

The Book Committee

Dr Axer's *Gymnazijum*

One of the important, educational institutions in our city was Dr Axer's private *gymnazijum*.

Its founder, Dr Axer, showed much audacity and energy, creating with his own strength and on his own responsibility a private *gymnazijum* and setting it at a high standard.

Over time, a series of communal activists and, separately, parents of the children studying there, became convinced that this private *gymnazijum* deserved for the Jewish community to take it under its protection and to aid in its further growth.

(Sadly, the Axer *gymnazijum* archives met the same bitter end as all the Jewish archives of our city).

Therefore, in order to immortalise the gymnasium's name in "*Sefer Częstochowa*", we are forced to only utilise details which we have found in "*Unser Express*" [Our Exp.] (Częstochowa edition) No.137, dated 16th June 1936, regarding a parents' general meeting which was held on Sunday, 14th June 1936, in the over-filled hall of the Craftsmen's Club. There, it was also decided to create a Community Committee, which would see to the *gymnazijum*'s further growth and development.

The meeting was opened and chaired by the President of the Parents' Committee, the dentist Lajzerowicz, who delivered a report on the *gymnazijum*'s situation and proposed a plan regarding the support from the community that it could, and should, be granted.

Dr Axer then expounded on his *gymnazijum*'s first steps, prior to it earning the trust of Częstochowa Jewish parents, and on his plans for the future development of his life-project - the *gymnazijum*. He also expressed his hopes that, with the community's aid and also that of his students' parents, he would be able to fund his "dreams".

The same plan was also discussed at length by parents Feldberg, Zolondz and Mrs Rajch.

The meeting approved the proposition and also elected a committee to realise the project as soon as possible.

Concurrently, the Parents' General Meeting expressed its warm thanks to Director Dr Axer and to the entire teaching staff for the good education and broad knowledge which they gave the students and an especially warm blessing for those students who had completed their studies at Dr Axer's *gymnazijum*.

Following the distribution of diplomas by the Director Dr Axer, schoolgirl E. Majzner gave thanks on behalf of the graduates and also, in a well-composed report, spoke of what a Jewish *gymnazijum* gives Jewish schoolboys and schoolgirls, as a pointer for its future.

Graduate R. Gotlib also spoke along these lines.

The students then showed that the school had not only enriched them with wisdom, but also with artistic abilities.

The school cantor, very beautifully, recited Ch.N. Bialik's "*Mikrei Zion*" [Events of Z.] and schoolgirls Z. Opatowska and K. Cyper performed a dialogue about "a Heart", in which they showed that wealth and treasures have no value without a Jewish heart as well, for only a good heart is the greatest and most essential gift.

Next, the choir sang Beethoven's "The Skies Boast" [*Die Himmel Rühmen*], and a march from Handel's oratorio "*Judas Maccabaeus*" - "*Rejoice and be Happy*".

In the last part of the programme, schoolgirl M. Szlezinger recited a song by Friedrich Schiller in the original and, at the end, young Mania Jakubowicz read a contemporary satire about the world politics at that time, which was written and produced by the Director Dr Axer. An appearance was also made by puppets, which played their roles so successfully that, at times, it seemed that experienced actors were performing and not schoolchildren. For this, they were indeed given resounding applause by the exhilarated audience.

It must be noted that these roles were not easy ones. They portrayed the characters of an experienced journalist; Ghandi - the "seeker" of peace and rectitude; a rigid English diplomat, a representative of the Commonwealth; the dictator Mussolini; and the "Ideal Race" – the Nazis.

In conclusion, schoolgirl Epsztajn recited a song about Socrates and the choir sang the French National Anthem and the "*Hatikvah*".

This is all we can provide for future generations regarding "*Axer's Gymnazijum*".

* [Translator's note: The reference is most likely to the air in D major, "Rejoice, O Judah".]