

CONTRIBUTION OF OFFICERS CADRE TO THE SOKOL MOVEMENT AND THE SERBIAN OLYMPIC CLUB FROM 1904 TO 1941

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SUMMARY

This paper aimed to examine the officer cadre's contribution to the Serbian Sokol movement and the Serbian Olympic Club (SOC), highlighting certain social relationships and repercussions at the time. Many officers who graduated from the Military Academy performed the highest state duties in various fields and were present in sports and state sports institutions, which proves that the officers influenced not only the development and progress of the army in which they served but also improved the state and institutions in the whole. Using the historical method, we investigated the contribution of the officer cadre in the work of the Sokol movement and SOC and pointed to the fact that the Sokol movement and SOC shared common interests and goals within the army of the Kingdom of Serbia, the Kingdom of SHS and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Through theoretical and critical analysis, this paper examined these relationships and demonstrated the significant contribution of officers in developing the Sokol movement and the SOC.

Key words: historical review, sports, sports organizations, physical exercise.

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INTRODUCTION

The roots of the mutual influence and connection of the army and physical exercise in Serbia can be found in the medieval Serbian state, with the ultimate

goal of strengthening the army, defending the country, or expanding its territories. Regarding the history of the formation of the Serbian army, it is necessary to mention that Serbia did not have a regular military organization until 1807 when the Serbian state received its first constitution, general military service was introduced, and every adult male was obliged to carry a weapon. Miloš Obrenović's People's Army existed then. Only in 1825 did Prince Miloš form a standing army. He recruited 1147 selected young men and created 12 troops called "Upisni "cops or "Soldats." ¹

Due to inadequate opportunities for the education of a significant number of officers in their military colleges and a dearth of officer cadres, the Serbian army sent its cadets overseas between 1861 and 1873. During their time abroad (Austria-Hungary, Russia, France, Belgium, and Germany), Serbian officers could familiarize themselves with various armies' physical training (physical education) systems. After graduating from the Military Academy, one of them, Dragomir T. Nikolajević, remained in France (1902–1904). During that time, he completed his studies at the Faculty of Sports (University of Sports) in Joinville le Pont. After returning to Belgrade, Nikolajević presented English and French boxing for the first time in Serbia, continued to compete in fencing, engaged in dog training and hunting, and joined the Serbian Olympic Club ².

The brief cessation of hostilities with the Turks and independence in 1878 impacted Serbia's economic, political, and sporting development. Intellectuals and officers from Serbia educated in major foreign countries and cities contributed significantly to this achievement. They returned to Serbia with new ideas, projects, props, and specific concepts. Since its establishment in 1850, the Military Academy has served as a center for gathering and systematic training. Officers studied horseback riding, gymnastics, wrestling, fencing, exercise (rifle drills), fencing (saber fencing), and swimming during their training. Physical education instruction held a unique role in the officer cadres' education and upbringing. Gymnastics, wrestling, swimming, and exercises (rifle exercises) had a large and significant impact on the physical abilities of Serbian soldiers from 1850 to the end of the 19th century ³. These training contents formed the basis of physical training from 1850 to the end of the 19th century.

The officer cadre has always participated in social events, including sports groups and state institutions, where they have made incalculable contributions and held positions of great importance. Previous researchers have only partially addressed this issue; consequently, the authors have chosen to conduct this study.

¹ Slavica B. Ratković-Kostić, *Evropeizacija Srpske Vojske: 1878-1903* (Vojnoistorijski institut, 2007).

² Дејан Гавриловић, *Великан Српскога Спорта Пуковник Драгомир Николајевић* (Београд: СИА, 2011).

³ Radoš Ljušić et al., *Oficiri u Visokom Školstvu Srbije: 1804-1918* (Vojnoizdavački zavod, 2000).

The knowledge gained by the authors as a result of this research will undoubtedly aid in illuminating the contribution and activity of officers throughout the history of Serbian sports.

This paper aimed to examine the officer cadre's contribution to the Serbian Sokol movement and the Serbian Olympic Club (development of the Olympic spirit), highlighting certain social relationships and repercussions at the time.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Time (vertical axis) and space (horizontal axis) constrain societal events and, by extension, human life (horizontal axis). All events and movements are temporally and spatially related ⁴, and the historical study serves cultural and practical purposes. During our investigation, we found historical sources that connected past events, people, and us, the researchers. We knew that a straight route to historical events and facts was impossible. In order to achieve the highest level of historical sensitivity through historical inquiry, considering contemporary society, we relied on intermediaries in the form of material evidence and written records, like historical sources of the first and second order. Therefore, this research was primarily based on primary and secondary sources, which were adequately examined to draw appropriate conclusions.

The utilization of Serbian military commanders and soldiers as military training teachers in the medieval Serbian army is a precursor to the contribution of Serbian army officers to the development of physical education in the Serbian army indirectly in the 19th and 20th centuries ⁵. Due to uncertainties, doubts, and abuses, the Serbian history of the Sokol movement has not been accorded a rightful position in Serbian historiography. This national movement marked physical education from 1903 until 1941. This paper should clarify the role of the Sokol and Serbian Olympic Club officers ⁶.

Consequently, the paper's theoretical framework refers to the impact and involvement of officers of the Serbian army in the Sokol movement and the Serbian Olympic Club and their mutual relationships and activities throughout the three states. The present paper comprises the following nations: the kingdoms of Serbia, SHS, and Yugoslavia. In this paper, historical and descriptive methods were utilized.

⁴ Zdravko Delečić, *Nauka o Istoriji* (Niš: Centar za balkanološke studije, 2006).

⁵ Дејан Гавриловић, "Утицај Српске Војске на Појаву и Развој Физичке Културе у Србији у XIX и Почетком XX Века," *Токови Историје*, no. 2 (2011).

⁶ Zvezdan Savić, "Socio-Istorijski Aspekti Sokolstva u Srbiji," *Teme-Časopis za Društvene Nauke*, no. 4 (2010).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The army's contribution to the work of the Sokol organization

The Sokol movement is a Slavic cultural, national-liberal movement that began in the Czech Republic in 1862 under Miroslav Tirš and arose in Serbia in 1904 with Laza Popović. Sokol's teaching was folk-inspired, and the army could engage many officers as speakers, teachers, and community leaders. Sokol's instruction incorporated military training. Sokol societies routinely provided information and advice to army members ⁷.

The Sokol movement needed resources and a social context to accomplish its goals. That was made feasible by Serbia's social and political circumstances, where the Sokol movement infiltrated all social structures. Some scholars are enthusiastic about interpenetration and complementarity, while others are pessimistic ⁸. At the annual conference of the Sokol Society of Niš on January 24, 1926, the Board of Directors was elected: Jaša Nenadović (president), Lieutenant colonel Ljubomir Ivanović (vice-president), and others ⁹.

As with many other armies, the Serbian military had a physical education program for its personnel, a keen interest in physical training methods, and a desire to collaborate with physical training organizations. The Army of the Kingdom of SHS showed interest in the postwar Sokol movement. At the First All-Sokol Rally in Ljubljana in 1922, the army proved the effectiveness of its Sokol-based physical training with a rifle (exercise) that made a lasting impression.

The Sokol movement was in a position where its physical training and educational work in peacetime conditions should support the accomplishment of military tasks by producing more decisive, more agile, and morally stronger military conscripts, which would benefit both the military and the general populace. That is how the Sokol movement facilitated the physical instruction of soldiers following its system. The partnership between the army and the Sokol movement was unique and highly productive. The Sokol ideals determined the Sokol movement as an ideology and organization and the Yugoslav army's relationship. These ideals also addressed uniting the entire nation inside the Sokol

⁷ Звездан Савић, *Соколство и Моравска Соколска Жупа Ниш (1920–1941)* (Ниш: Универзитетска библиотека Никола Тесла и Факултет спорта и физичког васпитања у Нишу, 2011).

⁸ Звездан Савић и Б. Тикић, "Моравска Соколска Жупа Ниш и Њен Старешина Радован Димитријевић," *Пешчаник, Часопис за историографију, архивистику и хуманистичке науке* 9 (2011).

⁹ Zvezdan Savić, "Odnos Sokolstva Prema Pojednim Institucijama u Društvenim Subjektima u Kraljevini SHS i Kraljevini Jugoslaviji" (paper presented at the X Međunarodni naučni skup, FIS-Komunikacije, Niš, 2003).

community. That resolved the matter of the spirit in which the entire nation must be raised ¹⁰.

As the Yugoslav army was an integral component of the nation at the time, it could not be viewed outside of the Sokol movement. That is why the Sokol movement concept and instruction embraced the military and was an intrinsic component of it where the military joined the Sokol movement. The same spirit merged both, becoming a single entity. The Yugoslav army operated concurrently with the Sokol movement as a national institution. The Sokol movement was conscious that its education supported the operations of the Yugoslav army; thus, it established professional military training in its societies. According to Savić (2004) ¹¹, in every Sokol society that had members in the army, a department was established to maintain permanent contact with those members, correspond with them, send them society news, encourage them to perform Sokol work in the army, and provide them with books and leaves.

Due to threats from the Tripartite Pact, the Federal Sokol Administration pushed in 1940 that the Sokol formations develop into the Yugoslav National Army to defend against aggressors and avoid the formation of a fifth column in Yugoslavia (internal enemy). In this way, the formation of new Sokol military units was accelerated. Numerous officers were members of the Sokol movement. We list a few: cavalry Lieutenant colonel Miloje Pavlović (the elder of Šumadija parish), Mihajlo Miko Jovanović (member of the secret organization Mlada Bosna), Milutin Miković (organizer of the Sokols in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), and Lieutenant colonel Vojislav Ivanović (deputy head of the "Dušan Silni" society). During Milan Stojadinović's administration, Sokol battalions were armed to counterbalance Croatian peasant protection.

OFFICERS' RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS THE SERBIAN OLYMPIC CLUB (SOC)

When Olympism swept Europe, Serbia began emphasizing the significance of physical fitness and exercise. Beginning in the nineteenth century, the concept of forming sports clubs developed rapidly. The Olympic Committee of Serbia plays a crucial role in the domestic (regional and national) and international (International Olympic Committee multi-sport tournaments) organizing of sports (IOC). Since March 23, 1910, when the Serbian Olympic Club was founded in

¹⁰ *Правилник Југословенског Соколског Савеза*, Љубљана: Организација Југословенског Соколског Савеза, 1925.

¹¹ Звездан Савић, "Настанак Соколства у Србији од 1904. до 1945. Године" (Докторска дисертација, Универзитет у Нишу, 2004).

Belgrade, in addition to excellent sports professionals, politicians, influential people, and merchants, it has been led by military personnel who have contributed immense value to its prosperity. They brought their education in France back to their nation and continued their athletic endeavors there.

They were: director and IOC member General Svetomir Đukić (1912-1948), retired General Nikodije Stevanović (1910-1919), General Duan Stefanović (1927-1931), and General Dušan Korać (1950-1951)^{12,13}. The secretary and treasurer of the SOC in 1910 were Second Lieutenant Milo Ilić and Captain Milorad Petković, respectively. In SOC, military regulations restricted political involvement and engagement by officers. Of the 49 members of the Central Olympic Club in 1912, 25 officers in significant positions and 24 notable civilians were included. Four officers (Nikodije Stevanović, Dragan T. Nikolajević, Svetomir Đukić, and Radoje Janković) and seven civilians comprised the final administration of SOC in 1914. From 1910 through 1914, the SOC administration processed 139 members, comprising 70 officers and 69 civilians. SOC was primarily a military-influenced organization. Most of the SOC's 33/38 local committees were led by officers¹⁴. We provided the names of officers by their SOC assignments. *Presidency*: General Staff Lieutenant Colonel Nikola Stevanović; *Executive Board*: General Svetomir Đukić (Director), Lieutenant Milo Ilić (Secretary), and Captain Milorad Petrović (Treasurer); *Honorary president*: retired General Nikodije Stevanović; *Founders*: Major Stanko Glavašević, Captain Dara Petrović; *Board members*: Major Dragan T. Nikolajević (Deputy), Vladan Belić, Rade Janković, and Pavle Jurišić – captains¹⁴.

Organizing committees: Captain Ljuba Maksimović, Captain Vladan Skubić, Lieutenant Radovan Radovanović. *Section for concerts and excursions*: Captain Pavle Jurišić, Lieutenant Milija Đorđević. *Section for winter sports*: Captain Milivoje Petrović, Ljubivoje Borisavljević, Sreten Todorović, and Vladimir Dimitrijević – lieutenants. *Section for cavalry and foot travel*: Ljuba Maksimović and Jeremija Stanojević – captains, Dimitrije Pavlović and Petar Jurišić – lieutenants. *Competition committee*: Lieutenant Colonel Dragan Andonović Captain Dr. Krstić, Major Leon Kone, Lieutenant Milivoj Čolak Antić¹⁴.

Literal committee: Major Petar Lazarević, Cavalry Captain Jevrem Lazić. *Control board*: General Boža Janković, Medical Major Čeda Mihajlović. *Heads of sections*: Major Dragutin Nikolajević (martial arts and wrestling), Captain Vojin

¹² Виолета Шилјак, *Олимпијизам* (Београд: Алфа универзитет, 2013).

¹³ Violeta Šiljak, "The Competitions That Have Contributed to the Rise and Spread of the Olympic Movement in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century," *Fizičko vaspitanje i sport kroz vekove* 7, no. 1 (2020).

¹⁴ Radivoje Marković, *Šezdeset Godina Učešća Beogradskih Sportista na Olimpijskim Igrama 1912-1972* (Beograd: Komisija za istorijski arhiv i muzej fizičke kulture, 1972).

Todorović (equestrian), Captain Dragoslav Mostić (jockey), Lieutenant Đorđe Blagojević (cycling), Medical Colonel Lazar Genčić (permanent referees) ¹⁴.

We list individual SOC local committees in the interior: Valjevo - Major Dobrivoje Tošić, Vranje - Colonel Dušan Stefanović, Gornji Milanovac - Colonel Živojin Nešić and Captain Vojin Glišić, Kragujevac - Colonel Vasa Božidarević, Kruševac - Colonel Jovan Vitorović, Niš - Lieutenant Colonel Stevan Milovanović and Captain Aleksandar Plesničar, Smederevo - Major Milan Vučković, Čačak - Colonel Mihailo Zisić, Loznica - Major Milivoje Momčilović. Cavalry Lieutenant Dragutin Vojinović was a member of the team at the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912 (Andra Jović, an engineer, was also a member of the professional team). Through a general investigation of other cities, we realized that those committees also had officers we did not include here.

CONCLUSION

This paper uses the historical method to examine observed relations and phenomena from the perspective of creation, development, and existence, to explain the past and predict future phenomena, introduces events, people, and years and highlights their contributions to sports and exercise in our region. This paper emphasizes Sokol's and the SOC officer cadre's contribution to overcoming the internal and external events that hampered the Serbian army at that time. Based on the profound influence of the officers, the kingdoms of Serbia, SHS, and Yugoslavia had a declared and effective alliance based on broad cooperation, which boosted the state's army. Military personnel developed Serbian physical exercises from 1882 to 1918 and contributed significantly to "Dušan Silni" and Sokol gymnastics sports organizations, which accelerated the advancement of sports, sports organizations, recreation, and physical education.

Additionally, certain members of the Kingdom of Serbia's army influenced the creation and growth of the Olympic movement and fostered and promoted the Serbian people's national spirit through sports. Officers united Sokol and "Dušan Silni" organizations in 1910 and raised national pride and dignity in the liberation wars 1912-1918, where Serbian athletes contributed to freedom. Additionally, the Military Academy lent sports areas (exercises and halls) equipment to specific sports, while instructors and officers helped form sports groups and societies while competing in athletics, fencing, swimming, gymnastics, archery, equestrian sports, boxing, savate, and wrestling.

We can conclude that the officer cadre significantly contributed to the emergence of various forms of physical exercise that eventually evolved into sports. Soldiers' physical training profoundly impacted the civil system in the states of that time, as evidenced by the proliferation of private fencing schools, swimming lessons, gymnastics classes, and others. The examination of pertinent

literature and archival material presented in this paper offers a new perspective on the relationships mentioned, with the intent of furthering the research. We can reasonably anticipate that this form of presentation of the mutual interactions and activities of the officer cadre in the Sokol movement and the Serbian Olympic Club would partly impact new trends in the development of thoughts and ideas in future studies.

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ДОПРИНОС ОФИЦИРСКОГ КАДРА СОКОЛСКОМ ПОКРЕТУ И СРПСКОМ ОЛИМПИЈСКОМ КЛУБУ ОД 1904. ДО 1941. ГОДИНЕ

САЖЕТАК

Овај рад је имао за циљ да испита допринос официрског кадра Српском соколском покрету и Српском олимпијском клубу (СОК), наглашавајући одређене друштвене односе и реперкусије тог времена. Многи официри који су завршили Војну академију обављали су највише државне дужности у разним областима и били су присутни у спорту и државним спортским институцијама што доказује да су официри утицали не само на развој и напредак војске у којој су служили, већ и унапредио државу и институције у целини. Користећи историјски метод, истражили смо допринос официрског кадра у раду соколског покрета и СОК-а и указали на чињеницу да су соколски покрет и СОК делили заједничке интересе и циљеве у оквиру војске Краљевине Србије, Краљевине СХС и Краљевине Југославије. Кроз теоријску и критичку анализу, овај рад је испитао ове односе и показао значајан допринос официра у развоју соколског покрета и СОК-а.

Кључне речи: историјски осврт, спорт, спортске организације, телесно вежбање.

ВКЛАД ОФИЦЕРСКИХ КАДРОВ В РАЗВИТИЕ ДВИЖЕНИЯ «СОКОЛ» И СЕРБСКИЙ ОЛИМПИЙСКИЙ КЛУБ С 1904 ПО 1941 ГОД

АННОТАЦИЯ

Цель данной работы – рассмотреть вклад офицерского состава в сербское движение "Сокол" и Сербский олимпийский клуб (СОК), подчеркнув определенные социальные отношения и результаты участия офицеров. Многие офицеры, окончившие Военную академию, выполняли высший государственный долг в различных областях и были задействованы в области спорта и государственных спортивных учреждениях, что доказывает, что офицеры оказали влияние не только на развитие и прогресс армии, в которой они служили, но и улучшили государство и институты, в целом. Исторический метод позволил исследовать вклад офицерских кадров в деятельность движения Сокол и СОК и подчеркнул тот факт, что движение Сокол и СОК

имели общие интересы и цели в армии Королевства Сербия, Королевства СХС и Королевства Югославия. На основе теоретического и критического анализа в данной работе рассмотрены взаимоотношения представителей движения Сокол и СОК и показан значительный вклад офицеров в их развитие.

Ключевые слова: исторический обзор, спорт, спортивные организации, физические упражнения.

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