

THE FIRST JEWISH SPORTS CLUB IN KUTNO

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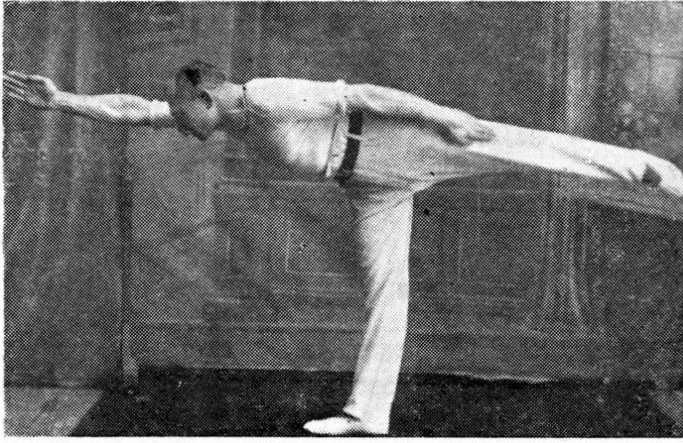
(A reminder)

I was born in Kutno in 1898 -- and lived in France since 1929. When I became aware of the preparations for publishing a Yizkor Book, I decided to publish on paper a reminder of "*Maccabi*".

In World War I, Kutno was occupied by the Germans. At that time, there was an opportunity to develop a certain social activity -- and the Jewish youth, who sought ways and ideals, took advantage of these opportunities. In 1915, a group of young people founded the first Jewish sports club -- "*Maccabi*". The club was headed by a... German non-commissioned officer, Mazik, who would be later found

dead in his bath. Bernard Holcman was particularly active for the club.

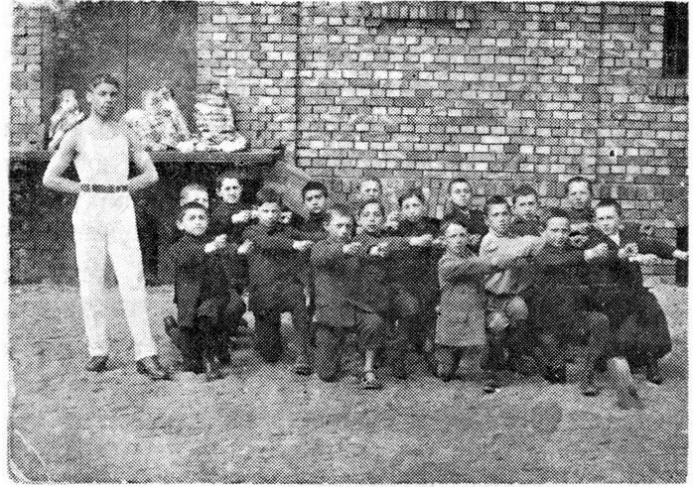
There was also an orchestra of the club, with the conductor Birencwajg at its head. In 1916 (or 1917) we decided to organize a sports festival with the participation of the clubs of the surrounding and following places: Warsaw, Łódź, Włocławek and Płock. Many young people from the nearby towns also came to the festival. On a beautiful summer day, dozens of Jewish athletes, accompanied by their own Jewish orchestra, marched through the streets of Kutno. The feeling was there, instantly we found ourselves to be in our own country... The blue and white sports uniform, the Yiddish melodies, which the orchestra played



Mazik, first sports coach of "Maccabi" (1915)

continuously and the municipal councilor Eliezer Elberg, who was excited to be at the head of the parade...

The same year, the Balfour Declaration was published. We wanted to see a connection between our sports festival in Kutno and the political declaration for



Children group from "Maccabi" (1922)

Jewish Rights in the Land of Israel, published in London. Unfortunately, not all the then and later enthusiasts of "*Maccabi*" were privileged to see the realization of their dreams – the establishment of a Jewish state...