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 4th 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.
Hence his; even the term $\beta$, antitheses that had never really existed. Today, this field is named the -

were seen as threats to the sovereignty and power of the princes. In the following decades, students and fraternities and other liberal-minded people. The movement was associated with the movement for national unity and freedom by professors such as Ringen, Fechten und Schwimmen - Leibesübungen. 

July 1819, Jahn had actually been arrested under suspicion ofTurnen 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.

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 Fußballkermel und englische Krankheit. 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.

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.

Credits:
Director: Sebastian Grobler
Screenplay: Philipp Roth
Production: Anatol Nitschke
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
Karthrin von Steinburg Klara Bornstedt

Commentary: Karl Moehlmann