

CONTRIBUTION OF CEDOMIR MILIC TO EDUCATION OF SOKOL STAFF IN HERZEGOVINA

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SUMMARY

Cedomir Milic, from father Jovan Milic and mother Soka Milic (maiden Govedarica), was born on March 23rd 1886 in Mostar, and killed on November 22nd 1941 near Niksic. Since the founding of first Serbian gymnastic society “Obilic” in Mostar in 1904 (since 1910 known as “Serbian Sokol (hawk)”), Milic was involved in its work and dedicated his whole life to sokol and national work. Through sokol and fraternity societies he fought for spiritual and physical strengthening of his people. He was deeply respected, not only by sokols and brothers (members of the fraternity), but also by the intellectuals of that time. Among his numerous sokol activities, he also gave great contribution to education and specialization of sokol staff on the territory of Herzegovina during Austro-Hungarian occupation, and also in Sokolism in the time of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (since 1929 Kingdom of Yugoslavia). The goal is to highlight and research the role of Cedomir Milic in education and specialization of sokol staff. Numerous sources from the time of Milic’s life and work, as also sources originated after that, were reviewed and analyzed.

Key Words: candidates, courses, district; school, sokols.

INTRODUCTION

Sokol movement started in Czech Republic in 1862, when a group of young Czechs led by Miroslav Tyrsh founded first Prague gymnastic society, with the idea of physical and spiritual strengthening of Czech people in fighting against the occupier. Professor Emanuel Toner, inspired by Serbian heroic poetry where hawk (sokol) symbolises courage, heroism, chivalrous, justice, etc, came to idea to name the newfound society »Sokol«, wishing to pass all those characteristics to their members. Soon after sokol movement spread to all countries inhabited with Slavic people (Илић & Милатовић, 2006).

Second half of the 19th century brought significant changes for the people of Balkan Peninsula. By surrender of Turkish army and decision of Berlin congress in 1878, the government over Bosnia and Herzegovina was given to Austro-Hungarian monarchy (Екмечић, 2010). In that period any form of political organizing was strictly forbidden and all other activi-

ties were carefully monitored. Very hard time started for Serbian people, and therefore they were forced to find other ways for physical and spiritual fight against the occupier.

Therefore Serbian intellectuals and other citizens started forming different sport, cultural and other institutions, and started publishing different magazines and newspapers with the goal of strengthening and rising of spirit and national awareness of people. In that way starts also development of Sokolism on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The idea of Sokolism on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina appeared in 1893 when a group of Serbs in Foca tried to found first Serbian sokol society, but the Austro-Hungarian authorities did not allow it. After few years, in 1899, they allow founding of first anti-alcohol and sober society »Pobratimstvo« (Fraternity). In Mostar in 1904 first Serbian gymnastic society »Obilić« was formed, and after it societies in other places of Herzegovina and Bosnia, so in 1914 there was a total of 58 societies. From 1909 and first

initiatives for forming Serbian Sokol Union of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the united name »Serbian Sokol« was adopted for all Serbian gymnastic societies on the territory of Herzegovina and Bosnia, which was officially approved by National government (Zemaljska vlada) in 1910 (ПАВЛОВИЋ, 1999).

During Skadar crisis on May 2nd 1913, the actual chief of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Oskar Pocorek, introduced so-called »special actions« that announced closing of Union and all Serbian Sokol Societies and Fraternities. With the contribution of representatives of closed societies on October 1st 1913 National government allowed them to continue their work. On the Union assembly on March 2nd 1914 in Sarajevo, they elected the seniority, which was mostly the same as before “special actions”. The new positions were Head of the county: for Mostar county was elected Cedomir Milic.

After assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on national holiday Vidovdan in 1914, the Union was closed again and »[...] started searches in Serbian sokol societies and arresting of sokol workers« (Ibid, p. 131). In that time over eighty Serbian sokols were arrested and prosecuted in Banja Luka in 1916.

By closing of Union’s and societies’ work after the assassination, the first period of Serbian Sokolism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, period of the Austro-Hungarian occupation, was finished.

After WW1 started the period of Yugoslavian Sokolism, when »Serbian Sokol« embraced the Yugoslavian idea and in 1922 in Ljubljana joined the Sokol Union of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (SUKSCS). After WW2 the renovation of Sokol was not allowed, and Society for physical exercise »Partizan« took over all its properties.

The subject of this paper is Sokolism in Herzegovina, and the goal is to research the role of Cedomir Milic in education and specialisation of sokol staff.

METHODS

Historical method was used in this paper. Sources from the time of Cedomir Milic’s life and work, as also sources originated after that, were reviewed and analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cedomir Milic

Cedomir Milic was born on March 23rd 1886 in Mostar from father Jovan and Mother Soka Milic (maiden Govedarica).

According to Milic’s son Jovan and Milic’s biographer and close associate Vasilije Paranos, Cedomir Milic »[...] after his primary school, was a candidate of Serbian cultural society ‘Prosveta’, formed in 1902, where he finished high school« (J. Milić, personal communications, August 20, 2012; Папанос, 1982, p. 1). After school, he started to do sawing craft (making of national suits). He had a sawing shop »Cedo Milic« which existed until the beginning of WW2. Even though Milic stooped with sawing and started to be a merchant, he hired one friend with sawing knowledge and even helped him in hard times, and all in the purpose of saving that craft.

When he was a young man, Mostar was a centre of cultural life of Herzegovina, which was not surprising knowing that Mostar was a place of great Serbian people as Aleksa Santic, Jovan Ducic, brothers Svetozar and Vladimir Corovic, who left eternal mark to our people with their words, poems and other work. With becoming more mature Cedomir Milic showed more interest for cultural, political, spiritual, economic and agriculture development, he loved to read about it, what gave him the knowledge to be on the same level as highly educated people he always loved to talk with. As Paranos claims, he was especially inspired and thrilled with Aleksa Santic.

On November 10th 1913 he married Ljubica Kadijevic, with whom he had six children: sons Jovan and Djordje, and daughters Dragica, Mirjana, Smilja and Biljana.

Young and full of will for helping the national development, on Prosvjeta’s initiative for starting Serbian Sokolism, Milic embraced that idea and started working on physical, spiritual and moral rebirth of Serbian people. He nurtured special love towards Herzegovinian village and its people. According to his son Jovan, he always unselfishly helped others, but did not like to emphasize that. Jovan Milic remembers how his father gave a lot to poor people and other who needed help, but he never wanted to brag with that. He remembered how during one religious feast of some poor hosts, when they exit the room to get food and drink, Cedomir Milic left some money under something, so they can find it later. He helped Herzegovinian villagers by procuring and giving them seeds for sowing. He was teaching villagers how to sow, he brought fruit for sick, etc. During his life several drinking fountains in Herzegovina were built, what improved life, work and breeding in that territory. Today there still stands one drinking fountain with his name in Nevesinje (J. Milić, personal communications, August 20, 2012).

He specially advocated for bond between village and town, saying that »[...] the only way for national

FIGURE 1

Cedomir Milic (Source: Photograph of Cedomir Milic).



unity and a general revival is possible through the Sokol work in village» (Милић, 1935а, р. 14), and that »Village should spiritualize the town, and town should economically recover the village« (Ibid, p. 15).

We already mentioned that Cedomir Milic was inspired and fascinated by Aleksa Santic, but himself did not lag for such a great man. He was a man of the people, very tall, with sokol attitude, the one who always knew how to say something nice about village and its inhabitants, and the one who gave them all its energy. In one of many speeches inspired by Herzegovinian village and Sokolism, among other things, he said:

Organizing villages through Sokolism is like the cultivation and preservation of the roots of a large oak tree that will be able to resist all winds and weather disasters. Because wind, lightning or an axe can break and cut down branches and even the whole tree, but healthy and developed root rejuvenates all wounds from wind, thunder or an ax, and gives new life to young shoots of ruptured oak (Ibid, p. 16).

He directed all his strength into fight for physical, national and spiritual enlightenment of people. By

his national work he fought for its preservation and strengthening, because, as same as occupying authorities, he knew where our strength lies. About aforementioned he said:

Austro-Hungarian authorities knew well where the strength of our people lies and where from comes the danger for its politics. [...] Behead the village, and alienate the intelligence (town), that was the main goal of their well designed politics (Ibid, p. 10).

Through his work he tried to help people as much as he can, but also at the same time, every day he learned from the people. He considered home as the greatest sacred thing because »[...] Home builds spiritual strength of family members more perfect than any university programs...« (Ibid, p. 20), and the host as the greatest authority. According to him the host »[...] by tradition and national custom is the highest sanctity in the family« (Ibid).

He devoted his whole life to national work. Through Sokol and Fraternity societies he fought for spiritual and physical growth of nation. He was highly respected, not only by all Sokols and brothers, but also from the famous people of that time, like: Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic, Bishop Petar Zimonic and King Aleksandar Karadjordjevic. In 1935, together with his son Jovan, he went for a devotional pilgrimage in Bari, to the grave of Holy Father Nikolai (Стойковић, 1935).

Besides working in Sokolism, Cultural-educational society »Prosvjeta« and Fraternity, he also worked for »National Defence« as a trustee for Herzegovina. He was in contact with other trustees as Spiro Soldo, Vaso Medan and Mirko Tomovic, who was »[...] one of the most agile trustees. He was equally standing out both in report and organizational work through Sokolism and fraternity, and the second one together with Cedo Milic from Mostar« (Беатовић & Милановић, 1989, p. 137). Because of the aforementioned he was not a minion of the occupying authorities, and therefore was persecuted and convicted.

During the First World War ensued a difficult time for the whole world and in our country especially for those who did not follow the occupying regime. Among them there were also Serbian Sokols. After assassination in Sarajevo in 1914, difficult time started for all Serbian sokol and other societies. Sokols were arrested, societies shut down, and their assets deprived and most frequently destroyed. During the famous Traitorous process in Banja Luka in 1916, under the accusation for working on secession of Herzegovina and Bosnia from Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and

affiliation to Kingdom of Serbia, more than 80 sokols were arrested, among them also Cedomir Milic. On April 22nd 1916, Milic was sentenced to death penalty. After that, by the decision of Supreme Court, his sentence was changed to 20 years of heavy prison. Together with other sentenced sokols, Cedomir Milic was sent to hard labour in Zenica, where he stayed until »[...] moment of national liberation« (Бесаровић, 1930, p. 205). He managed to avoid death sentence which did not avert him from his intensive sokol work.

After WW1 sokol societies revived their work and continued their mission of physical, intellectual and spiritual rebirth on nation. Their number grew constantly, sokol unions were formed and they directed their work towards village. Sokol Union Mostar was also formed, and its head from the very beginning was Cedomir Milic. Mostar union was one of the most active unions, and by that most successful in all aspects of social work, revival and making of better life. Her influence on cultural life of Herzegovina was priceless. Sokols participated in numerous ceremonies, slets (gatherings), public classes and other events where Milic's presence was infallible.

In the period between two world wars a lot was done regarding sokol societies and Serbian, later Yugoslav Sokolism. It rapidly spreads among people, especially the one living in the village. It was well accepted, and with common strengths they intensively worked on edification of village and its rapprochement to town. Different papers and magazines about Sokolism started, as also the ones directed towards life in the village. One of those was Milic's magazine Book for sokol village.

However, that huge love towards people and restless work in hard and difficult years, did not suit nor Austro-Hungarian authorities or supporters of the occupying forces at the beginning of WW II. According to words of son Jovan Milic, his father

[...] was not involved in politics, and they presented him like quite a politician... [...] He was a great patriot. He helped wherever he could, and did not make any difference whether somebody is a Catholic, or a Muslim... He did not make any difference; the important was that somebody is a good man, wants' to work, to do good[...] (J. Milic, personal communications, August 20, 2012).

Milic continued with sokol work regardless to difficulties from the occupier. In 1916 he managed to escape death after Banja Luka process, but it was not the only time. His life was again threatened in 1940 when he managed to survive the attack occurred

in Imotski. Shortly after that, because of his own and security of his family, he was forced to retire in Montenegro, in Piva monastery, where he spent the last days of life. According to Jovan Milic, after Cedomir Milic went to Montenegro, his family was arrested and closed up in school “Queen Mary”, which was a prison at a time. After that, with escort up to Visegrad, they managed to go to Belgrade, where they continued to live in a small apartment (Ibid). His wife Ljubica, together with five children, stayed there until the end of her life.

According to previous research, better said writings of authors who dealt with his death, partisans found Cedomir Milic in Montenegro and on November 22nd 1941 in Duga of Niksic (place Podstoge) they threw him into pit. Not until 1942 his body was found, drawn out of the pit and buried near the church in the village Zavrh near Niksic (Скоко, 2000). By memories of Jovan Milic, the family knew about his death from some newspapers. In reviewed documents we were not able to find that article.

However, that was not the end of Milic’s family agony, which continued even years after his death. The Town Board of Mostar declared Milic a criminal, posthumously, and the authorities confiscated all his property.

Milic’s work on education and specialization of sokol staff

Period until 1918

As there was a lack of professional staff for working in sokol societies, one of the main activities of Sokol Union of Bosnia-Herzegovina from the very beginning was education of sokol staff. Cedomir Milic and his Herzegovinian sokols were always one of the main actors of sokol courses and other forms of education.

In August 1911 there was a gymnastic course for leaders of small sokol units (troops) in Prague, where also attended Herzegovinian sokols Dusan Savic from Ljubinje and Lazo Piceta from Gacko. According to writings of »Serbian Sokol« no. 1-12, from October 15(25) 1911, they successfully passed the gymnastic course exams (Павловић, 1998).

Besides courses in other sokol countries, the county always tried to organize as many domestic educational activities as possible. One of those, which we will use as our example on how the courses looked like, was also teacher’s course in Sarajevo.

The leader of Serbian Sokol Union of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Stevan Zakula, through Serbian word on May 30th 1912 addressed letter about abovementioned course, where he gave all necessary information about time and place of the course, as also the general conditions for interested candidates. Every municipality paid the travel expenses for their teachers, and in Sarajevo they had food and accommodation, as also expenses of planned trips (»СОКОЛСКИ УЧИТЕЉСКИ КУРС«, 1912a).

The beginning of course was planned for 2(15) July, and lasted for one month, until 2(15) August 1912. (»СОКОЛСКИ УЧИТЕЉСКИ КУРС«, 1912b) After end of the course all candidates were awarded with identifications about attending the mentioned course. Until May 30th there were eight applied candidates.

As the date of the course approached, certain problems regarding application of candidates appeared, as also about support of the very course. Stevan Zakula expressed his discontent about negligence of Serbian teachers for applying for the course, but at the same time about the negligence of Serbian Teacher Society which, although kindly asked to give their respective opinion about this matter, kept silent.

Even greater Zakula’s disappointment caused suggestion to share the money that Great Council¹ gave for the purpose of organizing the course among applied candidates, so they can take care for themselves about the accommodation and meal (because in somebody’s opinion, there is no need for Sokol Union to think about that). Zakula welcomes and states the names of four applied teachers, but clearly admits defeat of his hope that at the very beginning the interest will be much greater. Nevertheless, Great Council saves the case and applies 15 more teachers, but the debate about whether the money will be shared or managed by Union, still stays unsolved, which leaves Zakula quite disappointed.

Besides all dissatisfaction, he advised all those who are not ready for serious and hard work, to stay at their homes. »Because, to say the truth, in my eyes I cannot see nor sokol or man among those who fear from chivalrous trouble. During the course the getting up will be at 5 a.m. and exercise until 7 a.m., lectures will last from 8 a.m. to 12 a.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., and the evening exercise from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Who thinks he cannot manage that, he better not come« (Жакула, 1912, str. 2). He finished his appeal with words: »I am Sokol, and Sokolism has taught me to speak openly, face to face« (Ibid).

¹Great steering and educational council had headquarters in Sarajevo, and it presented supreme steering, supervisory and judicial power in autonomous church-national government for all four metropolises in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Grujić, n.d., ¶ 7) Special attention of the Council was dedicated to national education. (Mikić, n.d., ¶ 7)

Milic also participated and gave significant contribution to organization of sokol staff education.

Period from 1918 to 1941

After WW1 sokol societies continue their work. Sokol convocation of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians was held on June 28th and 29th 1919 in Novi Sad. Second gala session of Sokol convocation of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians was held on June 30th 1919 in hotel »Liberty« in Novi Sad. Total of 607 Sokol delegates, from which 25 from Herzegovina, attended the session. As a member of Technical Board and Fraternity Board the session also attended Cedomir Milic. Among other things, they discussed about forming and organization of Sokol Unions. The suggestion was to form 33 separate Unions, and among them also Mostar Union (Herzegovina with Dubrovnik and Korcula districts, and part of Montenegro up to Duga pass – Banjani and Rudine) (»Organizacija župa sa teritorijalnim razgraničenjem«, 1919).

Sokol Union (region), with headquarters in Mostar, formed from societies from Herzegovina, border parts of Dalmatia and Montenegro, called its First assembly in November 1919, and constitutional assembly was held on March 28th 1920 (»Sokolska župa Mostar«, 1930). Union (region) started the work with 22 societies, and soon societies from Avtovac and Janjine joined the Union. The number of societies grew constantly, so in 1933 Union had 29 societies and 120 sokol troops (smaller, village sokol societies). The Union directed its work in several directions, and especially to work at village, because it felt that the village will be Union's mainstay. At the session of steering committee of Union on June 9th 1925 they unanimously decided to name the Union »Aleksa Santic«.

From the very founding of Mostar Union in 1919, Cedomir Milic was the head and main engine for all activities. He gave immeasurable contribution to Union's development, first of all through unselfish love and huge will for physical and spiritual rising of people, but also with practical work: visits to societies, lectures, correspondence, different kind of help, etc. The organization of Union was like this: the Union was on top of Sokol societies, and Sokol societies were on top, took care of and gathered smaller sokol units, village sokol troops.

As in the time of Austro-Hungarian occupation, Milic still worked on empowering and education of staff for work in sokol troops and societies. From foundation of Union, until 1929 he made some memorable results in that field. He organized more than fifty different courses in that period: five courses for

sokol leaders, two courses for leaders of sokol troops, five union (region) courses, two courses for preparing of leaders for gathering in Belgrade and thirty courses of sokol societies (Blato, Vela Luka, Dubrovnik, Djenović, Imotski, Korcula, Kotor, Ljubuski, Metković, Mostar, Nevesinje, Niksic, Opuzen, Podgorica, Stolac, Cetinje and Capljina) held from 1924 to 1929 (»Sokolska župa Mostar«, 1930).

Sokol Union »A. Santic«, among other things, worked on preparation of sokol experts through Union courses. One of those, fourth, was held on February 26th and 27th 1927 in Mostar. One of the lecturers was Cedomir Milic. The test attended ten male and four female sokols.

After that there was a party with different significant spiritual, military and national personalities, among whom also Cedomir Milic. He addressed to all present about sokol views on life, and the speech »[...] was very good and rich with words of world moralists and preachers« (Ćurić, 1927, p. 3).

The candidates received the certificates of attendance, after what they started dancing and celebrating. In special room Cedomir Milic said goodbye to candidates with touching speech, and with some Sokols who joined them. In the name of the course organizers Kosta Ligutic expressed gratitude to lecturers, and especially Cedomir Milic, for their effort and the fact that they have always been there for all candidates. After that the singing and dancing continued.

Milic worked intensively on founding of sokol schools for preparing village youth for work in sokol troops. By working with youngsters and developing in them »[...] faith in God, love towards fatherland and old family moral laws, he repelled destructive and demolishing forces that youth is always inclined to« (Грђић, 2002, p. 205).

The schools started to work in 1929. According to Dusan Bajic, those schools had »[...] a character of preparing village youth for sokol troop leaders and general work in villages« (Bajić, 1934, p. 133). The host and leader of those schools was Cedomir Milic »[...] who by constant presence among candidates followed the work of all teachers and put together all subjects according to needs or life of village nowadays« (Ibid).

The teacher's section in Union was formed in 1933, when it started to work.

When we talk about courses in Mostar, in 1933 there were two Union courses for leaders of Sokol troops. They both lasted 54 days with total of 509 lectures (Dokić, 1934).

The great attention was dedicated to preparing and education of leaders. According to already men-

tioned report of Турањанинова and Чолић (1934), in 1933 there were a total of nine leaders courses:

- Three-day course in Mostar for programme of union matches and preparations for regional gathering in Ljubljana.
- Three-day course for county chiefs, Mostar.
- Seven-day course of light athletics and games, led by Union leaders in Mostar.
- Union leader course in Vela Luka.
- Seven-day course for male and female leaders of youth and kids, first time held in Union.
- Fourth union course for leaders of sokol troops, Mostar.
- Fifth union course for leaders of sokol troops.
- Fourth federal course for sokol solders, Belgrade.
- Fifth federal course for sokol solders, Belgrade.

In these courses, among others, also participated members of Union management, including Milic.

On fourth and fifth November 1933 there were union leader's courses, organized for the first time in Mostar Union and in this range.

Among already stated, there were also leaders courses of societies: Vrgorac, Gacko, Dubrovnik, Imotski, Janjina, Ljubinj, Mostar and Trpanj, as also troops practical courses, whose main goal was to introduce leaders of sokol troops with programme for 1933. Those courses were held in sokol troops who haven't held it in 1932, and those were: Dubrovnik, Konjic, Ljubuski and Trebinje.

In 1934 there were seven planned courses, with total duration of 106 days, and those were:

- Seven-day course for male and female chiefs of societies,
- Seven-day course for light athletics and games,
- Seven-day course for swimming, rowing and water games,
- Ten-day course for leaders of youngsters and kids,
- Thirty-day union course for preparing of union leaders,
- Fifteen-day course for skiing,
- Thirty-day course for sokol troops leaders (Ibid).

All planned courses were held in 1934.

Based on the aforementioned, we can ascertain that Cedomir Milic, among other numerous successful activities in Sokolism, gave great contribution to education and specialization of sokol staff on the territory of Herzegovina, as during Serbian Sokolism in the time of Austro-Hungarian occupation, also during Sokolism in the time of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (from 1929 Kingdom of Yugoslavia).

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