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## **National Mourning: The First Norwegian Sports Boycott in 1905**

### *Abstract*

One of the early sports boycotts in modern times occurred in 1905 as a reaction to the stalled negotiations concerning separate consulates for Norway, then in political union with the mightier country Sweden. The Committee for the representation of Norwegian athletes in the winter sporting contest Nordic Games in Stockholm, Sweden, decided to quit its work because of the sorrow which was said to be felt throughout Norway. To a considerable extent, the daily newspapers and weekly sports magazines defined the public opinion in this context. The editors, especially in the capital Kristiania (now Oslo), related the right to set up Norwegian consulates to the fundamental question of national sovereignty as well as to the democratic aspirations of the Norwegian people, thereby most probably inducing the Committee to terminate its work. Although the decision was a break from the paradigm of not mixing sport and politics, neither the Committee, nor the publications, nor most athletes voicing their opinions, presented the boycott as a kind of threat or direct political demonstration against Sweden. It became a question of morality and identity. The boycott in 1905 may be perceived as a demonstration of what mattered most – for the Norwegians themselves.

### *Key Words*

Boycott, skiing public opinion, media, Scandinavia.

Norway, on the Northern outskirts of Europe, has a long history of debating and boycotting sports events throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Most recently, the International Ski Federation's decision to exclude Russian athletes from competitions through the end 2021-2022 season, although justified only out of concerns for the security for the athletes themselves, can partly be explained as a consequence of pressure from the Norwegian Ski Association and local organizers of World Cup ski events in Norway. Russia's unprovoked assault on Ukraine in February 2022 infuriated the Norwegian people, as in many other countries around the world.<sup>1</sup> The year before, in 2021, the Norwegian Football Association (NFF) engaged a relatively independent working group, to help an extraordinary congress decide on whether to boycott the World Cup 2022 in Qatar. A grassroots movement of clubs had raised the issue of whether one (ultimately FIFA) would really let games be played on graveyards – quite literally because of the very harsh conditions for migrant workers building the football stadiums in Qatar.<sup>2</sup> In 1980, the main congress of the Norwegian Confederation of Sports (NIF) chose, by a rather narrow margin, not to take part in the Moscow Olympics, as the Soviet-union had invaded Afghanistan the year before. In 1969, the countries of the Warsaw Pact (except Czechoslovakia) were not welcomed to the skiing festival at Holmenkollen, Oslo, because of the military crushing of the Prague Spring of 1968. Norway's best track and field athletes, together with other Scandinavian athletes, decided the same year not to compete in the European Championships in Athens in protest against how the military junta in Greece had mistreated its own people.<sup>3</sup> The most well-known boycott, and most researched, is what was called the 'sports strike' during the Nazi occupation (1940-1945).<sup>4</sup> The common thread in almost all these boycotts is opposition to dictatorship. The very first sport boycott, however, has not been studied at length, at least not from a Norwegian perspective. It is likely among the earliest political boycotts in modern sport history.<sup>5</sup>

For several centuries, Norway was in union with Denmark and, therefore, on the losing side in the Napoleonic Wars (1807-1814). The so-called Peace of Kiel transferred Norway to the Swedish king, but before the general Jean-Baptiste Jules Bernadotte (Crown Prince in Sweden from 1810, King Karl Johan from 1818) could claim his powers, the people (men) of Norway elected representatives to a national assembly that made a Constitution for a sovereign, independent nation, with its own monarch. The Constitution was renegotiated in the autumn of 1814; the elected king had to leave the country. From 1860, the conflict within this political or indeed personal union developed strongly, and in 1884 the parliament (Stortinget) asserted power of dismissing the government, introducing parliamentarism from then onwards. Even so, the king of Sweden and Norway presided over foreign policy and chose (or dismissed) consuls on behalf of both countries. Accordingly, the political conflict from 1892 to 1905 had to do with whether Norway could appoint its own consuls. Probably to the surprise of many Norwegian (as well as the Swedish) leaders, even in the beginning of 1905, this specific controversy resulted in the peaceful dissolution of the union in June 1905.<sup>6</sup>

Nordiska Spelen (the Nordic Games) was first held in Stockholm in 1901.<sup>7</sup> The idea behind this winter sports festival was to enhance the Nordic sporting traditions, particularly related to Sweden's landscape and history, to strengthen the cultural ties between Sweden and Norway, and to some degree to Denmark and Finland as well.<sup>8</sup> The site of the games was intended to alternate between the countries, every second year. For a whole week, skiing events, skating and ice hockey, and various races with horses formed the program and arrangements.<sup>9</sup> The contests held in Kristiania in 1903 must be regarded as a success, with 23 Swedish skiers participating in a (special) 50 km long-distance race, and a few of them also attempting the ski jump in Holmenkollen. The press of both nations reported extensively from the games; the journalists also met at a dinner, thus raising the awareness of sport journalism as a field of its own. On the last day of the festival, there was a celebration with

all the athletes, with a typical Swedish evening meal consisting of sandwiches (smørrebrødsexa), and fireworks at the prize ceremony. Politicians and the Crown Prince attended the ceremony, which included speeches by prominent sports leaders such as the Swedish military officer Victor Balck and the internationally famous Norwegian polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen.<sup>10</sup> Balck, termed the father of Swedish (competitive) sports, was an original member of International Olympic Committee (IOC) and was clearly influenced by Pierre de Coubertin's ambitious project of reviving the classical Olympic Games. Nansen's books on the first crossing of Greenland (on skis), and then on the scientific exploration of the North Pole (1893-1896, with the ship Fram), had been translated into both English and German. The IOC even awarded Nansen an honorary diploma in 1904.<sup>11</sup>

These two sports events in Stockholm in 1901 and in Kristiania in 1903, and the support they received from politicians and the press, form part of what the historian Ruth Hemstad refers to as the 'Indian Summer' of cultural and organizational partnerships between Norway and Sweden, and partly Denmark, after the more intense period of the union (consulates) conflict, at one occasion also involving sports, in the years 1892-1895.<sup>12</sup> The association Brødrefolkens Vel (The Well-being of the Brother-people), which had its first meeting before the Nordic Games in 1903, fits into the same picture.<sup>13</sup> The question concerning the consulates reached something of a 'thaw' the same spring; the two union partners reaching a compromise, and a promise according to Norwegian newspapers, to allow Norway its own representation abroad.<sup>14</sup> At that time only the most radical writers and editors in Norway demanded dissolution of the union, and certainly no one then advocated a boycott against the brother-people, in any cultural context. In January 1905, the Committee for organizing the travel and representation in Stockholm decided that the Norwegian athletes would stay home. The political negotiations concerning whether Norway, in union with Sweden, was entitled to set up its own independent consulates abroad, had then

collapsed. Scholars have not fully recognized the leading role of the Norwegian press, in producing the sentiment behind the boycott. The editors of the leading newspapers and sporting periodicals in the capital Kristiania (called Oslo from 1925) advocated strongly for not participating in Stockholm, thereby making it almost impossible for the Committee to carry on its work.

The 1905 boycott debate can be divided into four related time sequences. During the first preparatory phase, in autumn 1904, a prestigious committee for a Norwegian representation in Sweden appointed its president, working chairman, and secretary. The national sports federation even applied for additional support from the government. Both aspects underline the national and official dimension of the forthcoming winter sports team. In the second phase in early January 1905, both union-radical and conservative newspapers hinted at the need for a boycott, as it seemed like the negotiations on independent appointment of consuls had stalled. In the third phase, in mid-January, the official Committee denied that they had decided upon any boycott. An association for friendship among the brother-people even travelled to Sweden to explain to its partner (and friends in Sweden) how the already agitated opinion, intensified by how Swedish newspapers were rephrased, was developing in Norway. In the final stage, late in January 1905, even more newspapers demanded a sports boycott, as it by then was clear that the negotiations concerning consulates had collapsed. This agitation prompted the official Committee to decide for staying home. However, in its letter to the Swedish organizers, the Committee did not use the word 'boycott', nor presented it as such. In hindsight, the political reason for the decision, as well as the framing of the boycott, may seem strange. The main newspapers and sporting periodicals stressed that they did not want to punish or defame Sweden, or Swedish sports. The editors, and then the Committee, justified their choice by insisting on a widespread

emotion of deep sorrow in Norway. The Norwegian rejection of Nordic Games in 1905 reflected the importance of morality and identity behind such a decision.

### Norwegian Daily Newspapers

The boycott of the Nordic Games in 1905 has received some scholarly treatment but mainly from a Swedish perspective. Jan Lindroth emphasized the role of and reactions from Victor Balck, who excluded Norwegian skiers in Swedish events the years following 1905 because of the offence he felt as an important originator of these Nordic Games.<sup>15</sup> Matti Goksøyr also explains the evolving Norwegian-Swedish sports relations, and (the mostly symbolic) conflicts, in the years after 1905. It is probable that relationship, even in the most nationally important sport of skiing, had been partly normalized around 1910.<sup>16</sup> Ruth Hemstad treats the sports boycott as part of a broader cultural darkening, a ‘Nordic winter’, which ended the new Scandinavianism. The boycotts affected other cultural spheres and meetings, as in chess, in science, and in music.<sup>17</sup> Leif Yttergren, and Jens Ljunggren have both studied the Nordic Games, but neither of them concentrate at any length on the 1905 boycott, although Ljunggren explains the broader context of nation-building and the tourist industry of the Nordic Games, and in this way relates sport to politics of the period.<sup>18</sup> Most researchers grant Fridtjof Nansen a leading role in deciding for a Norwegian boycott.<sup>19</sup> However, the newspapers and sporting periodicals at the time pretty much created the ‘national mourning’ that most likely induced the Committee to quit its work.

The literature on global sporting boycotts in the previous century, especially in relation to the various Olympic Games, is vast.<sup>20</sup> Recent research has concentrated on the effectiveness of boycotts.<sup>21</sup> Sigmund Loland’s short definition of boycotts, which is rooted in general politics and also includes sanctions, is a useful departure because he states ‘sanctions and boycotts involve denying one party access to a good’.<sup>22</sup> Hence, boycotts can deny someone access to a market or exclude a team or a state from prestigious arenas for international interaction. As in

the case from Scandinavia in 1905, sports boycotting can also imply staying away, instead of directly denying someone else (for example Russian athletes) participation, and then only indirectly denying a party access to a good such as a friendly meeting or an exciting competition. To deny oneself (or own team's) participation, however, must be harder emotionally than to deny another from taking part. The state, the political-administrative body of a country, is not necessarily included in the process and the concept, although it often has been the initiating part in the global history of sporting boycotts. Loland's definition consists of a second important element: a purpose of forcing or defaming the boycotted party.<sup>23</sup>

Both the periodicals concentrating fully on sports, and the daily newspapers published in various cities in Norway, pushed the question of a Nordic Games boycott forward. The most prominent of the two weekly Norwegian sport magazines, *Norsk idrætsblad*, was founded back in 1881. This periodical covered both amateur and professional sports, although amateurism as a sports ideology quickly became the norm. In 1905, the most important daily newspapers were *Morgenbladet* and *Aftenposten*, which tended towards conservative points of view and often supported the union with Sweden, and *Dagbladet* and *Norske Intelligenssedler*, liberal papers that often sympathized with the cause for full Norwegian sovereignty. *Ørebladet* was a newer daily newspaper (except Sundays), and although the circulation numbers probably were well below *Aftenposten* and *Morgenbladet*, its more straightforward style and sensational journalism made it influential, or at least referred to by the other newspapers. Until 1905, *Ørebladet's* editorial line had been supportive of the union.<sup>24</sup> The 'unpolitical' *Morgenposten*, with the highest circulation numbers at the time, did not involve itself in this question of a sporting boycott, nor did *Verdens Gang* or *Social-Demokraten*, the paper for the rising labour movement in Norway at this time.<sup>25</sup> The many Kristiania-based publications covered the question of a boycott in January 1905, expressing their own views. Although the editors did not necessarily state their views in specific columns, the different publications presented fairly



obvious positions on the issue.<sup>26</sup> In 1905, women were politically excluded in both Norway and Sweden, and mostly, though not in principle, from sport and the sports-press as well. Of the very different news and headlines (and sometimes even photos) printed in the newspapers throughout January 1905, there is mention of fears of smallpox in Kristiania; a disastrous flood wave in the west of Norway, killing more than 60 people, and late in the month, the riots and even tendencies towards revolution in St. Petersburg.<sup>27</sup> The natural disaster, as well as the revolt in Russia, are both relevant contexts for the boycott, and how it was presented.

### Financial Support from the Ministry of Defence

The stalled negotiations concerning separate Norwegian consulates obviously elicited the newspapers' argument for, and then demand for, a boycott of the Nordic Games in Sweden. Furthermore, the reason why the press and the sporting periodicals mixed sport with politics in this specific event, may be found in how the Norwegian state itself decided to support a sports team financially. Although the athletes could register for the various races privately, not all of them could not afford to travel at their own expense. The Swedish team visiting Oslo in 1903, had travelled as a coherent and rather large group. Various Norwegian sports leaders partly therefore chose to ask for monetary support from the political authorities in Norway, and later to form a committee that could organize the sportsmen's travel to and stay in Stockholm. As the state in fact granted the sporting community a considerable amount of money at this occasion, the team preparing for the Nordic Games took on a national dimension. The leading newspapers then argued that the quite official winter sports team of Norway, heading for Sweden, inevitably implicated politics.

Already in June 1904, the main Swedish sport federation, Sveriges Centralförening för Idrottens Främjande, sent the first formal invitation for the next Nordic Games, which were scheduled in Stockholm in early February 1905, to the corresponding Norwegian Sports

Federation (NSF, Centralforeningen for Udbredelse af Idræt).<sup>28</sup> NSF was an organization with roots in a former association initiated back in 1861, partly as a consequence of the political conflict with Sweden at that time. In its structure and ideology, NSF around 1905 was quite different from the later federation (of 1910), being both an association with direct, voluntary membership, and a federation for different sports associations. NSF supported various and local sports clubs financially; its muscle in this regard was stimulated and nurtured by the Norwegian State Budget. Accordingly, NSF decided to apply to the Ministry of Defence for additional support (2500 NOK), raising the argument that a coherent and strong Norwegian sports representation in Stockholm was both valuable as such, and in line with what Sweden had demonstrated in Kristiania in 1903. Later in 1904, an organization for the travel, accommodation and representation of the Norwegian athletes formed itself (called the Committee from now on).<sup>29</sup> Fridtjof Nansen was elected (honorary) president, Colonel Fridtjof Jacobsen (working) chairman of the Committee, and Lieutenant Christopher Fougner the secretary. The other members were also either military officers, or landowners, factory owners and consuls, the more privileged men in and around the capital of Norway.<sup>30</sup>

Nowhere within these preparations and applications, nor in the related notes printed in the newspapers, should it be interpreted that an explicit political dimension was presented, except perhaps in the extolled virtues of what the sports leaders hoped would be a worthy and impressive Norwegian winter sports delegation. These ambitions can be perceived as part of nationalism in a cultural sense; that is, a common understanding of tradition, language, history. Benedict Anderson has characterized it as an ‘imagined community’.<sup>31</sup> These ideas and emotions of a proud nation do not necessarily imply a demand for political institutions and a national state, although they often have. Correspondingly, Norway – understood as a cultural, geographical and national entity – should be represented, hopefully impressively and successfully, at the Nordic Games. The press and the periodicals, in particular the sports

magazine *Norsk idrætsblad*, preferred to present the relationship between the two nations as brothers and friends in the same political union. It is difficult, of course, to insist upon no political ambition on behalf of Norway being included in this official sport representation. Neither the newspapers and sports magazines, nor the Committee, hinted at this. Especially *Aftenposten* wrote long articles on the programme in the forthcoming Nordic Games and how the newspaper thought Norwegians sportsmen would perform in speed skating, in skiing, and even horse racing.<sup>32</sup> Other papers encouraged the athletes to head out for Stockholm, as this was such a beautiful city to visit..<sup>33</sup> However, the negotiations concerning consulates had moved into a much trickier phase from the end of November 1904. *Aftenposten* first wrote about the difficulties. In mid-December, the daily, and liberal, newspaper *Dagbladet* stated that although an official statement from the government could not be expected until at least January, the negotiations were de facto stalled, or, literally translated, ‘stranded’.<sup>34</sup> Rather unsurprisingly, it was *Dagbladet* which first involved a political aspect in the forthcoming sporting event. The paper’s editors were closely connected to the political party Venstre (1884), fighting for a union-radical program.<sup>35</sup> A statement, probably from the editor himself, Olaf Thommesen, argued that the sum of 2500 Norwegian krone (NOK), now incorporated into the budget of the Ministry of Defence, should be openly debated in parliament. The state’s support for the Norwegian team of athletes and leaders to Stockholm, *Dagbladet* claimed, would make the participation an even more official expedition, representing Norway as such. The newspaper certainly did not want this engagement, expressing that it would seem like a vassal bowing to his lord. The editorial referred to the opposing argument, that sport and politics should not be mixed, but easily rejected it as the usual cliché of the conservative, union-sympathizing press.<sup>36</sup> Although *Dagbladet*’s editor probably did not expect it, his view on participation (or not) was supported the very same evening, in the conservative and pro-union newspaper *Morgenbladet*. The editor Nils Vogt stated that if the negotiations had really broken

down, no Norwegian would ‘drink the cup of joy’ in Stockholm. In fact, he concluded, there would be nothing less than national mourning, and much that had started to grow, would freeze and wither.<sup>37</sup> Vogt anticipated, or wanted to make sure, that the Norwegian athletes would stay away because of sorrow, implying that if they really headed for Stockholm, they would miss the happiness that sport meetings and competitions were all about. Neither the parliament, nor the government’s possible financial backing, was mentioned; neither did the paper use the word ‘boycott’.<sup>38</sup>

The conservative but minor newspaper *Ørebladet* was the first to explicitly choose the word ‘boycott’ in this sports context. On the front page on January 13, 1905, it proclaimed that the Committee had almost certainly decided to boycott the games if the negotiations really proved to have stalled. As this break had not been officially declared by the governments of the two countries, it was still possible to sign up for the team. The paper mentioned no source or specific name behind the information from the Committee.<sup>39</sup> It might have been the sentiment expressed by newspaper the day before that prompted *Ørebladet* to draw such a hasty conclusion about the ‘boycott’. The first line ran, in even bolder type: ‘A word of honour broken’; it was a rather short, but very clear and heartbroken message about the ongoing negotiations. Probably the editors of the conservative newspapers were the most disappointed, as they had put all their trust in the union in this last round of negotiations.<sup>40</sup> In numbers and strength and political relevance, the daily and mainly conservative newspaper *Aftenposten* surpassed even *Morgenbladet* in the years after 1900.<sup>41</sup> It did not express its view on boycotting Nordic Games right away, and initially praised the Committee for taking a pending position.<sup>42</sup>

The Swedish papers almost immediately reacted to the suggestion of boycotting Nordic Games, as *Dagbladet*, *Ørebladet* and *Morgenbladet* had at least hinted at. The Norwegian newspapers brought the articles and the reasoning in them to the public in Norway, and the press often referred to the Swedish papers as their opponents as much as Swedish politicians.

In mid-January, *Aftenposten* printed a telegram from Stockholm referring to the daily *Dagens Nyheter*, to which members of the Committee was said to have explained that sportsmen in Norway really looked forward to the games but feared the public opinion and the politicians, and that the Committee itself disliked the idea of a boycott.<sup>43</sup> In an editorial the following day, *Aftenposten* rejected this interpretation of the interview, both in terms of what concerned Norwegian sportsmen generally and how the two quoted officers of the Committee viewed a possible boycott. The sorrow and disappointment with Sweden politically were felt by everyone in Norway, the editor stated – although he stopped short of advocating for a boycott himself.<sup>44</sup> *Morgenbladet*'s editorial also pointed to the derision that the possible boycott-decision was fomenting in Sweden. The Swedish papers maybe perceived the question of separate Norwegian consulates as matter of trivial politics and economics, in developed countries, on the contrary, every man and woman associated their personal honour with the honour and freedom of the country itself, *Morgenbladet* declared. Nonetheless, the editorial warned against the more confrontational line that *Ørebladet* in Norway seemed to have chosen. Again, the newspaper avoided the word 'boycott'.<sup>45</sup>

The Swedish newspaper *Handelstidningen* conducted an early investigation among sport leaders in Sweden. The organizers of the forthcoming Nordic Games expressed disbelief at a political move by Norwegian athletes. If a boycott really were to occur, they continued, Sweden would still arrange the event – and thereby not let itself be threatened, nor be dragged into politics.<sup>46</sup> *Svenska Dagbladet* printed an interview with the Centralkomiteen, which must be understood here as the leader Victor Balck, one of the very originators of the winter games. He pointed to the idea behind it, that of promoting the Nordic sports and brotherhood between the Nordic countries, which the sport meetings in 1901 and 1903 so clearly had demonstrated and succeeded in achieving. If the Norwegians really would stay home during the Nordic Games now, the Swedish sports leader declared, the Swedish people would be deeply

disappointed.<sup>47</sup> What was only partly, and still only hypothetically, considered as a sports boycott in Norway was certainly perceived as a full one, and a direct threat, in Sweden. The editors in Sweden accused the Norwegian newspapers of being “nervous”, here meaning provocative.<sup>48</sup> To the leading Swedish newspapers, it was obvious that it was the press that had pushed the issue of a sports boycott forward in Norway. To some degree, the Swedish press reaction agitated the newspapers in Norway even further towards demanding a boycott from the Committee.

### Final Push

Until mid-January, mainly the press had problematized Norwegian participation in the Nordic Games. The Committee itself did not express any view or decision until *Ørebladet* reported so. No statement or announcement from the president Fridtof Nansen can be traced throughout January in the newspapers, and the first declaration that the Committee produced, only told that nothing had been discussed in the meetings so far. The published statement of January 14, 1905 added that the Committee had registered the discussions of the many newspapers but that it wanted to remain silent and proceed with the preparations, as the negotiations were still officially being held.<sup>49</sup> A few days later, nevertheless, C. Fougner and O.T. Klingenberg, both members of the Committee, most clearly distanced themselves from the interpretation in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheder* of their reluctance to a boycott, confirming, or insisting, that *if* the Norwegian athletes were to stay home, they would do so not due to pressure from the politicians but because they would miss the joy that sports were understood to be all about, at least from a Norwegian perspective.<sup>50</sup> *Morgenbladet* had already struck this tone and theme of argument early in January.<sup>51</sup> The stated deepfelt emotions of sorrow became the basis for the Committee’s later boycott-decision.

In the weekend of January 14 and 15, 1905, three leading members of the Norwegian association The Wellbeing of the Brother-people even travelled to Stockholm. They tried to explain to their fellow organization in Sweden how the political and cultural atmosphere in Norway had developed recently. The union, the political 'brotherhood' itself, they reported, was facing a crisis. The Norwegian attitude toward the forthcoming sports festival had to be interpreted in this light. Nonetheless, the representatives asserted, a possible boycott should be looked upon as a manifestation of sorrow, not as a demonstration against the festival or Sweden politically. Victor Balck then held a speech in which he repeated the unifying thought behind the winter games, urging the Norwegian representatives to convey his warmest welcome back to his sports friends in Norway.<sup>52</sup> The explanation presented by the Norwegians can be interpreted as a desire to minimize division. Whether the trio, one of them being a high-ranking military officer, spoke on behalf of the Committee, is doubtful. Their interpretation of a possible boycott echoed the leading newspapers in Norway.

After mid-January 1905, *Norsk idrætsblad* published an editorial as a direct appeal to sportsmen in Norway on not taking part in the Nordic Games.<sup>53</sup> This weekly magazine clearly contributed to the recognition of sports writing in Norway, as it was wholly focused on discussing (and thereby supporting) various sports. The editor in 1905, after a brief period where Lieutenant Fougner had been in charge, was a civilian educated in law, and member of a well-known family in Kristiania, named Hagbarth Wergeland. No one, whether part of the official squad or going privately, no matter how successful he would be in the contest, would have moral support if he went to Sweden now, he wrote. It was a question of honour for them as sportsmen and as Norwegians. A rightful demand had been denied the whole people of Norway; it was therefore legitimate to mix sport and politics, in this matter. It really distressed him to print this claim, the editor added, as involvement with politics was something drastically new to the periodical. Being politically independent had been a core value of the publication

since its beginning in 1881, when an intense political debate in Norway raged between those who recognized the union-king's traditional power and those who wanted political power to be placed firmly with the Parliament. Understandably, a new magazine, and many new newspapers as well, did not want to scare away possible subscribers by taking a clear stand in this conflict.<sup>54</sup> Wergeland did not change the apolitical line when he became editor, relaunching the periodical in 1891. As late as 1899 he mocked all those 'half mad poets, political charlatans, and dreadful publishers' who argued like they wanted war against Sweden.<sup>55</sup> The new orientation in 1905 was important in another aspect, as *Norsk idrætsblad* represented the leading magazine for sporting matters in Kristiania and all of Norway.<sup>56</sup>

Late in January, most newspapers reported that the negotiations between Norway and Sweden had collapsed, although they officially ended on February 7, during the Nordic Games. Before an important meeting in the Committee on January 26 at the Bristol hotel in the centre of Kristiania, several newspapers made their final call. *Ørebladet* showed itself as probably the strongest agitator in favour of boycotting the games. *Morgenavisen* in Bergen was perhaps the most outspoken when it came to the possible effect of a boycott. The editor strongly criticized Swedish newspapers, concluding that there should be no participation in Nordic Games unless Sweden acknowledged Norway fully and the sovereign rights to its own consulates.<sup>57</sup> *Norske Intelligenssedler*, an organ for the opposition party Venstre, had not written much about the boycott. The editor now declared that to participate in Stockholm would be political foolishness, as the Committee's decision involved more than just sport. The interests, and the honour of the country itself, were at stake.<sup>58</sup> *Aftenposten* printed only a short note on the forthcoming meeting, anticipating a decision to stay home, adding that this would be appreciated by sportsmen all over Norway.<sup>59</sup> The press created – and heated – the atmosphere in which the Committee had to make its decision.



Two days after its decisive meeting, the Committee itself published a letter sent to the sport federation in Sweden. It explained, in cautious terms, that the sportsmen of Norway would not take part in Nordic Games this year because of the conflict related to the union.<sup>60</sup> The Committee answered on behalf of all Norwegians, not only on behalf of itself and its preparation. On the other hand, contributing to the sombreness of the letter, the Committee emphasized that the Norwegians would be absent only due to ‘the deepest sorrow’. The Committee’s letter concluded with a hope that the decision would not be misunderstood by the friends of Norway in Sweden. The Committee underlined that the absence was not meant as an attack on the sports festival as such.<sup>61</sup> It was as if the Committee wanted to boycott the games without saying so explicitly.

The most important Norwegian publications throughout January 1905 contributed strongly to the decision of the Committee. Although their wording were not fully identical, the justification – the sadness the failed negotiations had created – was the same. After this occasion, in February and March 1905, Fridtjof Nansen published five long pieces in the newspaper *Verdens Gang*, demanding the consulate matter be solved on Norwegian terms.<sup>62</sup> His role as president in the Committee was primarily ceremonial, although it should not be ruled out that he influenced the other members, but probably not before the final meeting in late January. Furthermore, the newspapers to the right and left in the political spectrum joined forces in this case. To some degree they differed in the terms and justifications they used, but they all (with one minor exception, *Kysten*) wanted the winter sport athletes to stay home.<sup>63</sup> The disclaimer that two of the members in the Committee presented in *Aftenposten* demonstrates the level of pressure exerted upon them by the media. The newspapers obviously saw themselves as representing the public and national opinion. In addition, the Swedish and the Norwegian papers agitated and provoked each other. Whether the press in fact created the emotions, or just interpreted and expressed the disappointment and sorrow that a lot of

Norwegians really felt, is hard to tell. Either way, the editors and the journalists defined the tense context in which the members of the Committee had to make their choice.

How the athletes in Norway reacted to the press-presented 'fact' that all sportsmen were burdened with sadness can partly be studied by interpreting letters to the press. Originally, interest in the games had been huge, according to Victor Balck. Skaters, hockey teams, horse riders and around thirty of the best skiers had signed up for the event, and the Norwegian papers published the names of some of them as well.<sup>64</sup> Three different letters in January, one of them signed by 'Several Sportsmen', all supported the idea of a boycott, although they had some difficulty with the notion of mixing sport with politics.<sup>65</sup> 'Several Sportsmen' even mocked the Committee's secretary, Lieutenant Fougner, whom the Committee probably paid in his role, implying that he did not dare to offend the Swedish organizers because of money. A single member of a sport association in Kristiania argued directly against a boycott, pointing to the ideal of not mixing sport with politics, but then he was a Swedish citizen living in Norway.<sup>66</sup> Some sportsmen from Trondheim, including two lieutenants, were said to be planning to travel privately, if the official tour to Stockholm were to be stopped.<sup>67</sup> Taken together, the athletes' opinions probably was more supportive of a sports boycott rather than against it. Both sport magazines and history books refer to several speeches that hint at political awareness among Norwegian farmers and skiers.<sup>68</sup> It was of course easier for the press editors to call for a boycott in 1905, than it was for the athletes. The cross-country skiers in particular missed a rather rare opportunity to compete internationally in Stockholm, with both Swedish and Finnish racers. However, Lieutenant Fougner in the Committee would be hit by a boycott as well. He was not just a sport leader but an athlete and equestrian as well, preparing for the games with his most capable horse 'Colchester'. Later in 1905, when the union conflict was even more intense, he participated in another race in Sweden. The editor of *Morgenbladet*, Nils Vogt, influenced the national representation, even here. According to a fellow Norwegian racer, Vogt instructed

Lieutenant Fougner to compete in civilian clothing, instead of in his military uniform.<sup>69</sup> By and large, the view and the action which the Norwegian athletes, as well as the official Committee, took in early 1905, resonated clearly with the opinion held by the newspapers in Norway.

## Mourning and morality

The arguments that the newspapers and periodicals raised for the sports boycott can be summarized into two key words: honour and emotions. The first word or motive may be connected to morality. The grave emotions which the press and then the Committee also pointed to reflected matters of personal and national identity. Interpreted together, they disclose how the boycott in 1905 was a need to demonstrate something important to the Norwegians themselves.

One aspect in the articles and editorials was obviously honour. When *Ørebladet* wrote that a word of honour had been broken, it indicated the perceived political agreement of 1903. *Dagbladet*, with its metaphor of a vassal bowing to his lord, and *Morgenbladet*, referring to personal honour as linked to national honour, also struck this chord. Even the sport magazine *Norsk idrætsblad* inferred honour as reason why sportsmen should stay home, probably implying that to accept an invitation from an untrustworthy and offending host would be a disgraceful act. According to the magazine, one could not distinguish between being a sportsman and a Norwegian in this case. The concept of honour here can be explained in an aristocratic sense, as a kind of fair play expected by gentlemen in both sports and politics. This connection was in fact made, or at least hinted at, by *Ørebladet*. *Morgenbladet*'s editor related honour to freedom and independence. To Norwegians, at least according to *Morgenbladet*, separate consulates alluded to the independence and honour they wanted to represent to themselves and to the world. The dimension of honour can also be interpreted as that of the

more common man who kept his word, and thus was honest. Honesty was both what *Norsk idrætsblad* praised as the innermost quality of the skater and champion Axel Paulsen in 1885, and what virtue the same magazine accused him of lacking three years later, when it was very likely that he contributed to rig a race with a Swedish competitor. Sports amateurism in a Norwegian context may be said to be revolving around this leitmotif of honesty.<sup>70</sup>

Involving oneself with politics might be understood as a break with the broader ideology of amateurism at that time.<sup>71</sup> Within this perspective, the sporting amateur skied or rode, or whatever he (or she) did in terms of sport, for his own pleasure and of his own free will, not because someone, even the state, told him so. Hence, a Swedish newspaper in 1905 raised the argument that a boycott broke with what a proper sport was all about, not only in ancient Olympic Games in Greece but in contemporary Great Britain as well.<sup>72</sup> *Norsk idrætsblad* initially supported this way of thinking, and the conflict about consulates was never mentioned explicitly here, not even in the direct appeal to the sportsmen. As honour had been denied to all Norwegians in the question of representation and foreign policy, it argued, it would be unworthy to accept an invitation by the very same offender. Seen from the right angle, this corresponded with sports amateurism as well. An amateur practiced his (or her) sport in an honourable way and for honour only – certainly not for money. Furthermore, as he did not compete for material gain in any other way, he could be expected to be honest as well. The virtue of honesty was, for the editor Hagbarth Wergeland, as it also had been for the previous editors of his magazine, fundamental to all good sport. It most likely reflected the view of many readers. A sportsman wrote in 1905 that one should stay away from festivals and parties where one had to avoid the truth in order not to provoke the host; another argued that one should avoid hypocrisy altogether.<sup>73</sup>

Another important argument behind the boycott was the serious emotions the papers stated to be dominating or burdening the Norwegian people. Because the negotiations had

failed and the promise of more Norwegian sovereignty had been broken, everyone was feeling deep disappointment and sadness – and even mourning, according to the main newspapers. This made it difficult to see how sportsmen and their leaders could travel to Stockholm to play. Most explicitly, *Aftenposten* and *Morgenbladet* followed this line of reasoning. Their argument for staying home was obviously rooted in an understanding of sports events as festivals or parties, meaning games and competitions to create great enjoyment, excitement and fun, and celebrating brotherhood and friendship. This idea of sport as celebration parallels how the Swedish leaders initially planned for Nordic Games as a broad cultural festival, as Ljunggren has explained. According to the newspapers' reasoning, politics was not necessarily mixed with sport in this context; the national mourning only mattered more than a party, in particular at a festival meant to celebrate and strengthen the bonds between the brother-people.

The Committee framed its decision in the same direction, justifying its choice in the deeply felt emotion and using the expression 'sadness of the most serious kind'.<sup>74</sup> It was probably meant to indicate both a morality and an identity on behalf of Norwegians, who were aspiring for (even more) freedom. Some of the newspapers had no problem using the word boycott, and one in Bergen even wanted it to be understood as at threat to be realized if the leading Swedish politicians did not change their position in the difficult negotiations. A minor paper in the northern part of Norway criticized the idea of demonstrating national mourning, calling it 'a schoolboy's fisted hand in his pocket'.<sup>75</sup> The editor found the idea of a sports boycott worthless. Nonetheless, the leading publications in the capital Kristiania clearly avoided the very word boycott. Norwegian sportsmen had no desire, *Aftenposten* explained to its readers in mid-January, to hurt or damage Swedish sports. The press, accordingly, only referred to the related words 'demonstration' and 'strike'. The editors and journalists indicated by their use of quotation marks that this was the Swedish newspapers' framing and not identical with the Norwegian public view. *Morgenbladet* took the same, very careful, stance.

Consequently, whether the press' push for, and the Committee's final decision not to organize, travel and participation in Nordic Games really could be called a boycott is not necessarily self-evident. A recent definition, for example by the scholar Carole Gomez, explains a boycott as 'an organised mechanism designed to change the behaviour of its target'.<sup>76</sup> In 1905, at least so it seemed, the Committee intended no force upon or no change of Sweden's behaviour. The word 'boycott' and the history behind it was well known in Norway in 1905. *Morgenbladet* had already, in October 1880, told the story that *The Times* had published, in Captain Charles Boycott's own words, of the terror which the Irish National Land League had initiated by blocking, threatening and even beating the people that worked on the estate where he was in charge.<sup>77</sup> The political goals of the Land League were clear enough, even behind Boycott's propaganda. In 1881, the words 'Boycott' and 'to boycott' ('boycotte') were introduced in Norwegian newspapers; by 1885 these expressions even appeared without the quotation marks.<sup>78</sup> Although in 1880 the newspapers seemed to be fascinated by the Land League's determination, the word and the associated actions mostly had a 'taste' of something anarchistic and of violence, riots and terror. This association can explain why the conservative newspapers were reluctant to use the word in 1905. The political situation in Russia at the very same time – the riot and revolts that the papers proclaimed in big headlines – also contributed to the same explanation. Most editors did not want a revolution in Norway and certainly not a war against Sweden because of a minor sporting event. At the same time, the word itself had taken on a wider meaning: to treat someone like Charles Boycott had been treated, as one dictionary explained, implying to ostracize, or to stay away from someone. The explicit goal of these more broadly understood boycotts was not always obvious.<sup>79</sup>

From a Swedish perspective, the Committee's decision was a politically motivated boycott, no doubt. Victor Balck's reaction of boycotting Norwegian skiers the next few years from participating in Sweden, has been well documented.<sup>80</sup> Balck accused the leader Sigfrid

Edström, who worked for collaboration with Norway and Denmark (concerning common amateur rules), for being a traitor, and colonel Balck might have wanted Norway kept in the union by armed force.<sup>81</sup> The writers in the Swedish newspapers were also convinced of the intention, defining the Norwegian reaction as ‘strike of the press’, a ‘demonstration’, and a boycott.<sup>82</sup> The notion of national mourning would probably be more understandable if it had been related to the disaster in Loen – with a total of 61 people drowned in the flood wave on Sunday, January 15. Norwegian athletes were perhaps not in the mood for parties, joy and competitions in Stockholm shortly after that. *Morgenbladet* in Norway wrote that freedom had been such a long tradition in Sweden, lasting at least 1000 years, and therefore the people and the press had trouble understanding the Norwegian reaction concerning consulate negotiations.<sup>83</sup> From a Swedish perspective it was probably difficult to perceive the athletes’ and the Committee’s determination as not influenced by the politicians of Norway. For Norwegian newspapers and athletes, it was probably difficult to not think of Nordic Games and particularly Colonel Balck as not representing the official Sweden. Maybe, to Swedish newspapers the question of consulates was trivial foreign politics. Regarding Norwegian opinion, the striving for full sovereignty had been triggered in this matter. Furthermore, a feeling of strong disappointment had arisen because the previous agreement from 1903 now seemed broken. The rationale of the Norwegian newspapers seemed to be that if politics was involved, it added on a totally different layer. The press and the Committee, and probably also most of the athletes in Norway, decided to let democratic aspirations (and disillusionments) have priority before or above a sporting event. Their personal and national identity were at stake.<sup>84</sup>

Still, the boycott of 1905 had no explicit political ambition – if *Morgenavisen* in Bergen is excluded from the material. For most of the Norwegian papers, and surely for the Committee, there was no associated idea of changing, pressuring or pushing Sweden back to

the negotiation table – or to defame this political regime through reducing the status of Nordic Games. This contrasts with the specific political and economic goals of the Irish National Land League during the very first boycott in Ireland, although the word had acquired a broader meaning some fifteen years later. It also looks quite different from contemporary definitions concentrating on the intended outcome, and the related research into both intended and unintended consequences of boycotts and sanctions. Stephanie Chan has explained their continued popularity by the symbolic use of sanctions and boycotts to express morality. She problematizes this need among policymakers to just ‘do something’ because it may override considerations of (un-)effectiveness.<sup>85</sup> A historian should neither criticize nor defend the sports boycott in 1905. It was less as a demonstration the Norwegians did against their neighbouring country than *for* themselves. The leading newspapers, and then the Committee, wanted to communicate what ideas of national sentiment, and independence, and honour, that mattered to them. They wanted to communicate or signal their morality not only to Sweden, but to other countries, and probably not the least, to themselves.<sup>86</sup>

### What mattered most

The Norwegian press created the mood that made a boycott of the Nordic Games in Stockholm in 1905 almost unavoidable. The liberal paper *Dagbladet* made the first move, demanding that the financial support for an almost official Norwegian representing team should be openly discussed in the parliament. The conservative newspaper *Morgenbladet* immediately supported the politicization of the forthcoming sport event, declaring that a collapse in the negotiations concerning separate consulates would create a national mourning, nothing less. A wide range of various newspapers across the political spectre supported a boycott of the Nordic Games. They were deeply saddened by the stalled negotiations and the corresponding broken political promises but also agitated by the Swedish newspapers, which



were said to misrepresent the Committee itself. Even the main sporting magazine encouraged the athletes to stay home, referring to their feeling of honour. Probably most Norwegian sports men agreed upon a boycott, although it brought more severe consequences to them than to the editors of the many papers.

Neither the main newspapers, nor the Committee itself, wanted to harm the Nordic Games, Swedish sports, or Sweden more generally. They insisted upon their emotions of deep sorrow and disappointment as the motivating factor, almost *not* defining it, or at least not calling it a boycott at all. The boycott in 1905 hints to the role that moral emotions and identity play in such a decision. A sports boycott may sometimes be a demonstration of what matters most – for the boycotter him- or herself.

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<sup>1</sup> Norges Skiforbund, 'Ønsker ikke Russlands eller russiske utøveres deltagelse i Norge ['Russian Athletes not Welcome in Norway'], February 22, 2022, <https://www.skiforbundet.no/norges-skiforbund/nyheter/2022/2/nei-til-russiske-utovere-i-konkurranser-i-norge/> (accessed March 30, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Christer Madsen, 'Se Qatar-utvalgets rapport her' ['See the Qatar-committee's report here'], Norges Fotballforbund, May 5, 2021, <https://www.fotball.no/tema/nff-nyheter/2021/qatar-utvalgets-rapport/> (accessed November 11, 2022).

The extraordinary congress, which took place in June 2021, passed a motion not to boycott the World Cup. Yet, the men's team did not in fact qualify, finishing in third place in the UEFA-group G in November 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Helge Pharo, *Tjalve hundre år [Tjalve 100 Years]* (Oslo: Schibsted, 1990), 137. Media companies in Scandinavia also boycotted this event. 'Også Sveriges radio boikotter EM i Aten' ['Even Swedish Radio Boycotts European Championships in Athen'], *Stavanger Aftenbladet*, August 29, 1969, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Most recently: Matti Goksøyr and Finn Olstad, *Skjebnekamp [Fight of Destiny]* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2017); Matti Goksøyr, "'How Can You Play When Your House Is on Fire?' The Norwegian Sports Strike During the Second World War', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 43, no. 4 (2018): 433-456. To some extent, this boycott was preceded by those athletes and associations not participating in the 1936 Olympic Games in Nazi Germany.

<sup>5</sup> According to some scholars, the Germans felt insulted that they had not been invited to the founding IOC Congress in Sorbonne in 1894 and therefore would not compete at the first modern Olympics in Athens in 1896. David B. Kanin, *A Political History of the Olympic Games* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), 28-29. Although Deutsche Turnerschaft threatened to expel those members who participated in a French-sponsored event, some gymnasts decided to take part in Athens. See Allen Guttmann, 'The Virus of Nationalism Distorts the Olympic Ideal', *New York Times*, June 17, 1984, Section 5.

<sup>6</sup> One of many books on the union: Ola Mestad and Dag Michalsen, eds., *Rett, nasjon, union. Den svensk-norske unionens rettslige historie 1814-1905 [Right, Nation, Union. The Swedish-Norwegian Unions Judicial History 1914-1905]* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> The event in 1901 was called 'Nordiska Spel', later editions; 'Nordiska Spelen' (plural form).

<sup>8</sup> Newspapers often used the term 'Nordic', usually indicating Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark together, as a synonym for 'Scandinavian', usually restricted to Sweden, Denmark, and Norway in a more narrow, geographical sense.

<sup>9</sup> For a broad picture of the games, see Åke Jönsson, *Nordiska Spelen: Historien Om Sju Vinterspel [Nordic Games: The History of Seven Winter-Games]* (Stockholm: Arena, 2001). For the programme for 1905 games, see 'Sport', *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, November 16, 1904 (no. 331).

<sup>10</sup> Foreningen til Ski-idrettens Fremme, *Aarvog 1903 [Yearbook 1903]* (Oslo: Fabritius & Sønner, 1903), 16-20; Centralforeningen for udbredelse af idræt, *Aarsberetning for 1902, samt vinteren 1902/1903 [Yearbook 1902/1903]* (Kristiania: Steenske bogtrykkeri, 1903), 121-167.

<sup>11</sup> Fridtjof Nansen, *The first crossing of Greenland* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1890); Fridtjof Nansen, *In Nacht und Eis [In Night and Ice]* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1897); Roland Huntford, *Nansen: The Explorer as Hero* (London: Ducworth,

1997). Fridtjof Nansen's involvement in the peaceful dissolution of the union made him the first Norwegian ambassador to Great Britain. He was later appointed High Commissioner for Refugees by the League of Nations and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1922. . Letter, Pierre de Coubertin (Paris) to Fridtjof Nansen, June 12, 1904, Ms. Fol 1924:15.C, Håndskriftsamlingen, National Library, Oslo,

<https://www.nb.no/items/788328b80f8c6380398002e2e2732661?page=0&searchText=nansen> (accessed April 27, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Swedish sportsmen and leaders were invited to a gymnastic meeting (Turn-fæst) in Kristiania, but some from Stockholm, Victor Balck among them, declined, probably because they feared politics would be mentioned in speeches. Other Swedish athletes, especially from Gothenburg, did participate. See 'Gymnastik', *Norsk idrætsblad*, June 26, 1895 (no. 25), 216-217. Still, Balck's absence was remembered by some Norwegians, and a note from a sportsman in January 1905 pointed to the hypocrisy from Balck in inviting Norwegians to Stockholm now. 'Nordiska Spelen.', *Morgenbladet*, January 20, 1905 (no. 36), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ruth Hemstad, 'Skandinavisme, skandinavisk samarbeide og unionsoppløsningen' ['Scandinavianism, Scandinavian Cooperation and Union-dissolution'] (PhD diss., University of Oslo, 2008), 100, 285.

<sup>14</sup> 'Konsulat-Overenskomsten.', *Morgenbladet*, March 24, 1903 (no. 164), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Jan Lindroth: *Unionsoppløsningen 1905 och Idrotten: Den svenska idrottsrörelsen i en utrikespolitisk krissituation* [The Union-Dissolution, 1905 and Sports'] (Särtryck ur Sveriges Centralförenings för Idrottens Främjande årsbok, 1977).

<sup>16</sup> Matti Goksøy, 'Og så ein svensk-norsk landskamp (!), ein blir så patriotisk i slike stunder: Norsk-svenske idrettsforbindelser etter 1905.' ['Norwegian-Swedish Relations in Sports After 1905'], in *Norsk-svenske relasjoner i 200 år*, ed. Øystein Sørensen and Torbjørn Nilsson (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2005), 72-86. Per Jørgensen treats the Nordic sport development mostly through the lens of Olympic Games, and therefore dates the normalization to 1912/1913. See Per Jørgensen, 'From Balck to Nurmi: The Olympic Movement and the Nordic Nations', in *The Nordic World*, ed. Henrik Meinander and J.A. Mangan (London: Frank Cass publishers, 1998), 69-99.

<sup>17</sup> Hemstad, 'Skandinavismen, skandinavisk samarbeid og unionsoppløsningen', 15, 388, 453-469.

<sup>18</sup> Leif Yttergren, 'The Nordic Games: Visions of a Winter Olympics or a National Festival?'. *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 11, no. 3 (1994): 495-505. Jens Ljunggren, 'Tradition eller tävling: Nordiska Spelen ock kampen om hvad idrott är', *Historisk tidskrift* 117 (1997): 31-37.

<sup>19</sup> Lindroth, *Unionsoppløsningen 1905 och Idrotten*, 6; Hemstad, 'Skandinavismen, skandinavisk samarbeid og unionsoppløsningen', 386-387. Both scholars include a certain influence from the press in their analyses.

<sup>20</sup> An interesting point of departure could be Onyestyák's comparison of two boycotts concerning Hungary. Nikoletta Onyestyák, 'Boycott, Exclusion or Non-participation? Hungary in the Years of the 1920 and 1984 Olympic Games', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 27 no. 11 (2010): 1920-1941.

<sup>21</sup> Sigmund Loland, 'Major Sporting Events and Human Rights: Limitations and Opportunities', <https://www.fotball.no/globalassets/samfunnsansvar-og-verdier/lolands-rapport-eng-final-1.pdf> (accessed April 9, 2022). Although not peer reviewed, the report is highly relevant, with Loland building especially upon other scholarship: Carole Gomez, 'Boycotts and Diplomacy. When the Talking Stops', in *Sport and Diplomacy*, ed. J. Simon Rofe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 169-184; Dursun Peksen, 'When Do Imposed Economic Sanctions Work? A Critical Review of the Sanctions' Effectiveness Literature', *Defence and Peace Economics* 30, no. 6 (2019): 635-647.

<sup>22</sup> Loland, 'Major Sporting Events', 13.

<sup>23</sup> 'Sanctions and boycotts are implemented for the purpose of forcing the boycotted party to implement real changes, and/or to change their reputation.' Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> The editor in 1905 was Ludvig Larsen. See Gunnar Christie Wasberg, *Norsk presse i hundre år, 1820-1920* ['Norwegian Press Through Hundred Years'] (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1976), 296.

<sup>25</sup> *Morgenposten*, or *Christiania Nyheds- og Avertissements-Blad*, had 38,599 subscribers in 1905. See Yngar Holm, ed, *Svæarta: Morgenposten, en gang Norges største avis* [*Morgenposten: Once the Biggest Newspaper in Norway*] (Oslo: Orion forlag, 1999). There is an irony to the lack of support because the *Social-Demokraten* and the Bergen-based *Arbeidet* were supposed to be positive about a boycott, and the related actions of strike and go canny as the weapons of the working class. See for example 'Et sidestykke', *Arbeidet*, January 17, 1898, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Most of the newspapers consisted of only four pages and were published unpaginated. Neither did the newspapers necessarily have headings for their different articles. Numbers are included in the endnotes when newspapers published two editions the same date.

<sup>27</sup> Part of a mountain broke loose, creating a massive flood wave in Loenvatnet in the northwestern part of Norway. The papers told of the disaster two days later. 'Forfærdelig Ulykke.' ['Disastrous Event'], *Aftenposten*, January 17, 1905 (no. 32), 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen 1905', *Aftenposten*, June 21, 1904 (no. 346), 1.

<sup>29</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen', *Aftenposten*, October 5, 1904 (no. 566), 1; 'Nordiska Spelen i Stockholm 1904 (sic!)', *Aftenposten*, October 7, 1904 (no. 570), 2.

<sup>30</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen', *Aftenposten*, December 16, 1904 (no. 712), 2. Representatives of the social class preferred to call itself the more educated (dannede) men in Norway. 'Idræt-Sport', *Norsk idrætsblad*, January 14, 1881 (no. 2), 9.

<sup>31</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991). See also Sverker Sörlin, *Nationalism* (Stockholm, SND Förlag, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Aftenposten*, December 20, 1905, 2; 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Aftenposten*, December 24, 1905, 2. Advertisements for different sports were also printed, urging athletes to sign up. See *Dagbladet*, December 27, 1904 (no. 353), 3. One could also enlist privately without the Committee's help.

<sup>33</sup> 'Sport', *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, November 11, 1904, 2.

- <sup>34</sup> 'Stillingen' ['The situation'], *Dagbladet*, December 17, 1904, 1-2.
- <sup>35</sup> Hans Fredrik Dahl, Gudleiv Forr, Leif Mjeldheim, and Arve Solstad, eds., *Utskjelt og utsolgt. Dagbladet gjennom 125* ['Sold Out and Reviled. Dagbladet Through 125 Years'] (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1993).
- <sup>36</sup> 'Norges offisielle Røpresentation' ['Norway's Official Representation'], *Dagbladet*, January 2, 1905 (no.1), 2. In circulation numbers, the paper was relatively small, around 3000 in 1906.
- <sup>37</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen', *Morgenbladet*, January 2, 1905 (no. 3), 1. See also Nils Vogt, *'Morgenbladet' og unionsopløsningen : 1, Artikler og brev 1903-1905* ['*Morgenbladet and the Union-Dissolution: Articles and Letters 1903-1905*'], (Oslo: Tanum, 1994).
- <sup>38</sup> At least ten local newspapers referred to the notion from *Morgenbladet*.
- <sup>39</sup> 'Nordmændene deltar ikke i Nordiska Spelen' ['Norwegians Will not Participate in Sweden'], *Ørebladet*, January 13, 1905, 1.
- <sup>40</sup> The government of Norway, led by the conservative party (Høyre), had on January 11, 1905, rejected the new Swedish demands. 'Brud på Æresord.' ['Word of Honour Broken'], *Ørebladet*, January 12, 1905, 1.
- <sup>41</sup> Erik Rudeng, *Morgenbladet. En historie for seg* ['*Morgenbladet: A History of Its Own*'] (Oslo: Pax, 2021). The editor in 1905 was Amandus Schibsted, son of the founder Christian Schibsted.
- <sup>42</sup> See *Aftenposten*, January 12, 1905 (no. 22), 1.
- <sup>43</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Aftenposten*, January 17, 1905 (no. 31), 1.
- <sup>44</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Aftenposten*, January 18, 1905 (no. 34), 1.
- <sup>45</sup> 'Stemningen i Norge' ['The Mood in Norway'], *Morgenbladet*, January 12, 1905 (no. 22), 2. See also 'Hvad Pressen skriver.' ['What the Press Writes'], *Morgenbladet*, January 12, 1905 (no. 21.), 2.
- <sup>46</sup> 'Normændene og de Nordiska Spelen', *Aftenposten*, January 13, 1905 (no. 24), 2.
- <sup>47</sup> 'Svensk Presseudtalelse' ['Swedish Press-Release'], *Ørebladet*, January 14, 1905, 1; 'Nordiska Spelen', *Aftenposten*, January 17, 1905 (no. 31), 1.
- <sup>48</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Ørebladet*, January 14, 1905, 1. See also 'Nordiska Spelen', *Morgenposten*, January 21, 1905, 1. For a Swedish (critical) statement to a Danish newspaper; 'Nordiska Spelen: Mærkelige paralleller' ['Nordic Games: Conspicuous parallels], *Morgenbladet*, January 21, 1905, (no. 38), 2. For a corresponding view in the Swedish paper *Aftonbladet*. The so-called nervous press was referred to in 'Nordiska Spelen: Nordmænds Udeblivelse.' [Nordic Games: The Norwegians' Absence'], *Aftenposten*, January 17, 1905 (no. 31), 1.
- <sup>49</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Aftenposten*, January 14, 1905 (no. 25), 1; 'Officielt fra den norske Komite' [Official Statement from the Norwegian Committee] *Ørebladet*, January 14, 1905, 1; 'Nordmænds Deltagelse' ['The Norwegians' Participation'], *Morgenbladet*, January 14, 1905 (no 25), 1. Several other papers reprinted this article in the following days.
- <sup>50</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen', *Aftenposten*, January 19, 1905 (no. 35), 1.
- <sup>51</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen', *Morgenbladet*, January 2, 1905 (no. 3), 1.
- <sup>52</sup> 'Situationen drøftes i "Broderfolkenes Vel"' [The Situation are discussed in "The Well-Being of the Brother-people"] *Morgenbladet*, January 17, 1905 (no 31), 2.
- <sup>53</sup> 'Norske idrætsmænd' ['Norwegian Sportsmen'], *Norsk idrætsblad*, January 19, 1905, 21.
- <sup>54</sup> For the newspaper *Bergens Tidende* (founded in 1868) related to this, see Gudmund Skjeldal, *Vestover: Bergens Tidende i 150 år* [Heading west: *Bergens Tidende in 150 Years*] (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2017).
- <sup>55</sup> 'Idrætstoget 17. Mai' ['The Sporting Column in the 17.May-Defiling'], *Norsk idrætsblad*, May 26, 1898, 327.
- <sup>56</sup> *Morgenbladet* quoted the editorial in *Norsk idrætsblad* the following date: 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Morgenbladet*, January 20, 1905 (no 37), 2. The minor sport periodical, *Norsk Sportsblad* (1903-1907), was printed in Drammen, 30 miles west of Kristiania. The editor was T.N. Glesne.
- <sup>57</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Morgenavisen*, January 25, 1905, 1. The editor was Anders Stilloff. The newspaper was owned by Christian Michelsen, who became prime minister later in 1905 and played a significant role when the parliament broke from the union on June 7.
- <sup>58</sup> 'Det Nationale' [The National], *Norske Intelligenssædler*, January 26, 1905, 1. Hjalmar Løken was editor. On January 27, the paper reported that the Committee, after a meeting that had lasted two hours, decided to end its work. 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Norske Intelligenssædler*, January 27, 1905, 1.
- <sup>59</sup> 'Nordiska spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Aftenposten*, January 25, 1905 (no. 48), 2. *Morgenbladet* wrote nothing until the Committee had made its decision.
- <sup>60</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen – Skrivelsen' ['Nordic Games – the Declaration'], *Morgenbladet*, January 28, 1905 (no. 52), 2.
- <sup>61</sup> All members of the Committee had signed the letter. It was subsequently printed or quoted in at least 30 Norwegian newspapers.
- <sup>62</sup> *Aftenposten* claimed that Nansen already in December 1904 had declared that participation would not happen if the negotiations collapsed. The paper's sources are not mentioned, and what the Committee itself announced in the press contradicts this version. 'Nordiska spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Aftenposten*, January 18, 1905 (no. 34), 1. Victor Balck had even written to the chairman of the Committee, Colonel Jacobsen, thus obtaining at least his view on the developing opinion in Norway, and Jacobsen (in letter to Balck January 8, 1905) confirmed that the newspapers were agitated and that national mourning was possible if the negotiations failed, but in the meantime the Committee would proceed as planned. Lindroth, *Unionsopløsningen 1905 och idrotten*, 5.
- <sup>63</sup> 'Den endeløse Strid' ['The Everlasting Conflict'], *Kysten* ['Norwegian Shipping Gazette'], January 7, 1905. 1-2.
- <sup>64</sup> 'Nordiska spelen' [Nordic Games], *Aftenposten*, January 25, 1905 (no. 48), 2.
- <sup>65</sup> Officer, 'Nordiska Spelen.' ['Nordic Games'], *Dagbladet*, January 5, 1905, 1.; Idrætsmænd [Sportsmen], 'Norges offisielle Repræsentation' ['Norway's official Representation'], *Dagbladet*, January 21, 1905, 1. Idrætsmand, 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Aftenposten*, January 8, 1905 (no. 15), 2.

- <sup>66</sup> Gylfe Svedlund, 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Aftenposten*, January 12, 1905, 1.
- <sup>67</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, January 18, 1905, 2; 'Nordiska Spelen.' ['Nordic Games'], *Morgenbladet*, January 20, 1905 (no. 36), 1. According to some notes in the newspapers, all the privately registered Norwegian sportsmen supported the Committee's official boycott. 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Morgenbladet*, January 28, 1905 (no. 52), 2. Nevertheless, some telegrams indicate that at least a few Norwegian horses – and probably their owners – took part in the races in Stockholm. 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Aftenposten*, February 16, 1905 (no. 84), 2. Reports from Swedish magazines and newspapers confirm this, for example: 'Andra dagen: lördagen den 11:' ['The Second Day: Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup>'], *Tidning för Idrott*, February 16, 1905, 71.
- <sup>68</sup> Torjus Loupedalen, *Morgedal: Skisportens vogge* [*Morgedal: The Cradle of Skiing*] (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1947), 212.
- <sup>69</sup> Chr. Aug. Giertsen, 'Norske veddeløpsryttere abroad' ['Norwegian horse racing abroad'] in *Festskrift utgitt i anledning 'De Norske Ride-officeres Klub's 50 års jubileum* [*Festschrift*], ed. F.G. Henriksen (Oslo: Haakensen, 1930), 46-51.
- <sup>70</sup> See Gudmund Skjeldal, "'Kjærlighed", "Sportsgribbe", og "Cirkusartister". Amatørførestillingar i norsk idrettsoffentlegheit [Amateur conceptions in the Norwegian Sports Public Sphere] 1866-1907] (PhD.diss, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, 2022), 211-286, 345-450.
- <sup>71</sup> Martin Polley, for example, identified amateurism as the ideological reason why British diplomats were reluctant to involve themselves in sporting matters before the Second World War. To him, totalitarianism (as in Nazi Germany) represents the opposite position of voluntarism. Martin Polley, 'The Amateur Ideal and British Sports Diplomacy, 1900-1945', *Sports in History*, 26, no. 3 (2006): 450-467.
- <sup>72</sup> 'Normännerna och Nordiska Spelen.' [The Norwegians and the Nordic Games.], *Aftonbladet*, January 20, 1905 (no. 16), 5.
- <sup>73</sup> 'Nordiska Spelen' ['Nordic Games'], *Morgenbladet*, January 20, 1905 (no. 36), 1; Idrætsmand [Sportsman], letter to editor, *Aftenposten*, January 8, 1905 (no. 15), 2. *Morgenbladet* had its own column for sport since 1895, corresponding with *Norsk idrætsblad* in its appraisal of amateurism.
- <sup>74</sup> According to Bøje and Eichberg, the idea that sports can elevate and exist above politics has been thriving into very modern age because the historical tradition combined sports with the festival, or the ritual, or even the holy days. Claus Bøje and Henning Eichberg, *Idrettens tredje vej* [*Sport's Third Road*] (Copenhagen: Klim, 1994), 223.
- <sup>75</sup> 'Konsulatforhandlingerne' ['The Consular-Negotiations'], *Nordlands Folkeblad*, January 16, 1905, 2.<sup>76</sup> Carole Gomez, 'Boycotts and Diplomacy', 170-1. She adds that this definition is put shortly.
- <sup>77</sup> 'Times', *Morgenbladet*, October 27, 1880 (no. 297B), 1.
- <sup>78</sup> 'Telegrammer' ['Telegrams'], *Bergens Tidende*, January 4, 1881, 3; 'Kaptein Boycott' ['Captain Boycott'], *Skienposten*, October 24, 1881, 2; 'Udlandet' ['Abroad'], *Adressebladet*, November 4, 1885, 1-2.
- <sup>79</sup> Ivar Geelmuyden, *Engelsk-Norsk Ordbog* [*English-Norwegian Dictionary*], 4th ed. (Kristiania: Norsk Aktieförlag, 1901), 70. The phenomenon of sports boycotts is much older than the word. In 420 BC, Sparta was barred from the games at Olympia, possibly the earliest recorded occasion, although this may have been a consequence of not having paid a fine for breaking the Olympic truce and not a boycott. Marlene Goldsmith, 'Sporting Boycotts as a Political Tool', *The Australian Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (1995): 11-20.
- <sup>80</sup> Matti Goksøyr, 'Og så ein svensk-norsk landskamp', 72-86; Jan Lindroth: *Unionsoppløsningen 1905 och Idrotten*, 8-15
- <sup>81</sup> Per Jørgensen, 'From Balck to Nurmi: The Olympic Movement and the Nordic Nations', 86.
- <sup>82</sup> Interview with the Swedish officer in Danish newspaper, see 'Nordiska Spelen: Mærkelige paralleller' ['Nordic Games: Conspicuous parallels'], *Morgenbladet*, January 21, 1905 (no. 18), 2.
- <sup>83</sup> 'Stemningen i Norge' ['The Mood in Norway'], *Morgenbladet*, January 12, 1905 (no. 22), 2.
- <sup>84</sup> *Morgenbladet* defined a country's national politics as the sum of its spiritual and material powers – lifting it above trivial politics. Ibid.
- <sup>85</sup> Stephanie Chan, 'Principle Versus Profit: Debating Human Rights Sanctions', *Human Rights Review* 19 (2018): 49.
- <sup>86</sup> In parallel to this, Sigmund Loland suggested to morally justify a boycott of the World Cup in Qatar, although he probably did not support the idea, as 'an expression of a clear ethical commitment'. Loland, 'Major Sporting Events', 19.