victory in the Yugoslav championship the previous year. The already mentioned *Neues Österreich*, explaining to its readers who Dinamo was, wrote: "Dinamo is the successor of the famous sports club Gradjanski and it won the last season's Yugoslav championship."⁷³ On the same day, a match announcement was also *published* in *Weltpresse*, with a similar text emphasizing Dinamo's Yugoslav championship victory: "Dinamo, formerly Gradjanski, was the Yugoslav champion last year."⁷⁴

The visit of Dinamo to Vienna was also covered by the newspaper *Neue Zeit*, which, while mentioning the past, also wrote about the contemporary situation: "FC Dinamo Zagreb has finally signed on as the sparring partner for the Austrian national football team for a training match on March 9 at the Vienna stadium. This team, which is the successor to the once-famous club Gradjanski Zagreb, won the Yugoslav championship last season and is currently second behind Partizan in the spring portion of the championship."⁷⁵ The Austrian journalist not only knew the past of the Zagreb club well but also actively followed the then-current Yugoslav football championship and Dinamo's position in the standings.

Dinamo's arrival in Vienna and its association with Gradjanski was also announced by *Wiener Kurier*, which, as we have seen, later mentioned Gradjanski in the context of Lokomotiva (1953): "The best Yugoslav club, Dinamo-Zagreb, the successor to the once-famous Gradjanski, arrived last night at the Südbahnhof in Vienna."⁷⁶

On the day of the match, 9 March 1949, *Österreichische Volksstimme published* an article about the encounter with the Austrian national team, also equating Dinamo with Gradjanski. The Austrian journalist made the connection with Gradjanski because that club was supposed to be the opponent of their national team before the war: "The likely lineup of the national team will

⁷³ "Dynamo-Zagreb spielt gegen das A-Team," *Neues Österreich*, March 5, 1949, No. 1179/54, 5. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nos&datum=19490305&seite=5&zoom=33&query=gradjanski>&ref=anno-search (accessed May 30, 2024).

⁷⁴ "Dynamo-Zagreb in Wien," *Weltpresse*, March 5, 1949, No. 54, 5. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=dwp&datum=19490305&seite=5&zoom=33&query=gradjansky>&ref=anno-search (accessed May 30, 2024).

⁷⁵ "Dynamo Zagreb – Trainingspartner der Nationalelf," *Neue Zeit*, March 6, 1949, No. 55, 4. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=awi&datum=19490306&seite=4&zoom=33&query=gradjanski>&ref=anno-search (accessed May 30, 2024).

⁷⁶ "Dynamo-Zagreb in Wien eingetroffen," *Wiener Kurier*, March 8, 1949, No. 56, 5. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wku&datum=19490308&seite=5&zoom=33&query=gradjanski>&ref=anno-search (accessed May 30, 2024).

be tested against none other than the excellent Yugoslav club Dinamo-Zagreb, the winner of the last year's championship. The club's former name was Gradjanski, and this team was chosen as the national team's sparring partner even before the war."⁷⁷ To emphasize Dinamo's quality, in addition to mentioning that they were the previous year's Yugoslav champions, it was highlighted that the team had five Yugoslav Olympic national team representatives. Dinamo, though trailing 2-0, ultimately won the match 5-2, which was a major shock and blow to the Austrian sports public.⁷⁸

After the club left an excellent impression against the Austrian national team, other invitations for matches followed. In *Salzburger Volkszeitung* on 19 August 1949, a short announcement of a celebratory match marking the 50th anniversary of Vienna's Rapid against Dinamo can be read: "After much effort, SK Rapid has finally found an opponent for its jubilee match, and SC Dinamo Zagreb (formerly Gradjanski) will play against the Hütteldorfers⁷⁹ in Vienna on October 5."⁸⁰

All these reports about Dinamo's encounters with Wiener Sportklub, Rapid, and the Austrian national team equated Dinamo with the former Gradjanski. It is a fact that at that time, Dinamo, despite being the Yugoslav champion, did not mean much to readers of Austrian newspapers under that name, so those in the know referred to Gradjanski in their reports, i.e. they would note that Dinamo was formerly Gradjanski in parentheses. These records not only testify to the great reputation that Gradjanski enjoyed in Austria during the interwar period but also to the fact that Austrian journalists were well aware of the situation in postwar Yugoslavia and correctly assessed that Dinamo had not emerged from nothing, as was officially presented, but was indeed the successor to the famous Gradjanski.

⁷⁷ "Schwere Aufgabe für die Teamkandidaten," *Österreichische Volksstimme*, March 9, 1949, No. 57, 4. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ovs&datum=19490309&seite=4&zoom=33&query=gradjansky>&ref=anno-search (accessed May 30, 2024).

⁷⁸ Stjepan Bobek, who after the war had to leave Gradjanski for the newly founded Partizan in Belgrade, played for Dinamo as a loaned player. Bobek's appearance for Dinamo should primarily be viewed through the lens of strengthening Dinamo on that tour, thus bolstering the reputation of Yugoslav football abroad.

⁷⁹ Name used for Rapid team: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SK_Rapid_Wien

⁸⁰ "Rapid Wien spielt gegen Dynamo Agram," *Salzburger Volkszeitung*, August 19, 1949, No. 191, 3. <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svz&datum=19490819&seite=3&zoom=33&query=gradjansky>&ref=anno-search (accessed May 30, 2024).

Other European newspapers and programmes

Swiss newspaper *Der Bund* from Bern, on 21 April 1949, in a report from a football tournament in the Belgian city of Charleroi, explained to its readers that Dinamo was merely a new name for the former Gradjanski: “However, Dinamo Zagreb (the new name of the famous Gradjanski) showed how football can be played, which the open-air audience greeted with applause.”⁸¹ The same newspaper, a year later on 14 February 1950, in a comment on Dinamo’s match with the Swiss national team, once again explained Dinamo through Gradjanski: “The strikes were better, and there was much joy in the brief phases of quick attacks, which, given Dinamo’s skill – better known to us under the former name Gradjanski – didn’t bring anything this time.”⁸² Considering that the initials at the start of both articles are the same, it is likely that the same person wrote both articles and felt the need to clarify for their readers which club was being referred to, one that, in a short time, had not only been defeating other clubs but also national teams.

In the light of the identification of Dinamo with Gradjanski, an interesting example can be found in the *Festival Programme* booklet of Fulham Football Club from 10 May 1951, which announces the match and Dinamo’s visit to London. On page 3 of the aforementioned program there is a short text welcoming Dinamo football players in English and Serbian. The next, fourth, English-language page provides more detailed information about Dinamo, which is addressed to Fulham fans. In addition to the initial praise (“The Dinamos are certainly one of Yugoslavia’s best teams”), the text explains who Dinamo really is:

The Dinamos have often been champions of Yugoslavia. Before the war (when the club was known as Gradjanski E.K.) they won it five times in a fairly short period. They were champions again two years ago. As a club they are not entirely new to England as tourists, which will surprise many people. Under their old name of Gradjanski E.K. they toured this country in 1936.⁸³

⁸¹ w. b., “Der zweite Tag der Berner in Charleroi”, *Der Bund*, April 21, 1949, No. 183, 4. <https://www.e-newspaperarchives.ch/?a=d&d=DBB19490421-01.2.19.1&srpos=8&e=-----en-20--1-byDA-img-txIN-dynamo+zagreb-----0-----> (accessed June 9, 2024).

⁸² w. b., “Dreifarbiger Schweizer Fussball in Lausanne”, *Der Bund*, February 14, 1950, No. 74, 5. <https://www.e-newspaperarchives.ch/?a=d&d=DBB19500214-01.2.20.3&e=-----en-20--1-byDA.rev-img-txIN-gradjanski-----0-----> (accessed June 9, 2024).

⁸³ J. G. Orange, “Inside the Cottage” (*The Cottagers’ Journal, Fulham Football Club, Festival Programme*), p. 4.

The mention that Gradjanski is already known to the English audience continues and is clarified on the following page: “So far as I can trace this is only the third occasion that Yugoslavian teams have visited England. There was the case already referred to Dinamo’s predecessors Gradjanski, visiting this country in 1936 to play Liverpool, Doncaster Rovers, Wolwerhampton and West Ham”.⁸⁴

This short booklet (a total of 12 pages with advertising space) testifies that English journalists were identifying the then Dinamo with the former Gradjanski as early as 1951, which is six years after the “abolition” of Gradjanski in Yugoslavia. Basic information about the club could have been obtained either from Dinamo’s delegation, which included people who once worked at Gradjanski, or from the press while researching what kind of a club was this club coming to London.⁸⁵

It is also worth mentioning here the Hungarian daily newspaper *Magyar Szó* from Novi Sad, which, on the occasion of the game played between Slovan from Bratislava, then the current winner of the European Cup Winners Cup, and Dinamo, reported the statement of the Slovan’s coach Michal Vičan, who referred to the draw and his opponent:

MICHAL VIČAN, Slovan’s coach, who once played as the centre back in the same team and wore the national team jersey several times, said about the Zagreb team: ‘I could have imagined a much more pleasant opponent. I think that the Zagreb Dinamo is the successor of the former Gradjanski, and that well known team has often caused us great problems during my career as a player.’⁸⁶

We see that the famous player and coach, who often encountered the Zagreb team in the past, also believed that Gradjanski and Dinamo were the same club. This statement is even more significant because those Hungarian newspapers were published in Yugoslavia, where this fact was still not publicly emphasized at the time. It is worth mentioning that Dinamo was better and advanced further.

Along with these articles in which Dinamo is associated with the pre-war Gradjanski in foreign newspapers, we also provide a part of writing from the Spanish newspaper *Diario de Navarra* from 30 December 1970, that is,

⁸⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁸⁵ At the beginning of the welcoming address for guests, they are addressed in Serbian (*vreme, jugoslovenskom, futbalskog, učestvuju, uspeha, ovde, gde, najbolje, Fulamom, lepoj*), and not in Croatian, so they could not have been influenced by someone who perhaps fled Croatia after the war or sympathized with the abolished Gradjanski.

⁸⁶ József Zala, “A KEK győztese Zágrábba tart”, *Magyar Szó*, September 15, 1969, No. 255, 14 (highlighted in the source).

25 years after Dinamo played its first match: “Dinamo, the first Zagreb football team, is an exceptional club that cannot be compared to any team in the Yugoslav league. During its 25 years of existence, it continues the pre-war, 30-year-long tradition of ‘Gradjanski’. Some of these exceptions do not particularly please those from Zagreb.”⁸⁷ In this text, too, we see that the unsigned author believes that Dinamo is the successor of Gradjanski because they say that Dinamo, in addition to its 25 years of existence, continues the 30 years of tradition of Gradjanski. Particularly interesting is the sentence from which we can gather that the people of Zagreb did not receive the changes that occurred in the best possible way. Unfortunately, this sentence seems to have been subsequently inserted into the text, so it seems a bit cumbersome and its meaning cannot be determined with certainty.⁸⁸ Given that it comes after the sentence in which Dinamo is equated with Gradjanski, we can only assume that the citizens of Zagreb may not have been satisfied with the changes that occurred in football after the war. The author of the article seems to have been well informed about Dinamo because, in addition to the aforementioned data, they also give some details about Dinamo’s European matches, as well as data from a tour of South America. However, unlike Fulham’s 1951 program, although the author refers to the tradition of Gradjanski in the text, they list only the trophies and successes that Dinamo achieved after the war during the already mentioned 25 years of existence. Nevertheless, it is clear that at the end of 1970, a Spanish journalist considered Dinamo and Gradjanski to be one and the same club.

Conclusion

From the published news reports, primarily from Austrian, Hungarian and Romanian newspapers, but also from some Swiss, Slovak, Spanish and English media, it is clear that Dinamo was equated with Gradjanski. In the early years and in the first reports, foreign journalists likely shaped the information based on well-known players, and thus most often associated Dinamo with Gradjanski. Later, they were more likely to receive information either from fellow journalists from Zagreb or even from the management of the Zagreb club, where there were a lot of those who had also worked in Gradjanski.

⁸⁷ “El día 1: Osasuna – Dinamo de Zagreb”, *Diario de Navarra*, December 30, 1970, 11.

⁸⁸ I would like to thank my colleague from the Institute for Migration Research, María Florencia Luchetta, PhD, for help with the translation and interpretation of the said text.

It should be mentioned that the number of references in which Dinamo occurs without a connection to Gradjanski is much higher, but we were mainly focused on that relationship, given that the prevailing narrative in Yugoslavia was that Dinamo was a completely new club founded after the Second World War. It is logical that, as time went on, Dinamo became less and less identified with Gradjanski. This was due, firstly, to the good results of Dinamo, especially in Europe in the 1960s, being one of the finalists of the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup in 1963, and winning it in 1967, and secondly, due to the already mentioned, but still important, official club position that Dinamo, although it inherited the famous football tradition of Zagreb clubs, was nevertheless founded in 1945. It was illusory to expect that foreigners, since they are not local journalists, would question when and how the club was founded. Yet, despite such a narrative, we saw that Ferencvárosi's official bulletin back in 1981 considered Dinamo and Gradjanski to be the same club.

This number of examples that equate Dinamo with Gradjanski should not be taken as final either, because by examining the newspaper archives of other countries, more such examples are likely to be found. In the end, that number is not so important; what matters is that in the early years, for those who were familiar with the situation in Yugoslavia, it was clear what had happened to Croatian and Yugoslav football clubs after the end of World War II, and they undoubtedly considered Dinamo and Gradjanski to be the same club, regardless of the official stance of the Zagreb club at that time.

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