

SHORT HISTORICAL NOTES VII

Anton Gajdoš, 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). 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.



MIROSLAV KLINGER (January, 20 1893 – February, 10 1979)



Miroslav Klinger was a gymnast (competing at OG 1920 and OG 1928, on photo performing dismount on high bar), coach, judge, president of TC FIG and honorary member of FIG. As we have OG in Rio and electoral congress FIG, it is interesting Miroslav's view and memory on how FIG was dealing with topics in 1948 in preparation towards OG 1948 in London. His views were published in Czech journal *Cvičitel* (1948, p. 35- 38).

The International Gymnastics Federation and the Olympic Games of 1948

I would like to write something about the Olympic Games. It would not be inappropriate, I think, if I were perhaps to proceed by first touching on what the conditions were really like for the international federation during the time when it resumed its activities. The first meeting to take place after the war was held in Geneva on the 23rd and 24th of March, 1946.

This meeting saw the emergence of the Scandinavians as a more active force, although whether this was a result of the Olympic Games, or of their efforts to establish contacts in the world of gymnastics, still cannot be determined. Their activities consisted not only of participating in meetings but also contributing to the reform of competitions. They wanted to have the pommel-horse discipline removed from gymnastics programs. The predominance of the English was not surprising. They are the organizers of the Olympic competitions. What was most surprising was the moderation shown by the Swiss towards their own member Huguenin. They wanted to replace him with Maurer, through the intercession of the technical commission. It didn't happen that way. We all supported Huguenin, and he won. He died three weeks later.

And shortly before that, one of the best known members of the technical committee for women, Mr. Demarbre, had died.

The question of who would be Huguenin's successor was solved by ballot. The election was conducted mainly on the basis of written ballots, and I was unanimously elected chairman of the committee. I didn't want to stay on, and so I didn't know what the results of the London election were, because until then the results of the elections had been only temporary. The makeup of the federation is now as follows: the Chairman is the Belgian, Goblet d'Alviella, the Vice-Chairman a Frenchman, Lecocq, while the position of Second Vice-Chairman is vacant (I don't want to be prophetic, but I have the impression that it is being reserved for an Italian). The Treasurer is our brother Muller, and the Secretary is Thoeni, a Swiss. The technical committee is arranged thus: I am the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman is the Frenchman Lapalu, the Secretary the Luxemburger Hentges and the invigilators are the Swiss Mauer, the Belgian Bodaert, and the Englishman, King, who for every negotiation is substituted by the Secretary of the British Amateur Gymnastics Association, Simmonds. The following nations were represented at the Geneva meeting: Belgium, France, England, Holland, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Sweden and Czechoslovakia, while Norway and Finland were absent. Italy, Hungary, Germany and Japan were expressly not invited. The invitation to Yugoslavia was returned with a message to the effect that „Sokol" didn't exist. In the absence of Norway, Sweden was invited and present.

The Executive Bureau (something like our office of the Chairman) restricted itself to questions of organization. It brought into being the first organs of the federation. We technicians are responsible mainly for applying the regulations and sanctions of the federation. And thus it was that the Americans proposed that competitions be judged by five referees. The American proposal was turned down because at the 1938 Basel Conference we had already definitively stated that 4 referees should be provided, that the highest and lowest scores should be dropped, and that the average of the remaining scores would be recorded in the standings. These arrangements had already been confirmed for the Olympic Games which were to have taken place in 1940. In addition to this declaration, it was accepted that among the marks from which the average scores were calculated, there shouldn't be a difference of greater than half a point. And furthermore, in contrast to the calculation of scores in Prague where whole marks were awarded from 0 to 10, partial marks would be given (to one decimal point), in order to organize scoring in such a way that from 0 to 8 points, quarter marks would be given, and from 8 to 10 points, tenths of a mark would be scored. And finally, it was agreed that among the 4 judges it would no longer be permitted to have a referee giving marks to a competitor from his native country during international competitions: this rule derived from experiences of bias during the competition in Budapest and was in effect for the Olympic Games in Berlin.

The Norwegian proposal, translated by the Swede Klaus Thorson, suggested that with regard to the participation of the northern countries, the pommel horse event should be

scrapped: the change was firmly accepted, but its enactment was postponed until a later time. Teams would compete in one of 2 or 3 (higher and lower) divisions. Both classes would have the same required exercises, but easier than until now. While the second group would have fewer elements (which would mean, in effect, the certain abandonment of the wide horse).

A change has been made to article 17 of the Rules of Competition, so that instead of this regulation (not excluding the springboard) the springboard can be said to be a required element. This is regarding the certain former FIG members. Admitted again were Italy and Hungary under condition that their organizations will be completely independent from their governments. Newly admitted were Austria, Iran, South Africa. The applications of Korea, Columbia, Cuba and Ireland were postponed to the next meeting. We again touched on the admission of Russia. The topic remained unresolved, even though we informed several times the Russian Embassy in Prague and Russian gymnasts during visits, that the applications needs to be submitted at least 1 year before the competition and there is danger that the Russians will not be allowed to attend the OG.

Very heated, but private, was the discussion between me and the Chairman about the admission of Spain. We discussed what the individual speakers said and very strongly protested against their presence. The Chairman retained his opinion that Spain never ceased to be a member of the federation and did not accept the reasons that they were close collaborators with the Axis (even if not directly at war and only was the supplier of the Axis). There is nothing we could have done. This could have caused public outrage. The situation was similar to a diplomatic one. The question remains if they will actually come to the competition. Then our situation would be very difficult. The FIG has 18 members. The proposal of S. Provaznikova that it should be put into protocol that Germany and Japan cannot be members of FIG because they misused the humanity, was not approved. We only stated that from FIG standpoint they do not exist.

The US proposal to have 5 judges was postponed to the next congress, because the actual rules are already finished. The same applied to the Mexican proposal for new types of competition.

The main part of the meeting was spent on comparing text of the exercises. That is proof to me that all delegates were in close connection to the athletes in the rehearsal. Their remarks and proposals were proving that. If it wasn't for such a connection, I would only have to limit myself to not allowing such changes that according to me could hurt our athletes. I only allowed what I thought would be a benefit to them. The remarks and changes were related to all *naradie*, including *prostne*. Right after the return I informed about these changes to the exercises and rules, when I worked on the films for Mr. Penigra and Novotny, who lead the training. I also gave them the text of the exercises so that they correct their own, in order to allow our gymnasts to know where they stand and prepare in peace for the competition. There should be also the unofficial working issue with the changes at the COS. Mr. Simmondes was tasked with this from London and I don't know if it's already finished. If the COS don't have the text yet, he needs to be urged to do so. These are the names of the applicants so far: Belgium, France, Italy, Hungary, Finland, Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, USA, Luxemburg, England, Switzerland, Denmark, Mexico, Norway, and Egypt. In addition there are 11 women teams. Thus, there will be a big competition.

And the only question that remains is how will our athletes score in London in 1948. I was there 3 times within the last 2 years. First at a competition at home, second at the competition against Denmark and the last time during one training. I saw ones the English, 3 times the French and some Hungarians and also the Danes. I read the newspapers from Switzerland, Luxemburg, Denmark, France, and Italy. I analyzed and recalculated the results of the

competition between the US and us. I am not an optimist. If they were to succeed they have to do better.