

TYPES AND FORMS OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE IN THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND GYMNASTIC SOCIETIES FOR PHYSICAL EXERCISING IN THE PRINCIPALITY AND THE KINGDOM OF SERBIA

Sladjana Mijatović¹

¹Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, University of Belgrade, Serbia

UDK 796.41.37.058(497.11)

SUMMARY

The previous studies on the gymnastic societies of the Principality and the Kingdom of Serbia did not seriously deal with the types of physical exercise practiced therein. It may be assumed that is due to a lack of the information preserved thereabout.

For these reasons, in this study we searched for the findings about the types of physical exercise applied in the private training schools where some skills (fencing, swimming, archery, horse riding) were learnt and practiced, then in the societies for physical exercising (gymnastics) as well as in the chivalrous societies. *The aim of this study* was to determine the types and forms of physical exercise practiced in the private training schools, societies for physical exercising (gymnastics) and chivalrous societies of the Principality and the Kingdom of Serbia. *The historical method* was applied in this paper.

In this paper, we presented the results, i.e. the types of physical exercise practiced in the private training schools (*Schools of Fencing*, Steva Todorović's *School of Painting*, Askanius Sedlmayer's *School of Gymnastics*), societies for physical exercising (gymnastics) and chivalrous societies (*Belgrade Society for Gymnastics and Fighting*, *Belgrade Gymnastic Society "Sokol"*, *Civil Gymnastic Society "Dušan Silni"*, *Sokol societies*).

Correspondence author

Sladjana Mijatović
sladjana.mijatovic@fsfv.bg.ac.rs

Based on the comparative analysis of the types of the apparatuses used and the exercise methods applied it has been determined that **private schools** mainly implemented the Turner system using most of Jahn's Turner apparatuses. However, in the **societies for physical exercising**, in addition to the Turner exercise method, the Swedish system of physical exercise was partially applied as well.

Upon the appearance and acceptance of the Sokol idea, the application of the Sokol training method also started in the established Sokol societies, and soon afterwards in the army, and primary and secondary schools as well.

Key words: physical exercise, types and forms, Serbia, private schools, gymnastic societies

INTRODUCTION

The previous studies on the gymnastic societies of the Principality and the Kingdom of Serbia did not seriously deal with the types of physical exercise practiced therein. It may be assumed that is due to a lack of the information preserved thereabout, but also because of the complexity of such studies.

For these reasons, in this study we searched for the findings about the types of physical exercise, primarily in the private training schools where some skills (fencing, swimming, archery, horse riding) were learnt and practiced, then in the various societies for physical exercising (gymnastics) as well as in the Sokol societies.

METHODS

The historical method was applied in this paper.

The aim of this study was to determine the types and forms of physical exercise applied in the private training schools, societies for physical exercising (gymnastics) as well as in the Sokol societies in the Principality and the Kingdom of Serbia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The beginnings of the introduction of physical exercise in Serbia

The first institutional physical exercise in Karadorde's Serbia was organized within the military training in the Great School in Belgrade (1808) and these were mainly military exercises which included some physical exercises as

well, so that we could say these represented *the first forms of the organized physical exercise* in Serbia.

The military exercises of the students of the Great School, under the management of Captain Petar Đurković, consisted of the exercises with swords, rifles, marching and maneuvering exercises. These were *physical exercises with equipment* (swords, rifles) designed to acquire certain military skills necessary for handling these weapons.

After his arrival to Serbia (1839), Atanasije Nikolić was appointed professor of mathematics and drawing in the Gymnasium as well as the Rector of the Lyceum in Kragujevac. Having understood the concept of a new school, he undertook a series of actions in relation to establishing “a school of drawing, music and *a school of fighting (fechten-fencing)*”. Thus, the students of the Gymnasium in Kragujevac practiced how to handle and use swords and knives and thus engaged in physical exercise.

The physical exercise in the private schools and gymnastic societies

In the 19th century, the civil societies that offered various *physical exercises* were established in Europe. In *Germany* they were the Turner societies where Jahn's Turner gymnastics was practiced; in *Sweden*, Ling's system of medical gymnastics was a training curriculum implemented in many of the established societies: in *England* there were sports clubs established where various sports were practiced; in *France* the societies which applied Amoros's system of physical exercise were organized, and in the *Czech Republic* the Sokol societies applied the Sokol system established by Tyrš.

In Serbia of that time, various traditional forms of competitions were cherished and developed at national gatherings and ceremonies. However, in the mid-19th century, the youth, who had been educated in European countries, returned to Serbia and brought their knowledge about physical exercise in civil societies. They often established *private schools* or *civil societies for gymnastics (physical exercise)*, where they, as young people, also practiced themselves. They organized exercises modeled on some of the European gymnastic systems, but regardless of different forms or contents of physical training, they practiced in order to be stronger, faster, hardier, more agile and more skilled.

The *private schools* for physical training were established in many towns in the Principality of Serbia and they attracted both the youth and the citizens.

In the beginning, these were mostly *schools of fencing*, which is understandable, since this skill had been cherished and developed among the Serbs as a part of knightly and military training. Such a school was founded by Jovan Ninić in Belgrade in 1843. There the students, youth and adult citizens of

Belgrade **practiced fencing skills**. A few years later (1848) Đorđe Marković – Koder opened the *Private School of Fencing* in Belgrade, where the youth and citizens practiced, and afterwards, a Czech, Karel Wilmes - a fencing teacher, also established his private school of fencing for the citizens of Belgrade (1851).

In Belgrade, on the Sava river, the “*School of Swimming*” was opened (1843) with a fenced swimming area and a swimming teacher, where swimming was practiced by the citizens of Belgrade.

Similar private schools of fencing, riding, swimming and other forms of exercises or skills were opened in the late 19th century in many places across the Principality and the Kingdom of Serbia. These schools had more or less success but the most important thing is that they **organized various forms of physical exercise** bringing the youth and citizens together and training them in some of these skills.

The societies for gymnastics (physical exercise) where the citizens practiced on the apparatuses, with or without the equipment, were established in the late 19th century. They were first founded in Belgrade and then they were established in other towns as well.

When Steva Todorović, an academic painter, came from Vienna to Belgrade in **1857**, with the approval of the authorities, he established **the School of Painting**, which included 16 students (13 students of the first year and 1 student of the second year of the Lyceum). He taught them painting, singing, fencing and **organized physical exercise (gymnastics) for them** free of charge.

In his autobiography, he stated: “*I immediately started to divide my work into other urgent cultural needs, in addition to painting, and particularly to organize harmonious singing and **physical exercise**, as a foundation for a healthy body and a healthy spirit. My first task was to establish a school of painting,...”**I organized physical exercise in Sava Spahija’s hut, opposite the Old building, and in the place of the primary school near the Orthodox cathedral.”**1)*

The first **exercise equipment** was quite simple, since **rings, climbing poles and weights** were supplied by Todorović himself. Todorović obtained better working conditions for his School and especially for practicing gymnastics in 1860, when he moved into the Turkish han inn, where he had more rooms available so that he set up the exercise equipment (“*gymnastic apparatuses*”) in a separate room, and then he brought together about 80 students.

In the spring of 1860, Todorović went to Vienna for his further painting development, but he returned in the middle of the summer 1861. After a one-year break he could not continue the work of his School of painting since the former students had left Belgrade, and the new ones attended poorly. However, Prince Mihailo entrusted him with care and education of his extramarital son Velimir

during the following six years, so that in early November 1861 he started teaching Velimir and two other boys (Velimir was 10, and the other two boys were 9).

He taught them drawing, singing, ***gymnastics and fencing***, and in one of the two halls he set up ***gymnastic apparatuses*** which he had bought with the money he was given by Prince Mihailo. During winters, in ***the small exercise room***, in addition to his three students, he also admitted other children to practice together. As for the training during summers, an empty lot opposite the Real Gymnasium was equipped with many pieces of exercise equipment and thus a summer training site was created, where the students of the Gymnasium also practiced, in addition to Todorović's students.

The review of the exercise equipment has shown that there was not a plenty or a variety of it, and not because he was not familiar with the equipment, but because he used to purchase it himself and pay for it with his own money. In addition, gymnastic apparatuses were neither known or made in Serbia, therefore they could not be purchased either.

Askanius Sedlmayer, a professional gymnastic teacher, opened the ***School of Gymnastics*** (February 1st, 1866) in the Terazije Gymnasium where he taught this subject. During the summer, the students and citizens practiced in the schoolyard, and during the winter, in a large adapted room (hall) which was equipped with gymnastic apparatuses. The adults practiced following the instructions by Askanius Sedlmayer according to the German Turner gymnastic system, since Sedlmayer acquired the Turner education in Germany.

The school was equipped with its own gymnastic apparatuses, which may be found in the preserved Rules of Work of the School where it was recorded that the attendants *'were not allowed to take the gymnastic apparatuses out of the school'*. Unfortunately, a list of the equipment used at the School has not been preserved, but it may be assumed that most of the apparatuses were modeled on the Turner ones (*beams, poles, vaulting apparatuses, parallel bars, horizontal bars*).

The School of Gymnastics worked until the death of Sedlmayer in 1873 and during these seven years of its work many citizens of Belgrade practiced there. At the beginning of the Serbian-Turkish wars (1876-1878) all the activities and the work of the School were stopped.

The Principality of Serbia gained its independence according to the provisions of the Berlin Treaty (1878), therefore new findings about civil gymnastic societies, Sokol movement and sports came to Serbia. In January 1882, at the initiative of a young Serbian physician, dr Vladan Đorđević, the ***Belgrade Society for Gymnastics and Fighting*** was established, where the citizens could practice after completing their education, and the task of which was also ***to***

prepare gymnastics teachers for secondary schools and later on for primary ones as well.

The aim of the Society was to develop and improve physical strength and health of its members who practiced every day between 6 and 7 p.m. and between 7 and 8 p.m. through joint, systematic and physical exercise, and there also was a women's department. The practitioners used **the apparatuses of the German gymnastic system**: parallel bars, horizontal bars, pommel horse, rope. In the beginning, they performed exercises in ordinary clothes and shoes and only in 1890s their **training clothes** included a T-shirt and trousers, whereas trainers were introduced a bit later.

The training method in the Society was applied according to the Turner system, due to the teachers who acquired their knowledge in the Turner societies. The practitioners performed the exercises of jumping with poles/sticks, fighting with sticks as well as a sort of fist fighting. Simple exercises – shaping exercises were also applied, but under the name of Swedish exercises. Dumbbells and weights for strength exercises were also used a lot.

The turbulent political and social changes in many European countries also reflected in the political and cultural life of the Kingdom of Serbia. These changes and influences did not exclude the gymnastic organizations either. Thus, the idea of pan-Slavic **Sokol exercising** was accepted by a number of the Belgrade youth, and in the Belgrade Society for Gymnastics and Fighting it was reflected in the aspiration and desire to introduce the Czech – Sokol system of exercise instead of the German one. Therefore, they changed their name into the **“Belgrade Gymnastic Society Sokol”** (1891), at the proposal of Vojislav Rašić, the Secretary of the Society.

Immediately afterwards, similar **Sokol societies** were established in many towns in the interior of the Kingdom of Serbia such as Kragujevac, Šabac, Niš. Thus, the Sokol idea and the Sokol exercising were also spreading to other places in the Kingdom of Serbia. Having changed its name and the contents of exercises, the work of the Belgrade society became more intense as the interest in new working methods considerably increased among its members.

The Belgrade Gymnastic Society Sokol continued the work of the **Belgrade Society for Gymnastics and Fighting** also by opting for the Sokol idea aiming at the development of the physical strength and health of its members through physical exercises, excursions i.e. by deeds and words. Three years later (1895) the curriculum was extended by introducing new activities: fighting, swimming, rowing, and the practitioners of the Society were then officially called **“Sokol gymnasts”**.

At the beginning of 1901, the Serbian Sokol movement faced a period of loss in the members' interest in its work, so that a great number of the societies almost stopped their operations, while the chivalrous societies "Dušan the Mighty" were founded all across Serbia. For these reasons, during 1902, the *Belgrade Gymnastic Society Sokol* expanded its curriculum by establishing new gymnastic departments in order to attract and involve the citizens in the work of the Sokol society. The envisaged departments were as follows: fighting (Sokol Fighting Club), "driving on wheels" (Sokol Velocipede Club), shooting (Sokol Shooting Club), skating (Sokol Skating Club), horse riding (Sokol Horse riding Club), rowing and swimming (Sokol Rowing and Swimming Club), activities with a ball (Sokol Football Club).

This ambitious plan of the Society followed the emergence of modern sports in this region and showed understanding for the need of young people to engage in them. The unique management of the Belgrade Gymnastic Society Sokol was envisaged to manage the work of these "gymnastic departments" which could be actually considered "**the sports departments**" of the Society, since they were called: "**clubs**".

However, during this six-year period, a **problem of exercise rooms** where the trainings would be held during wintertime still persisted, so that in 1902 they decided to build their gym and provide a special gymnastic teacher. But, they did not have enough funds to realize this idea, so they practiced in the hall of the "Russian Crown" tavern during winters.

The biggest issue regarding the work of the Society was a lack of permanent **professional teachers**, as well as of the Society's gym, i.e. their own exercise rooms. During 1903 they managed to provide a professional teacher, Živan Madžarević and soon afterwards a Czech, Antonije Brazdil was appointed a professional gymnastic teacher.

During the summer holiday 1908, the training for the Society's members was organized at a summer training site, under the management of Frantisek Hofman. He held 'a course in fist-fighting' for the members of the foremen's board and in addition to that, the curriculum of this and other Sokol societies included some of the modern sports disciplines (then called "**modern gymnastics**") such as: fighting (wrestling, boxing, fencing); cycling; shooting; skating; horse riding; rowing; swimming and football (activities with a ball).

Such diverse contents of exercises attracted an increasing number of youth and citizens who practiced these sports disciplines and thus Sokol societies represented the places where modern sport was introduced and cherished, i.e. sports clubs, where sport continued its further development, were formed out of them.

After the change of its name “*Belgrade Society for Gymnastics and Fighting*” into “*Belgrade Gymnastic Society Sokol*” (1891), some of the former members, wishing to make the name of the Society associated with the cultural and political history of the Medieval Serbia, under the leadership of Jovan Stojanović, a student of the Faculty of Law, founded the “*Civil Gymnastic Society “Dušan the Mighty*” in Belgrade on **November 22nd 1892**. 19)

The true reason for establishing the Society “*Dušan the Mighty*” was the aspiration of the Serbian people to have something that belongs only to them, i.e. the restoration of the Serbian state based on the glorious period of Dušan’s Serbia – Serbian Empire.

The Society changed its name into **the Chivalrous Society “Dušan the Mighty”**, and the term ‘*chivalrous*’ was chosen because they wanted to highlight their connection with the tradition of the Serbian knights in the name of the newly founded Society. A **knight** metaphorically represented a hero, a defender, a protector, a man without fears and flaws, a man of high moral qualities, and the practitioners of the Society “*Dušan the Mighty*” wanted these to be their own **qualities** as well.

Their competitions were called **chivalrous competitions**, and in practice the following terms were increasingly used: **chivalrous societies, chivalrous fights, chivalrous competitions, chivalrous behavior, chivalrous spirit** and the like. This term actually denoted everything that the term **sport** meant in the Europe of that time.

During the following eighteen years (1892-1910), the gymnastic societies which were generally named “*Sokol*” or “*Dušan the Mighty*” were established and operating in Serbia. Even though they had similar curricula, equipment and methods of physical exercise, they were separated by the idea they opted for, i.e. **Sokol societies** – which cherished the idea of the Sokol movement that expressed the aspirations for national liberation and unification of all the Slavs, and **the Societies “Dušan the Mighty”** which cherished the national ideas that relied on the cultural and political past and tradition of the Medieval Serbia.

There were some attempts to solve the disagreements between the members of these societies in **1904** already, by merging them into one gymnastic society, as proposed by the Federal Management of the Chivalrous Societies “*Dušan the Mighty*”, but they failed to realize this idea, to the detriment of the work of both societies, although there still were mutual initiatives as well as the single desire and need for the unification of most practitioners of these societies.

The first (founding) Assembly of the newly established **Association of the Sokol Societies “Dušan the Mighty”** was held on February 2nd 1910 in Belgrade. Although the realization of the agreement on merging the Sokol and chivalrous

societies thus began, however, it was not accepted and complied with by all chivalrous societies "Dušan the Mighty".

The issue of professional staff started to be solved only when the Sokol foremen, who worked in the Sokol societies but also taught in secondary schools, started coming from the Czech Republic to Serbia in the late 19th century. By passing the professional examinations for gymnastic teachers and acquiring the gymnastic teachers' qualifications in civil gymnastic societies and by opening the Gymnastic School in Belgrade in 1908, the first qualified staff was created in Serbia, which only initiated the resolution of the problem of professional training and education.

Another significant factor for the gymnastic societies' work was a material basis, i.e. training sites: exercise rooms and indoor premises-halls, as well as their being adequately equipped in terms of apparatuses and props. The apparatuses used in the German gymnastic system were generally purchased: horizontal bar, parallel bars, climbing apparatuses – devices and structures (poles, ropes, rope and wood ladders), taken from the German gymnastic system and partially from the Swedish one – balance beams (balancing), - pommel horse, - rings (circles).

Modern sport also arrived to Serbia and it was accepted by all the categories of the citizens, primarily in private schools and civil gymnastic societies, and later on in special sports clubs which started to be established in the late 19th century.

At the end of the 19th century, the Olympic idea was accepted in the Kingdom of Serbia, and the knowledge about the Olympic movement was expanding, therefore on February 10th (23rd) 1910 the **Serbian Olympic Club** was founded, which in the following period of time directed the sports clubs and organizations towards the inclusion into the international Olympic community.

During a four-year period of its work, i.e. from its establishment until the start of the First World War (1910-1914), the *Serbian Olympic Club (Committee)* launched a wide-spread activity and played an important role in the further development of sport and the Olympic movement in the Kingdom of Serbia.

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ВРСТЕ И ОБЛИЦИ ТЕЛЕСНОГ ВЕЖБАЊА У ПРИВАТНИМ ШКОЛАМА И ГИМНАСТИЧКИМ ДРУШТВИМА ЗА ТЕЛЕСНО ВЕЖБАЊЕ КНЕЖЕВИНЕ И КРАЉЕВИНЕ СРБИЈЕ

САЖЕТАК

У досадашњим истраживањима рада гимнастичких друштава Кнежевине и Краљевине Србије нису се сериозније изучавале врсте телесног вежбања у њима. Може се претпоставити да је разлог у недовољно сачуваним подацима о томе.

Из тих разлога у овом истраживању се трагало за сазнањем о врстама телесног вежбања у приватним школама за телесно вежбање, у којима су се вежбале и училе одређене вештине (мачевања, пливања, гађања из лука, јахања коња), затим у друштвима за телесно вежбање (гимнастику), као и у соколским друштвима. *Циљ истраживања* је био да се сазна које су се врсте и облици телесног вежбања користиле у приватним школама за телесно вежбање, друштвима за телесно вежбање (гимнастику), као и у соколским друштвима Кнежевине и Краљевине Србије. У овом истраживању коришћен је *историјски метод*.

У раду су презентовани резултати, односно изложене су врсте физичког вежбања у приватним школама за телесна вежбања (*Школама мачевања; Сликарској школи* Стеве Тодоровића; *Гимнастичкој школи* Асканијуса Седлмајера), у друштвима за телесно вежбање (гимнастику) и соколским друштвима (*Београдском друштву за гимнастику и борење; Београдском гимнастичком друштву Соко; Грађанском гимнастичком друштву Душан Силни; соколским друштвима*).

На основу упоредне анализе врста коришћених справа и начина вежбања утврђено је да се у *приватним школама* вежбало углавном по турнерском

систему, користећи већину Јанових турнерских справа. Међутим, у **друштвима за физичко вежбање**, осим турнерског начина вежбања, делимично је коришћен и шведски систем вежбања.

Појавом и прихватањем соколске идеје започела је и примена соколског начина вежбања у основаним соколским друштвима, а убрзо и у војсци, основним, и средњим школама.

Кључне речи: телесно вежбање, врсте и облици, Србија, приватне школе, гимнастичка друштва

ВИДЫ И ФОРМЫ УПРАЖНЕНИЙ ДЛЯ ФИЗИЧЕСКОЙ ПОДГОТОВКИ ВОСПИТАННИКОВ ЧАСТНЫХ ШКОЛ И ГИМНАСТИЧЕСКИХ ОБЩЕСТВ В КНЯЖЕСТВЕ И КОРОЛЕВСТВЕ СЕРБИЯ

АННОТАЦИЯ

В предыдущих исследованиях, посвященных гимнастическим обществам в Княжестве и Королевстве Сербия, не рассматривались так детально виды физических упражнений в подготовке атлетов. Очевидно, что это обусловлено отсутствием необходимой информации по указанной проблеме.

В связи с этим данное исследование предполагает поиск информации о видах физических упражнений, применяемых в частных учебных заведениях, где воспитанники получали знания и формировали навыки физической подготовки в определенных видах спорта (фехтование, плавание, стрельба из лука, верховая езда), а затем в спортивных обществах по гимнастике и в рыцарских обществах. Цель данного исследования – определить виды и формы физических упражнений, развивающих физические навыки воспитанников частных учебных заведений, обществ физической культуры (гимнастики) и рыцарских обществ Княжества и Королевства Сербия.

Работа представляет собой теоретическое исследование.

В данной статье в качестве результатов исследования представлены такие виды физических упражнений, которые используются для спортивной подготовки учащихся в частных образовательных школах (школа фехтования, школа живописи Стева Годоровича, гимнастическая школа Асканиуса Сельдмайера, общество физической культуры (гимнастика)) и рыцарских обществ (Общество в Белграде по гимнастике и борьбе, Гимнастическое Общество «Сокол» в Белграде, Гражданское Гимнастическое Общество «Душан Силни», общество «Сокол»).

В результате сравнительного анализа типов используемых гимнастических снарядов и применяемых методов физической подготовки установлено, что в частных школах в основном применялась

система физических упражнений Яна Тернера, а именно, применялись преимущественно гимнастические упражнения на снарядах. Однако, наряду с упражнениями по системе Тернера, в обществах по физической подготовке частично применялась и шведская система физических упражнений.

С разработкой и развитием идеи «Сокол» началось применение метода «Сокол» в обществах «Сокол», а вскоре и в армии, а также в начальных и средних школах.

Ключевые слова: физические упражнения, виды и формы, Сербия, частные школы, гимнастические общества.

Received on 08.09.2017.

Accepted on 01.10.2017.