

## SHORT HISTORICAL NOTES XV

Anton Gajdoš, Bratislava, Slovakia & Michal Babela, Faculty of Physical Education and Sports, Bratislava, Slovakia

Ph.D. Anton Gajdoš born on 1.6.1940 in Dubriniči (today Ukraine) lives most of his life in Bratislava (ex TCH, nowadays SVK). He comes from gymnastics family (his brother Pavel have world championship medals) and he devoted his life to gymnastics. His last achievement is establishment of Narodna encyklopedia športu Slovenska ([www.sportency.sk](http://www.sportency.sk)). Among his passion is collecting photos and signatures of gymnasts. As we tend to forget old champions and important gymnasts, judges and coaches, we decided to publish part of his archive under title Short historical notes. All information on these pages is from Anton's archives and collected through years.



### **ALBERT VAGARŠAKOVIČ AZARJAN (February, 11 1929 Kirovakan, Armenia, ex-Soviet Union)**

Armenian Azarjan was born in hard times during WWI and WWII. Lucky he was young enough to miss combats of the WWII, but he had to survive as his father died when Albert was 14. He started to work to support his family, and again something bad is not necessary so negative for future life. He worked as ironsmith and it is no wonder how he became so strong in arms. Comparing to nowadays-young gymnasts, who start with gymnastics at age of 5 or 6, he started with gymnastics at age of 17. In addition, he became gymnast by pure luck. Armenian gymnasts had a performance at his town and after exhibition Albert and friend tried to perform what they saw. As Albert was excellent in repeating movements on rings, gymnasts invited him to join at Erevan (Armenia capitol). After three years of training, he won Armenian championship on rings.

The first international competition he participated was World Championship 1954 in Roma (Italy). Already at the first attempt he won the title on rings, and with Soviet Union team, besides he was also very good in all around, placed to 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> on vault.

At European championship in 1955 (Frankfurt, Germany) he won rings, parallel bars and took silver on horizontal bar.

Next year at OG in Melbourn (1956, Australia) he won rings and team title. Melbourn he left with another two good results as he was 5<sup>th</sup> on parallel bars and 7<sup>th</sup> in all around.

In Albert's time two major competitions OG and WC were organized in four years timespan and between two OG were WC. So in a row of Albert's competitions WC 1958 in Moscow

(Russia, ex-Soviet Union) he was the best on rings and with team, and improved his high bar gymnastics to the second place.

OG in Rome (1960, Italy) were Albert's last major competition, and again he was the best on rings, and with team he won silver.

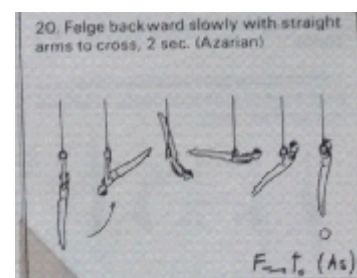
Albert left to the international gymnastics two major inventions on rings, which remained even up to day as something very difficult.



First time he showed his cross (Azarjan cross) at Soviet Union championship in 1953, his exercise was not evaluated as his exercise consisted of something which was declared as "unprecedented". Up to now, no other gymnast tried to search new elements with such arms position (forward and backward, despite there are possibilities).

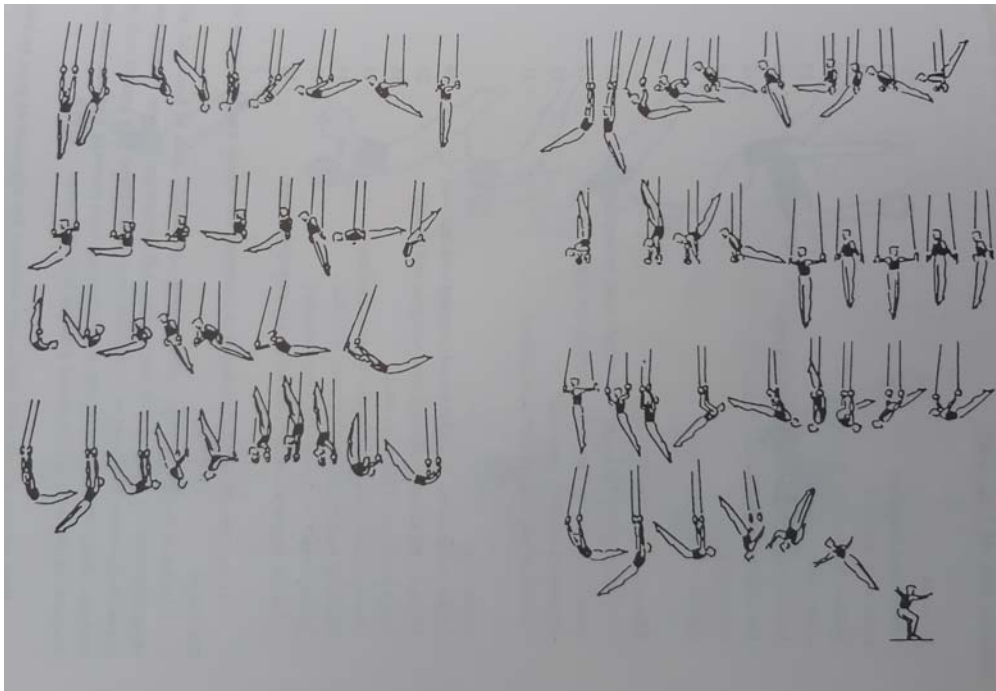


His second invention was slow felge backward with straight arms to cross, and he performed this element at WC 1954 for the first time at major competitions.



His son Eduard (he had also two daughters) followed his steps in gymnastics and was a member of wining team at OG 1980 in Moscow.

Armenian Sport Journalists Federation declared Albert Azarjan as the top Armenian athlete of 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was also decorated by Armenian Prime Ministers and Presidents at his anniversaries (70<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup>, 80<sup>th</sup>).



Albert Azarjan winning exercise on rings at 1954 WC in Rome as draw from Tadamiki Mori in Akitomo Kaneko book: Exercises on Rings, Fumaido, Tokyo, 1971, page 127



**Happy 90<sup>th</sup> birthday!**