



received: 15.11.2023; accepted: 5.06.2024

<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/sit.2024.04.03>

Julian JAROSZEWSKI*

SPORTS COMPETITION AMONG THE JEWISH POPULATION IN ŁÓDŹ IN THE YEARS 1945–1949

How to cite [jak cytować]: Jaroszewski J., *Sports competition among the Jewish population in Łódź in the years 1945–1949*, "Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe" 2024, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 53–68.

Rywalizacja sportowa społeczności żydowskiej w Łodzi w latach 1945–1949

Streszczenie

Oswobodzenie spod okupacji niemieckiej Łodzi umożliwiło odrodzenie się kultury żydowskiej, w tym kultury fizycznej. W latach 1945–1949 ludność żydowska zamieszkująca Łódź reaktywowała ruch sportowy. Sport żydowski w Łodzi nie osiągnął przedwojennego poziomu. Głównym powodem była migracja oraz mniejsza liczebność ludności żydowskiej. Niekorzystnie na rozwój sportu żydowskiego wpływał brak obiektów i sprzętu sportowego oraz kosztowne remonty sal klubowych i boisk. Powodowało to okresowe zawieszanie szkolenia sportowego. Utworzone kluby: Żydowski Klub Sportowy, Żydowski Klub Sportowy „Makabi”, Żydowski Klub Szachowy, Żydowski Klub Sportowy „Jedność”, Żydowski Robotniczy Klub Sportowy „Gwiazda” rywalizowały w ramach związków sportowych. Walkę z najlepszymi w kraju i regionie nawiązali zawodnicy Żydowskiego Klubu Szachowego w Łodzi. Dwukrotnie wywalczyli drużynowe mistrzostwo Polski (1946, 1947 r.) oraz mistrzostwo miasta Łodzi (1947 r.). Indywidualnie największe sukcesy odnosił Izaak Grynfeld, zdobywca III miejsca w mistrzostwach Polski (1946 r.) oraz 2-krotny drużynowy mistrz Polski. Wśród kobiet mistrzostwo Polski w 1949 r. wywalczyła dr Róża Herman. Przemiany w sporcie polskim oraz utrata autonomii kulturowej przez Żydów doprowadziły w 1949 r. do likwidacji żydowskich klubów sportowych. Połączone w Związkowy Klub Sportowy „Spójnia-Solidarność” w Łodzi wtopiły się w ruch sportowy stworzony przez władze komunistyczne.

Słowa kluczowe: sport żydowski, Łódź, lata 1945–1949.

* <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0224-7445>; PhD; University of Applied Sciences in Konin; e-mail: julian.jaroszewski@konin.edu.pl (corresponding author)

Abstract

The liberation of Łódź from German occupation enabled a revival of the Jewish culture, including physical culture. In the years between 1945 and 1949, Jewish people living in the city of Łódź reactivated their sporting movement. Jewish sport in Łódź did not achieve the pre-war level. The main reason was migration and a smaller Jewish population. The development of Jewish sport was adversely affected by lack of sports facilities and equipment and costly renovations of club rooms and sports fields. This resulted in the periodic suspension of sports training. The clubs that were formed: The Jewish Sports Club, Jewish Sports Club "Makabi", Jewish Chess Club, Jewish Sports Club "Jedność" ("Unity"), Jewish Workers Sports Club "Gwiazda" ("Star") competed as part of sports associations. The players of the Jewish Chess Club of Łódź were a match for the best in the country and the region. They won the Polish team championship twice (1946, 1947) and the City of Łódź championship (1947). Individually, the most successful player was Isaac Grynfeld, who won the 3rd place in the Polish championship (1946) and was 2-time Polish team champion. Among women, the Polish championship in 1949 was won by Róża Herman, PhD. The changes in Polish sport and the loss of cultural autonomy for Jews led to the dissolution of Jewish sports clubs in 1949. They were incorporated in Union Sports Club "Spójnia Solidarność" in Łódź and blended into the sporting movement created by the communist authorities.

Keywords: Jewish sport, Łódź, years 1945–1949.

Introduction

The inclusion of Łódź as an industrial city in 1820 caused the rapid development of the city on a scale never seen before in the Polish lands. The arrival of migrants to Łódź, mainly Poles, Germans and Jews, gave the city a multi-ethnic character. In the reborn Republic of Poland, Łódź became the second largest city. Until 1939, the Jewish population was the largest national minority in Łódź (30-33%).¹ It influenced the industrial and socio-cultural development of the city. Initiated by the Łódź Society of Chess Supporters (1897), sports activity during the Second Polish Republic was promoted by 25 Jewish sports clubs.² The outbreak of World War II interrupted all cultural activities. Out of 230,000 population of Jews in Łódź, 7,000–10,000 survived the Holocaust in 1939,³ including 877 members of Aufräumungskommando in the Łódź ghetto.⁴ The escape of German troops from Łódź resulted in the return of surviving Jews and the influx

¹ Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi (APŁ), Biblioteka, file number 4690/Ł, *Rocznik statystyczny miasta Łodzi. Rok 1924*, Łódź 1926, Table no 3. In 1921, Łódź was inhabited by 451 974 people including: 279846 Poles, 138851 Jews, 31 670 Germans and 1607 people of other nationalities; *Rocznik Statystyczny m. Łodzi 1945–1947*, Łódź 1949, p. 84.

² A. Bogusz, *Dawna Łódź sportowa 1824–1945*, Łódź 2007, pp. 391–394; *Żydowskie stowarzyszenia sportowe Łodzi 1897–1939*, Łódź 1992, p. 2

³ T. Bojanowski, *Łódź pod okupacją niemiecką w latach II wojny światowej (1939–1945)*, Łódź 1992, p. 61.

⁴ D. Siepracka, *Żydzi łódzcy po likwidacji getta (wrzesień 1944 – styczeń 1945)* [in:] J. Żelazko (ed.), *Rok 1945 w Łodzi. Studia i szkice*, Łódź 2008, pp. 48, 51.

of Jews from the Eastern Borderlands. Their stay in Łódź was short-lived. The majority of them emigrated to the established state of Israel or other countries, while others settled in the “reclaimed land” or returned to their native cities. Estimates indicate that in 1949 there remained 10,000–15,000 Jews in Łódź. This constituted about a quarter of the Jewish population in Łódź from 1946, when the city of Łódź had the largest population of Jews in Poland (about 28%).⁵ Enjoying cultural autonomy, Jews reactivated their socio-political and cultural activity. In Łódź, among others, the following were functioning: Central Jewish Historical Commission, Jewish Press Agency, Łódź Jewish Theatre, “Kinor” film co-operative and two Jewish schools. Jewish newspapers were published in Łódź (20 titles) and 11 Jewish political parties operated.⁶ The attitude of the Soviet Union and satellite states to the Jewish question changed for the worse after the establishment of the State of Israel. The cultural and national autonomy of the Jewish community, the Central Committee of Jews in Poland and Zionist organizations were abolished. The Social and Cultural Society of Jews, loyal to the Communists, was established in Poland (1950).⁷

The purpose of this study was to present the sports rivalry of the Jewish population in Łódź in 1945–1949. The beginning of the period in question, i.e. 1945 is connected with the departure of the German army from the city of Łódź, the end point, i.e. 1949 is connected with the dissolution of Jewish sports clubs in Łódź.

Methods and research problem

The work is of a source-based nature. The preliminary research was conducted at the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, the Archives of New Records in Warsaw, the State Archives in Łódź, and the Łódź Branch of National Remembrance Institute. The author reviewed the Jewish and local press and literature on the history of the Jewish population. The collected material was compiled in accordance with the methodology of historical research. First of all, the method of source analysis and criticism was used. Inductive, de-

⁵ L. Olejnik, *Łódź wielonarodowa w pierwszych latach po II wojnie światowej*, „Rocznik Łódzki” 1998, vol. 45, s. 196–197; A. Rykała, *Społeczność żydowska*, [in:] A. Lech, K. Radziszewska, A. Rykała (eds.), *Społeczność żydowska i niemiecka w Łodzi po 1945 roku*, Łódź, 2010, pp. 278, 281.

⁶ L. Olejnik, *Społeczność żydowska w Łodzi w latach 1945–1950. Zarys problemu*, „Acta Universitatis Lodzensis. Folia Historica” 1997, no 60, pp. 135–143; *Mniejszości narodowe w Łodzi w 1945 r.* [in:] J. Żelazko (ed.), *Rok 1945 w Łodzi. Studia i szkice*, Łódź 2008, pp. 137–143.

⁷ S. Redlich, *Na rozdrożu. Żydzi w powojennej Łodzi 1945–1950*, Łódź 2012, p. 215; J. Mizgalski, *60-lecie TSKŻ. Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydów w Polsce*, Warszawa 2010, p. 24; L. Olejnik, *Społeczność żydowska w Łodzi...*, p. 145.

ductive and synthesis methods were used, and a comparative and statistical method were also included.

The issue of Jewish sports in Poland after 1945 was occasionally addressed by researchers.⁸ The research problem formulated in the title was treated as a contribution to the issue under study.⁹ The following research problems were put forward:

1. What factors determined the sports movement of Jews in Łódź in 1945–1949?
2. What forms of sports activity did the Jewish population in Łódź undertake?
3. At what sports were Jewish athletes successful?

Organization of the Jewish sports movement

After the liberation from the German occupation, the city of Łódź became the cradle of resurgent Jewish culture.¹⁰ The Jewish institutions that were founded sought to revive Jewish culture. In addition to the theatre or cinema, the Jews again turned to physical activity. The first, unsuccessful, attempt was the establishment of the Jewish Sports Club (1945). Belonging to the Łódź District Football Association (ŁOZPN), the club failed to develop its activities and soon ceased to exist.¹¹ The beginning of the sports activities of Jewish clubs should be dated to 1946. At that time, the Jewish Sports Club (ŻKS) “Makabi” in Łódź¹² and the Jewish Chess Club were established.¹³ In 1947, the Jewish Workers’ Sports Club (ŻRKS) “Gwiazda”¹⁴ and the Jewish Sports Club “Jedność”¹⁵ were

⁸ R. Urban, *Der jüdische Sport in den Jahren 1945–1950*, [in:] *Jüdischer Sport und Jüdische Gesellschaft*, Berlin, 2010, pp. 248–254; T. Włodarczyk, *Sport żydowski na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945–1959*, [in:] J. Maliniak, P. Sroka, G. Strauchold (eds.), *Z dziejów sportu na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnej Polski po II wojnie światowej*, Wrocław 2014, pp. 97–117; D. Blecking, *Marxism versus Muscular Judaism sport in Poland*, [in:] *Studies in Physical Culture and Tourism*, 2001, vol. 8, pp. 183–189.

⁹ A. Bogusz, *Sport w Łodzi po II wojnie światowej*, [in:] J. Żelazko (ed.), *Rok 1945 w Łodzi. Studia i szkice*, Łódź 2008, p. 320; A. Rykała, *Spółeczność żydowska...*, p. 315.

¹⁰ L. Olejnik, *Spółeczność żydowska w Łodzi...*, p. 137.

¹¹ APŁ, Prezydium Rady Narodowej m. Łodzi (PRNmŁ), file number 2359, Sprawy rozwiązania i likwidacji stowarzyszeń (1952), p. 129, Sprawozdanie Łódzkiego Okręgowego Związku Piłki Nożnej za rok 1945.

¹² Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego (AŻIH), Organizacje Syjonistyczne (OS), file number 547, Makabi Łódź. Akta organizacyjne. Sprawozdania, p. 1, Sprawozdanie z dotychczasowej pracy Ż.K.S. “Makabi”.

¹³ Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (AANW), Polski Związek Szachowy (PZSz), file number 20/9, no pagination, Zgłoszenie; no pagination, Wykaz.

¹⁴ “Express Ilustrowany” 1947, no 237, p. 5.

¹⁵ “Dziennik Łódzki” 1947, no 296, p. 4; “Express Ilustrowany” 1947, no 296, p. 4.

established. These were the only Jewish sports clubs operating in Łódź in the years 1945–1949. Some clubs were prevented from reactivation by the communist authorities. A negative opinion issued by the Provincial Office of Public Security (WUBP) in Łódź blocked the registration of the ŻKS “Bar-Kochba”.¹⁶

The abolishment of the cultural autonomy of Jews and Zionist organizations after 1948 coincided with the Stalinization of the sports in Łódź.¹⁷ In 1949, Jewish clubs in Poland came under the supervision of the Central Manufacturing Cooperative (CSW) “Solidarity” and were incorporated into the “Spójnia” Sports Association. On June 28, 1949, the Union Sports Club (ZKS) “Spójnia-Solidarność” was formed from the merger of ZRKS “Gwiazda” and ZKS “Jedność” in Łódź.¹⁸

Despite the relatively small destruction of the city of Łódź, the established Jewish sports clubs struggled with housing problems. The premises they owned required costly renovations. The remaining funds were used to purchase sports equipment, pay salaries and maintain the facilities. The funds came from membership fees, grants from the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, the United Democratic Zionists (ZSD) “Ichud”¹⁹ and the so-called “donations from America” (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee),²⁰ from 1949 from the CSW “Solidarity”.²¹ The biggest obstacle in the development of sports activities was the migration of the Jewish population, which led, among others, to the dissolution of clubs.

On the initiative of pre-war activists²² the Jewish Sports Club “Makabi” in Łódź was established on 16 May 1946.²³ Close ties with the Zionist party ZSD

¹⁶ Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Oddział w Łodzi (IPNOŁ), Wojewódzki Wydział Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego w Łodzi (WWBPŁ), file number IPN Lgpf 10.690 t. I cz. I Sprawy na członków organizacji syjonistycznych z terenu Łodzi, p. 19, Do Kierownika III sekcji V Wydziału W.U.B.P. w Łodzi.

¹⁷ J. Jaroszewski, *Stalinizacja sportu w województwie łódzkim w latach 1949–1956*, „Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie. Kultura Fizyczna”, 2018, t. 17, nr 2, pp. 85–100.

¹⁸ “Solidarność” 1949, no 17–18, p. 34.

¹⁹ AŻIH, OS, file number 458, Makabi Łódź. Akta organizacyjne, p. 63, Do Resortu Organizacyjnego Centralnego Komitetu “Ichudu”.

²⁰ AŻIH, OS, file number 547, Makabi Łódź. Akta organizacyjne. Sprawozdania, pp. 4, 8, Sprawozdanie z pracy z dnia 1 X do dnia 15. X. 1946 r.; Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce (CKŻP), Wydział Młodzieżowy (WM), file number 26, Akta organizacyjne, p. 76, Do Zarządu ZKS “Spójnia Solidarność” w Łodzi.

²¹ APŁ, Komitet Łódzki Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej, file number 1581, Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydów w Polsce, (1948–1949, 1951), p. 50 Sprawozdanie Spółdzielni Solidarność w Łodzi.

²² APŁ, PRNmŁ, file number 2358, Sprawy związane z likwidacją..., p. 278, Podanie. The activists were: Adam Wałach, Lejb Solarz, Jan Dobrzecki, Ignacy Feldon, Mieczysław Zajbert, Ludwik Chęciński, Ignacy Fryszman, Adam Feldon, Leon Zybersztajn, Zygmunt Widawski, Szymon Rogoziński, Jakub Kempinski, Dawid Ruszeck, Rubin Fein, Zygmunt Sztrauch i Józef Kronmam

²³ AŻIH, OS, file number 547, Makabi Łódź..., p. 1, Sprawozdanie z dotychczasowej pracy Ż.K.S. “Makabi”.

“Ychud” did not escape the attention of the WUBP in Łódź.²⁴ Despite the negative opinion issued by the WUBP in Łódź, on 10 August 1946, the statute of the ZKS “Maccabi” in Łódź was approved by the city authorities.²⁵ The Makabi Secretariat was located at 20, Zachodnia Street,²⁶ the sports ground at 2, Sterlinga Street.²⁷ The established Club struggled with the above-mentioned problems. In 1946, the departure of members of the board of directors of “Maccabi” led to the suspension of its activities.²⁸ The reactivation took place in 1947,²⁹ and the following were elected to the board: Zajbert, L. Chęciński, L. Dobrzecki, Wajskopf, Gutentag and Henryk Zglinowicz.³⁰ Emigration was the reason for frequent changes in the management boards. The last one in 1948 was chaired by Zajbert, assisted by: Szapiro (vice chairman), Pacanowski (treasurer), Majer and Rozanykwiata (sports management), Artman (secretary) and Mowszowicz (administrator).³¹ On 26 May 1948, the inactive ZKS “Makabi” was dissolved by a decision of the President of the City of Łódź, Eugeniusz Stawinski.³²

In the years 1946–1948, ZKS “Makabi” was a multi-section club with 70–80 members³³. Most of the members were Jewish youth and team games (volleyball, football, basketball) were the most popular activities.³⁴ In 1946, the club offered activities in volleyball, basketball, Swedish gymnastics and table tennis. Sports games and gymnastics in the ‘open air’³⁵ were conducted by L. Stalarz

²⁴ IPNOŁ, WWBWŁ, file number IPN Lg pf 10.690 vol. I cz. I Sprawy na członków organizacji syjonistycznych z terenu Łodzi, p. 19, Do Kierownika III sekcji V Wydziału W.U.B.P. w Łodzi.

²⁵ APŁ, PRNmŁ, file number 2358, Sprawy związane z likwidacją..., p. 276, *Pismo Nr.XX.SP.IV.1d/22/46*.

²⁶ AŻIH, OS, file number 458, Makabi Łódź..., p. 15, Sprawozdanie z działalności w przeciągu grudnia 46 r.; “Express Ilustrowany” 1947 file number, no 69, p. 7.

²⁷ APŁ, Prezydium Dzielnicowej Rady Narodowej Łódź Śródmieście (PDRNŁŚ), file number 723, Stowarzyszenia (statuty, likwidacja, sprawozdania, korespondencja), 1947–1952, p. 316, Sprawozdanie z działalności Ż.K.S. “Makabi” Łódź, ul. Sterlinga 2 za rok 1946; file number 2358, Sprawy związane z likwidacją..., p. 211, Pismo z dnia 24 grudnia 1951 r. do Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego.

²⁸ APŁ, PRNmŁ, file number 2358, Sprawy związane z likwidacją..., p. 269, Sprawozdanie z działalności Ż.K.S. Makabi Łódź, ul. Szterlinga 2 za rok 1946.

²⁹ “Opinia” 1947, no 13, p. 5; “Express Ilustrowany” 1947, no 69, p. 7.

³⁰ APŁ, PDRNŁŚ, file number 723, Stowarzyszenia..., p. 316, Sprawozdanie z działalności Ż.K.S. Makabi Łódź, ul. Szterlinga 2 za rok 1946.

³¹ APŁ, PRNmŁ, file number 2358, Sprawy związane z likwidacją..., p. 232, Protokół z walnego zgromadzenia ŻKS Makabi w Łodzi z dnia 25/II 1948.

³² Ibidem, p. 258, Decyzja.

³³ AŻIH, OS, file number 547, Makabi Łódź..., p. 1, Sprawozdanie z dotychczasowej pracy Ż.K.S. „Makabi”; p. 6, Sprawozdanie z pracy i działalności Ż.K.S. „Makabi” w Polsce; pp. 7,9, Sprawozdanie pracy Ż.K.S. “Makabi” za VIII miesiąc; file number 251, Spis członków ŻKS Makkabi w Łodzi z roku 1948.

³⁴ Ibidem, file number 549, Makabi Łódź. Akta personalne. Deklaracje członkowskie Żydowskiego Klubu Sportowego Makabi, pp. 1–105.

³⁵ APŁ, PDPNŁŚ, file number 723, Stowarzyszenia..., p. 316, Sprawozdanie z działalności Ż.K.S. “Makabi” Łódź, ul. Sterlinga 2 za rok 1946.

(Solarza) and F. Kępińska.³⁶ Table tennis trainings were organized in “sniff”³⁷ (Łódź branch of “Ichud”), then on their own premises at 20 Zachodnia Street. Initially amateur activity of the table tennis players changed its character in December 1946. As a consequence of the renaming of the veteran organization “Maawak” at ZSD “Ychud” to ZKS “Makabi,”³⁸ the “Maccabi” table tennis players joined the Łódź Regional Table Tennis Association (ŁOZTS). Work in “Makabi” was not continuous. The high mobility of the Jewish population and the seasonal decrease in activity made systematic sports work impossible. Sections were launched annually in the most popular sports. In 1947, these were boxing, sports games, gymnastics and table tennis,³⁹ and in 1948, gymnastics, athletics, sports games, chess, table tennis and football (juniors).⁴⁰

In 1946–1948, the Jewish Chess Club (ŻKSz) began its activity. It continued the pre-war tradition of the Łódź Society of Chess Supporters (ŁTZGS), which had 90% of Jewish chess players. As a result of war operations, many members of the ŁTZGS lost their lives.⁴¹ Luckily, Isaac Grynfeld (a member of the pre-war Board of the Łódź District Chess Association) survived the war.⁴² In 1946–1948, he headed the Games and Discipline Department of the Łódź District Chess Association (ŁOZSz).⁴³

ŻKSz was affiliated with the Łódź District Chess Association, 9 Jewish players were put forward to the Polish Chess Association (PZSz).⁴⁴ Chess players from ŻKSz took part in district and Polish championships.

In 1947, the Jewish Workers’ Sports Club “Gwiazda” and the Jewish Sports Club “Jedność” (“Ichud”) were established in Łódź. ŻKS “Jedność” was a multi-section club, offering its members activities in soccer, sports games, boxing, table tennis, and from 1948 also in chess. The secretariat of the Club was located at 32, Więckowskiego Street.⁴⁵ Its activity was limited by the high popularity in

³⁶ AŻIH, OS, file number 547, Makabi Łódź..., p. 1, Sprawozdanie z dotychczasowej pracy Ż.K.S. „Makabi”; p. 6, Sprawozdanie z pracy i działalności Ż.K.S. “Makabi” w Polsce, pp. 7, 9, Sprawozdanie pracy Ż.K.S. “Makabi” za VIII miesiąc.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 4,8, Sprawozdanie z pracy z dnia 1 X do dnia 15 X 1946 r.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 65, Do Łódzkiego Okręgowego Związku Tenisa Stołowego.

³⁹ “Opinia” 1947, no 13, p. 5; “Express Ilustrowany” 1947, no 69, p. 7.

⁴⁰ APŁ, PRNm.Ł, file number 2358, Sprawy związane z likwidacją..., p. 253 Sprawozdanie z działalności ŻKS Makkabi w Łodzi z roku 1948.

⁴¹ A. Bogusz, *Dawna Łódź sportowa 1824–1945*, Łódź 2007, p. 220; “Szachista” 2001, no 7, p. 17.

⁴² APŁ, Urząd Wojewódzki Łódzki 1918–1939, file number 1611, Łódzki Okręgowy Związek Szachowy w Łodzi, no pagination., Do Urzędu Wojewódzkiego Łódzkiego Wydział Społeczno-polityczny w miejscu (17 kwietnia 1937 r.).

⁴³ AAN, PZSz, file number 20/9, no pagination, Sprawozdanie z działalności sportowej Ł.O.Z. Szach. za rok 1947; no pagination, Protokół z Walnego Zebrania Łódzkiego Okręgowego Związku Szachowego odbytego dnia 30 grudnia 1947 r. w obecności 18 delegatów reprezentujących 6 klubów.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, file number 20/9, no pagination, Zgłoszenie.

⁴⁵ “Dziennik Łódzki” 1947, no 296, p. 4; “Express Ilustrowany” 1947, no 296, p. 4.

the youth environment of the rival ŻRKS "Gwiazda" and by housing and financial problems. In 1948, the club had 47 members in the football, table tennis, swimming and juniors sections. The swimmers trained at the *Young Men's Christian Association* (YMCA) swimming pool in Łódź. The players took part in "C" class games of ŁOZPN, and table tennis players in "B" class of ŁOZTS.⁴⁶

The largest Jewish sports organization in Poland after World War II was the Union of Workers' Sports Clubs "Gwiazda". In the years 1945–1950, it united 12 clubs,⁴⁷ one of which was the Jewish Workers' Sports Club "Gwiazda" in Łódź, established in 1947.⁴⁸ In the years 1947–1949, it was the strongest multi-section club for the Jewish population, promoting football, table tennis and boxing among its members. Table tennis players took part in "A" class district games (1948),⁴⁹ football players in "C" class games.

Results of sports competition

Boxing

From 1947 boxing was promoted among the Jewish population in Łódź by the ŻKS "Makabi", ŻKS⁵⁰ "Jedność"⁵¹ and ŻRKS "Gwiazda".⁵² The highest level was reached by the boxers of ŻRKS "Gwiazda". Training in the sports hall at 26, Zachodnia Street was conducted by: Aleksandr Polus (1947/1948) as well as Erichman and Szepsel Rotholc (1948).⁵³ The sports rivalry was initiated by a friendly match with "IKP" Łódź. Losing the match 7:9 to the "A" class boxers should be regarded as a good result of the Jewish boxers.⁵⁴ In 1948, the ŻRKS "Gwiazda" team consisted of: Szytglitz (Szytglis), Rajchenberg, Kotlowski, Sabinek, Zyldeberg (Zilberberg), Rozenwajg (Rozennewaig), Zyngerman (Singerman) and Wartaki.⁵⁵ In 1948, the opponents of the "Gwiazda" boxers in friendly matches were the boxers of the Union of Youth Struggle "Zryw", the Central School of Agricultural Education and the Łódź Sports Club (team champion of

⁴⁶ AŻIH, CKŻP, WM, file number 26, Akta organizacyjne, pp. 14, 26–27, *Protokół z zebrania ogólnopolskiej komisji sportowej odbytego w Warszawie w dn. 23 XII 1948 r.*; "Express Ilustrowany" 1949, no 83, p. 6.

⁴⁷ R. Urban, *Der jüdische Sport...*, p. 250.

⁴⁸ "Express Ilustrowany" 1947, no 237, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 1948, no 131, p. 5.

⁵⁰ "Opinia" 1947, no 13, p. 5; "Express Ilustrowany" 1947, no 69, p. 7.

⁵¹ "Dziennik Łódzki" 1947, no 296, p. 4; "Express Ilustrowany" 1947, no 296, p. 4.

⁵² "Express Ilustrowany" 1947, no 237, p. 5.

⁵³ Ibidem, 1948, no 21, p. 5; 1948, no 264, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, 1947, no 355, p. 5.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, 1948, no 31, p. 5.

Poland).⁵⁶ The results of the matches were not published by the press. There were also few reports on the rivalry for the "B" class championship of ŁOZB (from 1949). In the inaugural match of the district competition, the "Gwiazda" team faced the "Tramwajarz" Sports Club. The match ended with the victory of the ŻRKS "Gwiazda" team (8:6). The winning team featured the following athletes: Szytylis (flyweight), Runian (bantamweight), Rozennewaig (bantamweight), Singerman (lightweight), Zilberberg (light heavyweight), Warski (middleweight) and Waintraub (heavyweight).⁵⁷ The last report about the "Gwiazda" boxers was that they lost their match (16:0) with the KS "Energetyk" boxers. The reason for the defeat was the incomplete team of ŻRKS "Gwiazda".⁵⁸

Football

The first attempt after World War II to unite Jewish football supporters was the establishment of the Jewish Sports Club. In 1945, despite belonging to the ŁOZPN, the club did not participate in the games. The following season it ceased to exist. In 1947, the football sections of ŻRKS "Gwiazda" and ŻKS "Jedność" were established.⁵⁹ In the season of 1947/1948 only the players of "Gwiazda" Łódź took part in the "C" class championship matches. Their start did not go well. In the autumn round, losing all their matches put the team in the last place in the league table. In the spring round, "Gwiazda" was promoted to the penultimate place in the group (1 win out of 10 matches).⁶⁰ From 1949, the players of ZKS "Jedność" joined the "C" class games of ŁOZPN. Out of the two Jewish teams, the players of ZKS "Jedność" performed better (the 4th place among 7 teams) than ŻRKS "Gwiazda" (last place in the group).⁶¹ In 1948, in a friendly match between Jewish footballers, the ŻRKS "Gwiazda" team could celebrate its victory (8:1). The goals for the winners were scored by: Kuchidło (3), Zejtman (2), Szrajter (2) and Momankiewicz (1).⁶²

In 1949, after the merger of the Jewish clubs, ZKS "Spójnia Solidarność" Łódź participated in the "C" class championship. After losing all their matches in the autumn round, they were in last place in the league table.⁶³ The reports by the Youth Department of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland from 1949 on

⁵⁶ "Dziennik Łódzki" 1948, no 77, p. 4; "Express Ilustrowany" 1948, no 16, p. 5; 1948, no 31, p. 5.

⁵⁷ "Express Ilustrowany" 1949, no 8, p. 5.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, 1949, no 37, p. 5.

⁵⁹ APŁ, PRNmŁ, file number 2359, Sprawy rozwiązania i likwidacji..., p. 72, Sprawozdanie z działalności Zarządu Ł.O.Z.P.N. za rok 1947.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, pp. 78–86, Sprawozdanie Wydziału Gier i Dyscypliny Ł.O.Z.P.N.; p. 49, Sprawozdanie Kapitana Związkowego Ł.O.Z.P.N. za rok 1948.

⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 16, Sprawozdanie WGiD za r. 1949.

⁶² "Express Ilustrowany" 1948, no 156, p. 5.

⁶³ APŁ, PRNmŁ, file number 2359, Sprawy rozwiązania i likwidacji..., p. 10, Sprawozdanie z działalności Zarządu Ł.O.Z.P.N. za rok 1949.

games of ZKS "Spójnia Solidarność" Łódź in the "B" class⁶⁴ are not confirmed in the reports by the ŁOZPN.

Table tennis

A table tennis section was formed in the ŻKS "Makabi", which was established in 1946. Initially, the section had a recreational character. The renovation of its own premises forced the players to train on the premises of the "Ichud" branch.⁶⁵ The aforementioned renaming of "Maawaku" to ŻKS "Makabi"⁶⁶ changed the character of this section. The table tennis section "Maawak",⁶⁷ belonging to the Łódź District Table Tennis Association (ŁOZTS), developed its sports activity. In December 1946, Z. Inzelsztajn (secretary of ZKS "Makabi") put forward the table tennis section to the ŁOZTS. It consisted of Wolf Szapszonowicz, Adam Becher, Lolek Zybersztajn, Jakob Sznajner, Karol Majer, Leon Mazur, Abe Gutenberg, Marek Milsztajn and Lutek Czarny. Trainings and games for the ŁOZTS championship were held on the premises of "Makabi".⁶⁸ The actions of Z. Inzelsztajn had a formal character and despite the renaming procedure, the table tennis players of "Makabi" appeared under the name "Ichud" in correspondence. The team's level did not make it possible for them to compete in championships. In 1947, in the district team championships, "Ichud" ("Maccabi") occupied the eighth place (out of 12 teams).⁶⁹ In the individual championships of the ŁOZTS, none of "Maccabi" 5 representatives (Wolf Shapshonovich, Lolek Zybersztajn, Abe Gutenberg, Moniek Zajtman and Lutek (Czarny) advanced to the final group.⁷⁰ Soon the activities of the section became less frequent. A number of players continued their sporting activities in the clubs established in 1947, namely ŻRKS "Gwiazda" and ŻKS "Jedność" (Moniek Zajtman (Zajdeman) went to "Gwiazda").⁷¹ A higher level of sports skill was demonstrated by the tennis players of the ŻRKS "Gwiazda", from December 1947 they belonged to the "B" class of the ŁOZTS.⁷² In the fight for the class "B" champion's title they competed mainly with KS „Filmowiec”. In the decisive match, the "Filmowiec" team won. The defeat of "Gwiazda" was due to poor health condition of the

⁶⁴ AŻIH, CKŻP, WM, file number 26, p. 43 Wykaz klubów i kół sportowych.

⁶⁵ AŻIH, OS, file number 547, Makabi Łódź..., pp. 4,8, Sprawozdanie z pracy z dnia 1 X do dnia 15 X 1946 r.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, p. 65, Do Łódzkiego Okręgowego Związku Tenisa Stołowego.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 67, Do Zarządu Ł.O.Z.T.S. w Łodzi.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, p. 15, Sprawozdanie z działalności w przeciągu grudnia 46r.; p. 66, Do Zarządu Ł.O.Z.T.S. w Łodzi.

⁶⁹ "Express Ilustrowany" 1947, no 30, pp. 7; 1947, no 44, p. 7.

⁷⁰ AŻIH, OS, file number 458, Makabi Łódź..., p. 68, Do Zarządu Ł.O.Z.T.S. w Łodzi; "Express Ilustrowany" 1947, no 31, p. 7; 1947, no 42, p. 7.

⁷¹ AŻIH, OS, file number 548, Makabi Łódź, p. 68; "Express Ilustrowany" 1948, no 42, p. 5.

⁷² „Express Ilustrowany" 1947, no 339, p. 7.

player Kadzidło, the team was supplemented by Waksman and Zajdeman (after 2 wins).⁷³ The title of "B" class vice-champion enabled the team to fight for the right to play "A" class games. They competed against the following teams: KS „Filmowiec”, Scout Sports Club (HKS) and KS „Pilica” Tomaszów. The promotion to class "A" was won by the following teams: ŻRKS "Gwiazda", KS "Filmowiec" and HKS.⁷⁴ "A" class games went on with varying fortunes for the "Gwiazda" players. Among the 8 teams, the Jewish club took the sixth place.⁷⁵ In 1949, the second Jewish club "Jedność" participated in "B" class games and the top position won in the group made it possible for them to fight for "A" class games. These efforts were not successful.⁷⁶ The start of the "Gwiazda" players in the individual championships of Łódź ended without much success, with the highest place taken by Waksman (7th place).⁷⁷

After the transformations in Polish sports, in 1949 the only Jewish club that took part in the ŁOZTS games was ZKS "Spójnia-Solidarność" in Łódź.⁷⁸ Soon the admission of new players of Polish nationality (Stanisław Krygier) caused the club to lose its former Jewish character.

Chess

With the departure of the German army from Łódź, chess activities were resumed in the city. The wartime losses among Łódź chess players were particularly evident in the first post-war years. However, against all odds, from 1946 the Jewish Chess Club (ŻKSz) brought together the lovers of the royal game. In 1946-1947, its members included: I. Grynfeld, Jerzy Szapiro (brother of M. Szapiro), Aleksander Goldsztajn, M. Lewkowicz, L. Korenfeld, J. Iwicz, J. Kleczewski and Hampel.⁷⁹ The highest level of sports advancement was demonstrated by: Izaak Grynfeld (national champion) and Marek Szapiro, PhD (1st category).⁸⁰ In 1946, they took part in the first Polish Chess Championship after the war in Sopot. A high third place was won by I. Grynfeld⁸¹ (together with K. Plater from Warsaw), M. Szapiro, PhD (15th/18th place).⁸² In 1946-1947, Izaak Grynfeld won the Polish team championship 2 times with the representation of the city of

⁷³ Ibidem, 1948, no 42, p. 5.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, 1948, no 131, p. 5; 1948, no 142, p. 5.

⁷⁵ Ibidem, 1949, no 35, p. 7.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, 1949, no 83, p. 6; 1949, no 114, p. 6.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, 1949, no 114, p. 6.

⁷⁸ "Solidarność" 1949, no 17-18, p. 34.

⁷⁹ AANW, PZSz, sygn. 20/9, no pagination, Wykaz członków Łódz. Okr. Zw. Szach.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, no pagination, Zgłoszenie; no pagination Wykaz.

⁸¹ "Szachista Polski" 1946, no 5-6, p. 15.

⁸² AANW, PZSz, file number 20/9, no pagination bp., Do Polskiego Związku Szachowego Warszawa (15 kwietnia 1949 r.).

Łódź. In 1947, the following were on the reserve bench in the Łódź team: Leszczyński and Wróblewski from the ŻKSz.⁸³

The players of the ŻKSz were among the leading players in the Łódź district. In 1947, they took part in the first team and individual chess championships of the city of Łódź after the war. The team, consisting of I. Grynfeld, Szapiro, Lewkowicz, Leszczyński, Iwicz, Kleczewski, Goldstein and Konfeld won the team championship.⁸⁴ This ensured that the ŻKSz qualified for "A" class of the ŁOZSz.⁸⁵ In 1947, the following players from the ŻKSz participated in the qualifiers for the individual championships of Łódź: Szapiro, J. Iwicz, Farbiarz, Lewkowicz, Rosenwasser, Leszczyński and Konfeld.⁸⁶ The right to compete without any qualifying round was held by I. Grynfeld.⁸⁷ He won the title of vice-champion, losing only to Jan Piechota (YMCA). From the ŻKSz players, M. Szapiro, PhD and Leszczyński were also classified in the top ten positions of the championship.⁸⁸

The last championship with a ŻKSz representative was the championship of the city of Łódź in 1948 and only one representative of the ŻKSz took part in it (no mention of the participant's surname).⁸⁹ After 1948, the club's activity died down. The former players of the ŻKSz migrated from Łódź (I. Grynfeld went to Warsaw, worked in the monthly called "Szachy" and in the Polish Chess Association), the others changed clubs (Marek Szapiro, PhD – Academic Sports Team in Łódź, Aron Lewkowicz – YMCA Łódź).⁹⁰

In 1949, Jewish chess players belonged to the chess section of the ZKS "Spójnia-Solidarność". The club had 9 players, in reports they appeared under the name KS "Solidarność". In 1949, after winning the "B" class team championship, it was promoted to "A" class games.⁹¹ In the years 1945–1949, Róża Herman, PhD (Hermanowa) participated in chess competitions in Łódź. In 1947, to-

⁸³ Ibidem, no pagination, Sprawozdanie z działalności sportowej Ł.O.Z. Szach. za rok 1947; no pagination Protokół. Z Walnego Zebrania Łódzkiego Okręgowego Związku Szachowego odbytego dnia 30 grudnia 1947 r. w obecności 18 delegatów reprezentujących 6 klubów; "Szachista Polski" 1946, no 9–10, pp. 1–11; 1947, no 11–12, pp. 1–13.

⁸⁴ "Szachista Polski" 1947, no 3, p. 12; 1947, no 4, pp. 11–12.

⁸⁵ APŁ, PDRNŁŚ, file number 723, Stowarzyszenia..., p. 385, Protokół z walnego Zebrania Łódzkiego Okręgowego Związku Szachowego odbytego 30 grudnia 1947 r.; "Express Ilustrowany" 1947, no 107, p. 7.

⁸⁶ "Express Ilustrowany" 1947, no 96, p. 7.

⁸⁷ Ibidem, 1947, no 73, p. 7.

⁸⁸ AANW, PZSz, file number 20/9, no pagination, Sprawozdanie z działalności sportowej Ł.O.Z. Szach. Za rok 1947.

⁸⁹ APŁ, PDRNŁŚ, file number 723, Stowarzyszenia..., p. 381, Do Starostwa Grodzkiego Śródmiejsko-Łódzkie Oddział Administracyjny.

⁹⁰ AANW, PZSz, file number 20/9, no pagination, Do Polskiego Związku Szachowego Warszawa (15 kwietnia 1949 r.).

⁹¹ Ibidem, no pagination, Do Polskiego Związku Szachowego Warszawa (16 kwietnia 1949 r.); „Solidarność” 1949, no 17–18, p. 34.

gether with male players, she took part in the championships of the city of Łódź (she took the 16th place).⁹² She was the leading chess player in Poland. In 1949 she became the champion of Poland.⁹³ During the period in question, there is no information on club affiliation.

Conclusion

One of the manifestations of the revival of Jewish culture after World War II in Łódź was the reactivation of the Jewish sports movement. In the years 1945–1949, Jewish sport in the city of Łódź did not regain its pre-war level or its range in terms of Jewish people's participation. In the area of the city of Łódź, sports activities were developed by: the Jewish Sports Club (football), the Jewish Sports Club "Makabi", the Jewish Chess Club, the Jewish Sports Club "Jedność", the Jewish Workers' Sports Club "Gwiazda". They offered to their members such activities as boxing, basketball, volleyball, football, table tennis, gymnastics, chess, athletics and swimming. The classes were mostly recreational and their goal was to strengthen Jews biologically. Sports activities in the clubs were promoted by sports sections formed in sports associations: Łódź District Football Association (ŻKS, ŻRKS "Gwiazda", ŻKS "Jedność"), Łódź District Table Tennis Association (ŻKS "Makabi" – "Ichud", ŻRKS "Gwiazda", ŻKS "Jedność"), Łódź District Chess Association (Jewish Chess Club) and Łódź District Boxing Association (ŻRKS "Gwiazda", ŻKS "Jedność"). The greatest success was achieved by the chess players from the Jewish Chess Club in Łódź (championship of Łódź, 1947). The leading chess player was Isaac Grynfeld (ŻKSz), 2-time Polish team champion (1946, 1947), winner of the 3rd place in the Polish championship (1946). In 1949, the Polish chess championship was won by R. Hermanova, PhD. Among table tennis players, the highest professional level was demonstrated by the players of the ŻRKS "Gwiazda" ("A" class).

The lack of facilities and sports equipment, costly renovations and financial problems were a hindrance to the development of sports activities. This resulted in seasonal suspension of training activities. The biggest obstacle to the clubs' functioning was the migration of the Jewish population, which was the reason why the clubs' activities dwindled and the clubs were dissolved.

The change in the policy of the Soviet Union and its satellite countries towards the Jewish population and the adjusting of Polish physical education culture to the Soviet model were the reasons for outlawing Jewish sports in Łódź in

⁹² AANW, PZSz, file number 20/9, no pagination, *Sprawozdanie z działalności sportowej Ł.O.Z. Szach. za rok 1947*.

⁹³ W. Litmanowicz, J. Giżycki, *Szachy od A do Z*, T. 1: (a-m), Warszawa 1986, p. 346; „Szachy” 1949, no 7–8, p. 70

1949. Jewish sports clubs were dissolved or consolidated into the Union Sports Club "Spójnia-Solidarność." Some Jewish athletes emigrated, others continued their sporting activities within the framework of the model created by the communist authorities of Poland.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Sports competition among the Jewish population in Łódź in the years 1945–1949*.

FUNDING

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Sports competition among the Jewish population in Łódź in the years 1945–1949*.

References

A. Sources

I. Archival sources

Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (The Archive of New Files in Warsaw)

Polski Związek Szachowy

Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi (The State Archive in Łódź)

Biblioteka (Library)

Komitet Łódzki Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej (Łódź Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party)

Prezydium Dzielnicowej Rady Narodowej Łódź Śródmieście (Bureau of the District National Council for Central Łódź)

Prezydium Rady Narodowej m. Łodzi (Bureau of National Council of Łódź)
Łódź Office 1918–1939

Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Warszawie (The Jewish Historical Institute Archive in Warsaw)

Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce (Central Jewish Committee in Poland)

Organizacje syjonistyczne (Zionist organisations)

Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Oddział w Łodzi (The Institute of National Remembrance Departament in Łódź)

Wojewódzki Wydział Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego w Łodzi (Provincial Office of Public Security in Łódź)

II. Press

"Dziennik Łódzki" 1947–1948.

"Express Ilustrowany" 1947–1949.

"Opinia" 1947.

"Szachy" 1949.

"Szachista" 2001.

"Szachista Polski" 1946–1947.

"Solidarność" 1949.

B. Literature

Blecking D., *Marxism versus Muscular Judaism sport in Poland*, "Studies in Physical Culture and Tourism" 2001, vol. 8, pp. 183–198.

Bogusz A., *Dawna Łódź sportowa 1824–1945*, Muzeum Historii Miasta Łodzi, Łódź, 2007.

Bogusz A., *Sport w Łodzi po II wojnie światowej*, [in:] J. Żelazko (ed.), *Rok 1945 w Łodzi. Studia i szkice*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Łódź 2008, pp. 315–322.

Bogusz A., *Żydowskie stowarzyszenia sportowe Łodzi 1897–1939*, Muzeum Sportu i Turystyki, Łódź, 1992.

Bojanowski T., *Łódź pod okupacją niemiecką w latach II wojny światowej (1939–1945)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Łódź 1992.

Jaroszewski J., *Stalinizacja sportu w województwie łódzkim w latach 1949–1956*, „Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie” 2018, vol. 17, no 2, pp. 85–100; <http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/kf.2018.17.15>.

Litmanowicz W., Giżycki J., *Szachy od A do Z*, Tom 1: (a–m), Sport i Turystyka, Warszawa 1986.

Mizgalski J., *60-lecie TSKŻ. Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydów w Polsce*, Zarząd Główny Towarzystwa Społeczno-Kulturalnego Żydów w Polsce, Warszawa 2010.

Olejnik L., *Mniejszości narodowe w Łodzi w 1945 r.* [in:] J. Żelazko (ed.), *Rok 1945 w Łodzi. Studia i szkice*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Łódź 2008, pp. 131–148.

Olejnik L., *Łódź wielonarodowa w pierwszych latach po II wojnie światowej*, „Rocznik Łódzki” vol. 45, Urząd Miasta Łodzi oraz Urzędów Wojewódzkich w Piotrkowie Tryb. i Sieradzu, Łódź 1998, pp. 185–210.

Olejnik L., *Społeczność żydowska w Łodzi w latach 1945–1950. Zarys problemu*, „Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica” 1997, no 60, pp. 125–147; <http://dx.doi.org/10.18778/7525-496-9.14>.

Redlich S., *Na rozdrożu. Żydzi w powojennej Łodzi 1945–1950*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Łódź 2012.

- Rosin R., Bandurka M., *Łódź 1423–1823–1973. Zarys dziejów i wybór dokumentów*, Wydział Kultury i Sztuki Urzędu Miasta Łodzi, Łódź, 1974.
- Rykała A., *Społeczność żydowska*, [in:] A. Lech, K. Radziszewska, A. Rykała (eds.), *Społeczność żydowska i niemiecka w Łodzi po 1945 roku*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź, 2018, pp. 267–332.
- Siepracka D., *Żydzi łódzcy po likwidacji getta (wrzesień 1944 – styczeń 1945)* [in:] J. Żelazko (ed.), *Rok 1945 w Łodzi. Studia i szkice*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Łódź 2008, pp. 31–52.
- Urban R., *Der jüdische Sport in den Jahren 1945–1950*, [in:] T. Niewerth, T. Jurek, W. D. Mattausch (eds.), *Jüdischer Sport und Jüdische Gesellschaft*, Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz, Gedek- und Bildungssätze; Zamiejscowy Wydział Kultury Fizycznej Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego w Poznaniu w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim, Berlin, 2010, pp. 248–254.
- Włodarczyk T., *Sport żydowski na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945–1959*, [in:] J. Maliniak, P. Sroka, G. Strauchold (eds.), *Z dziejów sportu na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnej Polski po II wojnie światowej*, Ośrodek Pamięć i Przyszłość, Wrocław 2014, pp. 97–118.