

the ban of soccer existed until 1927. You wouldn't know this by looking at the recent success of the best team in Germany, Bayern München. But the *Siegeszug* of soccer in Germany proved to be unstoppable. 20 years after its first introduction Koch stated in his *Geschichte des Fußballs*:

*“Die Frage, ob Fußball in Deutschland eingeführt werden soll oder nicht, bedarf keiner Erörterung mehr. Sie ist durch die Macht der Tatsachen entschieden.”*

Clubs who play in the *Bundesliga* today added soccer at the turn of the century, as indicated by many of the names: Hannover 96; 99 Hoffenheim; Schalke 04. One hundred and forty years after Koch issued his rulebook, this *englische Krankheit* is far and away the most popular sport in Germany, which just won its 4<sup>th</sup> World Championship while England, *das Mutterland des Fußballs* has a single World Cup, winning it when they hosted the competition in 1966. Germany owes a debt of gratitude to England for spreading this “horrible disease” to the Fatherland.

### Der Film

The film *Der ganz grosse Traum* has only a tenuous relationship with real events. For instance, Koch's friend and assistant August Hermann - who played a significant role in the early years of soccer in Germany - does not appear in this movie. Koch himself had not lived in England for a long period and was a German and Old Language Teacher rather than a teacher of English. Thus, he didn't try to use the new game to enhance his English lessons or to teach English terms.

But movies are not necessarily load bearing structures and so they should not always be expected to bear large loads of reality. A movie can do other things and *Der ganz grosse Traum* does so. What Sebastian Grobler's rendition of the birth of soccer in Germany lacks in historic accuracy it makes up in charming atmospherics that animate the *Zeitgeist* of the decade following the *Gründerzeit*. The plot aptly delineates the clash of progressive and conservative societal forces in that day and age.

George Orwell, passing on an alleged quote from the Duke of Wellington, said “... the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton.” Actually it probably had more to do with the timely arrival of General Blücher and the Prussians, but the spirit of those playing fields was indeed infectious and soccer was certainly a carrier agent. The spirit embodied in the game could lead to serious dreaming, which some believed might be unhealthy for the body politic. Others were persuaded that such dreaming was precisely the remedy in need.



# THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## Friday Film Fest Series



## Der ganz große Traum

By Sebastian Grobler

May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015

• 6:30 PM •

Film, Food & Discussion

Non-Members \$15, Members \$12

The German Society of PA

611 Spring Garden St.

215-627-2332

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Philadelphia Cultural Fund.



## Der ganz grosse Traum (2011)

### Credits:

**Director:** Sebastian Grobler  
**Screenplay:** Philipp Roth  
Johanna Stuttmann  
**Production:** Anatol Nitschke  
Raoul B. Reinert  
**Music:** Ingo Ludwig Frenzel  
**Camera:** Martin Langer  
**Country:** Germany  
**Length:** 105 minutes

### Cast:

Daniel Brühl	Konrad Koch
Burghart Klaußner	Gustav Merfeld
Thomas Thieme	Dr. Roman Bosch
Jürgen Tonkel	Dr. Jessen
Justus v. Dohnanyi	Richard Hartung
Theo Trebs	Felix Hartung
Karثرin von Steinburg	Klara Bornstedt



Commentary: Karl Moehlmann

### Frisch, fromm, fröhlich, frei – die Turnbewegung von Turnvater Jahn

When Germany was finally united in 1871 and the second empire was formed, the *Deutsche Turnerschaft* celebrated the memory of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn who had died 20 years earlier. Jahn had been a leading advocate of German unity under Prussian leadership. The German sport was *Turnen* and that meant *Barren, Reck, Pferd, Ringe und Boden*, the classical disciplines of gymnastics that were practiced in every school, emphasizing drills, discipline and obedience. The *Turnbewegung* was a conformist movement that supported nationalistic policies and the militaristic and imperialistic tendencies associated with such nationalism.

But this orthodox view of Jahn and his *Deutsche Turnkunst* was somewhat distorted. In July 1819, Jahn had actually been arrested under suspicion of *geheimer und hochverrätherischer Verbindung* and brought to Festung Spandau. He had established his model *Leibesübungen* at the *Hasenheide* near Berlin in 1811 where *Laufen, Werfen, Springen, Ringen, Fechten und Schwimmen* were emphasized. He also favored *Bewegungsspiele* such as *Laufen und Raufen, Suchen und Verstecken, Fliehen und Verfolgen*. Hence his movement was associated with the movement for national unity and freedom by professors, students and fraternities and other liberal minded people.

But as long as Prussia was occupied by Napoleon's troops the immediate goal was the liberation from French occupation. After Napoleon was defeated in Leipzig in 1813, the call for a unified German state and the concomitant demands for democratic reforms were seen as threats to the sovereignty and power of the princes. In the following dec-

ade the state issued restrictive legislation outlawing fraternities and imposing censorship on newspapers and other publications. In conformity with this repressive spirit, a *Turnsperre* was imposed that was in place for over 20 years until 1842, outlawing Jahn's form of *Leibesübungen* and its subversive character.

In the wake of this ban, *Turnen* was narrowed to *Geräteturnen* with the emphasis on exercises on the high bar, the parallel bars, the rings, the pommel horse and the floor. The defeat of the democratic revolution in 1848 was the final factor in turning the *Turnbewegung* from its original revolutionary character into a conformist, nationalistic movement. So it is richly ironic that the attempt to introduce a new game to the curriculum of an old-fashioned German Gymnasium in 1874 was seen as a revolutionary threat to the established *Geräteturnen* in the same way that Jahn's *Turnbewegung* itself had become a threat to the traditional princely power structure.

The fact that this new game of "Football" came from England made this threat much worse since the newly united Germany was emerging as a fierce rival of England, a rivalry that would evolve and intensify right up until the outbreak of World War I. In retrospect, it is easy to notice that it was the state which created artificial antitheses such as *Turnen vs Spiel* or *Sport vs Leibesübungen*, antitheses that had never really existed for Jahn and other like-minded people. In the end, soccer would succeed in Germany in spite of the state, because Germans quickly came to love an inclusive team game which was inexpensive, simple to participate in and devoid of class implications.

### Konrad Koch (1846 – 1911)



Konrad Koch was a native of Braunschweig who became a language teacher at the Gymnasium Martino-Katharineum. Recognizing that outside physical activities would be beneficial for the development of his students, he initiated the *Schulspiele* in 1872 as an addition to the existing *Turnunterricht*.

He was supported by his colleague and *Turnlehrer* August Hermann. It was Hermann who acquired an original soccer ball from England in 1874 and, as the story goes, threw it down between the students without further explanation.

This experiment on the so-called *Kleinen Exerzierplatz* at the Rebenstraße in Braunschweig is considered the *Geburtsort und Geburtsstunde der Fußballs in Deutschland*. Today, this field is named the Konrad Koch-Stadion. In 1875, Koch wrote the first soccer rulebook and founded the first German *Fußballverein* at his school.

Predictably, there were many people (especially among the *Turnlehrer*) who resisted the introduction of this new game. Karl Planck, a teacher from Stuttgart, mocked the new sport as *Fußlümmelei* and *englische Krankheit*; even the term "Sport" was not accepted. The rough physical play was seen as a decay of all ethical behavior. Teachers and students were expelled from school if they participated. In Bavaria,

