

DR. MIROSLAV TYRŠ – FATHER OF THE SOKOL AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE SOKOL

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Original article

Abstract

The aim of the article is to present an overall image of the Bohemian philosopher, art historian and founder of the Sokol in the territory of Bohemia – Miroslav Tyrš. The article consists of two chapters. The first chapter – Life of Dr. Miroslav Tyrš – describes personal life of Miroslav Tyrš and his key tasks and activity within the Sokol Pražský and the Sokol movement. The second chapter – Philosophy of the Sokol – is focused on a brief review of ideological concept of the Sokol philosophy. In this chapter there are stated and elucidated the main Tyrš's philosophical basis in conception of physical education, which had and still have the great ideological value not only in the field of physical education.

Keywords: *Miroslav Tyrš, Sokol Pražský, The Sokol, kalokagathia, philosophy.*

INTRODUCTION

The human is the only being who can think about the past, who can manage the present and who can plan the future. Therefore, human existence is based on the clear goal or many partial goals, that are assumption for meaningful human activity in any field of the human life. In the 17th century, the great Bohemian savant and pedagogue – Jan Amos Komenský came up with the idea, that physical activity and sport have incontrovertible impact on the moral and mental aspect of the human. This powerful idea was successfully resurrected and inspired via the Sokol movement founded by Dr. Miroslav Tyrš in the 19th century.

Life of Dr. Miroslav Tyrš

Miroslav Tyrš (baptized as Friedrich Emmanuel Tirsch) was born on the 17th of

September in 1832 in Děčín (North Bohemia Region) in the family of doctor Jan Vincenc Tirsch (originally from Germany). In early childhood Tyrš experienced a trauma, when his two younger sisters, father and mother were infected by tuberculosis and finally all of them died. After mother's death, six years old Tyrš was adopted by his uncle Bedřich Kirschbaum. At the beginning Tyrš attended elementary school in Vtelno (Central Bohemia Region) and in Stránov (close to the city Mladá Boleslav in the Central Bohemia Region). In 1841 he was adopted by his second uncle Antonín Kirschbaum from Prague. In Prague Tyrš attended Maltesian trivial two-classed school. Later he continued at Malostránske gymnázium (grammar school) in Prague, where he started to be interested in the ancient

culture, which fascinated him. At grammar school he also started to practice gymnastics following the doctor's advice (Dvořáková, 1989, pp. 7-13).



Figure 1. Miroslav Tyrš as graduate at grammar school. Pencil drawing by L. Kirschbaum, 1850. (Československá obec sokolská. Dr. Miroslav Tyrš 1832–1932. K stým narozeninám zakladatele Sokolstva. Československo: Praha III, Tyršův dům)

In 1848 Tyrš participated in the Slavic Congress in Prague. The Congress strengthened his conviction of fully conscious Bohemian and Slav being. After the Congress he decided to change his school attended to Staroměstské akademické gymnázium (academic grammar school), which was considered to be a patriotic school. In 1850 he finished the grammar school by passing the final exam with full marks (Havlíček, 1947, pp. 5-7).

After finishing grammar school he continued in studying at the Faculty of Law at the Charles Ferdinand University, but already after one year of studying, he definitely decided for the Faculty of Philosophy at the same University. Except

for Philosophy, Tyrš was interested also in natural sciences, languages, literature, aesthetics, political history, mathematics and anatomy of the human body. Since Tyrš had a predisposition to tuberculosis and suffered from frequent neurosis, he started to practice gymnastics following the doctor's advice, during the study. First he attended *Ústav Malýpetrův* (Institute of Malýpetr) and later private *Tělocvičný ústav Schmidtův* (Gymnastic Institute of Schmidt). Both institutes preferred teaching based on the gymnastic system of *Ernst Friedrich Ludwig Jahn* (founder of the gymnastics movement in Germany) in combination with gymnastic apparatus work created by *Wilhelm Bernhard Eiselen*. Jahn-Eiselen's gymnastic system have become an inspiration for Tyrš and have become a basis of the exercises for the Sokol (Kos, 1982, pp. 80-84).

Tyrš had a positive attitude towards the nature and he was seriously interested in tourism, what confirms the fact, that during his studium he went hiking through the Alps and his final destination was Italy (Pelikán, 1931, pp. 8-9).

In 1855 he graduated at the Faculty of Philosophy in Prague and he decided to work as an instructor in *Gymnastic Institute of Schmidt*. In 1855 Tyrš have become a nursing father in the family of manufacturer Bartelmus in Nový Jáchymov. He was also studying to become a Doctor of Philosophy and in 1860 he successfully graduated in Prague (Československá obec sokolská, 1932, pp. 6-7).

After his studium, Tyrš was still intensively interested in philosophy and he focused on philosophical work of A. Schopenhauer. He created a complex work called *Historische Einleitung in der Philosophie A. Schopenhauers* (Historical Introduction into A. Schopenhauer's Philosophy) which he later translated into Czech language (translation has been lost in 1914) and this work was supposed to serve as a pedagogical model for Tyrš's future pupils (Československá obec sokolská, 1932, pp. 53-54).

Tyrš was interested in Shakespeare's literature and he analyzed his dramatic literary works. In 1865 he participated in Shakespeare's celebrations in Prague. Nový Jáchymov and his connections with Bohemian patriots had influenced and shaped Tyrš's consciousness of Bohemian being and received Czech language as a maternal language. In 1852, as a member of *Matica česká* (Czech publishing house and cultural institution), he started to use signature of the name *Bedřich Tirš* and since 1862 finally *Bedřich Tyrš*. Shortly after this, he definitely accepted his first name Miroslav, so his full name has become purely Czech, *Miroslav Tyrš* (Martínková, Klír, Swierczeková, 2013, pp. 2-3).



Figure 2. Miroslav Tyrš, the founder and the first chief of Sokol Pražský (The Sokol). *Československá obec sokolská. Dr. Miroslav Tyrš 1832–1932. K stým narozeninám zakladatele Sokolstva. Československo: Praha III, Tyršův dům*

In 1860, ranger Nittinger presented Tyrš to *Jindřich Fügner*. Fügner and Tyrš had the same interests and similar progress

of personality from the national perspective, so they have become a real friends. During the visitation of Prague, Tyrš met *Dr. Eduard Grégr*, who enabled Tyrš to become an editorial collaborator of *Náučný slovník Riegerov* (*Rieger's Encyclopedia*). Tyrš used pseudonym „Ti“ and he published overall 22 philosophical terms into encyclopedia (Havlíček, 1947, pp. 8-9).

In 1859, in Austro-Hungarian Empire occurred radical political changes. The Austrian Minister of Interior, Alexander Bach, was removed from his post, because of the failure of his neo-abolition and military defeat. On the 20th of October in 1860, Austrian emperor, Franz Joseph I. renewed parliamentarism via the October Diploma. This change meant for the Austrian people the liberation of the tense political situation and partial freedom. On the Bohemia territory occurred patriotic activity and there were founded printed journals *Národní listy*, art societies *Hlahol*, *Umelecká beseda*, *Svatobor*. Young generation of writers and artists came forward – *J. Neruda*, *V. Hálek*, *J. Mánes*, *J. Čermák*, *B. Smetana* (Žitná, 2003, p. 127).

In this period both gymnastic institutes in Prague (Institute of Malypetr, Gymnastic Institute of Schmidt) had a plan to establish the German-Bohemian gymnastic institute according to model of Turner's German association (Mauerhart, 1930, pp. 8-9).

The establishment of such a institution seemed hopefully, however wealthy German sponsor Dresdner Bank with branch office in Prague strictly accepted only establishment of German institute. Tyrš felt a need to divide from Germany and process of germanization. He started to prepare documents needed for establishment of Bohemian gymnastic institute. Tyrš along with *Dr. Julius Grégr* (editor in printed journal *Národní listy*) and *Eduard Grégr* (brother of J. Grégr) created the bylaws, which were presented to c. k. proconsulate (c. k. means imperial-royal) in December 1861. On the 27th of January in 1862 bylaws were officially approved. The first constituent assembly was held on the 16th of February in 1862. This event is officially

known as a birth of the first Bohemian gymnastic institute named *Tělocvičná jednota pražská* (*Prague Gymnastic Club*) in Austro-Hungarian Empire (Sak, M., 2012, pp. 60-63).

For the mayor of *Tělocvičná jednota pražská* (*Prague Gymnastic Club*) was elected Jindřich Fügner known as example-supporter of democracy, noble humanist and authority in financial domain. For the vice-mayor, manager and later governor (after establishment of this function) of *Tělocvičná jednota pražská* was elected Miroslav Tyrš. As the main cash-keeper was elected Ferdinand Náprstek (Havlíček, V., 1947, p. 10).

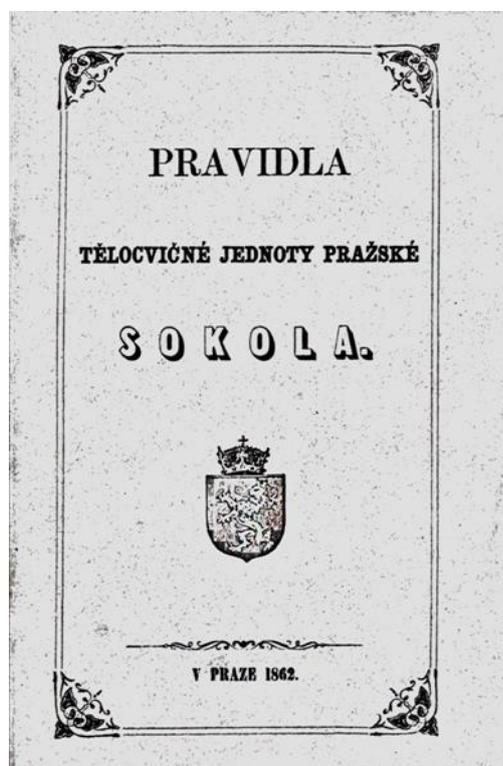


Figure 3. The first bylaws of *Tělocvičná Jednota Pražská* (*Gymnastic Prague Union*) with bohemian emblem. *Československá obec sokolská. Dr. Miroslav Tyrš 1832–1932. K stým narozeninám zakladatele Sokolstva. Československo: Praha III, Tyršův dům*

On the proposal of Emanuel Tonner (the professor of History) *Telocvičná jednota pražská* (*Gymnastic Prague Union*) has approved the name *Sokol pražský* (*The*

Sokol) on the general assembly on the 13th of January in 1864. The name *Sokol* (*Falcon*) expressed his national character and came originally from the Slavic symbolism. South Slavs used this symbol to portray their heroes fighting against the Turkish domination. Tyrš has proposed the institutional word "*Tužme se*" ("*Let Us Harden Ourselves*"). Josef Barák has proposed institutional greeting "*Nazdar*" ("*Cheerio*"). The official flag and costume of the Sokol were designed and made by Josef Mánes (significant and famous Bohemian painter and illustrator). The costume, typical for the Sokol, were trousers and jacket made from tow-cloth with the closing according to the fashion of national čamara (kind of gent's coat), rounded cap decorated by falcon's feather and cockarde in the national (red and white) colors and red garibaldi shirt according to the famous Italian revolutionist Giuseppe Garibaldi (Kopp, Herget, 2012).

J. Fügner introduced being on first-name terms and he introduced also using salutation "*Bratř*" ("*Brother*") among all members of the Sokol. As the major symbol of the Sokol red silky cockarde with falcon feather was approved. In the middle of the cockarde, there was placed an iron capital letter „S“ (*Tělocvičná jednota Sokol Ústí nad Orlicí*, 2012).

The first exercise of *Telocvičná jednota pražská* (*Gymnastic Prague Union*, later known as *Sokol Pražský*) was practiced in gymnasium of Malypetr with participation of 60 practitioners on the 5th of March in 1862. Tyrš developed exercise program, 11 rules of exercises and he drew up first gymnastic corps with 20 gym instructors (F. Loubal, 1932, p. 177).

The gymnastics instructors and gymnast practitioners were missing steady gymnastic system and gymnastic terminology in Bohemian language because of using Bohemian-German slang expressions. At first, *Sokol Pražský* took Malypetr's gymnastic terminology, but it was not very popular among gymnastics instructors and gymnasts, so gymnastic committee has appointed the commission, which was

supposed to review new gymnastic terminology and preparing documents for the press (Sak, 2012, pp. 70-71).

In April 1862 *Tělocvičné názvosloví* (*Gymnastic terminology*) was released in press, written by Tyrš as a part of *Pravidlá telocvičné jednoty pražské Sokola* (*The rules of Gymnastic Prague Sokol Union*) (Tyrš, 1862).

Tělocvičné názvosloví (*Gymnastic terminology*) contained more than 150 terms for the floor exercises and apparatus work. Tyrš was inspired by *Jungmann dictionary*. He took over 450 terms from Jungmann dictionary and gave a new meaning to half of them. Tyrš wrote the notes about every exercise and he archived his notes in his personal card file. From these database, he finally created circa 300 original gymnastics terms (Havlíček, 1947, pp. 12-13).

The last and the final form of Bohemian gymnastic terminology written by Tyrš was published in the press entitled *Základové telocviky* (*Basics of Gymnastics*) in 1872. Tyrš's work was generally approved in the Sokol, in physical education at schools and has become a part of languages dictionaries. In work *Základové tělocviky* Tyrš developed also new gymnastic system into which he included floor exercises, disciplinary gymnastics and sports from ancient physical culture – wrestling, fencing, swimming, bur pot, weight lifting and athletic sport – running and jumping disciplines (Martínková, Klír, Swierczeková, 2013, p. 3).

Tyrš divided physical exercises into four groups:

1. Physical exercises without using gymnastic apparatus and without the help of assistants (floor exercise and disciplinary gymnastics)

2. Apparatus-work (gymnastics with apparatus, gymnastics on apparatus)

3. Group gymnastics (exercises realized only with support of another assistants)

4. Combat sports (exercises with overcoming physical resistance against another gymnast) (J. E. Scheiner, 1887, p. 55).

Tyrš determined and propagated in the Sokol these ethical (moral) principles:

- strength and manhood
- activity and endurance
- devotion to the freedom and to the motherland
- volunteering and discipline
- mutual fraternal relation of the Sokol members (Stejskal, V., n. d.).

The mission of the Sokol, in contrast to another gymnastic clubs, was to come to an ancient ideal of harmonious development of human body and psyche (soul), known as kalokagathia. The admiration to the ancient Greek is expressed by Tyrš in the work *Hod olympický* (*The Olympic Feast*), which was a part of the *Zborník sokolský* (*The Sokol Almanac*) in 1868 (Tyrš, 1869, pp. 2-3.).



Figure 4. The original Sokol flag. Czechgaller. *The History of Sokol since 1862*. Retrieved from <http://www.czechgaller.com/sokol/>

By Tyrš's detailed description of the ancient Olympic Games in his work, he tried to support an idea of calling merging congress of Sokol Unities with public exercises. He dreamt about this idea like about "Velký hod sokolský" ("The Great Sokol Feast") (Sak, 2012, p. 111).

Austro-Prussian War (1866) meant a need for implementation of national defense education into the Sokol for Tyrš. The evidence of Tyrš's efforts was a publication

of *České velení a názvosloví vojenské* (Czech military command and terminology) written by Tyrš, that became a base of command terminology for Czechoslovak Army (Tyrš, 1867).

For the first 5 years Sokol Pražský (The Sokol) organized the public exercises only in gymnasium. The first public exercise took place in Prague's gymnasium at Hall of Apollo building on the 1st of June in 1862. During this historic event was festively revealed the Sokol flag. After the second public exercise Sokols (means members of the Sokol) had to leave areas of Apollo because this building have become a convent for the nuns. Under the impulse of J. Fügner was builded the first Bohemian Sokol house – *Sokolovňa* (Sokol house, home). Fügner provided building ground and funded construction works. Sokolovňa was projected by eminent Bohemian architect Vojtěch Ignác Ullmann. First exercises in new building have started at the end of 1863. The official building approval was realized in 1864. Sokolovňa included dimensional gymnasium with tribune, cassette ceiling, lune, courts (halls) and dayrooms for concerts, dramas and ball dancing (Prager, 1887, pp. 78-83).

The first official outdoor public exercise of the Sokol was held at Rohanský ostrov (a part of Prague) on the 19th of May in 1867. The important propaganda of the Sokol idea were trips, so-called „*landpartie*“, which were organized by Tyrš since 1862. The first hike trip was held on the 11th of May in 1862. Circa 200 members of the Sokol, dressed in traditional Sokol costumes, went up Závist (a part of Prague, Celtic Oppidum). These trips had sports-healthy (averaged time of hiking was about 8-9 hours) and cultural-edifying character. The trips strengthened the patriotic consciousness of Bohemians and these events have become a reliable tool for the propagation of the Sokol. All hikes used to be related to visitations of the memorial and religious places (Martínková, Klír, Swierczeková, 2013, p. 4).



Figure 5. Designs for the Sokol costume by Josef Manes, 1862. Czechgallerly. *The History of Sokol since 1862*. Retrieved from <http://www.czechgallerly.com/sokol/>

At the regular meetings of gymnastic instructors, Tyrš emphasized the need of the establishment of Sokol Unions in other Bohemian cities. Finally there have been established Sokol Unions in Jaroměř (1st of June 1862), in Kolín (25th of June 1862), Nová Paka (4th of July 1862), in Turnov, in Příbram (18th of August 1862), in Jičín (5th of November 1862) and in Kutná Hora (1st of December 1862). In 1865 Sokol Unions had overall 1 949 members. In 1867, there were known 13 Sokol Unions in Moravia and Silesia. As the first Sokol Union in Moravia was established Sokol in Brno on the 2nd of January in 1862 (Havlíček, 1947, p. 15).

The Sokol Unions expanded into foreign countries. The United States of America was the first country out of Europe, in which Sokol societies were successfully established. The first Sokol Union in USA named *Sokol St. Louis* was established by Bohemian emigrants K. Procházka, J. Vostrovsky, E. B. Erben on the 14th of February in 1865 in St. Louis, Missouri (Dostál, V., 2015, p. 8).

The American members of the Sokol were evidently more active than the Sokols in Bohemia and after the establishment of central organization *National Sokol Union* (since 1917 known as *The American Sokol Organization*) in 1865, there were established 4 Sokol Counties in 1870s. *Eastern County* in New York associated 14 Sokol Unions. *Northeastern County* in Cleveland associated 7 Sokol Unions. *Central County* in St. Louis associated 12

Unions and *Western County* in Omaha associated 17 Sokol Unions. The Sokol belonged to the most numerous Bohemian organization in the USA. Before the First World War there were more than 12 500 American Sokol members (I-prozradit, n.d).



Figure 6. The public exercise of Sokol Pražský (The Prague Sokol) at Rohánský ostrov in Prague on the 19th of May in 1867. Drawing by F. Čermák. Československá obec sokolská. Dr. Miroslav Tyrš 1832–1932. K stým narozeninám zakladatele Sokolstva. Československo: Praha III, Tyršův dům

Tyrš and Fügner emphasized the importance and need of Slavic reciprocity, therefore a lot of Sokol Unions were situated in the Slavic countries. The first Sokol Union established out of Bohemia was in Slovenia named *Južni Sokol* on the 1st of October in 1863. Next Sokol Unions were established in Croatia (1874), in Serbia (1891), in Poland (1867), in Russia (1883), in Ukraine (1894), in Bulgaria (1879) and finally in Slovakia (1918). Sokol Unions have been established in others non-Slavic countries such as Germany (1889), Austria (1867), Switzerland (1868), France (1891), England (1903), Argentina (1908), Denmark (1910) and Canada (1911) (Mauerhart, 1930, pp. 55-60).

Tyrš did not focus only on the physical exercises for men, but his aim was also to focus on the physical education for women. Kabes (2003, p. 2) states „Still according to Tyrš’ beliefs, a nation is not just its

men. Children should also be given the opportunity to become accustomed to Sokol discipline, and Tyrš also claimed that “the best qualities are implanted by motherly care and teaching”. And this led him to initiate and then help to found in 1869 the *Gymnastic Society of Women and Girls of Prague*, an organization that opened the Sokol idea to women“. In December 1897 the chairmanship of the Bohemian Sokol Organization called for the establishment of the women physics unions and for the first time Sokol women had actively participated on the IV. všesokolský slet (4th Sokol Slet) on Letenská pláň in Prague in 1901.

In 1870 Tyrš had to visited health care institution in Waid (Switzerland) because of his neural problems. During the therapy Tyrš has written work *První Závěť Tyršova* (*First Testament of Tyrš*), which should represent his next program for the Sokol. Tyrš’s work has become the basis of Tyrš’s keynote speech named *Náš úkol, směr a cíl* (*Our Task, Direction and Destination*). This keynote speech has become the main ideological and program basis for the Sokol, that was published as the editorial in the first issue in *časopis Sokol* (*The Sokol Journal*) founded by Tyrš’s redaction in 1871 (Mauerhart, 1930, p. 20).

Tyrš (1946, p. 13) states in the treatise *Náš úkol, směr a cíl* (*Our Task, Direction and Destination*) that „As many members of the nation should become the members of the Sokol as it is possible, because the “Sokol case”, as far as all states and layers are concerned, means as much as increased physical and moral upbringing of the whole nation of the Czechoslovaks (Bohemian-Slavs), bred to strength, bravery, nobleness and ardour”.

On the 11th of March in 1872 the first Sokol county *Sokolská župná jednota moravská* (*Moravian Sokol County Union*) was approved. First public exercise had been accomplished in Prostějov, but Sokols has been discharged. The first Unions did not laid down rules in bylaws for consolidation of counties, therefore Sokol Unions could not merge into larger units. These facts had a negative impact on the

Sokol what was reflected in extinction of many Sokol Unions, which suffer from insufficient financial sources. In 1875, out of 128 Sokol Unions remained only 71 Unions and 22 of them were fire associations (clubs). Tyrš was frustrated because of this situation and had visited medical institution in Italy (Mauerhart, 1930, pp. 20-21).

The important point for the rebirth of the Sokol was renewing of the activities of the Sokol Journal in 1881. In 1882, on the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Sokol, Tyrš had decided to organize the festival named *I. všesokolský slet (1st Sokol Slet)*. This festival had a huge success and was accepted by Bohemian citizens with enthusiasm. The ceremonial procession took place in Střelecký ostrov (a part of Prague) with participation of 1 600 uniformed members of the Sokol representing 76 Sokol Unions from Bohemia, Moravia, Wien (Austria), Ljubljana (Slovenia), Zagreb (Croatia) and USA. The main part of event was public exercise with 720 gymnasts, half of the gymnasts performed the floor exercise directed by Tyrš. Next part of festival program was apparatus-work presented by 40 Sokol teams. This successful festival finished with the evening meeting of members of the Sokol in Měšťanská beseda (one of the oldest association in Prague, which organized open discussion, forum for townsmen). First Sokol Slet has set and confirmed principles of education to the physical fitness, to the military capability and to the moral and societal discipline. The Sokol slet was a great historic event and a culmination of Tyrš's activity in the Sokol. In 1884 Tyrš decided to abdicate from the post of a chiefdom of the Sokol and focused his attention to scientific, pedagogical and art studium at University of Prague. On the 6th of February in 1884 Tyrš was appointed as a professor at Faculty of Philosophy at Charles Ferdinand University, but Austrian government officials sended him a letter with strict requirement, which was: "If it is in your interest to get academic degree seriously, you have to leave all

responsibilities in the Sokol forever" (Kovář, 2016).

The hardly acquired professorship, academic lectures, scientific work, lot of activities in Arts, lots of responsibilities in the Sokol and the condition of professorship affected negatively Tyrš's health condition. On doctor's recommendation Tyrš has visited medical institution in Oetz (Austria, Tyrol), where was founded dead during therapy on the 8th of August in 1884. The real cause of his death is unexplained until now (Martínková, Klír, Swierczeková, 2013).

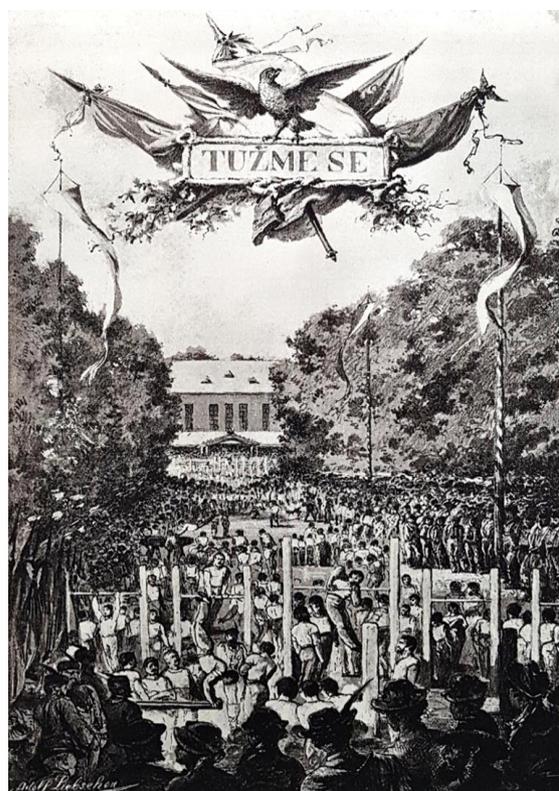


Figure 7. The public exercise of Bohemian Sokol Unions at Střelecký ostrov on the 18th of June in 1882. Drawn by A. Liebscher. *Veřejné cvičení českých jednot sokolských dne 18. června 1882 na Střeleckém ostrově. Kreslil A. Liebscher. Československá obec sokolská. Dr. Miroslav Tyrš 1832–1932. K stým narozeninám zakladatele Sokolstva. Československo: Praha III, Tyršův dům*

The important act for the Sokol movement after Tyrš's death was the establishment of the first Bohemian sokol county named *Župa Tyršova (The County of*

Tyrš) on 25th of August in 1884 in Kolín (Mauerhart, 1930, p. 24).

On the 5th of November in 1889, counties (Krkonošská župa, Podkrkonošská župa, župa Havlíčkova, župa Plzeňská, župa Podřípská, župa Fügnerova, župa Tyršova, Středočeská župa, Východočeská župa, župa Žižkova a Sokol pražský) with 185 Sokol Unions and with 22 000 Sokol members have been successfully integrated and included in *Česká obec sokolská* (*The Czech Sokol Union*). *Česká obec sokolská* (later only ČOS) has become a primary authority for the Sokol unions and for the Sokol counties. As the first mayor of ČOS was elected Jan Podlipný, as commission agent Josef Scheiner and as leader was elected František Čížek (Havlíček, 1947, p. 40).

ČOS successfully demonstrated its activity by the expedition with 137 members of Sokol to the World's Fair in Paris in 1889, where they participated in many gymnastics competitions organized by French Gymnastic Union. They won several medals and established the strong relationships with French gymnasts and French public. The Sokols have been credited with establishing the beginning of the strong French sympathy for the Czechs and their subsequent political alliances on this trip (Polidoro, 2000, p. 33).

The next important act of the Sokol movement was the unification of Moravian counties with Silesian counties into one county named *Moravskoslezská obec sokolská* (*The Moravian-Silesian Sokol Organization*) in 1892. In 1896 Moravian-Silesian Sokol Organization has merged with ČOS into *Svaz československého Sokolstva* (*The Federation of Czech-Slavic Sokols*) and after 15 years, in 1904 Moravian-Silesian Sokol Organization and ČOS have finally merged into *Česká obec sokolská* (*The Czech Sokol Union*) (Komanická, 2010, p. 23).

The rapid development of the Sokol behind the Bohemian and Moravian borders was reflected by establishment of many similar gymnastic organizations all over the world. Therefore, on initiative of ČOS,

whose purpose was to merge the Slavic nations and to present the ideas of the Sokol, after *V. všesokolský slet* (5th Sokol Slet) with participation of 12 000 Sokol members, was established *Svaz Slovanského sokolstva* (*The Federation of Slavic Sokol*) in 1908. In the same year Slovakia (*Sokol na Slovensku*), Croatia (*Hrvatski sokolski savez*) and Slovenia (*Slovenian Sokol*) have been included into this federation. In 1910 Bulgaria, Poland and Serbia have been included into the Federation of Slavic Sokols and in 1912 Russia have been also included.



Figure 8. Sokolice – Sokol women, VII. Sokol Slet in 1920. Czechgaller. *The History of Sokol since 1862*. Retrieved from

<http://www.czechgaller.com/sokol/>

The activity of the Sokol movement in Bohemia and Moravia has been interrupted during the both World Wars. During the World War I many members of the Sokol were active in persuading the Czechs (Bohemians) to defect from the Austro-Hungarian army to the Russian side. Sokol members also helped to create the Czechoslovak Legions and local patrols that kept order after the disintegration of Habsburg authority, and during the creation of Czechoslovakia in October 1918. They also fulfilled their title as the *Czech national army*, helping to defend Slovakia against the invasion of Béla Kun and the Hungarians (Djordje, 2016).

The Sokol flourished in the early interwar period, and by 1930 had 630,000 Sokol members. In this period Sokol members achieved (had) the best sport

results in the history of the Sokol movement. The best sport results are associated with Czechoslovak Sokol gymnasts. The men's Czechoslovak gymnastics team has won overall 7 World Championship in the team's competition in 1907, 1911, 1913, 1922, 1926, 1930 and in 1938. Among the successful Czechoslovak men's representation, consisted of active members of the Sokol including: J. Čada, F. Erben, B. Honzátko, K. Sál, J. Seidl, Pitl, J. Starý, J. Steiner, S. Svoboda, V. Svoboda, Douda, Pardubský, R. Pražák, J. Sýkora, S. Indruch, Karásek, M. Klinger, J. Malý, F. Pecháček, F. Vaněček, J. Effenberger, J. Gajdoš, J. Karafiát, L. Riessner, B. Šupčík, L. Vácha, V. Veselý, E. Löffler, Rybák, L. Tikal, J. Tintěra, G. Hrubý, A. Hudec, J. Novotný, V. Petráček and J. Sládek. Bedřich Šupčík, the Sokol gymnast has achieved a success, when he has won the gold medal in climbing on the rope discipline at the Olympic Games in Paris in 1924 and he has become the first Czechoslovak olympic winner. The great success in the sport results are associated also with women's Czechoslovak gymnastics team, who has become World Champions in 1934 and in 1938. Among the successful Czechoslovak women's representation were: M. Bajerová, V. Děkanová, V. Foltová, E. Hájková, A. Hřebřinová, V. Jarušková, Šebková, Z. Veřmiřovská, B. Dobešová, M. Hendrychová, H. Nežerková, M. Pálfyová and M. Skálová. Especially successful was Matylda Pálfyová, who has won silver medal in teams competition at the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 as the first slovak gymnast in Czechoslovak gymnastics women's team (Gajdoš, 2017).

The members of the Sokol held one last Sokol Slet (350,000 Sokols) on the eve of the Munich Agreement in 1938 and were later brutally suppressed and banned during the Nazi occupation (1939-1945) of Bohemia and Moravia (Djordje, 2016).

During the World War II the members of the Sokol were battling against the fascism. Especially important was the attendance of Sokol members in war action called *Anthropoid*. This war action's aim

was to murder Reinhard Heydrich and it was successful, but Nazis executed 264 parachutist's assistants, half of them were Sokol members (Vítková, 2012).

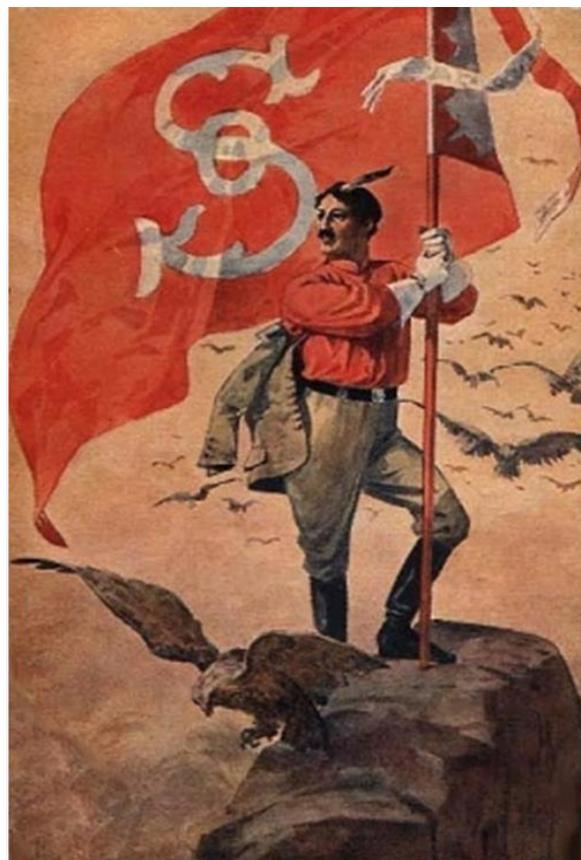


Figure 9. Postcard – Česká obec sokolská (Czech Sokol Organization). Flag of Czech Sokol Organization. Czechgallery. The History of Sokol since 1862. Retrieved from <http://www.czechgallery.com/sokol/>

After the World War II, in 1947, the Sokol movement renewed activities and integrated 3686 Unions with 1 004 987 Sokol members, what was the greatest number since the Sokol's establishment (Kössl, Krátky, Marek, 2000, p. 252).

The Sokol's activity was also interrupted during communism in the 1950s. The only Sokol's activity that have survived were Sokol Slets called *Spartakiáda* (*Spartakiades*) and their purpose was to present communist regime (Sokol Pražský, n. d.).

Gajdoš, Provaznikova, Bednar and Banjak (2012, p. 79) state: „The mass gymnastic performances - Spartakiades formed a solid basis of the socialist system

of physical culture for its content versatility, variety of forms, time longevity and increasing massification. Spartakiades were always carried out in a huge stadium in Prague's Strahov where could be around 200,000 viewers. Spartakiade first held in 1955 on the occasion of 10-th anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia. At the Strahov trained more than half a million children, youth and adults. They performed in 29 songs, which was a very comprehensive program for trainees and the audience."

The Sokol movement was successfully renewed after the defeat of communism in Czechoslovakia in 1989. Sokol continued with the program traditions related to the educational influence of a person responsible for himself, for the community and for democracy. In the name of Tyrš, Sokol has renewed the organization of Sokol Slets, which expect to be held every six years. The Last, XV. všesokolský slet (15th Sokol Slet) was held in 2012 in Vršovice. In 2017 ČOS integrates over 160 000 Sokol members in 42 Sokol Counties (Sokol Pražský, n. d.).

ČOS is preparing XVI. všesokolský slet (16th Sokol Slet) for 2018, on the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Czechoslovakia, which will be a representative act of respect for the traditions, values and philosophy of the Sokol, whose "father" is Dr. Miroslav Tyrš (Česká obec sokolská, 2017).

Philosophy of the Sokol

If we want to understand the Philosophy of the Sokol, we need to find the answer in the philosophical teachings of Tyrš, which have become the ideological (philosophical) basis of the Sokol movement.

During his university studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Prague, Tyrš was first interested in the philosophy influenced by Hegel – so-called "Hegelianism". Hegelianism was not widespread in the territory of the Bohemia at that time for linguistic reasons (lectures and texts in the German language) and due to its abstract

complexity. Hegel's philosophy is based on the principle of idealistic, dialectical philosophy using the principle of triad in the development of the idea: thesis - antithesis - synthesis (Krejčí, 1986).

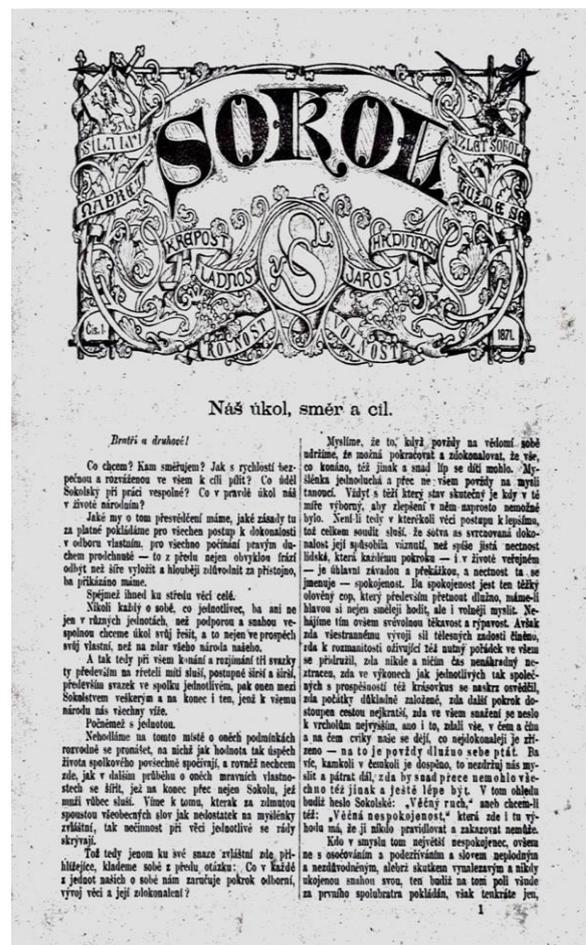


Figure 10. The frontpage of the first issue of the Sokol Journal. Československá obec sokolská. Dr. Miroslav Tyrš 1832–1932. K stým narozeninám zakladatele Sokolstva. Československo: Praha III, Tyršův dům

Oborný (2017, p. 8) interprets Hegel's triad as follows. G. W. F. Hegel formulated as a logical obelisk of his philosophical system the concept of „absolute spirit“. The inspirational power of the basic concepts of his philosophical system was also used by many personalities standing outside the immediate philosophical work. They also included Tyrš. According to Hegel, the whole being is the embodiment of the idea, and all the action of this world is essentially a movement of the concept (Hegel, 1986,

pp. 90-92). A consequence of this reasoning is the thesis that all reasonable is real and all real is reasonable. If we place the concepts of Tyrš into this formula, then the outcome will be that the idea of physical education is a reality and the “reality” of physical education is soulful. The absolute spirit (thesis) is absolute only in terms of the strength of its content, not in terms of its state, that is, it is not at the stage of a completed development. The absolute spirit feels in itself the instinct to develop, it is searching for the tendencies within to develop; it finds them in the process of self-alienation, in the forms of its so-called “non-being” in which it becomes objectified (antithesis). The idea of physical education as a part of the absolute spirit goes through the stage of “non-being”, it is objectified for our thinking (as philosophy of motion) and for our senses in the form of real physical education and all of its processes. The first form of this non-being of the absolute spirit (antithesis) in our case and with regard to the inclination of Tyrš towards Hegel is the physical education, more precisely, the philosophy of physical education. It follows that the physical education necessarily contains the spirit in itself, we can sense its purpose and message. A sensitive and soulful person seeks mental balance in physical motion and listens carefully to all the thought potentials of this motion. And that is exactly the Hegelian synthesis in which the unification of the subjective (human) aspect of physical education with its objective “predestination” takes place.

Tyrš, as we can see, sympathized with Hegel’s philosophy, he was a student of some “Hegelians”, and he accepted the ideas of brotherhood, the principles of love, progress and both individual and social development (Válek, 2003).

However, the philosophical studies of Tyrš are not only focused on G. W. F. Hegel. The thinking of Tyrš was also influenced by Schopenhauer. The development of the thought of Tyrš contained 2 major periods:

During the first *Schopenhauer period*, he became acquainted with the teaching

about the will as the essence of all the existence, as the world will which leads to the spreading of power, glory and thus also of the sources of fight, distress and poverty. Tyrš sought a solution against the above consequences in indomitable will. The voluntarism of Tyrš is therefore different from Schopenhauer’s voluntarism (leading to resignation and pessimism) and leads to activity, and it is basically expressed in the Sokol slogan “*Tužme se*“ (“*Let Us Harden Ourselves*“). This slogan of Tyrš expresses the purpose of unity, of goal, the idea that it is unworthy either to underestimate or to flatter oneself (Krejčí, 1968).

The second period was represented by *positivist evolutionism*, which has later become the life philosophy of Tyrš. He asks the philosopher to be sceptical, to search and combine the knowledge of sciences, contribute (benefit) to the progress of humanity. Tyrš, influenced by Charles Darwin was convinced that the development of an individual and of the humankind (also animal creatures) is an eternal fight for being and continuation, but also internal will to improve. Under the influence of Ch. Darwin, he formulated an active national agenda which was later put into practice in the Sokol. Tyrš has attempted to combine the Schopenhauer’s voluntarism with the Darwin’s theory of development. This combination should have been dominated by the idea of brotherhood and voluntary disciplines as the fulfilment of ancient Kalokagathia and preparation for the struggle for national existence. Polish authors Drozdek-Małolepsza & Małolepszy (2013, pp. 48-54) write about this aspect of the Sokol message of Tyrš more specifically, but in the wider context of Slavic patriotism. Such a unique combination of two philosophies has brought him to the philosophy of humanism, and not the other way round, as some may assume, to ethnocentrism (Kráľ, 1932).

Tyrš was also inspired by Jahn’s German, Turner-like physical education system with a strong military, patriotic, harsh, tough and rough character. Tyrš has taken from Turner physical education only

those items which he considered as positive for physical training, i.e. mainly apparatus gymnastics (Havlíček, 1947, p. 11).

Tyrš built the foundations of his physical education according to the ideals of ancient Greeks and he was inspired by the idea of Hellenism and ancient Olympic Games. In his work *Hod olympický* (*The Olympic Feast*) he wrote about the sources of ancient Greek physical culture, the meaning of physical exercises and their individual and social application. This work can be considered as one of the first modern expressions of the Olympic thought (Černek, 2008, p. 49).

Hod olympický is according to Hodaň (2003, p. 114) „...the result of the erudition of Tyrš and also of his fascination with the ancient Greece.”

Tyrš expressed his admiration for ancient culture and for the Greek ideal of a human being in the above work. This perfect harmony between physical and mental aspect of a human being is an ideal that the human being does not attain, but which she/he seeks by “going along his/her path” (Pačesová and Oborný, 2012, pp. 28-32). The relationship to body and physical culture represented by the ancient Greece has become a model for Tyrš, not only for physical and mental harmonic development of the human being, but most of all, he understood the meaning of the concept of *Kalokagathia* for wide-ranging social success (Černek, 2008, p. 49).

Tyrš combined, very harmoniously and in a sensible way, the antique ideal of beauty and good with the national program and with the effort to mobilize every Czech (citizen) in the struggle for the implementation of national goals. According to Tyrš, strength and culture are based on the principle of quality, not on the power of extension and quantity. The quality of a nation consists of creating and transforming more than just receiving. Culture therefore consists of creating one's own culture and cultivation in every human being, in everyday life, in inner wealth, in self-sufficiency and independence (Válek, 2003, p. 24).

The overall national profile of citizens, their culture, their identity, their values and their ideals are rooted in the Sokol idea. The Sokol movement can be seen as the way of perceiving and evaluating the world. It is focused on the human being in the ontological sense of word. The Sokol movement and Olympism are, among other things, characterized as an educational, educational and cultural pattern that finds its ideological roots in antique culture. It was similarly expressed by Pierre de Coubertin (founder of the modern Olympics) in his words: “Olympism is not a system, it is a state of mind” (Černek, 2008, p. 48).

According to Hogenová (2003, p. 20): „The home, the origin, is what we carry in our tradition and we need to take care of it. This care in Greek is called *Epimeleia* (care for the soul) and this care is the care for the spiritual centre. By experiencing physical balance through exercise in a good home environment, this feeling is improved at first, without words, by means of experience, feeling of harmony and order. And that's it! This is the reason why the Sokol is something that does not tend to disappear”.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, Tyrš was a well-educated personality (critic and art historian, aesthetician, professor of history, philosopher), pragmatic and acknowledged at national and international level, as evidenced by the expansion of the Sokol movement to other European countries, and countries of the new continent.

The founder of the Sokol understood that the question of freedom is, above all, the question of education, the question of the education of body and spirit – the question of the cultivation of the (Czech) nation. This idea is equally desirable today, at the beginning of the third millennium. It will always be the case that only a society of “good” people (personas) allows the way to progress, democracy and freedom.



Figure 11. The official logo of the Czech Sokol Organization. Česká obec sokolská. Logos for downloads. Retrieved from <http://www.sokol.eu/obsah/58/loga-ke-stazeni>

The philosophy of Tyrš can be called the “philosophy of action”. Tyrš wanted to introduce philosophy to life because his philosophy was different than academic and incomprehensible. He was convinced that “the role of philosophy is to teach people to act and to think, and not just to believe. The second task of philosophy is to lead man to pan-humanity, to civil awareness, to the goal of becoming a cosmopolitan and world citizen”.

Tyrš was and remains the philosopher of historical development, directing human activity to the future in the sense of the human ideals of good, beauty and perfection, the ideal of justice, democracy and harmony, and the Sokol is the embodiment (spiritual and physical) of his philosophy. The Sokol ideology includes a strong link that has been the guide to the positive direction of physical and civic culture also for the generations of the 21st century.

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