

GENERAL VIRGIL BĂDULESCU – FOUNDER OF THE FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE D’EDUCATION PHYSIQUE – FIEP

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Abstract: *Romanian general Virgil Bădulescu (1882-1944) was a very important figure in the development of physical education worldwide. He was a founding member of the Federation Internationale d’Education Physique – FIEP, being one of its original executive members, alongside Gents (Belgium), Chryssalis (Greece), Groner (Norway), Miss Fountain (U.K.) and Inspector Sikorski (Poland). He also founded major physical education and sports educational institutions in Romania, contributing to the development of professional military training.*

Key words: *Romanian historical figure, FIEP founder.*

1. Introduction

The promotion of Romanian physical education and sports internationally involves *raising general awareness of the lifelong social and educational value of physical and sports activity*, but such action calls for a strategic and rational approach to mobilize the physical education experts in recognition of this goal.

During the International Congress of Physical Education in Paris (France), which took place between August 30 and September 6, 1900, the idea arose to form an international organization of physical education.

A ‘Permanent International Physical

Education Technical Commission’ was created then, with some of the great personalities in the Physical Education world at the time, of which I mention: Mosso (Italy) as President, Demeny (France) Fosseppez (Belgium), Cabezas (Chile), Kier (Denmark), Chryssafis (Greece), Tongres (Sweden). Delegates from 16 countries were present at the respective committee, whose objectives were to qualify the members of the university faculty.

The “**Institute Internationale d’Education Physique**” (the International Institute of Physical Education) it was made a little later, between July 7 and 10, 1911, pending the Odensée International Congress, Its objective was School Physical

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Education, and its executive board consisted of: President Sellen (Sweden) (Director of the Stockholm Real Institute), Vice-presidents Philippe Tissié (France) and Knudsen (Denmark), General secretary De

Genst (Belgium), Treasurer Mmeivers (The Netherlands) [1] (Figure 1).



Fig. 1. Image of Mr. Sellen - President (Sweden) (Director of the Stockholm Real Institute), Mr. Philippe Tissié - Vice-presidents (France), Mr. Knudsen (Denmark), Mr. De Genst - General secretary (Belgium) and Mr. Treasurer Mmeivers (The Netherlands)

The goals of this institute were:

- To obtain important results in the science of physical education and its practical applications, by accumulating the progress of studies and experiments conducted in the world and generating directions for new investigations.

- In order to disseminate among people, culture the principle that physical education must cooperate with intellectual and moral education [1].

Currently, the multiple events, projects and other activities organized or supported by FIEP, nationally or internationally, are in relation to the scientific, technical, pedagogical and managerial aspects of physical education, sports, leisure, fitness, and health. However, it is my belief that this world physical education organization does not have a significant national representation.

Being constantly preoccupied of finding Romanians that were involved in the development of physical education at an international level, I have discovered in the official FIEP founding documents, at the "Casa do FIEP" in Foz do Iguaçu (Brazil) – the international headquarters of this federation, the official founding act of the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique Educative, F.I.G.E (The International Federation of Educational Gymnastics).

The same act revealed by the cornerstone of FIEP, and it is important for Romania because it attests the presence of Romanian General Virgil Bădulescu among the first FIGE Executive Board, which comprised 2 representatives from each of the 8 participating countries: The United Kingdom, Chile, France, the Netherlands, ROMANIA, Sweden, and Switzerland.

The FIGE General Assembly takes place in Stockholm, on July 20, 1939, bringing only minor modifications in the executive boards. Berg von Linde becomes vice president, while another Swede, Major O. Kragh, is elected general secretary. **What is important for us is the election of General Virgil BĂDULESCU (ROMANIA) as an executive member**, alongside Gents (Belgium), Chryssalis (Greece), Groner (Norway), Miss Fountain (U.K.) and Inspector Sikorski (Poland).

After 14 years, during the World Congress held on August 2-9, 1953, at the General Assembly in Istanbul I, the International Federation of Educational Gymnastics, at the proposal of Thulin, changed its name to: **FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE D'ÉDUCATION PHYSIQUE – FIEP** [1].

2. Virgil Bădulescu – promoter of physical education in Romania

Born in Călărași on October 6, 1882, Virgil Bădulescu, after finishing primary school, graduates in 1900 the Iași Military High-School. Then, after graduating the Officer Candidate School of Engers-Rhein (Germany), he receives the rank of sub-lieutenant, in 1902.

Between 1903 and 1910 he was an instructor at the 2nd and 3rd Hunter Battalions and at the Military Infantry School of Bucharest, but, unfortunately, there is no document in the National Archives that would mention Virgil Bădulescu at this time.

Between **1910-1913**, Bădulescu was sent by the Ministry of War in Sweden to train at the **Stockholm Royal Gymnastics Institut**. Once he finished his instruction, he was sent to the Military College of the Dealu Monastery of Târgoviște to lead the physical training of the military cadets [2] (Figure 2).



Fig. 2. *Course of physical education (summer school) for the training of military instructors, by LTC. Virgil Bădulescu (Brasov, August 1920)* [2]

Over the next years, the leadership of the Romanian military forces makes an

effort to train specialists, create institutions and organizations that would

use physical education in the creation of competitive armed forces (in particular) and healthy young people (in general).

In order to help the military cadets, Virgil Bădulescu publishes in 1915 his

"Manual of Games", the first manual of this kind used for physical training that was published in Romania (Figure 3).



Fig. 3. Image of Virgil Bădulescu's "Manual of Games"

At the initiative of LTC. Virgil Bădulescu, the first physical education magazine is published, called "Physical Education", which was considered to be the bulletin of

the National Office for Physical Education (Figure 4).



Fig. 4. Image of the birth of the "Physical Education" magazine, on June 27, 1928

At the end of World War I, Romania was taking part in the Inter-Allied Games (Paris, Pershing Stadium, from 22 June to 6 July 1919), in which 18 countries

from the winning coalition competed, symbolically marking the end of the war. Virgil Bădulescu was one of the officers from the Romanian team (Figure 5).



Fig. 5. Image of officers from the Romanian delegation; in centre: LTC. Virgil Bădulescu

In the spring of 1922, he founded the **National Office for Physical Education (ONEF)**, the **Military Physical Education Institute** (Fig. 6) and the **National Physical Education Institute** (December 1, 1922, in Bucharest), the first Romanian higher education institution that would train physical education teachers, being the 10th of its kind in the world and the 5th in Europe [4, 5].

Supported by the Royal Family, especially by His Majesty King Ferdinand I, Bădulescu becomes the **first rector of the National Physical Education Institute** and, among many other accomplishments, he builds the central pavilion of the Eforie sports training base and the main stand of the *O.N.E.F. stadium*, which was torn down in 1988 to make way for the construction of today's Palace of Parliament.



Fig. 6. Image of the Military Physical Education Institute students and teachers, in 1922

The Ministry of War supported the creation of the **National Office for Physical Education (ONEF)**, approving and posting LTC. V. Badulescu, as well as other, younger officers in the ranks that eventually formed the core faculty of the National Physical Education Institute.

In 1923 there were 24 military bases that functioned as groups used to stimulate the practice of physical exercises (sports gymnastics) and modern sports.

A number of officers recommended by Virgil Bădulescu left abroad with scholarships, then came back to Romania to work as promoters of physical education during the interwar period: MAJ. Al. Savulescu in Italy, MAJ. P. Lazar in France, Switzerland and Australia, CPT. C. A. Botez and CPT. I. Dimancescu in the United States, Dr. Fl. Covaci Ulmeanu in France and Germany.

According to the newspaper "Adevărul" [3], **1929** is the year in which he edits the second "**Bulletin of physical education**".

3. Conclusion

Being constantly preoccupied of presenting the Romanian physical education values, I have conducted an intense activity of promoting the Romanian physical education school in Europe and worldwide, during the multiple international congresses that I have participated in.

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