



APPEARANCE OF THE OLYMPIC IDEA IN CIVIL GYMNASTIC AND OTHER SPORTING SOCIETIES AND CLUBS IN SERBIA

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SUMMARY

The idea of revival of the Olympic Games appeared much before its realization, but creation of the possibilities to reintroduce the Games was closely related to development of modern sport. The first mentioning and proposals originated from the works of the Humanists in 15th and 16th century, and in the thirties of the 19th century some practical attempts were made for their revival.

The aim of the paper was to determine the time when the first ideas on Olympism appeared in Serbia in civil gymnastic and other sporting societies and clubs. *Historical method* was used in the paper.

For a long period Serbia was cherishing and developing traditional forms of competitions and tournaments but organized forms of physical exercises of citizens appeared only in the mid-19th century when the first private schools for physical exercises were established in many towns of the Principality of Serbia. Therefore, these private schools and the civil gymnastic societies were places where modern sport and the Olympic ideal were gladly accepted and further developed. Thus, it is understandable why, at the time of realization of the idea on revival of Ancient Olympic Games, those societies and clubs used the expression: *Olympic competitions* for their sporting events, besides they already used names: *popular festivals* or *chivalry competitive plays*.

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In the mid-19th century the Olympic idea took roots also in the Principality and later in the Kingdom of Serbia. Namely, before the revival of the Olympic Games in Athens and before the term „Olympic“ became more significant in reporting from sporting events, the competitions in Serbia had been announced as „Olympic festivities“ although they were not directly linked to the aforementioned Games in Greece.

Key words: Serbia, Olympic Games, Olympic idea, civil gymnastic societies, sports societies.

INTRODUCTION

Thoughts and ideas about the revival of the Olympic Games are much older than realization of the idea of Baron Pierre de Coubertin in 1896, when Athens hosted the first renewed Olympic Games.

In an attempt to determine the time when the Olympic thoughts appeared in cultural and public life of the 19th century Serbia, we should start from the state of its socio-economic, political and cultural setting. When economically and culturally developed Europe started considering the idea of renewing the Olympic Games, Serbia was fighting for the basic existential needs, striving for freedom and the restoration of its national state. Its culture and national identity was preserved through various forms of heritage and traditions.

Traditional forms of folk plays and chivalrous competitions, which represented a significant basis and precondition for easier and faster acceptance and development of all the attainments, achievements and various influences that arrived from the developed Europe, played an important role in the field of physical education.

Under these influences, various civil gymnastic societies and private schools cherishing certain forms of physical exercise were established in the mid-19th century in Serbia. Soon afterwards, in the second half of the 19th century, societies with the characteristics of modern sports clubs were also established. People practiced there to become stronger, faster and more enduring, but also to show who was better and more successful in competing with each other.

Thanks to these activities, civil gymnastic societies and sports clubs were fertile grounds, but also a necessary requirement for the acceptance of the Olympic idea and its further development. Thus, it is understandable why, at the time of realization of the idea on revival of the Ancient Olympic Games, those societies and clubs used the expression: *Olympic competitions* for their sporting events. Besides, they often used names: *popular festivals* or *chivalry competitive plays*.

METHOD

Historical method was used in the paper.

The subject of this study was the appearance of the Olympic idea in civil and other sporting societies and clubs in Serbia. *The aim* of the study - to determine precisely the time when the Olympic idea first appeared in cultural and public life in Serbia - emerged there from.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the mid-19th century, the Olympic idea took roots in the Principality and the Kingdom of Serbia. Namely, before the revival of the Olympic Games in Athens, and before the term "Olympic" took an important place in reporting from sporting events, the competitions in Serbia had been announced as "*Olympic festivities*", although they were not directly linked to the aforementioned Games in Greece.

The first Serbian intellectuals spoke, wrote and required that all significant achievements of European culture, including the idea of Olympism as the most valuable attainment of the physical culture of ancient Greece, should be introduced and accepted in Serbia.

Thus, in 1875 already, the "Srbadija" newspaper recorded a lecture on education by Milorad Popović Šapčanin who proposed that competitions and festivities such as the Olympic Games in ancient Greece should be organized in Serbia as well.¹

Since this is one of the first records of the Olympics found in the Serbian press of that time, it is likely that all those who read it could get acquainted with this idea and support its further spreading and understanding.

A few years before the first renewed Olympic Games were held, some Serbian newspapers had started publishing the writings about popular festive plays, which indicated the assumption that the authors of these articles identified this term of folk festivities with the term Olympic Games, which appeared again in 1896.

Most of the competitions of "Kolo jahača", a chivalrous riding organization, of that time in Serbia were called *chivalrous competitions* or *popular festivals*. Bearing in mind that major competitions in various places across ancient Greece were called popular festivals or festive games, it may be concluded that even

¹ Milorad Popović, Šapčanin. *Srbadija* no. 42(1875).

though they did not include the term Olympic in their names, these competitions in Serbia included the idea of ancient Olympic festive games.

These popular festivals were announced in the newspapers as follows:

"Great and uncommon economic and *chivalrous popular festivities* will take place in Šabac on the 1st and 2nd of August..."²

"Great economic and *chivalrous popular festival* will be held in Šabac on the 3rd and 4th of September..."³

"*Drinosavsko kolo jahača*', an economic chivalrous riding organization, will organize great *popular festivities* on 29th and 30th ..." ⁴

Civil gymnastic society "Dušan Silni" organized physical exercise within its athletic, veteran and gymnastic department.

There was an interesting announcement of a gymnastic public lecture declaring that "famous Olympic games with the swords from the ancient times of the Greeks are going to be performed for the first time in this public lecture."⁵

Embedding this term in their own competition program probably represented their own commitment and devotion to the Olympic idea as well.

This society also confirmed its affiliation towards the Olympic idea and the Olympic movement by organizing the local miniature Olympic games on Ada Ciganlija in Belgrade in

1908, i.e. two years before the establishment of Serbian Olympic Club.

Gymnastic society "Soko" of Belgrade also organized physical exercise similar in contents to those of gymnastic society "Dušan Silni". They also demonstrated their skills in public lectures.

The presence of the Olympic idea in the Sokol societies was confirmed by Jova Tanović in his article „Let's be Sokols ourselves" stating:

² Jovan Živković. *Mali žurnal* no.23(1894).

³ *ibid*, no.33.

⁴ Jovan, Živković. *Mali žurnal* no.215 (1894).

⁵ Gvozden Pantić, *Mali žurnal* no.47 (1896).

"Our youth does not compete in assemblies and meetings anymore ...There are no longer those popular games and competitions where our old men toughened..."⁶

Society "Srpska olimpija", founded several years before the establishment of Serbian Olympic Club, organized games with the awards of all olympic games, several times every year.

Students' association named Olympic Club, which organized competitions in hiking, running, throwing a stone from the shoulder and throwing poles, was founded in 1901 in Jagodina.

All of this suggests that the Olympic idea found its place and its followers in many civil gymnastic and other sporting societies and clubs in the mid 19th century in Serbia, and the establishment of Serbian Olympic Club (SOC) created essential conditions necessary for the admittance of the Kingdom of Serbia to the world Olympic movement in 1912.

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⁶ Jovan Tanovic, " Budimo sokoli", *Narodne novine* no.5 (1909)

ПОЈАВА ОЛИМПИЈСКЕ МИСЛИ У СРБИЈИ У ГРАЂАНСКИМ ГИМНАСТИЧКИМ И ДРУГИМ СПОРТСКИМ ДРУШТВИМА И КЛУБОВИМА

САЖЕТАК

Замисао о обнављању Олимпијских игара постојала је много пре него што је ова идеја остварена, али стварање могућности да се Игре обнове било је у тесној вези са развојем модерног спорта. Са првим поменима и предлозима срећемо се у делима хуманиста у 15. и 16. веку, а почетком тридесетих година 19. века јављају се и практични *покушаји* њиховог обнављања. *Циљ рада* је утврдити време кад се у Србији у грађанским гимнастичким и другим спортским друштвима и клубовима јављају прве идеје о олимпизму. У раду је коришћен *историјски метод*.

Србија је у дужем временском периоду неговала и развијала традиционалне облике надметања и такмичења, али организовани облици физичког вежбања грађана јављају се тек половино 19. века, оснивањем приватних школа за физичко вежбање у многим местима Кнежевине Србије. Због тога су ове приватне школе и грађанска гимнастичка друштва представљала места у којима су модерни спорти и олимпијска идеја наишле на погодно тле за њихово прихватање и даљи развој. Стога је и разумљиво што су у време остварења идеје о обнављању античких олимпијских игара у овим друштвима и клубовима могао да нађе, у називу њихових програма такмичења израз: *олимпијска такмичења*. Осим тога, често су своја такмичења називали *народне светковине* или *витешка надметања*.

Средином 19. века олимпијска идеја је нашла своје место у Кнежевини и Краљевини Србији. Наиме, пре почетка обнављања Олимпијских игара у Атини и пре него што је термин „олимпијски“ заузео значајније место у извештавању са спортских такмичења, у Србији се најављују такмичења под називом *олимпијске свечаности*, а да она немају директну везу са поменутиим Играма у Грчкој.

Кључне речи: Србија, олимпијске игре, олимпијска мисао, грађанска гимнастичка друштва, спортска друштва

ЗАРОЖДЕНИЕ ИДЕИ ОЛИМПЕЙСКОГО ДВИЖЕНИЯ В ГИМНАСТИЧЕСКОМ И ДРУГИХ СПОРТИВНЫХ ОБЩЕСТВАХ И КЛУБАХ В СЕРБИИ

АННОТАЦИЯ

Идея возрождения Олимпийских Игр зародилась задолго до того, как возникла возможность их проведения, но сама возможность их возрождения тесно связана с развитием современного спорта. Впервые о них было упомянуто в работах гуманистов 15 и 16 веков, а в тридцатых годах 19 столетия были предприняты первые попытки возрождения Олимпийских Игр.

Цель данной статьи – установить временные рамки, в течение которых в Сербии появились первые идеи Олимпизма в гимнастических обществах, а также в других спортивных обществах и клубах. Авторами использовался исторический метод.

Долгое время Сербия сохраняла и развивала традиционные формы соревнований и состязаний, однако организованные формы занятий физическими упражнениями населения появились только в середине 19 столетия, когда были созданы первые частные школы физического воспитания во многих городах княжества Сербии. Именно в этих частных школах и гимнастических обществах современный спорт и олимпийский идеал были с радостью восприняты и приобрели дальнейшее развитие. Таким образом, эти частные школы и общества стали тем благодатным местом, где современный спорт и Олимпийские идеалы были с радостью приняты и получили свое дальнейшее развитие. Становится понятно, почему во время реализации идеи о возрождении античных Олимпийских игр в этих обществах и клубах использовалось выражение «Олимпийские соревнования» для спортивных мероприятий, наряду с такими устаревшими, как «популярные фестивали» или «рыцарские состязания».

В середине 19 века идея олимпийских игр зародилась в Княжестве, а позднее и в Королевстве Сербии. Прежде, чем произошло возрождение Олимпийских игр в Афинах и прежде, чем термин «Олимпиада» стал более значимым для массового освещения спортивных мероприятий, соревнования в Сербии объявлялись как «Олимпийские праздничные мероприятия», хотя они не имели прямого отношения к вышеупомянутым играм в Греции.

Ключевые слова: Сербия, Олимпийские игры, идея олимпийских игр, гимнастические общества, спортивные общества.

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