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Tomáš TLUSTÝ*, Vlasta KURSOVÁ**

HISTORY OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK TOURIST SOCIETY BETWEEN 1938–1948

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Historia Czechosłowackiego Towarzystwa Turystycznego w latach 1938–1948

Streszczenie

Artykuł dotyczy jednej z mniej znanych czechosłowackich organizacji turystycznych. W porównaniu do innych organizacji turystycznych działających w Czechosłowacji, Czechosłowackie Towarzystwo Turystyczne powstało stosunkowo późno, bo w 1925 r. Jego członkami byli głównie przedstawiciele klasy średniej i niższych warstw społecznych. W związku z tym jego głównym celem było zaoferowanie mniej zamożnym klasom taniego udziału w wycieczkach grupowych, w podziwianiu pięknej przyrody Czechosłowacji lub w pobytach rekreacyjnych w uzdrowiskach, przy minimalnych składkach członkowskich. Baza członkowska Czechosłowackiego Towarzystwa Turystycznego stopniowo rosła, osiągając w analizowanym okresie aż 30 tys. członków. W czasie okupacji hitlerowskiej jego członkowie zaangażowali się w działalność konspiracyjną. Swoją postawę wobec okupantów chcieli następnie wykorzystać po zakończeniu wojny, próbując zdobyć wiodącą rolę wśród czechosłowackich stowarzyszeń turystycznych, które coraz częściej rozważały utworzenie zjednoczonej czechosłowackiej organizacji turystycznej. Czechosłowackie Towarzystwo Turystyczne utraciło niezależność w 1948 roku, kiedy to, podobnie jak inne czechosłowackie organizacje wychowania fizycznego, sportu i turystyki, zostało włączone przez komunistów do Sokola.

Słowa kluczowe: Czechosłowackie Towarzystwo Turystyczne, Czechosłowacja w czasie wojny i powojenna, turystyka, oznakowanie szlaków turystycznych, rekreacja, urzędnicy.

* <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6571-9161>; doc. Ph Dr. PhD, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Faculty of Education, Department of Sports Studies, Czech Republic; e-mail: tommlusty@pf.jcu.cz (corresponding author)

** <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9929-0850>; Ph Dr. PhD, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Faculty of Education, Department of Sports Studies, Czech Republic; e-mail: kursova@pf.jcu.cz

Abstract

The present paper focuses on one of the less known Czechoslovak tourist organisations. The Czechoslovak Tourist Society was formed relatively late in comparison with the other tourist organisations active in Czechoslovakia, namely in the year 1925. Its membership consisted mainly of members of the middle and lower walks of life of the nation. Accordingly, its primary objective was to offer the less well-off classes cheap participation in group tours, visits to natural beauties of Czechoslovakia or recreational stays in spas, all at minimal membership fees. The membership base of the Czechoslovak Tourist Society had gradually grown, reaching as many as 30 thousand members in the period under review. Its members were involved in resistance activities during the Nazi occupation. The Society intended to follow up on its approach to occupiers after the end of the war, when they attempted to gain the leading role among Czechoslovak tourist associations, which increasingly discussed the creation of a unified Czechoslovak tourist organisation. The Czechoslovak Tourist Society lost its independence in 1948, when it was – like other Czechoslovak physical education, sports and tourist organisations – incorporated into Sokol by communists.

Key words: Czechoslovak Tourist Society, wartime and post-war Czechoslovakia, tourism, trail marking, officials

Introduction

Several tourist organisations operated in the interwar Czechoslovakia. However, they differed in many ways, pursuing different goals. The largest and most important of them was the Club of Czechoslovak Tourists [Klub československých turistů] (KČsT), which tried to extend its activities over the whole of Czechoslovakia. Its programme as well as its membership base were very broad. The second most important organisation was the Czechoslovak Tourist Society [Československá obecturistická] (ČsOT), which was founded as late as the mid-1920s as a spin-off from the Tourist Union of Workers [Svazdělnických turistů], making it the youngest Czechoslovak tourist organisation. Its membership (see Figure 1) generally did not belong to the wealthy strata of the nation. Needless to say, the Czechoslovak Tourist Society still managed to develop the organisation into a distinctive and respected association in the environment of Czechoslovak tourism during the interwar period. Radhošť Mountainous Association [Pohorská jednota Radhošť]¹ was another tourist organisation active in Czechoslovakia, the oldest tourist association in the Czech lands. Another organisation worth mentioning is the Čerřínek Tourist Club [Turistický klub Čerřínek] or the Tourist Association of Moravian Karst [Turistická jednota Moravský Kras], founded in Jedovnice. However, in both cases, the importance of these organisations was of a predominantly local character.

¹ Radhošť Mountainous Association was founded in 1884. The Club of Czechoslovak Tourists (the Club of Czech Tourists before WWI) was founded four years later.



Figure 1. Membership card of Bohumil Říha (Source: National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturisticá, Box 1, II/4 – Osobní korespondence s jednotlivci, Členský průkaz Bohumila Říhy.)

The objective set by the ČsOT was to preserve health of working people, whose physical and mental fitness constituted, as the ČsOT believed, a necessary prerequisite for the economic prosperity of the country and the nation's ability to defend itself. The ČsOT sought to distinguish between tourism as a physical education discipline and tourism as an economic factor. The ČsOT was mainly engaged in the practical cultivation of all types of tourism, supporting the facilities that served tourism, and also emphasizing the importance of tourism in terms of national history and education. The ČsOT chose to achieve its aims by organising walks, tours, recreational and educational tours, establishing recreational centres and practising various types of sports.

Its practical programme further included various games, physical exercise activities and sports (track and field athletics, rowing, ball games, etc.). As an additional activity, its members took up trail marking in 1929, or trail constructing. In remote places (e.g. in the mountains), tourist shelters or huts were built. However, unlike the KČS and the Radhošť Mountainous Association, the ČsOT did not try too hard to build facilities that would promote tourism, its aim rather being to enable the less well-off strata of the nation to participate, at low prices, in group tours, visits to the natural beauties of Czechoslovakia, or recreational stays in spas at minimal contributions. The ČsOT therefore mainly promoted hiking.

Activities of the ČsOT earned much success in the interwar period. It managed to perform its objectives, a fact that contributed to the gradual expansion of its membership base. Nonetheless, its activities were significantly disrupted for the first time by the events of the late 1930s.²

² T. Tlustý, *History of the Czechoslovak Tourist Society until 1938*, "Sport i Turystyka. Środkowo-europejskie Czasopismo Naukowe" 2023, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 29–43; <http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/sit.2023.02.02>.

Activities of the ČsOT during the Second Republic and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

In the “Munich period”, representatives of the KČsT, ČsOT³ and other smaller tourist organisations discussed the unification of their associations into one organisational unit. The agreements concluded resulted in the formation of the Central Board of Czechoslovak Tourism, which was supposed to be an initial step for further merger of these associations. However, the organisational and ideological disagreements emerging in November 1938 and the favouritism towards the KČsT led to a halt in the above merging efforts. Those efforts were renewed only after the division of Czechoslovakia and the formation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, in the premises of the fascist National Partnership [Národní souručenství].⁴

The initiator was its component “Joy of Life”, which, with the help of the Protectorate government and several members of the newly named Club of Czech Tourists (KČT), took matters into its their hands. At the instigation of the National Partnership, the newly named Czech Tourist Society (ČOT)⁵ first carried out a certain reorganisation in its branches. All events of the branches began to be held within the framework of the National Partnership – in the context of

³ The ČsOT was also active in Slovakia during the period of the First Republic. Nonetheless, with the break-up of Czechoslovakia, its local branches were dissolved in Slovakia and were not renewed until February 1948. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 1, I/44 – Korespondence s poverenictvom vnitra, Obnovenie činnosti Čs. Obceturistickej na Slovensku, dne 10. června 1947.

⁴ The National Partnership was formed on 21 March 1939 as the only permitted political movement in the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Before that, however, the ČsOT participated in the cooperation in National Unions (National Unions were national defence associations. The Unions were involved in the support of economic and cultural life of Czech minorities in ethnically mixed areas and in German border areas), where it remained until their dissolution in April 1939. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 9, XX/16 – Spolupráce ČOT veslučování s jinýmiturist. organizacemi, Bratrskému Výboru Národních osouručenství v Praze, dne 15. listopadu 1939.

⁵ The organisation’s magazines were also renamed. In March 1939, *Czechoslovak Tourist* was renamed *Czech Tourist*, and *Tourist in the Czech West* was added to the title as its heading. A year later, the ČOT entrusted the publication of the magazine to a private person in order to ensure that “*the basic line of the ČOT’s standpoint is not affected even outwardly during the occupation period.*” Nevertheless, its publication was discontinued in 1943. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 5, XVI/1 – Korespondence s úřady, podniky, jednotliv ciał. o vlastnímtisku ČOT, Policejní ředitelství Praha I, dne 15. března 1939. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 5, XVI/1 – Korespondence s úřady, podniky, jednotliv ciał. o vlastnímtisku ČOT, Časopis „Československý turista“ – doporučení žádosti o povolení k obnovení, dne 22. února 1946. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 5, XVI/1 – Korespondence s úřady, podniky, jednotlivciał. o vlastnímtisku ČOT, Česká obecturistická, dne 29. března 1943.

“Joy of Life”.⁶ Subsequently, thanks to considerable manoeuvring as well as pressure, discussions on the merger of the KČT, ČOT and Tourist Union of Workers into a single organisation – the Club of Czech Tourists⁷ – were successful. A new department for the ČOT was formed within the KČT.⁸ However, the merger did not go smoothly at all. It was expected to take place in January 1940, but as late as September 1940, the KČT complained that the ČOT had failed to meet all the conditions agreed upon and that in fact it still carried out independent activities.⁹

After the National Partnership as well as the “Joy of Life” were sidelined, the Pilsen and České Budějovice groups decided to try to revive the ČOT and to make it independent. In fact, on the part of the KČT (according to members of the ČOT), there existed a risk of compromising with occupants and Czech traitors, and as a result, it was resolved at the General Assembly of the ČOT¹⁰ on 07 September 1940 so that the cooperation with the KČT would be discontinued and the activities of the ČOT would be renewed. Despite all obstacles imposed on the Society (e.g. withdrawal of the youth, dissolution of branches or seizure or confiscation of property), the ČOT had reached almost its pre-war state (see Table 1) by 1945.

Table 1. Development of the membership of the ČsOT

Year	Members
1936	6,500
1942	1,200
1945	5,000
1946	28,900

Source: National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 9, XXI/30, – Zprávy o činnosti ČOT.

⁶ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 9, XX/16 – Spolupráce ČOT veslučování s jinými turist. organizacemi, Bratrskému Výborukomise RADOSTI ZE ŽIVOTA v Praze, dne 17. listopadu 1939.

⁷ The Tourist Union of Workers and KČsT agreed to the merger of both organisations at their joint meeting on 29 November 1938. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 9, XX/16 – Spolupráce ČOT veslučování s jinými turist. organizacemi, Zápis porady zástupců předsednictva Klubu čs. turistů a Svazu čs. dělnických turistů, konané dne 29. listopadu 1938 za účelem dojednání měřnic pro sloučení obou korporací. V. Bárta, L. Khandl, *História turistiky na území Slovenska: od štúrovcov po dnešok*, Klub fotopublicistov SSN, Slovenská Ľupča 2015, pp. 61–62.

⁸ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 9, XX/16 – Spolupráce ČOT veslučování s jinými turist. organizacemi, Radostze života Klubu českých turistů, dne 21. prosince 1939.

⁹ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 9, XX/16 – Spolupráce ČOT veslučování s jinými turist. organizacemi, Provedení jednání o sloučení ČOT s KČT, dne 18. září 1940.

¹⁰ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Archival tool.

The membership base of the ČOT thus grew even though its members, during the occupation period, refused to join Moravec's Curatorium,¹¹ preferring to put the entire organisation in danger of dissolution. Indeed, a considerable part of the central committee was arrested, also on account of their attitudes to the occupants.¹² At that time, Ludvík Chlupatý served as the organisation's mayor, having been elected to the post as early as 1936. However, he worked with the ČOT only illegally throughout the period of occupation. The organisation was formally headed by Otta Bureš.¹³

The period of occupation also ignited changes in the arrangements of the ČOT. In 1942, the head office decided that no general assemblies would be held during the war, unless based on official orders. The powers of general assemblies were delegated to the central committee of the ČOT, elected on 06 December 1942. The powers of the central committee were passed to the mayor (Otta Bureš), provided that the individual officers were to put forward respective proposals to him. The mayor then either made decisions on such proposals or put them to vote in a form of a circular, addressed to members of the central committee (or members of the board whenever necessary). A similar procedure applied to the individual branches. The powers of the hitherto branch committees as auxiliary bodies were transferred to the chairman of the branch, who would decide on his/her own responsibility on ordinary matters, whereas decisions on important matters were made upon consultation with the organisation's mayor. Given that no general congresses were held, the term of office of members of the central committee was extended indefinitely.¹⁴

¹¹ The Curatorium for the Education of Youth in Bohemia and Moravia was a mass extracurricular organisation active in the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The focus of this organisation was on the education of Czech youth between the ages of 10 and 18. The Curatorium was formed on 28 May 1948 and operated until May 1945. Emanuel Moravec was its chairman.

¹² One of the vice-mayors – Jaroslav Pužman – was executed in June 1942, during the Heydrichiad. His successor Václav Ulman worked as the regional commander of the underground organisation "White Rose," cooperating side by side with members of the Prague branch of the ČOT. Another vice-mayor, J. Štádlík from Pilsen, was the leader of an underground movement in the area of Plzeň, probably the resistance group "Black Lion". In addition, members of the ČOT were involved in activities of the resistance groups "Iron" or "Black Dog".

¹³ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 1, I/10 – Korespondence s ministerstvem sociální péče, the ČSOT Ministerstvu sociální péče a ochrany, dne 17. 4. 1947. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 5, XVI/2 – Korespondence s redakce mja. o tiskových zprávách ČOT, O jednotutaké v turisticke.

¹⁴ Until 1944, the members paid membership fees in the following amounts: active members – K 12.50 per year, junior members K 3 per year. Nonetheless, it was newly proposed and approved that founding members should pay a lump-sum membership fee of K 500 only (in a single payment or in instalments), active members K 12.50 per year, contributing members K 25 per year and junior members K 6 per year. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 1, III/3 – Zápisy ze schůzíústředního výboru ČOT, Zápis o schůzíústřed-

Activities of the ČsOT from the liberation of the Republic until 1948

After Czechoslovakia was liberated, the ČsOT (renamed again) tried to take advantage of its wartime attitudes to the occupiers, and from outward appearance, began to make positive comments on all events organised by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ). The reason was that the ČsOT hoped that such conduct might ensure its leading position among the other Czechoslovak tourist organisations. However, the restoration of independent Czechoslovakia brought with it the previously raised issue of the organic merger of all physical education, sports and tourist organisations into a single organisation. The ČsOT, which was then under direct influence of the Czechoslovak National Socialistic Party (ČSNS), entirely opposed such an idea and enforced a federative union.¹⁵

The issue of unification also concerned tourism as such. As early as on 14 May 1945, representatives of the KČT, Radhošť Mountainous Association and ČsOT founded the Central Council of Czech Tourism,¹⁶ composed of two representatives of each tourist organisation. The role of the Council was to unify the standpoints held by the individual organisations of tourism, their content and mission and to develop a unified tourist movement.¹⁷ From the onset, the KČT again insisted on the organic merger of all tourist organisations into the KČT, but other organisations were more in favour of a federal union.¹⁸

ního výboru České Obce Turistické, konané dne 25. III. 1944 v sekretariátu ČOT. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 10, XXII/2 – Činovníci ČOT, Přechodná úprava ČOT.

¹⁵ Until then, the Czechoslovak National Socialistic Party was only slightly interested in the ČsOT, which was shown through minor disputes. However, to prevent such disputes, a broader central committee was installed, in which representatives of the Party as well as the ČsOT oversaw the close cooperation between the two entities. The Chairman of the Czechoslovak National Socialistic Party, Petr Zenkl, was appointed honorary mayor of the ČsOT. In 1947, the Party provided the ČsOT with a hefty subsidy as a contribution to the construction of shelters, hostels, etc. The newly formed building department was also composed of the Party officials, who advised and helped during the construction. The close cooperation was probably demonstrated in the attitude as such to the various issues of unification of the Czechoslovak physical education, sports and tourism organisations. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Archival tool.

¹⁶ The agreement on the formation of the Council was concluded by the ČsOT and KČST in 1938. Regrettably, post-Munich events prevented the development of the idea of cooperation between Czechoslovak tourist associations.

¹⁷ For instance, a joint marking committee was established and assigned a task to harmonise marking and tourist orientation and to prepare a unified marking plan. The individual tourist organisations in Czechoslovakia were rather inconsistent in marking individual tourist trails, which often resulted in chaos in tourist trails.

¹⁸ On the other hand, the Čeřínek Tourist Club saw no reason in continuing its independent existence after the Germans were expelled, and therefore, it also unanimously supported an or-

The first meeting of the Central Council of Czech Tourism was held at the beginning of the summer 1945, the second meeting took place about three months later. Representatives of the above-mentioned touristic organisations gathered at the two meetings. The KČT promised to try to ensure good mutual relations and to eliminate any previous disagreements. During the second meeting, the ČsOT, however, pointed out that the KČT had failed to meet the agreements reached at the first meeting (e.g. efforts to create joint committees, to prepare a unified plan for trail marking, reciprocal provision of benefits in the buildings of the individual organisations). Accordingly, the ČsOT was of the opinion that the obstacles to the merger consisted in two issues mainly, i.e. in the lack of mutual trust and the demand of the KČT that the new organisation should bear its name. Upon the proposal of the ČsOT, it was nevertheless agreed that a joint weekly *Tourist Newspaper* [*Turistické noviny*] would be published.¹⁹

In July 1945 the ČsOT issued its new organisational guidelines, which its branches (or groups) were supposed to follow. According to the guidelines, the organisation's activities were to focus mainly on the following:

1. To organise regular walks and trips for adults, to which tourists not yet organised will be invited;
2. To offer trade union organisations or company sports organisations their assistance in organising trips, tours and recreational events;
3. In agreement and with active participation of members (teachers' union boards), national history walks in a given locality and its vicinity will be organised, and school youth will be acquainted with their native region not only in terms of natural beauties, history and various monuments, but also in terms of the population's occupations or employment (excursions in factories, mines, trades etc.) to teach them the love of work;
3. To contact the National Physical Education Committee in the locality and offer assistance in organising trips and tours;
4. In agreement with the Local National Councils, to create tourist advisory centres, which will provide interested persons with information on tourism in the region where the organisations operate, information on accommodation, catering, etc., wherever there are favourable conditions, a tourist advisory centre will be created as a permanent establishment and part of the Municipal Authority;
5. To place maps of their regions at railways stations, public areas, etc., with an indication of tourist trails, information on highlighted locations of the region with photographs of remarkable places as well as images depicting interesting regional production;
6. To place signposts in front of railway stations or in the square, indicating directions of tourist trails, information on the locality, thermometer, barometer, information

ganic merger of the Czech tourist organisations. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 1, III/1 – Pamětní spisy a návrhy ČOT, the ČsOT Předsednictvuv lady Republiky československé, dne 23. prosince 1945.

¹⁹ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 1, I/15 – Korespondence s ministerstvem vnitřního obchodu, Starostathe ČsOT přednostovi presidia ministerstva vnitřního obchodu, dne 20. září 1945.

- about the ČOT, addresses of accommodation establishments, restaurants, physicians, pharmacies, etc.;
7. To draw up a proposal for the marking and development of tourist trails; in localities where an “embellishment” association was active, this is to be done in cooperation with such association;
 8. In agreement with the Local National Council, to create seasonal or permanent tourist hostels in their locality and the vicinity, for which effort will be made to obtain premises from closed infirmaries and similar establishments;
 9. Where there are favourable conditions, to endeavour, in agreement with the Local National Council, to obtain from seized properties a building which might be turned into a recreational centre for the locals as well as members from afar;
 10. To endeavour to ensure that a representative of the branch (group) is engaged as an expert in the physical education committee attached to the Local and District National Councils;
 11. To encourage the Local National Council to establish facilities for recreation of working classes, with special focus on needs of the youths (e.g. swimming pools, parks for recreation and entertainment, with restaurants, entertainment establishments, concerts, etc.).²⁰

Importantly, the ČsOT needed money for its activities in the first place. Money was obtained (apart from the above-mentioned subsidies) primarily from membership fees, the amount of which had returned *de facto* (according to the organisation’s statement) to the pre-war level (see Table 2). Moreover, the ČsOT began to apply for confiscated property, with the view of using the same for its needs. Such property mainly included hotels in the border area, tourist shelters or spa locations.²¹ The ČsOT was undoubtedly motivated by the fact that it was the only Czechoslovak tourist organisation to lack own facilities to perform tourist and recreation activities.²²

Moreover, the organisation’s leadership noticed at that time that the interest in various types of sports was on the increase. The leadership however agreed to concentrate the individual sports disciplines in state associations. For this reason, its efforts were directed at concluding an agreement on the collective membership of the ČsOT in some of those associations (e.g. in the Czech Amateur Athletic Union, Czech Handball Association, Czech Central Union of Velocipedists, Association of Skiers, etc.). The associations were asked whether they would be willing to accept the ČsOT, and if so, under what conditions (financial in particular).²³

²⁰ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 3, XI/21 – Oběžníkyústředí ČOT, Organizační pokyn č.2/45 – Pokyny k činnostimí stníchodborů /skupin/ České obceturistické, červenec 1945.

²¹ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 3, XII/5 – Korespondence a ucházení o konfiskáty pro potřeby ČOT, ČOT Národnímu pozemkovému fondu, dne 14. června 1946.

²² National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 3, XII/5 – Korespondence a ucházení o konfiskáty pro potřeby ČOT, ČOT Ministerstvu školství a osvěty, dne 13. května 1946.

²³ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 3, X/7 – Korespondence a zprávy s Českou atletickou amatérskou unií, ČOT České aletické amatérské unii, dne 8. července 1946.

Table 2. Amounts of membership fees of the ČsOT in the period of the First Republic*

	Youth up to 18 years of age	Adults over 18 years of age
Membership fee	CSK 4	CSK 12
Mandatory accident insurance	CSK 4	CSK 4
Membership card	CSK 1	CSK 1
Badge	CSK 15	CSK 15

* Regrettably, it was impossible to trace a table showing accurate amounts of post-war membership fees

Source: National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 1, III/3 – Zápisy ze schůzí středního výboru ČOT, Zápis o schůzi středního výboru České Obce Turistické, konané dne 25. III. 1944 v sekretariátu ČOT.

At its extraordinary general congress on 13 October 1945, the KČT proposed the formation of the Association of Czechoslovak Tourism, which was to be founded on a federative principle and subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Enlightenment. The ČsOT agreed to the proposal to a larger extent, but it suggested that other associations be created or reorganised which the tourist organisations would join or form a close cooperation with. The suggestion relied on the efforts of the ČsOT to ensure that the economic importance of tourism or its significance for military training would be applied as well.²⁴

The extraordinary general congress of the ČsOT was held on 13 October 1945 and, *inter alia*, elected Otto Bureš as chairman of the organisation and resolved to establish the closest possible cooperation with the Central Council of Trade Unions (ÚRO).²⁵ It was eventually agreed with ÚRO that tourist unions would be formed in individual companies as either independent branches of the ČsOT or autonomous company groups attached to the ČsOT branches (the branches paid only a symbolic “recognition” fee to the ČsOT). The role of the ČsOT was then to

²⁴ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 1, III/1 – Pamětní spisy a návrhy ČOT, the ČsOT Předsednictvu vlády Republiky československé, dne 23. prosince 1945.

²⁵ ÚRO was a unified trade organisation in Czechoslovakia active after 1945. The organisation later worked as a government body of the trade union movement between the congresses of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (ROH), which was a monopoly trade union organisation as well as the biggest mass social organisation in the socialist Czechoslovakia. In many places, membership of employees in ROH was in fact obligatory and automatic. The ČsOT suggested that ROH, within the framework of company physical education, create tourist groups, which would later be incorporated in the ČsOT. The ČsOT would then offer its membership benefits to their members, who would be organised by the newly formed committee, and would, for instance, organise for them courses with a focus on tourist practices and other events. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 9, XX/I – Revoluční odborové hnutí, Ústřední rada odborů, komise závodní turistiky, Praha II, dne 6. prosince 1945. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 9, XX/I – Revoluční odborové hnutí, ČOT Antonínu Vandrovci, poslanci ÚNS a tajemníku ROH, dne 27. června 1946.

assist in company physical education and organise tourist events, to provide professional courses for the leaders of tourism in companies, or to prepare a plan of hostels in cooperation with ÚRO. Nevertheless, most of the membership benefits of the ČsOT were linked to the individual membership in the ČsOT itself.²⁶

In March 1946, the ČsOT applied for membership in the ČSTS, which was in the formation process, and in which the ČsOT was represented by its mayor Otta Bureš, who also served as a member of the preparatory committee,²⁷ and where it was also the only tourist organisation for an extended period of time.²⁸

The organisation intended to inform of its activities again through its (republished in the future) central newspaper. Its suspended publication was initially (in 1945) at least partially followed by the *Circular of the Czech Tourist Board* [*Oběžník české obceturistické*], which the organisation planned to publish six times a year. Importantly, the organisation had not abandoned hopes of reviving its original magazine.²⁹ For example, its expectations were that the above step would contribute to the integration of tourism into the new development of the Republic, breaking away from the old methods and creating a truly popular tourist movement on a broader scale.³⁰ The organisation obtained the permission to restart the publication of the monthly *Czechoslovak Tourist* [*Československý turista*] (see Image 2) from the Ministry of Information on 02 April 1946.³¹

²⁶ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 9, XX/1 – Revoluční odborové hnutí, Záznam z jednání delegace ČOT s předsedou kult. odboru ÚRO posl. J. Jungmannem. dne 15. července 1947.

²⁷ In addition to Otta Bureš, two other members of the ČsOT signed the Articles of Incorporation, namely Václav Lebl and Jiří Vacek. National archives in Prague, Fund ČSTS, Box 1, Sign. 4, Valná hromada 1946, Čsl. Obceturistická – Ustavující sjezd ČsTS – delegace ČOT, dne 29. října 1946.

²⁸ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 1, III/4 – Zápisy ze schůzí předsednictva ČOT, Zápis o 3. schůzi předsednictva Čs. obceturistické, konané dne 13. VI. 1946 v místnostech ústředí ČOT. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 1, II/2 – Osobní korespondence: Projevy soustrasti, Projev soustrasti k úmrtí šéfa redaktora O. Wünsche, dne 8. října 1947.

²⁹ Probably the first application for the renewal of the magazine *Czechoslovak Tourist* was declined by the press department of the Ministry of Information on 11 December 1945, on the grounds that it was necessary to reorganise periodical press with the view of economic management of paper. However, the ČsOT did not want to put up with the refusal since the publication of the magazine of the Club of Czechoslovak Tourists and Skiers was permitted at that time. National archives in Prague, Fund, Box 5, XVI/1 – Korespondence s úřady, podniky, jednotlivci, o vlastním tisku ČOT, Ministerstvo informací, tiskový odbor, v Praze dne 14. března 1947. National archives in Prague, Fund, Box 5, XVI/1 – Korespondence s úřady, podniky, jednotlivci, o vlastním tisku ČOT, Ministerstvo informací, tiskový odbor, v Praze dne 29. března 1946.

³⁰ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 5, XVI/1 – Korespondence s úřady, podniky, jednotlivci, o vlastním tisku ČOT, Časopis Český turista.

³¹ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 5, XVI/1 – Korespondence s úřady, podniky, jednotlivci, o vlastním tisku ČOT, Vydavatelstvo „Práce“ v Praze 11, dne 12. dubna 1946.



Figure 2. Header of the magazine *Czechoslovak Tourist*

In August 1946, the ČsOT sent an application to the Central National Council of the Capital City of Prague for permission to establish a publishing house, printing house and bookstore. In effect, one of the objectives of the ČsOT was to publish specialised literature, magazines, postcards, maps, information and promotional tourist leaflets and own literature focused on natural history. The ČsOT intended to use the profits for broadening of knowledge of the Czechoslovak Republic and specialised study, exactly as was prescribed by the Statutes of the organisation.³² Nonetheless, on 30 May 1947, the Board of the Central National Council of the Capital City of Prague decided to reject the application at its meeting, stating that

[...] the planned economy may only allow the establishment of such enterprises that are economically justified. In the given case, the establishment of a new enterprise is not justified.³³

However, the organisation of courses and races was also getting into swing in the ČsOT. Between 09 and 16 June 1946, for instance, the Ministry of Education and Enlightenment held the First State Course for Tourist Leaders. It was planned to take place in Hejnice in the Jizera Mountains and its technical management was entrusted to the ČsOT, a gesture that was much appreciated by the organisation. A similar course was organised a year later, from 01 to 10 June in Karlova Studánka.³⁴

³² National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 11, XXV/2 – Kniha kupectví a nakladatelství ČOT, Žádost o udělení živnostenského oprávnění kuzřížení nakladatelství, vydavatelství a knihkupectví, dne 28. srpna 1946.

³³ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 11, XXV/2 – Kniha kupectví a nakladatelství ČOT, Živnostenský úřad hlavního města Prahy, dne 30. května 1947. In 1946, the ČsOT also applied for a trade licence to form and operate a travel agency. Its intentions were to ensure more favourable tourist conditions for its members. Unfortunately, the information whether the application was granted could not be traced. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 4, XIV/19 – Korespondence s úřady o hostinských koncesích, Žádost o udělení živnostenského oprávnění kuzřížení cestovní kanceláře, dne 28. 8. 1946.

³⁴ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 4, XV/1 – Kurzystátní pořádané ČOT, Rozvrh přednášek a cvičení vestátním kurzu pro vedoucí turistiky v Karlově Studánce 1.-10.VI.1947.

Probably the largest sports event organised by the ČsOT after the Second World War was the “Karel Fojtík Memorial”.³⁵ The Memorial consisted in a walking race, the first year of which was held by the Brno Regional Organisation of the ČsOT on behalf of the Board of the ČsOT on 21 September 1947. The length of the main race, which took place on the route Obřany – Bílovice nad Svitavou, was 10 km, while women and youth competed on half the distance.³⁶

The ČsOT also planned to organise several of its own races for the year 1948. Specifically, the races included the ČsOT skiing championships (see Figure 3),³⁷ the second year of the Karel Fojtík Walking Memorial³⁸ and the first year of the Tourist Fitness Race.³⁹ The other plans consisted in the organisation of the “Days of Friendship between Czechoslovak and Polish Tourists”. The idea was to hold a joint meeting on Sněžka Mountain, where, among other things, cooperation and tourist exchange options were to be agreed between the two states.⁴⁰

From 17 to 25 February 1948, a communist coup d'état took place in Czechoslovakia. The subsequent events in the Czechoslovak physical culture gained momentum. In fact, communists were suddenly able to make substantial changes and interventions in the organisation of the Czechoslovak physical education without any resistance. On 27 February 1948, the Board of the Central Action Council of the National Front (ÚAV NF) resolved that the only physical education organisation would be Sokol, to which other physical education, sports and tourist organisations, associations, societies and clubs would transfer their property and membership.⁴¹

³⁵ Karel Fojtík was the chairman of the physical education department of the ČOT during the occupation, and the chief of the youth of the ČAAU. He fell in the battle for Prague on 07 May 1945.

³⁶ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 9, XXI/13 – Chodecké závody, Proposice chodeckého závodu – Memoriálu K. Fojtíka, dne 25. července 1947.

³⁷ These races, which were ten years apart from the ČsOT last skiing championship, took place in Špindlerův Mlýn on 21 and 22 February 1948.

³⁸ The ČsOT branch in Vokovice-Veleslavin was at that time asked to organise the race. Actually, the intention of the ČsOT was to organise this race every year in a different place. The plan was to ask the selected branches to propose dates and specific locations for the race. Nevertheless, it was announced later that the race would be held in the same place as the first year.

³⁹ This was supposed to be a combined race, as a part which the contestants were to overcome terrain obstacles (climbing down slopes, jumps over ravines, wading through water), running with shooting and orientation in maps (plus terrain sketching in the race of level II). National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 1, III/3 – Zápisy ze schůzí středního výboru ČOT, Předlohy pro schůzí středního výboru Čs. Obecturistické dne 7. října 1947.

⁴⁰ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 9, XXI/14 – Lyžařské závody, Československá obecturistická – návrhadny přátelstvíčs. a polských turistů, dne 17. ledna 1948.

⁴¹ J. Kössl, J. Štumbauer, M. Waic, *Vybrané kapitoly z dějtinělesné kultury*, Karolinum, Prague 2006, p. 142. In March 1948, the Ministry of Internal Trade acknowledged the resolution of the KČT action committee and its essential requirement that – as in Slovakia – tourist organisations

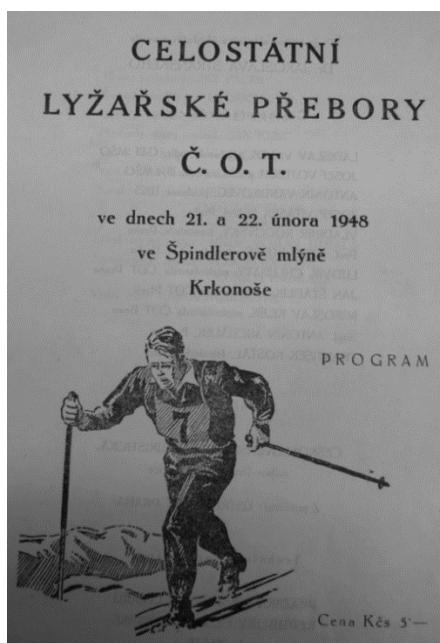


Figure 3. Programme of the ČsOT skiing championships in 1948

The central action board of the ČsOT welcomed the open declaration by the ÚAV NF regarding the unification of physical education into the Sokol organisation. The board pointed out that its standpoint was fully compliant with its position expressed in May 1945, when the ČsOT, as the only tourist organisation, submitted its application to the Central National Physical Education Board, which was being formed at that time (ÚNTV).⁴² Moreover, the ČsOT asked the ÚAV NF to have its representatives included in the emerging ÚAV of the unified Czechoslovak physical education so that they could fully participate in its reorganisation.⁴³

should be unified in the Czech Lands. The above Ministry hence authorised the KČT action board to discuss the conditions of unification with individual corporations and to this end, to take all necessary steps. The Czechoslovak Tourist Society was among the organisations to be united. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 1, I/15 – Korespondence s ministerstvem vnitřního obchodu, Ministerstvo vnitřního obchodu Akčnímu výboru Klubu československých turistů, dne 4. března 1948.

⁴² However, the ČsOT was not admitted to the ÚNTV. At the end of May 1945, the KČT and ÚNTV concluded an agreement, according to which the ÚNTV renounced the tourist organisations with which it was to establish close cooperation. The ÚNTV nevertheless ceased to exist the following year. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 2, VI/10 – Korespondence Ústředním národním tělovýchovným výborem, the ČsOTÚ střednímu národnímu tělovýchovnému výboru, dne 30. srpna 1945.

⁴³ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 1, I/12 – Korespondence s ministerstvem školství a osvěty, Československá obecturistická Akčnímu výboru Československé obcesokolské, dne 12. března 1948.

The individual branches of the ČsOT were invited by the organisation's leadership to form action boards of three to five members, choosing from reliable persons who were unwavering supporters of the then government. The lists of those persons were to be forwarded to the central action board of the ČsOT. The central action boards of the ČsOT branches were then tasked to screen its members according to the regulations of the ÚAV NF.⁴⁴ Needless to say, powers of the action boards of the ČsOT were rather limited. Their powers mainly resided in the screening of members and the ordinary tourist activities (organisation of meetings, walks and trips, organisation of races, attending to correspondence or collection of membership fees). The boards had to ask the ČsOT for approval when it came to conducting any other steps.⁴⁵

The unification of the Czechoslovak physical education also led to the discontinuation of the publication of the magazine *Czechoslovak Tourist* [Československý turista]. It was last published as a double issue 1/2 on 15 February 1948. According to the plan, after the merger with Sokol, the organisations were to publish two tourist magazines, namely *Central Authority of Sokol Tourism* [Ústřední organ sokolské turistiky] and *Tourist Journal and Technical Magazine of Prague Sokol Regional Organisations* [Turistický věstník a technický časopis pražských sokolských žup].⁴⁶

The unification of all physical education, sports and tourism organisations into the Sokol organisation was declared ceremoniously on 31 March 1948.⁴⁷ Within the Sokol organisation, a tourist department for Czechoslovak tourism began to be prepared. The plan was that the above department would be divided into two highest bodies – economic and administration and the other was to be technical. Prof. Otto Bureš was nominated as chairman of the technical board after the agreement of all tourist organizations.⁴⁸ However, the incorporation of tourism into Sokol did not go entirely smoothly since as late as August 1948, no authority was installed in Sokol to assume the care of all tourist matters, and therefore the incorporation of all Czechoslovak tourism into Sokol

⁴⁴ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 2, VI/3 – Oběžníky Čs. Tělovýchovného svazu, Ústředniáckní výbor ČOT všemodborům a důvěrnickým místům ČOT.

⁴⁵ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 3, XI/22 – Oběžníky ústředí ČOT, Činnostakčnických výborů ČOT, duben 1948.

⁴⁶ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 5, XVI/1 – Korespondence s úřady, podniky, jednotlivci. o vlastním tisku ČOT, Ministerstvo informací, tiskový odbor, dne 16. června 1948.

⁴⁷ J. Grexa, M. Strachová, *Dějiny sportu: Přehled světových a českých dějintělesné výchovy a sportu*, Masaryk University, Brno 2011, p. 183.

⁴⁸ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obecturistická, Box 2, IX/2 – Korespondence o turistice v Polsku, Otto Bureš a Josef Voršilka Bratrskému Polskiemu Towarzystwu Krajowczemu, dne 29. června 1948.

could not be effectuated by that time.⁴⁹ In the following years, during which, *inter alia*, the democratic traditions of Sokol were quashed, communists made a striking number of organisational changes in Czechoslovak physical education and sports.

Conclusion

Before the Second World War, several tourist organisations were active in Czechoslovakia, with the ČsOT being the second largest in terms of membership. However, not all of them survived the subsequent harsh period, when, among other endeavours, efforts emerged to unify Czechoslovak tourism.⁵⁰ During the Nazi occupation, the Czech Tourist Society was unified with the Club of Czech Tourists. Needless to say, the unification was rather formal since the ČOT essentially continued to carry out its activities independently. In fact, there were many contradictions between the ČOT and KČT, also from the ideological perspective. The ČOT did not wish to participate too much in joint activities and began to make effort to become formally independent. Its members later refused to join the Curatorium for the Education of Youth in Bohemia and Moravia, becoming involved in resistance activities instead.

Only four tourist organisations were active in Czechoslovakia after the Second World War.⁵¹ Those organisations were the “Radhošť Mountainous Association”, which had about 6,000 members, the Club of Czech Tourists with 50,000 members, about 200 tourist shelters and several castle ruins, the Club of Slovak Tourists and Skiers [Klub slovenských turistov a lyžiarov] with 20,000 members. The last of them was the ČsOT, which comprised 30,000 members.⁵² There were many disagreements between these organisations, including issues regarding the organisation of tourism *per se*.⁵³ For instance, the ČsOT did not believe that

⁴⁹ National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 1, I/12 – Korespondence s ministerstvem školství a osvěty, Ministerstvo školství a osvěty, sector tělovýchovný ÚAV. Čs. obceturistické v likvidaci, dne 6. srpna 1948.

⁵⁰ After the establishment of the Slovak State in 1939, the KČT clubs in Slovakia formed together with skiers the Club of Slovak Tourists and Skiers, seated at Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš. The “Tourist Union” in Prague became part of the Federation of Proletarian Physical Education (FPT) and was dissolved, along with the above organisation, in 1938.

⁵¹ The Club of Czech Tourists was also joined by the Čeřínek Tourist Club, specifically in 1945. In the same year, the Tourist Union of Moravian Karst ceased to be a tourist organisation with extensive activities, limiting its activities to the organisation of tourism in the Moravian Karst.

⁵² National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 9, XXI/29 – Informační služba ČOT, TURISTIKA V ČESKOSLOVENSKU: Vývoj turistiky v ČSR.

⁵³ The Club of Czechoslovak Tourists and Skiers (formerly the KČST) emphasised the economic value of tourism and its importance for the state. From this standpoint, the Club was of the opinion that tourism should fall within the sphere of interest of the Ministry of Internal Trade.

it was appropriate in the 1940s to participate, to a considerable extent, in the preservation of monuments and their maintenance (activities previously undertaken e.g. by the Club of Czech Tourists), maintaining that it would be more suitable to be only of assistance to the government in this respect. Similarly, the ČsOT failed to comprehend the initiative of constructing lookout towers, attempted by the Club of Czech Tourists, even though the ČsOT officers admitted that lookout towers represented a means of making tourism more attractive. In spite of this, the above organisations agreed to form the Central Board of the Czechoslovak (or later Czech) Tourism.

After the end of the Second World War, the ČsOT endeavoured to make use of its opportunities and influence (for instance, the ČsOT tried to highlight its negative attitudes towards the occupiers) and to gain a leading role among Czechoslovak Tourist Organisations. Those efforts probably affected the direction of the entire organisation, which pretended to express favourable opinions of actions carried out by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. What is more, the ČsOT was the only Czechoslovak tourist organisation to send an application to the ÚNTV, whose efforts were aimed at the organic unification of Czechoslovak physical education. Soon, nevertheless, the ČsOT began to oppose those efforts and prefer its federative union. This was probably related to its increasingly close partnership with the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party, which began to provide the ČsOT with financial support. At that time, the organisation also started to present itself in the public by organising its own sports events. After communists seized power in February 1948, the ČsOT, however, began to highlight its application to the ÚNTV, sent previously, and to welcome the forced unification of all Czechoslovak physical education into the Sokol organisation, with which the ČsOT subsequently merged.

Contrariwise, the Radhošť Mountainous Association viewed tourism as a sports and recreational movement, and one with considerable ethnographic importance. The Tourist Union of Moravian Karst emphasized an economic significance of tourism, a standpoint logical from its perspective since the impetus for its formation was the promotion of the Moravian Karst and the prosperity of its immediate vicinity. The Čeřínek Tourist Club was established in Jihlava, at the time when the town was heavily Germanised. The Club had a national character and was concerned with national history. After the Germans were expelled, the Club, finding no reason for its continued independent existence, unanimously advocated the organic merger of Czech tourist organisations. Beginning from its formation, the ČsOT perceived tourism as a sports movement, serving the purpose of physical and mental recreation of the working people, and deepening their interest in exploring their homeland. The ČsOT was in favour of cooperation with physical education organisations and of including tourism as a basic and general physical education discipline into the sphere of interest of the Ministry of Education and Enlightenment. National archives in Prague, Fund Československá obceturistická, Box 1, III/1 – Pamětní spisy a návrhy ČOT, the ČsOT Předsednictvuv lady Republiky československé, dne 23. prosince 1945.

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