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Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský in the Interwar Olympic Movement¹

Abstract

The article follows the work of Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský in the given period both on the domestic and on the international scene. In the new Czechoslovak state, it was necessary to establish a new Czechoslovak Olympic Committee which would serve as a representative of athletes of all nationalities. This, however, proceeded very slowly. With the strengthening of the status of sports associations, their young officials also asked for a greater share of COC's decision-making. Therefore, in the second half of the 1920s, there was a crisis in the Czechoslovak Olympic Movement, to which Guth-Jarkovsky responded by retreating. Throughout the interwar period, however, he remained an active member of the International Olympic Committee. At first, he was the Secretary General, later a member of its executive board. He actively participated in the design and adoption of the Olympic Charter and organization of the 8th Olympic Congress in Prague in 1925. However, in 1936 his reputation was damaged by his support of the XI. Olympic Games in Nazi-dominated Berlin.

Keywords: Jiří Guth-Jarkovský, Czechoslovak Olympic Committee, Czechoslovak Olympic Movement, the 8th Olympic Congress.

The Great War didn't destroy the work of Pierre de Coubertin, quite to the contrary. It emphasized the importance of its constructive and peace-making nature and confirmed his words written on the eve of its outbreak:

The Olympic movement did not appear in the middle of modern civilization to play only a local or temporary role. Its mission is universal and shall last for centuries to come. It is

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¹ This paper is based on my biography of Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovského. See F. Kolář, *Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský*, Prague, Český olympijský výbor – Olympia 2011, ISBN 978-80-7376-294-0.

ambitious. It needs space and a great amount of time. Yet it shall soon be realized that its very first steps marked its future fate. War can only hinder its march yet cannot stop it.²

Just as the war didn't put an end to the Olympic Movement throughout the world, it didn't manage to smother it in the Czech environment either. As early as on October 30, 1918, Jiří Guth informed the new Police Director of Prague, Richard Bienert, that the Czech Olympic Committee would begin to function again in the new Czechoslovak state³. On November 5, a meeting of the former members of the Czech Olympic Committee – Josef Rössler-Ořovský, František Fehrer, Karel Fuchs-Robětín, Edmund Kaizl, Rudolf Richter and Josef Zelenka took place in Guth's flat in order to confirm the “resurrection and reestablishment” of the Czech Olympic Committee⁴.

The gentlemen met again on December 17 to take a position on the resolution of the Czech Sport Union from the previous day. The Union, being the highest body of Czech sports, was established as early as November 1, 1918, at the instigation of the sport journalists Vilém Heinz, Miloslav Horáček and Jaroslav Kalva. Its chairman was the then President of the Czech Athletic Amateur Union, the dentist Jan Jesenský. Jiří Guth most welcomed its establishment, as he himself had tried to set up a central organization of this sort before the war. But on December 16 its officials expressed a wish that the Czech Olympic Committee become “only a section within the Union”, which would mediate the relationship with the Olympic Movement and would be appointed by the leaders of the Union. The meritorious officials didn't like the sound of such a thing at all! Therefore, on December 17, they stated that “the Czech Olympic Committee, in view of current circumstances threatening its very independence, shall become an institution with proper rules and regulations”⁵.

So, the fight for competencies between the Olympic Committee and the Sport Union began and didn't stop until the late 1920s. As Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský writes in his manuscript *Last Olympic Memoirs*:

Since the very day of its foundation, the Czech Committee has desired to cooperate with all sport centres and if possible, with the Sokols, too. There was no other way, for such was the very essence of the matter. Yet the efforts were of a spontaneous, voluntary nature, hence if the Committee wished to send an athlete to the Games, it was first obliged to address the organization and have the athletes named ... So it happened that the Czech Olympic Committee had unwittingly become a supreme authority; a status which many were exceedingly jealous of ... The cooperation between the Committee and the headquarters of the said organizations has existed since time immemorial and had there been good will and a true desire to cooperate amongst the delegates, there was no need for change – for true and sincere work needs no statutes. Yet, sadly, gentlemen delegates would display

² P. de Coubertin, *L'insigne et le pavillon*, “Revue Olympique”, August 1913.

³ J.S. Guth-Jarkovský, *Paměti II. Paměti olympijské (1894–1918)*, Prague 1929, p. 147.

⁴ Idem, *Paměti III. Na dvoře republikánském 1919–1925*. Prague 1929, p. 50.

⁵ ČsVO meeting minutes 17.12.1918. The National Archive Prague, ČsVO fond, k. 3

their interest in the Committee and the Games only when the distribution of subvention was at hand⁶.

The Olympic Committee was officially set up – now as ‘Czechoslovak’ and recognized by the state – on June 13, 1919. Furthermore, unlike during the pre-war period, it was appointed as the representative of all athletes of the Czechoslovak Republic regardless of their nationality, as indicated in the findings of the IOC meeting in Lausanne in April 1919 and as confirmed in the Olympic Charter adopted at the 7th Olympic Congress in June 1921⁷.

The Czechoslovak Olympic Committee followed the Czech Olympic Committee from the era of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as far as its members were concerned. Its leadership consisted of the weather-beaten ‘old-timers’: Chairman Jiří Guth, General Secretary Josef Rössler-Ořovský and then František Fehrer, Karel Fuchs-Robětín, Zdeněk Kruliš, Otakar Petřík, Rudolf Richter, Rudolf Schindler and later also Prokop Bureš, Jaroslav Just, Vítězslav Pavloušek, Jan Plichta or Augustin Popelka. Other nationalities of Czechoslovakia did not initially show much interest in the Olympic Movement. It wasn’t until the mid-1920s that the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee, in connection with the success of German skiers at the first Winter Olympic Games in 1924 in Chamonix and the exclusion of Austrian and German athletes from the Olympic family, began to cooperate with the Association of German Ski Unions, Hauptverband der Deutschen Wintersportvereine. This situation lasted until the 11th Olympic Games in 1936 which were held in Berlin.

Not only did the Czechs reunite with the family of the International Olympic Movement but enjoyed unprecedented respect.

Still in 1918, Jiří Guth turned to the newly created Ministry of Education and National Culture in order to have the fact that “the Czechoslovak government appointed him the official delegate of the Czechoslovak Republic in the International Olympic Committee” officially confirmed. After receiving the letter of appointment, he happily announced the news to Pierre de Coubertin, who, however, somehow dampened his enthusiasm: “Why, my dear friend, it is most irrelevant. The International Olympic Committee is completely independent of all governments, it appoints all representatives of states and countries itself, irrespective of national governments – after all, you have experienced this yourself”⁸.

However, in April 1919, Guth arrived at the first post-war meeting of the IOC in Lausanne with a feeling of utmost pride, “since for the first time as equally

⁶ J.S. Guth-Jarkovský, *Poslední paměti olympijské*, ed. by J. Kössl based on sport magazine “Star” 1936–1938 and a manuscript placed with M. Šafránková in Náchod, Prague 1972, pp. 10–11. The ready-to-be printed manuscript of the book is archived in the Olympic Study and Information Centre of The Czech Olympic Committee in Prague (Vokovice).

⁷ ČsVO Meeting minutes 13.6.1919. The National Archive Prague, ČsVO fond, k. 2. – Published in: *Dokumentace k dějinám českého olympismu, 2. Díl 1918–1945*, Prague, Český olympijský výbor 1998, pp. 18–19.

⁸ J.S. Guth-Jarkovský, *Poslední paměti olympijské*, p. 5.

legitimate as all the other members”. He was asked by Pierre de Coubertin to become General Secretary of the IOC after the deceased Eugenio Brunettad’Usseaux and thus, in effect, his right-hand man. Jiří Guth took over the post in February 1920 – so far, the highest position in the hierarchy of the International Olympic Movement a Czech representative has ever achieved! The most important result of his close cooperation with Pierre de Coubertin was the completion of the Olympic Charter, a set of fundamental principles of Olympism, the essential codes and organizational rules of the Olympic Movement, which has been valid since its adoption at the 7th Olympic Congress in Lausanne in June 1921, save for a few updates and modifications, to this day. It was also at the Lausanne Congress that Jiří Guth was elected one of the six members of the IOC executive board⁹.

The IOC assigned the 7th Olympic Games in 1920 to Belgium, which was the first target of aggression at the outset of the war, with Antwerp being the host city. It was the first opportunity for Czechoslovak athletes to compete in their new national jerseys. The large contingent, however, managed to win only two bronze medals and it was chiefly their scandals that attracted attention. There was a slight embarrassment even during the opening ceremony on August 14: “It was a wonderful spectacle. Indians in their colorful silk turbans, the Egyptians in their red fezzes, the French in bright leotards – in a word, a rich diversity. Only the Czech contingent was – not poor as such – yet somehow unattractive. Everyone was in their plain clothes in which they arrived. The only unifying item of clothing was their dark blue caps. Everyone was wearing one. Yet they were so hideous that each and every one of them appeared to be a steward. The whole group seemed to be gloomy, tasteless, and, compared to the others, most untidy”¹⁰. This was certainly far removed from how Jiří Guth, in fact, Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský now, imagined the representation of the new Czechoslovak Republic! To make matters worse, the Czechoslovak football players had left the pitch in the finals before the final whistle was blown and later a bill for damage caused to accommodation facilities arrived at the Committee!¹¹

As early as in December 1920, Guth-Jarkovský came up with the idea of organizing future Olympic Games in Prague and won the support of the Foreign Minister, Edvard Beneš, who was quick to realize the propagandistic importance of such an undertaking for the new Czechoslovak state. However, Guth eventually accepted the wish of his friend and the President of the IOC, Pierre de Coubertin, and backed his hometown, the city of Paris, as the organizer of the 8th Olympic Games in 1924¹².

⁹ Ibid., pp. 8–10.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

¹¹ Compare Coubertin’s letter to Guth-Jarkovský from 6.09.1920. Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature in Prague, Guth-Jarkovský fond (still not organized).

¹² P. de Coubertin, *Olympijské paměti*, Prague, Olympia 1977, pp. 121–122.

The height of the international recognition of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee's work was the assignment of the 8th Olympic Congress, which was held at the end of May and at the beginning of June 1925 in Prague. It was the initiative of Pierre de Coubertin, who informed Guth-Jarkovský about his intention in a letter as early as in January 1923: "Let us seize the opportunity which we have missed so many times before, that is, to link your dear country with the Olympic business"¹³. In his Olympic Memoirs he sheds further light on this particular matter: "It was only fair to pay tribute to this beautiful city – for Prague surely is one of the finest towns in the world, a place where most dramatic and deeply human transformations had occurred throughout the course of history. And for me, for someone who had since the very beginning accepted the Czechs into the Olympic Movement and never ceased to defend their rights, it was particularly desirable to end my career of Olympic presidency there. Moreover, I could thus express my gratitude to my most faithful colleague and dear friend, Jiří Guth-Jarkovský, the only living representative of the 'old guard'"¹⁴.

When Guth-Jarkovský was contemplating this offer, he turned to the Foreign Minister, Edvard Beneš, who, as in the case of the proposal to organize the Olympic Games in Prague, gave him his full support; even more so in a situation where the other candidate to host the Congress was the city of Budapest. When the IOC approved of Prague at its April meeting in Rome, the Congress was about to be officially held under the auspices of President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, as well as supported by Prime Minister Antonín Švehla, the Minister for Public Health and Physical Education, Jan Šrámek, and the Mayor of Prague, Karel Baxa. An Organizing Committee headed by the Vice-Chairman of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee, Zdenek Kruliš, was established. However, it was Guth-Jarkovský who was the key player in the whole process. In July 1924, he even gave up his executive functions in the IOC on these grounds. There might have been another reason for such a decision though – and perhaps a more serious one – lack of financial means for participating in all the meetings and related social events.

The Congress was divided into two parts – a technical and pedagogical one¹⁵. The Swede Sigfrid Edström, who was the President of the IOC between 1946–1952, oversaw the former. 95 delegates attended the Congress, representing the International Olympic Committee, National Olympic Committees and international sports federations. Anyway, it was the first time since the end of the war that the representatives of the defeated states, Austria and Germany, also attended an Olympic event. One of the most important conclusions reached during the

¹³ Coubertin's letter to Guth-Jarkovský from 7.01.1923. LA PNP Prague, Guth-Jarkovský fond.

¹⁴ P. de Coubertin, *Olympijské paměti*, p. 146.

¹⁵ For more on 8th Olympic Congress in Prague see: J. Kössl, *Mezinárodní olympijský kongres v Praze v roce 1925 a olympijská současnost*, "Teorie a praxe tělesné výchovy", 19, 1971, pp. 129–137; and: *Dějiny československého olympijského hnutí*, Prague, Olympia 1977, pp. 47–53; *VIII. Olympijský kongres 1925 v Praze*, Olympijská knihovnička 40, Prague, Český olympijský výbor 2007.

debates in connection with the future was that the Week of Winter Sports, which took place in early 1924, would be additionally recognized as the 1st Winter Olympic Games, which would henceforth be held at regular four-year intervals. Sports disciplines that needed ice and snow were included in their programme. The participation of women in Olympic events was significantly extended, especially in athletics and gymnastics. However, despite Coubertin's efforts the Congress adopted a decision which was to be valid for several decades to come; that only 'pure amateurs' could compete at the Olympic Games. This significantly limited the participation of athletes from low-income strata.

The pedagogical part of the Congress, which according to Pierre de Coubertin was to represent a driving force for the future of sports and education all together, was attended by 62 delegates from 21 states under the leadership of Professor Karel Weigner. It dealt with the emerging commercialization of sport or the prevailing focus on performance in youth at the expense of versatility. The appropriateness of certain sports for women was also discussed, as well as college sports, the need for medical care and sports science, and finally, the role of journalists in promoting fair play. Numerous inspiring ideas could be heard, especially from the lips of Pierre de Coubertin himself. It was him who first came up with the statement that 'sport is a fundamental human right' and that it is the duty of municipalities or even the State to create conditions for sport activities. He was aware, however, that such efforts were indeed 'a long-distance run', to use sports terminology: "I would also like to tell you that a new work of art has been started, in the very same sporting spirit which we would cultivate together, that is, the joy of effort, the pleasure of courage and selfless idealism. May the same spirit help us reach the very peak where a temple shall be built, albeit perhaps only a marketplace is being constructed now on the plain. Yet the temple shall prevail, while the marketplace shall be long since gone. Athletes themselves must then opt either for the marketplace or the temple. They cannot have both. Let them select!"¹⁶

At the regular meeting of the IOC, which preceded the Congress itself, Pierre de Coubertin stepped down from the post of the President of the International Olympic Committee. Henri de Baillet-Latour of Belgium was elected his successor and took up his presidency in early September. Although it was in Prague where Pierre de Coubertin ended his more than a 30-year-long Olympic career, his memories of the city were most pleasant: "Great events were held every single day: President's garden-party, a gala performance at the National Theatre, a matinee at the famous Wallenstein Palace, dinners hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Guth-Jarkovský, the Minister of Health, the Mayor of Prague, the Automobile Club, the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee, etc. At the opening ceremony of the Congress at the City Hall in Old Town Square magnificent choirs sang and made me reminisce of John Huss and King George of Podebrady"¹⁷.

¹⁶ *The First Pedagogical Olympic Congress in Prague 1925*, Prague 1925, p. 13.

¹⁷ P. de Coubertin, *Olympijské paměti*, p. 148.

In connection with the success of the Olympic Congress, the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee in January 1926 revived the idea of Prague being the organizer of some of the future Olympic Games. An 'Olympic fund' was established for this purpose, using the surplus which the accounting of the costs of the Congress revealed. However, the idea remained nothing but 'wishful-thinking', so the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee decided to use the money for creating the tradition of Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský Prize instead. It was introduced in 1935 as the highest Czechoslovak decoration for sport performance and contribution to the development of Czechoslovak sports. The prize was awarded on a yearly basis until 1948 and then restored in 1994. It has been granted regularly ever since.

The respect that the leading officials of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee enjoyed in the international sense did not correspond with that in their domestic environment. The 'old officials', especially Josef Rössler-Ořovský, wanted to secure the Olympic Committee the position of 'an elite gathering of a narrow range of interested persons', which would not only facilitate contacts with the International Olympic Movement and guarantee the Czechoslovak participation in the Olympics, but would also function as a sort of headquarters of Czechoslovak sports and represent a link among all Czechoslovak physical education and sports organizations. This concept, however, was compatible neither with the strict political division of physical education associations, nor with the growing ambitions of sports federations. The Czechoslovak Olympic Committee initially managed to withstand the pressure of the Czechoslovak Sport Union, especially due to shared competencies. In the mid-1920s, however, new and young officials entered the leadership of sports federations and the fight started all over again.

In October 1925, negotiations on the future form of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee and its position in the structure of Czechoslovak Physical Education commenced. Josef Fíkl from the Czech Athletic Amateur Union suggested setting up the National Physical Education Council, within which the Sport Union was to represent the domestic department and the Olympic Committee the international section. However, only the representatives of sports associations and ministries were to be the regular members of the Committee, and elected delegates of the Czechoslovak Sokol Community its associate members. Members of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee would thus have been completely sidelined. It was obvious, however, that the realization of such a concept was inconceivable. The increasingly agile chairman of the Rowing Union, Jaroslav Čížek, thus put forward a 'moderate' proposal, within which ten selected meritorious officials had the right to attend the meetings of the amended Olympic Committee¹⁸.

Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský reacted to the activity of sports officials in early 1926 in an article published in the Olympic Journal in which he recognized the right of the Czechoslovak Sport Union and sports federations for the preparation

¹⁸ For more see KÖSSL: *Dějiny československého olympijského hnutí*, pp. 53-56.

of athletes – as had been the case until then anyway – but also stated that the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee should still have the last word. He also argued that it was necessary to maintain the continuity of the Committee's work, which in the case of exclusive representation of sports federations and the frequent changes of their representatives could not be ensured. The debate eventually became very intense and fierce, which was a good reason for the gentle Guth-Jarkovský to offer his resignation. Quite paradoxically, this act of his somehow weakened the opposition against the 'old' and after the bellicose vote at the special meeting of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee at the end of February 1926 everything remained unchanged.

Czechoslovak Sport Union was so dampened by the disputes between individual associations and by being defeated by the leadership of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee that it was disbanded in December 1927. At that time, however, at the initiative of the Football Association and its chairman Rudolf Pelikán, a new central organization of Czechoslovak sport was being formed – the Czechoslovak All-Sport Committee. It was from within this organization that new impulses to change the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee emerged in the following year.

A decisive confrontation occurred after the 9th Olympic Games, which were held in 1928 in Amsterdam. In Antwerp, eight years earlier, the Olympic flag and oath of competitors were newly introduced. During the Games in Paris in 1920, the participants could enjoy the Olympic village for the very first time. And now the Dutch capital was the first to light the Olympic Flame and the parade at the opening ceremony was headed, also for the first time, by Greek athletes.

The widowed Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský wanted to resign as the Chairman of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee as soon as the Games were over: "My quest in the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee had come to an end. My age and the awareness that my strength and abilities were sufficient no longer and eventually the death of my wife, my precious colleague even in the matters of Olympism, urged me to hand over the chairmanship of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee"¹⁹. Once again, his resignation was rejected. In early March 1929, at another plenary meeting of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee, the Chairman of the Rowing Union, Jaroslav Čížek, presented his new proposal of amending the statutes of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee. This time, however, he wanted to preserve the autonomy of the Olympic Committee including its right to make the final decision about the final make-up of the Olympic team. Regular members of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee, however, were supposed to be only the delegates of sports federations and meritorious officials; as far as ministries were concerned, their role was to be of an advisory nature only. The proposal was a compromise between the three-year-old suggestion of the Czechoslovak

¹⁹ Guth-Jarkovský's letter to the first Vice-President of ČsOV Zdeněk Kruliš from 18.08.1928. Published in: J.S. Guth-Jarkovský, *Paměti II*, pp. 150–151.

Sport Union and the stance of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee. However, it provoked a lengthy and stormy debate, which seemed to be never-ending. Guth-Jarkovský did his best to interrupt the discussion by offering his resignation, but as he hadn't been even heard out, he simply stood up and went home.

It wasn't until two weeks later that the crisis within Czechoslovak Olympism was resolved. When the resignation of Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský had been finally accepted, the representatives of the opposing sports federations took control of the Olympic Committee, in which only the Treasurer, Rudolf Richter, was the last remaining 'old' official. Besides the new Chairman of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee, Josef Gruss, the most active members were also Jaroslav Čížek and František Widimský²⁰. It didn't take long, however, before the new officials resorted to the very same managerial methods of their predecessors. A year later, Chairman Josef Gruss said the following words at the plenary meeting of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee: "Care must be taken that we keep working along the same lines as the previous committees"²¹. The thing was that it soon became apparent that the promotion of interests of individual sport federations had a most debilitating effect on the management of the Czechoslovak Olympic Movement.

Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský, however, hadn't completely left the Olympic Movement. He remained a member of the International Olympic Committee, in which he had been the doyen since 1925. He kept presenting the requirements of the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee and was a close advisor of Josef Gruss in all-important matters. At the end of May 1930, at the 9th Olympic Congress in Berlin, he introduced him alongside Rudolf Kaiser and František Widimský into the international Olympic family. When Gruss requested that Czechoslovakia be represented not by one but two delegates in the International Olympic Committee, he fully supported him although he must have been well-aware that they wouldn't be successful in this matter.

Unless Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský was short of money to travel, he kept attending all regular meetings of the International Olympic Committee – in 1931 in Barcelona, two years later in Vienna and then in Athens. He only missed the meeting during the 10th Olympic Games in Los Angeles. However, he no longer wrote reports about them, as nobody was interested. "No-one asked me for such a thing, neither a daily paper, nor a journal", he later ruefully noted in the *Star* magazine.

In March 1934, he was visited in Náchod by a Czechoslovak Olympic Committee delegation consisting of Josef Gruss, František Widimský and Rudolf Richter who arrived to consult with him on the participation of Czechoslovak athletes at the 11th Olympic Games, which were to be held in Berlin in 1936.

²⁰ For more see J. Kössl, *Dějiny československého olympijského hnutí*, pp. 57–59.

²¹ ČsOV meeting minutes from 25.03.1930. The National Archive Prague, ČsVO fond.

When Adolf Hitler had come to power in January 1933, however, the choice of the International Olympic Committee began to be seriously questioned. The persecution of political parties of the opposition and especially of German citizens of Jewish ancestry ignited protests in the U.S.A. and later also in Europe. At the Olympic meeting in Vienna in June 1933, however, President Baillet-Latour and other members of the IOC were assured by their German colleagues Theodor Lewald and Karl von Halt that the Games would be held in accordance with the spirit of the Olympic Charter and that the Germans of Jewish origin would enjoy the same rights as other German athletes²², Guth-Jarkovský had also succumbed to this illusion and despite the numerous critical voices that could be heard all over Czechoslovakia, he respected the view of the IOC.

In November 1935, under the influence of Guth-Jarkovský, the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee issued the following statement: “The Czechoslovak Olympic Committee submitted the application for the 11th Olympic Games, and therefore considers this as being true to its word as far as sending representatives to the Games is concerned. The Olympic Games had been assigned to Germany for the upcoming year. The IOC, in which the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee has full confidence, keeps ward over their execution and it can be therefore expected that the Olympic Games in Germany will be performed strictly in accordance with the spirit of Olympism”²³.

As early as on October 25, 1935, the Czechoslovak Olympic Committee awarded the weightlifter Vaclav Pšenička with the first Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský Prize for the best performance in Czechoslovak sport. The vanity of the ‘old man’ could have been fully satiated after reading that “this is the first time in the history of Czechoslovak sport that the great work of a significant living personality, who has selflessly worked for the glory of the nation both at home and abroad for over three decades, will be honoured in a dignified fashion at last” in the daily papers.

The Secretary General of the Organising Committee, Carl Diem, introduced another novelty for the 11th Olympic Games – a torch relay of the Olympic Flame from ancient Olympia to Berlin. Several interesting incidents connected with this issue occurred in Czechoslovakia. Feelings of resentment were aroused as soon as the poster of the Organizing Committee portraying the route of the relay appeared, since Czechoslovakia was depicted without the border territories occupied by German inhabitants. There were even several attempts to extinguish the Olympic Flame later. Guth-Jarkovský’s journey to Berlin in July 1936 caused considerable harm to his reputation. As a member of the International Olympic Committee, he attended the opening ceremony in the company of Adolf Hitler and other Nazi officials. To make matters worse, he even raised his hand in the

²² The Official Bulletin of IOC, 24, June 1933, p. 10.

²³ Národní listy from 10.11.1935.

Nazi salute at the stadium; alongside other IOC members. This was something that the domestic public could never forgive him.

This was one of the main reasons why Guth-Jarkovský gradually withdrew into his Náchod solitude. The swan song of his 'Olympic' life could have been the very last attendance of the meeting of the International Olympic Committee before the new war broke out, which was held in London, in June 1939. But at that time, he no longer represented an independent state, but the occupied Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, which was entirely dependent on Nazi Germany.

At first, Guth-Jarkovský refused to go to London. But he was eventually convinced by the Secretary General of the Olympic Committee, František Widimský and the Protectorate Minister of Social and Health Administration, Vladislav Klumpar, that he should attend the meeting in the very interest of the nation, to try to raise the question of the international position of the Czechs both in the world of sport and beyond. The decision of the Reich Commissioner for Sport, Hans von Tschammer und Osten, from April 1939, based on which apolitical sports clubs and federations had been preferred to the politically-oriented Sokol, seemed to work in his favour. Moreover, the independent participation of the Czechs in international sports organizations and in the Olympic Games was fully approved of. However, Guth-Jarkovský's journey to London was eventually thwarted by the State Secretary of the Protectorate, Karl Hermann Frank, at the very last moment²⁴. And that was the end of the Olympic career of Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský.

Three months after his death in January 1943, Josef Gruss and František Widimský convened a special meeting of the Olympic Committee. There was only one item on its agenda – 'a voluntary termination of all its activities'. It was the second time that this organization, co-established by Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský in the late 19th Century, had met such a fate.

Resources and literature

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²⁴ For more see F. Kössl, *Dějiny československého olympijského hnutí*, pp. 86–88; compare also documents 53 to 59 in *Dokumentace k dějinám českého olympismu 2*, pp. 143–156.

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Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský w ruchu olimpijskim okresie międzywojennego

Streszczenie

Artykuł śledzi działalność Jiříego Stanislava Guth-Jarkovského w wymienionym okresie, zarówno na scenie ojczystej, jak i międzynarodowej. W nowym państwie, jakim była Czechosłowacja, trzeba było zorganizować nowy Czechosłowacki Komitet Olimpijski, który miał reprezentować sportowców wszystkich narodowości. Jednak postępowało to bardzo opornie. Wobec rosnącego w siłę autorytetu stowarzyszeń sportowych, ich młodzi działacze domagali się również większego udziału w decyzjach podejmowanych przez CKOl. Dlatego też, w drugiej połowie lat 20. XX w. nastąpił kryzys w Czechosłowackim Komitecie Olimpijskim, na który Guth-Jarkovský zareagował ustępując ze swego stanowiska. Niemniej, przez cały okres międzywojnia pozostał on aktywnym członkiem Międzynarodowego Komitetu Olimpijskiego. Na początku piastował stanowisko Sekretarza Generalnego, później został członkiem zarządu. Aktywnie uczestniczył w przygotowaniu i przyjęciu Karty Olimpijskiej oraz w organizacji 8. Kongresu Olimpijskiego w Pradze w 1925 roku. Jednak w 1936 roku jego reputacji bardzo zaszkodziło poparcie, jakiego udzielił organizacji X Igrzysk Olimpijskich w zdominowanym przez nazistów Berlinie.

Słowa kluczowe: Jiří Guth-Jarkovský, Czechosłowacki Komitet Olimpijski, Czechosłowacki Ruch Olimpijski, 8. Kongres Olimpijski.