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DR. MIROSLAV TYRŠ

FOUNDER OF THE
GYMNASTIC ORGANIZATION
SOKOL

HIS UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES AND
ARRANGEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION
OF GYMNASTIC ACTIVITIES

—

BY JOSEPH CERMAK



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SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DIVISION
History of Physical Education
and Dance



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DR. MIROSLAV TYRŠ.*)

"Nations are blamed for their own weakness, their own destruction. The decision is made long before the test on the battlefield. Let us therefore take as our motto: Be first, or die on the way! All or nothing!" These were the words, by which Dr. Miroslav Tyrš electrified the Bohemian Nation and brought into life the now powerful Gymnastic Organization Sokol in Bohemia (now Czechoslovak Republic). As a professor of Philosophy in the University of Prague, he soberly examined the substance of National organism, discussed its right to live and determined its purpose. *"All history and all Nature is an eternal struggle in which everything succumbs that does not establish its right to live."*

*) Pronounce Tyrsh.

Either develop and flourish, or disappear and make room for those who are able to live!" From this Tyrš took up the solution of the problem of the people and, when he applied this law to the Bohemian Nation, he came to the conclusion that a Nation manifesting so much vitality after centuries of oppression, did have a right to live, but that that right must be defended, that more is needed than mere pride of the past and, what many of his contemporary co-workers did for the spiritual development of the Bohemian Nation, Tyrš, knowing that "*Nation's right to live must be defended . . .*", made up his mind to bring his people to such an acme of physical perfection as were the sons of ancient Hellas. We may say that Tyrš, by bringing into life his Sokols, had furnished the backbone and sinew to the body which was resurrected spiritually by many patriotic men in spite of the most brutal and merciless persecution, in spite of the grinding despotism of the Austrian Government. To those who are familiar with the "*divide et impera*" tactics of the Habsburg Dynasty, it is not necessary to say that Tyrš' work was not carried on without danger, for the Vienna diplomats were not slow to learn the underlying motives of the Sokol organization. They knew well that organization which, besides training young men physically, inscribed on its banners pure democracy and love of freedom, would soon form in that polyglot Empire an intractable united element which, in the future, might cause the autocratic circles in Vienna a great deal of worry. Although Tyrš as a University Professor was in the service of the Vienna Government and knew that he was jeopardizing his whole existence, he did not abandon his work for, like many other workers in those days, he was endowed with that indomitable spirit which was enkindled in the bosom of every patriot by the memorable defiant words which the eminent publicist, Karel Havlíček, fearlessly hurled into the faces of the plundering and blundering Austrian diplomats: "*You may promise, command—you may threaten me, traitor I will never be!*" And so the work was carried on in spite of the most alluring promises, in spite of the most arrogant commands, in spite of the most ominous threats. And if ever a man could justly say that he had accomplished his mission, that man was Dr. Miroslav Tyrš, for the history of the world's war will record on its pages innumerable deeds of valor, deeds of ardent Patriotism and deeply rooted love of Liberty which was manifested on all fronts by Tyrš' devoted followers.

Dr. M. Tyrš was born in 1832 and during his school years devoted all of his spare time to Gymnastic exercises under eminent Instructors who, in those days, followed their profession in Prague. As an ardent student and enthusiastic admirer of the life of ancient Greeks, he was convinced that Greece owed its unparalleled excellence to passionate cultivation of physical training, and he decided to make it his life's mission to lead the sturdy Bohemian youths to the same goal. After graduating from the University he published many essays on philosophy and aesthetics and was considered one of the foremost art critics. In all of his writings on Physical Education the reader detects Tyrš' aim to base all the Physical activities on physiological principles in which, however, the aesthetic side of the physical training is not being neglected. "For", he maintained, "physical perfection should go hand in hand with a noble mind". How deeply Tyrš went in his researches is shown by the fact that many of the Physical Education problems which are now being discussed at our Conventions and in different publications, are mentioned in his essays where even the ways leading to the solution of these numerous problems are indicated. His book "Fundamentals of Gymnastics" contains elaborately arranged foundations on which his followers continued building until the structure approached its perfection.—Being also an eloquent speaker, Tyrš was elected to the Vienna Parliament as a representative of the Liberal element but, as the parliamentary duties necessitated his absence from Prague and interfered greatly with his life's mission, he left the political field and devoted all of his time to teaching and organizing the National Guard, the Sokols. He died in 1884.

Principles, As Outlined For Sokols

By Tyrš

"Sokol idea does not mean physical training only—Sokol's aim is to educate our people to the highest physical efficiency, to nobleness and to morality." — Tyrš.



WHAT is Turner to every progressive, democratic and Liberty loving German, Sokol is to every progressive, democratic and Liberty loving Bohemian (Czech)—what Frederick Jahn is to every Turner or Ling to every Swedish gymnast, Dr. Miroslav Tyrš is to every Sokol and if Jahn's preaching filled the hearts of his followers with admiration of the deeds of valor performed by their forefathers, Tyrš brought into life the now powerful Gymnastic organization of Sokol in Bohemia (now Czechoslovak Republic) by instilling in the bosom of every Czech man and every Czech woman the axiomatical truth, that—

"...not a glorious history, but active energetic present only is a guarantee of the Nation's future..."

Although in all his preaching and in all his writing he is enthusiastically pointing to the physical beauty of the sons and daughters of the ancient Hellas, he at the same time never ceased in warning his disciples that physical beauty and prowess does not make an ideal man or an ideal woman, and in all his edifying exhortations he is urging his followers to try their utmost in their efforts to disseminate in the Bohemian Nation the noble principle, that

"Sokol work does not mean to attain physical perfection only, but that it means both physical and moral elevation of every man and every woman",

and he added with great emphasis:

"... so that when we address a Sokol the response will come from a man in the truest sense of the word—a man perfect physically, mentally and morally—a Patriot who is ever ready to respond to the call of his country, ever ready to draw a sword in defense of Democracy, Liberty and Humanity".

And even on this side of the ocean every young man seeking strength and agility, physical and mental efficiency on the athletic field or in a gymnasium, should everlastingly bear in mind one of the commandments of Dr. Tyrš directed to every individual Sokol:

*"What by bodily training you have gained,
by moral living try to preserve!"*

But Tyrš was not satisfied with seeing only the members of Sokol organization imbued with his noble preaching,—he was insisting that

*"to be a Czech should mean to be a Sokol,
for it will not suffice to see only a small
fraction of our Nation cultivating its physical
prowess. We must see every man and
every woman assembled under our stand-
ards and train their bodily vigor and in-
domitable spirit on our fields of contests,
for ...",*

he maintained further,

*"...the smaller the Nation, the greater
activity it must develop in order to remain,
in spite of small numbers, an active and
influential element of humanity ..."*

And although the words "that it will not suffice to see only a small fraction of Nation cultivating its physical prowess" were uttered by Tyrš more than half a century ago, the American Nation even to-day should find warning in those utterances, for it does not suffice to see only a small fraction of our men and women cultivating their strength and agility on the athletic fields or in gymnasiums, while more

than eighty per cent of our people are satisfied merely with admiring from the grand stand some daring feats of a few individuals on some piece of gymnastic apparatus, with applauding the speed of a few individuals on the running track, or vociferously cheering eleven stalwart men on the gridiron. How true were the warning words of Dr. Tyrš is sadly verified by the statement of Dr. F. A. Story who, in his address at the meeting of Physical Education Association in Chicago said *"that a whole army of our young men were found physically unable to support the supreme obligation of citizenship when the very existence of this country was dependent upon its manpower."* This, however, was known to every honest Physical Culturist long before the war, but what could a few well meaning individuals accomplish when the real importance of rational Physical Education did not permeate the masses who believe, even to-day, that Physical Education is nothing but a mere sport for a few able bodied individuals who, above all, are fitted by Nature to be trained for some special events and to win points for their respective school, club or organization? This eagerness "to win" is the main cause for which the Instructors are obliged to center all of their energy on training only a few individual "point winners", on coaching a few selected individuals so as to have a "winning team", to give their undivided attention to a small fraction of our Nation, to a few men who are physically fit, and neglect thousands of those "who are unable to make the team", in other words, *who are physically unfit!* We are still glorifying and munificently rewarding those who train few "record-breakers", coach five, nine or eleven winners, and very little, if any, appreciation is shown to those who in their altruism, unnoticed, are trying to do "the greatest possible good to the greatest possible number" and whose only reward is their knowledge that they are faithfully performing their duties to their fellowmen, to their community, to their country.

The Czechoslovak Republic to-day justly pays homage to its disciplined and well trained Sokols, who, seeing in that fateful year of 1914 that the whole existence of Bohemia was at stake, declared boldly:

"now or never!"...

and this ominous slogan shook the powerful Austrian Empire in its foundations at the very beginning of the war.

Had Tyrš lived until those terrible days he would have seen with great satisfaction how well he prepared the Bohemian Nation for its crucial time, how the Sokol idea has proved its soundness. For in the forefront, determined opposition to the Austrian tyranny in the Vienna Parliament, were men trained in the Sokol ranks. Sokols led the Bohemian regiments from Austria over to Russia and Italy and those heroes, who saved Brusiloff's demoralized and disorganized army from total annihilation in the terrible battle near Zborow, were men trained in the Sokol Gymnasiums and inspired by the teachings of their beloved leader, Tyrš. And among those who, after the fall of Czardom, created the Czechoslovak army in Russia and, without food, deprived of all the arms, heroically fought their way through Siberia, were Sokols who never forgot the legacy of their illustrious and beloved teacher:

*"Always have courage in your heart, strength
in your arm, and your Country in your mind!"*

And if every American boy to-day will follow the teaching of Dr. Tyrš, if every man will have "courage in his heart, strength in his arm and his Country in his mind", our Republic can face the future without fear, for there never will be an enemy strong enough that would dare to challenge such a Nation! These three things should be the attributes of every American Citizen no matter where his cradle stood. In those words of Tyrš which inspired his Sokols to such heroic deeds, I see the best preparedness for every Nation. A man with giant strength in his arm and with lion's courage in his heart, may be a dangerous man to his country, if he is not Patriotic! And, allow me to add that, it is the writer's firm belief that our Gymnastic Institutions should not be places for physical training only, but that in these Institutions the strict rules of morality should be planted in the plastic mind of our youths, that our Gymnastic Institutions should be the Temples from which the laws of hygienic living are disseminated among the masses and,—last but not least,—they should be the hotbeds of the most intensive Patriotism!

The Meaning Of Sokol

The writer was asked on many occasions by his American Colleagues what is the meaning of Sokol, why it was adopted as a name for the Gymnastic Organization, and I gladly grasp this opportunity to give the meaning of this popular name. Sokol, the falcon, is a bird who by his swiftness and energy symbolizes the active, vigorous, strenuous, real Spartan life which is the ideal of Sokol Societies. The falcon, (Sokol), who flies high in the free skies, is also the symbol of freedom, and every Czech, or Bohemian as they are called in this country, is born with a devotion to freedom. Sokol idea, then, was the realization of Tyrš's philosophy and he could not select a more appropriate name for those who were destined to liberate Bohemia from its long bondage in which that little Nation had suffered for three long centuries..

* * *

Lest the writer might create the impression, that as a man who was raised in the Sokol ranks and who always found inspiration in Tyrš' writing and preaching was carried too far by his enthusiasm in describing the work of Sokols, I insert here a few excerpts from the letter of a special correspondent of "The Chicago Daily News", Mr. A. R. Decker, who has spent several months in the Czechoslovak Capital, Prague:

Each Czech village, says Mr. Decker, has its Sokol group, and it is safe to say that hardly a family is without a Sokol member. It is the farthest reaching and best organized society in Czechoslovakia, and has immense influence and power. This is due to the ideals for which it stands. The Sokol institution is national, nonpolitical, liberal and democratic. It was founded for the purpose of conserving the Czech nation, with the idea of fortifying the resistance of the race through encouraging systematic physical and mental exercise. The story of the Sokols is the story of a nation which refused to perish, in spite of oppression. Dr. Tyrš, philosopher and art critic, founder of the Sokols, was evidently a man of lofty ideals, one might say a man inspired with a mission to save his people. His aims were "to cultivate beauty, morale, bravery in a national and democratic spirit." In the Sokol societies there is strict discipline, tempered by a spirit of friendship, fraternity and

equality. The members "thee" and "thou" one another, contrary to the formal manner of speech. The groups have libraries, have conferences and lectures and musical reunions. The movement marks a renaissance in national health, spirit and sentiment. By their own publications the Sokols keep informed of events in their society . . .

In 1870 Dr. Tyrs said in substance: "We should strive to develop the habit of self-confidence, without preaching versatility or vanity. Our devise is, 'Eternal Evolution or Eternal Dissatisfaction.' The Sokol is not a choral, industrial or scientific society; it is something for humanity." Women occupy a prominent place in the Sokols. Indeed, during the war, while the men were away, the women kept the organization intact. Some of the groups are headed by women."

And the "London Daily Telegraph" says: "The Sokols are not merely gymnastic clubs. They are associations for the promotion of mental and spiritual, as well as corporeal, excellence; they are meant to develop the character not less than the muscles and the limbs. They have, therefore, a high moral purpose, which goes beyond recreation and sport, and they are all inspired by an ideal of profound national and patriotic significance . . . How well they succeeded the events of the past few years have shown. There were no soldiers in the war who fought more worthily when they got the chance of fighting for their own cause and friends; there is scarcely any achievement in all the campaigns more notable than the amazing march of the Czechoslovak prisoners of war from the middle of European Russia half-way across Siberia. A people so educated for freedom and self-control as the Czechs have been in their Sokols can be trusted to make good use of the liberty they have so amply earned . . ."

* * *

BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH.

In order to understand the significance of the mission of the Sokols, it will be necessary to give brief excerpts from the history of the fall of the once powerful Bohemian Nation, its unutterable suffering and its long struggle for existence.*)

The year of 1620 was a great milestone in Bohemian history. In November of that fateful year the rebellion of the Bohemian estates was crushed in the battle of the White Mountain (near Prague) and the people experienced the full vengeance of the victorious Hapsburgs. The leading men were executed or exiled, the greater part of the soil was confiscated, and the nation that had taken such a noble part in the history of Europe was decimated, until its name almost disappeared from the roll of living nations. The peace of a churchyard prevailed in the Bohemian lands deprived of its leaders, and lying helpless under the most oppressive regime of the foreign dynasty. This frightful agony of an entire nation lasted more than two hundred years. When the propitious period of en-

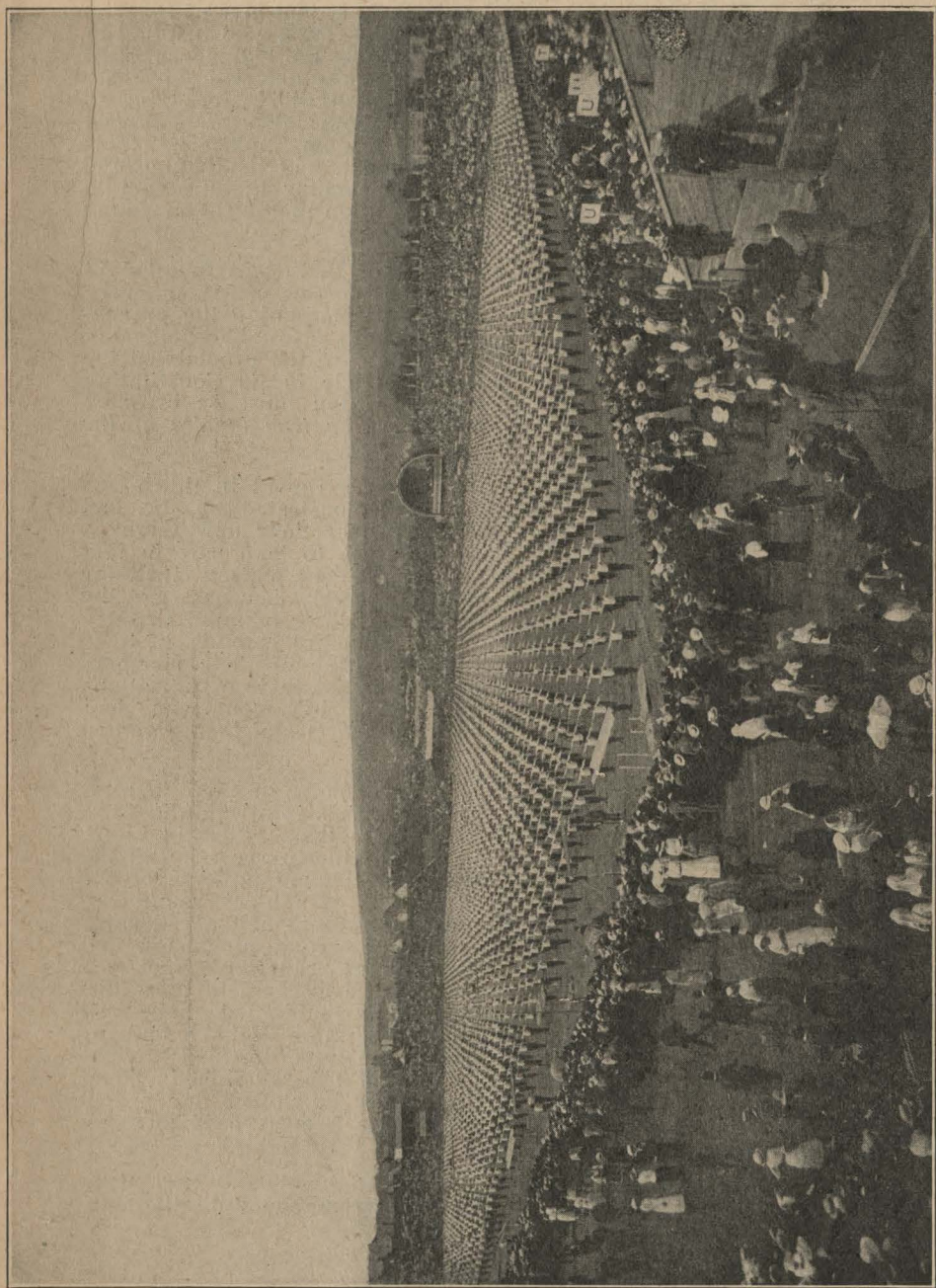
*) Reprinted from pamphlet published by "Bohemian National Alliance" 1917.

lightenment, preceding the French Revolution covered all Europe, even the autocratic Austria came under its influence. Two benefits principally it conferred upon the many races of Austria, which had far reaching influence upon the Czech (Bohemian) nation: The edict of toleration permitting a certain amount of religious freedom, and the liberation of the peasants from the most galling wrongs of serfdom, and these two concessions created the initial impulse which set into play the great forces by which the nation awakened to a new life. The peasant, released from slavery to his feudal lord, breathed more freely after centuries of severe oppression and became conscious that he was a man. All over the lands of the Bohemian crown, as persecution and oppression were lifted, forces that had been lying dormant came to life and sap began to circulate after a long winter in the body of the nation. On top of that, however, came a sudden blow. The same Emperor who had loosened the bonds of his subjects, the enlightened Joseph II., planned to take from Czechs the most essential part of their Nationality—their tongue. And then the indestructible vitality of the Bohemian people came to the surface. Men came forward in great numbers, animated by the conviction that they must work hard to preserve the people's language. The awakening of the nation begins with the defense of the Czech language. Joseph Dobrovský, the gifted linguist, defined first the laws governing the correct use of the Bohemian language and gave the initial impulse for its further cultivation. So the old speech was saved, but there still existed a violent break between the present and the more glorious days of old Bohemia. František Palacký rediscovered Bohemian history and through his work made people proud of being members of the Czech race. The bright past gave the people confidence that the future also must be full of promise. Palacký's history, besides recalling the days of Bohemian independence, introduced also into our "awakening" the political idea, so that the forties of nineteenth century see the birth of a new political life. And when Palacký proudly uttered the prophetic words in the Austrian Parliament "... we were before Austria and we will survive it!" Tyrš started to organize his Sokols who were destined "to defend the Bohemian Nation's right to live!"

It was natural that sooner or later room had to be made in the Sokol organization for the Bohemian women, for Tyrš' mission was the educating of the whole nation, knowing that "a man must be trained, before he is born." Bohemian women have appreciated the importance of the teachings of Tyrš, and the intelligent Czech woman considers it her duty to join the Sokol society of her town. At the last great Sokol Festival — one is held every five years and is looked upon as a great national holiday—over 12,000 men and 8,000 women and girls took part in the gymnastic exhibition in Prague. Women who are members of the Sokol organization give to the nation sound, healthy children and teach them passionate devotion to Bohemia."

SOKOLS IN AMERICA.

The Bohemian immigrants, who fled before the merciless flood of bloody persecution after the revolutionary days of 1848, leaving thus their native homes to find shelter in the peaceful haven smiling neath the flaring folds of the Stars and Stripes, and



Gymnastic Festival in Prague: 12,000 Sokols taking intervals for Mass Exercises.

like a richly laden ship reaching a port with all its wealth intact, brought to America with them not only their ardent love of Liberty, but also the noble gospel of their great leader Tyrš, who instilled in their minds and burned into their very souls the righteousness of his preaching that *"Physical Education means not only physical, but also mental and moral education of mankind."* Resolving to make their new home resemble their old home they were forced to leave, they followed the words of wisdom spoken by their leader and as every little village in Bohemia had its Gymnasium, so in every Bohemian settlement in this country the first public building was devoted to the physical education of the future young America.

In 1878 Bohemian Gymnastic Union of U. S. was founded in Chicago and in a short time its branches spread nearly in every state of our Union from coast to coast, disseminating the preachings of Tyrš into the younger element of both sexes. The Bohemian Gymnastic Union was the first organization which proclaimed the equality of men and women and one article in its Constitution *"that every member of the Gymnastic Union must be or must become a citizen of U. S."* demonstrates the true loyalty of the Sokols to their new Country.

How deeply the teachings of Tyrš were rooted in the hearts of members of these organizations is demonstrated by the fact that, when the dark cloud of war hung over their new Country, these loyal followers of Tyrš were so eager to take part in that mighty struggle that, two weeks after president Wilson's call for volunteers, the Sokol Gymnasiums were empty because all the young members hastened under the flag of their adopted Country and with no little pride did the Sokol Societies embody in their war records the significant fact that not one of their members was rejected for physical inefficiency and that their organizations were represented under the American flag by men who had *"strength in their arms, courage in their hearts and their Country in their minds!"*

There were several organizations of Sokols in this Country. The strongest one of them, which was organized into Union in 1878, adopted the blue uniform, out of respect to those "boys in blue", who fought under the Stars and Stripes for the preservation of the Union. Another organization adopted the original uniform of the Sokols of the old Country, which consists of a black round cap with a falcon's feather, gray blouse and trousers and a red shirt. This naturally led many Americans to the wrong conclusion that the "red shirt" symbolizes the same idea as "red flag." Far from it. Sokols in Bohemia were brought into life by Tyrš in those memorable days, when the Italian Patriot, Garibaldi, led his "red shirts legions" in their struggle for the liberation of Italy, and the same red shirt was adopted by Sokols who were destined to fight in the future for the liberation of Bohemia. The red shirt in Sokol ranks, therefore, is a symbol of the highest Patriotism and ardent love of Freedom on whose altar the wearer is ever ready to sacrifice his life.

These two organizations, the "boys in blue" and the "Garibaldian red" formed one Union several years ago with the Executive Board in the City of Chicago.

System, Theory And Method Of Sokol Gymnastics As Arranged By Dr. M. Tyrš

It is beyond the scope of this pamphlet to give a comprehensive treaty of Tyrš' work, but the writer hopes that even this brief outline will give the reader at least some idea about the classification of Physical activities as Tyrš arranged them for the Sokol Organization more than half a Century ago.

So far we have known in this country two different Systems of Gymnastics, i. e. Swedish System and German System; Swedish System by Ling, German System by Jahn and amplified and adapted to the physical and mental abilities of all ages by Spies. Some European Nations have adopted Swedish, some again adopted German System, but have conformed these systems to their own ideas, their needs, their desires and to their National characteristics. Most of the Nations of Northern Europe have adopted the Swedish System and, although some of them claim to have a system of their own, I think that it is Ling's System, somewhat modified. In Central Europe the Jahn's System again was generally adopted and was changed and molded to the needs of the people of the different Nations and also to the ideas of the apostles of Physical Education in their respective Countries. Frenchmen, for instance, claim to have their own system which originally was a German system, to which, however, prominent Physical Culturists, like Demy and Hèbert, added some new ideas and different types of exercises.*) And the same might be said of Italy.

The Bohemian Nation (now the Czechoslovak Republic) was the first Nation in Central Europe where the Jahn's System of Gymnastics was introduced and Tyrš, seeing in the modern Gymnastics a channel through which he could reach the realization of his cherished dream, i. e. to bring the Bohemian people to the highest pinnacle of physical efficiency, immediately went to work, re-arranged the rich

*) In what is known in France as "Hèbert System" however, one can not help noticing a strong influence of Swedish System.

material, divided and subdivided the physical activities, conforming them to his own idea of methodical procedure, and it is with this arrangement, with this "Organized Gymnastics" I wish to acquaint the Physical Education Circles on this side of the ocean.

We know that in teaching any subject, we have to deal with: a) System, b) theory and c) method. We understand that a collection of various physical activities, arranged in a certain order, according to certain rules and regulations, is called a System. System, therefore, gives us material to work with. Science, which shows us how this collection of physical activities are arranged, classified, grouped, divided and subdivided so that we have the rich material systematically arranged before our eyes, thus getting a clear idea of the procedure which we are to follow in presenting the subject to our students, is called a theory and, finally, a science teaching us how to impart the knowledge of our system and theory, we call a method. Tyrš arranged and systematized the Physical Exercises in such a way that the arrangement naturally indicates even to the less experienced instructor the methodical way of progression.

The System of General Gymnastics, as arranged by Dr. Tyrš, is divided into *Four Large Departments* and each of these Departments comprises different physical activities, as follows:

Department I. comprises all activities without apparatus;

Department II. comprises all apparatus exercises;

Department III. comprises all activities without apparatus, which, however, we can perform with the assistance of others;

Department IV. comprises all combative exercises.

Each of these four Departments, as we shall see later, is again divided into *branches*, the branches again into *Groups*, and Department II., which comprises all the apparatus exercises, and gives us the richest material to work with, the Groups are subdivided into *Categories* and these finally into *Elements*.

We shall take now *Department I.*, which comprises all the activities without apparatus and is divided into *Three Branches*.

DEPARTMENT I.

Divided Into Three Branches.

Branch 1) Simple marching, in file, rank, circle, different ways of walking and running.

Branch 2) Free exercises.

Branch 3) Tactics.

The last two of these branches are again subdivided into *Groups* of different activities, as follows:

Branch 2)

Group: { a) calisthenics proper—1) in place, 2) from place,
b) miscellaneous activities without any apparatus.

Categories:

Group a) is divided into following categories:

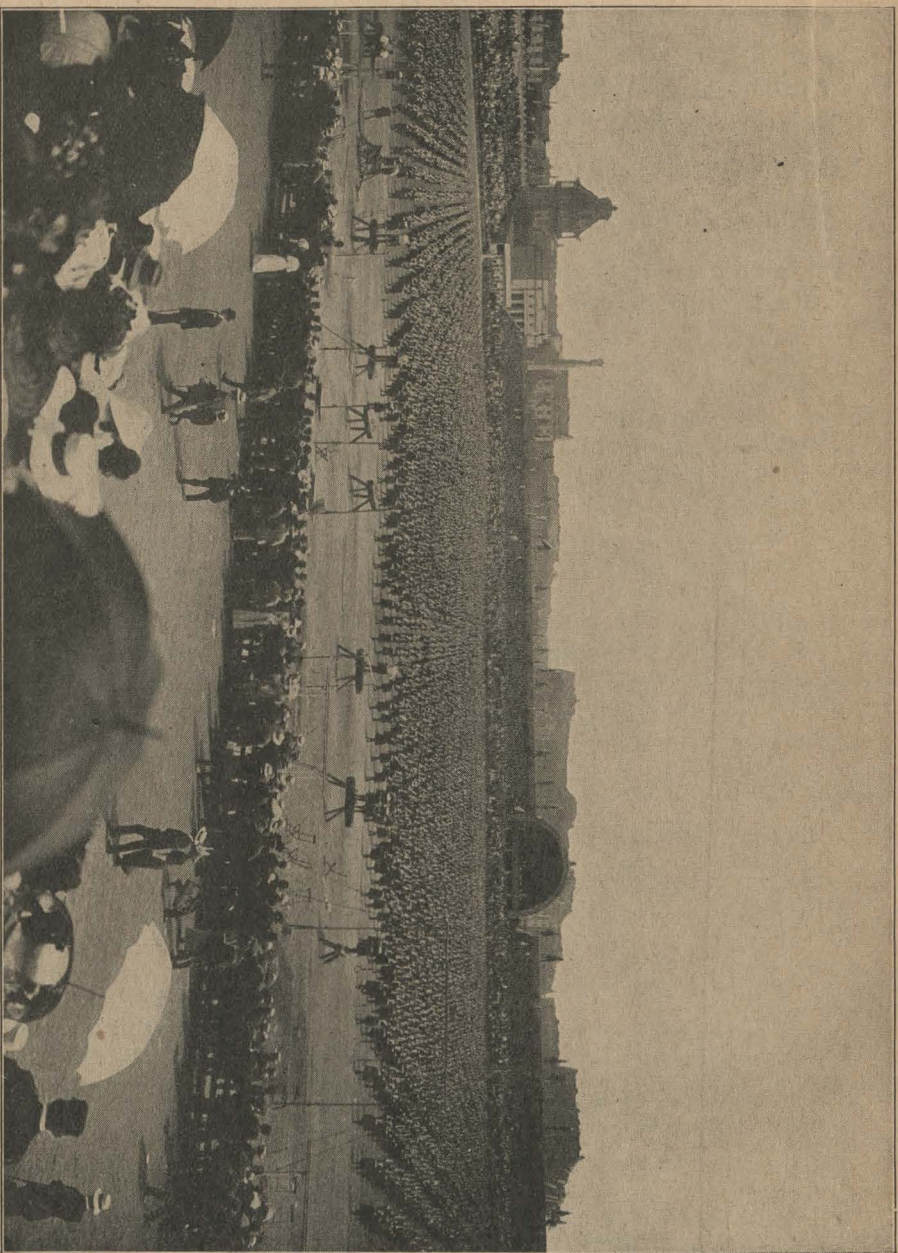
- In place: 1) arms, trunk, leg or head movements;
 2) static positions (arms, head, trunk or leg);
 3) turns;
 4) hopping;
 5) foot placing, changes of the same and all derived positions.
- From place: 1) Closing steps;
 2) walking;
 3) jumps, leaps.

Elements.

Simplest movement of any part of the body, which cannot be divided any more, is called an *Element*—example: raise arms and lower; place foot and replace; lower trunk and raise, etc.

Branch 3)

Group: { a) Marching in different formations;
 b) fancy and figure marching;
 c) folk and gymnastic dancing.



Gymnastic Festival in Prague: 8,000 women ready for Mass Exercises.

A short explanation to each of the above named groups will not be amiss, as it will help some to understand the value of the different activities and will also assist them in recognizing the more and the less essential exercises in each Department.

Branch 2)

a) *Calisthenics proper.* Calisthenics are exercises which every individual can perform without any assistance and involve the movements of the arms, legs, trunk and head. Although in arranging these exercises our chief aim is to achieve the physiological results, still we should not neglect also the important psychic element and, for that reason, we arrange these exercises in such a way so as to train also the mental part of a child, man or woman, by gradually developing their co-ordination and cultivating their aesthetic sense. These two elements, physiological and psychic, therefore, should go hand in hand. That in arranging these exercises we are also guided by paedagogical rules, so as to make them suitable not only to physical but also to the mental ability of the participants is, I hope, well understood.

Group b) *Miscellaneous exercises* are those which we are able to perform without any apparatus and which we see sometimes in public demonstrations under the term of "stunts".

Branch 3)

Group a) *Marching in different formations.* The object of these exercises is not to acquaint the pupils with different formations and evolutions only, but they are also exercises of discipline where every individual, as a part of a certain unit, by undivided attention, by obedience and by prompt responding to the commands contributes to the success of the whole. (Exemplifying of another Tyrš' Principle: "*The individual is nothing—the Whole is paramount!*") Their practical value lies in the fact that they enable the instructor to move a large body of men, women or children from one place to another and bring them to certain places for different activities in an orderly manner.

Group b)—*Fancy and figure marching.* By fancy and figure marching we try to demonstrate the results of our systematic teaching of all forms of marching exercises, but their place is in public exhibition only, where the teacher wishes to show what a height of beauty we are able to

reach by our faithful, methodical work. Conscientious teachers, however, will not attempt any fancy marching with their pupils unless in plain marching, unconsciously, without forced stiffness, in a natural manner, they are able to demonstrate the beneficial influence of physical education. The importance of our work must be demonstrated first and above all by such results which will accompany every man and every woman through their life, and will assist them in maintaining good health, physical and mental vigor to their old age.

Group c)—Dancing. The well known and popular Folk and Gymnastic dancing are practiced by the girls and women classes only, although even boys and men derive a great deal of physical benefit and mental recreation out of the well arranged exercises of this kind. There is hardly any branch of physical activities in which physiologic and psychic elements are so closely connected. The so-called "Fancy steps" and Folk dancing was a favorite branch of Women Gymnastics in Bohemia, for which the beautiful National dances offered the Instructors an inexhaustible source of rich material, (the first Instructor of note being Miss Klementina Hanuš), but the modern gymnastic dancing was added to this group in later years.

DEPARTMENT II.

Comprising all apparatus exercises and divided in *Two Branches.*

Branch 1) Exercises with the apparatus (light gymnastics.)

Branch 2) Exercises on the apparatus (heavy gymnastics.)

Each of these two branches are divided again into *Groups*, as follows:

- | | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| <i>Branch 1)</i> | { | Group a) Ex. with dumbbells, wooden or iron; |
| | | “ b) wands (wooden or iron) or barbells; |
| | | “ c) clubs; |
| | | “ d) long poles; |
| | | “ e) wooden rings; |
| | | “ f) skipping reeds;
and all other less essential hand apparatus. |

Categories and Elements.

In dividing these activities into Categories and Elements we follow the same rule as in the free exercises.

In the different Groups of *Branch 1*) we try to overcome the weight of the apparatus and although we may get good results from the carefully arranged and well executed free exercises, the various hand apparatus bring the important psychic element into our work by making the exercises more attractive and the weight of the apparatus makes the exercises more vigorous. To describe fully, what a rich material these Groups offer to the Instructors for their creative genius, is beyond the scope of this pamphlet.

- | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Branch 2)</i> | { | Group a) ex. on horizontal bar; |
| | | “ b) parallel bars; |
| | | “ c) horse and buck; |
| | | “ d) rings; |
| | | “ e) ladders; |
| | | “ f) climbing poles and ropes; |
| | | “ g) balancing boards; |
| | | “ h) jumping, pole vaulting, etc. |

In all the exercises of *Branch 2)* the apparatus is a fixed point, about which the individual moves, and

If in *Branch 1)* (ex. with apparatus) we try to overcome the weight of the different apparatus, in the exercises of *Branch 2)*, the apparatus being a fixed point, we are trying to overcome the weight of the body.

As stated above, each Group of the exercises on the apparatus (Dept. II. *Branch 2)* are divided again according to their character into *Categories*.

The twelve *Categories* into which Tyrš divided all the activities on the apparatus are as follows:

Categories of exercises on apparatus:

- 1) Hangs and changes in hangs.
- 2) Supports and changes in supports.
- 3) Seats and changes in seats;
- 4) Traveling.
- 5) Swinging.
- 6) Turns.

- 7) Upstarts—either by pull (or slow), or by a swing (or quick.)
- 8) Reversed upstarts, also either by pull or slow, or by swing or quick. (See explanation below.)
- 9) Swings-over.
- 10) Circles.
- 11) Vaulting.
- 12) Statical positions.

The writer of this epitome is far from trying to introduce new terms or propose any changes in our gymnastic nomenclature, but welcomes this opportunity to be able to appeal to the different Gymnastic Organizations in U. S., by some concerted action to make our terminology as uniform as possible. For it is surprising to see, after so many years, how unsettled our terminology is, each organization having its own and even teachers of the same organization having their own favorite terms for different activities not on the apparatus only, but in free exercises as well. A convention of our leading Physical Directors, with the assistance of some eminent etymologists, should work out simple, explicit, uniform terminology for our work.

Tyrš, being an eminent scholar, eliminated from his gymnastic nomenclature all descriptive terms, as “pike-jump”, “wolf-jump”, “bird’s nest” etc., being careful, that every term was also etymologically correct and this monumental work enables his followers to understand the most complicated combinations without any possibility of misunderstanding. Since many of Tyrš’ terms can not be translated, I am using for the different activities on apparatus the common terms, with which most of our Instructors are familiar.

In order to make the above Categories plainer to the reader, a few words of explanation are here given where the explanation will seem necessary:

- 1) *Hangs* — to this category belong all the exercises where the body is suspended on the apparatus, i. e. handhang, elbow hang, knee hang etc. Where two parts of the body are employed in hanging as in hands and knee-hang, Tyrš terms them “compound hangs” and places them in the same category.
- 2) *Supports* — the weight of the body supported by different parts: hands, arms, elbows, arms and feet, etc.

- 3) *Seats* — self-explanatory;
- 4) *Traveling* — where in hanging or support, individual moves forward, backward or sideward;
- 5) *Swings* — self-explanatory;
- 6) *Turns* — where the body, in hang or support, turns around its vertical axis;
- 7) *Upstarts* — exercises leading from standing or hanging position to support position, either by a swing or a pull. (By a pull Rath terms “still-upstart”.) Tyrš places the exercises leading from stand or hang to support in two different categories and has two distinct terms for them. In this category he places all those where the head leads and the feet follow e. g. “Back-up” or “jerk-up” (Butterworth), “stemming by pull or swing” (Rath), “kip”, etc.
- 8) *Reversed upstarts*. In the absence of some more definite term I purposely use the term “reversed upstarts”, for in this category Tyrš places all the exercises leading also from stand or hang to support, but in a reversed way, opposite to category 7). In 7) the head leads and feet follow, in category 8) the feet lead and the head follows. Example: Movement by which we come from stand or a hang to support, feet leading, is termed by some of our teachers “circle to front support”; according to Tyrš’s definition that movement would be termed “reversed swing (or pull) upstart to front support”. What some of our Instructors term “hip pull up to support rearways”, Tyrš would term “reversed pull (or swing) upstart to rear-support”. Tyrš’s terms for exercises in these two categories are so plain and so definite, that all possibility of any misunderstanding is entirely eliminated.
- 9) *Swings over*. — Activities, leading from stand to stand, or from hang to hang, from stand to hang or from hang to stand, the body not touching the bar. Can be executed also from the forward swing.
- 10) *Circles*. — This category comprises such activities, where the centre of the circle is a horizontal axis, as “knee circle”, “circle in front support”, “giant circle”, etc. Tyrš, however has a different term for these circles, a term etymologically derived from the turning

of the wheel. The term "circles" is used for the exercises on the horse only, where the centre of the circle is a vertical axis. In our English nomenclature the term "circle" is used for both activities, on horizontal bar as well as on the horse.

- 11) *Vaulting* — selfexplanatory and terms the same as in our English terminology, the only difference being, that where the back swing terminates with a vault, Tyrš terms it rear-vault, and where the forward swing terminates with a vault, he terms it front vault. If we say that "the direction of the vault is indicated by the side of the body which leads in the movement", then Tyrš' terms of these vaults seem to be more logical. All the circles on the horse belong to this category.
- 12) *Statical positions*. — In this category are placed all the exercises where the individual remains in a certain static position.

DEPARTMENT III.

Divided into two Branches.

Branch 1) Pyramid building.

Branch 2) Games.

DEPARTMENT IV.

Divided into Four Branches.

Branch 1) Resistive exercises.

Branch 2) Wrestling.

Branch 3) Boxing.

Branch 4) Fencing.

The resistive exercises are those where the individual resists his antagonist in his attempt either to bend or stretch his arm or leg, lower or raise the trunk or head, and are good preparatory exercises for the wrestling. The other branches do not need any special definition.

* * *

In order to have the arrangement of all the Gymnastic Exercises before our eyes, a table is presented here, showing how all the material is divided, classified and subdivided:

**Table Of Gymnastic Activities, As Classified, Divided
And Subdivided By Dr. M. Tyrš**

1. Departments	2. Branches.	3. Groups.	4. Categories.	5. Elements.
I. Ex. without the apparatus.	1. Marching in file or rank, circle, running.	a) Calisthenics b) Miscellaneous ex.	Calisthenics: a) in place b) from place. In place: a) movements of diff. parts of the body. b) static positions c) turns d) hopping e) foot placing and changes of the same.	Simple movement of any part of the body, which can not be divided, is called an element — examples: raise arms and lower; place foot and replace; lower trunk and raise, etc.
	2. Free ex.	d) Marching in different formations e) Fancy and figure marching.	From place: a) closing steps, b) walking c) leaping, jumping.	
	3. Tactics.	f) Folk and Gymnastic dancing.		
II. Apparatus exercises:	1. Ex. with the apparatus:	a) wands and bar-bells b) dumb-bells c) clubs d) long poles e) rings f) skipping reeds and other less essential hand app.	Categorical classification same as the calisthenic ex. 1. Hangs and changes in hangs 2. supports and changes in supports 3. Seats and changes in seats 4. traveling 5. swinging 6. turns 7. upstarts (by pull or swing) 8. reversed upstarts (by pull or swing) 9. swings over 10. circles 11. vaulting 12. static pos.	What was said above, applies also to the ex. with the apparatus. The simplest form of ex. on any piece of apparatus, which can not be divided any more. — Examples: — Hand hang, arm support, etc.
	2. Ex. on the apparatus:	a) horizontal bar b) parallel bars c) horse and buck d) flying rings e) ladders f) balancing boards g) vaulting table h) climbing poles i) round swing j) balancing boards k) all forms of jumping.		
III. Ex. without apparatus, but requiring the assistance and co-operation of others:	a) pyramid building b) games		
IV. Combative exercises:	a) resistive exercises b) wrestling c) boxing d) fencing		

Having this table before his eyes, and also the voluminous collection of all the possible elements in each category which, for obvious reasons, can not be published in a mere pamphlet, it greatly assists even the beginner to proceed methodically in arranging the material for his instruction in heavy gymnastics. It is not necessary to say that if we have a class of beginners, we can not teach them combinations on any piece of apparatus, but that our pupils must first master the different elements. In other words we must help them first to master the different letters in our gymnastic alphabet and then proceed to syllables, the syllables being combined into words and these finally into shorter or longer sentences. And knowing that every beginner must master the elements first, we put to ourselves the question: "which of these twelve elements is the most natural to every beginner?" If we study the natural inclination of every healthy boy or a girl in our playgrounds or in a gymnasium, we shall see that, whenever he or she passes any object which they can reach, they will immediately hang on it, and, knowing that hanging is the most natural activity for every boy or a girl to which he or she is prompted by his or her natural (may we say atavistic?) instinct, we begin with the first category of apparatus activities which comprises all the exercises in hanging. After the class masters the different hangs, we proceed to hanging and changes in hanging, i. e. from upper to under-grip, etc. Then we combine two elements, to wit: 1) hangs and 4) traveling, after which we look for new material in category 5) swinging. We should know first, how to hang and how to change hangs before we can safely proceed to swinging.

Then again we might take 6) turns, and combine ex. of category 1) hangs, with category 6) turns — and finally category 1) hangs, 4) traveling and 5) swinging. Thus we see how methodically we are able to proceed if we have the table of classified activities before our eyes in preparing a lesson for the work on apparatus. We know that even a well trained gymnast sometimes encounters an element which mars his smooth perfect execution of a combination, containing such troublesome element, and here we see the great advantage of mastering all the elements on all the apparatus, for such training will enable us to master the most difficult combinations and execute them with safety and ease.

On the parallel bars we proceed in the same manner. On this apparatus the fundamental element we find in category 2) supports, then we may combine 2) supports and changes with 3) seats, also with changes of seats. With the more advanced: 2) supports with 5) swinging; 2) support with 4) traveling; 2) 5) and 4) support, swinging and traveling, or 2) 5) and 11) supports, swings and vaulting, 2) and 12) support and statical positions. — Side horse: 2) supports, then 3) seats. Combination of these two elements: support and seats and changes in seats, 2) and 6) support and turns, 2) and 11) support and vaulting, 11) and 6) vaulting and turns, etc.

Teacher, following this method, must bear in mind, that in each of his lessons he is expected to follow faithfully a certain theme. If he selects for his lesson elements from category 1) and 5), his lesson should contain elements of these two categories only. In our selection we are guided not by the ability of the pupils only but also by the possibility of combining the different elements in an easy, smooth and harmonious manner.

Even for the advanced classes this classification will greatly assist the teacher in creating his own combinations. Now suppose we select for advanced class elements out of three following categories: 7) upstarts, 10) circles, and 11) vaulting. Examples: Back-swing upstart, hip-circle backward, drop kip, and squat. — Jerk upstart, hip circle forward, flank vault (l. or r.). Short swing upstart ("kip") hip circle forward, straddle vault, etc. These few examples will suffice to show, how the various elements of different categories may be practiced either in their simplest form or as elements for beginners, and how they can be combined into easy combinations for more advanced pupils and finally how three or four elements will give us exercises of the highest degree for the most advanced classes.

It is hardly necessary to say that all those twelve categories into which the exercises on the apparatus are divided, can not be practiced on all apparatus, as the construction of certain apparatus render some of the categories impossible. The only apparatus on which all the twelve categories can be practiced is the horizontal bar, which is not only the most popular piece of apparatus in our gymnasiums, but offers also the largest field for all kinds of gymnastic activities. Next come the parallel bars, where

only one category 9) swings-over has to be omitted. On the horse we omit category 1) hangs, 4) traveling, 5) swinging, 7) and 8) upstarts and "reversed upstarts" and 9) swings-over. Category 11) comprises most of the elements for this piece of apparatus and some are practiced also from category 12). The same might be said about the buck and long horse. On the flying rings we omit categories 3), 4), 9) and 11). The terminology for the categories 7) and 8) are the same in the rings as on the horizontal bar. To publish another table, showing what category on each of the apparatus is omitted, would take up too much space and besides even a teacher with limited knowledge will know what categories to eliminate in arranging his material for the different apparatus.

As stated before, it is beyond the scope of this pamphlet to describe fully and in every detail all the gymnastic activities, as Tyrš has arranged and classified them for the Sokol Societies, as especially the classification of the free exercises and hand apparatus and his simple and explicit terminology of the same would fill up a good sized book. But the writer hopes that even this necessarily brief and imperfect review of all his work will suffice to convince the Physical Education Circles in America that Dr. Miroslav Tyrš is entitled to the recognition as one of the foremost apostles of all that which tends to make people happy and Nations strong: *Health, Strength, Morality and Patriotism!*



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