

LEON ŠTUKELJ, OLYMPIC CHAMPION 1924 IN GYMNASTICS. PERFORMANCES AND LEGACY

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Abstract

Olympic champion in the general event in gymnastics at the 8th Olympiad in 1924, Leon Štukelj performed remarkably in international competitions. This article proposes to analyze the innovative character of the performance carried out by the gymnast of the Yugoslavian team, to appreciate the context of its realization and to evaluate his legacies. Through his performance, Štukelj paved the way to major evolutions in gymnastics, especially in the rings event where he excelled. Certain technical regulations of international gymnastics seem to have been especially inspired by the elements he performed in 1924. Štukelj was also considered an emblematic figure of the educational method developed by the Yugoslav Sokols. As a consequence, his imprint as a symbol of a moral and physical system of training was also very strong. The paper is positioned in the field of cultural history. It aims to study the evolution of Štukelj's performance and legacy. In addition to the historiography of the 1924 Olympic Games, it uses various primary sources: the French daily press published on the occasion of the 1924 Olympic Games, the archives of the Lausanne Olympic Study Center, the archives of the city of Colombes, the official reports of the 1924, 1928 and 1936 Olympic Games, the archives of the International Gymnastics Federation and Štukelj's autobiography (1989).

Keywords: *Štukelj, Olympic Games 1924, Gymnastics, Legacy, Sokol.*

INTRODUCTION

The sporting career of Leon Štukelj, Olympic champion in 1924 and multiple medalist later on, was special in many respects. The Slovenian gymnast (Yugoslav at that time) succeeded in remaining at the highest level in his sport for many years. In fourteen years, from 1922 to 1936, he accumulated a remarkable total of seventeen world awards.

The special place of Leon Štukelj in the history of gymnastics led us to analyze the conditions that made his emergence as a champion possible, as well as his role in

the evolution of gymnastic techniques: was he an innovator or was he simply a lucky beneficiary of changes in the sport regulations? It is also relevant to go back to the impression made by this Slovenian gymnast in France, a country where he acceded to the international scene for the first time in the beginning of the 1920s. How was he presented and perceived in the French press during the Olympic Games in 1924? Was he valued for his athletic performance? For his nationality? Or was he, rather, presented as the emblematic representative of a special method of

physical and moral education? What is Leon Štukelj's final legacy?

We will first argue that the context of the 1924 Olympic Games was favorable to major changes in the definition of gymnastic excellence and that the new regulations opened opportunities for new profiles of gymnasts. We will then analyze the gymnastic performances by the Slovenian gymnast Leon Štukelj during the Olympic week in 1924. Finally, we will use a media analysis to come to conclusions about the legacy of Leon Štukelj's performances at the 8th Olympic Games.

METHODS

Despite his record, Leon Štukelj has not been the subject of extensive biographical research, neither by historians of Olympism nor by political historians, apart from the two short articles devoted to him by Slovenian historian Vlado Bevc in *Smiling Slovenia* (2008, p. 73 and 74-78). However, the current paper follows and completes a few earlier investigations (Froissart, T., Villaret, S., 2008; Froissart, T., 2008; Froissart, T., 2010). To carry out this study, we used Slovenian works, the proceedings of the 1998 colloquium (Štukelj L. & Francek J., 1998) and the major work in four volumes by French historian Thierry Terret, *Les Paris des Jeux Olympiques de 1924* (2008). Our primary sources include the archives of the Olympic Study Center in Lausanne, the archives of the city of Colombes, the official reports of the Olympic Games of 1924, 1928 and 1936, the archives of the International Gymnastics Federation and Štukelj's autobiography (1989).

The study also includes an analysis of the French daily press published during the 1924 Olympic Games to evaluate the way Štukelj was presented by journalists when the champion was at the peak of his sports career. A study of the main French national dailies of the period has been carried out with a two-fold approach. First, we

analyzed a selection of the press articles dealing with the gymnastics events of the 8th Olympic Games published between Thursday 17 and Monday 21 July 1924. Particular attention has been paid to the newspapers published on 20 and 21 July that reported on the day dedicated to gymnastic performances, including: *L'Auto*, *La Croix*, *Echo d'Alger*, *Echo d'Oran*, *Echo de Paris*, *Excelsior*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Gaulois*, *Le Grand Echo du Nord*, *l'Homme libre*, *l'Humanité*, *L'intransigeant*, *Le Journal*, *La Lanterne*, *La Liberté*, *Le Matin*, *L'Œuvre*, *Paris midi*, *Le Petit parisien*, *Le Populaire*, *La Presse*, *Le radical*, *Le siècle*, *Le Temps*. These daily newspapers belong either to the general press or to the sporting press. They mirrored the large diversity of France's political orientations at the time. A second investigation was then carried out by searching the same corpus of newspapers for key words (Štukelj, gymnastics, Sokol) in the period when Štukelj took part in competitions as a gymnast or a trainer. This last analysis was based on the Gallica database of the National Library of France.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A favorable context for new forms of performances in gymnastics.

The 8th Olympic Games took place in Paris, between March 15 and July 27, 1924. They brought together nearly 6,000 athletes from 45 nations and saw the United States dominating the event. The Yugoslav delegation in Paris did not belong to the most represented nations: with 201 athletes, the country took part in 8 of the 19 sporting events of the Olympic program and finished at the 14th place in the ranking of nations. It however finished third in gymnastics, a result to which Leon Štukelj made a decisive contribution by winning the individual gymnastics event.

It, however, appears that the Olympic title was partly the consequence of favorable circumstances that occurred in

1924. During the Paris Olympic Games, the gymnastics competition included the usual six apparatus (floor exercises, pommel horse, still rings, vault, parallel bars, horizontal bar) to which climbing a rope was added. It is important to mention that the previous World Championships in Ljubljana in 1922 were much more open (Barrull, R., 1984). They included four apparatus (parallel bars, horizontal bar, still rings, pommel horse) and also athletic events: the competitors took part in three group events (Preliminary); they also competed in swimming 50m freestyle, and in track and field disciplines including 100m sprint, high jump with hard springboard and shot put (7.257 kg).

In 1924, the transition from gymnastics which was based on a general and polyvalent physical education concept to gymnastics which was progressively more oriented toward the use of pendular apparatus was engendered by a new generation of champions. By refocusing around two large types of events that required comparable physical qualities, the Paris Olympic program changed the very nature of the expected performances. Whether on apparatus where they swayed while swinging, or in events which favored acrobatic jumps, gymnasts had to extract themselves from gravity. Therefore, those who combined low body weight with thin and protruding muscles were more likely to be successful. With a height of 1.61 m and weight of 51 kg, Štukelj presented the ideal morphotype.

The exclusion of track and field events from the Paris gymnastics program encouraged new athletic profiles of slender and agile men who were able to exploit their body weight / muscle power ratio, and weakened the chances of strong and heavy muscular men. Thus, the official report of the Olympic Games explained the poor results of the Luxembourg team in rope climbing by the fact that these gymnasts “were certainly the heaviest of the group” (Official Report of the 1924 Olympic Games, p. 356). This

reorientation was supported by Charles Cazalet, the president of the Union of Gymnastic Societies of France (1896) and the future president of the International Gymnastics Federation in 1924, who gave Štukelj the opportunity to exploit his physical and morphological qualities and to establish himself as the best gymnast of the time.

Štukelj at the Olympic Games of Paris 1924

Leon Štukelj's gymnastic skills were built during childhood, through his education at the Sokol of Novo Mesto. His favorite events were revealed in 1922, during the World Championships organized in his country. In Ljubljana, he won the parallel bars, the horizontal bar and the still rings, finished second on the pommel horse and tenth on the floor exercises. He was second in the rope climbing event. He was, however, less brilliant in the athletic events, especially in the shot put where his performance did not allow him to be ranked or receive a single point.

Luck is part of sport. During the 1924 Olympic Games, circumstances handicapped Štukelj's direct competitors and sometimes even led to their elimination. For example, on the evening of the first day, the weather deteriorated which mattered as the gymnastics events were held outside. The wind and the diminishing temperature considerably hampered the Italian and Swiss teams who were performing in the horizontal bar event at the same time (Official Report of the 1924 Olympic Games, p. 346). Members of both teams who had a real chance of success were interrupted. Later, in the parallel bars event, two members of the Czechoslovak team fell and Jindruch, another direct competitor of Štukelj, was forced to retire with a knee injury. Finally, Leon Štukelj, who did not present himself as the favorite, managed to use all his moral and physical qualities in a situation which turned out to be favorable for him. He thereby revealed another facet of his

talent by showing remarkable tactical intelligence. There, he succeeded on the grassed surface of the stadium of

Colombes, using his adaptive qualities and agility he had built during the lessons at Sokol some years earlier.

Table 1
Ranking of Leon Štukelj during the 8th Olympiad (OG Paris 1924).

Horizontal bar	Parallel bars	Still rings	Rope climb	Vault (in length)	Vault (in width)	Pommel horse	General ranking
1st	20th	4th	10th	4th	17th	10th	1rst

Table 2
Score obtained by Leon Štukelj on pendula Apparatus in the Paris 1924 Olympic Games. Source: Official Report of the Olympic Games 1924, pp. 346-366.

Apparatus	Compulsory exercises				Free exercises				Full score
	Walking to apparatus /0,5	Score /10	Return from apparatus /0,5	Total	Walkin g to apparatus /0,5	Score /10	Return from appara tus /0,5	Total	
Horizontal bar	0,5	9,23	0,5	10,23	0,5	8,50	0,5	9,50	19,73
Parallel bars	0,5	9,27	0,5	10,27	0,5	9,13	0,5	10,13	20,40
Still rings	0,5	9,33	0,5	10,33	0,5	10*	0,5	11,00	21,33
Pommel horse	0,5	9,17	0,5	10,17	0,5	8,20	0,5	9,20	19,37

*Perfect 10 score.

Table 3.
Individual all-around and pendula Apparatus ranking achieved by L. Štukelj during international events (compulsory + free).

	Parallel bars	Horizontal bar	Pommel horse	Still rings	General ranking
1922 WC Ljubljana	1	1	2	1	7
1924 OG Paris	20	1	10	4	1
1926 WC Lyon	3	1	14	1	2
1928 OG Amsterdam	5	13	13	1	3
1930 WC Luxembourg	NC	3	NC	NC	
1931 WC Paris	2	10	3	2	1
1936 OG Berlin	22	35	39	2	32

In bold: the podiums.

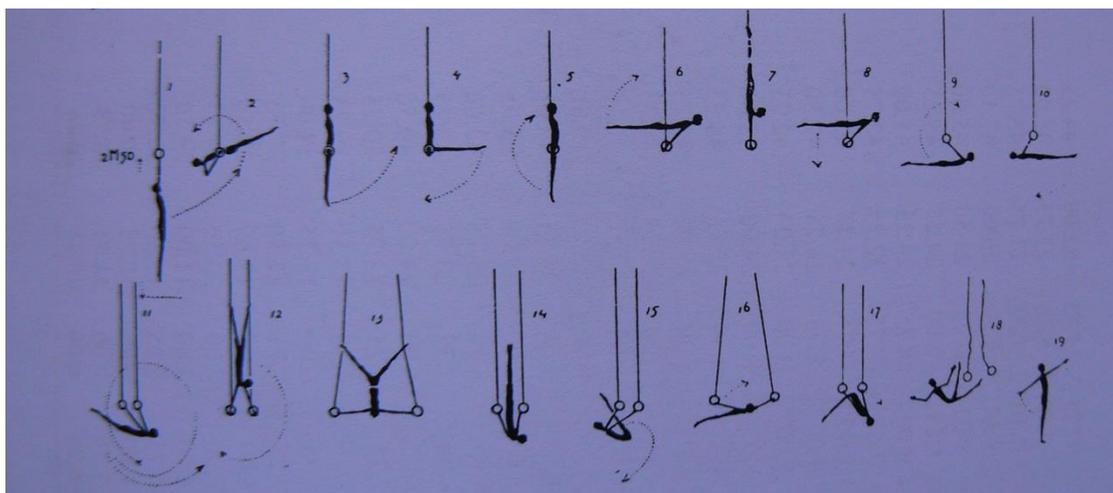


Figure 1. Rings compulsory exercises of the OG 1924. 8th Olympic Games Amsterdam 1928, Executive Committee.

The competition was, however, fierce, especially with the Czechoslovak gymnasts who had also trained as Sokols. Štukelj succeeded on still rings, demonstrating very difficult skills in which, in addition to two horizontal planks and the iron cross, he distinguished himself with the “inverted iron cross”, which consisted of a backrest upside down with vertical legs and horizontal arms. Despite his technical prowess, however, Štukelj did not win a medal on still rings. He was slightly behind after the compulsory exercises where he totaled only 9.33 points and lost his chances for the podium. Although he obtained the maximum score of 11 points in free exercises (out of 11 possible points), he finally finished fourth in this event. At least his last performance in free exercises positioned him as an outstanding specialist in this event.

Considering the whole competition, Štukelj's performances were not enough to outclass his Czechoslovak rivals. His Olympic title was actually rather a consequence of other points of the sport regulations. Leon Štukelj obtained the maximum “presentation score” on each apparatus, not only for “walking to the apparatus” where he received the maximum half-point at each passage granted for the quality of this walk, but also for the “return from the apparatus”

where he obtained two additional points on four apparatus. His direct competition did not manage to achieve the same. Czechoslovakian Prazack, second in the all-around, was penalized after returning from the fixed bar practice (Reck) where he only obtained 0.47 points. Supcik, another Czechoslovak who was third in the all-around competition, was also penalized for the way back from the imposed fixed bar exercise with a score of 0.43 point, and another time when he returned from the pommel horse where his score was 0.40 point. Leon Štukelj's automaton movement, on the other hand, pushed him far ahead of his opponents, leading to the supreme title. His walking skill even passed down to posterity by the grace of poetry since it was mentioned in the poem *Gymnastics* by Géo Charles, the 1924 Olympic champion in the “art and literature competition”: “Who has glimpsed the Yugoslavs, their Štukelj, automatons” (Géo Charles, 1925).

The results indicate that Štukelj and Prazack scored almost identical points. Had the latter obtained the maximum result on the return score he would have been crowned the Olympic champion, since 17 thousandths of a point separated the two competitors: 110.340 points for Štukelj and 110.323 points for Prazack.

In Paris, Leon Štukelj did not shine in acrobatics (floor, vault), nor in the various events where he obtained marks of 10 in the rope climbing with a performance of 8 seconds and 2/5; 9.91 on the vault in length, and 9.60 on the vault in broad. On the other hand, his remarkable capacities in the pendula apparatus (still rings, horizontal bar, parallel bars) played an essential role and helped him shoot ahead of his opponents.

In Amsterdam in 1928, as gymnast teams from Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia competed for the top steps on the podium, Štukelj excelled in the rings event and won the gold medal as well as two bronze medals in both the individual all-around and the team competition.

During the 1930s, competition became more uncertain with the appearances of Swiss Georges Miez and Czechoslovakians Ladislav Vacha and Jan Gajdos. Leon Štukelj won no event in Luxembourg at the 1930 international tournament nor in the individual competition at the World Championship in Paris in 1931. As a good Sokol member he persevered, however, and obtained a silver medal in the rings event during the final event of the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936: he finished ahead of the German Mathias Volz in his specialty with a total of 18.867 points, and was only beaten by his compatriot Alois Hudec by a very small margin. On this occasion, Yugoslavia lost the leadership it shared with Czechoslovakia, but Štukelj's sport longevity remained remarkable.

What is Štukelj's legacy in France?

Paris was the land of Štukelj's first Olympic consecration. What remained of the Slovenian gymnast in France?

Does Štukelj leave a sporting legacy?

Štukelj was only the sixth member to be selected for the national team at the World Championship won by the Czechoslovakian team over Yugoslavia

and France in Ljubljana on August 11 and 12, 1922. He finished seventh overall but was victorious in the unofficial rankings established on rings (19.75), parallel bars (20) and horizontal bar (19.75) (Barrull R., p. 376). During the competition he obtained a total of 124.25 points or 82.83% of the maximum possible total. This performance was, however, insufficient to win him a medal. Štukelj was outpaced by his teammates Peter Šumi, Stane Derganc and Stane Vidmar (Štukelj, L., 1989, 86) and did not even position himself as the leader of his team. In addition, Czechoslovakia performed extremely well and won the Championships with two of their gymnasts on the podium: Frantisek Pechacek shared the first place with Peter Šumi, Miroslav Klinger finished third and Miroslav Jindruch fifth. The domination of the Slavs and the superiority of the Sokols were absolute since the first ten places were all taken by these two nations. Two years later, during the Olympic Games in Paris, these two countries again featured as favorites.

The gymnastic heritage of the Slavic nations can be appreciated through the testimony of French gymnast R. Morin who finished 26th at the competition in Ljubljana. He provided an analysis of the transformations in modern gymnastics as discovered by the public during the 8th Olympic Games in 1924. For him, the evolution toward momentum rather than strength was "already consistent among foreign competitors who presented free exercises that were more linked, more flexible" from 1922 onward (Morin, 1948, 241). This was enough to feature on the front page of the newspaper *Le Matin* (July 20, 1924) with headline "Honor to gymnastics at the Olympic games" and praise for the "seven champions" and the "super champion" Štukelj.

Štukelj thus embodied the image of the modern gymnast. The particular influence he exerted can be analyzed in particular on his specialty: the rings event. Štukelj was one of the first to perform the

static “overturned iron cross” in competition. When comparing the exercises in the rings event and the relevant regulations in 1924 and in 1928, it can be concluded that the official regulations took notice of his innovations. In 1924, the compulsory exercises were mainly static postures: three planks, a square, two balances and the iron cross. Strength prevailed and two exercises only were carried out with momentum (Official Report 1924, 353). Four years later, the dominant techniques in the rings event seemed to have changed: the entry (1, 2, 3) was carried by momentum, followed by a series of strength exercises (4 to 10) including the reversed cross with the feet on the cables; exercises with momentum (11 to 19), and the exit in rotation. The required movement was therefore composed of an alternation of static and dynamic elements.

A careful observation of the compulsory exercises in 1928 shows that the construction and organization of the elements in the rings event reveals similarities with the free exercise carried out by Štukelj in 1924. This is especially the case for elements 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, and 13 listed in the following diagram which represent the compulsory exercises in 1928. Only the exit (elements 14 to 19) was actually different from the compulsory one in 1928.

We find neither the iron cross nor the overturned iron cross among the 1928 compulsory exercises. Yet element 13 of the diagram still requires to perform the “reversed cross” with, the possibility of not maintaining the position. Thus, it seems that the compulsory exercises were seen as an anticipation of the coming evolution of gymnastic techniques: to propose not to maintain the position and to require that the feet touch the cables for help were a clear encouragement for the gymnasts to perform this difficult element. Without generalizing, this example shows that Leon Štukelj contributed to the evolution of gymnastics through the compulsory

exercises on the rings event. Could such influence on the sport regulations be also found in the press?

The image of Štukelj in the French press

Astonishingly enough for a country with a gymnastic tradition, the French press did not really pay too much attention to gymnastics during the Olympic Games in Paris. This was partly due to the low popularity of this competition where the number of spectators was relatively low. According to the official report of the Games, there were only 1911 spectators, including 707 who paid for their seat who, for instance, attended the gymnastics events on July 17. There were 1863 spectators (654 with a paid ticket) on July 18, even fewer the next day, and finally 4553 spectators on Sunday, July 20, including 3276 who paid for their ticket. This result led the newspaper *La Liberté* (July 21, 1924) to claim that gymnastics failed to become popular: “Gymnastics is completely neglected by the public which pays attention to gymnasts only very rarely”. However, despite this very modest media covering, Leon Štukelj received special attention, with at least two types of media treatment.

The first series of journalistic chronicles focused on Štukelj’s exemplary performances and techniques. For example, famous French gymnast and promoter of the Hebertist physical education method D. Strohl regretted in *L'intransigeant* (July 25, 1924, 4) that the conditions needed for high performances were not appropriate, but he presented Štukelj as a brilliant gymnast whose practice augured the qualities of the gymnasts of the future: “Why this immense desert of Colombes? A beautiful gymnasium would have been a better setting to showcase the most robust fellows that the games have produced: Štukels (sic) the Yugoslav, so powerful and so flexible, [...]”.

Another media register was used to associate the Slovenian champion with the

Sokol movement of which he was described as an emblematic representative. The image of Štukelj as the man of the Sokols was even more emphasized than his sporting image. Thus, when the daily newspaper *Le matin* decided to put the Olympic champion of the individual all-around on the front page of its edition of July 21, 1924, the decision was made not to use a photograph of the gymnast in action. Rather, Štukelj appeared on a medallion, in bust, wearing the hat with the falcon plume, i.e., the emblem of the Sokols. Likewise, in the July 23 edition (p.4), *L'indépendant des Basses Pyrénées* mentions Štukelj's performance, but the newspaper amalgamates the different Slavic nations where the Sokols were active and claims that "Czech-Slovak Štukels (so spelled) won the individual tournament in front of two of his compatriots".

This association of Štukelj with the Sokol movement in the French press could also be seen in the suggestive slip of the newspaper *La Croix* (July 20, 1924, p.3) which changed the spelling of the champion's name to "Štukols", i.e., a contraction of both the gymnast's name and the Slavic gymnastic movement: Stu [kelj] [So] kol. Beyond this anecdote it should be remembered that the very popular sports daily newspaper *L'Auto* regularly underlined the action of the Sokols for the development of national identity and consciousness in the Slavic countries (Busseuil, 2020; Thiesse, 1999) at the time. The exemplarity (Saint-Martin, 2002, 43-57) of the Yugoslav Sokols was frequently praised (*L'Auto*, November 14, 1935, p. 6; *L'Auto*, August 2, 1935, p. 1 and 4, August 3, 1935, p. 1 and 5 and 2 August 1936, p. 5). It is true that the links between the promoters of French gymnastics and those of the Sokols had been forged a long time before (Cesky Svet Sokol, 1912), as recalled by Smutny, the president of the Czechoslovak Sokol in Paris, who was the first to invite a section of the Czech Sokol to the Federal Festival

of Vincennes in 1889 (*L'auto*, August 27, 1929).

This close relationship between France and the Sokol movement was still extremely strong in the early 1930. Delegations of the Czech and Yugoslav Sokols were thus invited to the Federal Festival of the Union of Gymnastic Societies of France in 1931. Conversely, the French gymnastics leaders went to Prague to attend the mass performances of the Sokols (Slets) in 1932 when Under-Secretary of State for Physical Education and Professor at the University of Lyon André Latarjet was accompanied by several delegations from large cities (Paris, Marseille and Lille) (Saint-Martin J., 2002).

During these encounters, the Sokols and Štukelj were sometimes glorified. This was, for instance, the case during the World Championship in 1931, when the newspaper *Le Petit Parisien* on July 12, 1931 (p 4.) analyzed the French chances. They observed the Slavs in training and to journalists the Sokols appeared once again as the favorites. Especially when "among them are eight gymnastic champions including Štukelj, the World Champion at the 1924 Olympics, and Primožič, winner of the International Gymnastics Championships which took place last year in Luxembourg". Thus, Štukelj was still considered a formidable opponent and the gymnastics he practiced with strength and flexibility still an example to follow. The champion's impact on the press in France seemed to last a very long time: 15 years after his victory at the 1924 Olympic Games, he was still presented as a talented coach during a meeting at the Pierre de Coubertin stadium in Paris (*L'Auto*, May 13, 1939).

CONCLUSION

The innovative nature of Štukelj's practice is indisputable, partly because the gymnastics he performed was different in the sense that certain elements such as the

“inverted iron cross” were previously unrecognized, but also because he knew how to use his Sokol education to optimize the opportunities of the sport regulation at a time of technical changes.

Štukelj did not transform the practice of gymnastics as a whole. He nevertheless inaugurated a change in the ring techniques. He indeed made the most of the alternation of strength and momentum as well as new qualities, which were identified in the official report of the 1924 Olympic Games as follows “[...] an incomparable lightness and flexibility at the service of superior technique, considerable endurance and strength of will” (J. Dalbanne, *Official Report of the 1924 Olympic Games*, p. 339). Štukelj's technique and strength were transcended by the values he held as a Sokol. He himself explained how much he was carried by the education he received within the Sokols; it strengthened his patriotic convictions and also built the rigor and stubbornness needed later for training. Sokol education was the basis of Štukelj's remarkable will mentioned by J. Dalbanne.

As a champion without spectators in Paris in 1924, then as a champion underestimated in regards of the gigantism of the Games in Berlin in 1936, Štukelj remained relatively unknown to the general public. His symbolic rebirth came later and dates back to the end of the 20th century. His fame was revived with Slovenia's independence in the 1990s (25 June 1991). The country, freed from communism, caught the attention of Western countries. The context oversized the symbols of identity of the new nation. Now the oldest Olympic champion, and still very valiant, Leon Štukelj offered a positive evocation of non-violent combativeness. He also cultivated this image, and liked to recall that he had always wanted, through his membership in the Sokols, to train his body and his mind, and not to subscribe to any political orientation.

Everything suggests that the iconic power of a champion like Štukelj, who had been educated in the Sokol of Novo Mesto, was thus reinforced. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, Štukelj was approached to become one of the founding members of the Slovenian Olympic Committee, finally created on October 19, 1991, and recognized by the IOC in February 1992. This is also why when in 1994, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the Olympic movement, the IOC wished to honor those who have contributed to the development of Olympism, Štukelj re-emerged. After fifty years in the shadow, he embarked on a second career in sports and became an ambassador of both the values of Olympism and the virtues of physical practice. As he grew older, he attracted admiration of observers who were seduced by his dynamism. As the oldest living Olympic champion, he was invited to the opening ceremony of the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games where he carried the Olympic torch. In 1997, at the age of 98, he was inducted into the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame as the longest-serving Olympic gold medalist alive. The following year, a few months before he passed away, his hometown of Novo Mesto organized a ceremony in his honor, the Ave Triumphator, to celebrate his one hundredth anniversary (Berger, Kuljaj, 1998). On top of this, various events were organized, including a scientific conference on the theme “Sport, Health and Old Age” (International scientific meeting at the centenary of the Olympic champion Leon Štukelj: "Sport - Health - Old Age", 11-18 November 1998).

Like Hungarian gymnast Agnes Keleti, who is the current oldest Olympic champion (David & Dobor 2020), Leon Štukelj's legacy is undoubtedly linked to his longevity and vitality in view of his age and not only to his remarkable sports career and to its past performances. Through these values, it is more the impact of the Sokol education than our

remembrance of his gymnastic achievements that still live on.

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