

Introduction

It may well be that the idea for this book resulted from a misunderstanding!

The “**Bibliography of the Commemorative Publications of German Chess Clubs Founded by 1914**” lying before you was initiated through an email from Italy, which arrived in February 2004, that is, a couple of months after the foundation of the Ken Whyld Association (KWA). The editor-in-chief of the renowned Italian magazine *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate* (Chess and Applied Science), Romano Bellucci (Venice), proposed to do in-depth research about the history of eminent German chess clubs. He was willing to publish the results of such ‘field studies’ in his magazine as a series of individual articles. My answer that this local history of chess in Germany had been for the main part documented in numerous available commemorative publications (‘Festschriften’) of the clubs caused an enthusiastic reaction.

While corresponding with Romano Bellucci through a (rather indirect) cooperation with Hans Jürgen Fresen (Bochum) – see entry number 10 – I became aware of his extraordinary collection of commemorative publications in his beautiful chess museum in Bochum. And when Dr. Ralf Binnewirtz (Meerbusch-Bösinghoven) was willing to act as editor of the book project for the Ken Whyld Association, for the first time, there was an opportunity to deal bibliographically with a very special part of collecting chess literature in the form of a book and to document the individual references with brief summaries.

At the annual meeting of the KWA in Forchheim 2004 our project found broad support by our members and the industrious gathering of data could begin. The two authors untiringly worked on this and compared their individual articles again and again. I would like to thank Hans Jürgen Fresen, who willingly offered the ‘treasures’ of his magnificent library, but also Ralf Binnewirtz for his very committed and customary precise editorial work without which a top quality compilation such as the one at hand would not have been possible.

We quickly became aware that an acceptable amount of work for the two authors and defining a limit for the size of the book were only possible by including only those clubs which had been founded before 1914 and by leaving out some German-speaking clubs from Germany’s neighboring countries. Therefore, we refrained from including the various chronicles of German chess state associations (Landesverbände). Moreover, this book does not aim at an all-encompassing comparative evaluation of club histories. This – as well as the sometimes rather brief summaries – may in individual cases be seen as a regrettable deficit, but on the other hand it offers a welcome incentive for a continuation or supplement of this project.

Here, I would like to mention two remarkable publications: In his diploma thesis “Politische Einflussnahme auf den Schachsport im Dritten Reich” (“Political Influence Exerted on Chess as Sport in the Third Reich”) published at the Gesamthochschule Duisburg, the historian Ralf Woelk brought attention to the inadequate documentation and analysis of existing commemorative publications. His work appeared in 1996 under the title “Schach unterm Hakenkreuz” (“Chess under the Swastika”) as the third volume in the series “Tübinger Beiträge zum Thema Schach” published by Dr. Hans Ellinger in the Promos publishing house and comprehensively presented the fate of the chess clubs and the exclusion of the Jewish members in the time of National Socialism. The individual fate of a highly renowned Jewish club president, councilor of commerce Otto Rosenfeld from Stuttgart, is taken up by Dr. Peter Schweickhardt in his story “Ehrevorsitzender Rosenblum” (“Honorary President Rosenblum”) published in 2007 at Books on Demand GmbH.

We hope that gaps and errors in our survey can in the near future be corrected or closed through a wide response from those interested in chess history and from chess clubs, which still might have available documents. With that, our original motivation to document chess history as experienced ‘at the roots’ and with a definite local historical perspective would be

realized in a way that fully conforms to the ideals of our association.

For feedback, please use the contact form on the www.kwabc.org site or write directly to the authors under binnewirtz@arcor.de or jfresen@gmx.de, heartfelt thanks in advance for all kinds of support and suggestions.

The Ken Whyld Association was particularly interested to publish the book in German and in English as this was the only way to present the unique development of chess clubs in Germany to an international audience. This required a laborious translation of these texts, and I would like to thank Johannes Fischer (Nürnberg), who mastered this difficult task professionally. For him the praise by our ‘proof-reader’ Dr. Leonard M. Skinner (Cowbridge, Wales) may be an additional form of recognition; we are all indebted to Len Skinner for his willingly offered profound help.

Additional valuable support came from Peter Anderberg (Harmstorf), Norbert Fieberg (Witten), Thomas Henrich (Linden), Johannes Pitl (Augsburg), Maria Łuczak (Library of the Polish Academy of Science in Kórnik), Siegfried Schönle (Kassel) and Dr. Jurgen Stigter (Amsterdam); thanks to them who also stand for all the supporters from the chess clubs and the circles of collectors.

A particular contribution which allowed this project succeed came from Egbert Meissenburg (Seevetal), who knowledgeably supported us in the final phase with suggestions, additions and the findings of his own research and who presents his thoughts about the topic of “Festschriften” in a preface.

I would also like to thank my colleagues on the board and the members of the Ken Whyld Association for their sustained support of this long-term project. Of course, we all thank Romano Bellucci for the realization of the book. Seeing the result, I think, this effort was worth it.

To conclude and prompted by a letter from Egbert Meissenburg, I would like to deal briefly with the term ‘Festschrift’. Following a common definition it refers to a publication on the occasion of a ceremonial event. As far as I know the first ‘Festschrift’ which can be proven was published by Gregor Ritzsch in Leipzig in 1640 on the occasion of the 200th year jubilee of the invention of printing (*Jubilaem Typographorum oder zweyhundertjähriges Buchdrucker-Jubelfest*). The academic use of the term usually sees such celebration publication (or celebration gift) as a collection of essays mostly written by students, friends or colleagues and dedicated to the honored person on a festive occasion. However, not only people, but the jubilees of institutions as well are honored this way, which arguably seems to allow the use of the term for chess publications designed mostly as “club chronicles”. In English publications one occasionally comes across the German term “Festschrift”, but we tried to find a translation (‘commemorative publication’) that is as descriptive as possible.

Michael Negele

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