

Wiesław PIĘTA

**TABLE TENNIS AMONG JEWS
IN POLAND (1924 – 1949)**

Częstochowa 2009

Recenzent

Professor Moshe ROSMAN

WIESŁAW PIĘTA ווייסל'ב פייטה)

ספר היובל
המוקדש לפימה בוריס
)Fima Borys(

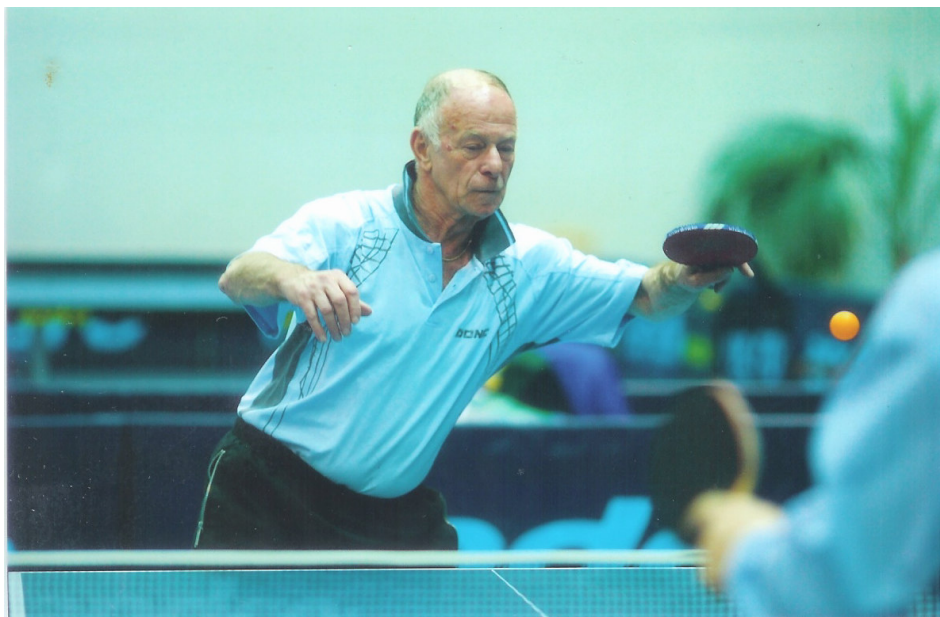
שנים שולחן

אצל יהודי פולין
(1949–1924)

2009 תל אביב

"גורלך אינו
תלוי בעושר ובשררה,
אלא בחברות עם בני אדם, אותם
הנך אוהב ומעריך."

ווייסל'ב פייטה



(Zawiercie פימה בוריס בעת טורניר אח"מ בזביירצ'יה)

(ששל הנהר בוג Brzeście **פימה בוריס** נולד ב-15 בנובמבר 1936, **בבוז'צ'יה**) (Eugenia) ושמות אחיו: **אוגניה** (Estera) **ואסתר** (Sender). שמות הוריו היו **סנדר** (Bug) (ילידת 1934), **משה** (יליד 1940) **ומרים** (ילידת 1947). בשנת 1946 היגר יחד עם משפחתו (**שלזיה תחתית**). שם סיים לימודיו היסודיים Ziebice מברית המועצות לפולין, **לזייביצה**) **בורוצ'לב VII** בשפת האידיש. בשנות החמישים המשיך את לימודיו ב**ביה"ס התיכון היהודי ה-1** . ביום 2 ביוני 1955 קיבל תעודת בגרות וב-1 באוקטובר של אותה שנה החל לימודי Wrocław) משפטים **באוניברסיטה של וורוצ'לב**. את לימודיו הפסיק עקב הגירתו לישראל בשנת 1957. לאחר הגעתו ל"ארץ הקודש" התקשר עם מפעלי הטבק "דובק" בפתח תקווה. בשנים 1958-1960 Hanna Howard שירת בצבא ההגנה לישראל. ב-1965 נשא לאשה את **חנה הורד**) (– 1973).² מלחמת יום כיפור¹ פעמיים גויס לצבא כאיש מילואים (מלחמת ששת הימים - 1967) נולדו לו שני ילדים (**מיכל**, **יורם**) ושישה נכדים. מאז שנות החמישים הוא עובד במפעלי הטבק, בהם עבר את כל דרגי הניהול. בשנים 1985-2006 מילא תפקיד מנהל המפעל של "דובק". ביום 1 בינואר 2007 קודם לתפקיד יועץ ראשי של הבעלים של מפעלי הטבק. פימה בוריס מחזיק באזרחות פולנית וישראלית.

קריירה ספורטיבית

עם עולם טניס השולחן **פימה בוריס** עשה הכרה בביה"ס היסודי **בזייביצה**. בהתחלה הוא התייחס למקצוע זה כמו לכדורגל, לכדורסל, לכדוריד ולאתלטיקה קלה. בגיל 16 היה לאלוף **ביה"ס היסודי מס' 1 בזייביצה**, ב-1953 זכה במקום החמישי **באליפות שלזיה תחתית לנוער**. ב-1953 זכה במקום השלישי **באליפות וורוצ'לב ליחידים**. כבר אז הגן על צבעי **איגוד הספורט** (Zrzeszenie Sportowe Gwardii Wrocław של **גברדיית וורוצ'לב**) (בשנת 1955 היה שחקן Kolejarz Wrocław (1954/1955) שיחק **במשחקי רכבת וורוצ'לב**) (מועדון איתו התקדם לליגה הראשונה (**טרנוב** – Start Wrocław) **ב-סטרט וורוצ'לב**) . בתקופה זאת קיבל הסמכה⁴. בשנת הספורט הבאה הוא שיחק בליגה הראשונה³ (Tarnów כמדריך ספורט בטניס שולחן וכשופט של ההתאחדות. בשנת 1957, כשחקן **בבוז'ה וורוצ'לב**) (הופיע **באליפות פולין ליחידים בורשה** וזכה, יחד עם **אוגניוש קישלבסקי** Burza Wrocław) (**פ. בוריס** ייצג את פולין, בין⁵) במקום הרביעי (משחק זוגות) Eugeniusz Kisielewski) השאר, במשחקים הבינלאומיים בצ'כוסלובקיה (1957). בישראל הוא המשיך את הקריירה הספורטיבית בקבוצות **הפועל יפו** ו**הפועל פתח תקווה** (עם **ס. פינקלשטיין** ועם **א. סלומון**). עשר פעמים זכה באליפות ישראל לקבוצות. בשנים

¹ עמ' 294. במשך 6 ימים ישראל ניהלה T.W-Żzw האנציקלופדיה העממית הכללית, וורשה 2003, מלחמה נגד מצרים, ירדן וסוריה (המצרים ננעו מעבר אניות ישראליות במפרץ עקבה – הים האדום), אשר כתוצאה ממנה מצרים איבדה את סיני, ירדן את הגדה המערבית של הירדן, את השומרון, יהודה וחלק מירושלים וסוריה את רמת הגולן

² יום כיפור (יום תחינה, יום התייחדות, יום הדין – אחד מהתגים העיקריים בעולם היהודי). במלחמה זאת (צבאות ישראל הדפו התקפה של מצרים וסוריה. 6-22.10.1973)

³ "עיתון העבודה" מיום 7.08.1955

⁴ "המילה הפולנית" מיום 13 במאי 1956.

⁵ Janusz Kusiński ו-Zbigniew Caliniński . בשנת 1957 אלופי פולין במשחק זוגות היו Akt W. Pięty גגנוד , במדליית הארד זכו Waldemar Roslan ו-Zdzisław Zawisza , במקום השני זכו Bogdan Latuszkiewicz ו-Tadeusz Deskur .

1967-1960 הופיע כנציג של אותה מדינה (אליפות העולם: פרג – 1963, שטוקהולם – ובמדליות⁷. תוך כדי כך הוא זכה בתואר אלוף **משחקי המכבייה** (1961) במשחקי זוגות⁶ (1967) רבות באליפויות בישראל (במשחקי יחידים, בהם היה ארבע פעמים סגן אלוף; במשחקי יחידים). ארבע פעמים היה אלוף **במשחקי הפועל**. במשך שנים עשרה שנים (1965-1977)⁸ ובמערבים אימן את נבחרת הגברים ואת נבחרת הנשים של ישראל (אליפויות העולם – בירמינגהם, לובליאנה, מינכן). עם תום קריירת המאמן (1977) נבחר להנהלת **התאחדות טניס השולחן של ישראל**. במשך שני עשורים פיקח על החינוך הגופני המרכזי. בשנים 1992-1996 עבד למען (קפיטן ספורט). בשנת 2000 נבחר לעמדת נשיא המועדון ITTA ההחברה בהתאחדות Swaythling Club ה-5 (ישראל). את התפקיד הזה הוא ממלא עד עצם היום הזה Swaythling Club ה-5.

בקריירת טניס השולחן רבת השנים שלו, **פימה בוריס** יצר שיתוף פעולה בין International Table Tennis Federation - ITTF (התאחדות הבינלאומית לטניס שולחן) (European Table Tennis Union - ETTU) (האיחוד האירופי לטניס שולחן) ITTF) (Polski Związek Tenisa Stołowego - PZTS) (האיחוד הפולני לטניס שולחן) (Israel Table Tennis Association - ITTA) (התאחדות הישראלית לטניס שולחן) (בשנים 1959, 1960, 1961, 1963). ראשי העיר פתח תקווה העניקו לו את התואר יקיר העיר (בשנת 1966). Akademię Wychowania Fizycznego i Sportu (AZS) (בית הספר הגבוה לחינוך) (Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej - WSP) (בשנת 2006 הוענק לפ. בוריס את Czesłochowa) (בצ'נסטוחובה) (WSP) וכן ציונים לשבח רבים בעד השירותים לאיחוד טניס השולחן של שלזיה PZTS הזהב של (בעת האקדמיה, לרגל יובל Dolno-śląski Związek Tenisa Stołowego - DZTS) (תחתית) (Swaythling ה-75 לקיומו של האיחוד הפולני לטניס שולחן) (וורשה 2007) הוענק לנשיא PZTS. את הזהב של ITTA.

⁶ . הנתונים הסטטיסטיים לגבי אלופי העולם שאחרי מלחמת העולם. Akt W. Pięty גונדך
⁷ המוזיאון האולימפי בלוצאן, משחקי מכבייה לפני מלחמת העולם השנייה. תעודה של המכבייה השישית משנת 1961 בידי פ. בוריס.
⁸ פ. בוריס (שהייה בישראל ב-17 ביולי 2006). המוזיאון האולימפי, מרכז התיעוד, מחלקת Akt גונדך רב-אירועים: ספר על משחקי המכבייה לפני מלחמת העולם השנייה, סימן 17548.
⁹ "מס' 75, 2005, עמ' Swaythling Club.5"

סיום

על פי הזמנת הוועדה המארגנת של משחקי הפועל ה-15 בשנת 1955, הגיעה לישראל נבחרת פולין בטניס שולחן. יחד עם הקבוצה נסע המחבר של עבודה זאת.

השהייה בישראל היוותה השראה נוספת להעמקת הלימוד של תולדות טניס השולחן בפולין. מסמכים ארכיוניים רבים מעידים על התרומה המשמעותית של הקהילה היהודית לפיתוח מנתה לפני פרוץ II מקצוע ספורט זה. כמות האזרחים ממוצא יהודי ברפובליקה [הפולנית] - מלחמת העולם השנייה מעל שלשה מיליון נפש.

הביקורים הנוספים בישראל, בשנים 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006 ו-2007, היו קשורים חלקית לסוגיות ארכיוניות באוניברסיטת באר שבע, באוניברסיטת בר-אילן, במכון ווינגייט לחינוך¹⁰ גופני, במוזיאון המכבייה ברמת-גן וכן בארכיונים פרטיים של פיימה בוריס ושל יז'י גאייר (Jerzy Gyer).

ניסיוני כשחקן, כמאמן וכמנהל קבוצה בטניס שולחן הקלה במידה רבה על פירוש העובדות הטמונות במקורות. ההיכרות עם פרטי הכללים של מקצוע ספורט זה ועם ארגון תחרויות אלה אפשרה לי עיון מלא בתנאים בהם התפתח טניס השולחן בקהילה היהודית בפולין בתקופה שבין המלחמות.

העיון בספרות על מקצוע זה בשפה הפולנית מראה שהתרומה של הספורטאים היהודיים, לרבות טניסאי השולחן, לא הוערכה במלואה בעבודות המחקר עד כה.

במסגרת תוכניות המחקר שלי לקחתי על עצמי להכין מונוגרפיה לרגל יובל המאה לטניס השולחן בפולין (1912-2012).

מתוך סדרת ההפקה המתוכננת פרסמתי זה מכבר: טניס שולחן בשלזיה העילית בשנים 1929-2004 (יצא לאור בשנת 2005) ואת איחוד הספורט האקדמי בצ'סטוהובה בשנים 1945-2000 (יצא לאור בשנת 2005). טניס השולחן אצל היהודים בפולין יופיע בשנת 2008. בהמשך אני מתכוון לעבוד על ראשית והתפתחות טניס השולחן באיחוד הספורט האקדמי בפולין (1928-2008).

המטרה של עבודה זאת הנה להציג את התרומה של העם היהודי לספורט טניס השולחן בשנות העשרים, השלושים והארבעים של המאה שעברה.

מניתוח הספרות והארכיונים בנושא יוצא שבתקופה שבין המלחמות, עבור ההצלחות הספורטיביות בפיינג-פונג בזירות הארציות והבינלאומיות הפולנים מודים בעיקר לשחקנים ממוצא יהודי.

בפרק הראשון אציג את המאפיינים הכלליים של המצב החברתי-כלכלי של המיעוט היהודי בפולין. הפרק השני יגע בראשית הספורט היהודי בעולם. אני אתאר בו גם את הארגון ואת ההצלחות של הספורט בסביבה היהודית של טניס השולחן העולמי. בפרק הבא אציג את מסורת הספורט היהודי בפולין, בעיקר את הראשית והתפתחות של חוקי המשחק, כלליו והציוד הכרוך בטניס השולחן וכן משחקים ברמה הארצית והבינלאומית.

הפרק הרביעי יתייחס לבעייתיות הכרוכה בטניס השולחן בפולין. הפרק החמישי יראה את הפעילות הארגונית של הספורט בהתאחדויות המחוזיות לטניס שולחן. בפרק השישי והאחרון, אציג את הביוגרפיות של שחקנים ופעילים פולניים בולטים.

¹⁰ את פיימה בוריס הכרתי במהלך משחקי הפועל אשר נערכו בימים 10-16 ביוני 1995 ברעננה שליד תל L. Błaszczyk, P. Skierski, P. Narkiewicz, M. Przewoźnik. הייתי שם עם הנציגות הפולנית במעמד מאמן)

פרק הזמן המוצג במונוגרפיה כולל את השנים 1924-1949. שנת 1924 הנה תחילתם ואילו שנת II של האימונים הבלתי רשמיים הראשונים במרכזים רבים שעל אדמת הרפובליקה ה-1949 מציינת את חיסולם של מועדוני הספורט היהודיים בפולין העממית.

המחקרים על פעילויות הספורט היהודי בפולין נערכו בעיקר על ידי ירוסלב רוקיצקי (Jarosław Rokicki) דוקטור ללימודי היסטוריה מוורשה. במרכזים לימודיים משמעותיים (מופיעים בנושא זה רק אזכורים בעבודות. אלו הוצאו על ידי המחלקה לתרבות הגוף בגוז'וב) (Zamięscowy Wydział Kultury Fizycznej w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim) (Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego - AWF) בוורוצלב, האוניברסיטה של וורשה, האוניברסיטה של ז'שוב (AWF) בוורשה, ה-AWF (Akademia Świętokrzyska w Rzeszów) האקדמיה שבייטוקשיסקה בקיילצה (Rzeszów) (Jan Długosz) עם זאת, וכן האקדמיה על שם יאן דל'גוש (Kielcach) פרסומים אלה אינם נוגעים לטניס שולחן.

בוורשה, Archiwum Akt Nowych חומרים בעלי ערך רבים השגתי בארכיון (Wojewódzkim Archiwum w Katowicach בארכיון המחוזי בקטוביצה) (Kraków, בלבוב) בקראקוב, Archiwum Państwowy w Łodzi ב'לודז' (מואלה) (Lwów) וכן בארכיון של מכון ווינגייט לחינוך גופני (ישראל).

Lausanne ביצעתי גם חקר תיעוד ארכיוני שמקורו באוספים מוזיאוניים בלוזאן (וכן במוזיאון המכבייה ברמת-גן (ישראל), ITTF (מוזיאון אולימפי ומוזיאון לטניס שולחן – Bielsk-ולפני הכל בוורשה (מוזיאון הספורט והתיירות), בטרנוב, ב'לודז', בביילסק-ביאל'יי (הוכיחו עצמם כבעלי ערך הממצאים בספריות של עיר הבירה (Chorzów), בחוז'וב (הספרייה הלאומית והאוניברסיטאית) וכן בקטוביצה (הספרייה של שלזיה), בקראקוב (הספרייה היגל'ונית) ובבלבוב (הספרייה האוניברסיטאית).

חלק נכבד מחומרי המקור היווה מידע שהושג מתוך כתבי עת, כגון: "הסקירה שלנו" (Sport), "סקירת (Sport), "Nasz Przegląd Sportowy", "סקירת הספורט שלנו" (Nasz Przegląd), "סקירת ספורט (Raz, dwa, trzy), "אחת, שתיים, שלוש" (Przegląd Sportowy) ספורט", (Kurier Łódzki של לודז' (זר), "הסקירה מאוירת" (Ilustrowany Przegląd Sportowy), "אקספרס של זגל'ב" (Chwila), "רגע" (Tygodnik Żydowski) השבועון היהודי", (Goniec), "אקספרס של צ'נסטוחובה", "הרץ של צ'נסטוחובה" (Express Zagłębia), (Dziennik Bydgoski), "היומון של בידגושץ" (Robotnik), "הפועל" (Częstochowski), "רץ הערב", "רץ הבוקר", "היומון החדש", "הספורטאי החדש".

נמצאו מועילים לעיבוד מונוגרפיה זאת גם אוספים פרטיים, שיחות, דו"חות, תוכניות, רשומות, הפקות יובל, הפקות מחוזיות ומודעות.

(ופרופ' ברנרד וולטמן Jerzy Gaj מעבר לכך נוצלו הפרסומים של פרופ' יז'י גאי) (Bernard Woltmann) (Miroslaw Ponczek) וכן של פרופ' מירוסלב פונצ'ק (Robert Gawkowski) ודר' וייסלב פייטה (Robert Gawkowski), דר' רוברט גבוקובסקי (Wieslaw Pięta) ודר' רישרד קולצ'יצקי (Jan Kunze), יאן קונצה (Jarosław Rokicki) רוקיצקי (Wieslaw Pięta).

(הסתבר PZTS רבות ציפיתי מחומרים ארכיוניים של האיחוד הפולני לטניס שולחן) (PZTS עם זאת שאין ל-גנוז).

הנחישות המחקרית הביאה לכך שלאחר שש שנים של חיפושים ניגשתי לעבוד סוגיה מעניינת זאת.

Fima Borys was born on November 15th, 1936 in Brest on the river Bug, Poland. He is a son of Sender and Estera, and a brother of Eugenia (born 1934), Moshe (born 1940) and Miriam (born 1947). In 1947, he emigrated with his family from the USSR to Poland and they settled in Ziębice (Lower Silesia). There, he finished a Yiddish language primary school. During the 1950s, he continued his education at the Jewish Grammar School No. 7 in Wrocław. He received his A-level certificate on June 2nd, 1955 and on October 1st he entered the Law School of the University of Wrocław. In 1957, he gave up his education and emigrated to Israel. After arriving in the Holy Land, he started working for the “Dubeck” tobacco producing plant in Petach Tikva. Between 1958 and 1960 he served his term in the Israeli army. He was called up to the army twice (the six-days war in 1967¹¹ and the Yom Kippur¹² war in 1973) as a reservist. In 1965 he married Hanna Howard, with whom he had two children (Michal and Joram). He has six grandchildren. Fima Borys has been working in the tobacco plant for fifty years now and he has been through all the managerial positions. Between 1985 and 2006, he was the technical director of the “Dubeck” plant. On January 1st, 2007 he was promoted to the post of the main advisor of the proprietor of the tobacco plant. He has Polish and Israeli nationalities.

Sports career

Fima Borys got to know the rules of table tennis while still in primary school in Ziębice. Initially, he treated this discipline on equal terms with football, basketball, handball and athletics. At the age of 16, he won the championships of the Primary School No. 1 in Ziębice. In 1953, he was fifth in the Lower Silesia Junior Championships, and in 1954 he came third in Individual Championships of Wrocław. By then, he was already a member of the *Gwardia Wrocław* Sports Association. He spent the next season (1954/1955) in *Kolejarz Wrocław*. In 1955, he joined the ranks of *Start Wrocław*, which club was then promoted to the first league (Tarnów)¹³. He spent the next year of his career playing in the first league¹⁴. In that time, he gained the qualifications of an instructor of table tennis and those of an umpire of the association. In 1957, representing *Burza Wrocław*, he took part in the

¹¹ *Popularna Encyklopedia Powszechna*, Warszawa 2003, Vol.: W-Żzw, p. 294. For six days, Israel was at war with Egypt, Jordan and Syria (the Egyptians refused to allow Israeli ships to navigate the Akaba Bay – the Red Sea), as a result of which Egypt lost Sinai, Jordan – the West Bank, Samaria, Judea and a part of Jerusalem and Syria lost the Golan Mountains.

¹² Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement, Judgment Day) is one of the main Jewish holidays. During this war (6–22.10.1973), the Israeli army repulsed the attack of Egypt and Syria.

¹³ “Gazeta Robotnicza” of August 7th, 1955.

¹⁴ “Słowo Polskie” of May 13th, 1956.

Polish Singles Championships in table tennis, held in Warsaw, and together with Eugeniusz Kisielewski (doubles)¹⁵, classified in the fourth place. Fima Borys represented Poland in the international competitions in Czechoslovakia (1957), among others. He continued his sports career in Israel, in *Hapoel Jaffa* and *Hapoel Petach Tikva* teams (together with S. Finkelstein and E. Salomon). He won the title of the team champion of Israel ten times. Between 1960–1967, he was a member of the national team of that country (World Cup in Prague in 1963 and in Stockholm in 1967¹⁶). In the meantime, he became the Maccabiah Games (1961) champion in doubles¹⁷ and won numerous medals in Israeli championships (in singles, which made him a four-time vice-champion, and in doubles and mixed doubles)¹⁸. He won the Hapoel championships four times. He coached the Israeli male and female national teams (World Championships in Birmingham, Ljubljana, Munich) for twelve years (1965–1977). After finishing his coaching career (1977), he was chosen a member of the management board of the Israeli Table Tennis Association. He supervised the central sports training for two decades. Between 1992–1996, he worked voluntarily in the ITTA (sports captain). In 2000, he was chosen the director of the Swaythling Club (Israel), which position he holds till this day¹⁹.

In his long career, Fima Borys contributed to the cooperation of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), the European Table Tennis Union (ETTU) and the Polish Table Tennis Association (PZTS) with the Israel Table Tennis Associations (ITTA).

For his achievements in sports, Fima Borys was awarded the title of a distinguished champion of the Hapoel many times (1959, 1960, 1961, 1963). The authorities of Petach Tikva conferred on him the title of a distinguished citizen (1996). In 2002, he received the diploma of a member of honour of the Academic Sports Association (AZS) at the Higher School of Pedagogy in Częstochowa. In 2006, Fima Borys was awarded a PZTS golden badge, as well as many distinctions for his services for the Table Tennis Association of Lower Silesia (DZTS). During the jubilee celebration of the seventy-five years of existence of the Polish Table Tennis Association (Warsaw 2007), the director of Swaythling was awarded a PZTS golden badge.

¹⁵ W. Pięta's private archive. In 1957, the Polish champions in doubles were Janusz Kusiński and Zbigniew Caliński, with Waldemar and Zdzisław Zawisza in the second position and Bogdan Latuszkiewicz and Tadeusz Deskur in the third place.

¹⁶ W. Pięta's private archive. Statistics of post-war World Cup.

¹⁷ Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Maccabiah games before World War II. 1961 Diploma of the 6th Maccabiah, owned by F. Borys.

¹⁸ F. Borys' private archive (trip to Israel on July 17th, 2006). Olympics Museum, Documentation Centre, Multi-events Section: Book about Maccabiah Games before World War II, ref. No.: 17548.

¹⁹ "Swaythling Club" no. 75, 2005, p. 5.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1995, at the invitation of the 15th Hapoel Games Organizing Committee, the Polish national table tennis team went to Israel. Along with the team went the author of this study.

The stay in Israel brought additional inspiration for the detailed study of the history of table tennis in Poland. Numerous archival documents prove that the Jewish community made a substantial contribution towards the development of this sport. Before the outbreak of WW II, there were over three million citizens of Jewish descent in Poland.

The subsequent visits to Israel, in 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007, were partly due to the carrying out of the preliminary archival research in the records of the University of Bar Ilan, Bar Ilan University, the Physical Education Institute in Wingate, in The Maccabi Museum in Ramat Gan, as well as in the private archives of Fima Borys and Jerzy Gayer¹.

The valuable experience which I had gained as a sportsman, coach and manager, made it, to some extent, easier for me to interpret the information I found in the surviving sources. The comprehension of the specificity of this sport and the familiarity with the methods of competition organization has enabled me to make a general examination of the circumstances in which table tennis was developing among the Jewish communities in the interwar Poland.

The preliminary research of the Polish literature on the subject indicates that the achievements of the Jewish sportsmen, including table tennis players, have not yet been fully appreciated in academic studies.

My research plan includes the preparation of a monograph on the occasion of the centenary of table tennis in Poland (1912–2012).

The following works have been already published: *Table tennis in Upper Silesia between 1929–2004* (published in 2005) and *Students' Sports Association in Częstochowa between 1945–2000* (published in 2007). *Table tennis amongst the Polish Jews* will be published in 2008. My plans for the near future also include the study of the *Origins and Development of table tennis in the Students' Sports Association in Poland (1928–2008)*.

The aim of this study is to present the sports achievements of Jewish people in table tennis in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.

The analysis of the literature on the subject and of the archival materials leads to the conclusion that, during the interwar period, the success of the Polish

¹ I met Fima Borys during the Hapoel Games, held between 10th – 16th of June, 1995 in Ranann near Tel Aviv. I was there with the Polish Team as a coach (L. Błaszczuk, P. Siekierski, P. Narkiewicz, M. Przewoźnik).

table tennis players in the national and international arena was mostly owed to the players of Jewish decent.

The Jews established many sports clubs, the promotion of physical fitness and health, especially amongst children and youth, being of great concern to them. The ping-pong sections of those clubs would soon lead the way. Aside from running the sports clubs, they also financed and managed district associations of ping-pong and the Polish Association of Table Tennis.

The first chapter of this study defines the general characteristics of the socioeconomic situation of the Jewish ethnic minority in Poland. The second chapter concerns the origins of Jewish sports worldwide. It also describes the organization and the accomplishments of the Jewish communities in world table tennis. The following chapter outlines the tradition of the Jewish sports in Poland, paying special attention to the origins and the evolution of the rules of the game, the regulations and the equipment used for playing table tennis, as well as the national and international competitions. The fourth chapter explains the issues related to table tennis in Poland. Chapter 5 presents the organizational and sports activities of the district associations of table tennis. The last, sixth, chapter includes biographical notes concerning the most distinctive Polish sportsmen and members of the associations.

The time span presented in this monograph embraces the period between 1924 and 1949. 1924 was the year that marked the beginning of the first unofficial trainings in many centres across the Second Polish Republic, while 1949 brought the eradication of the Jewish sports clubs in the People's Republic of Poland.

The study into the history of Jewish sports in Poland was done chiefly by Jarosław Rokicki, a Warsaw-born Doctor of Humanities. The records garnered by the significant educational institutions contain only brief mentions. They were published by the External Department for Physical Education in Gorzów Wielkopolski, the University School of Physical Education (*Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego*) in Warsaw, the AWF in Wrocław, the University of Warsaw, the University of Rzeszów, the "Świętokrzyski" University in Kielce and the "Jan Długosz" University in Częstochowa. These publications however do not concern table tennis.

I gathered many helpful details at the New Record Office in Warsaw, the Regional Archives in Katowice, Kielce, the National Archive in Łódź, Krakow, Lvov, and in the archives of the Physical Education Institute in Wingate (Israel).

I also looked into the records of the museum collections in Lausanne (the Olympic Games Museum and the Museum of Table Tennis – ITTF) as well as the Maccabiada Museum in Ramat Gan (Israel), and most of all, in Warsaw (the Museum of Sports and Tourism), Tarnów, Łódź, Bielsko-Biała and Chorzów. The library collections found in the capital city proved themselves worthy of

attention (the National Library and the University Library), as well as those in Krakow (the Jagiellonian Library) and Lvov (the University Library).

The major part of the source materials consisted of information found in magazines, such as "Nasz Przegląd", "Nasz Przegląd Sportowy", "Sport"; "Przegląd Sportowy"; "Raz, Dwa, Trzy", "Ilustrowany Przegląd Sportowy", "Kurier Łódzki", "Tygodnik Żydowski", "Chwila", "Express Zagłębia", "Express Częstochowski", "Goniec Częstochowski", "Polonia", "Siedem Groszy", "Robotnik", "Dziennik Bydgoski", "Kurier Wieczorny", "Kurier Poranny", "Nowy Dziennik", "Nowy Sportowiec".

Also, private collections, verbal accounts, reports, programmes, chronicles, jubilee publications, regional publications and announcements were used to supplement this monograph.

Moreover, I found helpful the publications of Professors Jerzy Gaj and Bernard Woltmann, as well as those of Professor Mirosław Ponczek, Jarosław Rokicki PhD, Jan Kunze, Ryszard Kulczycki PhD, Robert Gawkowski PhD and Wiesław Pięta PhD.

I had high expectations of the archival documents of the Polish Association of Table Tennis (PTTS). However, it turned out that the PTTS does not keep any records.

After a six-year long quest, the perseverance characteristic of a researcher resulted in the undertaking of such an engrossing issue.

Chapter 1

THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN THE INTERWAR POLAND

When does the Jewish history begin? The Jews and the Christians alike look for their origins in the biblical times. At the root of Judaism lies the Old Testament.

The beginnings of the Jewish history in Eastern Europe are marked with exile, migration and persecution. There is a great curiosity about the centuries-old history of the Jewish nation in Poland. To enable its better understanding, this chapter details certain issues related to the socioeconomic status of the ethnic minority in question.

During the interwar period, anti-Semitism was frequent in Central and Eastern Europe. Poland was a multiethnic country, so the relations between the communities would often change.

a) population

During the interwar period, Poland had one of the largest Jewish populations in the world. According to records, in 1921 the Jewish community constituted 7.8%¹, and in 1931, the figures went up to 8.6%² of the whole population. 3.5 million people belonged to this ethnic minority.

The largest Jewish communities were to be found in Krakow, Łódź, Lvov, Warsaw and Vilnius (on average, ca. 30%)³. 76.4% of them lived in towns and cities, while the remaining 24.6% lived in the country. The central regions of Poland (voivodeships of Warsaw, Białystok, Lublin, Łódź, Kielce) was inhabited by 56.8% of the Jewish population, the south of the country (voivodeships of Krakow, Lvov, Stanisławów, Tarnopol) – by 25.4%, Eastern Poland (voivodeships of Vilnius, Nowogródek, Polesie and Volhynia) – by 16.6%, and parts of Poland (voivodeships of Poznań, Pomerania and Silesia) only by 1.2% of the total Jewish minority.

¹ F. Kubiczek, *Historia Polski w liczbach*, Warszawa 2003, Vol. 1, p. 382. A census concerning nationalities, mother tongues and religions.

² F. Kubiczek, as above, p. 383.

³ S. Bronsztejn, *Żydzi w Polsce międzywojennej*, Warszawa 1963; Z.H. Nowak, Z. Karpus, *Studia i szkice z dziejów Żydów w regionie Bałtyku*, Toruń 1988, pp. 66–74.

b) language

The main language used by the Jewish minority was Yiddish (79.9%). Hebrew was used by 7.8%, and Polish by 11.9%, 0.4%⁴ of the Jewish community used other languages.

c) social and professional structures

The majority of the Jews worked in industry, trade and insurance (16.7%). Others found employment in healthcare (2.9%), educational and cultural institutions (2.8%).

d) social situation

The commercial activity of the Jewish community and the economy of the country were interrelated. A prosperous economy meant better financial status of the Jewish community members. The religious tradition of an obligatory celebration on Saturday (Sabbath)⁵ played an important part. At the beginning of 1930s, the economic crisis which took place in Poland hit the Jewish communities. During the period of the crisis, the authorities issued many directives and orders which were disadvantageous for the Jewish minority. Those were mainly the introduction of monopoly on salt, alcohol, rationing, sanitary orders, the Ritual Slaughter Act (1936). The state administrative apparatus (army, police) did not employ Jews.

The Jewish minority in Poland nourished their own, separate traditions. The differences intensified especially in the second half of the 1930s.

The Jews had their own associations and guilds⁶. They also organized their education system. Institutions were set up, whose aim was to create schools. Those institutions were, inter alia, Chorem Central Institute for Education (religious schools for males), Bejt Jakow (schools for females), CISZO (secular schools), Tarbut (nationalistic schools focused on Hebrew culture), the Federation of the Jewish Secondary Schools (Polish-Hebrew profiled), Szul und Kultur Farband (Judaic and Hebrew schools), the Association for Help and Support for the Agricultural and Craft Work in Poland (vocational schools), Yeshivas (religious higher education institutions). There were three institutions designated to organize and run the education system in Lower Silesia. They

⁴ F. Kubiczek, *Historia Polski w liczbach*, Warszawa 2003, Vol. 1, p. 493, cf. Reprint of *Rocznik Polityczny i Gospodarczy 1939*, Warszawa 2004, p. 19.

⁵ J. Tomaszewski, A. Żbikowski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, Warszawa 2001, p. 469.

⁶ W. Jaworski, *Struktura i wpływ syjonistycznych organizacji politycznych w Polsce*, Warszawa 1996. The characteristic features of social life were numerous organizations, associations and guilds. It was through them that the social life organized. Charity organizations constituted their major part; K. Samsonowska, *Wyznaniowe gminy żydowskie i ich społeczności w województwie krakowskim (1918–1939)*, Kraków 2005, pp. 184–185.

were the Jewish Committee, Hechaluc Pionier and the Congregations. In 1947, apart from primary schools, a secondary school was open, as well as art schools: of fine arts (named after Judyta Berg), of music (named after B. Huberman), of ballet (named after Judyta Berg and Feliks Fibich). In Częstochowa, in 1917, there were 15 elementary schools for Jewish children, while the older children would attend mixed schools. There were also religious schools (Cheders)⁷. The Jewish minority financed and maintained their own healthcare institutions (hospitals)⁸.

There were many Jewish social movements and political parties in the interwar Poland. Small groups would join parties of socialist⁹, communist¹⁰, Zionist¹¹ and religious orientations. Almost all the parties demanded the abolition of all legal and administrative restrictions. The Jewish minority had their own parliamentary associations in the Sejm (lower chamber of the Parliament of the Republic of Poland).

The Jewish cultural life in Poland was very intense and differentiated (literature, cinema, theatre, press). It developed in three languages: Hebrew, Jewish (Yiddish) and Polish.

⁷ J. Tomaszewski, A. Żbikowski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, Warszawa 2001, p. 369; R. Żebrowski, *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce 1918–1939*, A Selection of Source Texts, Warszawa 1993, p. 119. In June 1923, the Education Committee of the Sejm accepted a motion concerning the introduction of numerus clausus. In reality, numerus clausus was not enforced but the Jewish youth did have difficulties getting into universities; R. Żebrowski, *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1993, pp. 45–47, 119–120; Z. Jakubowski, S. Podobiński, *Z dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie*, Częstochowa 2002; S. Bronsztejn, *Żydzi na Dolnym Śląsku po II wojnie światowej*, Wrocław 1993.

⁸ J. Tomaszewski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 514–515. The Healthcare Association of the Jewish Minority in Poland (TOZ) is a social organization founded in Poland, in 1921. In 1939, TOZ supervised over 300 medical and sanitary institutions in 50 towns, employing some 1000 persons. TOZ was closed down and the institutions were nationalized.

⁹ The influential Jewish parties included, inter alia, Bund (Jewish Workers' Association).

¹⁰ J. Grzywa, *Żydowski Robotniczy Ruch Oświatowo-Kulturalny w Województwie Kieleckim w latach 1918–1939* in the bulletin issued by the Jewish Institute of History in Poland, Warszawa 1990, no. 3–4, pp. 121–139.

¹¹ K. Samsonowska, *Wyznaniowe gminy żydowskie i ich społeczności w województwie krakowskim (1918–1939)*, Kraków 2005, pp. 157–164. The Zionist trend was distinctive for the plurality of its programmes and organizations of political, social, educational, cultural and sport nature. The movement strongly supported initiatives of creating a modern Jewish state in Palestine where Hebrew would be in use.

The Jewish communities read the press published in Yiddish¹², Hebrew¹³ and Polish¹⁴. The cultural organization structures also involved theatre¹⁵. The most important centers of dramatic art in Poland were Warsaw, Krakow, Łódź, Lvov and Vilnius. The cultural work was organized by the Jewish theatre, the Jewish amateur theatre movement and drama societies. The activities of the latter were occasional and sprang mostly from immediate needs (performances organized on the occasion of sports competitions, scouts meetings or Jewish holidays).

The youth and the adults could, through Jewish sports clubs, practice sport, tourism and recreation. The size of the Jewish sports clubs depended on their sports level, financial resources or the activities of associations and political parties.

Even in sport life, signs of anti-Semitism were common (there were difficulties with establishing sports clubs; no places at training camps; excessive charges for rental of gyms, playing fields, stadiums; limiting the number of sportsmen taking part in competitions; limiting the number of district table tennis associations' officials), as well as manifestations of chauvinism (the fans' behaviour at football matches, boxing contests or athletics competitions) and unfair competition. The Jews also contended with financial difficulties (subventions for constructions of gyms and playing fields were limited or denied; there were difficulties with receiving financial help for statutory activities).

¹² M. Fuks, *Prasa Żydowska w Warszawie 1823–1939*, Warszawa 1979. The most popular journals in Yiddish were “Hajnt”, “Der Moment” and “Sport Cajtung”.

¹³ In total, between 1918 and 1939, there were around 370 journals and magazines in Jewish languages, 40% of them were published in Polish. Cf. M. Fuks, *Prasa żydowska w Polsce w latach 1823–1939*, Warszawa 1979. The Journals published in Jewish were “Łodzior Togblat”, “Dos Judische Wort”, “Folks Cajtung”, “Jidysze Togblat”.

¹⁴ “Chwila” was published in Lvov, “Nasz Przegląd” in Warsaw, “Nowy dziennik” in Krakow.

¹⁵ J. Tomaszewski, A. Żbikowski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 498–512.

Chapter 2

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH SPORTS WORLDWIDE

The beginnings of Jewish sport tradition date back to the 18th century. The pioneers in this field were boxers Samuel Eklias, Barney Aaron, the Belasco brothers and Issac Bitton¹. Throughout that period however, Daniel Mendoza, a Portuguese boxer, was the most successful competitor, repeatedly winning the English Championships between 1792 and 1795².

In the second half of the 19th century, sportsmen of Jewish descent, such as Lipman Pike (baseball)³, Lon Myers (athletics)⁴ and Louis Rubinstein (figure-skating)⁵ were the elite of world sport.

In the first half of the 20th century, the major accomplishments of the Jewish sportsmen were mainly those achieved by boxers. During the interwar period, they won twenty Olympic medals. The second most popular discipline among Jews was fencing⁶. The Olympic and world fencing champions came from Belgium, Austria, England, Denmark, Hungary and France. Table tennis (ping-pong) was classified as third most popular discipline. One of the disciplines that reached a certain degree of popularity within the minority in question was athletics, and in this context some of the exceptional sportsmen have to be mentioned: Myer Prinstein (USA) – the long jump and triple jump Olympic Champion from Paris and St. Louis (1900, 1904)⁷, Irena Kirszenstein-Szewińska – the many times Olympic medallist⁸, and Faina Melnik (Ukraine) –

¹ J. Siegman, *Jewish Sport Legends* (4th ed.), Virginia 2005; *Encyklopedia Judaica*, Jerusalem 1972, Vol. XV, pp. 291–318.

² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³ Lipman “Lip” Pike (1845–1893), Philadelphia Athletics. He would run 100 yards’ distance in 10.0 sec.

⁴ Laurence E. “Lon” Myers, born in 1858 in the U.S.A., WR holder for 100, 444 and 888 yards sprint.

⁵ Louis Rubinstein (1861–1931) from Canada. The first World Champion.

⁶ J. Siegman, *Jewish Sport Legends* (4th ed.), Virginia 2005.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195. M. Prinstein was born in 1880 in Russia. He performed record a long jump (7,50m) and a triple jump (14,47m).

⁸ Z. Głuszek, *Leksykon Polskich Olimpijczyków 1924–1998*, Warszawa 1999, p. 341; J. Siegman, *Jewish Sport Legends* (4th ed.), Virginia 2005, pp. 191–192; *Przewodnik Encyklopedyczny po współczesnej Europie*, Poznań 2004, pp. 461, 463, 488; W. Lipoński, *Polacy na Olimpiadach*, Poznań 2000, p. 64; J. Lis, T. Olszański, *Od Aten do Sydney*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 76–77; *Na olimpijskim szlaku 1972*, Monachium, Warszawa 1973, pp. 62–63.

disc thrower, Olympic Champion from Montreal and Munich. However, the record for most medals among the sportsmen of Jewish descent is held by Mark Spitz⁹. Other famous contestants came from Germany (Alfred Flatow – gymnastics) and Hungary (Agnes Keleti – gymnastics, Hajos Guttmann – swimming, and Eva Szekely – swimming). More Olympic medals were won in wrestling, weight lifting, judo, yachting, canoeing, rowing, basketball, water polo, figure-skating, speed-skating and ice hockey. Between 1896 and 2004, Jewish contestants won 325 medals altogether, 135 of them were gold¹⁰.

The modern history of Jewish sports is closely related to the Zionist movement (whose task was to foster physical education among the Jewish nation). In Berlin, in 1898, *Judische Turnverein Bar Kochba* was created. Its first activities concerned setting up the association of Jewish gymnastic teams of Europe.

It should also be mentioned, that the First Jewish Gymnastics Day took place in Basel (1903). In that year, there were ca.2000 members of the gymnastics associations. For comparison, in 1907, the numbers went up to 2715. Between 1909 and 1919, sports clubs from Lvov, Tarnopol, Constantinople, Palestine and Turkey joined the association¹¹.

In the Interwar Europe, the most important football club was *Hakoah Vienna* (1920–1930)¹². Many gymnastics and sports associations were created, where thousands of young Jews could work on their physical fitness. In Germany, the *Bar Kochba Berlin* club was one of the best performing sports clubs. In Hungary, the most noticeable one was *Vivo es Athletikai S.C.* from Budapest. In Poland, the *Makkabi Warsaw* had over one thousand members. *Hagibor Prague* was one of the most popular Jewish sports club in Czechoslovakia. There were Jewish sports clubs in Lithuania and Latvia as well.

In 1921, the Maccabi World Union (MWU) was created. The authorities approved the statute and the rules of the association, which allowed national associations to gain access to the MWU. During the Maccabi World Union Rally (Antwerp, 1930), Poland was represented by 127 sportsmen. The first Maccabiah Games were held in 1932. There were 390 sportsmen from 18 countries participating in it, 60 of them from Syria and Egypt¹³. There were only 10 competitors from the USA. The Polish, Austrian and American teams

⁹ Mark Spitz, born February 10th, 1950 in Modesto (California). Seven-time gold medallist from Munich; in total, winner of 9 Olympic gold medals. 33-time WR holder, participated in the 1965 Maccabiah Games.

¹⁰ J. Siegman, *Jewish Sport Legends* (4th ed.), Virginia 2005, p. 29.

¹¹ J. Tomaszewski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, pp. 427–429.

¹² Maccabiah Museum in Ramat Gan (*Hakoah Vienna chronicle*).

¹³ J. Tomaszewski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, p. 290; 2005 Maccabiah Album, Ramat Gan 2005.

won the most medals. The team of Polish Jews was classified first in the general score.

1350 competitors from 28 countries took part in the Second Maccabiah Games, held in 1935. The sportsmen competed in 21 disciplines. The subsequent Summer Maccabiah Games took place in 1953, 1957, 1961, 1965, 1969, 1973, 1977, 1981, 1985, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005¹⁴. In 1933, between the First and the Second Maccabiah, the World Summer Maccabiah Games were held in Prague. Representatives of 11 countries took part, including those of Palestine and the Free City of Danzig. The Third Maccabiah, scheduled for 1937, was cancelled.

A great organizational success of a considerable propaganda value was achieved by the Polish Jews, who organized the Winter Maccabiah Games in Zakopane (2–5 February, 1933)¹⁵. Polish representatives turned out to be the best. The Second Winter Maccabiah Games took place in Banská Bystrica, Czechoslovakia (18–24 February, 1936)¹⁶.

At the end of the 1930s, anti-Semitism in many European countries was aimed at Jewish sportsmen. Sports associations would not consent to competing with Jewish sports clubs¹⁷. WW II was the time of numerous executions of Jewish people in concentration camps and on the fronts. Many members of the Maccabiah actively fought against the German army in Europe and in Africa, having joined the Allied armies (the Maccabiah unit fought in El Alamein and Bizera)¹⁸. There were Jews that joined the resistance movements in France, England and in the occupied Poland. Despite many difficulties, the sport, forbidden in Poland by the occupants, was still practised, sometimes at the highest cost.

¹⁴ W. Pięta's private archive.

¹⁵ D. Matyja, *Sport*, Warsaw 2000, p. 154.

¹⁶ J. Tomaszewski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, p. 433.

¹⁷ Lvovsky Oblasny Dzierzhavny Arkhiv, ref. No. 594/38, ŻKS Hasmona Lvov File. A report on the activities of the Central Committee of the Makabi Association in Poland, Nov, 1936 – Mar 1938. On December 20th, 1937, the authorities of the Central Committee requested the National Department of Physical Education and the Union of Polish Sports Associations (ZPZS) for rescission of the resolution excluding the non-Polish associations from the list of sports associations. On January 27th, 1938, the Central Committee repeated their request for admittance into the ZPZS, which was denied. Cf. W. Roszkowski, *Najnowsza historia Polski 1914–1945*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 319, 329; B. Tuszyński, *Sport Polski Walczącej 1939–1945*, Warszawa 2006. The main manifestations of anti-Semitism in sports competitions were: unfair treatment by the umpires/referees, deriding, malignancy, interrupting the competitions by the fans, not inviting the ŻKSs to tournaments, denial of subventions. In table tennis, anti-Semitism was hardly present.

¹⁸ "Midrasz" no. 12, 2000, pp. 7–8.

Practising sport gave a unique opportunity to Jewish people. They could gather without any limitations or restrictions. Sports activities influenced the revival of the Jewish minority in Poland.

After the war, not many Jews went back to competing in the Olympic Games, World Cup or European championships. During the 1980s and 1990s, the European sports associations decided to include Israel in the Continental competitions¹⁹.

The interest in sports and making a dream come true allowed many generations of Jewish people to integrate and believe in the creation of Israel, which eventually took place in 1948.

2.1. The development of table tennis worldwide, paying special attention to the Jewish minority

There were many widely spread theories concerning the origins of table tennis. China, England and the U.S. are considered to be pioneers in this field²⁰. The discipline itself was probably already known in the 17th century²¹, at first as whiff-whaff, later as gossima, indoor tennis and ping-pong. The proponents of ping-pong in Europe were English officers and engineers²². The Jewish community became interested in this game before WW I. It was then, when the first ping-pong parlours were open, as well as clubs ping-pong cafes (Café Ping-Pong, Tischtenniscafe in Berlin), restaurants and table-tennis rooms.

The first table tennis show took place in England, in 1898 (Queen's Hall in London). It was in England, in 1902, where the first national federation was established, the English Table Tennis Association. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the first table tennis catalogues and manuals appeared²³. In 1890, James Gibb brought a celluloid ball to England from the U.S. (until then, the matches were played with wooden, cork or rubber balls). The development of

¹⁹ The President of the Polish Table Tennis Association, Jerzy Dachowski, played an important part in the admittance of Israel into the European sports associations (member of the Executive Committee of the European Table Tennis Federation).

²⁰ W. Lipoński, *Encyklopedia Sportów Świata*, Poznań 2001, pp. 380–381; Z. Uzorinac, *IITF 1926–2001, Table Tennis Legends*, Zagreb 2001, p. VI; W. Kozielski, *Gra Ping-Pong*, Łódź 1927, pp. 7–8; G.N. Gurney, *Table Tennis*, London 1990, pp. 1–3.

²¹ Z. Uzorinac, *Table Tennis Legends*, p. VI.

²² R. Kulczycki, *Tenis Stołowy w Polsce 1919–1989*, Gorzów Wlkp. 1998. pp. 12–13; Cf. “Początki Gry w Ping-Ponga”, a typescript by A. Gąsiorowski, owned by W. Pięta.

²³ J. Jagues and Son, *Ping-Pong*, England 1900; A. Golsworthy, *Ping-Pong People*, England 1901. *Handbook of the Ping-Pong*, England 1902. Spaldings Athletic Library; *Tennis Table*, USA 1902.

table tennis also concerned tables and rackets. New national federations and table tennis sports clubs emerged²⁴. They competed in games organized within the clubs, communities, or in many intercity and international competitions. It should be noted that there were no set rules of the game.

Ping-pong became a very popular sport, recognized mainly in Europe. On December 12th 1926, on the initiative of, among others, Jewish sportsmen and officials, a world organization of this discipline²⁵ was established in London, i.e. the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF). The first president of the ITTF was Ivor Montagu, an Englishman of Jewish descent²⁶. His mother, Lady Gladys Goldsmid Montagu Swaythling (1879–1965) was also a president of the English Table Tennis Association, as well as the sponsor of the Men's World Team Cup trophy²⁷ (the Swaythling Cup).

2.2. The achievements of the Jewish sportsmen in international competitions

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Jewish sportsmen had a significant influence on the development of table tennis in Europe and in the world. The leading table tennis players in Hungary were:

Ronald Jakobi, who won the national championships in 1910. In 1926, he won three gold medals during the World Championships in London, in team play, singles and doubles (with Pesci)²⁸.

²⁴ "Chwila" no. 757, 1937. In Lvov, the charge for renting a tennis table at a table tennis parlor was 15 grosze.

²⁵ The first founding convention of the International Table Tennis Federation took place on Dec 12th, 1926 in the London house of Lady Dowager Swaythling. It was then when the statute and the rules of the game were drawn up and accepted. The convention included the English, Austrians, Czechs, Germans, Welsh, Swedish, Hungarians and Indians.

²⁶ J. Siegman, *Jewish Sport Legends* (4th ed.), Virginia 2005, p. 170. Ivor Goldsmid Montagu (born Apr 23rd, 1904 in London, died in 1984), became a table tennis official at the age of 18. President of ITTF between 1926 and 1967, President of the English Federation in 1923–1929, 1932–1933 and 1936–1958. One of the creators of the table tennis rules and of the rules of the international sports competitions (World Cup). Montagu was the first non-player who was placed in the ITTF fame gallery.

²⁷ W. Pięta's private archive

²⁸ Z. Uzorinac, *ITTF 1926–2001, Table Tennis Legends*, p. 27. R. Jakobi was born in 1891 in Budapest. He won 6 World Cup medals, 4 of them were gold (Jews in Hungarian Sports, Tel Aviv 1993, pp. 34–35). President of the Hungarian Table Tennis Federation between 1945–1948. Died in Budapest, at the age of 60.

Zoltan Mechlovits, who in 1910 won the first title of Hungarian Championship in doubles, and in 1928, in Stockholm, won the World Singles Cup, winning two gold medals in mixed doubles (with Mednyanszky) at the same time. In 1926 and 1928, while in the Hungarian national team, he won three gold medals. He won the Austrian (1925), the Czechoslovakian (1926), and German (1926) Championships, as well as the Hungarian Championships in 1911, 1925, 1926 and 1928²⁹.

Laszlo Bellak, a Hungarian and American representative, a joker, a juggler and a showman, the prince of table tennis. He participated (for considerable sums of money) in many shows in every continent. Altogether, L. Bellak won seven championship titles, six of them were in team play (1928, 1930, 1931, 1934, 1935, 1938). In 1931, he won the first Open International Championships of Silesia, held in Królewska Huta³⁰. During the WW II, as a soldier of the American army, he fought in India and Burma. He is a many times U.S. champion. After retiring from professional table tennis, he played in the veterans' world championships. On the day of his ninety-fifth birthday, he took part in a show match in Budapest³¹.

Victor Barna, the player of all time. His international career began in 1925. Between 1929 and 1954 he won forty world championships medals, twenty-two of them were gold, seven silver and eleven bronze. He was a five time World Singles Champion (1930, 1932, 1933 – Baden, 1933 – Paris, 1935). He won the open championships of Germany, Austria, France, Australia, England, the U.S. He was a coach in New Zealand, Australia, Nigeria, Ghana, India, France, England and South Africa³². Throughout the interwar period,

²⁹ Z. Uzorinac, *ITTF 1926–2001, Table Tennis Legends*, pp. 34–35. Z. Mechlovits (1891–1951), used the Asian style when playing. A person of merit also for the ITTF (umpire matters, making ranking lists). After the war, coach and sports captain at the 1947 and 1948 World Cup.

³⁰ W. Pięta, *Tenis Stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 16.

³¹ J. Siegman, *Jewish Sport Legends* (4th ed.), Virginia 2005, pp. 168–169. L. Bellak, born in 1911 in Budapest, left-handed player. For his sports achievements, he was placed in the Jewish sport Hall of Fame. After finishing his sports career, he ran his own printing and lithography business. At the age of 90, he participated in a table tennis show in Budapest.

³² Victor Gyozo Barna-Braun (born in 1911 in Budapest) was born into a numerous family (5 siblings). *Jews in Hungarian Sports*, Tel Aviv 1993, pp. 34–35. He started his sports career under the direction of Sandor Glancz (former Hungarian representative). In 1939, he represented England. He suffered a heart attack on board of a plane to Venezuela, as a result of which, he died in Lima, Peru, in 1972. Many of his works on table tennis were published. His sports achievements granted him a place in the Jewish sport legends “Hall of Fame”. In the 1960's, the best Polish players, Danuta Calińska and Czesława Noworyta, used “Barna's” racket.

V. Barna visited Poland many times during the show competitions (Warsaw, Łódź)³³. He also represented Europe.

Miklos Szabados, a fifteen time world champion (six gold medals in doubles with V. Barna, three medals in mixed – with M. Mednyanszky). The winner of twenty-five international tournaments. He emigrated in 1937, in order to promote table tennis in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, India, Macao, China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan and Ceylon. During the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s he lived in Australia (player and national team coach). He was forty-eight when he died in Sidney³⁴.

Also, Istvan Kelen, the many time world champion, should be numbered among the best Hungarian table tennis players.

One of the best female players of the interwar period was Annus Sipos, born in 1908 in Szeged. She went to school in Budapest, where she also played ping-pong. Her game quickly reached the world level. At first, she was not included in the Hungarian national representation for the 1926 World Cup. She made her debut in 1929 and won her first gold medal in mixed doubles (with Istvan Kelen). Sipos won twenty-one world championship medals, eleven of those were gold, including two medals in singles (1932 – Prague, 1933 – Baden). She was splendid in doubles. The last time she took part in world championships was in Budapest, in 1950, where she was also a sports captain. Thanks to her achievements, she was placed second in the world ranking of all time (number of medals won). At first, she played the penholder style³⁵.

Some of the world champions were Austrian. Alfred Liebster was the 1936 World Team Champion (Prague) and the 1928 golden medallist in doubles, with R. Thum³⁶. Richard Bergman, who also represented Poland and England, was the World Singles Champion in 1937 (Baden), 1939 (Cairo), 1948 (London) and 1950 (Budapest)³⁷. In the 1950s, he established “The Bergman’s Circus”. His players would play in the match intervals of the famous professional basketball team, the Harlem Globetrotters.

An important competitor in the world championships was Trauta Kleinova from Czechoslovakia, a World Team Champion in 1935 and 1936, and a gold

³³ W. Pięta’s private archive. “Polonia”, no. 2236 of Dec 27th, 1930. Barna won 16 show matches which were played on Dec 13th and 14th, 1930; ITTF Bulletin, no. 6, Dec 2006.

³⁴ J. Siegman, *Jewish Sport Legends* (4th ed.), Virginia 2005, pp. 171–172.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 171. Z. Uzorinac, *ITTF 1926–2001, Table Tennis Legends*, pp. 43–44.

³⁶ W. Pięta’s private archive. Team World Cup list.

³⁷ J. Siegman, *Jewish Sport Legends* (4th ed.), Virginia 2005, p. 169; Z. Uzorinac, *ITTF 1926–2001, Table Tennis Legends*, pp. 84–90; B. Latuszkiewicz, *Alfabet tenisa stołowego*, Warszawa 1997. R. Bergman’s Fair Play Trophy is awarded during every World Cup competition.

medallist in mixed doubles with Mirosław Hamer (1936). During the WW II, she was imprisoned in the Auschwitz concentration camp. She emigrated to the U.S. soon after the war³⁸.

In the U.S.A., the two sisters, Thelma Thalol and Leah Thall Neuberger won over fifty U.S. championship medals. The younger sister, Leah, won a gold medal in Japan (1956) in mixed doubles with Erwin Klein, who was a doubles partner of Bernard Pukiet³⁹.

In her long sports career, Angelica Adelstein-Rozenau, won seventeen world champion titles and seven European championship medals. She represented Romania. She won her first gold in the world championships in mixed doubles (with B. Vana) in 1951 in Vienna. In 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955 she was the world champion in singles⁴⁰. She was the first Romanian sports person to win a gold medal in the world championships. Between 1950 and 1960, she was a member of the Romanian Table Tennis Association. In the 1960/1961 season, she won in the Maccabiah Games. In the 1980s she emigrated to Israel.

A major part in the world table tennis was also played by Polish players: A. Ehrlich, S. Finkelstein, E. Schiff, the Pohoryles brothers, W. Loewenhertz, B. Pukiet⁴¹.

Many players were anonymous, they used assumed names. The Jewish sportsmen prevailed in championships on the level of towns, cities, countries, Europe and in the world championships. They won over a hundred medals throughout that period. Their achievements would be greater had they not abandoned the trainings and sports competitions due to anti-Semitism, especially between 1938 and 1939 and during WW II, when the enemy turned out to be more powerful. The Jews had to flee the Germans, they died in battle, in death camps and in exile. Thanks to, among other things, practicing sports, a large group of Jews survived that dramatic period and carried on with their interests and love of sport after the war.

The Jewish community may be, without any doubt, proud of their table tennis players. Between 1925 and 1949, the Jews had an enormous influence on the development of this discipline. In the interwar World Cup (1926–1939), forty, out of the total of seventy-seven medals awarded, were won by Jewish

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 169–170. T. Kleinova (1918–1975).

³⁹ T. Bogan, *Historian USATT*, Washington 1999. B. Pukiet, born in Sosnowiec, former Silesian champion and Polish vice-champion.

⁴⁰ Oral account by F. Borys. A. Adelstein-Rozenau (1921–2006) was an active participant of the Israel Swaythling Club works, whose president is Fima Borys. She died in Haifa (Israel). Swaythling Club Bulletin, no. 2, Israel 2006. Au Top du Top. Mondial Ping-pong, Paris 2003, pp. 18–19.

⁴¹ W. Pięta's private archive. Cf. R. Kulczycki, *Tenis stołowy w Polsce w latach 1919–1989*, Gorzów Wlkp. 1998.

ping-pong players⁴². They were successful in national and international championships on all the continents. They promoted table tennis through shows, they trained youth and adults in Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. The leading table tennis players, after retiring from their sports careers, would often turn out to be outstanding managers and coaches.

A major part in organizing and establishing the international federation and the national associations of table tennis was played by Jewish officials. They were lawyers, bankers, traders, factory owners. The Jews created the statutes and the rules of the game. They had an influence on the evolution of the table tennis equipment.

⁴² W. Pięta's private archive. Statistics. 1931–1393 World Cup programmes.

Chapter 3

THE SPORTS TRADITIONS AMONG THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN POLAND (UNTIL 1949)

3.1. Jewish sports until 1939

A hundred and ten years ago, the tradition of Jewish sports in Poland begun. In 1886 in Bielsko (presently Bielsko-Biała) in the south of Poland (Bielsko was then a part of Austria)¹, the first gymnastics association was created. The main aim of the association was to promote gymnastics among the Jewish youth of the Bielsko area². The project was initiated and carried out by a group of Jewish intelligentsia. At the beginning of the 20th century, the association changed the name to the “Makkabi” Jewish Gymnastics and Sports Association³.

The first Jewish Sports Club (ŻKS) in Poland was established in 1901 in Lvov. It was called “Dror” Jewish Gymnastics and Sports Association. In 1907, the football section separated from the “Dror” Association⁴, and an independent ŻKS “*Hasmonea*” Lvov⁵ was established. In the same period of time, in Galicia, several ŻKS’s were created: *Makkabi Krakow* (1907)⁶, *Jutrzenka Krakow*

¹ *Popularna Encyklopedia Powszechna*, Kraków 2001, pp. 236–238.

² W. Jaworski, *Ludność żydowska w województwie śląskim w latach 1922–1939*, Katowice 1991, p. 143. Thanks to the Jewish sports clubs, the young and the adults could practise sports, recreation and tourism. The association was registered by the name Bielitz-Bialer Israelitischer Turnverein.

³ Z. Borzymińska, R. Żebrowski, *Polski Słownik Judaistyczny*, Vol. II, Warszawa 2003, p. 89. Makkabi was the strongest current of the Jewish sports life. Its name alludes to the descendants of Judas Maccabeus. The first Makkabi centres were established in Berlin and Constantinople.

⁴ Z. Borzymińska, R. Żebrowski, *Polski Słownik Judaistyczny*, Vol. I, Warsaw 2003.

⁵ Z. Borzymińska, R. Żebrowski, *Polski Słownik Judaistyczny*, Vol. II, Warsaw 2003, p. 564. Cf. State Archive of Lvov Oblast, Lvov, ref. no. 110/5/78, p. 54. The Hasmonea Lvov sports club was founded in 1908 by Rudolf Kohn. During its eventful history of the interwar period, the major sports achievements belonged to the footballers and table tennis.

⁶ Makkabi Krakow was the best Jewish sports club in Galicia. Founded on the initiative of Mieczysław Horowitz. The best sections of the Cracovian Makkabi were: water polo, swimming, cycling. The club ceased to exist in 1949.

(1911)⁷ and *Samson Tarnów* (1912)⁸. Despite the disapproval of the tsarist authorities, on the initiative of the Jewish students, *ŻKS "Jordania"* was established in Warsaw (the organization was illegal)⁹. The "*Bar Kochba*" Jewish Gymnastics Association was created in Katowice, in 1909¹⁰. Before the outbreak of WW I, there were twenty-eight Jewish sports clubs, with one thousand five hundred members altogether; five hundred of them were women¹¹.

Sport within the Jewish minorities had an enormous influence on the development and promotion of physical education in Galicia. It was possible thanks to the liberal attitude of the Austrian authorities. The authorities of the central and northern areas of Poland did not allow for establishing sports clubs or *ŻKS*'s (numerous refusals of registration by the tsarist authorities). The German invasion of Poland was used by the Jewish communities, who established sports associations in Łódź¹², Vilnius¹³, Białystok¹⁴ and Warsaw¹⁵.

The sports movement was considered by its proponents as an action aiming at the creation of a modern secular Jewish culture.

After Poland had regained independence, the government of the Second Republic recognized that sports activities were of much importance to the youth (main reason being the defense of the country), and that it was beneficial to the nation. Owing to this fact, the authorities started supporting all the initiatives

⁷ J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.* a typescript of a doctoral dissertation, doctoral defence on Nov 16th, 2005. Cf. "Jutrzenka Krakow".

⁸ S. Potępa, *Co nam zostało z tarnowskiego sportu*, Tarnów 1994, pp. 17–31. The earliest pieces of information come from Jewish sources. As Abraham Chomet wrote in his work *Tarnów. Zagłada żydowskiego miasta*, the origins of the largest and most famous Jewish sports club of Tarnów, the *Samson Tarnów*, date back to 1921. It was founded on the initiative of the local nationalists – the Zionists. *Samson* (means "Strongman").

⁹ J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.*, cf. "Jordania"

¹⁰ W. Jaworski, *Ludność żydowska w województwie śląskim w latach 1922–1939*, Katowice 1991, pp. 143–150.

¹¹ J. Tomaszewski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, Warszawa 2001, p. 434.

¹² A. Bogusz, *Żydowskie stowrzyszenia sportowe w Łodzi w latach 1918–1939*, Łódź 1992, pp. 4–54.

¹³ W. Pięta's private archive.

¹⁴ W. Pięta's private archive.

¹⁵ Z. Borzymińska, R. Żebrowski, *Polski Słownik Judaistyczny*, Warszawa 2003, p. 91. *Makkabi* Warsaw – the largest multi-section Jewish sports club (18 sports disciplines), founded in 1915 with the help of German occupation authorities. It had over 1000 members.

regarding establishing sports clubs, building sports fields, stadiums, sports halls, organizing training courses. However, at the beginning of the 1920s, the Jewish sports clubs could not count on any help from the Polish authorities. Nevertheless, a considerable increase in the number of Jewish sports clubs was noted.

Bielsko (the city where the first ŻKS was established) became the center of Jewish gymnastics and sports (June 6th, 1926) and of the Polish International “Makkabi” Association. The first convention took place in Warsaw, on June 16th, 1930¹⁶. The central office divided Poland into ten districts: Warsaw, Kielce, Lvov, Białystok, Krakow, Volhynia, Łódź, Nowogródek, Bielsko and Vilnius. There were thirty-three Jewish sports clubs representatives from all over Poland taking part in the first convention.

The tasks of the districts were as follows: launching propaganda campaigns and winning over the Jewish communities; organizing camps and courses for instructors; establishing their own publishing houses for sports literature in Jewish and Hebrew; cooperation on creating a mobile library for the use of the Jewish sports clubs; organization of a central permanent physical education camp for the use of the Jewish Union of Sports and Gymnastics Associations of Poland; building sports fields (at least one in every big city); providing newly established clubs with legal and organizational advice; establishing a financial institution which would grant short-term loans to the clubs¹⁷.

An important role in the popularization of the Jewish sports in schools was played by secondary schools (e.g. “Ascola” in Warsaw) and, among the university students, by the Jewish Academic Sports Association (ŻASS)¹⁸.

In the mid 1930s, the *Makkabi* Association was in charge of a hundred and thirty-three sports clubs and thirty thousand members in total¹⁹. One year later (in 1935), the number of the clubs increased to a hundred and fifty one, and the number of the members went up to forty thousand.

In that time, the Jewish sports movement was one of the strongest and the best organized amongst national minorities. It included children, youth and senior teams. The most popular disciplines were gymnastics, football, athletics, boxing, swimming and table tennis (ping-pong). The best clubs of that period were: *Hasmonea Lvov*, *Makkabi Łódź*, *Makkabi Krakow*, *Makkabi Warsaw*, *ŻASS Warsaw*, *Makkabi Bielsko*, *Hakoah Krakow*, *Samson Tarnów*, *Gwiazda Warsaw*, *Hakoah Łódź*, *Bar kochba Łódź*.

¹⁶ J. Tomaszewski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, Warszawa 2001, p. 432.

¹⁷ W. Pięta's private archive.

¹⁸ J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.*, p. 317.

¹⁹ J. Tomaszewski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, Warszawa 2001, p. 432.

The Jewish sportsmen achieved many good results. Alojzy Ehrlich, a table tennis player, was a three times vice-champion and world champion. The Pohoryles brothers, Emylles Schiff (Gutek) and Shimcha Finkelstein were world championships bronze medallists. Szapsel Rotholc won a bronze medal in boxing during the European Championships in Budapest (1934)²⁰ and was a very popular sportsman in Poland. Roman Kantor, a fencer (specialized in sword), born in 1912 in Łódź, in a merchant family, was a member of the ŁKS Łódź, and a representative at the Olympic Games in Berlin, as well as a many time champion of Poland²¹. Leon Sperling (1900–1941), alias “Muniu”, a Krakow-born football player, a member of the national team at the Olympic Games in Paris (1924), played for Jutrzenka and Cracovia. He made his debut as the representative of Poland in a match against the Hungarian team. He played on the left wing²². Lejzor Ilja Szrajbman (1905–1943) went in for swimming, training in the ŻASS and Makkabi and Legia Warsaw. He practiced free and crawl stroke, he was a Polish record holder. He took part in the Olympic Games in Berlin (1936), swimming the 4x200 free-style relay. He also took part in the Academic World Championships in Monaco (1939)²³.

In the interwar period, the top sportsmen also included chess players: Akiba Rubinstein, Aleksander Goldstein, Dawid Przepiórka, Ksawery Tartakower. The Polish team won a gold medal at the Third Chess Olympic Games in Hamburg (1930)²⁴. A major role in the organization of the next Chess Olympic Games, which was held in Warsaw (1935), was played by representatives of the Jewish chess clubs.

The Maccabiah Games served as a review of the level of Jewish sports on an international scale²⁵. The Polish representatives took part in the summer games (Palestine, 1932 and 1935) and in the winter games (Zakopane, 1933; Banská Bystrica, 1936). The competitors were selected mainly during the Maccabiah championships. The disciplines were as follows: wrestling, boxing and weightlifting, swimming, cycling, tennis, motorcycling, athletics, team sports, ping-pong, skiing, ice hockey and skating²⁶. All these disciplines were supervised by the Maccabiah Central Committee.

²⁰ S. Rotholc, born in 1915, boxer of Gwiazda Warsaw, Polish flyweight champion, represented Poland 15 times.

²¹ Z. Głuszek, *Leksykon Polskich Olimpijczyków 1924–1998*, Warszawa 1999, p. 221.

²² B. Tuszyński, *Polscy Olimpijczycy XX w.*, Wrocław 2004, p. 208. A. Pawlak, *Olimpijczycy, polscy sportowcy w latach 1924–1998*, Kraków 2000, p. 238.

²³ Z. Głuszek, *Leksykon Polskich Olimpijczyków 1924–1998*, Warszawa 1999, pp. 343–344.

²⁴ J. Tomaszewski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 438–439.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 433.

²⁶ The Archive of the Wingate Institute of Physical Education (Israel). The preliminary research was conducted on July 22nd, 2006.

“*Dzień Makkabi*”, “*Święto Sportu*” and the central sports camp had a significant role in the promotion of sports among the Jewish communities. The Maccabiah Championships were a review of the sports achievements, the condition and strength (the form) of the Jewish minority. It should be noted that all the Jewish sports clubs from a given city or town were obliged to take part in the championships. The competitions were held between April and December every year (for example, the celebrations of the Maccabiah Day were combined with the Lag BaOmer feast)²⁷.

Sports turned out to be a successful way of uniting the young generation of Jews in Poland. The results from the sports test would have been better, had the Jewish communities had qualified instructors and trainers. The organization of training camps and courses (in Skole, Warsaw, Krzemieniec, Stanisławów and Łódź) contributed to the increase in the number of masters and leaders of physical education. The courses were mainly intended for Tarbut schools teachers, physical exercise specialists and third level PE instructors (the lowest level)²⁸. After gaining the necessary qualifications, those who completed the course would start working independently as PE leaders, PE instructors, trainers of particular sports disciplines, instructors at supplementary, training and instruction courses. Those who completed a PE leadership course (the tuition fee was 10 zlotys) were obliged to two-years voluntary work at a Jewish sports club.

In 1935, the Central Committee (KC) of the Maccabiah Jewish Sports Clubs organized a survey in order to work out the total number of members of the association. The ten districts and clubs reported directly to the Central Committee had 16209 members. Seventy-six out of one hundred and forty-three Jewish sports clubs (i.e. 55%) responded to the survey²⁹. The districts with the most members were: Warsaw (4300), Krakow (3234) and Łódź (2750). The smallest district was Vilnius, with only sixty-one members. During the 1938 sports season, the Vilnius and the Nowogródek districts were merged. The Maccabiah structures were continuously developing. Sub-districts were established in the bigger districts³⁰. The Jewish sportsmen practiced every known sports discipline, raising their technical skills. They trained in five hundred and seventeen organized sections, including: gymnastics, wrestling,

²⁷ Ibid., circular letter of Apr 12th, 1930, signed by the President of the Head Council, Dr J. Dawidsohn. N. Kameraz-Kos, *Święta i obyczaje żydowskie*, Warszawa 2002, p. 139. The Lag BaOmer takes place on the 33rd day of Omer, i.e., 18th day of the month of Iyar (April - May); it is a semi-feast, a day between the Pesach (Passover) and Shavuot, celebrated as the student's day.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 8–10.

²⁹ “Hamakabi” no. 3, 1935.

³⁰ State Archive of Lvov Oblast, a circular of the "Makkabi" Union of the Jewish Gymnastics and Sports Associations in Poland of Oct 28th, 1938..

boxing and weightlifting, team sports, ice hockey, canoeing, cycling, motorcycling, skiing, football, ping-pong, swimming, shooting, fencing, tennis, tourist, rowing³¹. The most popular discipline was ping-pong (seventy-two sections), further on the list were: football (sixty-eight), gymnastics (sixty-six), motor section (five), fencing (four) and wrestling, boxing and weightlifting (two). Many of the leading Jewish sportsmen were members of well-known Polish sports associations, like *Cracovia*, *Legia* and *Polonia* Warsaw.

It is important to mention the role of the sports camps, which contributed to the increase in the number of participants and to the promotion of sports.

The publishing of the Hebrew dictionary of the sports terminology by the Makkabi Association was a significant achievement. The dictionary contained around two thousand physical education and sports terms. After suspending the publication of the “Hamakabi” monthly magazine (due to the lack of funds), the Central Committee restricted their activities to permanent publication of the so called “*Sports Instructions*” (sets of common theoretical instructions concerning games, exercises and training). The association also had its symbols, a badge which cost 60 grosze and a member’s ID card with a sticker, worth 50 grosze³². The Lvov District membership fee was 8 zloty a month.

At the end of the 1930s, the Jewish sportsmen would experience many difficulties and obstacles. The directives of the State Sports and Physical Education Office, published as circulars and announcements, limited the access of the Jewish sportsmen to Polish sports³³. That was the reason why the Jews were losing the places in the Polish national teams. In that period of time, many well-known sportsmen left for Palestine (S. Finkelstein, F. Berson)³⁴.

In 1938, the “Sport Cajtung” magazine published a list of top ten Jewish sportsmen in Poland. They were: 1. Rotholc – boxing; 2. Witman – swimming; 3. Ehrlich – table tennis; 4. Kantor – fencing; 5. Freinold – athletics; 6. Szrajbman II – swimming; 7. Grabe – gymnastics; 8. Szrajbman – swimming; 9. Dawidowicz – swimming; 10. Runstein – boxing³⁵.

In 1938, the association was in charge of two hundred sports clubs with the total of fifty thousand members, not counting scouts organizations (one hundred and fifty thousand members). The Makkabi Association was taking care of

³¹ “Hamakabi” no. 3, 1935, p. 6.

³² ŻKS Hasmona Lvov archive. A circular no. 7/8 of Jan 31st, 1938.

³³ “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 10, 1938. The directive was signed by the Director of the Office, Gen. Olszyna-Wilczyński. The Jewish sports clubs were extremely disappointed (strong protests) with this position of the authorities (which differed from their stand in respect of the German or Ukranian clubs in Poland). H. Haumann, *Historia Żydów w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 236–239.

³⁴ W. Pięta’s private archive.

³⁵ “Rocznik sportowy” 1937/1938, Warszawa 1938.

around two hundred thousand young Jews. These facts consolidated the activities of the Jewish clubs in the field. The districts were allowed to start charging membership fees. Inspections were carried out in the districts of: Bielsko, Lvov, Krakow and Łódź. Despite the financial difficulties (no state funding), the Makkabi house was built in Mikuliczyn (a center for winter sports). On account of that project, the organization of tournaments and international competitions was temporarily suspended, which was considered to be harmful to the further development of the competitors.

3.2. The years of extermination

Second World War is an extremely tragic period in the history of the Jewish people. Jewish sportsmen were dying in concentration camps³⁶, ghettos, on the fronts³⁷ and in captivity. The Jews were also fighting for the freedom of Poland. There are some well-known examples of Jewish sportsmen participating and dying during the war between Palestine and Israel (1948). Emylles Schiff, the five-time individual champion of Poland in table tennis, died in the Negev desert. Mateusz Hoch, the director of a *Hasmonea Lvov* section, was killed when the ship which carried him and other Jews evacuating from Russia to Romania was sunk by a German submarine. Władysław Szumilas, the Vice-Champion of Poland of 1932, died in the Auschwitz concentration camp, and his team colleague, Władysław Stefaniuk, was murdered in a prison in Krakow. A promising table tennis player from Łańcut, Benjamin Landau, was executed by a firing squad at a Jewish cemetery in 1942³⁸. Many well-promising ping-pong players were not to survive the Second World War. That historical period requires further studies and research.

3.3. The re-establishment of the sports activities after the WW II

The regaining of independence marked a point in time when the revival of the social, commercial, cultural and sports life began. The largest Jewish sports organization between 1945 and 1949 was the “*Gwiazda*” Association of the

³⁶ J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.*

³⁷ Z. Trzeźniowski, *Sport w Łańcucie*, Łańcut 2004, p. 30. Oral account of J. Rokicki, dated Apr 21st, 2006.

³⁸ B. Tuszyński, *Za cenę życia. Sport Polski Walczącej*, Warszawa 2006, p. 178. W. Pięta's private archive.

Workers' Sports Clubs. The Jewish sports clubs were mainly re-established in Lower Silesia³⁹. Table tennis was developing thanks to the efforts of the former members of *Hasmonea Lvov*⁴⁰. The strongest section in Western Pomerania, in the voivodeship of Szczecin, was created in December 1946, in the "Solidarność" ["Solidarity"] Jewish Sports Club⁴¹. Also, in the Kujawy region, table tennis was quickly re-established, Stefan Engel from *Makkabi*, Abram Sztajn from *Jutrznia* and Leopold Stejngern, Stefan Bocian and Marian Czyżowski from the *ŻKS* all came back after years of wandering⁴².

A group of Jewish sportsmen came back to their cities and hometowns from Palestine, joining their favorite sports clubs again. They were, among others, E. Schiff, Wajnsztok, H. Apse⁴³. However, their activity in Poland was short, and it ended in their return to the Holy Land.

In 1949, the authorities decided to abolish Jewish political parties and associations, including sports associations⁴⁴.

Sports within the Jewish minority in Poland played a significant role in the promotion of diverse sports disciplines (mainly table tennis). Membership of a sports club gave the opportunity to promote and develop teamwork, learning and improving Hebrew language, which was the language of command and sports technology⁴⁵. There were several disciplines in which the Jews were the only representatives of Poland. Sports, in its characteristic way, united the young generations and even gave the opportunity for a social advancement. The inclusion of the Jewish sportsmen in the Polish national team was also a sign of good cooperation between the Polish sports authorities and the Jewish minority living in this country.

³⁹ K. Niemierka, *60 lat sportu wałbrzyskiego*, Wałbrzych 2006, p. 93.

⁴⁰ W. Pięta's private archive.

⁴¹ S. Bronszejn, *Z dziejów ludności żydowskiej na Dolnym Śląsku po II wojnie światowej*, Wrocław 1993; Cf. H. Laskiewicz, *Ponadlokalne organizacje kultury fizycznej na Pomorzu Zachodnim 1945–1957*, Szczecin 1996, pp. 46–48; Cf. Z. Szafkowski, *Pół wieku na Pomorzu Szczecińskim (1945–1995)*, Gorzów Wlkp. 1999. Cf. R. Jarzembowski, *Włocławski sport*, Włocławek 1992, pp. 249–250.

⁴² R. Jarzembowski, *Włocławski sport*, Włocławek 1992, p. 250.

⁴³ Oral account of Franciszek Dobosz, dated March 12th, 2007.

⁴⁴ J. Tomaszewski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, Warszawa 2001; T. Kawski, *Żydzi kujawsko-dobrzyńscy w latach 1918–1950*, Toruń 2006, p. 209.

⁴⁵ J. Szczepański, *Spółeczność żydowska Mazowska w XIX–XX wieku*, Pułtusk 2005.

Chapter 4

THE ORIGINS OF TABLE TENNIS AMONG THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN POLAND

The analysis of the Jewish sports movement in Poland confirms its connection to the political phenomena. The revival of the political parties found its reflection in the development of the Jewish sports associations. Throughout the 1920s, Polish sportsmen of Jewish descent competed in many disciplines, like lawn tennis or ping-pong. They were far more efficient playing the so-called “small ball”. Jews had a far wider access to this discipline. It should be noted that it was the Jewish minority that determined Polish success in table tennis.

4.1. The development of the equipment

The development of table tennis, ever since it was introduced in Poland, had numerous supporters. As “Emef” once wrote: “[...] this game allows you to attain not only pleasure, but also suppleness of movement, refreshment and improvement of the feeble body of nearly every townie, who spends most of the day and night sitting, without movement [...]”.

The development of table tennis had an obvious influence on the evolution of the equipment. At first, playing table tennis involved a somewhat problematic access to the rackets and balls. With time, the discipline became very popular, which made the equipment manufacturers meet the needs of the players.

The first balls and rackets¹ appeared in many Polish towns (Łódź, Lvov, Warsaw, Częstochowa and Kalisz) before the First World War. The first Polish equipment was made by the “Olimpia” manufacturing company in 1924. The company produced rackets of plywood and wood, covered with a thin layer of cork on one or both sides. Balls of questionable quality were also for sale.

In 1928, the “Olimpia” sports articles manufacturer, situated in Warsaw, at ul. Warecka 8, extended the range of their products. They offered ping-pong sets, which cost 7 zlotys, to schools, sports clubs, army units and individual customers. The racket was worth 1 zloty, the ball (3 cm in diameter) –

¹ The Częstochowa celluloid manufacturing works “Celluloid und Metallvarenfabrik Czestochau” also manufactured dolls (there were attempts to manufacture ping-pong balls).

30 grosze. There were three balls included in a set. The net cost 1.50 zloty, and the stand was 3.50 zlotys².

In the mid-1930s, in Poland, a ping-pong table cost 65 zlotys, and at the same time, a foldable table cost 20 zlotys more. A coloured net was more or less 1 to 2 zlotys. Stands were necessary to hold the net upright; their price varied from 1.25 zloty (wooden stands) to 3.50 zlotys (iron stands). The price of a table tennis ball was around 15 grosze (at that time, there was a lot of this equipment on the market). It was not an excessive amount. For comparison, a tennis ball was 3 zlotys, a volleyball (with a bladder) – 9 zlotys, a basketball – 10.55 zlotys, and a handball (with a bladder) – 11 zlotys. The prices of rackets varied, depending on the quality. A plywood racket cost 80 grosze. The same, but with a rubber layer, was 1.20 zloty. Rackets with a layer of red rubber cost 2.40 zlotys, and if they had a rubber surface on both sides, the price would go up to 3.50 zlotys³. And again, for comparison, a “Riva” tennis racket cost 19.50 zlotys. To make the equipment of a ping-pong player complete, sports clothes were needed: a T-shirt for 1.50 zloty; long, navy-blue trousers for 3.50 zlotys; tennis shoes with a white rubber sole for 3.50 zlotys; coloured jumpers for 7.50 zlotys and white cotton socks for 2.50 zlotys. The members of the Jewish sports clubs had to have a club emblem on their jumpers, and the representatives of Poland – an eagle. The *Ping-pong* manual by R. Jodłowski cost 1.20 zloty.

In 1938, all the table tennis equipment was coming from G. Grabowski’s sports equipment storehouse, located in Warsaw, in ul. Szpitalna. A very popular racket at that time, a so-called “Viedenka” (a wooden board covered with rubber facing on both sides) by Barna and Bellak cost 2.50 zlotys. Ping-pong sets cost 3.50 zlotys. Plywood rackets without rubber facing were cheap and could be bought even for 50 grosze. The price of a ball was around 15 grosze, and a net was 90 grosze⁴.

People also used rackets made of thick wooden boards, covered with glass paper for a better spin, or with plywood rackets covered with check rubber⁵. The shapes of the boards varied, they were oval and round, with the surface covered with rubber or a thin layer of India rubber. There were also rackets without any facing. To keep the boards hard, players applied drying oil and French polish on them⁶.

² “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 51, 1928.

³ Price list of the Central Coordination of Deliveries of the Polish Scouting Association, Warsaw 1935.

⁴ Seasonal price list for winter 1938/1939, Warsaw 1938, p. 11.

⁵ “Sport szkolny” no. 22, 1938, p. 12.

⁶ “Sport szkolny” no. 27, 1938, pp. 5–6.

At the end of the 1930s, the best ping-pong balls, called “Maho”, were produced by a Lvov manufacturer. They were approved by the Polish Table Tennis Association (PZTS) and were used during the main national competitions⁷. Also, good quality balls, called “Wir”, were manufactured in Częstochowa. After the WW II, the largest wholesale outlet in Lower Silesia offering table tennis balls was located in Wrocław, in ul. Żeromskiego 37.

4.2. The equipment

During the 1920s, ping-pong players were encouraged to use a normal table 270 cm long, 130 cm wide and 70 cm high. The supporting posts (with springs or clamps) would be attached to the opposite edges of the table. The net was attached to the supporting posts with strings. The net was woven, white or coloured, and its height varied from 12.5 to 15 centimetres⁸.

According to the recommendations of the English Table Tennis Association (1927), the ping-pong table should be 9 feet (270 cm) long and 5 feet (150 cm) wide. The height of the table was 2 feet and 6 inches (80 cm). The Federation forbade to polish the tables, however it recommended painting them dark-green. The net was hung at 6 inches (16 cm)⁹.

The ball was made of white rubber. Rackets of different parameters (size, thickness, shape) were allowed, however, they could not be polished.

Władysław Kozielski gathered in his manual¹⁰ the rules of table tennis pursuant to the ITTF regulations, as established at the 1928 convention. The ping-pong table was to be 274.5 cm long, 152.5 cm wide and 76–77 cm high. In doubles, a service ball could touch any spot on the opponent’s court.

According to Ryszard Jodłowski (1936), a ping-pong table should be of the following measurements: 275 cm long, 152 cm wide, 80 cm high. The net was to be suspended at 17 cm. The rackets were oval or round. Rackets made of metal and those which had a shining surface were not allowed. The diameter of the ball was 3 cm and its weight was 3 grams¹¹. Hard wooden floors were

⁷ “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 96, 1936. Oral account of Franciszek Dobosz, a pre-war Cracovia player. Table tennis balls of good quality were also manufactured in Częstochowa, they were called “Wir”.

⁸ “Emef”, Ping-pong – reguły gry, Warsaw 1924.

⁹ Table Tennis Association, *Zasady gry tenisu stołowego*, England 1927. A copy may be found in the Ossolineum in Wrocław.

¹⁰ W. Kozielski, *Gra Ping-pong*, Łódź 1927. A unique edition of this book may be found in the Łódź University Library.

¹¹ R. Jodłowski, *Ping-pong*, Warszawa 1936, pp. 8–9.

recommended. Playing on a stone or lino surface was forbidden. One year afterwards, the height of the net suspension was lowered from 17 cm to 15 cm.

In 1946, *Table tennis* was published through the Sportsman's Library. The study contained methodology of exercise and the rules of table tennis. A 270 cm by 150 cm rectangular table was suggested. Its height was to be 75 cm, and the height of the net suspension was 15 cm¹².

The third edition of *Ping-pong* in 1948 suggested, that the table should be made of pine or oak wood or, alternatively, of 4 cm thick, dark-green plywood. The length of the table was to be 275 cm, the width – between 150 and 153 cm, and the height – 77 cm. The height of the net suspension was 15,3 cm. Rackets were made of plywood or wooden boards. A celluloid ball was to be used. It was white, matt, with a diameter of 3 cm and a weight of 3 grams¹³.

4.3. Sportswear

At the end of 1920s, the players wore shirts and ties, with coloured jumpers on top. Long trousers with belts were obligatory, so were white socks and plimsolls. Ladies wore ankle-length skirts.

The 1933 Champions of Poland (*Hasmonea Lvov*) wore white, long-sleeved shirts, sleeveless pullovers in club colours, long trousers and white plimsolls.

In 1934, the Polish national team wore long, grey trousers with belts, navy-blue T-shirts with the national emblem, and white plimsolls.

Owing to the increasing pace of the game, the pullovers were dispensed with and the players only wore T-shirts and long trousers. Female clothes included white plimsolls, a knee-length skirt and a long-sleeved shirt.

The post-war regulations (World Championships in London, 1948) prohibited wearing bright-coloured clothes only. Therefore, a considerable freedom of garment choice was allowed: ladies started wearing long trousers, shorts or short skirts, as well as short T-shirts. Men competed wearing long trousers or shorts.

4.4. The rules of the game

According to "Emef" (1924), a set was made up of six games, 1st service – 15 points, 2nd service – 30 points, 3rd service – 40 points, 4th service – 60 points

¹² Biblioteka Sportowca no. 1, Tennis stołowy, Koszykówka, Siatkówka, Tennis, Lubeck 1946, pp. 5–10.

¹³ R. Jodłowski, *Ping-pong*, 3rd, corrected edition, Warsaw 1948, pp. 10–12.

1 game. Until 1926, the rules of the game were set immediately before the match and it was played like lawn tennis, i.e., until a player scored sixty points. In other cities, matches were played up to thirty points (Lvov), or, as in Warsaw, Krakow, Łódź and in Silesia, up to twenty-one or twenty-five points. Also, in some places, matches were played to 100 points.

In 1927, the warehouse of a sports magazine in Lvov sold "*Zasady gry tennisu stołowego*" ["Table Tennis Rules"] (a translation from English), the 18th point of which stated: "...if no other arrangements were made prior to the commencement of the game, the winner is the first to score 21 points." Each of the player served 5 times. The doubles play was then called a game of four.

In the mid-1930s, the points calculation system was based on the rule that one of the players must score 21 points (set). The set winner must have had a clear two points advantage over his opponent. The matches were played to two (team play) or three (singles) sets. The umpires were authorised to disqualify players whose match lasted more than 60 minutes (two sets) or more than 105 minutes (three sets). Imparting spin to a service ball was prohibited.

Due to the common practice of playing in such a way so as to exhaust the opponent (time-wasting), a decision was made concerning limiting a set to 20 minutes. A special clock, similar to the one used in chess matches, was designed to measure time. In the 17th minute, the umpire would give a signal and, if the game was not decided yet, extra 3 minutes would be added. Should, after this time, the game not be finished with a clear victory, both players were crossed out¹⁴.

After WW II (1946), a set would be played up to 21 points. When both players reached 20 points, the game would be carried on, until one of the players was two points ahead of the opponent. Also, the open-hand service was introduced and the ball had to be tossed into the air.

Between 1947 and 1948, the ITTF introduced further changes. The players would play up to 21 points, however, a set could not last more than 20 minutes. When the time was up, the winner would be the player with at least one point advantage over the opponent (e.g. 12–10). In case of a tie at 13–13, the winner would be the player who was winning at 13–12.

4.5. Manuals

An important role in the promotion of table tennis on the Polish market of the interwar period was played by wholesale outlets, sports equipment manufacturers and publishers. Through their representatives, they encouraged

¹⁴ "Raz Dwa Trzy" no. 6, 1938.

many Jewish associations, sports clubs and schools to buy the essential specialist literature. There were many titles by many authors available at the bookshops: Emef, *Ping-pong (tennis pokojowy)*, Warsaw 1924; TTAE, *Zasady gry tennisu stołowego*, Lvov 1927; W. Kozielski, *Gra ping-pong*, Łódź 1927; R. Jodłowski, *Ping-pong*, Warsaw 1936 (second edition); Biblioteka Sportowca, *Tennis stołowy (metodyka ćwiczeń, zasady gry)*, Lubeka 1948; R. Jodłowski, *Ping-pong*, Warsaw 1948 (third, corrected edition)¹⁵.

4.6. The achievements of the Jewish table tennis players in the Polish Championships

The Polish Table Tennis Association (PZTS) divided the sports competitions into team games and individual games. PZTS cooperated with the District Table Tennis Associations on the organization of the sports events.

4.6.1. The Polish Team Championships (DMP)

The first Championships took place on March 27th 1932 in the Makkabi hall in Łódź. Only three teams, of five members each, took part. Each member of the team played one match only. The number of sets won determined the final winner. The biggest surprise of the event was the defeat of the *Hasmonea Lvov* (the favourite to win the gold medal) by *Makkabi Łódź* 4:6 (little known Edelbaum defeated Kühl). In the course of the championships, Lvov defeated Krakow 10:0, and in the last match Łódź defeated Krakow (8:2)¹⁶. The champions' title was given to *Makkabi*. The final table was as follows:

- 1) *Makkabi Łódź* (Hendeles, Librach, Edelbaum, Lewkowicz, Inzelstein, Szenwald);
- 2) *Hasmonea Lvov* (Ehrlich, Munzer, Munzer II, Kühl, Fichtenberg);
- 3) *Makkabi Krakow* (Hochberg, Rozenzweig, Weissblat, Rothman, Feinberg).

The second Championships took place in Lvov, in a sports hall in ul. Jabłonowskich (March 4th–5th, 1933). The event was organized by *Hasmonea*. Only two teams were competing. The host, *Hasmonea*, defeated *Wisła Krakow*¹⁷. The final table was as follows:

- 1) *Hasmonea Lvov* (Ehrlich, Kühl, Loewenhertz, Fichtman, Fluk);
- 2) *Wisła Krakow* – a Polish sports club (Szumilas, Żak, Herbst, Stefaniuk, Mianowski).

¹⁵ W. Pięta's private archive.

¹⁶ "Kurier Łódzki" of March 26th, 1932.

¹⁷ D. Zastawny, *Sto lat w blasku Białej Gwiazdy*, Kraków 2006, p. 265.

The third Championships were held in the sports hall of the Physical Education and Military Training District in Krakow (March 3rd– 4th, 1934). Twelve teams from the following districts were competing: Krakow, Częstochowa, Łódź, Lvov, Poznań and Warsaw¹⁸. All teams had five members each. The medal table was as follows:

- 1) *Samson Tarnów* (E. Schiff, Klein, Gelbwachs, Seiden, Schiff II, Schmidt);
- 2) *Makkabi Łódź* (Hendeles, Librach, Edelbaum, Schwajcer, Inzelstein);
- 3) *Hasmonea Lvov* (Kühl, Fluk, Loewenhertz, Kauf, Margulies, Ochst)

In 1935, the Championships were held in Poznań (March 9th–10th). Six teams, including two from Poznań (KPW, HCP), took part. It was in Poznań where the Pomeranian champion, Leo Bydgoszcz, made the debut. The champions' title was given to *Hasmonea Warsaw*, the team that won all the matches¹⁹. For unknown reasons, neither *Makkabi Łódź*, a favourite to win a medal, nor *Hasmonea Lvov*²⁰ took part in the competitions in Poznań. The final table was as follows:

- 1) *Hasmonea Warsaw* (Wajnsztok, Jarecki, Finkelstein, Mesing, Rechtleben, Rojzen, Engelsberg);
- 2) *YMCA Warsaw* – a non-Jewish club (Jeziernski, Grodnicki, Gałkowski, Weremicz I, Weremicz II);
- 3) *Samson Tarnów* (E. Schiff, Klein, Gelbwachs, Seiden, Siwek)

The 1936 Polish Team Championships were held in Warsaw, in the Jutrzenka sports hall in ul. Nalewki 2, between the 28th of February and the 1st of March. The matches were played according to the new rules. Each team had three members²¹. Several Silesian teams made their debut in Warsaw (GDA Chorzów, Związek Strzelecki Świętochłowice)²². The medals went to:

- 1) *Samson Tarnów* (E. Schiff, Klein, Gelbwachs, Seiden, Siwek);
- 2) *Hasmonea Warsaw* (S. Finkelstein, Wajnsztok, Rojzen, Rechleben);
- 3) *YMCA Warsaw* – a non-Jewish club (Jeziernski, A. Grodnicki, J. Gałkowski).

The leading ping-pong players competed for the 1937 champions' title in Tarnów, between 15th and 16th January. There were four tables available in the Sokół hall. After the draw, the competition was divided into two groups. *Samson Tarnów* and *Makkabi Chorzów* from Group A, and *Hasmonea* and

¹⁸ "Goniec Częstochowski" no. 51, 1934; "Expres Zagłębia" no. 64, 1934; "Gazeta Polska" no. 65, 1934.

¹⁹ "Kurier Łódzki" no. 69, 1935.

²⁰ "Kurier Łódzki" no. 56, 1935. Due to scarce financial resources, Hasmonea Lvov did not make it either (team tournament).

²¹ "Kurier Łódzki" no. 328, 1935.

²² W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 23.

Hagibor (defeated *Hasmonea Lvov* 5:4)²³ from Group B qualified for the finals. The final table was as follows:

- 1) *Samson Tarnów* (Klein, Siwek, E. Schiff),
- 2) *Hasmonea Warsaw* (S. Finkelstein, Rojzen, Rechtleben),
- 3) *Hagibor Krakow* (Blonder, Susmann (Zysman), B. Weintraub).

The next, eighth Polish Championships (February 19th– 20th, 1938) were organized by the Częstochowa District Table Tennis Association. The competition took place in a fire station building. Thirteen teams from nine districts (Warsaw, Krakow, Łódź, Poznań, Pomerania, Silesia, Vilnius, Częstochowa)²⁴ were competing for the champions' title. The players wore varied sportswear (jackets, jumpers and shirts). The medals went to:

1. *Samson Tarnów* (E. Schiff, Klein, Sommer),
2. *Polskie Zakłady Lotnicze* (PZL) Warsaw – a non-Jewish club (Jeziński, Czerniachowski, Małujło),
3. *Hasmonea Lvov* (Gallat, Loewenhertz, Sternhertz).

In 1939, ten teams competed for the Polish Championship in Lvov (February 25th– 26th). The event was held in a sports hall and the teams were divided into two groups. *Samson Tarnów*, *Makkabi Chorzów*, PZL Warsaw and the host, *Hasmonea*, qualified for the finals. *Samson* turned out to be unrivalled and won the Polish Team Champions' title for the fifth time²⁵. The final table:

1. *Samson Tarnów* (E. Schiff, Klein, Sommer),
2. *Makkabi Chorzów* (Pukiet, Wiener, Nowarski),
3. *Polskie Zakłady Lotnicze* (PZL) Warsaw – a non-Jewish club (Pęczkowski, Czerniachowski, Małujło).

Between 1946 and 1949, there was only one Jewish sports club, *Gwiazda Wrocław*, competing in the team championships finals. However, many Jewish players were members of the Polish sports clubs: B. Pukiet played for *Lublinianka* (1946), S. Blonder for *Cracovia* in 1947 (bronze medal), Brajbart and Somper for *Skra Częstochowa* (1948), A. Ehrlich for *Garbarnia* (1949)²⁶. Between 1932 and 1939, eighteen out of the total of twenty-three medals, including all the gold medals (eight), were won by Jewish clubs. *Samson Tarnów* was a five time Polish Champion.

²³ "Raz Dwa Trzy" no. 3, 1937.

²⁴ "Goniec Częstochowski" no. 40, 1938; no. 42 of Feb 21st, 1938; "Kurier Łódzki" no. 45, 1938; "Robotnik" no. 54 (7323), 1938.

²⁵ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 17, 1939; no. 18, 1939; "Kurier Wieczorny" no. 54, 1939; W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 161.

²⁶ W. Pięta's private archive.

4.6.2. Polish Singles Championships (IMP)

In December 1932, during the meeting of the Polish Table Tennis Association, held in Łódź, its council decided to organize the first Polish Singles Championships²⁷. Only eight players took part in the individual competition, they were: Ehrlich, Kühl (*Hasmonea Lvov*), Hendeles (*Makkabi Łódź*), Sz wajcer (*Jutrzenka Łódź*), Stefaniuk and Mianowski (*Wista Krakow*), Gryszan and Grodnicky (*Ognisko Vilnius*). The medals went to:

1. A. Ehrlich (*Hasmonea Lvov*),
2. H. Kühl (*Hasmonea Lvov*),
3. T. Mianowski (*Wista Krakow*).

Twenty-seven players competed in Krakow, in a tournament under the patronage of general Mond. The only defeat in the competition was suffered by E. Schiff, defeated by B. Pukiet (*Makkabi Sosnowiec*). The final table of the Second IMP²⁸:

1. E. Schiff (*Samson Tarnów*),
2. S. Klein (*Samson Tarnów*),
3. S. Finkelstein (*Makkabi Warsaw*).

The organization of the Third IMP by the Poznań District Table Tennis Association won the recognition of Mr Lipszyc, a PZTS delegate. Thirty-one players were competed for the Polish Championship. In the semi-finals, Loewenhertz (Lvov) defeated Weiner (Sosnowiec), Klein (Tarnów) defeated Kantor (Łódź), Finkelstein (Warsaw) won against Pomper (Tarnów), and E. Schiff (Tarnów) whitewashed Kierot (Poznań)²⁹. After the finals, the medals went to:

1. E. Schiff (*Samson Tarnów*),
2. S. Finkelstein (*Hasmonea Warsaw*),
3. S. Klein (*Samson Tarnów*).

The Fourth IMP, held in Wrsaw, were dominated by the *Samson Tarnów* players who won the team and the singles competitions³⁰. The surprise of the tournament was the bronze medal for little known W. Joskowicz.

1. E. Schiff (*Samson Tarnów*)
2. S. Finkelstein (*Hasmonea Warsaw*)
3. W. Joskowicz (*Hakoah Łódź*)

The jubilee IMP were held in Tarnów. The city went down in table tennis history, for it was there where the first women's championships were held, in 1937. There were six players competing in the opening tournament; they were:

²⁷ "Siedem groszy" no. 197, 1932. The first Polish Singles Championships took place in Lvov, on March 4th–5th, 1933.

²⁸ W. Pięta's private archive.

²⁹ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 21, 1935; "Kurier Łódzki" no. 69, 1935.

³⁰ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 21, 1936.

Smętek (*Warszawianka*), Haber and Kanter (*Jutrzenka*), Springer (*Gwiazda Tarnów*), Cichoń (*Świętochłowice*) and Czyżewska (*Czarne Lwy*)³¹. All players had to play against one another. The final table was as follows:

1. Smętek (*Warszawianka*)
2. Cichoń (*RIOK Świętochłowice*)
3. Springer (*Gwiazda Tarnów*)

Five players competed in the men's finals: Finkelstein, Starnharz, Schiff (Polish Champion 1936, without qualifiers), Pukiet and Loewenhertz. Finkelstein won the final match (in the third set, E. Schiff was leading 18–10, but eventually lost 21–23).

1. S. Finkelstein (*Hasmonea Warsaw*)
2. E. Schiff (*Samson Tarnów*)
3. W. Loewenhertz (*Hasmonea Lvov*)

The 1938 IMP were held in Częstochowa and were dominated by Polish players. The widely advertised participation of the many time world championships medallist, A. Ehrlich, did not come off. There were seven women players and forty-seven men players taking part in the singles³². The IMP medals went to:

Women:

1. Stockfisz (*Gwiazda Warsaw*)
2. Nadel (*Gwiazda Warsaw*)
3. Konstantin (*Jutrzenka Lvov*)

Men:

1. E. Schiff (*Samson Tarnów*)
2. B. Pukiet (*Makkabi Chorzów*)
3. S. Klein (*Samson Tarnów*)

In 1939, Lvov hosted the IMP for the second time (the first IMP in Lvov were held in 1933). The organizers were expecting a record number of eighty participants. In the end, thirty-four competitors took part³³. The tables were of questionable quality and the lighting was poor. Despite the unfavourable conditions, the level of the game presented at the tournament was considered a high one. The finals ended on Sunday, at 3 a.m. The final table:

Women:

1. Stockfisz (*Gwiazda Warsaw*)
2. Eck (*Gwiazda Lvov*)
3. Rotszaj (*Jutrzenka Lvov*)

³¹ "Raz Dwa Trzy" no. 3, 1937; W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 25.

³² "Goniec Częstochowski" no. 42; "Robotnik" no. 54, 1938; "Kurier Wieczorny" no. 52, 1938.

³³ "Kurier Wieczorny" no. 54 of Feb 23rd, 1939; R. Gawkowski, *Sport na Woli w latach 1918–1939* [in:] „Zeszyty wolskie” no. 7, Warszawa 2008.

Men:

1. E. Schiff (*Samson Tarnów*)
2. Piórowicz (*Orkan Warsaw*)
3. Sommer (*Samson Tarnów*)

After WW II, the Polish Champions' titles went to Jewish players: Szymon Blonder in 1947 (*Cracovia*) and Nina Glazner in 1948 (*Gwiazda Wrocław*). Between 1933 and 1939, the Jewish table tennis players were at the forefront of the Polish Singles Championships. Perhaps, the achievements would be even greater had it not been for the limitation of the number of Jewish players in the championships between 1946 and 1949. In 1946, Schiff came back to Poland, to Tarnów, but the *Samson Tarnów* and its table tennis section no longer existed, which was why he decided to go back to Israel. In 1947, Blonder moved to Belgium. In 1949, Ehrlich was withdrawn from the IMP finals by the panel of umpires. Including the after-war period, eight out of the possible eleven gold medals were won by Jewish sportsmen. The most successful competitor was Emylles Schiff (five gold medals).

In the interwar period, 90% of the finalists of the championships tournaments were representatives of the Jewish sports clubs in Poland.

4.7. Jewish table tennis players in the World Cup

It was back in 1928 when the debut of a Polish table tennis player in the World Cup was first expected. Goldstein, a many time Warsaw Champion, an alumnus of the Finkel gymnasium, stood a good chance. The *Warszawianka* player was entered by his club for the 1928 World Cup in Stockholm³⁴, however he had to cover the costs of the trip himself. Eventually, Goldstein did not go to Stockholm due to financial difficulties.

The next attempt, this time successful, to participate in the World Cup (Prague, 1932) was made by the students of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius (Grodnicky) and Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov (Adler)³⁵. Adler was not granted the nationality and Grodnicky represented Czechoslovakia³⁶. Apart

³⁴ "Nasz Przegląd Sportowy" no. 67, 1927. Goldstein – Warsaw Champion of 1926, 1927; from 1928 played for Makkabi Warsaw. Cf. "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 81, 1929. In 1929, he studied in Vienna.

³⁵ W. Pięta's private archive. Poland was not a member of the ITTF then. During the championships, Adler defeated J. Hoffmann but lost to Hayden (England) in the 2nd round. Grodnicky defeated Kulwiat and Bednar (both 3–0), and lost to Nickelsburg by 3–1 in the 1/16 round.

³⁶ ITTF Museum, Lausanne, Table-Tenisove Mistrovsvi Sveta 1931–1932 Prazhe Programme, p. 3.

from several individual wins of minor importance, the students did not achieve much but they signalled the readiness of the Polish table tennis players to participate in the World Cup.

In 1933, a few of the former players of *Hasmonea Lvov* (A. Ehrlich, and Simon and Hillel Pohoryles, all of Jewish descent) studied in France (Lille). The Poles were interested in taking part in the World Cup in Paris, and submitted a petition to M. Corbillon, the president of the French Table Tennis Association. They demanded admitting the Polish representatives to the competition. After a correspondence between the French and the Polish Table Tennis Association, the Poles were met with a refusal to participate in the event. Long negotiations took place, as a result of which the then head of the organizing committee, M. Corbillon, gave in to Ehrlich, and the official Polish debut in the World Cup became fact³⁷. The Polish national team in Paris was initially supposed to be joined by Kuehl, from Lvov, however, the Lvov District Table Tennis Association did not have the financial resources for his stay in France. In the team tournament, the Poles beat Holland 5–0, Czechoslovakia 5–1, India 5–0, France 5–4, Yugoslavia 5–2 and Belgium 5–1, and they were defeated by Hungary 0–5, and Latvia 2–5. Eventually, the Polish team was ranked fourth³⁸. In the individual competitions, A. Ehrlich was defeated in the quarter-finals by Szabados, a many time World Cup medallist³⁹. The Pohoryles brothers did not pass the qualifiers.

The second time Poland participated in the World Cup was in London, in 1935⁴⁰. Yet again, the management of the Polish Table Tennis Association encountered difficulties sending the team to England. The Polish Treasury would not issue free passports. The Association's finances were poor, and there was no room in the team for Emylles Schiff, the 1934 Polish Champion. It was only when S. Jacobson (the vice-president of the PZTS) appealed to the Polish Federation of Sports Associations the desired effect was achieved and the

³⁷ Oral account of Fima Borys, dated July 14th, 2006. F. Borys had this information from Ehrlich (meeting during the 1963 World Cup in Prague).

³⁸ "Raz Dwa Trzy" no. 50, 1933. Cf. 8th World Cup 1933–1934 Programme of Dec 2–10th, 1933; "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 98, 1933. At the time, the Polish table Tennis Association claimed that there could be no entry in the competition as the team members were hurriedly recruited. After achieving the 4th place, the association sent a congratulatory telegram; "Robotnik" no. 460, 1933. The World Champions were the Hungarians, the vice-champions – Czechoslovakians, the bronze went to Austria.

³⁹ The 1933 World Cup influenced the training sessions. A. Ehrlich dropped out of University to become a professional player. He earned his first money by giving table tennis lessons. He moved from Lille to Paris.

⁴⁰ ITTF Museum, Lausanne. ITTF World Championships Programme, Feb 8th–16th, 1935.

participation in the event was possible. During the London Championships, it was only the players of Jewish descent who played in Polish colours: Wajnsztok (*Hasmonea Warsaw*), Loewenhertz (*Hasmonea Lvov*), Ehrlich and Pohoryles (foreign clubs). In London, the Poles defeated India 5–1, England 5–4, Holland 5–0, Ireland 5–0, Switzerland 5–0 and Wales 5–0. The only lost match was against Czechoslovakia, 4–5 (three points scored by A. Ehrlich)⁴¹. In that way, the Polish team won the bronze medal, the first in the history of this discipline.

In the first round of the singles competition, W. Loewenhertz was defeated by K. Svoboda (Czechoslovakia) 2–3, and Wajnsztok by Veger (France) 0–3. S. Pohoryles won against Bonnaventure (Belgium) 3–0, and A. Ehrlich against Waerenier 3–0. In round two, Ehrlich defeated Corton (Belgium) 3–0, but Pohoryles lost 0–3 to S. Kolar, a Czechoslovakian representative. Ehrlich defeated Duskis (Lithuania) 3–0 in the 1/16 finals, Vana (Czechoslovakia) 3–0 in the 1/8 finals, and L. Bellak (Hungary) 3–0, a valuable victory in the quarterfinals. However, he was beaten by V. Barna in the semi-finals⁴². Alojzy Ehrlich eventually won a bronze medal in the Empire Swimming Pool in Wembley. The matches were played in the presence of some twenty spectators⁴³.

Poland was one of the favourites in the jubilee Tenth World Championships of 1936, held in Prague. The team was in its full strength, with A. Ehrlich, S. Finkelstein and E. Schiff (the core of the team being, therefore, Jewish players) and Z. Jezierski as a substitute⁴⁴. In the Swaythling Cup competition, the Poles defeated Lithuania, Latvia and Romania (during this match, a record was beaten by Ehrlich and Paneth; it took a hundred and twenty-three minutes and around six thousand strokes to get to 1–0) and Holland, both 5–0. They lost to Hungary 1–5, and France 4–5 (which determined the lack of a chance for a medal)⁴⁵. The second part of the championships turned out to be fortunate only for Ehrlich and Schiff. The

⁴¹ “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 15, 1935. Once again, the championship went to the Hungarians, leaving Czechoslovakia second.

⁴² “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 15, 1935; “Robotnik” of Feb 18th, 1935; “Kurier Łódzki” no. 48, 1935.

⁴³ “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 12, 1935. In the 2nd round of doubles, Wajnsztok – Pohoryles lost to the Estonian couple Jones – Sears; Ehrlich – Loewenhertz defeated the Estonians Bergl – Hales and the French Schwarz – Brisson and unexpectedly lost to the Welsh Lisle – Thomas. In mixed doubles, only Loewenhertz took part, together with Bromfield (England). The defeated the Swiss Cowell – Esely but lost to the Hungarians Barna – Sipos.

⁴⁴ W. Pięta’s private archive. Cf. “Raz Dwa Trzy” of March 17th, 1936.

⁴⁵ “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 24, 1936. The championship title went to Austria, and the vice-championship – to Romania.

others, S. Finkelstein (lost to V. Barna) and Jezierski, were eliminated in the first round. E. Schiff defeated Weibacher (Yugoslavia), Bebestak and Pivetz from Czechoslovakia, and Marin (France). In the quarterfinals, he lost 1–3 to Kolar (Czechoslovakia). A. Ehrlich beat Fleischner (Czechoslovakia), and defeated also Lazar (Yugoslavia), Tobiasch (Czechoslovakia), Vana (Czechoslovakia), Marschal (USA) and Bergman (Austria)⁴⁶. He played too cautiously in the World Cup finals and lost 2–3 to Kolar (Czechoslovakia)⁴⁷. Ehrlich still had a chance for a medal in mixed doubles with Braunova but they lost the semi-finals.

The authorities of the Free City of Gdansk put forward a valuable initiative to the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF). They supported the application of the sports circle for granting the city the possibility of hosting the 1938 World Cup⁴⁸.

Between the 1st and the 7th of February 1937, in Baden, nr Vienna, the next World Cup (singles and team tournaments) were held⁴⁹. Ninety-eight men and fifty women representing thirteen countries took part. Initially, a female team was supposed to participate as well. The coach of the Polish team was M. Hornung, PhD (a well-known precursor of the Jewish sports in Krakow and a member of the PZTS), while the team captain was Henryk Apsel. The members of the national team were: A. Ehrlich, S. Finkelstein, E. Schiff. The substitute was Małujło (eventually, Z. Jezierski went to the World Cup instead). The team tournament was like a marathon. Much stamina was required of the players to fight twelve duels. Poland beat Egypt, England, Yugoslavia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Lithuania, Romania and Austria. The players lost to Czechoslovakia, the U.S. and Hungary. Poland was ranked fourth in the final table⁵⁰. In singles, Z. Jezierski lost to Blatner (USA), S. Finkelstein beat Robinson (England), Sramek (Czechoslovakia), Kaspar (Austria) and M. Szabados (Hungary), and lost the quarterfinals to R. Bergman. E. Schiff won

⁴⁶ R. Bergman was born on April 10th, 1918 in Vienna (another possibility is the city of Kalisz). Richard's father was Polish. New Record Office ref. No. 543/I/9 Dr Ignacy Schwarzbart's archive 1937/1939/1940. Dr I. Schwarzbart was an active lobbyist for Polish Jews abroad. He was a Councillor of the City of Krakow and an MP until 1939. A member of the World Jewish Council; member of the National Council to the Polish Government in Exile. In 1940, A. Ehrlich wrote a letter to Dr I. Schwarzbart asking for help with granting a Polish citizenship to R. Bergman.

⁴⁷ "Raz Dwa Trzy" of March 17th, 1936.

⁴⁸ "Kurier Wieczorny" no. 123, 1936.

⁴⁹ "Raz Dwa Trzy" no. 6, 1937; "Kurier Łódzki" no. 34, 1937. Table Tennis Museum in Rennes and Lausanne. 1937 ITTF Swaythling Cup Programme (Turnier -Leitung).

⁵⁰ 1937 ITTF Swaythling Cup Programme. The Americans won the championship, after defeating the Hungarians by 6–3 (in group duel, Hungary defeated the USA by 5–4).

against Foldi (Hungary), Ari (Estonia), but then lost to Hartinger. In the first round, the bronze medallist from Prague, A. Ehrlich, defeated Boros (Hungary), and then Borenbaun and V. Barna, the many time World Champion, (3–2), Kolar (the previous year World Champion, Czechoslovakia), as well as Hazi and Soos. In the finals, Ehrlich was defeated 3–2 by a Polish player representing Austria, Bergman⁵¹.

Between 24th and 29th of January 1938, London was hosting the best table tennis players for the third time. Two hundred men and women from sixteen countries were competing for the world championship. Three hundred umpires took part in the event. Two thousand matches were played. Fifty interpreters were helping in the organization of the tournament. The Polish team, A. Ehrlich, E. Schiff, I. Rojzen (Jewish players), K. Osmański and Czerniachowski, were in an eight-team group. Losing to Austria, England and the USA, and winning against Germany and Latvia (both 5–4), Ireland and Wales gave them the fourth position in the group. It was the worst performance in five years⁵². Three causes made up the bad result: there was no experienced third player; the duration of the matches was limited to 20 minutes, which gave the advantage to attack players; and the players participated with no previous preparation (no training camp). The poor condition of the players was evident throughout the individual tournament. All of them were eliminated in the first or in the second round: K. Osmański lost to K. Helmy (Egypt), Czerniachowski to I. Joffe (Latvia), I. Rojzen to L. Pagliaro (USA), E. Schiff to Vana (Czechoslovakia) and A. Ehrlich to S. Schiff (USA)⁵³. Only E. Schiff and A. Ehrlich made it to the third round in doubles. S. Finkelstein, already representing Palestine, was ranked fifth (with Kaspar)⁵⁴.

The Polish national team did not take part in the 13th World Cup in Cairo in 1939. The finances of the Polish Table Tennis Association were poor and the participation of the Polish team was no guarantee of spectacular game. Only A. Ehrlich was defending the honour of our country. Faruk, the king of Egypt, paid the entrance fee, travel expenses and the stay in Egypt for Ehrlich. The Hungarian or the American team did not participate either. Austria was already part of Germany, and the Czechoslovakian and the English teams were made up of young players. Bergman, with Polish citizenship, only took part in the individual tournament, while S. Finkelstein represented Palestine, together with S. Weissfish, M. Ingel and D. Granat. If the PZTS showed better organizational

⁵¹ “Kurier Łódzki” no. 40, 1937; “Robotnik” no. 43, 1937.

⁵² “Raz Dwa Trzy” no. 6, 1938.

⁵³ “Kurier Wieczorny” no. 28, 1938.

⁵⁴ ITTF World Table Tennis Championships Programme, London, Jan 24–29, 1938.

skills, they could have entered a dream team, with a chance for a gold medal⁵⁵. A. Ehrlich defeated V. Marcu (Romania), R. Bedoc (France), V. Heksner (Yugoslavia), H. Lurie (England), V. Barna (England) and Z. Dolinar (Yugoslavia) in the singles. He then lost in the finals to R. Bergman (Poland)⁵⁶ and became the World Vice-Champion for the third time⁵⁷.

Up until 1949, only Alojzy Ehrlich, who resided in France, took part in the World Cup (Paris 1947, Stockholm 1949), paying with his savings. Thanks to that, he was ranked amongst the top sixteen players⁵⁸. The best Polish table tennis player of the interwar period, Alojzy Ehrlich, went to a training camp held in Warsaw in 1949⁵⁹. The Polish team did not participate in the Stockholm World Cup, as the authorities at that time refused to issue passports to the team members.

Overall, between 1933 and 1939, the Polish representatives won seven World Cup medals, including two bronze ones in team tournaments. A. Ehrlich won five medals, he was the three time individual World Vice-Champion (1936, 1937, 1939), a bronze medallist in team tournament (1935) and a bronze medallist in doubles (1939). The Poles won twenty nine out of forty world championships matches. Poland was represented by a team of nine, seven of them being of Jewish descent: A. Ehrlich, E. Schiff, S. Finkelstein, S. Pohoryles, H. Pohoryles, I. Rojzen and W. Loewenhertz.

4.8. Jewish club championships in Poland

The competitions amongst held within the Jewish community played a major part in the promotion of ping-pong. Their level was decent and they enjoyed popularity among spectators (friendly matches and shows). The origins of the sports competition go back as far as 1920s⁶⁰. Many friendly matches were played in Warsaw between 1929 and 1930, the participants being the Jewish Sports Clubs Team and Jewish Academic Sports Association (ŻASS). Those matches originated the individual and team competitions of the Makkabi Association in Poland.

⁵⁵ ITTF World Table Tennis Championships Programme, Cairo 1939. "Kurier Wieczorny" no. 70 of March 14th, 1939. Czechoslovakia won the team tournament, while Yugoslavia was second.

⁵⁶ "Kurier Wieczorny" no. 73, 1939.

⁵⁷ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 16, 1939.

⁵⁸ W. Pięta's private archive. Cf. ITTF Museum, Lausanne. ITTF Programmes of 1947 and 1949.

⁵⁹ Oral account of Franciszek Dobosz, dated March 10th, 2007, Krakow.

⁶⁰ W. Pięta's private archive.

Those Jewish clubs which achieved a high organizational and sports level demanded from the central Makkabi the organization of competitions in various disciplines. In that way, they satisfied the communities' need for similar activity. The Jewish Physical Education Board in Poland decided to organize the First Jewish Club Championships in ping-pong. The organization of the championships was entrusted to *Makkabi Krakow*⁶¹.

Fifteen teams of seven competed in the First Jewish Club Championships: *Hasmonea Lvov*, *Metal Lvov*, *Makkabi* and *Hakoah Krolewska Huta*, *ZASS Warsaw*, *Bar Kochba Poznań*, *Kadimah Łódź*, *Makkabi Pabianice*, *Warta Częstochowa*, *Makkabi Kielce*, *Makkabi Włocławek*, *Samson Tarnów*, *Makkabi Krakow*, *Hakoah Krakow* and *ŻTS Krakow*. The entry fee was 5 zlotys for a team and 1 zloty for an individual player. The tournament lasted sixteen hours and finished on Monday morning with the victory of the Lvov team. The final table⁶²:

1. *Hasmonea Lvov* – ZRWF RP challenge cup
2. *ŻASS Warsaw* – Fabin factory Cup
3. *Kadimah Łódź* – a ping-pong player statuette

Women:

1. Schock (*Makkabi Krakow*)
2. Spitzer (*Makkabi Królewska Huta*)

Men:

1. Kühl (*Metal Lvov*)
2. Ehrlich (*Hasmonea Lvov*)
3. Tellermann (*ŻKS Krakow*)

An open individual tournament was held in December 1930, which gathered the top ping pong players at the time. The best Jewish player turned out to be A. Ehrlich (*Hasmonea Lvov*), Hendeles (*Makkabi Łódź*) was second and Schweitzer (*Makkabi Łódź*) – third⁶³. The First Women's Jewish Club Championships were scheduled for January 1931⁶⁴.

Between 1931 and 1933, the internal championships of the Makkabi Association were not held. The top players, A. Ehrlich and H. Kuehl, were successful at the Maccabiah Games in Prague (1933). A. Ehrlich won the gold

⁶¹ "Kurier Łódzki" no. 72, 1930.

⁶² W. Pięta's private archive. "Nowy Dziennik" no. 83 of March 29th, 1930. J. Kunze, *Sport żydowski na terenie miasta Krakowa w latach 1926–1930*, WSWF Kraków 1962 (typescript of Master's dissertation).

⁶³ "Kurier Łódzki" no. 355, 1930.

⁶⁴ "Kurier Łódzki" no. 318, 1930 (neither archives nor magazines included the results).

medal in singles, while H. Kühl and A. Ehrlich triumphed in doubles. The Makkabi Poland won the silver medal in team game⁶⁵.

The Makkabi Association Championships were organized by *Makkabi Łódź*. Between the 22nd and the 23rd of December 1934, twenty-three players competed in the tournament. The members of *Hasmonea Warsaw* were definitely dominating the event at the time. Wajnsztok triumphed (*Hasmonea Warsaw*), B. Pukiet was second (*Makkabi Sosnowiec*), other positions were occupied by: Rechleben (*Hasmonea Warsaw*), S. Finkelstein (*Hasmonea*), Hendeles (*Makkabi Łódź*), Fusch (*Hakoah Częstochowa*). *Hasmonea Warsaw* turned out to be the best team, *Makkabi Łódź* being ranked second and *Makkabi Sosnowiec*, with a bronze medal, third⁶⁶.

On November 10th, 1935, the General Council of the Polish Makkabi Association Central Committee chose new sports captains for sixteen sports sections. The ping-pong section was captained by N. Himelfarb from Warsaw⁶⁷. The Makkabi Championships that were supposed to be held in 1935 actually took place between the 13th and the 14th of April 1936 at the Jewish hall of residence in ul. Przemysłowa 3 in Krakow. The singles tournament (only fourteen players took part) was won by Szymon Klein (*Samson Tarnów*), Bernard (Berek) Pukiet of *Makkabi Sosnowiec* was ranked second, the third place on the podium being occupied by Samuel Pempel (*Makkabi Krakow*). The best team was *Makkabi Krakow*, ranked before *Makkabi Łódź* and *Makkabi Sosnowiec*⁶⁸.

The following year's Makkabi Championships were hosted by *Hasmonea Lvov* (April 17th – 18th, 1937). The representative of the Sports Department was Schatz, and D. Kacengold from Krakow was the sports captain⁶⁹. The individual champion's title was yet again won by B. Pukiet (*Makkabi Chorzów*), W. Loewenhertz from Lvov was ranked second, and S. Nowarski (*Makkabi Chorzów*) was third. The best team of the tournament was *Hasmonea Lvov*, placed before *Makkabi Chorzów*.

On the recommendation of the Central Committee, the 1938 Makkabi Championships were organized by *Samson Tarnów*, between the 12th and the 13th of March. The organizing association prepared the event very carefully and carried out the task properly. The costs of the event (lodging and meals) were

⁶⁵ J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.*, (a typescript of a doctoral dissertation).

⁶⁶ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 103, 1934.

⁶⁷ The Wingate Institute for Physical Education (Israel), a report on the activity of the Central Committee of the Makkabi Association in Poland, p. 2. Sports report II.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁶⁹ State Archive of Lvov Oblast, Lvov, the *Hasmonea Lvov* files of March 17th, 1938, ref. No. 594/38.

covered by the organizers, as well as the event being organized at the risk of the association. The players took part in a parade, and even show games were played (Schiff – Joskowicz, Pukiet – Blonder). Eight teams participated in the team tournament. The first place was taken by the four time Polish champions, *Samson Tarnów*; *Makkabi Chorzów* was placed second, and *Makkabi Krakow* third⁷⁰. Thirty-three players representing twelve clubs took part in the individual tournament. An unexpected victory was one of B. Pukiet's (*Makkabi Chorzów*), who came before S. Klein (*Samson Tarnów*) and the four time Polish Champion, E. Schiff⁷¹. One of the prizes, a stationery set, was funded by M. Hornung, PhD, the director of KOZTS. The umpires' committee included: H. Apsel, Gellwasch, Ormian, Birnfeld.

Taking into consideration the well-known organizational difficulties, the 1939 Makkabi Championships were held in Warsaw, in ul. Królewska 20. *Makkabi Krakow* was ranked first, before *Makkabi Łódź*. In individual game, S. Klein took his revenge on B. Pukiet for the previous year's defeat. It should be noted that at that time, many of the well-known Jewish players had already left for Palestine⁷².

⁷⁰ In 1938, the following teams competed: Makkabi Krakow, Chorzów, Częstochowa, Międzyokręgowe Koło Tarnów, Makkabi Sosnowiec, Nowy Sącz, Krynica and Samson Tarnów.

⁷¹ W. Pięta's private archive. Circular no. 1/VIII of the Union of the Jewish Gymnastics and Sports Associations of Poland, p. 3.

⁷² W. Pięta's private archive.

Chapter 5

THE SPORTS ACTIVITY OF THE DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATIONS, PLACING PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE JEWISH SPORTSMEN

A considerable role in the development of table tennis in the Interwar Poland was played by the district table tennis associations in Łódź, Lvov, Krakow, Warsaw and in Silesia, and particularly by their Jewish members and players.

5.1. The Łódź district

The origins of table tennis may be traced back to the Tourists' Club in Łódź, in ul. Kilińskiego. There were two ping-pong tables there, used for training by the Łódź Sports Club (ŁKS), Union, as well as by many beginners of Jewish descent¹. The sports life in Łódź was limited to football, volleyball, basketball, gymnastics and ping-pong. In 1927 in Łódź, Władysław Kozielski published the first manual, entitled *Gra w ping-ponga*. Also, in the same year, a friendly match between Hakoah and Union was played (Hakoah won 5–2). The winning team included: Morgenstein, Dyktom, Kaban, Segal, Baumarten, Hauchman and Podlasiak. The 1928 Łódź Champion was Stollenwerk from ŁKS, Szotland from the Braun Gymnasium was second, and Kohan from Hasmonaea Łódź was third².

On December 23rd, 1928, General Founding Meeting of the Łódź District Ping-Pong Association (ŁOZP-P) was held in the venue provided by the YMCA. The official media support for the activities of the association was offered by *Kurier Łódzki*. The initiators of the ŁOZP-P establishment were sportsmen of Jewish descent.

The ping-pong sections could be found in Kadimah (1928), Bar Kochba (1928), Hakoah (1928), Hasmonaea (1927) and Samson Jewish Sports Club (1928).

The 1929 Łódź Team Championships were held at two ping-pong youth clubs. Each of them was equipped in two tables: ŻSGS Hasmonaea (in ul. Gdańska 40) and Hakoah (in ul. Zachodnia 66)³. At that time, Hasmonaea I triumphed over ŁKS and Hasmonaea II.

¹ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 45, 1926.

² "Przegląd Sportowy" of April 21st, 1928.

³ A. Bogusz, *Żydowskie Stowarzyszenia Sportowe Łodzi 1897–1939*, Łódź 1992; "Kurier Łódzki" no. 52, Feb 22nd, 1929.

One of the major achievements of the members of the ping-pong associations was bringing Victor Barna, the many times world champion, to Łódź for show games purpose, which was in 1930. The champion played sixteen matches and won them all⁴. Many inter-city matches, with the participation of Jewish players, were organized at that time (Łódź vs. Warsaw, Łódź vs. Krakow, Łódź vs. Lvov).

One year later, in 1930, Hasmonia Łódź won the championships again.

In 1931, Makkabi Łódź turned out to be the best team in the city. The team included Edelbaum, Hendeles, Schoenwald, Librach, Adek, Lewkowicz⁵.

Jewish players dominated the individual women's championships in Łódź. The gold medal went to Libfeld from Makkabi, Polak from Sztern won the silver and Barwin from Jutrzenka Łódź won the bronze⁶.

At that time, the Łódź District Ping-pong Association stood out not only for their organizational activity (the First Polish Championships), but also the sports activity. They organized a well-structured team tournaments (with around forty teams taking part) and the only women's league in Poland. Every team had a proper tournament venue. The umpires participating in the tournament were mostly Jewish: Werthajm, Rotenberg, Goldwasser, Gros, Pasirman, Kurc, Mendelson. The 1932 team champions were: class A – Makkabi, class B – Hakoah II, class C – Tej-Chaj, substitute team – Hakoah III. In women's class A, Makkabi Łódź was ranked first, before Sztern, Orle and Makkabi Pabianice, Jutrzenka, PK Zjednoczone and Makkabi Zgierz. The best class B team was Hakoah, before Resursa and Bar Kochba⁷.

The 1933 Łódź champion was Birkenwald (Sztern), Libfeld was second and Polak from Sztern was third⁸. The men's championships were won by Hendeles, Librach becoming the Vice-Champion. The best team was the unrivalled Makkabi Łódź.

In 1934, the following sports clubs had the license to organize tournaments: ŻKS Makkabi Łódź, RSS Sztern, ŻKS Hakoah, ŻSRWF Jutrznia, ŻKS Tajfun, ŻKS Nordija, ŻKS Hapoeal, ŻKS Makkabi Pabianice, and the following non-Jewish clubs: KS Orle, PK Zjednoczone, KS YMCA, ŁTS Siła, ZMCh Odrodzenie and the Riflemen's Association, as well as RKS Widzew⁹. The "A" class included eight teams. Once again, the Makkabi Łódź won the

⁴ "Polonia" no. 2236, 1930. His opponents were players of Makkabi Łódź, ŻASS Warsaw, Hasmonia and Metal Lvov.

⁵ "Kurier Łódzki" of March 31st, 1931.

⁶ "Kurier Łódzki" of March 2nd, 1932.

⁷ "Kurier Łódzki" of Nov 24th, 1932.

⁸ "Kurier Łódzki" of Dec 27th, 1932.

⁹ "Rocznik Sportowy 1934", Warsaw 1934, p. 475.

championship. The top three in the individual game were: Lucjan Winsche (Orlę), Inzelstein (Makkabi) and Weiner (Sztern). In the 1934 Polish Championships in Krakow, Makkabi won the silver (Hendeles, Librach, Edelblum, Schweitzer, Inzelstein).

It should be mentioned here that a very useful role in the table tennis promotion in the Łódź district was played by "Kurier Łódzki". It dedicated a lot of space in its sports section to the current events and activities of the Łódź District Table Tennis Association (more than any other journal of the interwar period).

Throughout 1935, many of the Jewish sports clubs were experiencing an organizational and economic crisis, the effect of which was a temporary suspension of their activities. Despite those problems, Makkabi and Kantor (Makkabi Łódź) were champions yet again. Pazia (a sportsman of non-Jewish descent) from Orle Łódź was the Vice-Champion, and W. Joskowicz (Hakoah Łódź) was third¹⁰.

Makkabi was unrivalled in the class "A" championships in 1936 (they won the sixth championships); Hakoah won the silver and Zjednoczone won the bronze. In the finals of the individual games, Kantor and Zajdeman (from Makkabi) played against Pazia and Hoffman (from Orle). Zajdeman won and was ranked before Kantor and Hoffman¹¹. In the same year, the Łódź team played friendly matches against the Warsaw and the Poznań teams. The tournament of the twelve best players of Łódź was a very interesting event.

Table tennis became a very popular sport in schools. An example of this could be the inter-school tournaments, which enjoyed an immense popularity (sixteen schools participated). The Łódź Championships for seniors were played in class "A" and class "B". In class "A", Joskowicz from Hakoah was ranked first, before Zajdeman (Makkabi) and Pytel (Hakoah). In class "B", Pazia (KWP) was the best¹². The team championships were declared invalid by the Management Board of the Łódź District Table Tennis Association. The reasons for this decision are still unknown.

In February 1938, Makkabi won the championships again and was ranked before Orle and Hakoah¹³. Zajdeman triumphed over Pazia in singles. However, Łódź lost 1–4 to Krakow in a friendly meeting¹⁴. It was at that time when most of the Jewish sports clubs were closed down, which had a negative effect on the level of table tennis in Łódź.

¹⁰ "Kurier Łódzki" no. 64, 1935.

¹¹ "Kurier Łódzki" no. 350, 1936.

¹² "Kurier Łódzki" no. 339, 1937.

¹³ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 14, 1938.

¹⁴ "Kurier Łódzki" no. 81, 1938.

The Łódź district included thirty-three Jewish sports clubs in its structures, among others, those from Łódź, Pabianice, Ozorków, Piotrków, Tomaszów Mazowiecki and Kalisz. There was a table tennis section in each of these clubs¹⁵.

The Łódź District Table Tennis Association organized an international match, which was held in the Łódź Municipal Theatre, where Poland beat Latvia 5–4. E. Schiff (from Samson) scored three points, and B. Pukiet (Makkabi Chorzów) scored two.

Between 1931 and 1939 the Polish Table Tennis Association had its seat in Łódź. It was in Łódź where the Polish Table Tennis Association was established, registered and where its statute was approved. Most of the directors and members of the association were from Łódź; they were businessmen, bankers and civil servants. It was also in Łódź where the first Polish Team Championships were held (in 1932). The members of the Łódź District Table Tennis Association carried out the entrusted task very well, also thanks to the involvement of the Jewish community. Throughout the years in question, the Jewish sportsmen were successful in competing for the first place in Łódź.

5.2. The Lvov district

Ping-pong was brought to Lvov from Austria before the First World War. The preparations for the presentation of a new discipline had been under way for years. The first public show tournament was held in January 1926, at the “Rondo” café¹⁶. Table tennis was also known as “room tennis” in those days. The tournament was organized by the members of Hasmonaea Lvov. The matches were played according to the rules agreed upon before the tournament. The teams of Hasmonaea (Hoch, Gruber, Philip, Rappaport, Redler, Fleischer, Ales) and of Pogoń Lvov (Zimmerman, Wiećkowski, Urich, Bacz, Z. Kuchar, Jacgerman, Polowy) competed in teams of seven until thirty winning points in each set. The umpires at that match were Singer and Cybulski. The meeting, watched by a hundred and fifty spectators, was won by Hasmonaea by 389–354¹⁷.

In those days, the members of the table tennis section of the ŻKS Hasmonaea Lvov would organize evening training sessions between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. (at the ping-pong parlour in ul. Skarbkowska 1/3). The trainings were

¹⁵ A. Bogusz, *Żydowskie Stowarzyszenia Sportowe Łodzi 1897–1939*, Łódź 1992.

¹⁶ “Sport” of Jan 6th, 1926, Lvov. p. 10

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10

conducted by Mateusz Hoch, a ping-pong player and the director of the section¹⁸.

In 1927, eleven teams participated in the inaugural Lvov Championships. Jutrzenka Lvov (Altschuller, Farb, Flohr, Hechman, H. and S. Pohoryles, Luberman) was ranked first, before Hasmonia and Bar Kochba¹⁹.

Many ping-pong sections were established in Lvov between 1928 and 1929²⁰. The “A” class tournaments were dominated by Jewish sports clubs.

The popularity of ping-pong among the citizens of Lvov increased considerably after the Lvov District Table Tennis Association had been established²¹. The youth and the adults played it. This game turned out to be a fantastic form of supplementary training for football players (Zenit, Metal, Hasmonia, Pogoń). In 1930, Pogoń Lvov played a record number of twenty-six ping-pong matches in Poland. There were seventeen players training in the club, including, among others: Kuźmiński, Donsaft, Feder, Weissberg, and the Pohoryles brothers²².

In the 1930 Lvov Team Championships, Hasmonia Lvov (Aubs, Fichtman, Hellman, A. Munzer, Munzer II, Schenkman, Tonenbaum, Ehrlich)²³ was ranked first, after beating Pogoń Lvov (both teams were represented solely by Jewish players).

The first Silesian Open Championships, which were held in Królewska Huta (in 1931), ended in the victory of the Lvov representatives. The individual part of the tournament was won by the world champion, L. Bellak from Hungary, the seventeen-years-old A. Ehrlich (Hasmonia) was second, and Kuehl (Metal) was third²⁴. Ehrlich and Fichtman, both from Lvov, were definitely the best in doubles.

In 1932, Heller won the Lvov Singles Championships²⁵. The best team of Lvov in 1933 was the Sports Section of the Jewish Association of Private Clerks (Feinbraun, Fuhrman, Gelbhaer). In the women’s tournament,

¹⁸ J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.*; Mateusz Hoch (1903–1944), Doctor of Law (alumnus of the Jagiellonian University), lawyer, sports official. Player of Bar Kochba Lvov, Pogoń Lvov (1918–1932), Hasmonia Lvov (1924–1931).

¹⁹ “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 12, 1927.

²⁰ W. Pięta’s private archive.

²¹ The Lvov District Table Tennis Association was registered on January 1st, 1930

²² A commemorative book published on the 35th anniversary of the LKS Pogoń Lvov (1904–1939), Lvov 1939, p. 225.

²³ W. Pięta’s private archive. “Nowy Dziennik” no. 17, 1930.

²⁴ W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 16.

²⁵ “Robotnik” no. 53, 1932.

Konstantin (SRWF Jutrznia) triumphed. The leading ping-pong players of Lvov (the Pohoryles brothers, A. Ehrlich) did not participate in that tournament, as at that time they were studying outside the country. The Rzeszów ping-pong section was created at ŻRK Bar Kochba (donations were collected for new equipment)²⁶.

In 1934, table tennis was already very popular in Lvov. The tournaments organized by the Lvov District Table Tennis Association would gather twenty-four teams, divided into three classes, “A”, “B”, and “C”. Twelve Jewish sports club took part in the tournament. After the class “A” vetting by the Department of Games and Discipline, it turned out that the best women’s team was Hasmonea Lvov (Hessl, Juff, Schapiro, Wildman). In men’s category, the gold went to Hasmonea Lvov (Agid, G. Fluk, Kauf, Loewenhertz, Ochs, Sternhertz), the silver to ŻKS Makkabi, and the bronze to Jutrzenka²⁷. In singles play, W. Loewenhertz, a regular Polish representative, won for the first time; Fluk was ranked second and Feder finished third²⁸. The 1934 Singles Women’s Champion was Rozenlak from AZS Lvov. Ranked before Juff and Hessl (Hasmonea).

The structures of the Lvov District Table Tennis Association, which had its seat in the ŻKS Makkabi building in ul. Blacharska, included also the associations from Stanisławów, Tarnopol, Jarosław, Przemyśl and Rzeszów. The district included nine Jewish sports clubs from Lvov only, namely: ŻKS Hasmonea, ŻKS Jutrzenka, ŻKS Kadur, ŻKS Rekord, ŻKS Ssyjonid, ŻKS Makkabi, the Jewish Association of Private Clerks, RSWF Jutrznia, ŻKS Gwiazda²⁹.

The members of the Lvov District Table Tennis Association encountered many difficulties in their organizational work. They had to pay two zlotys for placing a tournament announcement in the “*Ilustrowany Program Sportowy*” (“*Illustrated Sports Programme*”)³⁰. The old rules of sports competitions made the matches extremely long (for instance, the match played by Jutrzenka against ŻMS lasted nine hours and ended only when one of the players fainted). Many disruptions and arguments provoked by the association members and players themselves were an additional issue.

²⁶ “Przegląd Rzeszowski” no. 1, 1933. (The 1932 friendly match between Bar Kochba – Makkabi Jasło). “Kurier Lwowski” of Feb 24th, 1932.

²⁷ “Ilustrowany Program Sportowy” no. 66, Lvov 1934, pp. 39–40.

²⁸ W. Pięta’s private archive.

²⁹ „Rocznik Sportowy” 1934, Warsaw 1934.

³⁰ “Ilustrowany Program Sportowy”, Lvov 1934, no. 64, p. 39; “Ilustrowany Program Sportowy”, Lvov 1934, no. 66, p. 41.

In 1935, there were eighty players from thirty-four teams competing in the Lvov District Championships. Ten players got to the finals, six of them were representatives of Hasmonia. The singles part of the tournament was won by the then Polish representative, W. Loewenhertz, ranked before Fluk and Kuehl (all three from Hasmonia)³¹. Hasmonia Lvov won the Lvov Team Championships (G. Fluk, Kauf, Loewenhertz, H. Kühl, Ochs, A. Sternhertz)³². Hasmonia did not participate in the 1935 Polish Team Championships due to high costs of travel and board in Poznań (450 zlotys).

The 1936 championships had a surprise in store. The many times district champions, Hasmonia Lvov, was defeated in the finals by Zenit Lvov (Garstner, Feder, Szpinger, Ressler, Weintraub, Habenstreit)³³. The champion of the women's singles was Fuhrman, ranked before Konstantin and Zimmerman. Elmer (Gwiazda) triumphed in the tournament for seniors, the silver went to Feder (Zenit) and the bronze to Loewenhertz (Hasmonia).

The involvement of the members of some Jewish sports clubs, such as Scherer, Ressler, Weiss or Silber, was of great importance to the development of table tennis in the district of Lvov.

1937 was the year of the triumph of Hasmonia and Loewenhertz, Abraham Sternhertz was ranked second. The following year, Hasmonia won again and a member of Zenit Lvov, Ressler, was ranked first³⁴. Loewenhertz was second and Gallat third. The best player of the season among women was Czyżnowska (Czarni), who was placed before Konstantin (Jutrznia)³⁵.

Before the Polish Championships in 1939, the Lvov District Table Tennis Association organized the qualifiers for the second time, which turned out to serve also as the district championships. Hasmonia was the winner. The gold in individual game went to Loewenhertz, the silver to Ressler and the bronze to Gallat (Hasmonia Lvov). In women's competition, Eck (Gwiazda Lvov)³⁶ climbed the podium having been ranked first.

³¹ "Ilustrowany Telegram Sportowy" no. 4, Lvov 1935.

³² W. Pięta's private archive.

³³ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 3, 1936.

³⁴ J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.* (typescript of doctoral dissertation). Ressler, footballer of Zenit Lvov, the most popular sportsman of Lvov (1934).

³⁵ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 14, 1938.

³⁶ "Chwila" no. 22, 1939.

5.3. The Krakow district

The origins of ping-pong in the Krakow district date back to the mid-1920s. The first attempt to establish a district association in Krakow was made in 1926³⁷. The proponents of this idea were Henryk Apsel, Maksymilian Hornung and Herman Borsztyn. The first Krakow Championships were held in 1927. The winners of that event were S.C. Cracovia and their famous player Andrzej Zieliński (non-Jewish players)³⁸. The triumphers in the following years were OKS Orleńa Krakow, including: K. Herbst, W. Żak, W. Szumski, T. Mianowski, J. Gronobis, W. Stefaniuk.

The first official match of a Jewish team took place in 1928. It was then, when ŻKS Makkabi defeated RKS Legia 8–2. The representatives of the Krakow team were: Eder, Weissblat, Lichting, Englander and Weinblatt³⁹.

In May 1928, on the initiative of ŻKS “Amatorzy” the Krakow District Ping-pong Association was established. The members of ŻKS Hakoah were very helpful throughout the organizational stage of the enterprise. The first management team of the Krakow District Ping-pong Association included: M. Hornung (president), H. Borszcz (vice-president), H. Apsel, E. Kleinberg, H. Eismann⁴⁰.

The Krakow Team Championships were very popular among the players and fans. By 1928, ŻKS Makkabi Krakow (J. Eder, A. Englander, A. Feldman, M. Landau, J. Lichting, S. Monderer, R. Weissblat), who won the silver in the Krakow Championships, was already a force to be reckoned with in the sports competitions.

In a 1929 friendly match, Makkabi Krakow (Lichting, Weissblat, Apsel, Herman, Friedman, Horowitz, Eder) defeated the then leading team of Cracovia 4–3. A. Zieliński, a member of Cracovia, the 1927 Champion, did not take part in the event⁴¹.

³⁷ W. Pięta’s private archive. The Cracovian circles accepted this date as the date of the establishment of the Krakow District table Tennis Association (1926). The registration files suggest 1928 (cf. the State Archive, files of the district authorities of the city of Krakow). The founding meeting took place on May 7th, 1928.

³⁸ The Krakow District Table Tennis Association Chronicle (chronicler – Jan Kuśmierz) is to be found in the office of the Table Tennis Association in Krakow – Krakow-Bronowice.

³⁹ J. Kunze, *Sport żydowski na terenie miasta Krakowa w latach 1926–1930*, Kraków 1962 (Master’s dissertation).

⁴⁰ W. Pięta’s private archive.

⁴¹ “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 83, 1929.

In 1929, the management of the Krakow District Ping-pong Association already included ten members, and all of them were Jewish. The composition of the management board was as follows: M. Hornung – president, H. Bursztyn – vice-president, H. Apsel – secretary, M. Landmann – treasurer; other members: J. Klein, M. Kwaśniewski (the president of the Department of Games and Discipline), H. Seifter, S. Horowitz, I. Bauminger, J. Kirchenbaum.

1930 was the best sports year for TS Orleńta (Krakow Championship). ŻKS Makkabi won the vice-championship, while ZTS Krakow was ranked in the third place and Cracovia in the fourth⁴².

In order to promote table-tennis among the youngest beginners from the Jewish communities, an idea emerged to organize the so-called all-Poland Tournament of the twenty-two aces. The host of the tournament, ŻKS Hagibor Krakow, fully satisfied the requirements. In the venue provided by the Jewish Handicraft Association, two new tables were installed. Nine prizes had been funded for the best players. The tournament turned out to be a well-deserved triumph of the youth from the Makkabi Krakow⁴³.

The members of the Makkabi Krakow won the bronze in the 1932 Polish Team Championships. In the following year's Krakow Championships, they were defeated by Wisła Krakow and Samson Tarnów⁴⁴. The individual part of the tournament was a success for Majerczyk of Hagibor⁴⁵. Makkabi, Helsi and Langer triumphed in Nowy Targ.

The 1933 electoral success belonged to H. Apsel, a member of the Makkabi Krakow, who was chosen to fill the position of the sports captain of the Polish Table Tennis Association (he held this position until 1937).

The Krakow district included twenty one sports clubs, fifteen of them were Jewish: ŻKS Hagibor, ŻKS Hakoah, ŻRKS Siła, ŻKS Makkabi, ŻKS Hakadur, ŻTS Kraków, ŻKS Hapoel, Samson, TS Jutrzenka, RSWF Gwiazda-Sztern, ŻKS Tarnów, ŻKS Makkabi Jasło, ŻKS Makkabi Stary Sącz, ŻKS Makkabi and ŻKS Gwiazda Nowy Sącz⁴⁶.

The sports competition in the Krakow district were divided into two classes, class "A" and "B". The 1934 champion of the KOZTS [Krakow District Table Tennis Association] was Samson Tarnów, Hakoah Krakow (Krakow champions) were second, and Makkabi third. In the individual part of the competition, the first two places went to the players of Samson: E. Schiff and

⁴² "Nowy Dziennik" no. 54, 1930.

⁴³ "Raz Dwa Trzy" no. 34, 1931; "Nowy Dziennik" no. 149, 1930

⁴⁴ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 12, 1933.

⁴⁵ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 13, 1933.

⁴⁶ "Rocznik Sportowy" 1934, Warsaw 1934. Cf. "Raz dwa Trzy" no. 9, 1934.

S. Klein, Majerczyk from Hagibor was classified third⁴⁷. The tournament confirmed the primacy of Samson Tarnów in the Krakow district, as well as in the whole country. E. Schiff and S. Klein became regular national representatives while the rest of the team (Gelbwachs, Seiden, Schiff I and Schmidt) also belonged to the group of top table tennis players of Krakow. The Samson team played a major role in the promotion of table tennis in the South of Poland. The Krakow District Table Tennis Association introduced, as a sort of experiment, the Krakow doubles championships (in imitation of the Davis Cup). The tournament brought the success of Wisła Krakow (Szumilas – Stefaniuk), ranked first before Hakoah (Pemper – Ohrenstein). The sports calendar of the KDTTA included also the prestigious tournament of the aces with the participation of Ehrlich, and matches against the teams from Częstochowa and Lvov. The series of table tennis competitions had its influence on the fact that two new sub-districts, Tarnów and Nowy Sącz, were distinguished from the KDTTA.

The 1935 Krakow Champion was Hagibor Krakow (Zysman, Weintraub, Blonder), ranked before Hakoah and Makkabi⁴⁸.

The Polish Championships in Warsaw (in 1936) were unsuccessful for the Krakow teams. Hagibor partially restored their reputation by triumphing again in the Krakow championships⁴⁹. The best singles player of that competition was Blonder (who defeated Stefaniuk in the finals)⁵⁰.

At that time, the Krakow District Table Tennis Association was considered to be the most efficient district within the Polish Table Tennis Association's structures. As a consideration for that fact, the head office of the PTTA was to be moved from Łódź to Krakow (however, the decision has never been changed). The propagation and the development of table tennis were largely due to the activities of the Jewish club members and players.

In 1937, there were forty-four players competing for the title of Krakow's best ping-pong player. They represented such clubs as Hagibor, Makkabi, ŻTS, as well as Wisła, Garbarnia and Cracovia (non-Jewish clubs). This time, Blonder (Hagibor) won the gold, defeating Stefaniuk (Wisła) and Weintraub, a team mate from Hagibor, in the finals. It was also the fourth time Hagibor was announced the best team⁵¹.

⁴⁷ "Raz dwa Trzy" no. 10, 1934.

⁴⁸ "Raz dwa Trzy" no. 47, 1935.

⁴⁹ "Raz dwa Trzy" no. 50, 1936. The silver went to Makkabi and the bronze to ŻTS Kraków F. Dobosz. Cf. J. Kukulski, *60 lat Cracovii 1906–1966*, Kraków 1966, p. 129.

⁵⁰ "Raz dwa Trzy" no. 52, 1936.

⁵¹ "Raz dwa Trzy" no. 1, 1937.

The host of the 1937 District Championships was Tarnów, and the favourite player was the three time individual Polish champion, E. Schiff from Tarnów. Apart from Schiff, the following players played in the finals: Klein, Siwek, Sommer, Blonder and Weintraub. Unexpectedly, Blonder, a fifteen-year-old, triumphed by defeating seventeen-year-old Schiff. S. Klein was ranked third⁵².

With changing fortunes, Blonder and Rozenzweig, alongside the Hagibor team, represented Krakow in the Polish Championships in Częstochowa (in 1938)⁵³.

The period between 1938 and 1939 brought more triumphs of Samson Tarnów and E. Schiff in the Krakow district tournaments⁵⁴.

A ping-pong match between the Warsaw and the Krakow teams was held in Krakow. The players from Krakow marked out for the match (Schiff, Klein, Blonder) defeated the Warsaw team (the result being 7-2)⁵⁵.

The Krakow District Table Tennis Association (Krakauer Ping-Pong Bezirksverband) was carrying out its activities during the WW II as well. It was only in 1941 when the police authorities of the General Government of the city of Krakow prohibited the management of the KDTTA from any further activities⁵⁶.

The Krakow District Table Tennis Association was re-established on November 11th, 1946⁵⁷. The 1947 Polish Champion was a Cracovia player, Szymon Blonder (formerly, Hagibor Krakow player). The new champion had to struggle not only against other ping-pong players, but also against the authorities who considered his Polish nationality dubious. The same adversities emerged in A. Ehrlich's career. In 1949, the Polish Table Tennis Association impeded the Garbarnia Krakow player to win the second Polish championship title⁵⁸.

⁵² W. Pięta's private archive.

⁵³ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 14, 1938.

⁵⁴ "Raz dwa Trzy" no. 2, 1939.

⁵⁵ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 10, 1939.

⁵⁶ State Archive in Krakow, files of the district authorities of the city of Krakow (akta Starostwa Grodzkiego), ref. No. SMKr 429, pp. 559, 573, 575, 577, 579. The document concerned the closing of the bank account (13,43 zlotys), handing over files and books and suspending the activities. The authorities during WW II included: Dr. M. Hornung, W. Żak, W. Grochowski, I. Bauminger.

⁵⁷ Krakow District table Tennis Association Chronicle, p. 9.

⁵⁸ W. Pięta's private archive. At a special meeting of the Management Board of the PTTA, S. Blonder had to prove that the time he spent abroad during the war, he did so as a Polish citizen.

5.4. The Warsaw district

Ping-pong tables appeared in the capital's parlours and sports clubs in the 1920s. A friendly show match was played between the Haokah Vienna and Makkabi Warsaw (its result remains unknown)⁵⁹. It took the Warsaw teams very little time to achieve such level of proficiency, so as to organize the first Warsaw championships (the Warsaw district association did not exist yet). The proposal was put forward by S.C. Warszawianka, which was home to many Jewish players. The first championships were held in 1926, they lasted all day long and brought the victory of Goldstein from Warszawianka. In the finals, he defeated his club colleague, Redlich⁶⁰.

Table tennis was developing mostly in the school environment (both male and female). The discipline did not require any major financial resources or specialized sports venues⁶¹. More and more matches promoting the discipline were played, with the participation of Makkabi (Strauch, Grajwer, Rozenfeld, Strauch II, Łabędź, Bronberg, Landau) and Polonia, as well as Stella Warsaw (Rounfeld, Finkielkraut, Lubliner, Grajwer, Kaltman II, Korallot, Aksenny)⁶².

The above mentioned facts support the rightness of the decision to establish the Warsaw District Ping-pong Association which was responsible for organizing tournaments in accordance with the current regulations⁶³.

On the initiative of the Ascola School Club, a meeting was organized for the delegates of the sports clubs which had ping-pong sections. Their goal was to establish the Polish Ping-pong Association⁶⁴.

⁵⁹ R. Gawkowski, *Warszawskie kluby sportowe 1918–1939. Ich rola społeczna i kulturalna* (typescript of Master's dissertation). The master's defence took place at the Institute of History of the University of Warsaw on June 27th, 2007.

⁶⁰ "Sport" no. 173, 1926.

⁶¹ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 52, 1926.

⁶² "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 48, 1926.

⁶³ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 2, 1927.

⁶⁴ "Nasz Przegląd" of Jan 22nd, 1927. The meeting was scheduled for Jan 24th, 1927 at 8.30 p.m. at S.C. Ascola in ul. Tłomackie 13. The research shows that this meeting did not eventually turn out to be the foundation of the Polish table Tennis Association. S.C. Ascola (aram. „Education”): the male Gymnasium of the Ascola Association was established in 1922. The table tennis section of the S.C. Ascola was the responsibility of H. Malipan. In 1928, S.C. Ascola joined the ŻAWF and created the Jewish Academic Students' Association.

“Nasz Przegląd” (in 1927) included information saying that the Warsaw District Table Tennis Association welcomed all players interested in taking part in the Warsaw Championships to visit the Makkabi hall⁶⁵.

Over those years, Jewish sports clubs, namely Makkabi, S.C. Ascola, Gwiazda, Bar Kochba and Jutrzenka, were the leaders in Warsaw. The 1927 Warsaw champions were Goldstein (Warszawianka) and Ascola, who defeated Makkabi 3–2 in the finals. After that success, the authorities of S.C. Ascola dismissed twenty-five players (the decision was influenced by the circular issued by the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, which prohibited the school youth from associating with any sports institutions)⁶⁶. The same year, the fusion of S.C. Ascola and ŻAWF (Jewish Academic Physical Education) took place. As a result, the Jewish Academic Sports Association emerged⁶⁷.

In 1928, workers’ and school tournaments were highly popular among the capital’s inhabitants. The Warsaw school champion was Syrkin (III Municipal Gymnasium), who defeated Lapidus (Commercial Gymnasium) in the finals⁶⁸. Gwiazda (Kesler, Welnfeld, Majerowicz, Zylberstein, Rosner) was the leading workers’ sports club, ranked before Skra (non-Jewish club)⁶⁹.

At the end of the 1920s (1929), Makkabi (Syrkin, Szpinadel, Strauch, Lothbringer, Lapidus, Szwarcmann, Głowacki) triumphed in the Warsaw Team Championships. The best workers’ sports club of the period was Skra (Gwiazda was ranked second)⁷⁰.

In 1930, the leading table tennis teams were ŻASS and Makkabi, who dominated not only in the field of organization, but also in the field of sports competition. There were seventy players training in the Makkabi Warsaw team, which was a record number. A very active team at the time, ŻASS, played many friendly matches against Marymont, AZS, Kraft, YMCA and Makkabi. A prestigious match was played at the ŻASS sports hall, in ul. Namiestnikowska 7, between the Warsaw team (which was composed of the players from Makkabi, Bar Kochba, Gwiazda, Czarni and Jutrzenka) and

⁶⁵ “Nasz Przegląd” of Mar 5th, 1927. There are no archival documents which would confirm the establishment of the Warsaw District Table Tennis Association in 1926 or 1927. The entry fee was 2 zlotys per team.

⁶⁶ “Nasz Przegląd” of Novr 22nd, 1927. In December 1927, the two-time Warsaw champion – Goldstein – got Warszawianka’s permission to play for Makkabi Warsaw.

⁶⁷ J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.*

⁶⁸ “Nasz Przegląd” of Mar 13th, 1928.

⁶⁹ “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 3, 1928.

⁷⁰ “Przegląd Sportowy” of Mar 23rd, 1929.

ŻASS⁷¹. Seven individual matches were played, ŻASS won 5–2. After this spectacular success, ŻASS also defeated the Jewish Clubs Team. This time, the match was played at the fine Einstein hall at the Jewish Hall of Residence⁷². Another distinguished sports club, ŻKS Hakoah, would conduct training sessions for the citizens of Warsaw, which took place every day, between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. The trainings were held under the supervision of Warsaw's best player, Goldenhar. Together with the Jewish players of Warsaw, Victor Barna, the many times World Champion, took part in the friendly show matches⁷³. The gold medal of the 1930 Warsaw Championships went to ŻASS, and in individual game, Goldehar.

Table tennis underwent a major development in one year, which is supported by the following facts: the school tournaments became much more appealing (six schools took part in the Warsaw Championships); more university students were practising ping-pong (AZS and ŻASS), and more people joined the workers' sports clubs (there were twelve teams competing in an unofficial league) and the Jewish sports clubs. The champions of 1931 were: ŻASS Warsaw (who beat YMCA in the finals) and Rundstein from Gwiazda⁷⁴.

An event of major importance for the table tennis environment was the establishment and registration of the Warsaw District Ping-Pong Association, which took place on November 10th, 1931. The founders of the WDP-PA were: Eisenberg I, Eisenberg II, Górka, Obarski and Weisenfisch⁷⁵.

The Warsaw Championships of the workers' sports clubs were held in January 1932. They ended in another success of Gwiazda I, their substitute team was ranked second.

WDTTA was responsible for the organization of the Warsaw championships. The management of the association also included representatives of the Jewish sports clubs: Feinbaum, Górka, Ajzenberg, Weisenfisch, Szebel and Lew.⁷⁶

⁷¹ "Nasz Przegląd Sportowy" no. 48, Dec 15th, 1930. The newspapers noted that the ŻASS prepared two tennis tables for this meeting. The participants were: Goldstein, Rozmaryn, Szwarcmann, Silberstein, Lapon, Górka, Goldenhar, Lotryngier.

⁷² "Nasz Przegląd" no. 324, Dec 24th, 1930.

⁷³ "Nasz Przegląd Sportowy" of Nov 28th, 1930.

⁷⁴ W. Pięta's private archive. The Academic Sports Association [AZS] used the sports hall in ul. Piramowicza 3 to play their matches. The workers' sports clubs which competed then included: Czarni, Skra, Błyskawica, Gwiazda, Draft, Sarmata, Union, Marymont, Jutrznia, Czerwoni, Tur Wola, YMCA.

⁷⁵ "Gazeta Polska" of Nov 12th, 1931. The Warsaw District Ping-pong Association was the fourth (officially) established and registered district association in the PTTA, after Krakow, Łódź and Lvov. W. Pięta's private archive.

⁷⁶ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 19, 1932. The authorities of the WDP-PA included: Olchowicz – President, Twardo – vice-President, Kotmora – Secretary, Szebel –

The 1933 Warsaw Champions were Makkabi, followed by YMCA in the second place and AZS in the third⁷⁷. Shimcha Finkelstein from Makkabi triumphed in the singles play⁷⁸. It should be noted that the technical abilities of the Jewish players were quite considerably superior to those of the rest of the players.

It was not until 1934 (in Krakow) that the Warsaw teams made their debut in the Polish championships. Hasmonia was fifth and Makkabi sixth. The bronze medal in the singles went to S. Finkelstein⁷⁹. Over that period, the WDTTA abandoned their activities. In the 1934 information section of the "*Rocznik Sportowy*" ("*Sports Yearbook*") there is no mention of the association. "*Przegląd Sportowy*" ("*Sports review*") of March 1934 also names only nine districts (no mention of the WDTTA again). Despite the problems, the tournament for the best Warsaw team did take place. Since 1927, the tournament would be continually won by Jewish teams. In that season, Hasmonia (Engelsberg, Mesing, S. Finkelstein, Jarecki, Rechleben, I. Rojzen, Wajnsztok) was ranked first, before Makkabi (Dymentmann, H. Grunberg, B. Heller, Lapon) and YMCA, with ŻASS being ranked fifth and Makkabi II seventh. The singles champion's title went to S. Finkelstein for the second time. The workers' tournament brought yet another triumph for Gwiazda⁸⁰.

The 1935 Warsaw Singles Champion was Wajnsztok (Hasmonia). The class "B" champion was the team of Hapoel Praga⁸¹. Hasmonia, a very strong team at that time, won the team championships easily and thus qualified to the Polish Team Championships. In Poznań, Hasmonia didn't suffer a single defeat, winning, among others, against the prize-winning Samson Tarnów, and became the Polish Champions.

Hasmonia Warsaw were the organizers of an international tournament with the participation of the Hungarian many time world champion, M. Szabados, and distinguished Austrian players: Liebster and Kohn. Finkelstein, Loewenhertz and Pohoryles were also present⁸².

A successful sports venture of an international significance was bringing to Warsaw world cup medallists, V. Barna and A. Ehrlich. The winner of the duel, i.e., of the five-set match was V. Barna. The programme also included matches with the participation of the public. The scheduled matches involving the

Treasurer, other members: Feinbaum, Prusak, Pisarczyk. the Department of Games and Discipline included: Górka, Ajzenberg, Weisenfisch, Lew.

⁷⁷ "Robotnik" no. 44, 1933.

⁷⁸ "Robotnik" no. 124, 1933.

⁷⁹ W. Pięta's private archive.

⁸⁰ "Robotnik" of Jan 29th, 1934.

⁸¹ "Robotnik" of Jan 28th, 1935; "Nowy Sportowiec" no. 12, 1935.

⁸² "Robotnik" of Apr 12th, 1935.

invited players did not take place due to the military police entering the venue (the organizers had not paid the 30 zlotys for the room rental).

The last sports accent of 1935 was an intercity match, in which Warsaw defeated Lvov (5–4) and Vilnius (9–0). The main player of the Warsaw team was S. Finkelstein⁸³. The matches were held in the Makkabi sports hall, in the presence of one thousand spectators.

On December 16th, 1935, a general meeting of the Warsaw District Table Tennis Association was held. The assembly chose the following members for the next term: Koliwieszko WO, Ajzenberg, sergeant Sławek, Matuszewski, Tłuchowski, Helcer, Lanenberg, Szulzitzer, Grunberg, Wyrzgier, Fajgenbaum, Wietecha, Bereza, Karpiński, Bromski, Cukerman.

Gwiazda was a regular winner of the workers' sports competitions. In that year's finals, they defeated WKS 1922 Warsaw (6–4).

In January 1936, the 1935 Warsaw Championships were finished. Six players were fighting for the leadership at the Gwiazda sports hall: Rojzen, Finkelstein, Rechtleben, Cukerman, Lapon and Grodnicki (Polish player). Eventually, for the third time in a row, S. Finkelstein triumphed over the rest, with Cukerman (Maraton) in the second place and Rojzen (Hasmonea) in the third⁸⁴. In the team finals, Hasmonea defeated YMCA. It was the first time that Warsaw women's championships were held (in 1936). There were twenty players competing for the championship. The first position was awarded to Hupfal (Haganah), the silver went to Smętek (Warszawianka) and the bronze to Student (Hasmonea). Young Finkelstein was ranked fourth. For unknown reasons, Gwiazda withdrew their two players from the competition.

The Warsaw District Table Tennis Association was the organizer of the Polish Team and Individual Championships. The sports clubs expressed many reservations – there were not enough umpires (Zofia Smętek umpired three matches) or good quality equipment. It was a worse period in the association's history. One of the reasons for the poor organization were financial difficulties. It had been three years since the WDTTA paid anything into the PTTA's account and it took eight months to settle accounts for the Polish Championships. It seemed that inspection was inevitable, but eventually, a new board of directors was elected, with Koliwieszko WO as the president. The remaining members of the new board were: Matuszewski, Kamiński, Piotrowski, Helcer and Rozengart. The function of the sports captain was entrusted to Ajzenberg (8th term)⁸⁵.

⁸³ "Robotnik" of Oct 20th, 1935.

⁸⁴ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 106, 1936; "Nowy Sportowiec" no. 3, 1936.

⁸⁵ "Kurier Codzienny" no. 342, 1936; "Nowy Sportowiec" no. 97, 1936. The meeting took place in ul. Leszno 66.

The best table tennis player of the interwar period was Shimcha Finkelstein, who left for Palestine at the end of 1937⁸⁶. Before leaving, he had managed to win the Polish individual championship. The Warsaw championships gave Finkelstein, together with Ratafia, Rechtleben, Rojzen and Wajnsztok, an opportunity to make Hasmonaea the best team of the capital yet again (PZL was second). The individual championship went to Małujło, Finkelstein was second and Rojzen third.

In 1938, the Warsaw district included twenty-seven clubs. A so-called workers' sub-district was sectioned off; it included fourteen teams. Izaak Rojzen, a player of Hasmonaea, was the Warsaw champion⁸⁷. The Gwiazda team was ranked first, before PZL. At the end of 1930s, the Jewish sports teams were losing their prestige and importance, many sections were disbanded. Some new sports clubs with table tennis sections appeared in Warsaw. It was the level of the competition between them that determined the level of sports in the capital.

The surprise of the 1939 competition was the gold for Rechleben from Gwiazda, who became the best player of the capital (he defeated, among others, the Polish representative, Piórowicz). It was the year when for the first time a non-Jewish team, PZL Warsaw, won the gold, after defeating Gwiazda in the finals⁸⁸.

In 1939, fifty-three out of one hundred seventy-six Warsaw sports clubs had table tennis sections (the workers' sports clubs were: RKS ŻAR, Gwiazda Warsaw, RSWF Gwiazda Otwock, Gwiazda Radom, ZRKS Union Warsaw, Hapoel Falenica). Table tennis sections also existed in tourist, educational and social groups. As for the popularity of the discipline, table tennis was ranked fifth⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ Oral account of Jerzy Gayer and Fima Borys.

⁸⁷ J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.* I. Rojzen represented Poland and Israel; left for Israel before the outbreak of the Second World War. Him and F. Borys played in one club (Hapoel Petah Tikva).

⁸⁸ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 15, 1939.

⁸⁹ R. Gawkowski, *Warszawskie luby sportowe 1918–1939*, pp. 107–108. Cf. R. Gawkowski, *Falsze, mity i półprawdy w dziejach warszawskiego sportu*, 2005 (typescript in author's possession).

5.5. The District of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie

At the beginning of the 1930s, ping-pong was one of the most popular sports disciplines in the area of Zagłębie⁹⁰. Most of the Jewish sports clubs had sections and the necessary sports equipment (tables, rackets and balls). The players of the ŻRKS Gwiazda Sosnowiec, Makkabi Sosnowiec and Hakoah Będzin initiated friendly competitions. In Piaski, the main prize was the city of Czeladź challenge cup⁹¹. Show matches were held in Grodziec, Sielec Mały, Będzin and Sosnowiec (ŻKS Kinareth defeated KS Płomień Sosnowiec). In Oświęcim (German – Auschwitz), Makkabi Sosnowiec defeated Kadimah Oświęcim 7–2.

The first championships of the Zagłębie district were held in January 1931. The winner was Bolesław Majcher from Sosnowiec, Błoch (Sosnowiec) was ranked second and Wywiół (Dąbrowa) was third⁹². The Team Championship went to RKS Zagłębie Sosnowiec. ŻRKS Gwiazda Sosnowiec finished the tournament in fourth place⁹³.

In 1932, the best team of Zagłębie was Makkabi Sosnowiec, who won all the friendly matches against other teams from the region⁹⁴.

In 1933, Zagłębie Dąbrowskie – the District Ping-pong Association in Będzin was established⁹⁵. Lichtenstein was chosen president, S. Łakomik was vice-president, Radzik – treasurer and Twardoch – secretary. The remaining members were: Zajdman, Wajsberg, Patucha, Łycki, Kamiński, Juryst. The district structures included counties of Zawiercie and Olkusz⁹⁶. The Department of Umpires organized a course for umpires. The city of Będzin hosted the championships of Zagłębie. Prior to that, Hakoah Zawiercie was ranked second in the Zawiercie championships (the winner was Warta). The subsequent positions were taken by: KS Harcerz, Riflemen's Association, TUR⁹⁷. The leading Jewish sports club, Hakoah Będzin, won the Cup of the Mayor of Katowice after defeating twenty-one teams from Silesia, Kraków and Zagłębie.

⁹⁰ "Polonia" no. 2931, 1932; M. Ponczek, *Rozwój kultury fizycznej w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim w latach 1864–1939*, Katowice 1992.

⁹¹ "Polonia" no. 2251, 1931.

⁹² "Expres Zagłębia" no.38, 1931.

⁹³ The tournament took place at the Sosnowiec community centre in ul. Jasna 26.

⁹⁴ M. Meducka, *Żydowskie stowarzyszenia sportowe w województwie kieleckim w latach 1918–1939*, [in:] *Jewish Historical Institute Bulletin*, Warszawa, no. 3–4, 1990. Makkabi Sosnowiec was registered in 1922. In 1926, the Makkabi centres were established in Zawiercie, Olkusz, Dąbrowa Górnicza.

⁹⁵ "Expres Zagłębia" no. 11, 1933.

⁹⁶ "Expres Zagłębia" no. 312, 1933.

⁹⁷ "Expres Zagłębia" no. 31, 1933.

The singles part of the tournament saw the triumph of Mauer (Hakoah) over Slotosch (AKS Królewska Huta)⁹⁸. The leading players of that time were: young B. Pukiet, S. Nowarski, Stachlic and Fischel⁹⁹.

At the 1934 Polish Championships, held in Krakow, Hakoah Będzin was classified seventh (out of twelve teams). According to the information placed in the 1934 "*Rocznik sportowy*" ("*Sports Yearbook*"), the District Table Tennis Association of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie included twenty-three sports clubs (the largest number of sports clubs with table tennis sections in Poland)¹⁰⁰. The organizational strength of the ZD-OZTS was determined by Jewish sports clubs: Makkabi Sosnowiec, Hakoah Będzin, Bar-Kochba Czeladź, Makkabi Dąbrowa Górnicza, Kadimh Będzin, Kinareth Sosnowiec, Hapoel Będzin, Gwiazda Sosnowiec, Gwiazda Dąbrowa, Gwiazda Będzin, Kraf-Siła Będzin, RSWF Jutrznia, ŻKS Przemysła Będzin, as well as the Polish Youth Association of Piaski, Sosnowiec, Sosnowiec – Pogoń, Nowy Sielec, and the remaining sports clubs: Arja Sosnowiec, Solway Grodziec, Brynica Czeladź, the J. Piłsudski Polish Youth Club of Czeladź and Sosnowiec, the Community Centre in Sosnowiec.

The 1934 Zagłębie Singles Champion was B. Pukiet, the silver went to S. Nowarski. The ping-pong players from the Makkabi Sosnowiec (Pukiet, Nowarski, Jakubowicz, Dafner, Brandes) took part in the Polish Makkabi Championships¹⁰¹.

The city of Olkusz hosted the match between the Bejtar Jewish Sports Club (Friedman, Piess, Cukerman, Wajemon, Gleitman) and the "*Zagłębiańska Dziesiątka*" ("the Zagłębie Ten") scout team. The championships in Zawiercie were held under the patronage of the mayor.

The 1935 Zagłębie champions were S. Nowarski and Makkabi Sosnowiec¹⁰². Also, Zagłębie Dąbrowskie – District table Tennis Association was reorganized that year by the representatives from Sosnowiec, Będzin, Dąbrowa, Piasek and Grodziec¹⁰³. Table tennis was popular as nearly every week friendly matches would be held in Milowice, Dąbrowa (RSWF Gwiazda vs. ŻKS Makkabi Dąbrowa: 4 – 3) and Olkusz. In Piaski, the tenth anniversary of the club was celebrated with a match of the ten best players of Silesia and Zagłębie.

⁹⁸ "Expres Zagłębia" no. 45, 1934; "Polonia" no. 3300, 1934.

⁹⁹ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 18, 1934.

¹⁰⁰ "Rocznik Sportowy", Warsaw 1934, pp. 476–477.

¹⁰¹ "Expres Zagłębia" no. 348, 1934.

¹⁰² "Expres Zagłębia" of Mar 25th, 1935.

¹⁰³ "Expres Zagłębia" of Jan 20th, 1936.

In January 1937, a tournament for the title of the Champion of Silesia and Zagłębie of the Makkabi Sports Clubs was held in Dąbrowa. The competition was won by Makkabi Chorzów, with Makkabi Sosnowiec in the second and Makkabi Dąbrowa in the third place. Makkabi Rybnik was classified fourth.

Also in 1937, TCL Siemianowice won the title of the Zagłębie Champion, with KWP Mysłowice in the second and PIOK Świętochłowice in the third place. The singles part of the tournament was a triumph of Werba from Katowice over Guliński (Świętochłowice) and Robok (Piaski)¹⁰⁴.

In the sports hall of the Makkabi Sosnowiec, A. Ehrlich played and won seven show matches: four of them against the leading players of Zagłębie, and three against volunteers from the audience. The public showed an immense interest in that tournament. It should be noted here, that beating B. Pukiet (player of the Makkabi Chorzów) required most effort on the part of Ehrlich.

Another achievement of the talented Bernard (Bernie) Pukiet, a player from Sosnowiec, was winning the Silesian Championships in 1938¹⁰⁵.

On the 28th of January 1938, the Sub-District Table Tennis Association was established in Zagłębie¹⁰⁶. The seat of the management was located in the ŻTGS Makkabi Sosnowiec. Furthermore, table tennis was practised in Makkabi Dąbrowa, Hapoel Będzin, Hakoah Będzin and Sosnowiec. Majer Laueman was appointed the chairman, Jakub Sz wajcer – vice-chairman, and Izrael Zajdman – secretary. The members were: Lawek Firek, Hendel Dattner, Edward Więckowski and Marian Imielski. Table tennis was, back then, the favourite discipline of the national minorities.

A grand tournament for the championship of the Kieleckie voivodeship was held in Będzin and its main organizer was the management of the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie sub-district. The Zagłębie champion's title went to B. Pukiet with W. Kawczyk from Siemianowice in the second place¹⁰⁷. The tournament enjoyed great interest on the part of the locals. The sports clubs of Zagłębie were in good relations with the Silesian District Table Tennis Association and the Silesian sports clubs.

¹⁰⁴ "Expres Zagłębia" no. 66, 1937.

¹⁰⁵ W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 26.

¹⁰⁶ "Expres Zagłębia" of Jan 28th, 1938.

¹⁰⁷ "Expres Zagłębia" of Mar 23rd, 1939.

5.6. The Silesian District

Ping-pong in developed Upper Silesia in the late 1920s. At first, the discipline was introduced to the programme of the Polish Youth Associations¹⁰⁸. The first show tournament was held in Mysłowice, with matches between young players of Jewish descent – thirteen-year-old Marcol and thirty-two years old Lindzwi¹⁰⁹. The first ping-pong clubs were set up. A match held in Królewska Huta (Chorzów) originated the sports struggle between Hakoah and Makkabi (Hakoah Królewska Huta won 6–1)¹¹⁰.

In 1929, the “Polonia” daily paper published the standardized table tennis regulations¹¹¹.

At the beginning of 1930s, Makkabi Królweska Huta assumed the responsibility of organizing the ping-pong structures in Upper Silesia. It was on their initiative that the First International Silesia Championships were organized. The hosts invited 105 competitors, including, among others, Laszlo Bellak¹¹², a world champion, and players from Lvov, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Wrocław, Budapest, Łódź, Warsaw, Polish and German parts of Silesia¹¹³. The tournament was held at count Reden’s hotel in Królewska Huta. It was a triumph of L. Bellak, with A. Ehrlich in the second place and Kuehl in the third (both from Lvov). Romana (Makkabi Lvov) was the best among women. Ehrlich and Fichtman won the doubles¹¹⁴.

Cheap equipment, Jewish restaurants and youth clubs, all this favoured the development of table tennis in the Jewish circles. The popularity of the discipline was even greater due to the simple regulations. The table tennis proponents from Makkabi Królewska Huta managed to organize the first unofficial Silesian championships. Makkabi Królewska Huta turned out to be the best team. In singles, the best player was J. Kornhauser. In doubles, Krafka – Kornhauser (Makkabi) defeated Osiecki – Woźnica (Hedwig)¹¹⁵.

¹⁰⁸ A. Steuer, *Sport na Górnym Śląsku 1896–1996*, Katowice 1997, p. 38. Cf. W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁹ W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 15.

¹¹⁰ “Polonia” no. 1854, 1929.

¹¹¹ “Polonia” no. 2204, 1929.

¹¹² Z. Uzorinac, *ITTF 1926–2001 Table Tennis Legends*, Zagreb 2001, p. 37. Laszlo Bellak was born on Feb 11th, 1911 in Budapest; died in a New York hospital on Sep 20th, 2006. He was 95 years old.

¹¹³ “Polonia” no. 2252, 1931.

¹¹⁴ W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 16.

¹¹⁵ “Polonia” no. 2572, 1931.

Bellak and Szabados were playing in Silesia again. The ping-pong shows in which they participated enjoyed great popularity¹¹⁶.

On October 23rd 1932, the first elections in the history of the Silesian District Table Tennis Association were held. The organizational meeting was presided by Rotblum from Makkabi Królewska Huta¹¹⁷. The head office of the district association was located in ul. Szpitalna 1.

Many important tournaments were held in Upper Silesia. The players of Makkabi Królewska Huta dominated the championships in Myslowice: Kornhauser was first, Lichtblau second and Bednarek from La Salette Oratory in Myslowice was third.

The period between 1933 and 1934 was marked by stagnation in the Silesian table tennis. The players did not take part in the Polish singles and team championships. The Jewish sports clubs were less active in that period. Only Makkabi Sosnowiec decided to compete for the highest trophies in Upper Silesia. In the discussed period, there was a visible domination of the Polish Youth Associations (*Stowarzyszenia Młodzieży Polskiej – SMP*), Catholic Youth Associations (*Katolickie Stowarzyszenia Młodzieży – KSM*), workers' sports clubs and school sports clubs.

At that time, there were nine districts in the structure of the Polish Table Tennis Association. There was no District Table Tennis Association of Silesia, where ping-pong was defeated by other sports, such as football, swimming, boxing, wrestling, weightlifting or fencing¹¹⁸.

After three years of absence in the sports arena, ŻKS Makkabi Chorzów made a comeback. Bernard Pukiet won the Silesian singles championship. In the finals, he defeated Z. Werba, a two-time Silesian champion. Widekind, a player of Makkabi Chorzów, was ranked third in the class "B" singles tournament¹¹⁹.

In 1936, at the Shooting Centre in Chorzów, a propaganda match was played between the teams of Silesia and Poland, in which the Polish team won by 8–1. The Silesian team included S. Nowarski. Makkabi Chorzów paid a visit to Cieszyn. B. Pukiet won in the singles, with Wiener in the second place and Wachsberg in the third. The organization of the Bielsko championships was the local Makkabi, who was classified in the second place in the final ranking.

¹¹⁶ "Kattowitzter Zeitung" no. 65, 1932; H. Rechowicz, *Polska kultura fizyczna na Śląsku Górnym i Cieszyńskim*, Katowice 1991.

¹¹⁷ H. Rechowicz, *Dorobek polskiego sportu w górnośląskiej części województwa (1922–1939)*, [in:] *Z dziejów kultury fizycznej*, Gorzów Wlkp. 1996, p. 199. The management board included J. Kornhauser (Treasurer) and Rotblum (sports captain)

¹¹⁸ A. Steuer, *Sport na Górnym Śląsku 1896–1996*, Katowice 1997, p. 38.

¹¹⁹ W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005.

The Third Silesian Championships (for 1937) were held at the end of 1936. The title of the Silesian Team Champion went to representatives of the Training School from Rybnik with Makkabi Chorzów winning the vice-championship. For the second time, B. Pukiet triumphed in the singles. In total, seventy players representing twenty Silesian sports clubs participated in the tournament¹²⁰.

In the Polish Championships of 1937, held in Tarnów, the team of Makkabi Chorzów (Pukiet, Wiener, Nowarski) was classified in the ninth place. The leading Silesian player, B. Pukiet, was ranked fourth¹²¹. Pukiet's achievements in the tournament had an influence on his calling up to the national team for the world championships. Winning the place in the team required competing against first-class players, like Finkelstein, Schiff, Loewenhertz, Małujło, Ehrlich¹²².

1938 was also successful for Bernard Pukiet. He won the Silesian Championships and the Polish vice-championship. However, he did not go to the world championships. The Jewish sportsmen started to encounter problems of a social nature. Most of the ŻKS's were excluded from competing.

The last tournament before the outbreak of the WW II brought B. Pukiet the title of Vice-Champion of Silesia, and his team, Makkabi Chorzów (Lvov) won the Polish vice-championship¹²³.

The officials from the Jewish minority had a major influence on the development and the activity of the District Ping-pong Association of Upper Silesia. They co-organised the first international championships of the Silesian region. If needed, they invited world champions to Królewska Huta, which enabled young players to familiarize themselves better with the secrets of the discipline.

Bernard Pukiet continued his pre-war sports career in the United States and achieved many valuable victories in world championships tournaments, especially in the 1960s.

5.7. The Częstochowa District

The citizens of Częstochowa encountered the new discipline probably before WW I, thanks to the English and German engineers who worked on the construction of the steel mill, celluloid and textile factories. In spring, they would spend their spare time playing lawn tennis and during the autumn and winter evenings, they would amuse themselves playing ping-pong.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 25.

¹²² "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 4, 1937

¹²³ "Raz Dwa Trzy" no. 10 & 11, 1939; W. Pięta's private archive.

In the inaugural match (in 1929) in the Częstochowa region, *Warta* defeated *Ascola* (a non-Jewish club) by 8–1, 9–0¹²⁴. In the singles, praise was owed to Niemirowski, who defeated his brother, Sz. Niemirowski, in the finals. Miško was ranked third.

The district in question did not organise regular tournament. There was no table tennis association in Częstochowa, therefore, there was no-one who would assume the responsibility of organising singles and team tournaments or trainings. The game had a typically informal character. Jewish sports clubs with table tennis sections were being established. One of them was ŻKS Hakoah (1932)¹²⁵.

The first official championships of the Częstochowa district took place in 1934. The winning team was *ŻTGS Hakoah Radomsko*, with *Gwiazda* in the second place and *Makkabi* in the third. At that time, most of the matches were played in a sports hall in ul. Kościuszki 12 (S.C. “*Warta*”)¹²⁶.

In 1934, the Częstochowa District Table Tennis Association included eight sports clubs, seven out of which were Jewish: *Gwiazda*, *ŻTGS Hakoah Radomsko*, *ŻTGS Makkabi Częstochowa*, *RKS Hapoel Radomsko*, *RKS Hapoel Częstochowa*, *ŻRKS Jutrznia Częstochowa* and *ŻRS “Nordija” Częstochowa*¹²⁷.

The Krakow district was one of the best in Poland and its leading players, Pomper and Obinstein, were already championship medallists. Therefore, the visit of the Krakow team was an important event in the sports life of Częstochowa. The host team lost by 3–7. The competitors playing in the colours of the defeated team were: Gruca, Rozenbaum, Hasse, Rozenzweig, Kleinerman¹²⁸.

In the 1934 Polish Championships, held in Krakow, only Miško from *Makkabi Częstochowa* qualified for the second round. Helleman and Frenkenberg were eliminated in the first round.

¹²⁴ “*Expres Częstochowski*” no. 76, 1929.

¹²⁵ E. Małolepszy, *Kultura fizyczna i przysposobienie wojskowe w Częstochowie i w powiecie częstochowskim w latach 1918–1939*, Częstochowa 1996, p. 75.

¹²⁶ State Archive in Katowice, branch in Częstochowa, ref.: Starostwo Powiatowe w Częstochowie, no. 54. Stowarzyszenia sportowe 1923–1932.

¹²⁷ “*Rocznik Sportowy*” 1934, Warsaw 1934; “*Nowy Sportowiec*” no. 100, 1937, cf. E. Małolepszy, *Ruch sportowy wśród ludności żydowskiej w Częstochowie i w powiecie częstochowskim w okresie II Rzeczypospolitej* [in:] T. Jurek, *Z dziejów kultury fizycznej mniejszości narodowych w Polsce w XX wieku*, Gorzów Wlkp. 2007.

¹²⁸ W. Pieta’s private archive.

The team from Częstochowa (Ehrenfeld, Girman, Helleman, Krauze, Goldberg, Rozenzweig, Fajertag, Zyglar and Fuks) lost to the highly valued Warsaw team 0–5 in a friendly match¹²⁹.

The gold medal of the 1935 Częstochowa Championships went to *Hakoah Radomsko*, the silver was awarded to *Błyskawica Częstochowa* and the bronze to *Makkabi Częstochowa*. A young player of *Błyskawica Częstochowa*, Goldberg, triumphed in the singles and defeated Rozenzweig from Nordija in the finals. Ranked in the third place was Hadze from *Hakoah Radomsko*¹³⁰.

1936 was the year of the championship of *Błyskawica* in Częstochowa. In the period between 1936 and 1937, the teams of *Hakoah Radomsko* and *Hakoah Częstochowa* competed for the title of the best team of the Częstochowa district. In the 1937 Polish Championships, Feliks Brajbart (*Hapoel*), Herszlik (*Hakoah*) and Rozenzweig (*Admira*) played in the singles and *Hakoah Częstochowa* and *Hapoel Radomsko* in the team tournament¹³¹.

In 1937, Birman from *Admira* The subsequent places were taken by Weisbrott from *Hapoel* and Drożdzyk from *Makkabi*. won the singles of the Częstochowa Championship in the presence of 300 spectators. The competition between women ended with the success of Binestok from *Hakoah*, with Porus from *Warta* in the second place and Herberg (*Makkabi*) in the third. The best team was *Hakoah Częstochowa*, ranked before *Admira Częstochowa*¹³².

The new authorities of the Częstochowa District Table Tennis Association (1937) were constituted in the following composition: Horowitz (President), Bider, Bieda, Ehrlich, Kaufman, Kurpios, Kuśmierz, Zygband, Zylderberg.

The organizational achievements of the district authorities and their good relations with the Polish Table Tennis Association had an influence on the fact, that Częstochowa was chosen to host the Polish Championships. The tournament was held at the fire station. Thirteen teams and fifty-five competitors were invited to participate in the competition. The tournament turned out to be a success of *Samson Tarnów*, who won two gold medals (Schiff and the team). *Hakoah* could also rate the tournament among the successful ones (fourth place)¹³³.

¹²⁹ “Polonia” no. 3725, 1935.

¹³⁰ “Siedem Groszy” no. 8, 1935.

¹³¹ W. Pięta’s private archive.

¹³² “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 14, 1938.

¹³³ “Goniec Częstochowski” no. 40 & 42, 1938.

The 1938 Częstochowa Championships were held without participation of Jewish sportsmen. Lucjan Tomza from *TS Sokół*¹³⁴ triumphed over Kazik from *Raków*, with Mazolny from *S.C. Warta* in the third position.

In 1939, Częstochowa hosted the representative team of Riga. After two defeats at the hands of Krakow and Silesia 4–5, the Latvians managed to beat the Częstochowa team by 6–3.

After WW II, popular table tennis players, Feliks Brajbart and Somper, played in the Częstochowa Sports Club and won local championship titles. At the end of the 1940s, Brajbart was a two-time Częstochowa champion (1946–1949). In 1957, he left for Israel, together with Somper¹³⁵.

5.8. The Vilnius District

At the end of the 1920s (1929), the fastest development of table tennis took place in the Vilnius region. In many towns, it was the only sports which was practiced. In the academic circles, students would use a club sports hall equipped with a tennis table¹³⁶. There were very few people willing to practice it, thou. The character of the discipline changed from a friendly game to a competitive one.

The 1929 Lithuanian championships ended in a victory of Glikman, a Jewish player. Szimens was ranked second and Kimont from *Sparta Kowno* third¹³⁷. The following tournament, this time for the championship of Kowno, brought the success of *Makkabi Kowno*. It was a particular distinction for Glikman (*Makkabi*), Namenuie (*Hakoah*) and Serejko (*Sparta*) was their calling up into the team for the Kowno – Budapest match¹³⁸.

In 1930, an official friendly match was held, in which the Jewish Students' Sports Club (*ŻAKS*) from Vilnius lost to *Ognisko Vilnius* by 4–12 and 5–11¹³⁹.

¹³⁴ Oral account of Lucjan Tomza, a well-known RKS Raków player, a sports official of the Sileian District Sports Association, who coached many generations of young sportsmen. The conversation took place in August 1985, during a training session of the KU AZS WSP.

¹³⁵ Oral account of Zbigniew Tobijański, the many-time Częstochowa champion, the president of the Częstochowa District Table Tennis Association. the conversation took place on Nov 22nd, 2006 in Częstochowa. After leaving Poland in 1955, F. Brajbart settled down in Haifa (Israel).

¹³⁶ A. Gašiorowski, *Polski ruch sportowy w Republice Litewskiej 1919–1940*, Olsztyn 2001, p. 105.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 247. Kowno lost by 0–9. Budapest was represented by Zoltan Mechlovits (1891–1951), the 1928 Singles World Champion from Stockholm.

¹³⁹ “Sport” no. 41, 1930.

In the Vilnius area, mainly in schools and Jewish youth clubs, new tennis tables were provided. New blood was injected into the club teams. The sports officials of the Vilnius area did notice the development of table tennis and put forward a proposal of establishing a District Table Tennis Association. Until then, it was the task of the Tennis Association to look after the table tennis environment¹⁴⁰.

The first Vilnius Championships were held in 1932. There were four teams competing for the title: *Ogniwo*, *AZS* and *Makkabi* and *ŻAKS*. In the singles, Weksler (*Makkabi*) came before Gotlib (*ŻAKS*) and Klukiewicz (*Ognisko*). In the doubles, the couple Weksler – Chajkin were the best. The winning team was *Makkabi*.

The Jewish Students' Sports Club (*ŻAKS*) organized a ping-pong tournament in a room provided by the Jewish students' association, located in ul. Ludwisarska 1 in Vilnius. The entry fee was 25 grosze¹⁴¹. Table tennis was a sort of a novelty in the Vilnius area and it did enjoy great popularity. A group of volunteers from *Makkabi Vilnius* conducted training¹⁴². The *ŻAKS* organized the first tournament for the *Cajt* Cup, that is, for the best Jewish ping-pong player. Thirty players entered the competition. The "A" class winner was Zasikowski, with Gotlib in the second and Weksler in the third position. In the doubles, Musko – Gołub from *ŻAKS* were the winners. The revelation of the tournament was the victory of J. Gotlib over the many-time Vilnius champion, J. Weksler.

In 1933, the Championships of the Vilnius District were held at a venue provided by the *ŻAKS*, in ul. Zachodnia. Seven competitors played in the colours of both *ŻAKS* and *ŻTGS Makkabi*, *KWP Ognisko* entered four players and *AZS Vilnius* and *OMP* were represented by two players each. The entry fee for young players was 20 grosze and 30 grosze for the older ones.

In 1934, the Vilnius District Table Tennis Association included only six sports clubs, two out of which were Jewish: *ŻASK Vilnius* and *ŻTGS Makkabi Vilnius*¹⁴³.

Only Weksler from *Makkabi* participated in the Polish Championships in Krakow. However, defeated by Loewenhertz from Lvov, he was eliminated in the second round.

¹⁴⁰ A. Gašiorowski, *Polski ruch sportowy w Republice Litewskiej 1919–1940*, Olsztyn 2001, p. 250.

¹⁴¹ "Kurier Wileńsko-Nowogrodzki" no. 347, 1933.

¹⁴² "Kurier Wileńsko-Nowogrodzki" no. 473, 1934.

¹⁴³ "Rocznik Sportowy" 1934, Warsaw 1934.

Table tennis was also popular among the employees of the treasury offices, against whom *ŻAKS* would often play (Zasikowski, Nicberger, Myska)¹⁴⁴.

The 1936 Grodno Champion was Szuster from *Makkabi*, with Grozalski (Makkabi) in the second place and Halpern in the third¹⁴⁵.

Between 1937 and 1939, the tournaments were held irregularly. The players practiced more, the clubs were equipped with tennis tables, friendly matches were played but their level was poor.

The champion of the Vilnius area in 1939 was Radzeli from *ŻTGS Makkabi Vilnius*. Wasilewski from the Riflemen's Association was awarded vice-championship and Kac from *S.C. Jordan* won the bronze¹⁴⁶.

5.9. The Lublin District

Ping-pong first appeared in the Lublin area, in Chełm to be precise, in 1925, as a recreational sport. The local youth practiced in youth clubs and religious education rooms¹⁴⁷. In 1927, table tennis became main attraction and the highlight of the Lublin *AZS* week. Twenty-seven players competed for three days for the championship title. The matches were played up to six points, just like in the lawn tennis. The winner was Laryński, with Steinhauer in the second place, Pyzikowski in the third and Rotrub in the fourth¹⁴⁸. However, the interest in the discipline in question was scarce. The subsequent tournament was organized by *ŻTGS Hakoah Lublin*. Goldmann was the best player¹⁴⁹.

In Chełm, there were ping-pong sections at the *ŻKS Szamryja* (the leading player of the club, Chaim Sztajner, won the Chełm Championship in 1936)¹⁵⁰, *ŻKS Makkabi* and *ŻKS Bajtar*. In Lublin, there was no district association that would assume the responsibility of organizing team tournaments. Every now and then, on the initiative of the Jewish sports clubs, singles tournaments would be held. The ping-pong players of the Lublin district did not participate in the Polish championships during the Second Republic period.

¹⁴⁴ "Kurier Wileńsko-Nowogrodzki" no. 796, 1935.

¹⁴⁵ W. Pięta's private archive.

¹⁴⁶ "Kurier Powszechny" no. 33, 1939, p. 5; no. 56, 1939, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ W.A. Kozłowski, *Życie sportowe w Chełmie w latach 1918–1939*, Chełm 2004, p. 90.

¹⁴⁸ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 9, 1927.

¹⁴⁹ „Sport” no. 42, 1930.

¹⁵⁰ "Kronika Nadbużańska" no. 52, 1937. The rules of the game called „Master” required the winner to stay at the table and the loser to pay 5 grosze and wait for his turn.

5.10. The Białystok district

The first ping-pong section in the area in question was established at *Makkabi Białystok* on December 23rd, 1926¹⁵¹. In 1929, in Suwałki, in one of the first official meetings, *Rakieta* defeated *Brit Trumpeldor* by 4–1. The system of the game was 5 on 5 (five players from one team would play only one match). In the same year, *ŻKS Białystok* won the Championship of Grodno¹⁵².

An impressive publicity campaign was organized in Białystok in 1931. It was then when a show match was played by the *Jewish Sports Club (ŻKS)* and *Promień Białystok*. *ŻKS* won by 5–1. The match played an important role in introducing the citizens to table tennis¹⁵³.

In 1935, *Hapoel Białystok* was awarded the Białystok Championship, *ŻKS Makkabi* won the vice-championship and *Sokół* finished the tournament with the bronze. The singles championship title went to Wejdenbaum from *ŻKS Makkabi*¹⁵⁴.

In 1938, a District Table Tennis Association was founded by Jerzy Maśliński and Wygocki¹⁵⁵.

Table tennis in the Białystok district failed to develop. There were few sections and their activities were limited exclusively to friendly meetings.

5.11. Other districts

Most of the Jewish sports clubs had ping-pong sections, whose activities were limited to occasional training sessions (in youth clubs, private houses) and friendly meetings. The frequency of those meetings depended on the sports activity of the clubs and, most of all, on the organizational potential of the district table tennis associations. The discipline enjoyed much popularity among students and workers. The districts included isolated associations of the Jewish minority.

In the Kielce district, ping-pong sections were created in the 1930s. An important development of these took place when the Kielce District Table Tennis Association was established¹⁵⁶. Such clubs as *Kraft*, *Hapoel*, *Sztern*, *Jutrznia* and *Makkabi* organized training sessions and internal competitions,

¹⁵¹ "Nasz Przegląd" of Jan 15th, 1927.

¹⁵² "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 16, 1929.

¹⁵³ "Raz Dwa Trzy" no. 30, 1931.

¹⁵⁴ "Raz Dwa Trzy" no. 47, 1935.

¹⁵⁵ J. Górko, *Sprintem przez historię. Z dziejów sportu w regionie północno-wschodnim*, Białystok 1996, p. 294.

¹⁵⁶ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 6, 1935; M. Meducka, *Żydowskie stowarzyszenia sportowe w województwie kieleckim 1918–1939*, [in:] *ŻIH Bulletin* no. 3–4, 1990, pp. 148–189.

however, during the period in question, none of those clubs achieved any spectacular success and none participated in the Polish Championships.

The Poznań District Table Tennis Association, established in 1932, included only one Jewish sports club – Bar Kochba Poznań. The competitions of that time were dominated by *Kolejowe Przysposobienie Wojskowe (KPW)* from Poznań and Szablewski from *Riflemen's Association (ZS) "Zuchowaci"*¹⁵⁷. In 1934, 1935 and 1936, Grzechowiak from KPW won his three Poznań championships (he claimed that table tennis was not popular in the region of Greater Poland).

The local *Makkabi* of Włocławek (Białogłowski, Świętosławski, Engel, Sommer, Bornshtein) defeated KSM Spójnie 5–2 in a friendly match. In Bydgoszcz, thirty-three players from Grudziądz, Toruń and Bydgoszcz competed for the Jewish Youth Association Cup. The competition was a triumph of Tuchman (*Makkabi Grudziądz*)¹⁵⁸. The 1937 Pomeranian championships were dominated by non-Jewish players, such as K. Osmański from *Pomorzanin Toruń*. After the war, S. Engel (*Makkabi*), A. Sztajn (*Jutrznia*), S. Bocian, L. Stejngern and M. Czyżewski organized a table tennis section at the "Włocławek" Jewish Sports Club (which in 1948 won the vice-championship of Pomerania).

In 1946, in Western Pomerania, the "Solidarność" ["Solidarity"] Jewish Sports Club made a mark¹⁵⁹.

The *Bar Kochba* Jewish Sports Club of Gdańsk organized training sessions in the sports hall of the Municipal Gymnasium in ul. Lastadii. The club in question had a strong ping-pong section. The competitions were only of internal and inter-school character¹⁶⁰.

5.12. The Lower Silesian district

The starting point of sports among the Jewish communities of Lower Silesia was spring 1946. This fact was due to, inter alia, the settlement of groups of Jewish people on these territories. Many pre-war Polish champions moved to Lower Silesia from the areas of former Republic of Poland (Lvov, Stanisławów, Brest). Between 1946 and 1947, fourteen Jewish sports clubs were established, with over one thousand members¹⁶¹. There were table tennis sections in most of those clubs.

¹⁵⁷ W. Pięta's private archive.

¹⁵⁸ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 16, 1935.

¹⁵⁹ H. Laskiewicz, *Ponadlokalne organizacje kultury fizycznej na Pomorzu Zachodnim 1945–1957*, Szczecin 1996, p. 48.

¹⁶⁰ H. Domańska, L. Lifsche, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 86–88; J. Gebert, *Z gdańskich boisk i stadionów*, Gdańsk 1970.

¹⁶¹ S. Bronsztejn, *Z dziejów ludności żydowskiej na Dolnym Śląsku po II wojnie światowej*, Wrocław 1993.

The competition held in Wrocław, in the hall of the Casino owned by the Railmen Trade Union, on December 16th, 1945 were of pioneering character¹⁶². It revealed the state and the level of the players who moved to Wrocław. The first sports club established in the regained Wrocław was *Kolejowy Klub Sportowy (KKS) "Odra Wrocław"* ["*Odra Wrocław*" Railway Sports Club]. It also had a table tennis section¹⁶³.

In January 1946, "*Pionier*" Journal published the information on the creation of a ping-pong section at the Wrocław First Sports Club (*I KS*) [1 S.C.]. Training sessions were held daily, at the venue of *I KS* in ul. Mikołaja 71.

Among others, Munzer, a former player of the 1933 Polish Team Champion, *Hasmonea Lvov*, signed up for the training sessions offered by *I KS*¹⁶⁴.

It is worth knowing, that on February 10th, 1946, at 3 p.m., a friendly match was held in Wrocław between *I KS "Wrocław"* and *KKS "Odra"*. The match took place at the club's building in ul. Malteser 14. The live coverage of the event was provided by the Polish Radio. The players from the Lvov Jewish clubs, such as the already mentioned Munzer and Gaertner, with Derulski as the third player, played in the *I KS* colours¹⁶⁵. The participation of the Lvov players was extremely useful as they knew the rules of the training and the organization of table tennis competitions.

The Jewish sports community of Lower Silesia organized Jewish Sports Clubs Championships. On November 2nd and 3rd 1946, thirteen teams fought for the title. The first place went to *ŻKS Bielawa* (Keningsberg, Wegner, Harsze), the second to *ŻKS Wałbrzych* (Szycer, Wimmer, Gitter) and the third to *ŻKS Legnica* (Alfred, London, Bień). The best player in the singles was Keningsberg (*Bielawa*), who defeated Beckerman (*Świdnica*) and Szycer (*Wałbrzych*) in the finals¹⁶⁶.

A very strong ping-pong team was *ŻRKS Gwiazda Wrocław* (Kukawka, Zenderer, Seneman, Stachel, Segal). Their good condition was confirmed in the friendly matches against *Odra Wrocław* (5–4) and *Spotem Wrocław* (6–3), as well as against *AZS Wrocław* (6–3, 5–4)¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶² "Pionier" no. 94, 1945.

¹⁶³ M. Ordyłowski, *Szkice z dziejów kultury fizycznej*, Zielona Góra 2005, p. 119. Cf. M. Ordyłowski, A. Ostrowski, *1000 lat wrocławskiego sportu*, Wrocław 2002, pp. 59–60.

¹⁶⁴ "Pionier" no. 22, 1946.

¹⁶⁵ "Pionier" no. 37, 1946. The AZS general Meeting was scheduled for February 17th, 1946.

¹⁶⁶ W. Pięta's private archive.

¹⁶⁷ One of the representatives of the AZS was Tadeusz Ciupryk, then student of veterinary medicine. In 1954, he became the Polish Singles vice-Champion.

The 1947 Wrocław Champion was *Spotem Wrocław* and *ŻRKS Gwiazda* (Ormian, Stachel, Segal) won the vice-championship¹⁶⁸. *ŻRKS Gwiazda* won in the Legnica sub-district, *ŻKS Bielawa* in the Dzierżoniów sub-district and in Wałbrzych – *ŻKS Wałbrzych*.

On November 23rd, 1947, a temporary District Table Tennis Association was established in Lower Silesia. The management was made up of officials from Jewish sports clubs: Karger, R. Kuśmierski (*Gwiazda Wrocław*) and R. Szejman (*ŻKS Wrocław*).

One had no difficulties finding table tennis equipment in Wrocław since the only shop specialized in such equipment and a wholesale outlet selling table tennis balls were located precisely in Wrocław (in ul. Żeromskiego)¹⁶⁹.

The 1948 Wrocław Championships were full of interesting results: *KMSS Wrocław* defeated *Garbarnia Brzeg* 5–4 (three points for *Garbarnia* scored by Taran); the umpire at that match was Karger¹⁷⁰. *ŻRKS Gwiazda* (Ormian, Stachel, Stub, Segal) defeated *Garbarnia* 9–0; *Spotem* (Arbach, Kugler and Kępa) beat *ŻRKS Gwardia* 6–3.

Krakow lost to Wrocław 3–6 in an inter-city match (the Lower Silesian team included: Ciupryk, Kugler, Arbach from *Spotem* and Ormian from *Gwiazda*). Points in that match were scored by: Arbach (3 pts), Kugler (2 pts) and Ciupryk (1pt); for the Krakow team: Kowal (2 pts), Mamczarczyk (1 pt). The umpires were Kępa (Wrocław) and Michalski (Krakow)¹⁷¹. The following day, a rematch was held and *Cracovia* (Kowal – 3 pts, Mamczarczyk and Dobosz – 1 pt each) defeated *Spotem Wrocław* 5–4 (Kugler – 2pts, Arbach – 2 pts).

The *Spotem Sports Club* won the Wrocław Championships (Kugler, Arbach, Kępa), while the vice-championship went to *ŻRKS Gwiazda*¹⁷².

The ping-pong section of *Gwiazda Wrocław* had a good junior team. Their abilities were confirmed by the results: victory over *KMMS Wrocław* 8–1 and *Gwiazda Legnica* (Popiół, Bień) 7–2.

In 1949, eight teams competed for the Team Championship of Lower Silesia, including six sub-district champions and the Champion and the Vice-Champion of Wrocław (*Spotem* and *Gwiazda*, respectively). The sub-district of Kłodzko was represented by *KS Nysa*, Dzierżoniów – by *ŻKS Wolność Bielawa*, Legnica – by *ŻRKS Gwiazda*, Wałbrzych – by *ŻKS Wałbrzych*, Żary – by *Odra Nowa Sól* and Jelenia Góra by the local *YMCA*, who in the finals defeated *OMTUR Jelenia Góra* 6–4. The 1948 Lower Silesia Champion was *Spotem*

¹⁶⁸ “Pionier” no. 12, 1947.

¹⁶⁹ “Przegląd Sportowy” no. 97, 1947.

¹⁷⁰ “Słowo Polskie” no. 3, 1948.

¹⁷¹ “Słowo Polskie” no. 9, 1948.

¹⁷² “Słowo Polskie” no. 6, 1948.

Wrocław (Kugler, Arbach, Kępa), with *ŻKS Wałbrzych* in the second place (Stefan Schueltzer, Józef Wimmer, Haskel Gitter, Emil Wenda, Pinio Kefler), *ŻKS Wolność Bielawa* in the third (Koenigsberg) and *Gwiazda Wrocław* in the fourth¹⁷³. Twenty-two players fought for the singles championship. The first three places were taken by the players of *KS Społem*: Ciupryk, Kugler, Arbach; Stachel (*Gwardia*) was fourth, Bień (*Gwiazda Legnica*) – fifth, Ormian (*Gwiazda*) – sixth, Keningsberg (*ŻKS Bielawa*) – seventh, Kitrys (*Nysa Kłodzko*) – eighth, Beckerman (*ŻKS Świdnica*) – ninth and Dudek (*Górnik Wałbrzych*) – tenth¹⁷⁴.

The most significant success in post-war Poland achieved by a Jewish sportsman from Lower Silesia was winning a gold medal in Polish Championships. In Radom, Nina Glazner (*ŻRKS Gwiazda*) defeated Maria Kostkówna (*Lechia Mystowice*) in the finals and won the 1948 Polish Championships. Twenty participants took part in that competition¹⁷⁵.

ŻRKS Gwiazda, a successful club in Lower Silesia, organized junior competition (for under 18 year-olds) whose motto was “We are looking for talents”. The tournament was held in Wrocław, in ul. Pomorska 11/13, and the main prize was funded by the then president of *ŻRKS Gwiazda*, Mr. Bursztyn¹⁷⁶.

On the initiative of the management of the District Table Tennis Association of Lower Silesia, its vice-president, S. Karger, called a meeting in the office of *ŻRKS Gwiazda*. The aim of the meeting was to complete the management board. The organizational meeting gathered representatives of twelve sports clubs registered at the DTTA of Lower Silesia (*Pafawag*, *CPN*, *IKS*, *Gwiazda*, *Elektrownia*, *ŻKS*, *Gastronomia*, *YMCA*, *Odra*, *Academy of Fine Arts*, *PPD*, *Fabryka Obrabiarek*). Consequently, a decision to choose new authorities was reached. S. Karger was elected the president, engineer Wortmann – vice-president, Kuśmierski was chosen the secretary, sports captain was T. Ciupryk, host – Sadowski, Head of the Department of Games and Discipline – Kukawka, Head of the Department of Umpires – Issel and Bułacik – member of the management board¹⁷⁷. The head office of the DTTA of

¹⁷³ “Słowo Polskie” no. 19, 1948.

¹⁷⁴ “Słowo Polskie” no. 54, 1948; K. Niemierka, *60 lat sportu wałbrzyskiego*, Wałbrzych 2006, p. 93

¹⁷⁵ “Słowo Polskie” no. 60, 1948. cf. W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 157. W. Pięta’s private archive, Final lists of the IMP winners. Nina Glazner took part only in the 1948 IMP due to the fact that in December 1948 she gave birth to her daughter. During her decorating, someone shouted “Long live the Regained Territories, long live the sports of Lower Silesia!”.

¹⁷⁶ “Słowo Polskie” no. 309, 1948.

¹⁷⁷ “Słowo Polskie” no. 328, 1948.

Lower Silesia was located on the premises of *ŻRKS Gwiazda*, in ul. Pomorska 11/13. Upon registration with the DTTA, sports clubs were charged a compulsory annual fee of 1,000 zlotys.

During the opening of the new sports season, the management made an appeal to the sportsmen of Lower Silesia: “[...] let’s open table tennis sections in every factory or school club”. This initiative gained the support of major Skrocki, the president of the Regional Department of Physical Education in Wrocław, who was present at the tournament. The competition gathered sixty-four players. Arbach from *KS Samorządowiec Wrocław* triumphed over Ciupryk (*CPN Wrocław*) who was second and Ormian (*Gwiazda Wrocław*) in the third place.

ŻRKS Gwiazda Wrocław put particular emphasis on young players’ training. It was then, when junior talents appeared: Weisman, Brocki and Rosenberg.

In 1949, the Wrocław Championships tournament was played in three groups. The first group included *Nurt*, *Metalowiec*, *CPN* (Ciupryk, Kępa, Szymański), *Gastronomia* and *WUZ*. The second group comprised: *Gwiazda* (Ormian, Stachel, Francos), *Wodomierze*, *PPB Budowlani*, *Burza* and *Zakrzewianka*. The third group was composed of: *Pafawag*, *YMCA*, *Samorządowiec*, *ŻKS* (Kukawka, Fajngold, Wenda) and *Drukarz*. The finals ended in *ŻRKS Gwiazda* winning the Championship title, with *ŻKS Wrocław* in the second place and *CPN Wrocław* in the third. The rankings of the Lower Silesian Championships were identical, the same sports clubs from Wrocław dominated the tournament, while the fourth place was taken by *ŻKS Bielawa*¹⁷⁸.

The club with the best organization, *ŻRKS Gwiazda*, took part in the Polish Team Championships. They won the group phase of the qualifiers and finished the competition in the fourth place. The 1949 Polish Team Champion was *Ogniwo Krakow*¹⁷⁹.

Antoni Arbach triumphed in the 1949 Wrocław Singles Championships. The silver went to Tadeusz Ciupryk and the bronze to Stachel. The players from Jewish sports clubs: Fajngold, Ormian, Wenda, Kukawka, Gotman, were classified in the remaining positions.

Table tennis enjoyed much popularity among the Jewish communities. It was practised in Wrocław, Bielawa, Zagórze, Świdnica, Kłodzko, Żary, Wałbrzych, Jelenia Góra, Chojnów, Legnica, Jawór, Dzierżoniów, Pietrolesie, Biały Kamień or Ziębice. The interests and the abilities of the Jews were confirmed by the gold medals and numerous prizes they won.

¹⁷⁸ W. Pięta’s private archive.

¹⁷⁹ R. Kulczycki, *Tenis stołowy w Polsce*, Gorzów Wlkp. 1998, p. 173.

At the end of 1949, a resolution was passed which abolished all the Jewish sports clubs. All the sports achievements, the equipment and, most of all, the players (among others, those from *ŻRKŚ Gwiazda*), were transferred to *Ogniwo Wrocław*¹⁸⁰.

Between 1946 and 1949, the Wrocław district was an important table tennis centre of Poland. However, the Jewish sportsmen had been leaving Poland already. The major increase in emigration occurred twice: between 1948 and 1949 and between 1956 and 1957. Some of those players did continue their careers in Israel.

¹⁸⁰ “Słowo Polskie” no. 357, 1949. The decision about the club closing down was taken at the yearly meeting of the “Gwiazda” Jewish Workers’ Sports Club in Wrocław. The most distinguished players: Bień, Stachel, Ormian, received prizes (silver cigarette cases). Also, the equipment was transferred to the friend club – SC Ogniwo Wrocław. The players moved to the newly founded Spójnia. On Jan 1st, 1950, Stachel and Ormian took part in the “Aces’ Tournament” for the prize of the Lower Silesian District Table Tennis Association.

Chapter 6

BIOGRAPHICAL ENTRIES OF THE LEADING JEWISH TABLE TENNIS PLAYERS AND MEMBERS OF TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATIONS

The profiles of the leading Polish table tennis players are presented in alphabetical order. My selection of the sportsmen was determined by the results they achieved in their careers. Bearing in mind their conduct throughout their many-years-long careers, the players presented below undoubtedly deserve the distinction. Their lives were different but they were united by the passion for the game, their youthful enthusiasm, the many-hours-long training sessions and the Polish roots. For all of them considered themselves to be Polish. They also played for two representations. The best time of their lives and their careers was interrupted by the outbreak of WW II. They served at the eastern and western fronts. They survived the horrors of war and the hardships of wandering thanks to good fortune and good physical condition, gained while practicing sports. They wanted to meet again in the free Poland and win a gold World Championships medal for their country.

6.1. Richard Bergman

Richard Bergman was born on April 10th, 1918 in Vienna (although, some sources indicate Kalisz as his birthplace)¹. His mother was Italian and his father Polish, from the Kalisz district. Richard had six siblings. His father died when he was twelve. He had his first contact with the racket and a ball at the age of thirteen (in 1931). It was back then when he first visited master Fluszmann's table tennis parlour. He had to pay twenty-five schillings for the table rental².

At the peak of his career, he was 169 cm tall and weighed 67 kg. He subordinated his whole life to table tennis. In the beginning he would spend five hours a day training, later he added another hour in order to improve his forehand stroke. He played for Austrian sports clubs of: Hakoah, Vindoboy Fair Unitas, Postsport. In 1938 he renounced the Austrian citizenship (Anschluss). He considered himself to be a professional and would often come into conflict with the federations. During the 1939 World Championships in Egypt, he

¹ Oral account of J. Kusiński (former record holder for the number of medals won in the IMP), who claimed that R. Bn was born in Kalisz, which he confirmed in many conversations held during the World Cup tournaments.

² "Chwila" no. 753, 1937. After the first training session, on seeing Bergman's talent, Fluszmann decided that he would not have to pay. Fluszmann ran a dozen or so such table tennis parlours.

represented Poland. In 1940 he applied for Polish citizenship³. He lived in the U.S. during the war and returned to Europe in 1944.

According to many monographs, in 1944 he landed in Normandy with the Allies with a racket and a ball in his backpack and he never parted with them.

Between 1934 and 1969 he played table tennis with changing luck. While being an active player, he promoted table tennis on all the continents. He established schools and maintained them with his own means. He participated in many show games (with even twenty thousand spectators present) held before basketball matches of the Harlem Globetrotters. He also played many show games in Poland.

In 1969, Bergman was diagnosed with brain tumour. He died on April 5th, 1970 in England and was buried in New York (where his sister lived)⁴.

Richard Bergman did not have his own family or home. He was a loner. All he needed was a sports hall with a tennis table, a racket and a ball. He treated sport as a form of art. His style was marked by a perfect leg work and concentration. He was nicknamed Mr Sportsman, Diamond Defender, Richard of the Lion's Heart, Lizard of the white ball; Ricky – for friends. One of Bergman's well-known sayings was: "If you don't know how to return the ball, simply return it." He was always dressed elegantly, never smoked (although, as befitted a sportsman, he always had a cigarette case on him) or drank alcohol. He could speak seven languages fluently, including, of course, Polish. He also manufactured table tennis rackets.

Sports career

Richard Bergman took part in thirteen world championships. He was World Champion in Singles play four times (1937, 1939, 1948, 1950), Team Champion twice (1936 in Austrian team, 1953 in English team), doubles champion (with V. Barna)⁵. Altogether, he won twenty-two championships medals, six of them were silver and nine bronze. It should be added here that he could not defend his world champion title in 1951 due to being suspended by the English federation for prolonging his stay in South Africa. He went to Bombay at his own expense and won a silver medal with his team. Bergman was cheered on by a thousand of supporters during his match against Tsui Cheung Ling at the 1956 World Championships in Tokyo⁶. After the 1957 tournament in

³ New Record Office [Archiwum Akt Nowych], files of Dr. Ignacy Szwarzbart, 9th letter of A. Ehrlich to I. Szwarzbart (spring 1940). Cf. B. Grive, Pingis, Stockholm 1967, p. 137.

⁴ J. Siegman, *Jewish Sports Legends*, Virginia 2005, p.169; Z. Uzorinac, *ITTF Table Tennis Legends*, Zagreb 2001.

⁵ Alla Tidens Statistik, Stockholm 1998, pp. 1–4.

⁶ Z. Uzorinac, *ITTF Table Tennis Legends*, Zagreb 2001, p. 90. In 1956, during the qualifiers for the quarterfinals, he was losing by 2–0 and he could not find the way to

Sweden, at the age of thirty-nine, he gave up competing at the world championships level.

He won the International Championships in Austria (1935, 1936, 1949), England (1939, 1940, 1948, 1950, 1952, 1953, 1954), France (1946, 1949, 1950, 1952), Spain (1948), Yugoslavia (1952), Scotland (1948), Wales (1949), as well as those of Portugal, India, Chile, Thailand, the Philippines, Trinidad, Ireland.

His achievements and conduct gained him an appreciation by the ITTF authorities, who named after him a fair play prize, awarded during the world singles championships. He has also been included in the group of the Jewish Sports Legends.

6.2. Alojzy Ehrlich

Alojzy Ehrlich was born on January 1st, 1914 in Komańcza⁷. His father, a professor at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov, was of Jewish descent; his mother was Catholic. Ehrlich was born an Austrian citizen. When he was four years old, Poland regained independence and he was granted Polish citizenship. At the age of fifteen, he started training at Jutrzenka Lvov, then he continued at Hasmonea Lvov. He also played football, handball, tennis and ice hockey. While at gymnasium, he took part in the school competitions, using the pseudonym "Alex Dogilewski". After passing his A-levels in 1933, he went to study in France (Lille). After one year, he dropped out of the university and devoted himself solely to table tennis⁸. He was connected with France his whole life. He could speak six or seven languages⁹.

In the interwar years, he would organize tournaments in many Polish and European cities (Warsaw, Królewska Huta, Łódź, Krakow, Lvov), with the participation of ping-pong celebrities¹⁰. The money he earned would always be allocated/donated for saving Jews in Poland. In 1938, he represented Poland at the ITTF Congress in London. He was friends with the Egyptian king Faruk, who sponsored his stay in Egypt and his participation in the 1939 World Championships.

During the war years, Ehrlich fought against the Germans in France. After the war, he would visit Poland quite often, mainly for the training camps. The last time he took part in the Polish Singles Championships was in 1949 in Lublin, where he played in Garbarnia Krakow colours. Then he changed his

change the result. However, during the 3rd set, he exchanged over 250 passes in 25 minutes and eventually won by 3–2.

⁷ B. Latuszkiewicz, *Alfabet tenisa stołowego*, Warszawa 1997, p. 32.

⁸ Z. Uzorinac, *ITTF Table Tennis Legends*, Zagreb 2001, pp. 91–92.

⁹ B. Latuszkiewicz, *Alfabet tenisa stołowego*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 32–33.

¹⁰ "Folks-Sztyme" of Aug 23rd, 1986.

citizenship from Polish to French. In the finals of the competition, he was disqualified for his dubious Polish citizenship.

Ehrlich was a frequent guest at Józef Prutkowski's house in Warsaw (Prutkowski was a well-known satirist). He played in the professional team of acrobatic ping-pong players, organized by R. Bergman.

He married a German in 1960, however, they divorced after only three years¹¹. During the summer months, he would organize tournaments and show matches in Southern France (Saint Tropez) with the participation of many world championships medallists, as well as seminars for coaches. Those events were some attraction for the holiday-makers. Ehrlich worked as a coach in seventeen different countries¹². He also tried his luck at manufacturing table tennis equipment.

Ehrlich was a tall defender with a wide spread of arms. He often said that it wasn't the style, but the victory what mattered. His greatest passion was table tennis. He devoted his whole life to ping-pong. Lively, talkative, with a great sense of humour and a sonorous voice. A loner. He was a record holder for returning the ball about nine thousand time in a hundred and twelve minutes (match against Paneth, from Romania; result 0–0)¹³. He played matches on all the continents. He was a correspondent for *Przegląd sportowy*. He died in Paris, on December 7th, 1992.

Sports career

A two-time Polish Champion from 1933. He took part in fourteen world championships, six times as a member of the French team (1952, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1959, 1963). Together with the Polish national team, he won two bronze medals (1935, 1936). He was a three-time world singles vice-champion (1936, 1937, 1939) and also won the bronze in doubles (Cairo)¹⁴.

In a 1935 *Przegląd sportowy* poll to choose the best Polish sportsmen he was ranked eighth¹⁵. He took part in the Europe vs. Hungary match played between October 25th and 27th 1935¹⁶. He won the International Championships in France (1938), Ireland (1950), England (1936, 1951), Holland (1951, 1956),

¹¹ Oral account of Danuta Calińska, multi-medallist of Polish Championships. Together with her husband Zbigniew and their daughter Katarzyna, she was a regular guest at Ehrlich's leisure centre in Saint Tropez in the 1970s.

¹² W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 16.

¹³ Z. Uzorinac, *ITTF Table Tennis Legends*, Zagreb 2001, p. 61; W. Pięta's private archive. Cf. "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 24, 1936.

¹⁴ W. Pięta's archive. Cf. ITTF Museum in Lausanne (Switzerland).

¹⁵ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 19, 1936. (he received 8608 votes). The boxer Szapsel Rotholc was classified in the 10th position. In 1937, Ehrlich was 11th and in 1938 – 15th.

¹⁶ R. Kulczycki, *Tenis stołowy w Polsce 1919–1989*, Gorzów Wlkp. 1998, p. 59.

Switzerland (1951), Germany (1955 – mixed doubles)¹⁷. What is more, he won many international competitions: in Gdansk (1934), Paris (1936, 1937)¹⁸. He triumphed in the 1933 Maccabiah Games in Prague. As a Polish representative, he played forty-six meetings and won eighty games (between 1933 and 1939).

He was a natural-born vice-champion, an ambassador of Polish table tennis during the interwar years, as well as for some time after the war. In the ranking carried out by the Polish Table Tennis Association on the occasion of its seventy-fifth anniversary, he was classified second, after A. Grubba¹⁹.

6.3. Emylles Schiff

His real name was Gustaw Fluk (nicknamed “Milek” or “Gutek” by his friends from gymnasium). He was born in 1919 in Tarnów, where he also went to the Second Jewish Gymnasium²⁰. He was twelve years old when he started training at the biggest Jewish sports club, Samson Tarnów. At first, it was nothing more than a pleasant form of entertainment for Gutek.

The first sports club in Tarnów to open a table tennis section was SKS Tarnovia (in 1928)²¹. Their example was followed by Samson, Jutrzenka and ŻMS and Gwiazda. Young Fluk practised a few disciplines at first but then decided to take up table tennis for the winter and tennis for the summer months. He was a short man and didn't weigh much. Incredibly swift, used a distinctive grip, preferred attacking and playing a forehand²². He won many points by serving with a spinner. He had good spar partners: Klein, Gelbwachs, Seiden, Gross, Hollander. Back in those days, anybody's sports success was only owing to their own hard work. The majority of the sportsmen were self-trained due to the lack of trainers. Schiff devoted his youth solely to table tennis.

¹⁷ M. Schafer, *Ein Spiel fürs Leben*, Frankfurt am Main 2000, p. 137.

¹⁸ W. Pięta's private archive. Cf. J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.* (a typescript of a doctoral dissertation). Cf. *Rocznik sportowy 1934*, p. 222.

¹⁹ In the poll to choose the top 10 Polish table tennis players the respondents had to choose from among former National Team players or coaches from the period between 1996–2007. 1. Andrzej Grubba 2. Alojzy Ehrlich 3. Leszek Kucharski 4. Lucjan Błaszczuk 5. Emylles Schiff 6. Stefan Dryszel 7. Tomasz Krzeszewski 8. Shimcha Finkelstein 9. Piotr Skierski 10. Janusz Kusiński.

²⁰ S. Potępa, *Co zostało z tarnowskiego sportu*, Tarnów 1994, pp. 28–29. cf. “Samson” i sport żydowski w Tarnowie [in:] *Wielki Przewodnik*, Vol. VII, Tarnów 2000.

²¹ A. Biedroń, R. Lis, *Tarnovia Pany*, Tarnów 1992, pp. 35–36. The precursor of this sports discipline in Tarnów was Stanisław Jachimek.

²² Oral account of F. Dobosz, dated Mar 9th, 2007. In 1938, he lost to Schiff during the Krakow Championships. „Głos Ziemi Tarnowskiej” of Feb 16th, 1936.

In September 1939, he fled to Palestine²³. After WW II had finished, in 1946, he was seen at the Officers' Casino of the "Wawel" Sports Club in Krakow, accompanied by Redner (who played in Hagibor Krakow before the outbreak of the war) and Drengier, as well as in Tarnów. After attending several training sessions at the Wawel S.C., he went back to Palestine²⁴. As an officer of the Israeli army, he fought and died in the israeli-palestinian war of 1948 in the Negev desert²⁵. In the 1950's, competitions were held, as a tribute to his person. On May 9th, 1958 F. Borys was awarded E. Schiff Cup for winning the tournament²⁶.

Sports career

Emylles Schiff (in Israel, his name was spelled Samuel Schieff) was a five-time Polish Singles Champion (1934, 1935, 1936, 1938, 1939); he won the Polish Team Champion title five times with Samson Tarnów (1934, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939). He took part in the 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1947 World Championships (as Israeli representative, alongside S. Finkelstein and I. Rojzen). Prague 1936 brought Schiff's greatest success; there was a bronze medal for himself and the team, and quarterfinals in singles (where he lost to the later champion, Kolar from Chechoslovakia)²⁷. Schiff was the champion of Krakow, Tarnów and Rzeszów, as well as a tennis champion of the Polish Makkabi Association. As a Polish representative, he participated in twenty-five meetings and achieved thirty-four victories.

6.4. Shimcha Finkelstein

Shimcha Finkelstein was born in 1917 in Warsaw. He started training at Makkabi Warsaw. He was a rather defensive player. Finkelstein worked hard to achieve perfection in technical forehand strokes. He was the best player in the pre-war Warsaw. When young, he read a lot and showed interest in history and politics²⁸. He displayed a talent for training. Finkelstein retired from sport at the age of fifty. In May 1937, he left Poland and emigrated to Palestine, via Romania. In the meantime, he changed his citizenship from Polish to Palestinian. He settled down in Yafo, where he ran a lapidary workshop (cutting

²³ J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.* (typescript of doctoral dissertation). E. Schiff managed to make his way to the East and get to Palestine through Egypt. In Italy, he was a soldier of the Jewish Brigade.

²⁴ Oral account of F. Dobosz

²⁵ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 98, 1948.

²⁶ "Chadaszot" of May 14th, 1958.

²⁷ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 26, 1936.

²⁸ Oral account of J. Gayer, dated July 17th, 2006.

diamonds). Finkelstein was married with three children (who also practised table tennis). He died at the age of seventy.

Sports career

Finkelstein trained at Makkabi Warsaw. He won the Warsaw Singles Championships (1933) at the age of sixteen. A year later, he decided to change his club colours and became a member of Hasmonea Warsaw, with which he was associated until he emigrated from Poland. He won four medals at the Polish Singles Championships (1934, 1935, 1936, 1937 – gold). While at Hasmonea, Finkelstein won the Polish Championships of 1935, as well as winning silver twice, in 1936 and 1937. He took part in the World Championships seven times (in 1936 and 1937 as a member of the Polish team; in 1938, 1939, 1947, 1951, 1954 as an Israeli representative)²⁹. He represented Poland in seventeen meetings and achieved twenty-one victories³⁰. Finkelstein's greatest success were the 1936 World Championships in Prague where he won the bronze together with the colleagues from the Polish national team. He was a many-time Israeli and Palestinian champion. At the 1950 3rd Maccabiah Games, he won in doubles, pairing with Elisabeth Leipnik. While in Israel, he represented the club colours of Hapoel Yafa, as a member of which he won many world team championships. Finkelstein was a four-time Israeli champion in singles play³¹.

6.5. Bernard (Bernie) Pukiet

Bernard Pukiet was born in 1919 in Sosnowiec. His father died when he was only four weeks old, so his mother raised all three children on her own (Bernard had a brother and a sister)³². When still a child, Bernard was fascinated with football. His first contact with table tennis was while in gymnasium. Soon, the game preoccupied him so much that he would play ping-pong all day, every day, either at home, using the kitchen table and a towel, which served as the net, or at the after-school club. He would train at the Makkabi Sosnowiec sports hall until late at night, usually accompanied by his peer, Sigmund Nowarski. He fell behind in school. As a fifteen-year-old, he would meet with strong opposition from his mother. However, when, after another tournament, he would come home with yet another watch, coffee set, travel bag or whatever the prize was

²⁹ ITTF Museum in Lausanne. Cf. R. Gawkowski, *Sport na Woli w latach 1918–1939*, [in:] “Zeszyty wolskie” no. 7, Warszawa 2005. Cf. J. Rokicki, *Żydowskie organizacje sportowe i turystyczne w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX w.*

³⁰ W. Pięta's private archive.

³¹ F. Borys' private archive.

³² T. Bogan, *History of USA. Table Tennis* 2000.

that day, his mother with his brother and sister became his most faithful supporters. Between 1938 and 1939, he played for the Makkabi Chorzów³³.

During the war, Pukiet would hide in the basements in Sosnowiec. He was caught by Gestapo, however, and transported to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Pukiet managed to escape from the transport and, after a long wander, he went east and got to Smolensk. After a short period spent in the city, he was caught by the Soviets and exiled deep into the USSR, where he worked at clearing the forests³⁴. He managed to survive this particularly hard period of his life thanks to, among other things, the strong will and competitiveness acquired when practising sports and he made it back to Sosnowiec, only to learn that his mother was dead, his brother never came back from the war and that his sister, together with her child, were killed in one of the German concentration camps. Makkabi didn't exist either.

At the 1946 Polish Championships, he played in the WKS Lublinianka Lublin colours. Between 1947 and 1951, he lived in Western Germany and while there, he would play in German sports clubs. In 1952, he moved to the U.S. and settled down in Chicago, where he continued his sports career (at first, he had to pay for the training sessions). In 1957, he played in Bergman's table tennis show. Pukiet participated in the historic table tennis matches between the U.S. and Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan (in 1967).

He spent the final eighteen years of his life in California. At the age of seventy, he still participated in the U.S. Veteran's Championships. He received another invitation to Israel in 1990. In the evening of his life, he lost one eye and underwent a heart operation. He died of cancer and was buried in 1991.

Sports career

Pukiet trained at Makkabi Sosnowiec and was a defensive player. He put a fantastic spin on the service ball. He was the 1936 and the 1938 Silesian champion³⁵. At the age of fifteen, he was classified fourth at the Polish Singles Championships. In 1938, aged nineteen, he won the silver the Polish Singles Championships, held in Częstochowa (he lost to E. Schiff in the finals)³⁶. Pukiet was the Polish Makkabi Association champion of 1938. Together with his colleagues from Makkabi Chorzów, he won the silver at the 1939 Polish Team Championships in Lvov. While a member of the Polish team, he played one match, against Latvia (in 1939) and scored one point³⁷. He made his World

³³ W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 27.

³⁴ T. Bogan, *History of USA. Table Tennis 2000*.

³⁵ W. Pięta, *Tenis stołowy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1929–2004*, Częstochowa 2005.

³⁶ "Przegląd Sportowy" no. 15 & 16, 1938. cf. "Gazeta Polska" no. 65, 1934.

³⁷ "Raz Dwa Trzy" no. 11, 1937. The Polish National team included: Schiff, Pukiet, Piórowicz.

Championships debut in London, in 1954, at the age of thirty-five. As a member of the American national team, he took part in eight World Championships (1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1963, 1965, 1973)³⁸. Pukiet won twelve medals in the U.S. Championships, including three gold ones in Singles (1957, 1963, 1966). He achieved much in the field of table tennis at international tournaments (always climbing the podium) in Canada, England, Germany³⁹, India, Hong Kong and Japan.

6.6. Jewish members of the Polish table tennis associations

The achievements of the Polish national team contributed greatly to the popularisation of table tennis in Poland. The activities of the PTTA's management would not always have the desired effect, as there was a constant need for money. The association had its main office in Łódź, which made it more difficult to get contact with the Federation of the Polish Sports Associations (ZSPS), as well as the National Physical Education and Military Preparation Office (PUWFIPW) and the Association of the Workers' Sports Club of the Republic of Poland (ZRSS RP)⁴⁰. The association's statute was another source of difficulties with collaboration with the training centres (districts). Article 21 point g provided that: "not more than three members of the management at a time may stay outside the location of the association's main office. One member of the management must stay outside the location of the main office. The district which represents a champion will be granted a seat"⁴¹. The justification of this provision lies in the fact that the management would have to attend monthly meetings, which in turn caused transportation problems for the members from different cities (expenses, long, tiring journey, taking days off work). Between 1931 and 1939, 80% of the candidates for the management of the PTTA chosen at the General Meetings were of Jewish descent⁴². A similar percentage would be true for the district associations'

³⁸ T. Bogan, *History of USA. Table Tennis* 2000.

³⁹ M. Schafer, *Ein Spiel fürs Leben*, Frankfurt am Main 2000, pp. 137–138.

⁴⁰ J. Gaj, B. Woltmann, *Zarys historii sportu w Polsce 1867–1997*, Gorzów Wlkp. 1999, pp. 64–75.

⁴¹ State Archive in Łódź, files of the regional authorities of the city of Łódź [Łódzkie Starostwo Grodzkie]. Polski Związek Tenisa Stołowego, ref. No. 3076. The PTTA statute filed at the office of Ludwik Kahl, Notary-Public on Mar 7th, 1932 and the official letter addressed to Łódzkie Starostwo Grodzkie, dated Mar 9th, 1932. The seat for the member of the management remaining outside the location of the head office was given to the association's captain, H. Apsel from Krakow(6 times), L. Koliwieszko from Warsaw, C. Orszulak from Łódź and L. Przybylski from Lvov (once).

⁴² R. Kulczycki, *Tenis stołowy w Polsce 1919–1989*, Gorzów Wlkp. 1998, p. 34.

members in Krakow, Lvov, Łódź, Silesia, Warsaw, Zagłębie Dąbrowskie. Two members of distinction were:

Stanisław Jacobson, born on August 15th, 1906 in Łódź; lawyer by education. Between 1931 and 1939, he was a member of the PTTA management board. He organized the structures of the association and was a member of the team which drew up the association's statute. At first, he would run a secretariat in his private flat in Łódź, in ul. Południowa 42. He was a vice-president for organizational matters for many years. In 1936 and 1937, he was a member of the ITTF Executive Committee. There is no mention of his fate after 1939⁴³.

Maksymilian Hornung, born in 1901 in Krakow, son of Norbert, a commercial agent. He lived in ul. J. Dietla 29. He got a PhD in Law from the Jagiellonian University Law School. He enjoyed great authority in the Polish table tennis environment. Between 1928 and 1934, he was the President of the Krakow District Table Tennis Association. On December 1933, Hornung was representing PTTA at the National Convention of the Federation of the Polish Sports Associations (PZSS). In 1936, he was awarded an honorary membership of the PZTS. In the 1920s, Hornung was a member of the management board of ŻKS Hakoah, and then Makkabi Krakow. He was one of the founders of the Krakow Ping-pong Association (its structures and the statute). He put forward a proposal of establishing the Polish Table Tennis Association in Warsaw (in 1930). A heavy smoker. He died tragically in 1946, hit by a car⁴⁴.

There are, of course, many more people who played major roles in the development of table tennis in Poland. The fans of the discipline were present in the structures of the district sports associations, as well as in sports clubs. A very responsible organizational work rested on their shoulders.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 34; J. Gaj, B. Woltmann, *Zarys historii sportu w Polsce 1867–1997*, Gorzów Wlkp. 1999, p. 104. W. Pięta's private archive.

⁴⁴ *30 lat Krakowskiego Okręgowego Związku Tenisa Stołowego*, Kraków 1957; W. Pięta's private archive; "Nasz Przegląd" no. 59, 1938; M. Kulczykowski, *Żydzi – studenci Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (1919–1939)*, Kraków 2004, p. 576.

CONCLUSION

Table tennis developed in Poland at the end of the 1920s. It soon became the favourite discipline among the Jewish communities. At first, ping-pong sections emerged spontaneously. They contributed greatly to the establishment of the district associations (1928–1931), as well as the setting up, after three attempts, of the Polish Table Tennis Association.

The conditions of the development of table tennis in the interwar period were considerably more difficult in comparison with other disciplines. There were not enough sports halls or equipment (mainly tables and balls). The organization of table tennis tournaments or district competitions was chiefly an effect of the involvement of the Jewish officials.

Despite many difficulties, the number of the ping-pong sections was on the increase. In 1933, ninety-four sections with one thousand nine hundred members were registered. In 1937, there were already one hundred and fifty-seven sections with four thousand seven hundred players¹. The major part of the contestants were self-taught as the educational system of the training staff was highly unsatisfactory. Often, the trainers' duties were fulfilled by competitors themselves, and in particular the international table-tennis celebrities who were brought to Poland for show matches.

The sports achievements of Alojzy Ehrlich in the international arena (five medals, including three silver ones) had an influence on the establishment of new ping-pong sections across the country. It gave the youth a better opportunity to join sports clubs, as well as helping the integration of the Jewish people. Table tennis gave a chance for a sports competition while being a parlour game.

The Jewish table tennis players won all the gold medals in the Polish singles and team championships organized between 1932 and 1939 (all pre-war championships). The Polish national team included twelve players, nine out of which played in Jewish clubs (world championships, international matches). Non-Jewish sportsmen took part in four out of eighteen official matches. Jewish players won two bronze medals in the world team championships (A. Ehrlich, Loewenhertz, S. Pohoryles, S. Finkelstein, E. Schiff).

The strongest centres of the discipline in question were: Lvov, Tarnów, Warsaw and Łódź. The Jewish communities of those cities created the best training conditions for their sportsmen. At the end of the 1930s, there was a real

¹ Rocznik Statystyczny 1937/1938, Warszawa 1938.

chance for creating a dream team (A. Ehrlich, R. Bergman, E. Schiff, B. Pukiet) and winning a gold medal in the world championships.

All the great table tennis players were friendly people, immensely preoccupied with the game.

The tragedy which was the Holocaust completely destroyed many fields of social, cultural and sports activities of the Polish Jews. It also broke the strain of success of the Jewish table tennis. With their achievements, the Jewish sportsmen, as citizens of Poland Reborn, would spread the name of the Second Republic of Poland. Many of the leading table tennis players did come back to their homeland after the WW II, only to learn that the old circles were no longer there. They were not welcome, as they were still a strong competition. In 1949, the last Jewish sports clubs were closed down and their sports equipment was handed over to the Polish clubs.

In the light of the above reflection, it should be stated that table tennis is the only discipline of Polish sports in which a major role was played by the Jewish minority. This subject matter was not raised for a long time. The history of table tennis cannot be presented comprehensively without the reconstruction of the real picture, that is without mentioning the considerable achievements of the Jewish players in the fields of organization and sports.

The progress and development of the Jewish sports were held back by the application of the **Aryan Paragraph**, numerus clausus, numerus nullus. They mainly concerned places at the training courses, sports camps or obtaining subventions for development.

Also, the financial resources were insufficient. He Jewish sportsmen would often encounter signs of anti-Semitism. They were laughed at, insulted, they experienced many injustices on the part of the umpires and referees, chauvinism was spreading and the Jewish sports clubs and sportsmen were eliminated from the district and national structures.

There was also an unhealthy competition among the Jewish sports clubs. Table tennis was the sports discipline which defended itself from any signs of anti-Semitism.

The interest in the Jewish past and the diversity of activities, including the field of sports, and the urge to explore it was increasing among the young generation.

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ICONOGRAPHIC ANNEXES



Fot. 1. 1930 World Cup in Berlin. In the picture, the many-time World Champions (from left): A. Sipos, Z. Mednyanszky (non-Jewish player), M. Szabados, V. Barna (Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 2. 1932 World Cup in Prague. Qualifiers: Flussman (Austria) vs. Benthin (Germany) (Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 3. 1935 World Cup in London. In the picture, the bronze medallists:
W. Loewenhertz, H. Pohoryles, A. Ehrlich
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 4. 1936 World Cup in Prague. Poland vs. France. From left: Lipszyc (the Polish team manager), Finkelstein, Ajzenberg (sports captain), Ehrlich, Jezierski, Schiff, the French team (Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 5. The National Teams of Poland and Egypt (Baden 1937).
 From right: 1st: S. Finkelstein, 3rd: E. Schiff, 7th: A. Ehrlich
 (Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 6. Poland vs. Latvia, 1939. Top left: B. Pukiet, Piórowicz (non-Jewish player),
 E. Schiff. Bottom left: Osius, Stamm, Jaffa
 (Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 7. Hasmonia Lvov – the 1933 Polish Champion
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 8. The 1933 Polish Championships in Singles and Team play (Lvov),
the teams of Wisła Krakow and Hasmonia Lvov
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 9. 1934 Polish Championships in Krakow. In the picture: ŻKS Hakoah Będzin
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 10. 1934 Polish Team Championships in Krakow.
In the picture: ŻKS Hakoah Krakow
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 11. Krakow 1934. In the picture: ŻKS Hasmonea Warsaw
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 12. 1934 Polish Championships in Krakow. In the picture: Makkabi Lvov
(Source: New Record Office)



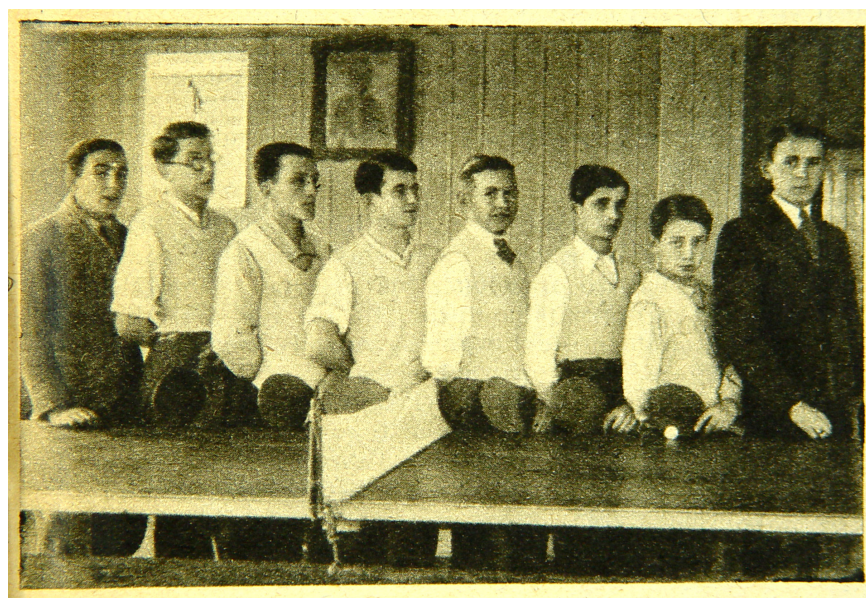
Fot. 13: Makkabi Warsaw. 1st player on the right: S. Finkelstein
(Source: New Record Office)



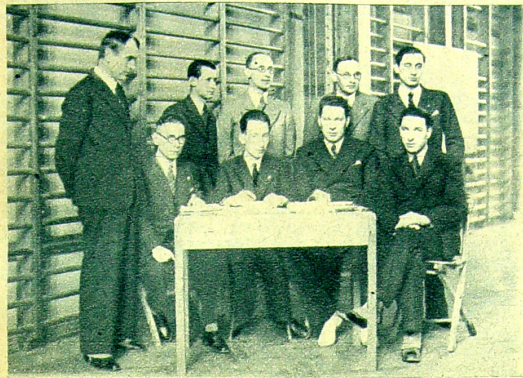
Fot. 14. 1934 Polish Championships in Krakow. In the picture: ŻKS Hakoah Radomsko
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 15. Players and officials during the Lvov vs. Krakow vs. Tarnów triple match
(Source: the Jagiellonian University Library, Krakow)



Fot. 16. Ping-pong section of the Makkabi Stanisławów
(Source: the Jagiellonian University Library, Krakow)



Grupa sędziów i organizatorów mistrzostw ping-pongowych. Siedzą od lewej: sekr. PZTS Orszulak, prezes K. O. Z. T. S. dr Hornung, kpt. zw. Apsel, przew. deleg. K. O. Z. T. S. Ormian. Stoją od lewej: wicepr. KOZTS mjr. Wilk oraz członkowie KOZTS Celnik, Zimmerpitz, Konkiewicz i Jaśkowski.

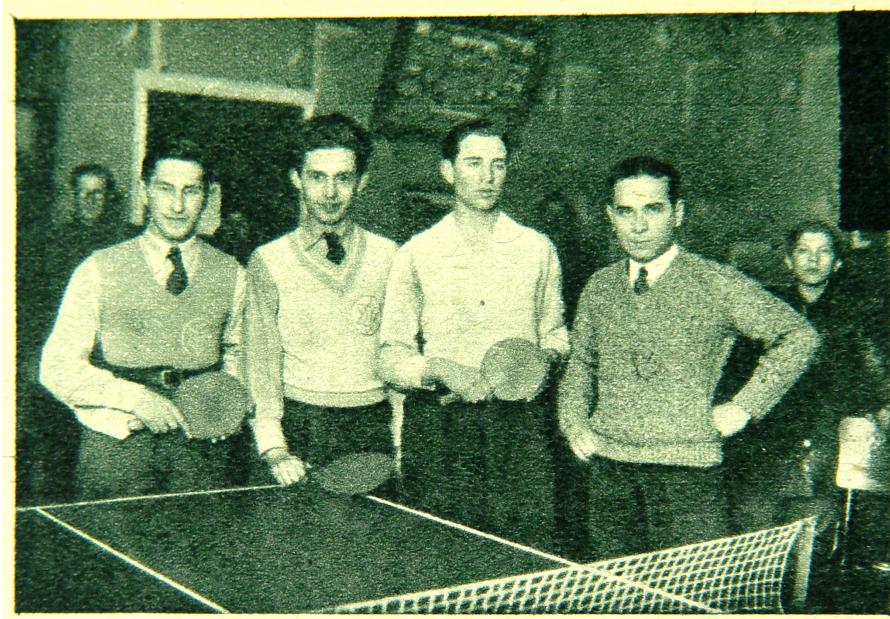


Drużyna ŻKS Radomsko.



Drużyna T. S. Gwiazda, Częstochowa.

Fot. 17. 1934 Polish Championships in Krakow
(Source: the Jagiellonian University Library, Krakow)



Fot. 18. Łódź Championships in Singles play
(Source: the Jagiellonian University Library, Krakow)



Fot. 19. 1937 Polish Championships in Tarnów
(Source: New Record Office)



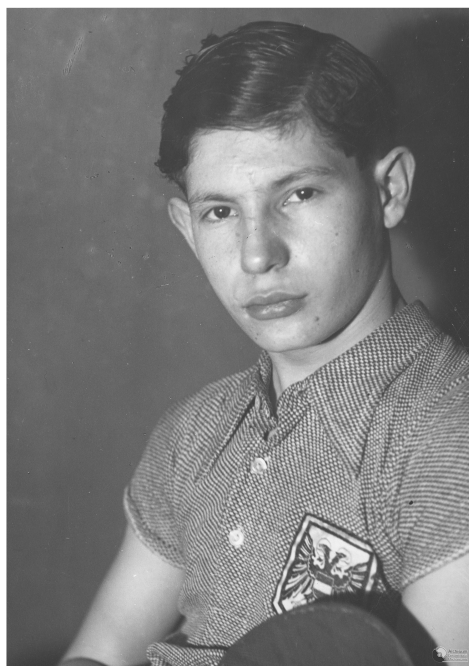
Fot. 20. Samson Tarnów – 1937 Polish Champions
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 21. Hasmonaea Warsaw – 1937 Polish vice-Champions
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 22. Samson Tarnów – 1937 Polish Champions
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 23.
Richard Bergmann – four-time World
Champion in singles
(Source: New Record Office)



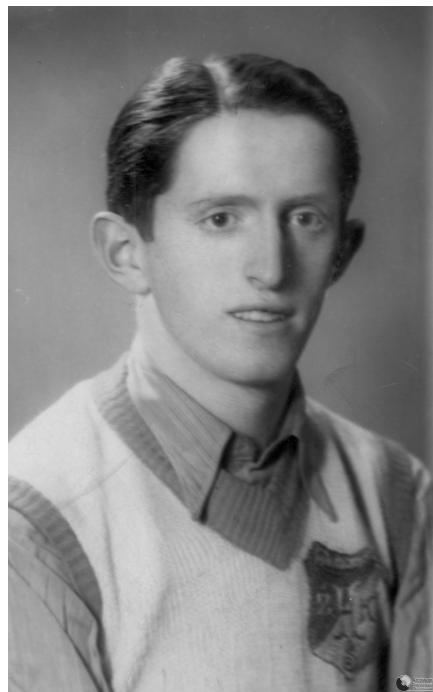
Fot. 24.
Ałojzy Ehrlich – three-time World
vice-Champion in singles
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 25.
Emylles Schiff – five-time Polish
Champion in singles and team play
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 26. Bernard Pukiet (Polish vice-Champion) and E. Schiff
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 27.
Simcha Finkelstein – Polish Champion
in singles and team play
(Source: New Record Office)



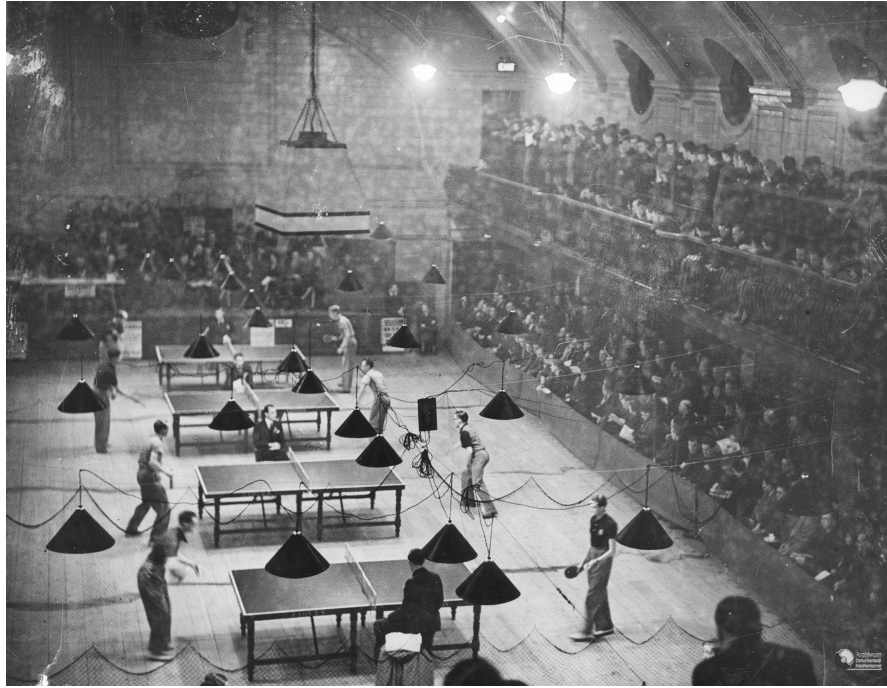
Fot. 28.
Szymon Blonder – 1947 Polish
Champion in singles play
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 29.
Stockfiszówna – 1938 & 1939 Polish
female Champion in singles play
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 30. The 1935 PTTA Management Board
(Source: New Record Office)



Fot. 31. 1935 World Cup in London
(Source: New Record Office)

Table 1. Matches played by the Polish national team between 1933 and 1939

No.	Teams	No. of matches	Victories	Defeats	Ratio	Date
1.	Poland – Germany	3	3	0	17 – 6	1933-1938
2.	Poland – Holland	3	3	0	15 – 0	1933-1937
3.	Poland – Latvia	4	3	1	17 – 13	1933-1939
4.	Poland – Wales	2	2	0	10 – 0	1935-1938
5.	Poland – Rep. of Ireland	2	2	0	10 – 1	1935-1938
6.	Poland – India	2	2	0	10 – 1	1933-1938
7.	Poland – Yugoslavia	2	2	0	10 – 2	1933-1937
8.	Poland – Belgium	2	2	0	10 – 2	1933-1937
9.	Poland – Lithuania	2	2	0	10 – 2	1936-1937
10.	Poland – France	3	2	1	14 – 11	1933-1936
11.	Poland – Romania	2	2	0	10 – 2	1936-1937
12.	Poland – England	3	2	1	12 – 9	1935-1938
13.	Poland – Austria	2	1	1	6 – 9	1937-1938
14.	Poland – Egypt	1	1	0	5 – 0	1937
15.	Poland – Switzerland	1	1	0	5 – 0	1935
16.	Poland – Czech Rep.	3	1	2	12 – 11	1933-1938
17.	Poland – U.S.	2	0	2	4 – 10	1937-1938
18.	Poland – Hungary	3	0	3	4 – 15	1933-1937

Source materials: W. Pięta's private archive, „Raz Dwa Trzy” 1933–1939, „Przegląd Sportowy” 1932–1939, ITTF Museum Rennes-Lausanne

Table 2. Polish national team statistics

No.	Date	No. of matches	Victories	Defeats	Ratio
1.	1933 WCh	8	6	2	32 – 18
2.	1934 Poland v. Germany	1	1	0	7 – 2
3.	1935 WCh	7	6	1	34 – 10
4.	1936 WCh	6	4	2	25 – 9
5.	1937 WCh	12	9	3	53 – 27
6.	1938 WCh	7	4	3	25 – 23
7.	1939 Poland v. Latvia	1	1	0	5 – 4
	Total	42	31	11	181 – 94

Source materials: W. Pięta's private archive

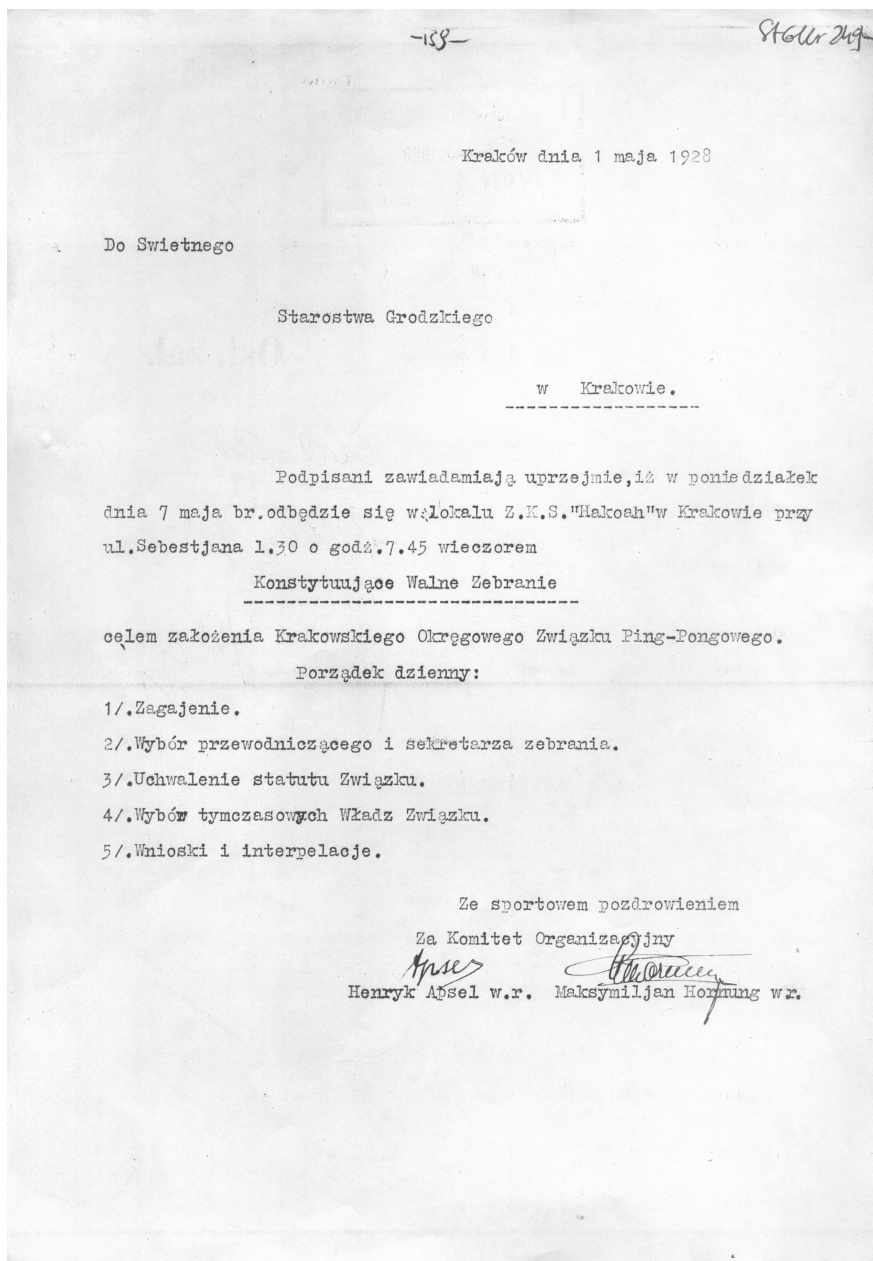
Table 3. Matches played by the Polish team members between 1933 and 1939

No.	Surname and Name	No. of matches	Victories	Date
1.	Ehrlich Alojzy	46	80	1933-1938
2.	Schiff Emylles	25	34	1936-1939
3.	Finkelstein Shimcha	17	21	1936-1937
4.	Pohoryles Hillel	15	13	1933-1935
5.	Loewenhertz Władysław	8	15	1934-1935
6.	Pohoryles Simon	8	10	1933
7.	Rojzen Isaak	6	3	1938
8.	Jezierski Zdzisław	3	4	1936-1937
9.	Klein Szymon	1	1	1934
10.	Osmański Kazimierz	1	1	1938
11.	Pukiet Bernie (Bernard)	1	1	1939
12.	Piórowicz	1	1	1939

Source materials: W. Pięta's private archive, ITTF Museum Rennes-Lausanne

Annex No. 1

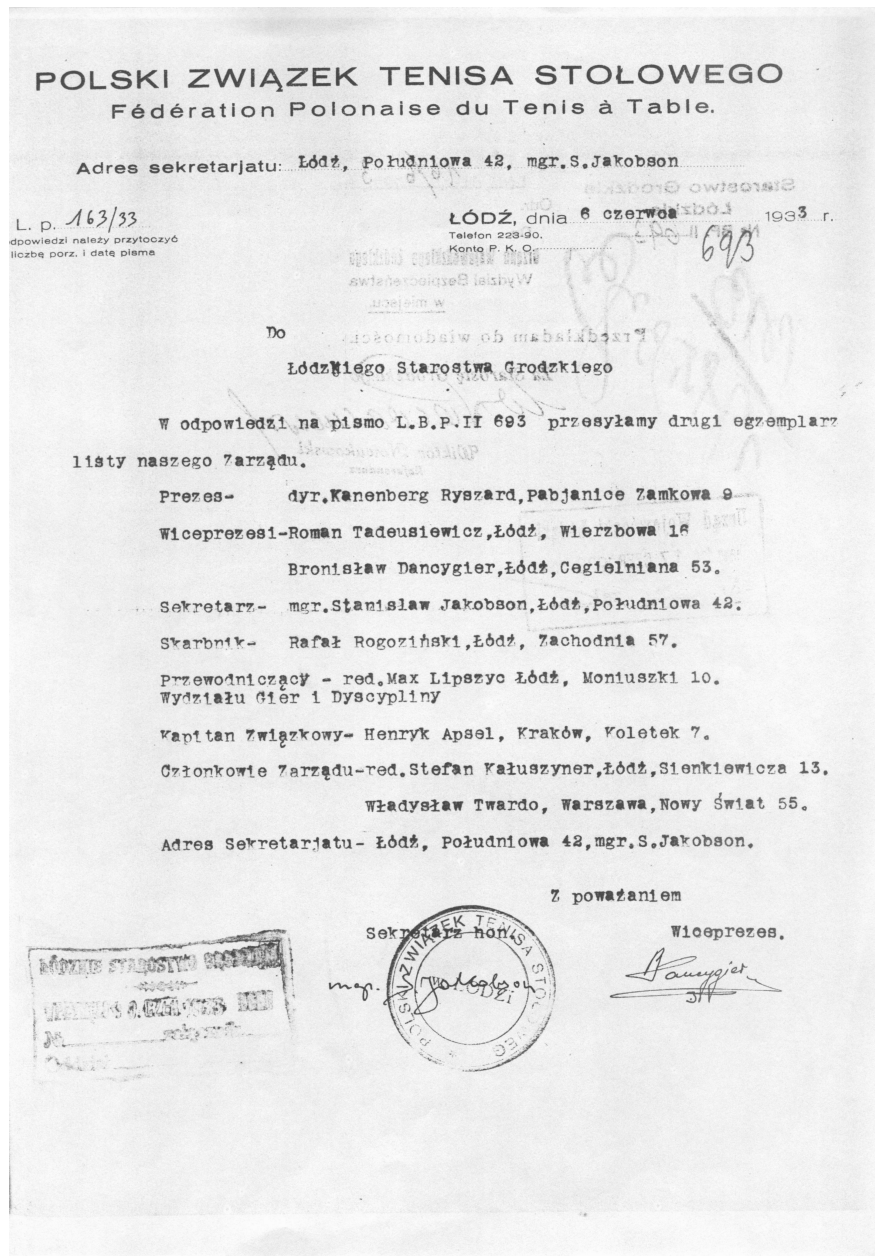
General Meeting of the Krakow District Ping-Pong Association, held in 1928



Source: State Archive in Krakow. Files of the Krakow Municipal Council (Starostwo Grodzkie). Jewish Sports Clubs, catalogue no. 249

Annex No. 2

The Board of Directors of the Polish Table Tennis Association, dated June 6th, 1933



Source: State Archive in Łódź. Polish Table Tennis Association Files

Annex No. 3

The Board of Directors of the Polish Table Tennis Association, dated February 10th, 1934

POLSKI ZWIĄZEK TENISA STOŁOWEGO
Fédération Polonaise du Tennis à Table.

Adres sekretariatu: **Orszulak Czesław, Łódź ul. Nawrot 55.**

L. p. 90/34
LÓDŹ, dnia **10. lutego** 1934 r.
Telefon 223-90.

Łódzkiego Starostwa Grodzkiego
w Łodzi

Niniejszym mamy zaszczyt podać Wspaniałemu
Zarządowi Polskiego Związku Tenisa Stołowego, *wybranego w dniu*
18. XII. 1933 r.:
Prezes - p. Roman Tadeusiewicz Łódź ul. Wierzbowa
Nr. 16.
Wiceprezes - p. Bronisław Daneygier Łódź ul. Cegielska
nr. 53.
p. mgr. Stanisław Jakobson Łódź
ul. Południowa 42.
Sekretarz - p. Czesław Orszulak Łódź ul. Nawrot 55.
Skarbnik - p. Rafał Rogoziński Łódź ul. Kilińskiego
48
Kapitan Związkowy - p. Henryk Apsel Kraków Koletek
Nr. 7.
Członek Zarządu - p. red. Maks Lipszyc Łódź ul.
Moniuszki 10.
" - p. Juda Szapiro Łódź ul. Zerom-
skiego 24.
" - p. Stefan Sikoraki Łódź ul.
Zeromskiego 8.

Verte.

Source: State Archive in Łódź. Polish Table Tennis Association Files

Annex No. 4

The Board of Directors of the Polish Table Tennis Association, dated January 29th, 1935

POLSKI ZWIĄZEK TENISA STOŁOWEGO
Fédération Polonaise de Tennis de Table.

Członek
dzynarodowej Federacji Tenisa Stołowego
(I. T. T. A.)
Członek
Związku Polskich Związków Sportowych
(Z. P. Z. S.)

Adres sekretariatu..... Fr. Abramsohnówna
Lódź, 6 sierpnia 37
Telefon 156-50

LÓDŹ, dnia 29 stycznia 1935 r.

L. p. 97/35
dpowiedzi należy przytoczyć
liczbę porz. i datę pisma

1. rej. 3076

Do
Lódzkiego Starostwa Grodzkiego

W Ł O D Ź I

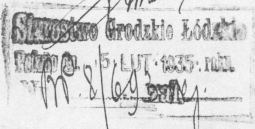

Miniejszem mamy zaszczyt podać skład Zarządu Polskiego
Związku Tenisa Stołowego.

Prezes - p. Zygmunt Lange, Łódź, ul. 7 amenhofa 34
Viceprezes - p. Bronisław Dancygler, Łódź, Cegielniana 53
" - p. mgr. Stanisław Jakobson, Łódź, 7achodnia 41
Sekretarz - p. Franciszka Abramsohn, Łódź, 6 sierpnia 37
Skarbnik - p. Teodor Ziegler, Łódź, Piotrkowska 118
Kapitan Związkowy - p. Henryk Apsel, Kraków, Koletek 7
Członek zarządu - p. red. Maks Lipszyo, Łódź, Andrzeja 27
" " - p. Juda Szapiro, Łódź, Wilńskiego 40
" " - p. Czesław Joachimiak, Łódź, Wilńskiego 171

Adres sekretariatu brzmi: Łódź, ul. 6 sierpnia 37, Fr. Abram-
sohnówna.

Sekretarz hon. /- Prezes.
mgr. S. Jakobson

Starostwo Grodzkie Łódź
15. I. 1935. roku



Source: State Archive in Łódź. Polish Table Tennis Association Files

Annex No. 5

The Board of Directors of the Polish Table Tennis Association, dated December 31st, 1935

POLSKI ZWIĄZEK TENISA STOŁOWEGO
Fédération Polonaise de Tennis de Table.

Członek
dzynarodowej Federacji Tenisa Stołowego
(I. T. T. A.)
Członek
Związku Polskich Związków Sportowych
(Z. P. Z. S.)

Adres sekretarjatu Al. Kościuszki 63 B.G.K.
Telefon 156-50 Stanisław Salm

ŁÓDŹ, dnia 31 grudnia 1935 r.

L. p. 422/35.
dpowiedzi należy przytoczyć
liczbę porz. i datę pisma

Do
STAROSTWA GRODZKIEGO
w Łodzi


Niniejszem uprzejmie zawiadamiamy, iż Zarząd, ukonstytuowa-
wany na Walnem Zgromadzeniu, odbytem w dniu 8 grudnia 1934 r., przedsta-
wia się następująco:

Prezes - p. Kazimierz Waręszkiewicz, Łódź, Leszno 40.
V. prezesi - p. Bronisław Dancycier*, Łódź, Cegielniana 53
 p. adw. Stanisław Jakobson, Łódź, Zachodnia 41
Sekretarz - p. Stanisław Salm, Łódź, R. dwańska 36
Skarbnik - p. Julian Michalski, Łódź, Targowa 19
Przewodniczący W.G.i D. - p. red. Maks Lipszyc, Andrzejka 27
Kapitan związkowy - p. Jakób Ajzenberg, Warszawa, Karmelicka 3
Członkowie Zarządu - pp. Czesław Joachimiak, Łódź, Kilińskiego 171 i
 Juda Szapiro, Łódź, Kilińskiego 40.

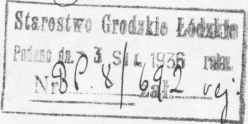
Adres Sekretarjatu brzozi : Salm Stan. Bank Gospodarstwa
Krajowego, Al. Kościuszki 63.

Z poważaniem
Prezes

Sekretarz
Salm



Salm



rej 3076/327.

Source: State Archive in Łódź. Polish Table Tennis Association Files

Annex No. 6

The Board of Directors of the Polish Table Tennis Association, dated November 20th, 1937

3076

POLSKI ZWIĄZEK TENISA STOŁOWEGO
Fédération Polonaise de Tennis de Table.

Członek
Międzynarodowej Federacji Tenisa Stołowego
(I. T. T. A.)
Członek
Związku Polskich Związków Sportowych
(Z. P. Z. S.)

Adres sekretariatu B. Koplowicz, Lipowa 31
Telefon 156-50

ŁÓDŹ, dnia 20 listopada 1937r.

L. p. 19/38
Odpowiedzi należy przycisnąć
liczbę porz. i datę pisma

Do
Starostwa Grodzkiego Łódzkiego
w m i e j s c u .

Miniejszym uprzejmie zawiadamiamy, iż Zarząd PZTS. wybrany przez
Doroczne Walne Zgromadzenie w dn. 31 października r.b., na swoim
pierwszym posiedzeniu w dniu 18 listopada r.b. ukonstytuował
się następująco:


Prezes - p. Wardęszkiewicz Kazimierz, bankowiec, w/m. Żeligowskiego 40
ur. 01.11.1901
I vice-prezes - p. Jakobson Stanisław, a. adw., w/m. Zachodnia 41.
ur. 15.6.1906
II vice-prezes - v a c a t
Sekretarz - p. Koplowicz Bernard, kier. fabryki, w/m. Pogonowskiego 40.
ur. 23.5.1907
Skarbnik - p. Michalski Julian, bankowiec, w/m. Al. Kościuszki 63
Gospodarz - p. Szternberg Mieczysław, kupiec, w/m. Piotrkowska 17
Kapitan zw. - p. chor. Koliwieszko Franciszek, wojskowy, Warszawa
ul. Powąskowska 44, ur. 18.12.1891
Referenci - p. Chłodziński Roman, biuralista, w/m. Żeligowskiego 40.
ur. 3.10.1909
p. Naftalin Henryk, a. adw. w/m. Lipowa 9, ur. 16.11.1908
p. Orszulak Czesław, biuralista, w/m. Nawrot 55
ur. 11.2.1913
p. Salm Stanisław, bankowiec, w/m. Mostowa 5, ur. 8.12.1900

Starostwo Grodzkie Łódź
22 LIST. 1937
BE 10 624

Adres sekretariatu brzmi - Koplowicz Bernard, Łódź, Lipowa 31.

Za Zarząd P.Z.T.S.
Prezes:
Kazimierz Wardęszkiewicz
Kazimierz Wardęszkiewicz

Sekretarz hon.:
Bernard Koplowicz
Bernard Koplowicz.



Source: State Archive in Łódź. Polish Table Tennis Association Files

Annex No. 7

The Board of Directors of the Polish Table Tennis Association, dated January 7th, 1939

POLSKI ZWIĄZEK TENISA STOŁOWEGO
Fédération Polonaise de Tennis de Table.

Członek
Międzynarodowej Federacji Tenisa Stołowego
(I. T. T. A.)
Członek
Związku Polskich Związków Sportowych
(Z. P. Z. S.)

Adres sekretariatu H. Neftalin, Łódź, Lipowa 9
~~Telefon 156-50~~ tel. 257-70

ŁÓDŹ, dnia 7 stycznia 1939 r.

L. p. ad 131/39-II
odpowiedzi należy przytoczyć
liczbę porz. i datę pisma

D o
Starostwa Grodzkiego Łódzkiego
w Łodzi

Poniżej mamy zaszczyt przedstawić skład Zarządu Polskiego
Związku Tenisa Stołowego w Łodzi na rok 1939.

1. Prezes	Kazimierz Wardęszkiewicz, ur. 21.11.1901 r., urzędnik bankowy, zam. w Łodzi, ul. Gen. Żeligowskiego 40.
2. I Wiceprezes	Stanisław Jakobson, ur. 15.8.1906r., adwokat, zam. w Łodzi, Zachodnia 41,
3. II Wiceprezes	Stanisław Salm, ur. 8.12.1900r., urzędnik bankowy, zam. w Łodzi, Mostowa 5,
4. Sekretarz hon.	Henryk Neftalin, ur. 16.11.1908r., aplikant adwokacki, zam. w Łodzi, Lipowa 9,
5. Skarbnik	Julian Michalski, ur. 31.1.1908r., urzędnik bankowy, zam. w Łodzi, ul. Targowa 51
6. Kapitan Związkowy	Czesław Orszulak, ur. 11.2.1913r., biuralista, zam. w Łodzi, Nawrot 55,
7. Referent Okręgów	Bernard Kopłowicz, ur. 23.5.1907, urzędnik prywatny, zam. w Łodzi, ul. Lipowa 31,
8. Referent Prasowy	Sztenberg Mieczysław, ur. w 1887r. kupiec, zam. w Łodzi, Piotrkowska 17
9. Referent ewidencji	Henryk Świątek, ur. 19.VIII 1913r., zam. w Łodzi, Wapienna 24, urzędnik, PKP
10. Gospodarz	Paweł Żyrycki, ur. 2.11.1911r., zam. w Łodzi, Racławicka 49, urzędnik, PKP

verte.

Source: State Archive in Łódź. Polish Table Tennis Association Files.

Annex No. 8

The first statute of the Polish Table Tennis Association, dated March 9th, 1932



S T A T U T

POLSKIEGO ZWIĄZKU TENISU STOŁOWEGO.

- § 1. Związek nosi nazwę „Polski Związek Tenisa Stołowego”. W stosunkach zagranicą obok nazwy polskiej używa Związek nazwy francuskiej "Federation Polonoise du Tennis a Table".
- § 2. Siedzibą P.Z.T.S. jest miasto Łódź.
- § 3. Działalność P.Z.T.S. obejmuje cały obszar Państwa Polskiego z zachowaniem ^{miejscowych} przejściowych praw o stowarzyszeniach.
- § 4. Językiem urzędowym jest język polski.
- § 5. P.Z.T.S. jest osobą prawną i korzysta z wszystkich praw, osobom prawnym przysługujących.
- § 6. Celem P.Z.T.S. jest rozwój i rozpowszechnianie sportu tenisa stołowego w Polsce jako amatorskiego przez:
- a/ wyłączenie reprezentację zrzeszonego w P.Z.T.S. sportu tenisa stołowego wobec władz centralnych, społeczeństwa i innych instytucji sportowych oraz wobec zagranicy,
 - b/ przestrzeganie w Polsce technicznych zasad przyjętych w międzynarodowym sporcie tenisa stołowego
 - c/ koordynowanie prac związków okręgowych.
- § 7. Sposobami działalności Związku dla osiągnięcia celów Związku są:
- a/ organizacja, kierownictwo, kontrolowanie i weryfikacja zawodów o mistrzostwo Polski oraz prowadzenie ewidencji zawodników, klubów i stowarzyszeń t.st.
 - b/ wydawanie odpowiednich przepisów, regulaminów i podręczników
 - c/ popularyzacja t.st. przez urządzenie zawodów o mistrzostwo Polski, międzynarodowych, odczytów i pokazów ofiarowywanie nagród honorowych współdziałanie z centralnymi i szkolnymi władzami w ^{urządzeniu} rozporządzeniu t.st. w Polsce
 - d/ subsydjowanie okręgów, klubów i towarzystw należących do związku.

e/ organizacja Okręgowych Z.T.S.

§ 8. Członkowie P.Z.T.S. dzielą się na honorowych, bezpośrednich i pośrednich.

Członkiem honorowym Związku może być tylko osoba pełnoletnia o pełni praw obywatelskich, zasłużona dla rozwoju T.S. w Polsce wybrana większością 3/4 obecnych na zebraniu Walnym Związku. Godność członka honorowego w Związku jest dożywotnia. Członkowie honorowi mają prawo brać udział we wszystkich posiedzeniach Zarządów tak Okręgowych Związków jak i P.Z.T.S. oraz w Wal. Zgr. tychże, jednakże tylko z głosem doradczym.

§ 9. Członkami bezpośrednimi P.Z.T.S. są okręgowe związki T.S. dla sprawniejszego prowadzenia celów Związku, Związek dzieli się

terytorjalnie na okręgi, o ile możliwości odpowiadające terenom poszczególnych województw. Noszą one nazwy *Okręgu O.Z.T.S. T.S.*
Wszystcy członkowie P.Z.T.S. mający siedzibę na terenie O.Z.

T.S. muszą być w tym Okręgu Związku zrzeszone. Podział na okręgi zatwierdza W. Zgr. P.Z.T.S. Związki Okręgowe pracują na podstawie statutu P.Z.T.S. oraz własnego statutu, zatwierdzonego przez W. Zgr. O.Z.T.S. i władze państwowe przy czym Zw. Okr. reprezentuje wobec P.Z.T.S. wszystkich członków pośrednich danego Okręgu. Okręgi mają być dzielone na podokręgi. Podział ten zatwierdza Zarząd O.Z.T.S.

§ 10. Członkowie bezpośredni P.Z.T.S. mają prawo:

- a/ brania udziału z prawem głosu decydującego na Wal. Zgr. przez delegatów O.Z.T.S., zebraniach i ogólnych konferencjach P.Z.T.S. do którego mają prawo zgłaszania wniosków i interpelacji,
- b/ korzystania ze wszystkich urządzeń i instytucji udogodnień i funduszy P.Z.T.S.

- § 11.¹² Członkami pośrednimi P.Z.T.S. są: kluby sportowe, stowarzyszenia sportowe, stow.-sport. społeczne lub jego sekcje, posiadające statut lub regulamin zatwierdzony przez władze do tego powołane uprawiające tenis stołowy, które przyjęły statut, przepisy i regulamin P.Z.T.S. i zrzeszone są w okręgowych Z.T.S.
- § 12.¹³ Członkowie pośredni korzystają ze wszystkich urządzeń i instytucji, udogodnień i funduszy P.Z.T.S. ponadto mają prawo do wniesienia protestów, zażaleń do P.Z.T.S.
- § 13.¹⁴ Wszyscy członkowie są obowiązani:
- a/ do bezwzględnego przestrzegania zasad amatorstwa
 - b/ do przestrzegania postanowień statutu, regulaminu oraz uchwał P.Z.T.S. i własnego O.Z.T.S. do popierania zadań i celów Związku,
 - c/ do płacenia ustalonych przez Wal. Zgr. O.Z.T.S. opłat rocznych, przyczem członkowie pośredni wpłacają przez *okręgi*
 - d/ są obowiązani uzyskać zezwolenie urzędnicze zawodów międzynarodowych, oraz o prawo uczestniczenia w nich poza granicami Państwa,
 - e/ do prowadzenia dokładnej statystyki swej pracy sportowej z przeprowadzonych zawodów i przekładania Zarządowi P.Z.T.S. sprawozdań rocznych do dnia 15 listopada każdego roku.
- § 14.¹⁵ Prawa członka bezpośredniego P.Z.T.S. ustają przez rozwiązanie O.Z.T.S.
- § 15.¹⁶ Prawa członka pośredniego P.Z.T.S. ustają przez utratę praw członka O.Z.T.S.
- § 16.¹⁷ Władzami Związku są: Walne Zgromadzenie, Zarząd, Komisja Rewizyjna i Wydział Gier i Dyscypliny.

§ 17. Najwyższą władzą Związku jest Walne Zgr. P.Z.T.S. Walne Zgr. mogą być zwyczajne i nadzwyczajne.

Walne Zgr. tworzą delegaci Okręgów, przy czym delegatom Okr. przyznaje się ilość głosów ^{odpowiednio do os.} w stosunku czynnych członków w Okręgu. Okręg reprezentujący mistrza Polski otrzymuje dodatkowo 5 głosów. Za czynnego członka uważa się członka, uznanego przez Związek Okręgowy T.S.

§ 18. Wal. Zgr. jest prawomocne przy komplecie delegatów reprezentujących przynajmniej 2/3 istniejących Okręgów. W razie braku kompletu Walne Zgromadzenie może się odbyć w godz. później, jako w drugim terminie, bez osobnego zwoływania, w obecności delegatów nie mniej jak 3 Okręgów.

Uchwały zapadają zwykłą większością głosów za wyjątkiem uchwał dotyczących zmiany, ^{zakończ} rozwiązania Związku, połączenia-skreślenia lub rozdzielenia okręgów dla których wymagana jest większość 2/3 głosów, oraz przy wyborze członków honorowych, dla których wymagana jest większość 3/4 głosów obecnych.

Siedzibę P.Z.T.S. ustala rok-rocznie Wal. Zgr. zwykłą większością.

Wal. Zgr. zwołuje Zarząd co najmniej na 6 tygodni przed oznaczonym terminem drogą zawiadomień pisemnych, oraz komunikatu PZTS w zawiadomieniach musi być umieszczony porządek dzienny Wal. Zgr. W Wal. Zgr. poza delegatami Okręgów biorą udział członkowie władz P.Z.T.S. oraz członkowie honorowi.

§ 19. Wal. Zgr. Zwyczajne odbywają się każdego roku kalendarzowego między 1-szym a 20-ym grudnia, do kompetencji Wal. Zgr. należy:

- a/ wybór prezydium
- b/ zatwierdzenie sprawozdań z działalności sportowej, administracyjnej i kasowej Zarządu P.Z.T.S. i udzielenie im absolutorjum,
- c/ zatwierdzenie protokołu z ostatniego Wal. Zgr.

- d/ przyjęcie sprawozdania z działalności Wydziału Gier i Dyscypliny i referenta spraw sędziowskich
- e/ wybór prezesa, 2 wiceprezesów, przewodniczącego Wydziału G. i D. skarbnika, sekretarza i 2 członków Zarządu oraz 4 członków W.G.D. Przewodniczącego Komisji Rewizyjnej P.Z.T.S. Wiceprzewodniczącego, sekretarza oraz 2 zastępców K.R.
- f/ wybór członków honorowych
- g/ oznaczenie wysokości opłat członkowskich na rzecz Związku P.T.S. taksy protestów i procentów od zawodów urządzanych przez O.Z.T.S.
- h/ załatwianie wniosków Zarządu P.Z.T.S. wniosków O.Z.T.S. protestów od decyzji P.Z.T.S.
- i/ zmiana przepisów gry
- j/ wszelkie wnioski okręgów, protesty i zażalenia powinny wpływać do Zarządu P.Z.T.S. pisemnie przynajmniej na 4 tygodnie przez Wal. Zgr.
- § 20. Wal. Zgr. Nadzw. zwołuje Zarząd P.Z.T.S. na skutek własnej uchwały, lub na żądanie Komisji Rewizyjnej, Zarządów przynajmniej 3 Okręgów, Zarządu Związku Polskich Związków Sport. ~~o ile P.Z.T.S.~~ będzie członkiem tej instytucji w razie rezygnacji prezesa i wiceprezesa, równocześnie $\frac{2}{3}$ członków Zarządu lub $\frac{3}{5}$ członków W. G. i D.
- Do porządku dziennego ~~W~~ Nadzwyczajnego Wal. Zgr. należą tylko te sprawy, które wywołały zwołanie i zostały umieszczone przez Zarząd na porządku dziennym.
- § 21. Zarząd P.Z.T.S. jest główną władzą kierowniczą Związku działającego na podstawie postanowień statutu i kierującą życiem Związku w myśl § 3 i 4 niniejszego statutu. W szczególności Zarząd ma następujące kompetencje i obowiązki:

- a/ załatwia bieżące sprawy organizacyjne i administracyjne
zatwierdza wszelkie regulaminy dotyczące Okręgów, zarządza majątkiem Związku, zwołuje i przygotowuje Walne Zgr. reprezentuje Związek, czuwa nad działalnością Okręgów.
- b/ proponuje rozpowszechnianie gry tenisa stołowego w Polsce urządza zawody o mistrzostwo Polski, wydaje przepisy i regulaminy obowiązujące dla prowadzenia zawodów, zgłoszenia i wykreślenia zawodników i t.p. uzgadnia, zatwierdza zawody między państwowe wydaje terminarze zawodów międzyokręgowych, zezwala na urządzenie i branie udziału w zawodach międzynarodowych, prowadzi ewidencję członków i zawodników, oraz statystykę odbytych zawodów,
- c/ utrzymuje kontakt z ^{państwami} ~~państwami~~ Związkami zagranicznymi
- d/ rozstrzyga sprawy, zażalenia od decyzji Zarządów Okręgów
czuwa nad utrzymaniem należytej dyscypliny i ducha sportowego Okręgów,
- e/ nakłada kary na członków, przy czym kary te są następujące:
napomnienie, nagana, kara pieniężna, zawieszenie dyskwalifikacja oraz wykluczenie
- f/ Zarząd wybierany jest przez W.Zgr. z pośród obywateli polskich o pełni praw obywatelskich
- g/ najwyżej 3 osoby z Zarządu mogą przebywać poza miejscem siedziby P.Z.T.S. jeden zaś członek Zarządu musi przebywać poza miejscem siedziby P.Z.T.S. Okręg reprezentujący mistrza otrzymuje mandat.

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§ 22. Posiedzenia Zarządu są poufne do ^{możliwości} ~~możliwości~~ uchwał potrzebna jest obecność 5 członków. *Stenogramy i protokoły jednego z wybranych.*
Posiedzenia Zarządu zwołuje Prezes lub w jego zastępstwie wiceprezes, zależnie od potrzeby, przynajmniej raz na miesiąc Zarząd

odpowiedzialny jest za swe czynności przed W.Zgr. Związku. ^{Od} decyzji Zarządu można wnieść odwołanie do Walnego Zgromadzenia PZTS o ile jednak decyzja P.Z.T.S. posiada moc obowiązującą. Zarząd ustępujący składa nowemu agendy Związku bez jakichkolwiek załączników lub braków, dopiero po ukonstytuowaniu się nowego Zarządu. ^{Przy}jęcie agend i funkcji powinno nastąpić w ciągu tygodnia od dnia ukonstytuowania się nowego Zarządu i stwierdzone być w księgach Związku.

- § 23. Prezes Związku reprezentuje Zarząd na zewnątrz, kieruje jego czynnościami, przewodniczy wszystkim zebraniom Zarządu Związku, przy czym udział w głosowaniu nie bierze, lecz rozstrzyga w razie równości głosów. Wspólnie z sekretarzem prowadzi biuro Związku. W wypadkach nagłych wydaje zarządzenie ex praesidio. Za czynności swe odpowiedzialny jest przed Zarządem i Wal. Zgr. w razie nieobecności prezesa zastępującego jeden z vice-prezesów.
- Sekretarz, skarbnik i wydziały Zarządu prowadzą poszczególne działy referując i przygotowując odpowiednie wnioski.
- Szczegółowy tak i podział pracy określa regulamin wewnętrzny uchwalony przez Zarząd.
- Podczas głosowania, głosy osób wstrzymujących się od głosowania nie liczą się.
- § 24. W razie nieprzyjęcia mandatu przez członka Zarządu lub ustąpienia tegoż, Zarząd kompletuje się drogą kooptacji.
- § 25. Wydział Gier i Dyscypliny P.Z.T.S. składa się z przewodniczącego 4 członków, wybranych przez Wal. Zgr. Związku oraz referenta spraw sędziowskich.
- Zadaniem jego jest: a/ nadzór nad pracą poszczególnych O.W.D.G.
b/ projektowanie i przeprowadzenie zawodów związkowych o mistrzostwo Polski i międzynarodowych, nadzór i statystyka zawodów weryfikacja zawodów o mistrzostwo Polski

- c/ karanie zawodników i klubów za nieprzestrzeganie przepisów o zgłoszeniu, zwalnianiu i wykreślaniu zawodników oraz regulaminów P.Z.T.S.
- d/ rozpatrywanie spraw przedłożonych do zaopiniowania przez Zarząd i przekładanie odpowiednich wniosków Zarządowi Przewodniczący W.G. i D. jest równo uprawnionym członkiem Zarządu P.Z.T.S.
- e/ karanie zawodników, którzy nie jawią się bez usprawiedliwienia na zawody międzypaństwowe, na wniosek kapitana związkowego

§ 26. Zadaniem referenta spraw sędziowskich jest:

- a/ zatwierdzenie przez referenta sędziów przedstawionych przez Okręgowych referentów S.S. *? Spraw Sędziowskich*
- b/ prowadzenie ogólnej ewidencji sędziów i nadzór nad pracą referentów S.S. przy poszczególnych O.Z.T.S.
- c/ rozpatrywanie przekroczeń sędziów
- d/ wyznaczenie sędziów na zawody o mistrzostwo Polski, międzypaństwowe i międzypaństwowe
- e/ referent S.S. wchodzi w skład W.G. i D.

§ 27. Komisja Rewizyjna jest organem kontrolującym gospodarczą działalność

Zarządu Związku, Składa się z 3 członków i 2 zastępców, wybieranych przez Wal.Zgr. z tym, że to ostatnie wybiera przewodniczącego, wiceprzewodniczącego, sekretarza oraz 2 zastępców. Członkowie Komisji Rewizyjnej nie ~~ma~~^{nie} wchodzić w skład władz Związku, natomiast mają ~~prawo~~^{możliwość} uczestniczenia w jego obradach z głosem doradczym. Komisja Rewizyjna, winna ^{Wzrostkowe} się ukonstytuować w przeciągu 30 dni od daty Wal.Zgr. *złotko przyjęci ma to być*

Na ządanie Komisji Rewizyjnej Zarząd obowiązany jest umożliwić jej dokonanie przeglądu ksiąg, rachunków aktów i t.p.

Przynajmniej na 20 dni przed Wal.Zgr. Zwyczaj. Komisja Rewizyjna powinna otrzymać od Zarządu Związku rachunki kasowe i księgi, zbadać je i

porównać ze stanem faktycznym i na tej podstawie złożyć pisemny protokół z wnioskiem udzielenia absolutorjum kasowego względnie wyrażenia votum nieufności ustępującemu Zarządowi. Protokół ten musi być zakomunikowany Zarządowi conajmniej na 7 dni przed Wal. Zgr. Komisja Rewizyjna winna odbyć conajmniej 2 posiedzenia i w listopadzie II w lutym.

§ 28. Na fundusze P.Z.T.S. składają się:

- a/ składki członków pośrednich
- b/ dochody z imprez urządzanych przez P.Z.T.S.
- c/ procenty z imprez urządzanych przez Okręgi
- d/ Kary pieniężne wpłacone przez Okręgi i członków
- e/ dary i subwencje

§ 29. Rozwiązanie Związku może nastąpić na podstawie uchwały Zwyczajnego lub nadzwyczajnego W.Zgr. P.Z.T.S. powziętej większością 3/4 głosów obecnych.

§ 30. Prawo interpeleacji niniejszego statutu przysuguje Zarządowi i Wal. Zgr. P.Z.T.S.

1) *Podzielnia Pomoc*
ul. Sapieżyńska 47.

2) *Stowarzyszenie*
ul. Rokicińska 81 1/2

3) *Comitua Hasy*
ul. Piotrowska 243

4) *Fija Hicorim*
ul. Kolarzowska 45.

5) *Łacznik Komisji*

Przewodniczący

Skarbnik
J. Krawiec
Spisano

mgr. Spalczon

Repertorium № 42-4395 Dnia *siódmego marca*
tysiąc dziewięćset trzydziestego *- drugiego* roku, ja,
LUDWIK KAHL, Notarjusz w Łodzi, mający kancelarię swoją przy ulicy
Piotrkowskiej № 102. zaświadczam że podpisy powyższe położone

zostały własnoręcznie w obecności mojej przez osobiście mi znanych, do działań prawnych zdolnych, zamieszkałych w Łodzi: 1/Romana Tadeusiewicza przy ulicy Napiórkowskiego Nr.47, 2/Aleksandra Stencła przy ulicy Rokicińskiej Nr.81^a, 3/Aleksego Leśniewicza przy ulicy Piotrkowskiej Nr.243, 4/Hieronima Feję przy ulicy Wólczańskiej Nr.75 i 5/Stanisława Jakobsona przy ulicy Południowej Nr.42.- Opłaty stemplowej pobrano, stosownie do art.139 Ust.Stempl.- 3 złote gotówką i 10% dodatku nadwycz.do opłaty stempl.30 gr.oraz zgodnie z art.9 Ust.z dnia 23/3.1929 r.o taksie - złotych dwanaście.-

Notariusz



Ludwik Kahl



Szanowny Panie Mecenasie. 1941

Wpierw pozwalam sobie przeprosić Sz. Pana za
 zabieranie muu cennego czasu w sprawie której go wyrost
 zapewne nie dotyczy, nie wiedząc jednak o kogo się
 gwałtem paraciam się do Sz. Pana. Gdyby jednak sprawa
 nie była ważną i pełną nie zabierałbym mu czasu.
 Oto od niedługo lat opuściłem Polskę i żyję we Francji
 Anglii i Egipcie, utrzymując ten swój rodziców w
 Polsce którą od czasu do czasu odwiedzałem.
 Ja byłem sędziowskim ksem tennisu stołowego (to jest
 ping-pongu) byłem trzykrotnie wieloletnim sędzią
 ta mistrzem Anglii i Francji. Po wojnie z powodze-
 niem brałem udział w Polce w drugich mistrzostwach
 świata. Najlepszym jednak graczem świata jest
 inny Polak Bergmann zamieszkały obecnie w Anglii.
 Bergmann dwukrotnym mistrzem świata zamieszkałym
 uprzednio w Austrii i w barwach tej ostatniej brał udział
 zdobywając o ile nie mistrzostwo świata. Do zawładnięcia
 Austrii przez Hitlera Bergmann wyemigrował do
 Anglii gdzie występował w ich barwach. Ostatnio został on
 zaproszony na tournée po Stanach Zjednoczonych.
 Gdyby skombinowano drugą Polkę w składzie
 Bergmann Ehrlich byłaby to drużyna o ile nikogo nie
 o pokonaniu świata nie pozostawi o jakimś mistrzostwie
 absolutnie nie może. Muszę się przednie zapoznać
 iż tenis stołowy jest w Stanach Zjednoczonych klubów
 w Nowej Jorku, Egipcie i Indjach mistrzostwie popu-
 larny, a w samych Stanach Zjednoczonych jest przez-
 to 2 miliony zadeklarowanych zawodników.

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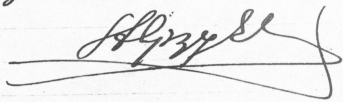
Moglibyśmy więc być doskonałym przykładem propa-
gandy Polkiej ze względu na wyutki, poziom i masę
znajomości. Najważną rzeczą jest wykluczenie moż-
liwosci przegrania choćby jednego meczu lub turnieju.
Przedewszystkiem możemy codziennie grać w innych
miastach, a doświadczeń z typów zawodów byłby przegrano-
my bądź na rzecz podmiotu polskiego, bądź dla celów
sów polskich bądź też dla Polaków w kraju, sala bo-
wien byłaby zawsze pełna. Zawody te mogłyby być
organizowane przez komitety przyjezdźców Polaki, które
istnieją; pod różnymi nazwaniami; tam gdzie goście owe
nie istnieją stworzyłbyśmy je. Dla komitetów typów
byłobyśmy nadzwyczajną pomocą bądź propagandową
bądź też finansową. Codziennie prosa by się nam in-
teresowała choćby ze względu na wyutki i sukcesy przez
nas zdobywane, a my im wywiedałał codziennie uodze
samiel dziennikozam wyhozakibyśmy (opomocą wiodo-
mości z bratniej i cypruej kucpi) że Polska była ofiarą wojny
przygotowanej i że jest madał ofiarą, której chyba przyje-
dź pomocy. Również w rozmowach z kolegami i kolegami i kole-
my obywateli i tosi podkreślabyśmy te fakty. Jako przykład
podam tylko jeden wyzwoleń o którym słowem i słowem
sij z prasy polskiej: Oto w Egipcie uformował się komi-
tet pomocy Polsce na którego czele stał p. Taha Fassa.
Osoba ta zresztą, międzykami popularna w Egipcie nie tylko
niezgodnie o Polsce nie wie o jej imieniu ale napewno by się jej
nie zainteresowała gdybyśmy pewnego dnia nie przyjeżdżał
do Egiptu na misję polityczną i wzięła i gdybyśmy się z nią
nie spotkał kilka godzin. Podlego mego zżeraniem się.

mezo polityki w Egipcie po stronie bezp. kraju pisano o wiele więcej
o Polsce niż podlegałby opisaniu i przedmiał. Gł. byłem przod
wybuchem wojny zapraszony do Turcji obok byłymu napawo
wyjechał do tytu nie wojna. To jest propaganda nad którą nie moż.
na przejść do porządku dziennego.

Sprawa jest o tyle ważna iż nie ma kontaktu z Bergmannem
i obawiam się że w niezgodności i ile już nie wyjechał wyjechać
do St. Jiduszyńskiego.

Gł. w kierował dział wojny zgłosiłem się na ochotnika do
wojaka politycznego, następnie na badanie ośrodka uni
iż jsttem polski do służby wojskowej i ad. szesci miesięcy
oczekuj powrotu.

Będzie pewny iż S. Pau zainteresuje się tą sprawą i
skieruje ją w odpowiednim kierunku, kreślę się z wy-
razami szacunku i poważania



Mój adres

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Paris XVII

DICTIONARY OF SELECTED TERMS

Ascola:	Male Gymnasium in Warsaw
Bar Kochba:	The name of the leader of a Jewish uprising against the Romans; the first sports club, established in 1917 in Łódź
Dror:	(Hebr. “Freedom”) a Zionist youth organization established in 1938 in Poland
Frajhajt:	(Yiddish: “Freedom”)
Fołks-Sztyme:	<i>The Voice of the People</i> , a periodical started in Łódź on Feb 22 nd , 1946
Hagibor:	(Hebr. “Hero”)
Hakoah:	(Hebr. “Strength”) a sports association established in 1909 in Vienna
Hajnt:	(Yiddish “Day” or “Today”) a journal in Yiddish
Hakadur:	(Hebr. “Ball”)
Hamakabi:	(Maccabeus) a two-language periodical (Polish-Yidish) issued by the Union of the Makkabi Jewish Gymnastics and Sports Associations (1933–1936)
Hapoel:	(Hebr. “Worker”) a sports association established in 1924 in Haifa
Hasmonea:	The Hasmonean (Hebr. “The Mighty”, “The Excellent”)
Holocaust:	Genocide of the Jews planned and organized by state institutions of the Nazi Germany
Ha-Szachar:	(Hebr. “Morning”, “Dawn”, “First Light”) an association of Jewish academic youth
Yiddish:	The language used by the Jews who lived also in Poland. It is based on a Lower German dialect from 12 th C. and is completed with borrowings from Hebrew, later also from Polish

Kadimah:	(Hebr. "Forward") Jewish students' association
Kraft:	(Yiddish "Strength")
Makkabi:	The most important current of the Jewish sport life whose name derives from the nickname of Judas Maccabeus
Maccabiah Games:	Sports competition organized by the Maccabi World Union
<i>Makkabi in Warsze:</i>	A monthly magazine in Polish and in Yiddish edited irregularly in Warsaw (1928–1930)
Mazal tov:	"Good Luck!", a common greeting in joyful situations
Morgenstern:	(Pol. "Jutrzenka" – "First Light") a network of Jewish sports organizations (Krakow–1909, Tarnów, Lvov, Łódź)
Samson:	A strongman, according to the biblical tradition, the last of the Biblical Judges. Gifted with an amazing strength.
<i>Sport-Cajtung:</i>	(Yiddish "sport magazine") a weekly magazine in Yiddish, edited in Warsaw between 1931 and 1939
Zionism:	A political movement which developed in the second half of 19 th C. amongst Jews, particularly those from Central Europe, whose aim was the reconstruction of the State of Israel in Palestine
Sabbath:	Saturday, a day when all regular work is forbidden
Szemrija:	(Hebr. "Guardian"), being on guard
Sztern:	(Yiddish "Star")

LIST OF USED ABBREVIATIONS

AWF	– University School of Physical Education
AZS	– Academic Sports Association
DMP	– Polish Team Championships
DOZTS	– Lower Silesia District Table Tennis Association
IMP	– Polish Singles Championships
ITTF	– International Table Tennis Federation
KOZTS	– Krakow District Table Tennis Association
KS	– Sports Club
LOZTS	– Lvov District Table Tennis Association
ŁKS	– Łódź Sports Club
ŁTS	– Łódź Sports Association
ŁOZP-P	– Łódź District Ping-pong Association
MP	– Polish Championships
MWU	– Maccabi World Union
PZL	– Polish Aviation Factory
PZTS/PTTA	– Polish Table Tennis Association
Śl. OZP-P	– Silesian District Ping-pong Association
Śl. OZTS	– Silesian District Table Tennis Association
WOZTS	– Warsaw District Table Tennis Association
ZMCh	– YMCA
ŻAKS	– Jewish Academic Sports Club
ŻASS	– Jewish Academic Sports Association
ŻKS	– Jewish Sports Club
ŻRKS	– Jewish Workers' Sports Club
ŻRWF	– Jewish Physical Education Council
ŻTGS	– Jewish Sports and Gymnastics Association