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Jewish Accommodations of Summer and Winter Tourism in the Interwar Period

Summary

Jewish community before World War I practiced summer and winter tourism, participating in the activities of Polish tourist and sports associations. Numerous Jewish tourist and touring societies and sports clubs, which sought to develop their own infrastructure for accommodation in mountains or spa and recreational centers were established in the interwar period. The efforts of the Jewish community to obtain accommodations in the mountains were based on their own resources and contributions from their members. Jewish organizations did not express interest in state subsidies for most developed hostels, tourist stations or dormitories for the Jewish community.

Keywords: tourism, accommodations, Jewish organizations, in the interwar period.

Before World War I, Jewish community practiced summer and winter tourism, participating in the activities of Polish tourist and sports associations. Numerous Jewish tourist and touring societies and sports clubs, which sought to develop their own infrastructure for accommodation in mountains or spa and recreational centers were established in the interwar period.

The purpose of this article is to present the material base of tourism, with particular emphasis on accommodation facilities for tourism in Jewish communities in the interwar period. The area covered by study is the subject of tourism in the Jewish community, and in particular issues related to the material base of tourism have so far been discussed quite sporadically.

Information about the most significant cognitive issues can be found mainly in the regional newspapers and magazines. It certainly can be said that the issue

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of the material base for the Jewish community tourism area covered by the survey has never been published as a synthetic paper.

In this article, the basic research method was a critical analysis of historical sources. In addition, the inductive method was used, and the method of deductive synthesis. The objective of the study is to develop the following research problems:

1. To what extent did the Jewish community participate in tourism?
2. What shape did tourist infrastructure assume (material base of tourism), with special emphasis on summer and winter forms of tourism?
3. How did the Jewish community raise financial resources dedicated for the construction of new and the restructuring of existing facilities for summer and winter tourism?

The first Jewish organization that undertook to build their own shelters were Jewish Gymnastic and Sport Association (ŻTGS) "Makkabi" in Bielsko¹. They continued the pre-war activities of Bielitz-Bialer Israelitischer Turnverein. "Makkabi", who acceded to build their own mountain retreat in about 1925².

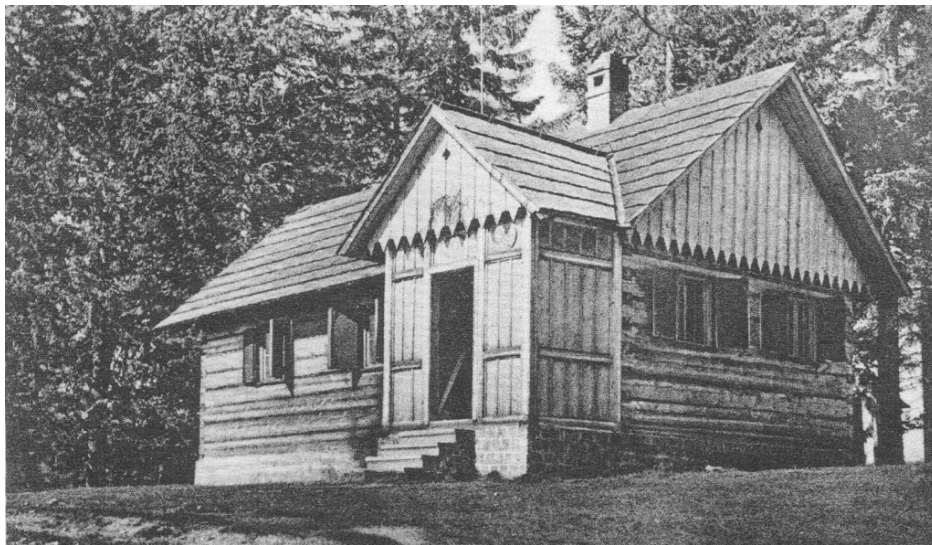


Fig. 1. The first shelter on Hala Boracza ŻTGS „Makkabi” in Bielsko in 1929

The building was built on the Hala Boracza in Beskid Żywiecki at the altitude of 854 m above sea level and was the first tourist ski-shelter of a Jewish community in Poland and abroad. "Przegląd Sportowy" reported that only at the

¹ W. Jaworski, *Ruch syjonistyczny w Bielsku*, [in:] *Żydzi w Bielsku, Białej i okolicy*, Bielsko-Biała 1996, p. 126–127.

² [http://www.jhi.pl/psj/Zydowskie_Towarzystwo_Krajoznawcze_w_Polsce_\(ZTK\)](http://www.jhi.pl/psj/Zydowskie_Towarzystwo_Krajoznawcze_w_Polsce_(ZTK)) [date 5.07.2013].

end of January 1927, "Makkabi" hallowed official opening the newly built hostel³. The facility was available to all Jewish tourists and skiers⁴ on request⁵. Initially, it was open on Sundays and on public holidays. Then, until 1932, the shelter was managed by Rudolf Antoni⁶.

In addition, at the discretion of the Jewish Ski Tourist Association (ŻTTN) "Makkabi" Bielsko, formed in ŻTGS "Makkabi" Bielsko stations were located in the regional places of interest, such as: Milówka, Rajcza, Zwardoń, Węgierska Górka, Jeleśnia and Krzyżowa, where tourists and skiers were able to stay overnight⁷.

The shelter on Hala Boracza did not survive long. In the spring of 1932 a fire broke out in it. In the summer of the same year it was reconstructed, and a completely new facility was created that could accommodate 150 people, including 60 beds (52 beds and 8 pallets). ŻTGS "Makkabi" Bielsko waived their rights to land and infrastructure. The management of the whole was transferred to ŻTTN "Makkabi" Bielsko. The new shelter was 22,65 m long and 8,10 m wide. The dimensions of the terrace were 15 × 12 m. The building had, among others, 8 collective rooms, two, four and six persons. The hostel was opened on December 18, 1932 and bore the name of Max Nordau⁸. The host of the property was Walter Zeitingerz Bielsko. The popularity of the shelter was testified by the guest list sent to the press: "on every Sunday or public holiday skiers flock here from nearby neighborhoods. Shelter is teeming with life to the fullest and breathes the atmosphere of Jewish smooth even visits..."⁹. After the war, the hostel was taken over by the Polish Tatra Society (PTT), and later Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Association (PTTK).

"Makkabi" Kraków benefited from a shelter on Hala Boracza for several years, but the number of members of the Section and in particular of the ski centers increased and intensive development of the branch made it necessary to build their own facility. During the ski camp of "Makkabi" Kraków in 1929, the idea of building their own mountain retreat on one of the most frequented tourist routes was put forward for the first time¹⁰. The concepts of activists concerning the location of the hostel building kept changing. In 1931, the Cracow club planned to build their own mountain retreat in the range of Babia Góra near

³ „Przegląd Sportowy” 1927, no. 5, p. 5.

⁴ Conf. A. Dworakowski, *Przewodnik po polskich skoczniach narciarskich*, Warszawa 2013.

⁵ <http://www.olszowka.most.org.pl/klmakabi.htm> [date 7.08.2013]; E. Moskała, *Schroniska górskie PTTK w województwie bielskim*, Warszawa – Kraków 1983, p. 144; <http://www.boracza.pl/index.php?show=historia> [date 7.08.2013].

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ <http://www.olszowka.most.org.pl/klmakabi.htm> [date 30.09.2013].

⁸ „Nowy Dziennik” 1932, no. 206, p. 11; no. 342, p. 6; <http://www.boracza.pl/index.php?show=historia> [date 7.08.2013]; *Informacyjny kalendarz narciarski na sezon 1938–39*, Kraków 1938, p. 338.

⁹ „Nowy Dziennik” 1937, no. 18, p. 8.

¹⁰ „Nowy Dziennik” 1929, no. 8, p. 6; „Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny” 1929, no. 63, p. III.

Jałowiec. Specific preparation was in progress in agreement with PTT¹¹. After several years of efforts, the idea of building their own shelters reached the next phase of implementation. In 1932, as a result of the efforts of “Makkabi” and I Bursa Crafts, the Shelter Building Committee was established under the Kowaniec in Nowy Targ. It was given the name of Dr. Edmund Schenker¹². Initially, the amount of money paid by the members were modest and actually provided only for the purchase of land for the future shelter¹³. The Cracow Club organized a number of ski courses in Cracow, in Wola Justowska, where in February 1933 the board of the municipal park “Las Wolski” decided to allocate two rooms located there, “Domek Myśliwski” for the needs of skiers. Athletes could go and purchase hot meals at favorable prices¹⁴. In 1936, “Makkabi” announced the campaign of collecting resources to build their own shelters and reiterated its call for further financial support: “let us build our own shelter for Jewish skiers and tourists”¹⁵. In the same year, SN “Makkabi” Kraków has provided its members with discount accommodations and tourist stations supply: Milówka in Goldberger and Kalfus, in Zakopane “Wierchy”, in Rajcza, in Schächter, in Zawoja, in Fischer. In addition, all hostels Beskidenverein honored the Jewish SN's card 50% discount for skiers. However, Cracow “Makkabi” failed to build its own shelters until the outbreak of the war¹⁶.



Fig. 2. ZTK Tourist House in Zakopane (Jaszczurówka) in 1930

¹¹ „Nowy Dziennik” 1932, no. 181, p. 10.

¹² „Nowy Dziennik” 1932, no. 293, p. 4.

¹³ „Nowy Dziennik” 1933, no. 1, p. 6.

¹⁴ „Nowy Dziennik” 1933, no. 58, p. 15.

¹⁵ „Nowy Dziennik” 1936, no. 355, p. 15.

¹⁶ „Nowy Dziennik” 1936, no. 11, p. 13.

Starting from 30 December 1930, Jewish Tourist Society in Warsaw (ZTK) of used the Dom Wycieczkowy in Zakopane¹⁷, which was leased from the owners of the "Hotel Warszawski". Moreover, the accommodation was used, inter alia, by Łódź branch of ZTK, Jewish Academic Circle of Tourism Lovers (ŻAKMK). ZTK also expressed a desire to have their own accommodation in the mountains¹⁸.

In 1933, activists ZTK Main Board on the pages of its own magazine "Wiadomości ZTK" issued an appeal to all members for engagement, especially financial, to build their own shelter

Our society, although it is a social institution, not only for its members, but for the broad spheres of society, has not yet turned for the material aid to the population. Let us continue the "miracle"! Let's build through our own efforts and thanks to the generosity of all of us a shelter, our House of Excursions!¹⁹.

In 1934, the Warsaw branch of ZTK launched in Miłosna and Łomianki Residential Cruise for hiking and skiing²⁰.

An attempt to obtain a land lot to build its own shelters was made by Nowy Sącz ZTK branch in 1936. A shelter was especially necessary for the Ski Section, which organized ski camps in Piwniczna for more than a dozen people. In addition, ski tours were arranged in the Beskid Sądecki, Gorce and Pieniny²¹. Therefore, negotiations were streted with the municipality of Piwniczna about the purchase of land below the Sucha Dolina²².

In 1937, ZTK agencies, including Łódź branch, rented accommodation in Zakopane, not only in Jaszczurówka, but also in the villa "Szczęsna" on Witkiewicz Street to accommodate skiing and tourist camps²³.

About 1932, "Makkabi" Ski Section made efforts to build a rustic shelter in the vicinity of Kocierz in near Andrychów. The main founder and builder of this investment was Max Hammer, head of SN. Considerable assistance in implementing the project was provided by his deputy, Dawid Jakubowicz. The shelter survived the war and was later taken over by the PTT Wadowice Tourist Station. In the 60s of the twentieth century it was demolished and the mine of "Miechowice" was built on the site²⁴.

¹⁷ W. Skowron, *Organizacje krajoznawczo-turystyczne żydowskiej mniejszości narodowej w Polsce w okresie XX-lecia międzywojennego*, [in:] http://khit.pttk.pl/index.php?co=tx_orgzyd [date 7.04.2013].

¹⁸ „Wiadomości ŻTK” 1931, no. 1, p. 6.

¹⁹ „Wiadomości ŻTK” 1933, no. 7, p. 8.

²⁰ „Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK” 1937, no. 1, p. 26.

²¹ „Nowy Dziennik” 1934, no. 62, p. 12.

²² „Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK” 1936, no. 1, p. 14.

²³ „Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK” 1937, no. 3, p. 9.

²⁴ Interview with Edward Wincenty Szlagor, the owner of the Museum of History and Ethnography in Andrychów from 28.09.2013; R. Truś, *Beskid Mały. Przewodnik*, Białystok 2008, p. 138.



Fig. 3. Shelter “Makkabi” Kocierz Andrychów post-war years from 1945 to 1946, source: collection of MHE in Andrychów

Kocierz, situated at an altitude of 879 m above sea level, is a peak in the Beskid Andrychowski in the eastern part of the Beskid Mały. Andrychów on Jewish weekends skiers went in the winter carts to the top of Kocierz and there they spent all day practicing skiing. In the summer, excursions were organized along the mountain range of Beskidy Małe. Kocierz ski instructors were Lola Rauchberger, Daniel Gros, Chaskel Goldberg, Jetka Silberman and Adolf Stamberger²⁵.

The origins of the attempts to create Jewish skiing in Borysław, by building a next Jewish tourist hostel in the resort, took place in 1933. Then, Izio Wegner, living in Borysław, returned from a ski camp in Sianki Makkabi and set to promulgating the sport in his environment. On Sundays and on public holidays during the winter the athletes of different sections of the Jewish Sports Club (ZKS) “Kadimah” took part in excursions in the vicinity of the most beautiful ski areas, such as: Schodnicki Dział, Chuchowy Dział and Orów. The excursion were attended by both beginners and experienced skiers, not necessarily members of the club²⁶.

²⁵ *Księga pamiątkowa byłych gmin żydowskich Wadowic, Andrychowa, Kalwarii i Myślenic*, edited and translated from the Hebrew by dr Dawid Jakubowicz, Izrael 1968, p. 158, (access MHE).

²⁶ „Nowy Dziennik” 1934, no. 20, p. 12; *Od pola Schor do Kadimah Stadium*, translated by Inga Karliner; <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Borislav/bor054.html#n9> [date 5.10.2013].

In 1934, “Kadimah” in Borysław made two shelters for ski tourism available to its members. One of the shelters was situated in a forester’s house on Buchowe, the other was adapted from the building “Gazy Ziemne” next to the casino of Folk School Society (TSL). The shelter on Buchowe, named after engineer Binder of Schodnica was inaugurated in February 1934. During the opening ceremony it hosted about 200 skiers. During the opening ceremony of the Department Schodnicki organizers offered a game, “chasing the fox”. Among them were i.a.: Mordechaj Weiss, Zenek Sobel, Gecek Friedland, Herbert Lantner and Izio Wegner²⁷.

Sports Clubs and Tourist Associations of the Jewish community did not have to try hard to build their own infrastructure of accommodation in Polish resorts, because the offer of accommodation in both Zakopane and Krynica was very abundant. Many Jewish owners of guesthouses and villas eagerly circulated their lodgings for tourists, skiers and lugers. In Krynica, the guest house “Odaliska”, which was owned by the Enker family enjoyed considerable popularity. It was managed by Enker Abraham, a former board member of the Kahal in Krynica, Max’s parents, Leo and Regina Enker, were fine lugers of the local Jewish “Makkabi”. The pension widely advertised in the Jewish press, offering accommodation “with full comfort and exquisite cuisine”. In addition, the facility could rent skis, sleds and above all, help to take advantage of the winter sports²⁸.



Fig. 4. Pension “Odaliska” in Krynica in 1929, source: “Światowid” 1929, no. 4

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ „Nowy Dziennik” 1936, no. 36, p. 1.

Mikuliczyn, situated at an altitude of 600 m above the sea level was the largest town with over 5 thousand residents, in the valley of the Hutsul Prut. Administratively, it belonged to the province of Stanisławów and was located approximately 200 km away from Lviv. Due to its location in a valley, the town, surrounded by very high mountains, had excellent skiing conditions and wide skiing base. There were numerous Hutsul houses, villas and cottages, including a shelter for school trips. There was a large concentration of Jews in that area²⁹.

On December 20th, 1937, there was a Dom Wycieczkowy opened for skiers in Mikuliczyn, which served, from December 25, 1931 until April 1, 1938, as a shelter for the Union "Makkabi". The house was built with the support of the Jewish community and was the basis for winter sports camps propagating the ski and movement exercises, which took place from December 27, 1937 until January 6, 1938 and from January 10, until January 20, 1938. The course of motion exercises was attended by 60 people. Head of the course for assistant ski instructors was a PZN instructor Israel Besner from Lviv³⁰. Participants of the course were skiers from Warsaw, Kraków, Bochnia, Nowy Sącz, Lviv and Vilnius. The fee for the course of 10 days, (minimum 6 days stay) was 40 PLN along with instruction and care provided by the instructors. The shelter was available to all skiers and the cost of accommodation for members amounted to 1 Polish zloty, for non-members 1,5 Polish zloty³¹.

In the pre-war statements PZN³² informed that the Jews had a skiing shelter even in Zwardoń. Actually, it was a skiing station and a branch of Tourist ZTK Będzin, located in the home of John Brush and a shelter in Orów, located at an altitude of 765 m above the sea level in the Eastern Bieszczady, boasted by ŻTGS "Betar" in Drohobycz³³. The "Betar" shelter provided accommodation for 10 people³⁴.

Accommodation for Jewish societies and clubs in the interwar period was quite modest. In fact, apart from the ŻTTN "Makkabi" Hala Boracza shelter and less "Makkabi" Kocierz Andrychów shelter, there was no accommodation on in this part of the Carpathian Mountains which could be defined as a mountain retreat. There were numerous tourist stations in the Beskid Żywiecki, but their purpose was a short stay and they did not satisfy the Jewish skiers wishing to attend courses or camps. Lack of its own shelters was most acutely felt by Cracow

²⁹ I. Czaykowski, *Beskid Wschodni szlaki turystyczne w dorzeczu Prutu i Czarnej Bystrzycy*, Stanisławów – Jaremcze, 1934, pp. 25–26.

³⁰ „Nowy Głos” 1937, no. 4, p. 6; no. 7, p. 8; „Nowy Dziennik” 1937, no. 344, wydanie poranne, p. 15.

³¹ „Nowy Głos” 1938, no. 3, p. 6; no. 10, p. 6; „Nowy Dziennik” 1938, no. 10, p. 7.

³² Conf. R. Kołodziej, *90 lat na śniegu – Historia Polskiego Związku Narciarskiego 1919–2009*, Kraków 2009, p. 45–48.

³³ „Turyzm Polski” 1939, no. 4, p. 76.

³⁴ *Informacyjny kalendarz narciarski na sezon 1938–39*, Kraków 1938, p. 237, 248.

“Makkabi”. One of the biggest Jewish clubs in Poland was unable, despite years of efforts to build a shelter in the mountains. Therefore, they had to use the Hala Boracza and hire accommodation, lodgings and guest houses in mountain resorts (Krynica, Zakopane). Apart from ZTK branches, other mainstream tourism and ski clubs and associations did not show any interest in obtaining accommodation facilities to take advantage from the proximity of mountain resorts (e.g. Zakopane, Nowy Targ, Krynica). Relatively late, but steadily, ski tourist infrastructure in the eastern part of Carpathian Mountains was developed. The already known ski centers of Jewish Lviv joined Borysław, Drohobycz, Krzemieniec, Mikuliczynie or Sianki in the most developed hostels, tourist stations and dormitories for the Jewish community in the area. It should be added that the efforts of the Jewish community about obtaining accommodation facilities in the mountains were based on their own resources and membership fees. Jewish organizations expressed no interest in being subsidized by the state.

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Streszczenie

Żydowskie obiekty noclegowe turystyki letniej i zimowej w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym

Spółeczność żydowska jeszcze przed I wojną światową uprawiała turystykę letnią i zimową, uczestnicząc w działalności polskich stowarzyszeń turystycznych i sportowych. W okresie międzywojennym powstały liczne żydowskie towarzystwa turystyczno-krajoznawcze i kluby sportowe, które starały się o rozwój własnej infrastruktury noclegowej w górach lub ośrodkach uzdrowiskowo-wypoczynkowych. Starania wspólnoty żydowskiej o pozyskanie obiektów noclegowych w górach oparte były na własnych środkach i składkach członkowskich. Organizacje żydowskie nie wyrażały bowiem zainteresowania subwencjami państwowymi. W większości powstały schroniska, stacje turystyczne lub domy wycieczkowe służące społeczności żydowskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka, obiekty noclegowe, organizacje żydowskie, dwudziestolecie międzywojenne.