

SOKOL IDEA – IDEA FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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SUMMARY

Created by the idea of Miroslav Tyrš in the second half of the 19th century as a movement of spiritual and physical strengthening of the nation, sokolism soon spread to all countries where the Slavic people lived. In that way, it reached the territory of Herzegovina as well. However, what exactly was the idea of the sokol movement, what did it develop into in the first half of the 20th century in Herzegovina and whether it is an idea that can benefit a man of the 21st century as well, are just some of the questions that the authors deal with in this research. Although Miroslav Tyrš and his sokols are typical representatives of ethnocentrism, the sokolism of Herzegovina has expanded its ideas also in another direction. Using physical exercise as a gracious food for their body and truth and zeal as food for their soul, they may have been able to hint at what is an essential need almost a century later, and that is a theoanthropocentric way of approaching man which has been used more and more lately, especially in the field of physical culture. The appointed problems authors research using the method of theoretical analysis and historical method.

Key words: physical exercise, theoanthropocentrism, sokolism, body, soul.

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INTRODUCTION

Created by the idea of Miroslav Tyrš in the second half of the 19th century in Prague, sokolism soon, as a movement of spiritual and physical strengthening of the nation, spread to all countries where the Slavic people lived. Also known as the Czech or Tyrš system of gymnastics, this form of physical exercising was one of the characteristic representatives of ethnocentrism, i.e. the direction of development of physical culture in which the emphasis was placed on physical exercise of citizens, potential future soldiers. Of course, the spiritual strengthening was not neglected, which at that time was aimed at raising the national consciousness of the people. As a newly formed, we could say Slavic system of exercise, sokolism arrived in Herzegovina. Although the first initiatives for the establishment of Serbian sokol societies in Herzegovina appeared in Foča in 1893, officially in 1894, it took several years for sokolism as such to come to life in that area. With the appearance of Cedomir Milić, a young Prosvjeta cadet, after the First World War sokolism in the area of Herzegovina, but also in the entire afore Kingdom, experienced a kind of flourishing. Its biggest characteristic was that the Herzegovinian sokolism went even further than the Czech one, entering the village and forming rural sokol companies as integral parts of sokol societies, which also led to a later formed Mostar Sokol Parish (Union). The basic idea of Cedomir Milić was to strengthen the village because, according to him, it was the foundation of a strong and stable state and therefore he dedicated the most love and selfless work to it.

We are witnessing the "unusualness" of the past few months, which has affected all parts of the world, but which has undoubtedly had the greatest impact on man as an individual. Starting from this thought, starting from the assumption that the body and soul of human were on one of the greatest tests in the recent past of mankind, the authors want to show and explain how, through physical and spiritual strengthening of the people, our predecessors overcame one also very difficult period. The basic idea of authors is to explore and show readers how sokols in Herzegovina observed man, what was their basic idea, how they managed to build the body and spirit of their members to selflessly give themselves for the betterment of all. In addition, they will show how the sokols observed physical exercise and whether it can benefit modern man, in the hope that this work will offer readers a new and interesting area for reflection and action.

SUBJECT AND GOAL OF RESEARCH

The subject of this research is the idea of sokolism, especially sokolism in Herzegovina, with the aim of showing how sokols observed physical and spiritual exercise, what it meant for their members in that period and how this idea, although it originated more than one century ago, is actually an idea for all times.

METHOD

In this research authors used the method of theoretical analysis and the historical method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Body and soul

Although very naive, the assumption that experts in the field of physical culture deal exclusively with the human body, while the soul is the subject of interest of some other fields, unfortunately seems quite accepted. However, even considering the spoken words *"If you take my soul, you can throw my body to the dogs"*, it should be clear to us that they cannot do without each other. Of course, stated words are not the only reason. Many "beacons of our profession", as professor Zivanovic calls them, spoke about the unbreakable connection between body and soul, and not only spoke, but understood, accepted and lived that truth. It was similar with the sokols in Herzegovina.

For the purpose of a clearer definition of both, for a moment we will observe them separately. As when it comes to the terminology of physical culture in which, according to certain authors, appear both simple and complex concepts¹, the authors of this paper dare to say that it is the same thing when it comes to the concepts of (human) body and soul. In terms of apprehension, when it comes to the notion of *(human) body*, we do not encounter great discrepancies in understanding and comprehending it. Especially due to the daily use of this term in the field of physical culture, it is quite clear what is meant by it. In order to be more terminologically precise, certain dictionaries define the term *body*, among

¹ See more in: Ненад Живановић, *Прилог епистемологији физичке културе*, друго допуњено и прерађено издање, Паноптикум, Ниш, 2000.

other things, as: "... 1. biol. **a. human or animal organism, understood in its entirety (as a morphological and functional whole).**"²

When it comes to the notion *soul*, we come across a much more complex area. Terminologically speaking, the *soul* (in the part related to the topic of this research) can be defined as:

"[...] 1. *Consciousness and the ability of man to think and feel.* [...] 2. **a. a set of character, innate qualities and traits, temper, nature, nature of a man, temperament, sense of creativity; ability to grasp quickly, to understand another.** [...] 3. *theol. immortal, immaterial principle of life in man, which binds him to God.* [...] 7. *the driving force in an object.* [...]"³

The Serbian dictionary of foreign words in physical culture defines the soul in one part as:

"[...] a specific, unique and dynamic component of the human being; the entelechy of the body, the essential and rational part, which gives an individual and personal form to the human being, by which it differs both from God and from other creatures; the soul is the substance that makes man a man, makes him a free being, personal and immortal; the spiritual (mental and emotional) life of man with all his psychological manifestations, consciousness; emotions, feelings: to penetrate one's soul, to wish someone well in our soul; to give your soul to something; the ethical nature of man which governs his actions and enables him to distinguish between good and evil, conscience: to have no soul, to burden one's soul with someone; a set of innate character traits, a personality trait, temperament, mettle, nature, character; temperament: poetic soul, cheerful soul, Slavic soul, slavish soul; *phi.* in idealistic philosophy: the substance of thought and the principle of life in man and other living beings; *rel.* the immaterial, immortal being in man who binds him to God and who continues life even after his bodily (physical) death; [...]"⁴

² *Речник српскохрватскога књижевног језика*, Књига шеста С-Ш, Матица српска – Матица хрватска, Нови Сад – Загреб, 1967 (друго фототипско издање 1990), р. 175.

³ *Речник српскохрватскога књижевног језика*, Књига прва А-Е, Матица српска, Матица хрватска, Нови Сад – Загреб, 1967 (друго фототипско издање 1990), рр. 811 – 812.

⁴ Петар Д. Павловић, Ненад Живановић и Кристина М. Пантелић Бабић, *Српски речник страних речи у физичкој култури (Д-Ђ)*, ФИЕП Европа - Секција за историју физичког васпитања и спорта и СПКД „Просвјета“ Гацко, Ниш – Гацко, 2019, р. 245.

Viewed from the point of Orthodoxy, which for certain reasons is especially important for this research, Metropolitan Jerotej Vlahos states about the soul that:

“ ... Although everything that possesses life, every animal, is called a soul, it is common that in the Holy Scripture it refers to man. It means the way in which life manifests itself in a person and does not refer to only one segment of human existence, that is spiritual, as opposed to sensual [material], than signifies the whole man as a single living hypostasis. The soul is not what simply resides in the body but what is expressed by the body and which, again, in itself, as a flesh [ἡ σάρκα] or heart corresponds to our ego, the way we realize life. The soul is a man, it is someone ... [...] The soul is not the cause of life, but primarily its bearer’.”⁵

Searching for the right words for the state of the human soul in the 21st century, we will again turn to the clear and comprehensive thinking of Metropolitan Vlahos, who at the beginning of his book *Orthodox Psychotherapy* in regards to aforementioned question, says: “Modern man, tired and discouraged by the various problems that torment him, seeks serenity and rest. He, in essence, seeks for healing of his soul, because that is exactly where he feels the problem. He is going through ‘soulful anxiety’.”⁶ It is exactly the alleviation of that *soulful anxiety* through physical exercise that is one of the subjects of interest of the authors of this research.

Furthermore, Vlahos talks about the growing need of man for treatment and how, instead of spiritual leaders, people often turn to a more modern method of psychotherapy, although, on a daily bases, he notices:

“[...] that Christianity, and especially Orthodoxy, which preserves the essence of Christianity, uses psychotherapy to a great extent, or that, in other words, Orthodoxy is mainly a therapeutic, healing science. [...] It is clearly different from other psychiatric methods, because it is theanthropocentric [God-man-centered], and not anthropocentric.”⁷

Therefore, theanthropocentrism, as the leading idea of Orthodox healing science but also as a direction of development of physical culture that appears in

⁵ Cited in: Митрополит Јеротеј Влахоc, *Православна психотерапија – Наука Светих Отаца*, треће допуњено издање, књигу приредио Јован Србуљ, Библиотека Образ светачки, Београд, 2010, р. 71.

⁶ Митрополит Јеротеј Влахоc, *Православна психотерапија – Наука Светих Отаца*, треће допуњено издање, књигу приредио Јован Србуљ, Библиотека Образ светачки, Београд, 2010, р. 13.

⁷ Ibid.

Eastern Christian schools⁸ somewhere around the end of the 20th century, represents the bond between Orthodoxy and physical culture today, but with its basic idea the guideline of Herzegovinian sokols in their effort to empower and preserve their people in the period before the First World War, and especially between the two wars, which will be analyzed and explained in more details in the following text.

Idea of Herzegovinian sokols – then or now

Although the Czech sokolism is a representative of the physical culture direction called ethnocentrism, in which, as the name says, the people or nation is in the center of interest, spreading to other countries and areas where Slavic people lived, it soon came to Herzegovina. One of the unavoidable characteristics of all social phenomena, including sokolism, is that they develop under the influence of socio-political, cultural, educational and many other circumstances of a given climate.

In addition to all the difficulties that sokolism encountered during its development in the mentioned area, there are also great advantages that should certainly not be left out. Sokolism in Herzegovina was accepted by all people who lived there, but among Orthodox Christians, that is, among the Serbian people, it remained the longest and developed the most. This is exactly what the authors see as one of its greatest advantages.

The words of Cedomir Milic, one of the most important and most respectable sokols of Herzegovina, but also the whole Kingdom in the period between the two wars, which represent the essence of sokol life and which will be analyzed in more detail in this research in order to respond to the raised issues, testify to the connection between Orthodoxy and sokolism in Herzegovina. In his address on the occasion of the Vidovdan slet (gathering) in Sarajevo in 1934, Cedomir Milic told the sokols that:

“[...] Faith in God, persistent work and small needs were always, in the ordeal and a great history of our nation, the basic virtues with which our people have preserved their individuality and became the winner in all troubles.”⁹

According to him, these three virtues should be imitated by every soko, i.e. every man. In what way exactly these stated virtues were the essence of the sokol

⁸ See more in: Ненад Живановић, Небојша Ранђеловић, Верољуб Станковић и Петар Павловић, *Теорија физичке културе*, Паноптикум, Ниш, 2010.

⁹ Vidovdanski slet u Sarajevu 1934. *Споменица II део*, Соколска жупа Сарајево, Сарајево, 1935, pp. 30 – 31.

movement in Herzegovina and whether and to what extent they are connected with modern man is a problem that the authors deal with in the text that follows.

The first of these, ***Faith in God***, is in fact an all-time need. However, as a basic postulate of Christianity, it inextricably connects it with sokolism in Herzegovina and confirms the orientation towards theanthropocentrism as a direction of development of physical culture, which is more and more present nowadays. The question arises as to why this is important in the field of physical culture, or even more so in the field of “planetary popular” sports?

Faith in God is important so that modern man while working with people (and not exclusively in the field of physical culture) would always ask himself one of the most important questions today - *Does the goal really justify the means?* This virtue teaches us that although everything is very easily available to us and almost everything is allowed, we give ourselves the correct answer to the question - *Does it all benefit us?*

In addition to the stated reason, we should not ignore the increasingly present appearance of sports idols and idolatry, which certain authors point out in their works.¹⁰ In this regard, we consider it important to cite a part of the text of Metropolitan Mitrofan Badanin, who in his work *Sport and its spiritual aspects*, speaking about certain past pagan times in Russia, quoted the Gospel which “[...] clearly enumerates the ‘qualities’ of that ungodly time: ‘idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, malice, anger, defiance, dissension, heresy, envy, murder, drunkenness, debauchery ...’ (Galatians 5:12)”¹¹ In line with the topic of this research, the authors mention only idolatry. Returning to the exposed virtue, we can confirm that the Herzegovinian sokolism was inextricably linked with Christianity.

The second virtue that Milić mentions, ***Persistent work***, and its importance for sports (and man as an individual) in the 21st century, needs to be viewed from the angle of today's “instant” life. Today, we are used to get most things from a few seconds (when it comes to information, video call, pictures, messages, etc.) to just a few days (among other things, certain physical characteristics). But the fact that this is not possible in sports is confirmed by the words of the authors of the *General Theory of Physical Culture* Milivoje Matic and Bozo Bokan, who, speaking about creativity in physical culture, state that: “Even for creativity in sports, where certain genetic predispositions can be a significant predictor of certain achievement a real value cannot be achieved without ‘hard work’.”¹² Although

¹⁰ See more in: Nenad Zivanovic, Petar Pavlovic, Nebojsa Randjelovic, Danica Pirsil and Danijela Zivkovic: Sports, Sports Idols and Idolatry, *Journal of Sport Science*, 2 (2015), pp. 309 - 316.

¹¹ Cited in: Митрополит Митрофан Баданин, *Спорт и његови духовни аспекти*, са Руског превео Ранко Гојковић, Бернар, Стари Бановци - Београд, 2019, p. 27.

¹² Milivoje Matic & Božo Bokan: *Opšta teorija fizičke kulture*, Fakultet sporta i fizičkog vaspitanja Univerziteta u Beogradu, Beograd, 2005, p. 96.

they talk about hard work, *Persistent work* is implied, which the mentioned authors confirm in further explanation, quoting the words of Professor Tomic: "The result (in sports M.M.) cannot be the goal. Sports life cannot be spent on the goal, but on the **path to the goal**."¹³ Unlike the goal, the *path* is what essentially makes sport (but also the whole life).

As third, but certainly not less important, are the *Small needs*. Even "birds on a branch", but also children know that we live in a "consumer society". Sports spectacles and performances become conditioned by earnings and business. The million figures that are mentioned every day are already growing into everyday life. Who needs this? A person viewed from the angle of theanthropocentrism does not, physical exercise as a *graceous food* as well, and games (which should be the basis of every sport) most certainly do not.

So, almost a century later from pronouncing these words, is it important for us to see the importance of *Faith in God, Persistent work and Small needs* that the sokols in Herzegovina have set as the basic guidelines and measures of their work? Guided by them, the sokols did not deviate from their *path* and following it they knew that:

"To be Sokol means to feel the sun light, which does not know anything else but to shine bright. To be Sokol does not mean to reason much in an official Sokol hour, but always and continually live the Sokol way, and in every place by word and deed preach the Sokol wisdom of life. Always and everywhere be a Sokol and a man. In a company, on the streets, in home, in joy and sorrow, always spread the Sokol idea, and with your deeds confirm the truth."¹⁴

By choosing the *paths of sunlight* in our profession, it is possible to confirm the words of Nenad Zivanovic, who says that:

"Luckily for us, in addition to the generally accepted claim – that *money is the measure of all things*, and the view of life that goes with it, a *hedonistic- Darwinian* understanding of life, there are men who do not accept it. They, they light bearers of their professions, and the society they belong to, use their light to enlighten some new-old roads to travel. Irrespective of these roads being steep and winding, they should be followed,

¹³ Cited in: Milivoje Matić & Božo Bokan: *Opšta teorija fizičke kulture*, Fakultet sporta i fizičkog vaspitanja Univerziteta u Beogradu, Beograd, 2005, p. 97.

¹⁴ Чедо Милић: Соколски часови, рукопис бр.16. Соколска жупа Мостар, Мостар, 1935, p. 23.

they say, since they lead to the source of life. And the profession we belong to, of course.”¹⁵

In order to build and develop *future* people shaped like this, perhaps this idea can be of use.

Sokol idea and physical exercise – exercising

The importance of physical exercise is not reserved exclusively for the field of physical culture. We can say that physical exercise/exercising actually has a beneficial effect on every other area of human activity. For that reason, the sokols practiced it regularly in their work. In the time of *general reconsiderations*, a person somehow neglects physical exercise without having time for it, not realizing that actually almost every obstacle can be solved more successfully in unity with physical exercise.

Although in defining the notion of *physical exercise* and *physical exercising* very often appear terms: scope, intensity, goal, etc., in order to explain in more detail the stated assumption (that physical exercise/exercising has a beneficial effect on every other area of human activity) the authors will consider a different definition. Professor Nenad Zivanović defines physical exercise as a *gracious food for our being*¹⁶ and physical exercising not only as “[...]an activity of a certain scope and intensity, it is at the same time an emotional experience of that physical exercise. And that is *always* the case, and that is why it is *always* good (and better) to exercise in the company of your dear ones.”¹⁷ Observing the importance of the grace given by physical exercise, but outside the space of physical culture, let us consider the following words: “‘The heart governs the whole human organism, and when grace takes over all the spaces of the heart, it masters all thoughts and body limbs, because here are both the mind and all the thoughts of the soul’.”¹⁸ In addition to the importance of grace (which, among other things, physical exercise gives us), Jerotej Vlahos points out with this quote another important factor in satisfying the soul as the basic goal. It is the heart (love).

In addition to the previously mentioned guidelines, *love* was woven into the daily work of Cedomir Milic and his sokols. He said that sokol love is a sight and

¹⁵ Nenad Živanović, An apolg(y) of the profession, *Physical education and sport through the centuries*, 3(1), 2016, pp. 97 – 98.

¹⁶ See more in: Nenad Zivanovic, Nebojsa Randjelovic, Danica Pirsl & Ivana Manic, Anatoly in the foundation of (our) science, *Physical education and sport through the centuries*, 1(2), 2014, pp. 61 – 77.

¹⁷ Nenad Zivanovic, An apolg(y) of the profession, *Physical education and sport through the centuries*, 3(1), 2016, p. 101.

¹⁸ Cited in: Митрополит Јеротеј Влахов, *Православна психотерапија – Наука Светих Отаца*, треће допуњено издање, књигу приредио Јован Србуљ, Библиотека Образ светачки, Београд, 2010, р. 80.

that the village is a window, and just as light does not pass through a dirty window, also “[...] an impure heart, without love, does not accept the truth. The eye is the window or the glass of the soul. If the eye looks after the mud, the window gets dirty and the soul becomes blind, so the evil is in people and their delusions, and not outside them, in lifeless things.”¹⁹

Observing human spiritual and physical unity in this way, with the help of physical exercise, the sokols in Herzegovina managed to *always shine*. It certainly referred to their spirit and soul. If we really use physical exercise as a *gracious food* for our body and our being and by that as a help to fill our *heart* with love - our mind and all the thoughts of our *soul* will follow a good *path*. The Serbian sokols in Herzegovina knew that “Man is made of body and soul. None of these elements make a man by itself.”²⁰ and that is why they followed the *bright* paths.

When it comes to the *body* nowadays, it seems that we do not take into account useful information from the past. Instead of adhering to the unity of the spiritual and the physical, we go in the opposite direction. Fortunately for us, seeing the problems that appear in the field of physical culture, a new, already mentioned direction of its development, theanthropocentrism, has been established. It is quite clear to its creators and supporters that man is the unity of soul and body and that “The soul moves and directs the whole body and all limbs.”²¹ thus refuting the already mentioned naive assumption that physical culture deals only with the bodily aspect of human. On the contrary.

Serbian sokols in Herzegovina knew that very well in “their” time, but it is also necessary for us, experts in the field of physical culture, to know that well now.

“Regarding the relation between soul and body, the general conclusion is that the soul is in the whole body, that there is no part of the human body in which the soul is not present, that the heart is the most important residence of the rational part of the soul and its center, but not as a vessel but as an organ that governs the whole body, and also that the soul, although not fused with the body, is still connected with it in the most intimate way.”²²

¹⁹ Чедо Милић: Наше мисли пред улазак у село, *Пут Соколства у село*, Савез сокола Краљевине Југославије, Београд, 1935. р. 17.

²⁰ Митрополит Јеротеј Влахос, *Православна психотерапија – Наука Светих Отаца*, треће допуњено издање, књигу приредио Јован Србуљ, Библиотека Образ светачки, Београд, 2010, р. 79.

²¹ Ibid, р. 80.

²² Ibid, р. 81.

Therefore, for the sake of success in sports and physical exercise in general, we need to use our *graceful food* to feed the human soul, because the soul, unlike the body that has its limits, offers us unlimited area for ascension.

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СОКОЛСКА ИДЕЈА – ИДЕЈА ЗА 21. ВЕК

САЖЕТАК

Настало идејом Мирослава Тирша у другој половини 19. века, соколство се убрзо, као покрет духовног и телесног јачања нације, проширило на све земље у којима су живели Словенски народи. На тај начин соколство је стигло и на просторе Херцеговине. Међутим, шта је заправо била идеја соколског покрета,

у шта се она развила у првој половини 20. века у Херцеговини и да ли је то идеја која може користити човеку 21. века су само нека од питања којима се аутори баве у овом истраживању. Иако су Мирослав Тирш и његови соколи типични представници етноцентризма, соколство Херцеговине проширило је своје идеје и у другом правцу. Користећи телесну вежбу као благодатну храну њиховом телу а истину и прегалаштво као храну њиховој души, можда су успели да наговесте оно што је и насушна потреба готово један век касније, а то је теоантропоцентричан начин приласка човеку који се у последње време све више користи, посебно у области физичке културе. Постављену проблематику аутори истражују путем теоријске анализе и историјске методе.

Кључне речи: телесна вежба, теоантропоцентризам, соколство, тело, душа.

ИДЕЈА СОКОЛА – ИДЕЈА 21 ВЕКА

АННОТАЦИЈА

Соколизм, созданный в результате деятельности Мирослава Тырша во второй половине 19 века, как движение духовного и физического укрепления нации, вскоре нашел распространение во всех странах, где жили славянские народы. Таким образом, оно достигло и территории Герцеговины. Однако в чем именно заключалась идея движения Сокол, во что оно вылилось в первой половине 20 века в Герцеговине и может ли эта идея принести пользу человеку 21 века – вот лишь некоторые вопросы, которые рассматривает автор в этом исследовании. Хотя Мирослав Тырш и его соколы являются типичными представителями этноцентризма, Соколизм Герцеговины расширил свои идеи и в другом направлении. Рассматривая физические упражнения как пищу для своего тела, истину и рвение как пищу для своей души, они, возможно, смогли указать на то, что является основной потребностью почти столетие спустя, и это теоантропоцентрический подход к человеку, на который ориентируются все чаще и в последнее время, особенно в области физической культуры. Рассматривая обозначенные проблемы, автор использует метод теоретического анализа и исторического метода.

Ключевые слова: физические упражнения, теоантропоцентризм, соколизм, тело, душа.

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