

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF OFFICERS' RELATIONS TOWARDS SPORTS AND SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS FROM 1882 TO 1941 IN THE KINGDOM OF SERBIA, KINGDOM OF SHS, AND KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA

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PROFESSIONAL ARTICLE

Abstract: The paper deals with the connection between sports, sports organizations, and military officer staff, pointing out certain connections and consequences. Many officers who graduated from the Military Academy performed the highest government duties in various fields (they were predominantly present in sports and sports institutions, but also physical education classes), which proves that the officers influenced not only the development and progress of the then armies in which they served but also the state and the institution as a whole. Using the historical method, we investigated the relationships between sports, sports organizations, and officers, as well as the influence of society on these relationships. Current historical research indicates that there is an unbreakable and practically significant connection between the activities of army members of different countries from our area (the Kingdom of Serbia, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) and sports and sports organizations in the form of common interests and goals. Through theoretical and critical analysis, the paper explores those relationships and points to officers' strong influence and efforts in forming and operating sports clubs and spreading the Olympic idea in the mentioned countries.

Keywords: history, sports organizations, sports, military officers, relationships.

INTRODUCTION

We learned through a historical approach that the relations and cooperation between the military and sports have existed since ancient times. The need for a modern officer cadre required the state to send Serbian cadets abroad due to insufficient opportunities to educate many officers in their military schools and the lack of an officer cadre (1861-1873). During their stay abroad (Austria-Hungary, Russia, France, Belgium, and Germany), Serbian officers had the opportunity to become familiar with the system of physical training (physical education) in the armies of foreign countries. One of them, Dragomir T. Nikolajević, stayed in France (1902-1904) after graduating from the Military Academy (Gavrilović, 2011a).

After gaining independence at the Berlin Congress (1878), Serbia began rapidly developing economically, politically, militarily, culturally, and sportingly.

Members of the army who were educated abroad and brought ideas, knowledge, skills, and specific sports equipment to Serbia also contributed to this progress. At that time, the army members mainly practiced riding, gymnastics, wrestling, fencing, exercise (gun exercises), and fencing (fencing with sabers). The influence of these sports disciplines was significant on the members of the Serbian army (Ljušić et al., 2000).

Officers have always participated in social events, including sports, apart from their professional duties in the army, contributing to sports development. Previous scholars have only partially dealt with this problem, so the authors have opted for such research. The knowledge gained in this research will undoubtedly make a further step in shedding light on the contribution and work of officers in the history of Serbian sports and physical exercise (Savić et al., 2022).

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 one's territories. In 1807, the Serbian state received its first constitution, military service was introduced, and every adult male was required to carry a weapon (Ratković - Kostić, 2008). It was only in 1825 that Prince Miloš formed a standing army, recruited 1147 young men, and created 12 companies, which he called registration cops or registration officers. After a year, he called them soldiers (nahia, village, and bečari).

The gymnastic systems in modern Europe contributed to developing sports and modern sports disciplines from 1882-1941 in the mentioned states on the territory of Serbia. Serbian sport was developed based on knightly tournaments, competitions, and battles (Bosiljčić, 1973). Numerous young people who studied abroad undoubtedly contributed to the emergence and development of sports in the Kingdom of Serbia, where they brought valuable sports experiences (Janković et al., 1996).

According to the author Deletić (2006), all social events, and therefore human life, are limited by time and space. Historical research in these areas has a cultural and practical function. The historical sources we used in this research represent mediators between those events, people in the past, and us researchers (Savić, 2016). Our research relied on primary and secondary sources, which we explored in detail to draw valuable conclusions.

The theoretical context of the paper refers to the influence and involvement of the officers of the Serbian army in sports and sports organizations, i.e., their mutual relations and activities during the period of three states: the Kingdom of Serbia, the Kingdom of SHS, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The questions that prompted the researchers to write this paper are reflected in the superficial writing, partly due to the neglect of the relationship between individuals, military members, sports, and sports organizations. This paper aimed to determine the frequency, relationship, structure, and contribution of officers from the country in transition in our area to sports and sports organizations and the development of the Olympic thought. Thus, the paper's importance lies in presenting and explaining those relationships and influences.

METHOD

The present review is based on a historical research approach examining events, people, and social circumstances to address the contribution of officers to sports empowerment specifically. Historical research helps us understand complex relationships between variables and events and to grasp the richness and complexity of human achievement and the roots of current social and economic circumstances. Our goal was to enrich the public by highlighting the importance of military engagement in developing sports.

We used the historical method, which involved analyzing historical sources and facts to understand and interpret the contributions of military officers to sports historical events and trends during the transitioning phase of the Serbian country. Typically, the historical technique involves collecting relevant primary sources like official records, letters, diaries, and pictures. Analyzing and interpreting primary sources is crucial to find potential biases or discrepancies, comparing and contrasting sources, or contextualizing the references within the specific historical period and helping us understand the past and its contribution to contemporary Serbian society.

Unfortunately, the primary sources were unavailable; therefore, we relied on secondary ones. We knew secondary sources could be biased to interfere with precise and objective historical interpretation. In that regard, we carefully evaluated available secondary sources like books, articles, and academic studies. In addition, the used sources needed to meet the following criteria: authenticity, reliability, relevance, and corroboration. We should note that each source could have possible limitations.

We created a narrative about the studied period based on valuable information. Our analysis included identifying and describing significant military figures' contributions, events, and trends that affected the sports' history of the Kingdom of Serbia, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, Slovenians, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relationship of Officers to Sports

At the end of the 19th century, certain sports began to be introduced in the Kingdom of Serbia, and sports societies directly contributed to establishing similar ones in other cities. Sports with a great tradition in this area, such as Shooting and Equestrian sports, have especially established themselves. The Resava Union Shooting Group was founded in 1891, and the society's president was Captain Marko Atanacković, and the storekeeper was Lieutenant Mladen Jovanović (Gavrilović, 2019; Гавриловић & Мијатовић, 2020).

The equestrian sport was a special place of engagement for officers. The first competition was held in 1865. Two officers were involved in the organization of the race: adjutant Dragutin Žabac and Colonel Franja Zah. With the establishment of the Association of Horse Training and Racing Officers (1885), the faster development of this sport in the newly formed states began. On the initiative of Captain Jovan Sretenović, the Equestrian Rally was organized in Kragujevac in 1911. At the equestrian show jumping event in the same year in Košutnjak, the first three places were won by the officers of the Kingdom of Serbia (Gavrilović, 2019; Гавриловић & Мијатовић, 2020).

The rich and meaningful sports life in the Kingdom of Serbia at the beginning of the 20th century and the accepted idea of the Olympic spirit made it possible for a group of officers and sports workers from Belgrade to establish the Serbian Olympic Club (SOK) in 1910 in Belgrade. Sports clubs founded before the Great War (1914-1918) changed their names after the war and continued their work. With the establishment of the Yugoslav Sports Association, conditions were created for better and faster development of sports. Members of the officer cadre also contributed to the founding of the Shooting Association SHS (1924) and the Yugoslav Fencing Association (1928) (Janković et al., 1996).

The School of Fencing (fencing with large sabers), started in Kragujevac by Atanasije Nikolić in 1839 (Private School of Fencing), is considered the beginning of organized sports in Serbia, from Belgrade downwards. Fencing also initiated serious organizing in other sports disciplines, primarily gymnastics, archery, and horse riding, but also a more professional approach to physical exercise teaching in Serbian schools. The "Serbian Sword" martial arts association was founded in May 1897. The first fencing teacher was Charles Duse, who was succeeded by officers Nikolajević, Josifović, and Dinić. In 1900, the First Officer's School for Fencing and other sports was created. Thus, in 1907, Serbian officers officially visited the Netherlands (Gavrilović, 2019; Гавриловић & Мијатовић, 2020).

During the 19th century, most organized sports activities were a function of "defense of the fatherland," where the lecturers were military officers. The departure of athletes to the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912 had sporting and political significance. Serbia, as a small country, then enters the world sports scene in the circumstances of constant war events. The Serbian government helped the departure of the athletes as much as it could, although until then, it only provided material support to the shooting and gymnastics associations and the riders' carts. It was, in a way, dedicated help. At that time, professional teachers were employed in military schools (the Belgian Charles Duse opened a private "School of Combat" in 1891, and later the "Officer's School of Combat" in 1897), placed as experts and lecturers.

Military scholars from the Kingdom of Serbia fell in love with sports while studying abroad, and together with educated people, they created sports organizations where they had a significant role and contribution. Cyclists, swordsmen, archers, and later footballers were the first athletes who performed outside the borders of Serbia. At the time of the Olympic Games in Stockholm, the Kingdom of Serbia drafted the "Law on Chivalry" (Vranje, president Mr. Dušan Stefanović - lieutenant colonel and director Mr. Dušan Kuzmanović - captain), which was

supposed to formalize the position of sports and physical culture in the war-torn country Serbia (Marković, 1972). Two Serbian officers, Aleksandar Josifović and Bogoljub Dinić selected by the Military Academy, attended the Austrian gymnastics and fencing school Viner Neustadt, where they obtained diplomas as gymnastics and fencing teachers (Perić, 2000).

Interestingly, in Vojvodina, which had a rich sports history, at the beginning of the 19th century, former Italian officers played a significant role in training (coaching) and propagating fencing sport. Fencing was highly valued then, so it was necessary for the army and the newly formed clubs. It should also be noted that during the formation of the first shooting society in Sremska Mitrovica (1870), the officers were the first members, and only later did ordinary citizens join. In the swimming school in 1856 in Zrenjanin (Velik Bečkerek), one of the coaches was a local garrison officer. At the large swimming pool in Novi Sad (on Veliki Šrand or Pojilo), the first swimmers were soldiers and officers who used the swimming pool in an organized manner. In the shooting club formed in 1870 in Novi Sad, the first members were distinguished German and Hungarian citizens and officers of Serbian nationality (Mrkić, 1996).

Colonel Dragomir T. Nikolajević trained as an officer in France. During that period, he graduated from the Faculty of Sports (University of Sports) in the suburb of Joinville le Pont. After returning to Belgrade, Nikolajević demonstrated English (1904) and French (1914) boxing for the first time in Serbia, continued to compete in fencing, engaged in dog training, hunting and becomes a member of the Olympic Club (Gavrilović, 2011a, 2011b). He authored the book "Boxing, French or English," a Ministry of Defense member supported by SOK and its competitive activities (Marković, 1972).

The Serbian army, as the backbone of physical exercise in Serbia at the time, actively participates in developing the idea of expanding sports and the idea of developing Olympism. The Military Academy hired Ljubomir Ilić, a graduate of a renowned European gymnastics school, as a gymnastics teacher. He also taught gymnastics at the Belgrade High School from 1880 to 1882. The stated tendency of continuous training of gymnastics and wrestling teachers at the Military Academy and the introduction of general military duty for two years provided the basis for the beginnings of sports in the Kingdom of Serbia (Maksimović, 1925).

Gavrilović et al., (2010) point out that officers and teachers of the Military Academy were direct/indirect participants in the establishment, organization, and development of athletics, gymnastics, swimming, archery, wrestling, boxing, savate, equestrian sports, fencing, but also sports associations, sports events, namely: "Belgrade Society for Gymnastics and wrestling" (1882), the "Serbian Sword" Fighting society (1897), the Danube Riders' Circle "Knez Mihailo" (1890), the First Serbian Archery Championship (1886), the first boxing sections (1904), "Officers' schools for fencing and other sports" (1900, 1902, and 1904), "Centenaries of Physical Labor of the Netherlands" (1907), "Yugoslavian Amateur Boxing Association" [president, Colonel Dragomir Nikolajević (1930)], "Yugoslavian Fencing Association" [president, Colonel Aleksandar Josifović (1928)]. They also distinguished themselves as authors of the first sports literature, namely: wrestling teacher Charles Duse ["Instructions for knife fighting" (1898)], Lieutenant Milenko

Arsović ["Knightly Games and Sports and physical education of our people" (1911)], Colonel Dragomir Nikolajević ["Physical Education Library," running, lung respiration, swimming, rugby, tennis, boxing, football, wrestling (1910)], "French and English boxing" (1914), wrestling (1914) (Maksimović, 1925).

In 1892, there were four officers in the founding assembly of the Civil Gymnastics Society "Dušan Silni": infantry captain Ljubimir Nedeljković, infantry lieutenant Miloš Ilić, infantry lieutenant Đorđe Blagojević and infantry lieutenant Živorad Lazarević (Gavrilović, 2019, Гавриловић & Мијатовић, 2020).

In 1925/1926, the organized skiing sport in the Royal SHS and later Yugoslavia's army began with the collaboration of the South Yugoslav Winter Sports Association from Ljubljana to conduct skiing courses for officers and non-commissioned officers to prepare them for official duties in mountainous regions during winter and to promote skiing among the public (Denda, 2009).

It is necessary to mention that during the Sixth January dictatorship (1929), almost all sports associations and club meetings were held under constant police surveillance. Club friends who supported the communist idea were harassed by the same police (Mitrović, 1969).

The Serbian Olympic Club's major sporting events and activities were attended by prominent civilians, representatives of the Government and the Court, representatives of diplomacy, and the military.

CONCLUSION

The historical method was applied in the paper, by which we connected historical events and personalities. The historical method allowed us to shed light and explain certain phenomena, personalities, and events in the past more closely, but also to predict future phenomena. The authors tried to make this research not a simple presentation of events, personalities, and years but pointing out their relationships and expected contributions to the further development of sports and physical exercise in our region.

The raised issue of presenting the aforementioned mutual relations and activities of the officer cadre in sports and sports organizations partly influenced new trends in developing thoughts and ideas in similar research. Therefore, this paper offers some new knowledge in presenting certain personalities of the officer cadre and their contributions to sports and sports organizations.

The army had different positions and influences in different states on the territory of Serbia. The relationship was highly complex in the Kingdom of Serbia due to internal and external politics and international circumstances. The army of the Kingdom of SHS and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia did not only have an essential activity. The relationship in society was based on a broad scope of cooperation, including sports and sports organizations. It was the cooperation and positive influence.

The importance of research is reflected in the different understandings by historians and critics of modern society and relations within it. Most agreed that the period (1882-1941) began the sports spirit in Serbia. Wars, negligence towards documentation, and political reasons contributed to little written and spoken about during this period. Behind all social and sports events in that period (1882-1941)

was the state of Serbia. Therefore, the sport was a vital area of the state and society, with the power of state influence and diplomacy. In this period, there was a significant emancipation of women in sports. Thus, in this period, sports hit the foundations of state concern (financing) about sports life and the attitude towards sports results.

Encouraging the reader to further thinking and work is reflected in the realistic presentation of facts and events that members of the army of the Kingdom of Serbia influenced the appearance and development of the Olympic movement in the Kingdom of Serbia. Army members of the Kingdom of Serbia also contributed to the liberation wars of 1912–1918. years. In this period, the officer cadre contributed to the unification of Sokols and Dušanovacs (1910). Until the beginning of the First World War, the officers of the Kingdom of Serbia performed most of the management functions in governing the Serbian Olympic Club.

The importance of the research is reflected in the knowledge that the officer cadre participated in the initiation of athletics, fencing, swimming, gymnastics, archery, equestrian sports, boxing (English or classical), savate (French boxing), and wrestling. Officers assumed responsibility for most functions in the administration and committees of the Serbian Olympic Club (1910). We emphasize and conclude that the officer cadre made a significant contribution to the emergence of various types of physical exercise that, over time, grew into sports, while the physical training of soldiers had great importance on the civil system in the mentioned countries, through numerous private fencing schools, swimming lessons, gymnastics, and others. By analyzing relevant literature and archival material, the paper establishes a novel view of the mentioned relationships with the aim of further research.

The present paper was created to preserve and emphasize this historical relationship for all past, present, and future generations. Also, the authors will be very grateful to researchers who will supplement this research with novel years, events, and personalities.

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