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Book Review

Ranković, M. (2013)
70 YEARS OF BOXING IN KRAGUJEVAC 1940-2010

*Publisher: Boxing Club „Radnički“,
56 Kralja Aleksandra I Karađorđevića Street, Kragujevac, Serbia; 263 pages
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In March 2014, the promotion of the monograph publication “70 years of Boxing in Kragujevac 1940-2010“ by the author Mića Ranković was held in Kragujevac. The monograph was published on the occasion of marking an important jubilee for sports and the club – seven decades of boxing in the City of Kragujevac and the Republic of Serbia. From the aspect of the history of physical culture and combat sport as a multidisciplinary field, it may be said that a new creative achievement has been accomplished, as the great commitment and the enthusiasm of the author, who is also a sports publicist, were bound to produce a work that is above all concise, measured and supported by investigation, at the same time synthesising numerous expert and research arguments.

In terms of scope, the book contains 263 pages of A4 format, showcasing 75 black and white pictures and 15 colour pictures, three articles from the local newspapers and magazines, several posters and tickets, as well as a wide range of bibliography entries: 62 monograph publications and 47 year-books and reports, all together totalling over 100 official sources and documents.

The origination and development of the boxing club refer mainly to the periods from the beginning to the ending of the 2nd World War, but in the **Introduction**, the author reminds us of the historical value of boxing as a martial art from the period of the Ancient Greece and Rome, and then takes us to the 18th century England i.e. James Figg and Jack Broughton, as well as to the year 1903, when the section „Soko“ was established, followed by the establishment of the boxing clubs „Radnički“ in Belgrade and „Herkules“ in Zagreb in 1920.

The chapter „**Beginnings**“ features a description of a place that enjoyed the cult status in the old town of Kragujevac – the Beer House – as the venue where the first boxing matches were held with the presence of spectators on the 7th of December 1940, which is officially marked as the date of

establishing the Boxing Club „Radnički“ in Kragujevac. The chapter „**Establishing the Club**“ contains the data of a great historical value. The club was founded by Aleksandar Jovanović, born in 1898 in Vranje. He worked as a medical technician in France and Algeria, where he started practicing boxing, and in 1928 he returned to Serbia, to Kragujevac, where, just before the dawn of war, he gathered a group of young people and started teaching boxing rules and skills. The club activities were continued after the end of war when the boxers from Kragujevac started to take part in the competitions in the bigger towns across Serbia.

The chapter „**Post-War Period**“ focuses mainly on the beginnings of competitions for clubs and national teams, and also on the renovation of the Physical Culture Association „Radnički“ as a sort of a club encompassing seven sections. In the chapter „**Competition Years**“, the author gives an extensive and quality description with the lists of all major competitions held over the seven decades. The beginning of the activities in the club saw the domination of Stevan Ljubomirović in the Flyweight category, Slavko Sorgić in the middleweight and Dragoslav Jakovljević in the light middleweight category along with the educated and professional coaches, Giovanni Labrucci and Boris Dugec. The year to particularly remember is 1962, because that was the year when „Radnički“ won the first Cup of Yugoslavia in the matches against the „Crvena Zvezda“(„Red Star“) from Belgrade. Later, on the 3rd October 1965, the club repeated the same feat by beating the same opponent in the match for the state champion before cca. 13.000 spectators, with the result 13:7. The following summer, there were more successful results, including the title defence in the deciding match against the team of „Radnički“ from Niš which was beaten with the result 12:8. This great trophy was presented to the boxers of „Radnički“ by Mr Branko Mirković, the then president of the boxing Association of Yugoslavia (“BSJ”). The next title was won in 1972 in the match against the team of „Pula“ in the last round, with the result 7:3. The 1980s saw the rise of two exceptional boxers from Kragujevac, Milivoje Labudović and Mirko Puzović, who won the bronze medal at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1984, while Nikola Marković achieved a great success in the 1990s by winning the bronze medal at the World Championship in Malaga.

In 1997, „Radnički“ team once again became the state champion after winning the match against the Loznica team with the result 12:8 before around 5.000 spectators. Later, in the season 2002/03, the first champion of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro was „Radnički“, after winning in the finals against the excellent team of „Loznica“.

The chapter „**Foreigners in the Radnički team**“ introduces the Romanian athletes, Lucian and Jon, Andrej and Beresho, as well as Ali from Macedonia and Panaiotov from Bulgaria, all of whom were boxing in the colours of „Radnički“.

The chapter „**Team State Champion**“ focuses on the six mentioned titles that rank „Radnički“ third in the all-time list of most successful teams, following BC „Radnički“ from Belgrade with the nine titles and BC „Partizan“ with seven titles.

Most interesting „**Participations of Contestants in International Encounters of the Senior National Team of Yugoslavia**“ starting from 1954 with the match between the teams of Yugoslavia and Austria in Kragujevac are presented in the following chapter.

The chapter „**Participations of Contestants in other World Competitions**“ focuses on the successes at the Olympic Games, World Championships, European Championships, Mediterranean Games etc. In the chapter „**At the Helm of the Club**“, there are mentioned the most successful presidents of the boxing club.

The chapter „**All Coaches in the Club**“ lists the names of the most renowned professionals in the history of „Radnički“. This is followed by „**They Cared about Health**“, mentioning the names of doctors Dimitrije Meta, Bora Milićević M.D., Milovan Erić M.D. and others.

The penultimate chapter of the book „**Others said about us**“ brings short works by the famous journalist Dragan Nikitović and Branko Ostojić M.D., who was the member of the Medical Commission of the World Boxing Federation, as well as the work of Miodrag Perunović.

In view of the fact that the professional criteria are fully met, this monograph may be recommended to the widest circle of readers, as it contains also a plethora of interesting material. The author of this review is of the opinion that each library should include this book into its book fund, as it contains numerous examples to be further followed.

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