

## SPIG FROM BEGINNING TO TODAY

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**Abstract.** Rapid growth of nuclear physics in fifties attracted attention of numerous scientists, mainly physicists. At the same time, governments become interested in the field, expecting various advantages, and to be honest, in the first place the nuclear weapons. As a result, also in the country at that time called Yugoslavia, the Federal Nuclear Agency has been formed, and generously funds have been given to support the research. In Yugoslavia three nuclear centers have been founded: in Belgrade (Serbia), Zagreb (Croatia) and Ljubljana (Slovenia). The nuclear research and applications to related fields, inevitably was related to the physics of ionized gases. Just to mention electro-magnetic separation of isotopes, mass spectrometry, gas filled nuclear radiation detectors, accelerator ion sources, sources for analytical spectroscopy and others. Right from the beginning a common problem has been met: lack of basic knowledge on elementary collision processes and in general on the matter in ionized state. Groups of physicists in the mentioned institutes have started paying full attention to these problems. They found it of interest to exchange the results and cooperate not only between themselves but also with research centers in other countries.

It was felt that at least one national meeting should be organized, where an overview of activities in the field of ionized gases could be presented. Thanks to extraordinary efforts of prof. B. Perovic, supported, backed and simulated by prof. A. Milojevic, prof. Z. Sternberg, prof. Dj. Bosan and prof. A. Moljk first such meeting was prepared.

In 1962 the "Ist Yugoslav Symposium an the Physics of Ionized Gases" was organized in Belgrade. Six invited lectures and 26 original contributions were presented.

Two years later, in 1964, the second meeting of the same title was held in Zagreb (Croatia).

The large number of participants and unexpected interest in field has initiated an idea that the study of different fields related to the physics of ionized gases should be done in a more organized manner. Already in the summer of 1964 the "Summer School on the Physics of Ionized Gases" has been held in Herceg Novi, small town on the Adriatic coast. Six internationally recognized lecturers were invited to give a series of lectures in various fields. These were: prof. J. D. Craggs (Univ. of Liverpool, UK, 3 lectures) prof. A. L. Cullen (Univ. of Sheffield, UK, 3 lectures), prof. Yu. H. Demkov (Univ. of Leningrad, 3 lectures), prof. A. von Engel (Univ. of Oxford, UK, 8 lectures), dr. R. Herman (Obs. de Paris, France, 2 lectures), prof. J. B. Hasted (Univ. College, London, UK, 6 lectures). They were actually the first real teachers for the young and growing generation of Yugoslav scientists working in the field of ionized gases, and their names should be praised with dignity and gratitude.

Good results of this summer school suggested that the school of this type should be organized on a regular basis and possibly combined with the symposium. This idea has been accepted by all the participants and as a result of this idea in 1968 the first meeting in a long lasting series was held under the full name: "Yugoslav Symposium and International Summer School on the Physics of Ionized Gases", now known world wide as SPIG. Mainly foreign participants insisted that it should be held somewhere on the Adriatic coast. Until 1990, with the exception of XIV SPIG (held in Sarajevo) all were organized in an attractive summer resorts along Adriatic coast, on a regular, two year basis.

Yugoslavia fell apart in 1991, and the regular 1992 term has been omitted. The renowned XVI SPIG meeting has been held in Belgrade in spite of general crisis and isolation of newly formed Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The next one, for the same reason, was also organized in Belgrade. The number of foreign participants dropped down sharply due to war surrounding and largely unsettled situation.

However, the general situation in the country gradually improved, so that the SPIG meetings were again organized on a regular basis and the number of mainly foreign participants, has increased. Meetings were held in Serbian tourist resources (Zlatibor, Kopaonik) except the last XXIV SPIG that was held in town of Novi Sad. Depending mainly on the financial support, number of invited lectures varied, but it is felt that all the SPIG meetings have been highly successful.

Let us hope that also this twenty-fifth jubiliary SPIG will be successful proving that that the idea of organizing this type of meetings in the republic of Serbia should be continued in the future.