

A.Chrobolovsky

The Jewish Sports Movement

(According to an Anniversary Publication)

The Jewish Gymnastics-Sporting Association¹

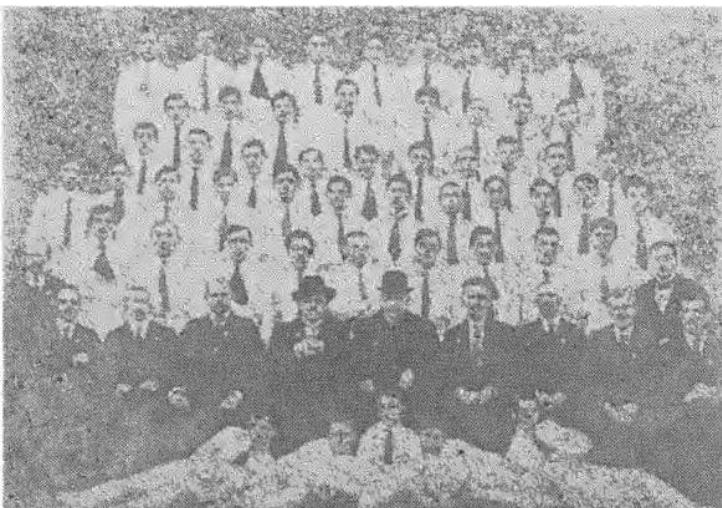
As in all of Poland, the Sports Movement emerged in Częstochowa as a result of the advancement of Jewish communal life, which began at the end of the 19th century and found expression in the Zionist and Socialist currents.

Already back in 1913, under Tsarist rule, a group was formed at the *Lira* with the purpose of establishing a sports association. Among others, Awner, A. Gonsiorowicz, M. Brum, A. Chrobolovsky [and] Dawid Krak belonged to this group. A performance was arranged at the *Lira* in support of this group. A request for authorisation, signed by Henryk Markusfeld, was presented to the governor in Piotrków. Mojsze Fajnkind of Piotrków, who had access to the "high windows", was the lobbyist. But no authorisation came.

The idea of a sports movement, however, penetrated ever deeper amongst the Częstochowa youth. In 1915, a group of sportsmen, among whom were the initiators of the sports club at the *Lira*, came to an agreement with the management of the Craftsmen's Club as regards forming a sports section in the Club's premises at Ogrodowa 22, where a low-price kitchen was located.

They were forced to postpone the first foundation meeting to another time, because the assembled youth demanded that the negotiations be carried out in Yiddish.

The first management committee of the Gymnastics-Sporting Association included W. Gostynski, Z. Szlezinger, L. Goldszajder, Eng. M. Milsztajn, Sz. Krauskop, M. Jaszajewicz, M. Brum, A. Gonsiorowicz, Ch. Kremski, J. Rozencwajg, H. Lajzerowicz, Sz. Halter, [and] M. Sztajnic. Henryk Markusfeld was chosen as honorary president.



*Members of the Gymnastics-Sporting Association
with the management committee*

The Association became very popular among the youth and the number of members soon reached 500.

The Association joined the Central Union of Jewish Gymnastics-Sporting Associations in Łódź. At the end of 1916, two delegates - Józef Aronowicz and Maks Brum - represented Częstochowa at the Union's founding conference in Łódź.

The Gymnastics-Sporting Association's first appearance took place on *Lag Ba'Omer*². Since then, the sportsmen have marched throughout the Częstochowa streets, every *Lag*

¹ [TN: Żydowskie Towarzystwo Gimnastyczno-Sportowe in Polish – or ŻTG-S.]

² [TN: Jewish festivity held in the summer.]

Ba'omer, with their banners and bands. The Jewish population of Częstochowa applauded enthusiastically every appearance of the sportsmen.

On 12th August 1917, a gymnastics tournament, with the participation of the sporting associations of Częstochowa, Tomaszów, Będzin and Sosnowiec, took place in Częstochowa. M. Krakowiak received the greatest distinctions for gymnastics, [and] J. ['] Fajga also distinguished himself - both were members of the Częstochowa ŻTG-S. At the second competition in Łódź, in 1918, the Częstochowa association took second place in gymnastics.

H. Halthausen led the sports exercises to the end of 1918. Later, the instructor of gymnastic exercises was J. ['] Krakowiak, who had completed an instructors' course of the Central Union in Łódź.

In 1916-1917, a drama section and a reading room, with the daily press and many periodic sports publications, existed at the Gymnastics-Sporting Association.

The question as to whether the team should be led in Yiddish or in Hebrew was the sharpest point of conflict in the Association. The majority of the Częstochowa ŻTG-S was for Yiddish and, due to this reason, the Association held back, for some time, from joining the Central Union in Łódź.

In 1919-1920, the Association was paralysed due to the Soviet-Polish War and the requisition of its premises by the Polish government.

In 1921, activity was renewed. A new management committee was elected, headed by A. Perec.

In 1925, the Association decided to join the Makabi¹ Union of Bielsko[-Biała]. The left-wing Yiddishist members voted against this resolution.

From the middle of 1922 until 5th May 1925, Dr Hipolit Gajsler was President of the Association. From May 1925 until August 1926, [the President was] Chaim Dawidowicz.

In 1925, the Association celebrated its tenth anniversary. Delegates from Warsaw, Sosnowiec, Będzin, Zawiercie, Wieluń, Bielsko[-Biała], Katowice, Tomaszów and [Czechowice-]Dziedzice came to the celebration. There was a parade in the Częstochowa streets, a gymnastics performance and a reception for the guests.

The Association also published an anniversary edition on the history of sport in Częstochowa, edited by Mendel Asz.

In the anniversary year, the management committee of the ŻTG-S consisted of Chaim Dawidowicz – President; Sz. Chajutin – Vice-President; A. Perec, H. Lajzerowicz, H. Tajchner, B. Kurland, L. Kryger, C. ['] Lichtensztajn, F. Kirszenblat, M. Proport, A. Wierzbicki, H. Gonsiorowicz, [and] J. Fajga [as management committee members], and a sports commission – F. Kirszenblat, M. Kremski, J. Rozencwajg, [and] M. Sztajnic. Sz. Chajutin was Chairman of the Anniversary Committee, [and] Osiasz Win [was] Chairman of the Financial Committee.

The Association had a football section. In 1923, the Association opened its own sports grounds for gymnastic exercises and light [viz. track and field] athletics.

In 1924, unification with the club "Sport" took place. The Association was in contact with the schools and *gimnazja*, for the purpose of drawing the youth into the Sports Movement. In that same period,

¹ [TN: Although the name is spelt "Maccabi" in English, we have used the Polish spelling found in the historical records.]

a musical band was formed in the Association, and a great popular assembly was held, with the participation of Sholem Asz.

In 1928, the Association joined the Yardenia² group, and a branch was opened in Krzepice. That same year, a cyclists' convention was held and three representatives of the Association – Sz. Chajutin, L. Wajs and H. Szaja - took part in the Kraków conference³, which created a Jewish council for physical education.

In January 1929, Sz. (Szmarjahu⁴) Chajutin died. He was one of the Association's most active figures, serving President from 1926 onwards. His death diminished the Association's activity for some time.



The Gymnastics-Sporting Association's cyclists' group

- Sports Director; L. Wajs - Manager, [and] R. Bryll, M. Horowicz, J. Fajga and N. Tajchner.

In August 1929, lawyer Lajb [Leon] Asz, [the Rabbi's son], occupied the office of President. Under his leadership, the Association, once more, developed a broad activity.

In 1933, unification with the Warta Sports Club and with the Ascola Club took place, under the name "ŻTG-S Makabi". The management committee which led to the unification was made up of Lajb Asz - President; Sz. Niemirowski, Dr D. Kagan, [and] Dr B. Epsztajn - Vice-Presidents; Eng. S. Kisn⁵; Miss H. Trajman - Secretary; E. Szmaragd

Askola Sports Club

The Askola Sports Club was founded in 1922 by a group of young people, under the name "Ha'Tzvi" [The Deer]. The Club was headed by C. [ż] Fajner, the Trembacki brothers, the Berkowicz brothers, the Miska brothers, H. Koplowicz and M. Tazewicz.

In 1925, the Club initially changed its name to "Makabi" but, as by the regulations of the Polish Football Union two sports associations in the same county could not have the same name, the name was changed to "Askola."

In 1928, the Club's energetic President, L. Herc, organised a cyclists' section – which, in 1930, participated in the chase for the championship of the city of Częstochowa.

During that same period, a drama section was founded at the Club, headed by Sz. Frank and L. Orbach, which put on several shows.

Askola, which from 1931 belonged to the Makabi Union, was the first to discard the slogan of unifying all three sports clubs in Makabi.

² [TN: A Zionist students organisation.]

³ [TN: It is unclear whether this is the same cyclists' convention mentioned above or a separate function.]

⁴ [TN: Szmerek in the official records.]

⁵ [TN: What his position was is not specified.]

Jewish Gymnastics-Sporting Association “Makabi”

The negotiations between the Gymnastics-Sporting Association [and the] Warta [Sports Club] dragged on for a long time before they united in *Makabi*. The ŻTG-S had had a populistic nationalist character from the start - [while] Warta had, for years, been controlled by assimilationist elements.

Kehilla President Jakow Rozenberg was the President of the Association, [and] Dr L. Goldman and Adv. Lajb Asz the Vice-Presidents.

In August 1933, the *Ha’Koach* [The Force] Sports Club, numbering twenty-three members, joined *Makabi*. The members of *Ha’Koach* in the management committee of *Makabi* were H. Zajdman and W. Owieczka.

Makabi comprised the following sections:

- light athletics and boxing - led by E. Szmaragd;
- gymnastics - led by H. Szaja and I. Rabinowicz;
- football - led by Ferens and later by M. Rozencwajg;
- sports games - led by G. Epsztajn and later by J. Fajga;
- table-tennis – led by A. [x] Horowicz.

The gymnastics and football sections were the busiest.

Makabi took part in the work for the benefit of the Kfar *Makabi* [M. Village] sports colony in the Land of Israel.

In 1934, a ski section was formed within *Makabi*.

Binder and Szajn from Częstochowa were part of the delegation of boxers, from the Polish *Makabi* Union, to the second Maccabiada⁶ in Tel-Aviv.

[The following individuals] completed instructors' courses and different sports camps: L. Wajs, R. Bryll and H. Birenholc – sports activists; J. Binder, J. Zilberberg and L. Przerowski – boxers; Misses E. Sztajer, H. Trajman and H. Goldsztajn – sports games, [and] A. Kapłan and H. Blausztajn – body exercises.

Doctors L. Goldman, B. Tenenbaum, D. Kagan, B. Epsztajn and S. Nowak carried out the medical supervision of the sportsmen.

In November 1934, *Makabi* organised a *Makabi* celebration with the participation of Mgr.⁷ M. Dikes, Vice-President of the Makabim [?] Union, including a literary evening and several concert evenings.

In 1935, *Makabi* celebrated the 20th anniversary of Jewish sport in Częstochowa and published an anniversary edition edited by Adv. Lajb Asz, with pictures of the managers, sports activists and members.

⁶ [TN: Early name of the Maccabiah, or Jewish Olympics.]

⁷ [TN: Polish abbreviation of “Magister” – meaning the holder of a “magisterijum” or Master’s degree.]