




Bożena Jaskowska

University of the National Education Commission, Krakow, Poland

[bozena.jaskowska@uken.krakow.pl](mailto:bozena.jaskowska@uken.krakow.pl)

 0000-0002-7484-3161

## The Warsaw Weekly “Cyklista” (1895–1898) and Its Role in Developing and Popularizing Cycling Culture in Polish Territories

**Abstract:** This article aims to provide an overview of the weekly magazine “Cyklista”, published in Warsaw from 1895 to 1898. It examines the magazine’s influence on the development of cycling culture in partitioned Poland and assesses its impact on the broader cultural landscape. The article outlines the history of the magazine’s publication, its program, internal structure, and content. It explores the editorial team’s initiatives to promote cycling, based on a thorough review of relevant literature and content. “Cyklista” is a valuable resource for those interested in the development of cycling in Poland. The magazine covers a wide range of topics related to bicycles, including bicycle tourism, historical and technical aspects, and utilitarian uses. It also provides information on the activities of cycling societies, it addresses issues concerning competitive cycling, and reports on sporting events.

**Keywords:** “Cyklista” – sports magazines – cycling magazines – bicycle history – cycling

**Słowa kluczowe:** „Cyklista” – czasopisma sportowe – czasopisma rowerowe – historia roweru – kolarstwo

The history of the bicycle and related activities presents a remarkable narrative where sport, tourism, performance, and social and cultural transformations intertwine with the development of large-scale businesses and other economic activities. The story of the bicycle is one of technical and mechanical innovation, of human capacity to transcend limitations and borders, of courage, of openness to new ideas, and the pursuit of freedom and independence.

Since its inception in the 1860s, the bicycle has undergone a remarkable transformation. Originally a basic and often uncomfortable mode of transportation, it has evolved into an elegant, highly functional, and increasingly popular vehicle. Innovations such as chain drives, spoked wheels, and pneumatic tires have made the bicycle more comfortable, secure, and efficient.

Beyond being a mode of transportation, the bicycle emerged as a symbol of modernity, independence, and women's emancipation, offering individuals new opportunities for travel and exploration. However, its impact was not uniformly positive. While it inspired admiration and joy for many, it also sparked controversy, criticism, and even aggression. These societal responses, evident from the very beginning of the bicycle's existence, were diligently monitored and reported by the press.

The 19<sup>th</sup>-century cycling press played a pivotal role in promoting and developing cycling culture. These magazines provided practical information about the new technology and, as the sport gained popularity, offered technical advice, race reports, and news about the activities of cycling societies and clubs. Moreover, they served as forums for debate on the evolution of cycling and its place in the late 19th-century social landscape. In time, the publications themselves began to stimulate interest and participation in the sport by organizing races and competitions, further popularizing cycling as an activity.

The earliest cycling-themed magazines appeared in 1869, beginning with the inaugural edition of "The Velocipedist" in the United States. This was followed by "Le Vélocipède" in France, which debuted in March of the same year, and "Le Vélocipède Illustré", which appeared a month later. Similar publications began to emerge in England, Denmark, Germany, and other countries throughout the 1870s and 1880s. By 1895, cycling periodicals were also being published in Polish territories. In April of that year, the Polish magazine "Koło. Pismo fachowe poświęcone sportowi kołowemu" [The Wheel. The Professional Journal Dedicated to Cycling Sports] was first issued in Lviv, marking the beginning of Polish contributions to the promotion of contemporary cycling. Its creator was Kazimierz Hemerling, a well-known and respected sports activist and one of the first sports journalists. The inaugural issue of periodical "Cyklista. Tygodnik specjalnie sportowi cyklowemu przeznaczony" [Cyclist. The Weekly Dedicated Specifically to Cycling Sports] was released on September 3, 1895,

in Warsaw. Franciszek Karpiński served as the editor and publisher, with Jan Leppert and Company handling the printing process<sup>1</sup>.

### The birth of Polish sports press

The origins of sports journalism in Polish territories date back to 1881, with the activities of the Gymnastic Society "Sokół" [Falcon] in Lviv prompting the establishment of a dedicated press outlet. On April 1st of that year, the inaugural issue of the magazine "Przewodnik Gimnastyczny. Organ Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego "Sokół" we Lwowie" [Gymnastics Guide. Organ of the Sokół Gymnastic Society in Lviv] was published. This date is widely recognized as the inception of the Polish sports press.<sup>2</sup> The magazine aimed to disseminate accurate information about gymnastics and to "instill a love for physical exercise among the youth."<sup>3</sup> This was a challenging task, given the limited awareness of the positive impact of physical activity on human health and the need to address critical opinions regarding this new and somewhat unconventional phenomenon. Initially, "Przewodnik" focused exclusively on gymnastics. However, in 1900, the journal expanded its scope to include a dedicated section for additional sports-related topics.

In 1888, the meticulously conceived magazine "Sport" made its debut in Warsaw under the direction of Michał Romiszowski, who also served as editor and publisher. The magazine covered a diverse range of topics including horse breeding, hunting, fishing, rowing, and cycling, the latter featured in the section titled "Sport kołowy" [Wheel Sports]. The periodical remained in publication until 1891, supplemented by "Dodatki Sportu" [Sport Supplements], which primarily focused on horse racing.

In Warsaw, from 1884 to 1887, a magazine titled (under various names) "Hodowca. Pismo tygodniowe poświęcone hodowli inwentarza żywego, sportowi i weterynarii popularnej" [Breeder. A Weekly Magazine Dedicated to Livestock Breeding, Sports, and Popular Veterinary Medicine] featured sports themes, predominantly focusing on equestrian topics without extensive coverage beyond this subject. In Krakow, Zygmunt Maciszewski published *Sport. Poświęcony wszystkim gałęziom sportu i stosunkom towarzyskim* [Sport. Dedicated to All Branches of Sports and Social Relations] in 1891. Despite its broad title suggesting a diverse focus, the journal primarily concentrated on

---

1 The topics presented in the article are discussed in more detail in the book: B. Jaskowska, „*Cyklista*” (1895–1898). *Z dziejów polskich czasopism rowerowych*, Kraków 2024.

2 B. Tuszyński, *Prasa i sport*, Warszawa 1981.

3 B. Tuszyński, *Sprintem przez prasę sportową*, Warszawa 1975, p. 21.

horse racing. Among the pioneering figures in Polish sports journalism was the magazine “Jeździec i Myśliwy. Dziennik sportowy” [Equestrian and Hunter. A Biweekly Sports Magazine], first published in Warsaw in 1891. Similar to the Krakow publication “Sport”, this magazine catered to the interests of the aristocracy and landed gentry, focusing on their sports and pastimes. A thorough review of existing sources reveals that several periodicals titled “Cyklista” [Cyclist] were also published during the 1890s.<sup>4</sup> A search of the archives reveals a dearth of surviving copies of the periodicals in question. This further complicates the process of identifying pioneering figures in this field and determining the precise publication details. In 1891, “Cyklista. Kalendarzyk sportowy satyryczno-humorystyczny na rok...” [The Cyclist. A Satirical and Humorous Sports Calendar for the Year...] was published in Warsaw, with its publication dated from 1891 to 1894.<sup>5</sup>

The inaugural issue of the annual publication “Cyklista” was released in 1892. However, there is no consensus among bibliographers and press historians regarding its precise publication period, the editor responsible, or the magazine’s subsequent fate. According to *Bibliografia czasopism warszawskich 1579–1981*, this annual was published between 1892 and 1895<sup>6</sup> under the editorship of Franciszek Karpiński. This claim is supported by Kubkowski.<sup>7</sup> Jasińska indicates the years from 1892 to 1894, along with Franciszek Karpiński’s involvement,<sup>8</sup> while Dudek’s compilation lists the period as 1892 to 1894, without providing any information regarding the editor.<sup>9</sup>

Jasińska suggests that the unpreserved annual in question may have been “Bicyklista (dawniej Cyklista). Upominek dla miłośników sportu kołowego na sezon letni 1895 roku” [The Bicyclist (Formerly The Cyclist). A Gift for Wheel Sport Enthusiasts for the Summer Season of 1895], published by Adam Koziański in Warsaw and printed by J. Guranowski and W. Jasiński. M.<sup>10</sup> In contrast,

4 Cf. M. Jasińska, *Bibliografia czasopism sportowych w Polsce 1881–1981*, where (pp. 20–21) four publications titled „Cyklista” are listed; similarly, D. Dudek notes four entries in *Źródła do dziejów kultury fizycznej 1795–1939. Czasopisma. Kalendarze. Jednodniówki. Dodatek do „Biuletynu Informacyjnego nr 4 Biblioteki Głównej AWF w Krakowie*, Kraków 2008, pp. 25–26.

5 Cf. M. Jasińska, *Bibliografia czasopism sportowych w Polsce 1881–1981*..., p. 20; D. Dudek, *Źródła do dziejów kultury fizycznej 1795–1939*..., p. 25; *Bibliografia historii Polski XIX i XX w.* Tom. III. 1865–1918. Vol. 1. Zebrał i oprac. zespół pod kierunkiem S. Sokołowskiej, Warszawa 2000, p. 733.

6 *Bibliografia czasopism warszawskich 1579–1981*. T. I. A–D. Oprac. K. Zawadzki i in. Warszawa 1994, p. 302 (item 1901)

7 P. Kubkowski, *Sprężyści. Kulturowa historia warszawskich cyklistów na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, Warszawa 2018, p. 88.

8 M. Jasińska, *Bibliografia czasopism sportowych w Polsce 1881–1981*..., p. 25.

9 D. Dudek, *Źródła do dziejów kultury fizycznej 1795–1939*..., p. 25.

10 M. Jasińska, *Bibliografia czasopism sportowych w Polsce 1881–1981*..., p. 38.

*Bibliografia* Estreichera asserts that "Bicyklista (dawniej Cyklista)" succeeded the "Kalendarzyk" from 1891.<sup>11</sup> Kubkowski associates both titles with editor F. Karpiński, suggesting that the weekly "Cyklista" was the continuation of the annual published in 1892, the "Kalendarzyk".<sup>12</sup>

However, a review of the most recent scholarly research and findings presented in *Bibliografia Historii Polski XIX i XX w.* [*Bibliography of the History of Poland in the 19th and 20th Centuries*] indicates that the original annual "Cyklista" is actually associated with a different publication. This edition, edited by Wiktor Czajewski, was first published in 1892 under the title "Cyklista. Z powodu otwarcia nowego toru cyklowego na Dynasach. Z kalendarzem na rok 1893" [The Cyclist. On the Occasion of the Opening of the New Cycling Track at Dynasy. With a Calendar for the Year 1893] as the first. It subsequently appeared in 1894 as "Cyklista. Jedyny Rocznik Polski poświęcony sprawom cyklowym" [The Cyclist. The Only Polish Annual Dedicated to Cycling Affairs] as the second annual.<sup>13</sup> The authors of the cited work have stated that earlier sources contained errors regarding the identification of the continuation of the annual "Cyklista" and have also raised doubts about attributing the editorship of this annual to Franciszek Karpiński.<sup>14</sup>

Given the lack of evidence in the early 1890s press for the publication of an annual called "Cyklista", supposedly edited by Karpiński, it can be concluded that the entries in the *Bibliografia historii Polski XIX i XX w.* are accurate. It appears that, prior to the weekly publication that is the subject of this article, there existed an annual of the same title edited by W. Czajewski, which was not connected to the periodical "Cyklista" edited by Karpiński.

The year 1895 marks a pivotal moment in the history of cycling periodicals. During this time, two significant publications emerged that played crucial roles in shaping the development of cycling culture in Polish territories. In March, the biweekly "Koło" [The Wheel] was established in Lviv through the initiative of Kazimierz Hemerling. In the autumn of the same year, the Warsaw-based "Cyklista" was launched.

---

11 K. Estreicher [i in.], *Bibliografia polska XIX stulecia*. T. 17, Knebel-Kopytowskij. Red. S.J. Zychowiczowa i S. Siess-Krzyszowski. Wyd. 2, Kraków 2000, p. 160, and K. Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska XIX stulecia*. T. 3, Litera C. Wyd. 2, Kraków, 1962, p. 316.

12 P. Kubkowski, *Sprężysci...*, p. 88.

13 *Bibliografia historii Polski XIX i XX w.* Vol. III. 1865–1918. Vol. 1... p. 119 (item 1126).

14 *Bibliografia historii Polski XIX i XX w.* Vol. III..., p. 119 (item 1126).

## Illustrated weekly “Cyklista” – establishment and program

On June 21, 1895, the Polish pharmacist and entrepreneur Franciszek Karpiński received approval to publish a weekly magazine in Warsaw titled “Cyklista”. The permit specified that the magazine’s program would include the following elements: “articles on velocipede sports, columns on sports in general, illustrated features on inventions and improvements in the field of velocipede sports, domestic and international sports news, biographies of notable sportsmen, and information about local and foreign velocipede societies and races.”<sup>15</sup>

Following several months of meticulous preparation, the inaugural issue of this weekly periodical was released on September 3, 1895. Originally titled “Cyklista. Tygodnik specjalnie sportowi cyklowemu poświęcony” [The Cyclist. A Weekly Specifically Dedicated to Cycling Sports], the magazine underwent two subtitle modifications over a span of four years. These changes reflected the evolving development of the magazine and the emerging themes in its content.

Starting with issue number four in 1895, the magazine was published under the title: “Cyklista. Tygodnik ilustrowany specjalnie sportowi cyklowemu poświęcony” [The Cyclist. An Illustrated Weekly Specifically Dedicated to Cycling Sports]. From the 11th edition onwards in 1898, a notable change occurred in the subtitle, where the adjective “cycling” was removed. Consequently, the title became “Cyklista. Tygodnik ilustrowany sportowi poświęcony” [The Cyclist. An Illustrated Weekly Dedicated to Sports].

Every Saturday, the weekly publication “Cyklista” was available for ten kopecks per copy. Notably, in Issue No. 15 of 1898, the editorial staff proudly proclaimed “Cyklista” as “the cheapest sports organ in the world.” As previously mentioned, Franciszek Karpiński served as both editor and publisher. The printing of the magazine was initially handled by Jan Leppert-Ski’s Commercial Printing House in Warsaw until the beginning of 1898. Subsequently, Franciszek Karpiński’s Printing House took over this responsibility. Zygmunt Józef Naimski served as the editorial secretary. Franciszek Karpiński and his close associates were active members of the Warsaw Cyclists’ Society (WTC). They were actively involved in various activities within the association and played a pivotal role in promoting cycling sports in Polish territories. The weekly issues of the periodical varied significantly in length, spanning from 8 to 48 pages, with an average of 12 to 16 pages. Around New Year’s, the length of the issues increased, accompanied by a higher number of advertisements (see Table 1). Initially, the editorial office of “Cyklista” was located at 8 Elektoralna in Warsaw. However, in September 1897, it relocated

---

15 *Zprawy*, „Kurier Poranny” 1895, Vol. 19, No. 208, p. 4.

to "a prominent front, ground-floor shop in the new building owned by Mr. Sosnowski at 9 Trębacka street."<sup>16</sup>

"Cyklista" was established with the aim of disseminating, or as it is also known in this context, popularizing knowledge about the benefits of the bicycle as a mode of transportation that promotes individual health and overall development, with the goal of "awakening and sustaining interest in cycling sports."<sup>17</sup> In the introduction to the inaugural issue, the editorial team, invoking the adage "a sound mind in a sound body," posited that cycling serves as a conduit for maintaining health, both at the individual and societal levels. "Cycling sport, aimed at strengthening physical strength, significantly enhancing energy and endurance, and diverting the mind and nerves from work, is precisely such a resilient means, and the evidence of its value is the astonishing speed with which it has been adopted worldwide. The organ of this sport will be «Cyklista»."<sup>18</sup> As promised from the outset, each weekly edition of "Cyklista" would feature updates on the global evolution of cycling sports, innovations in the field, and practical tips on training and equipment – essentially providing indispensable knowledge for those aspiring to excel in sports.<sup>19</sup> The magazine reiterated its purpose at the beginning of 1896 with the announcement of a cycling competition aimed at enthusiasts of leisurely sports: "One of our primary objectives, which we have set and continue to pursue diligently, is to attract as many supporters and followers to our sport as possible."<sup>20</sup>

The magazine's title referenced a common term for a bicycle rider. It was chosen over several similar options. "We prefer the term *cyklista* [cyclist] to all others, including *kolarz* [bicyclist], *kołowiec* [wheeler], *kręciek* [swirler], and *kołowaty* [wheelie],"<sup>21</sup> as explained in the pages of the weekly. In Warsaw, the term most frequently used for a cycling enthusiast was indeed "cyklista" as well as "welocypedysta" [velocipedist] and "kołownik" ["wheelman"]. In Galicia, however, from the mid-1890s, the term "kolarz" [bicyclist] was commonly used. The term "kolarz" emerged in the Kingdom of Poland at a later point in time and initially applied only to those engaged in amateur racing, in addition to professionals or champions in this field.<sup>22</sup>

The magazine was tailored for distribution to cycling enthusiasts. In one of its articles, the editorial board outlined the characteristics and interests of their

---

16 *Od Redakcji i administracji*, „Cyklista” 1897, Vol. 3, No. 38, p. 1.

17 *Do czytelników*, „Cyklista” 1895, No. 1, p. 1.

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Od Redakcji. Konkurs dla turystów*, „Cyklista” 1896, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 1.

21 *Z., Nie tędy droga*, „Cyklista” 1896, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 3–4.

22 P. Kubkowski, *Sprężysci...*, p. 107.

readership, affirming that “the title itself explains who reads it and who will read it.” Additionally, it was noted that “the number of bicycle licenses issued in Warsaw reached 3,000, with an estimated 4,000 cyclists in the city and at least triple that number in the provinces.”<sup>23</sup> Despite this clearly defined target<sup>24</sup> group, the editorial team actively promoted the magazine through advertisements in daily newspapers. During the initial period of the weekly’s publication, these advertisements appeared in various periodicals, including the “Kurier Codzienny”.

“Cyklista” was published weekly from September 3, 1895, to April 4, 1898. To address the Gregorian and Julian calendar discrepancy, the title page of the publication featured a dual dating system. The magazine maintained a consistent schedule, releasing an issue every Saturday, totaling 134 editions during its publication run. The weekly structure of the publication is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Publishing Structure of “Cyklista”. Source: own elaboration

Year	Year's issue	Number of issues	Title	Publisher / Editor	Additional Notes
1895	1	1–4	“Cyklista. Tygodnik specjalnie sportowi cyklowemu poświęcony”	Publisher and editor: Franciszek Karpiński	Issue lengths: 14–18 pages.
		5–14	“Cyklista. Tygodnik ilustrowany sportowi cyklowemu poświęcony”	Publisher and editor: Franciszek Karpiński	Addition of illustrative and photographic material Issue lengths: 12–16 pages. Only issue no. 14 consisted of 8 pages.
1896	2	52	“Cyklista. Tygodnik ilustrowany sportowi cyklowemu poświęcony”	Publisher and editor: Franciszek Karpiński	Issue no. 1: 40 pages; other issues: 10–20 pages
1897	3	52	“Cyklista. Tygodnik ilustrowany sportowi cyklowemu poświęcony”	Publisher and editor: Franciszek Karpiński	Issue no. 1: 48 pages; other issues: 9–20 pages
1898	4	1–10	“Cyklista. Tygodnik ilustrowany sportowi cyklowemu poświęcony”	Publisher and editor: Franciszek Karpiński	Issue no. 1: 34 pages; other issues: 12–24 pages
		11–16	“Cyklista. Tygodnik ilustrowany sportowi poświęcony”	Publisher and editor: Franciszek Karpiński	Issue Lengths: 16–24 pages

<sup>23</sup> Cyklista, *W jakim celu?*, „Cyklista” 1897, Vol. 3, No. 44, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> In 1889, the number of cyclists in Poland was probably 600 people, and the record number of members of the Warsaw Cyclists’ Society was noted in 1897, which was 763 people. Cf. B. Tuszyński, *Od Dynasów do Szurkowskiego*, Warszawa 1986, p. 100.



The publication that succeeded "Cyklista" was "Sport. Tygodnik ilustrowany sportowi poświęcony" [Sport. An Illustrated Weekly Dedicated to Sports]. Edited by Waclaw Orliński from 1899 until January 1906, the periodical continued until its closure. "Sport" primarily focused on equestrian topics but also covered various other sports, including cycling. Following this, from January to February 1906, readers received six issues of *Księga Uciechy i Pożytku. Pismo ilustrowane* [The Book of Merriment and Advantage. An Illustrated Magazine]. This marked the magazine's return to the market after a hiatus of over six months.<sup>25</sup>

The successor to "Księga Uciechy i Pożytku" was the magazine titled "Start. Pismo ilustrowane" [Start. An Illustrated Magazine], edited by Józef Łoziński, which was published from March to June 1906. The history of the periodical concludes with "Sport Polski. Tygodnik ilustrowany: z dodatkami w miarę potrzeb" [Polish Sport. An Illustrated Weekly: with Supplements as Needed], again edited by Waclaw Orliński. This publication replaced "Start" and continued until the end of 1906. A summary of the periodicals succeeding "Cyklista" is provided in Table 2.

In the lineage of successors to "Cyklista", it is worth mentioning the weekly publication "Kolarz, Wioślarz i Łyżwiarz. Tygodnik sportowy ilustrowany" [Cyclist, Rower, and Skater. The Illustrated Sports Weekly], which was published from February 1899 to January 1902 by the printing house Szyller i Syn. Initially edited by Wiktor Dzierzbicki, editorial responsibility was later taken over by Emil Karol Szyller on March 29, 1901. From its inception, the periodical served as the official publication for provincial cycling and rowing clubs and later became the official organ of the Warsaw Cyclists' Society (WTC) starting from issue no. 15. Although "Kolarz, Wioślarz i Łyżwiarz" was not formally affiliated with the publisher and editorial team of "Cyklista", it can be considered a direct successor to "Cyklista" due to its shared objective of promoting democratic sports practices.<sup>26</sup>

---

25 The periodical *Księga Uciechy i Pożytku* was previously published on a biweekly basis from 1903 to 1905 under the editorship of Bolesław Londyński. During this period, the magazine was of a universal character, as evidenced by its subtitle from 1904 to 1906: "The illustrated popular magazine published biweekly for Polish families".

In January 1906, the magazine resumed publication on a weekly basis and assumed the mantle previously held by its predecessor, *Sport: tygodnik ilustrowany: z dodatkami w miarę potrzeby*. The final publication was released on February 24, 1906.

26 P. Kubkowski, *Sprężysci...*, p. 91.

Table 2: Continuators and Successors to “Cyklista”. Source: Own elaboration.

Years Published	Volumes	Number of Issues	Title	Publisher / Editor	Notes
1898–1906	4–12	R. 4: 35 (+ 35 supplements) R. 5: 52 (+ 1 supplement; two double issues: 13–14 and 17–18) R. 6: 52 R. 7: 52 R. 8: 53 R. 9: 52 (+ 1 supplement) R. 10: 53 (+ 1 supplement) R. 11: 52 (two double issues: 4–5 and 44–46) R. 12: 1 (in 1906 only issue No. 1 was published; on January 2 publication was suspended due to martial law)	“Sport. Tygodnik ilustrowany sportowi poświęcony” From Vol. 5, No. 17/18 title changed to: “Sport Tygodnik ilu- strowany: z dodatkami w miarę potrzeb”	Editor and publisher: Franciszek Karpiński From Vol. 5, No. 17/18: Editor: Wacław Orłowski, Publisher: Franciszek Karpiński From Vol. 5, No. 40: Editor and publisher: Wacław Orłowski	Published with supplements from the beginning Format changed to 34×15 cm from Vol. 5, No. 17/18 Vol. 5, No. 15 dedicated to H. Sienkiewicz 1905 circulation: 1,000 copies
1906		2–7	“Księga Uciechy i Pożytku. Pismo ilustrowane”	Editor: Józef Michał Bazewicz, Publisher: Bolesław Londyński	Published from January 2 to February 24
1906		1–15	“Start. Pismo ilustrowane”	Editor: Józef Łoziński	Published from March 3 to June 9
1906		23–52	“Sport Polski. Tygodnik ilustrowany: z dodatkami w miarę potrzeby”	Editor and publisher: Wacław Orłowski	Published from June 16 to December 31

## Analysis of the Internal Structure and Content of “Cyklista”

The periodical “Cyklista” was published weekly, with each issue released on Saturdays. The number of pages per issue varied between eight and several dozen, depending on whether it was a regular edition or a special issue, such as those around New Year’s. Typically, four to seven pages were dedicated to advertisements and notices, often appearing on single or double covers. The magazine measured 27.3 cm by 19.2 cm in dimensions.

Each weekly edition of “Cyklista” clearly identified its subject matter through a distinctive title and a title vignette featuring an image of a cyclist. The vignette was crafted with a refined and sophisticated aesthetic, blending decorative elements with informative details. At its center is a male figure holding a bicycle, his left hand raised in a gesture suggestive of greeting or celebration. He is dressed in knee-length loose trousers, a defined belt, a fitted shirt, and an open jacket, holding a cap in his hand. The background likely depicts the bicycle track at Dynasy, built in 1892 by the Warsaw Cyclists’ Society, indicating a direct association between the magazine and the WTC organization.

The title, presented in a decorative serif font and arranged in an asymmetrical composition, can be interpreted as a reference to the concepts of movement and motion. Additionally, floral motifs are positioned near the title, with expansive petals that were a common graphical element in 19th-century illustrations.

Figure 1: Title Vignette of the magazine “Cyklista”.  
From the Collection of the University of Warsaw Library



The distinctive title vignette underwent a significant alteration starting from issue No. 11 in 1898. This change coincided with the abbreviation of the subtitle, where the term “cyklowy” (“cycling”) was removed, resulting in the revised designation “Tygodnik Ilustrowany Sportowi Poświęcony [The Illustrated Weekly Dedicated To Sports]. This alteration marked a clear shift in the magazine’s focus – a shift away from cycling-related topics and an expansion of sections devoted to horse riding. From then on, except for issue No. 15/1898 where the magazine may have mistakenly used the previous elaborate vignette, the weekly publication featured a simpler yet decorative header on its title page. This header began with a capital letter and was composed in a serif font with subtle embellishments. The cyclist, bicycle, and Dynasy track were no longer depicted in the illustration. However, the information regarding the editorial address and publication frequency remained unchanged.

Figure 2: Changed title vignette (from issue No. 11 in 1898).  
From the collections of the University of Warsaw Library.



The magazine’s content was structured into several thematic sections, although not every column appeared in every issue.

Each edition of the periodical typically began with one or two longer articles focusing on current affairs or specific thematic topics. In the Prospectus published in the “Kurier Warszawski” newspaper, the editorial team stated their aim was to “address issues vital to our sport” and “closely track developments and trends both domestically and abroad.” They also expressed their intention to “adapt and integrate these ideas into our local context.”<sup>27</sup>

Another prominent feature in the publication was the “Cyclist on Tours” column, which consisted of reports from correspondents or readers about their experiences on cycling tours. These reports often provided insights into the

27 Redakcja, “*Cyklista*” *Tygodnik ilustrowany sportowi cyklowemu poświęcony*. Prospectus for 1896, “Kurier Warszawski: dodatek poranny” 1895, Vol. 75, No. 352, p. 8.

geography and culture of the destinations visited. Beyond its informative nature, the column had a clear patriotic dimension, aiming to showcase the beauty of the country and inspire further exploration.

Each issue of the journal also featured a section titled "Cyclist Correspondence," which included a diverse range of texts and notices from various cities and events. The correspondences originated from urban centers such as Paris, London, Moscow, Kyiv, Saint Petersburg, Florence, Berlin, Odessa, and Ashgabat. Additionally, submissions were received from cities including Lviv, Krakow, Kalisz, Lublin, Łódź, Włocławek, Łomża, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Piotrków, Kielce, Płock, Częstochowa, and many others.

The "Cyclist's Almanac" chronicled events within the Warsaw Cyclists' Society (WTC) and other Polish cycling associations. Initially introduced in 1898, it was later replaced by the "Associations Movement" section. The Almanac comprised several sub-sections:

- "Races": Reports on domestic and international races, including results and tables. This section was titled "Races and Records" from its inception in issue no. 1 in 1899.
- "New Records": A column highlighting the latest noteworthy achievements and records, irregularly published since its introduction in 1898, later integrated into "Races and Records."
- "Sports Chronicle": Regular coverage of sports events worldwide, beginning in issue No. 3 in 1898, renamed to "Sports News" subsequently.
- "Obituary Chronicle": Notices on individuals from the cycling community who had passed away, published irregularly.
- "Latest Inventions" represented a planned regular feature of the magazine, with a focus on the description and analysis of recent advances and innovations in the field of bicycle engineering. Over the course of time, however, the section appeared with great irregularity.
- The "Sports Technique" section offered counsel and suggestions pertaining to cycling and the maintenance of cycling equipment.
- The entertainment layer was provided by the "Laughs Page", a recurring column that began with issue no. 4 in 1897 and then reappeared with some regularity. It included a variety of satirical drawings, humor, and rhymed pieces, many of which were related to the growing passion among cyclists.
- The section "From Industry and Trade" provided readers with insight into both domestic and international production and sales markets. The column in question was published relatively late, in the ninth issue of the journal, which appeared in 1897.

- The “Other Sports” section, published on the final pages of the weekly, constituted a regular feature. This section included information on various sporting activities, including ice skating, rowing, horse racing, bowling, tennis, gymnastics, fencing, chess, billiards, and, from issue number 48 in the year 1896, automobiles.

In the course of its four-year period of publication, the magazine included occasional features such as additional sections and thematic cycles:

- “Tales of an Old Cyclist”: essays authored by writers such as “Ex-racer” and “A.H. Popularny” adopted a casual, conversational tone in their presentation of various aspects of the sport.
- “Globetrotters”: A column dedicated to the achievements of foreign athletes who have traveled hundreds of kilometers by bicycle.
- “Our and Foreign Champions”: series that sought to illuminate the profiles of noteworthy Polish and foreign cyclists.
- “Cyclist’s Guide”: A section designed to address inquiries submitted to the editorial office, though it appeared only intermittently.
- “Sports in the Provinces”: the column documented the development of the practice of cycling in a number of cities outside of Warsaw, including Radom, Kalisz, Kielce, Łowicz, and Lublin.
- “Sports at Exhibitions” or “From Exhibitions”: a series of articles from the foreign correspondents of the journal “Cyklista” about world exhibitions and the bicycle equipment showcased there. The publications covered exhibitions held in various cities, including Chicago, New York, London, Paris, and Glasgow.
- “Bygone Sports”: a series of articles that commenced in issue number one of the periodicals in 1898, with the intention of elucidating various aspects of the “old noble life in Poland”<sup>28</sup>, encompassing both military and domestic pursuits as well as those conducted in the forest and on hunting expeditions. The advent of this column marked a progressive shift in the journal’s focus and the introduction of content intended for an alternative readership, distinct from the cycling community.
- “Our Herds”: a non-cycling section introduced in the ninth issue of the publication, which was released in 1898, marking a change in the magazine’s subtitle and thematic profile.
- “From the Sporting World”: a section that was published in issue No. 9 of the periodical in 1898. It comprised an account of occurrences and notifications pertaining to horse breeding and racing.

---

28 Ar. Opp., *Dawne sporty. Wstęp*, „Cyklista” 1898, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 16–17.

In "Cyklista", articles were contributed by passionate sports enthusiasts, active members of the Warsaw Cyclists' Society (WTC), and experienced cyclists who shared their insights and practical advice. The magazine also provided a platform for aspiring artists and writers inspired by the dynamism and spirit of cycling, enriching its pages with prose and poetry. Editor Franciszek Karpiński bore the responsibility for publication. With a few exceptions, editorial texts and informational content were either published anonymously or signed as Editors or "Cyklista". Other notable authors who contributed to the journal were Stanisław Leppert, Mikołaj Poturaj, Jarosław Pieniążek, Mieczysław Horodyński, the French correspondent J. H. Aubry, and contributors who provided literary and entertainment content, such as Antoni Orłowski and Artur Oppman. Karol Karski was responsible for the equestrian content which began to be included in the magazine at the beginning of 1898. A significant proportion of the texts in the magazine were anonymous, or signed with pseudonyms. These included such aliases as "Pedał" ["Pedal"], "Velox" ["Swift"], "Panewka" ["Bearing Shell"], "Mil-es", "War" and "Tandem".

At its inception, the weekly was published in a purely textual format. This changed with the release of issue No. 4 in 1895, marking a shift in the subtitle. From issue No. 5 onward, the publication was titled "Tygodnik Ilustrowany Sportowi Cyklowemu Poświęcony" [The Illustrated Weekly Dedicated to Cycling Sports] and underwent a notable transformation in graphic design. The magazine began incorporating a variety of visual content, including illustrations and photographs, to enhance its appeal.

A quantitative analysis of the materials shows that "Cyklista" featured a total of 471 illustrations and 135 photographs. Among the illustrations, 260 were drawn images, constituting 55% of the total. The remaining 211 images comprised regular graphic materials such as thematic column vignettes and small decorative images. The photographic materials predominantly consisted of portraits and group photos of people, making up 59% of all photographic content.

Table 3: Quantitative analysis of graphic materials in the weekly "Cyklista".

Source: Own elaboration.

Graphic Material		Number	Total Number
Illustrations	Illustrations depicting article content	260	471
	Illustrations of regular sections and decorative vignettes	211	
Photographs	Photographs of objects	20	135
	Photographs of places	18	
	Photographs of events	17	
	Photographs of people	80	

The content of the magazine presented a compelling blend of insights and information, complemented by illustrations that showcased cycling-related inventions, graphical representations of equipment servicing techniques, and drawings illustrating historical fashion. In contrast, the photographic images captured individuals mentioned in the weekly publication, documented events, and portrayed subjects such as new inventions, specific locations, and landscapes. Notable photographers contributing to these visuals included Stanisław Bogacki, Stanisław Rachalewski, and Józef Grodzicki.

As shown in Table 4, the weekly publication frequently covered various sports disciplines. Particularly noteworthy is the significant emphasis on bicycle tourism, considering the evolving profile and thematic breadth of “Cyklista” during the 1898 period. This highlights a notable shift in attention towards exploring the historical, technical, and practical aspects of bicycles. The activities of cycling societies were meticulously documented, alongside detailed coverage of competitive cycling practices, including track and road races, as well as reports on diverse sporting events and world exhibitions.

The magazine’s content was organized into several thematic categories, covering bicycles, bicycle societies, events, bicycle tourism, competitive and professional cycling, social reception, women cyclists, legal regulations related to cycling, cycling and health, and a miscellaneous category. The breadth and diversity of the content posed a challenge for uniform categorization due to its extensive nature. This quantitative analysis primarily focuses on longer forms of content, excluding sections like “Cyclist Correspondence,” “Cyclist’s Almanac,” “Sports Chronicle,” “Social Chronicle,” and “Other Sports,” which typically featured brief notes and similar contributions.

The analysis conducted reveals a comprehensive and diverse range of topics addressed in the magazine. The overarching theme is the promotion of cycling and related matters, particularly focusing on bicycle tourism. The publication delved into historical and contemporary issues, documented aspects of domestic society, and covered events abroad. Additionally, the magazine introduced profiles of notable figures in Polish and global cycling sports.

The aforementioned weekly magazine, which published texts and fostered community engagement, was far from passive. Alongside its regular publications, it undertook several initiatives, including organizing cycling contests and proposing the inaugural women’s race<sup>29</sup>, although the latter did not come to fruition. The magazine also initiated the “Tandem Race for the Cyclist’s Prize” and supported plans for a sporting exhibition at Dynasy<sup>30</sup>, which materialized

29 Redakcja, *Wýścigi. O wýścig damski*, „Cyklista” 3, 1897, nr 25, s. 11–12

30 Redakcja, *O wystawę*, „Cyklista” 3, 1897, 14, s. 4–6.



several years later. In 1897, demonstrating solidarity with other newspapers, the editorial team participated in a civic movement to erect a monument to Adam Mickiewicz on the centenary of the poet's birth<sup>31</sup>. They pledged to assist in fundraising, disseminating information, and organizing a charitable cycling event in Warsaw. Additionally, the magazine frequently referenced other publications such as Lviv's "Koło" and foreign cycling periodicals like "The Cyclist", "Bicycle News", "Paris-Velo", "Der Deutsche Radfahrer", and "Velotsyped".

Table 4: Quantitative Analysis of the Content of "Cyklista".

Source: Own elaboration.

Thematic category	Year 1 (1895) Number of Issues: 14	Year 2 (1896) Number of Issues: 52	Year 3 (1897) Number of Issues: 52	Year 4 (1898) Number of Issues: 16	TOTAL
Bicycle	9	31	36	5	84
Cycling Societies	7	30	36	2	75
Events and Happenings	9	34	17	0	60
Bicycle Tourism	7	34	31	15	87
Competitive and Sporting Cycling	13	35	16	3	67
Social Reception	0	15	15	0	30
Women Cyclists	4	8	9	0	21
Cycling and Health	3	2	3	0	7
Regulations by Law	2	4	2	0	8
Other Sports Disciplines	5	36	26	37	104
Miscellaneous	2	16	2	5	22

The transformation of "Cyklista" marked a significant shift in its identity. With the change of subtitle in its tenth issue in 1898 to "Tygodnik ilustrowany sportowi poświęcony" ["The Illustrated Weekly Dedicated To Sports"], and the alteration of its title vignette, which no longer featured a cyclist with a bicycle, the publication evolved notably. By the eighth issue of that year, it was announced that sections covering various other sports such as equestrianism, ice hockey, rowing, and automobiles would be expanded. Simultaneously, despite a growing readership, "Cyklista" faced financial challenges. Consequently, subsequent editions increasingly emphasized articles on equine breeding to diversify its content and appeal.

31 Redakcja, *Sport wieszczowi*, "Cyklista" 3, 1897, nr 24, s. 1.

As noted by Tuszyński, the editorial team of “Cyklista” (and its companion publication, “Koło”) began adapting their content to appeal to the upper class in an effort to attract new subscribers. With an insufficient number of active cyclists to sustain financial viability, the magazine shifted focus. Articles on bicycles were replaced by a series titled “Our Herds,” and educational features by M. Horodyński were supplanted by topics such as “Cough and Fever in Horses.” Tuszyński rhetorically questions, “While it’s possible to build a business around horses, how does one achieve the same in the realm of cycling?”<sup>32</sup>

According to historian Kubkowski, the shift in the magazine’s focus, closely intertwined with the society itself, was influenced by internal dynamics and rival factions within the organization. Members of the upper class, who held significant sway within the WTC, were predominantly involved in horse racing, which they considered their main passion. Cycling, on the other hand, was seen as a secondary interest, reserved primarily for special occasions.<sup>33</sup>

The last issue of “Cyklista” (issue No. 16) featured a succinct note titled “Latest News”, informing readers that the Main Press Department in St. Petersburg had approved the application to change the title from “Cyklista” to “Sport”. This announcement marked the conclusion of the publication history of a significant cycling magazine in Polish territories.

In the absence of “Cyklista”, tracing the genesis and evolution of Polish cycling culture would prove challenging. This magazine sheds light on the challenges and aspirations faced by cycling enthusiasts in the 19th century, providing insight into what motivated them to cultivate and pursue their interests. Today, the journal serves as an invaluable repository of knowledge about the historical development of cycling in Poland, offering glimpses into the social and cultural context that fostered a passion for two-wheeled vehicles in earlier times.

## Bibliography

*Bibliografia czasopism warszawskich 1579–1981*. T. I. A–D. Oprac. K. Zawadzki i in., Warszawa 1994.

*Bibliografia historii Polski XIX i XX w.* Tom. III. 1865–1918. Vol. 1. Zebrał i oprac. zespół pod kierunkiem S. Sokołowskiej, Warszawa 2000.

Dudek D., *Źródła do dziejów kultury fizycznej 1795–1939*. *Czasopisma. Kalendarze. Jednodniówki*. Dodatek do „Biuletynu Informacyjnego” nr 4 Biblioteki Głównej AWF w Krakowie, Kraków 2008.

---

32 B. Tuszyński, *Od Dynasów do Szurkowskiego...*, p. 79

33 P. Kubkowski, *Sprężysci...*, p. 89.

- Estreicher, K., *Bibliografia polska XIX stulecia*. T. 3, *Litera C*, red. Karol Estreicher. Wyd. 2, Kraków 1962.
- Estreicher, Karol et al., *Bibliografia polska XIX stulecia*. T. 17, *Knebel-Kopytowski*. Red. S.J. Zychowiczowa i S. Siess-Krzyszkowski. Wyd. 2, Kraków 2000.
- Jasińska M., *Bibliografia czasopism sportowych w Polsce 1881–1981*, Warszawa 1983.
- Kubkowski P., *Sprężysci. Kulturowa historia warszawskich cyklistów na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, Warszawa 2018.
- Tuszyński B., *Od Dynasów do Szurkowskiego*, Warszawa 1986.
- Tuszyński B., *Prasa i sport*, Warszawa 1981.
- Tuszyński B., *Sprintem przez prasę sportową*, Warszawa 1975.

