

Issued 11 times a year by The National Council of the Polish YMCA. Paul Super, General Director, Konopnickiej 6, Warsaw. Poland

Our 15th Birthday

About ten years ago the Polish YMCA chose as its official birthday that 8th day of December 1923, when the American YMCA in the presence of the President of the Republic of Poland, turned all its interests in Poland over to the National Council of the Polish YMCA and said in effect, "Now you're all wound up and ready to go; go ahead."

The Polish YMCA was the outgrowth of the work the American YMCA did for the Polish soldiers during and after the war with the Bolsheviks in 1919 and 1920, and its subsequent work for Polish railway men, typhus refugees, impoverished students just returning from war, and groups of the general civil population during those difficult post-war years. Seeing the American YMCA in effective action the Poles wanted one of their own and the American YMCA, at their request, and later assisted by the Canadian YMCA, has helped them develop it.

This 15th Birthday of the Polish YMCA is being made the occasion for numerous receptions, dinners, exhibitions, excursions, and official visits. Fifteen leaders of the Polish YMCA have been decorated with the Cross of Merit, and a handsome souvenir book telling about the Association's organization, program, growth, and future plans has been issued.

Well, assisted splendidly by the North American YMCAs in the finest spirit of practical Christian brotherhood, the Polish YMCA *did* go ahead. Today it is proud to report to its friends abroad how it has used its opportunities, and hopes that those who have helped launch and carry forward this Polish YMCA movement will feel that their gifts and advocacy were well placed.

Growth

1. We began work with local associations in rented rooms in Krakow, Lodz, and Warsaw. We have added Poznan and Gdynia and built three of the best YMCA camps in Europe. Thus we make eight dots on the map of Poland.

2. We had 659 members in December 1923. Our most recent official report shows 7,287; to this number of men and boys must be added 1776 women and 9,549 men and women, boys and girls who, though not officially counted as members, are enrolled in regular work in our physical department. That makes a total of 18,612 persons regularly served by the Polish YMCA, a number constantly growing. Note the growth; 659 to 18,612, and, we believe, just getting well started.

3. Those days 15 years ago we estimated our average attendance in all our plants at 450. In March 1938 it had reached 4914 by careful count and today it is way over 5000.

4. We began in 1923 with no gyms or pools. Last March we enrolled 4974 members and 9549 non-members in our physical departments, a total of 14,523. Our November or December reports will show this figure as having passed far beyond 15,000.

5. Our Educational Departments have not really found themselves and the 225 students of 1923 had increased to only 1130 last March. We're a bit unhappy about this.

(Cont. in column to right)

Land Parcellation

As a contribution to the settling of the problem of the disadvantaged peasant the Polish Government from time to time buys a section of good agricultural land and parcels it among peasants desiring to establish themselves on small modern farms of from 10 to 30 acres. Our accompanying picture shows the dedication of such an area of 5300 acres, divided into 72 holdings. Upon each little farm are erected three buildings, a residence for the family, a stable for the cattle, and a barn for the grain. Payment of the money advanced by the government is distributed over a period of years. The cost of each group of three buildings varies from \$1000 to \$2000. Each parcellation includes areas for social, educational, and recreational activities. Though not yet extensive in size, this project means a better life for a lot of humble people.

Photo: After the dedication ceremonies at Nowy Wies. Left to right: Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland. Minister of Agriculture Poniatowski. President of the Republic Moscicki. Extreme right: One of the new landowners, typical Polish peasant. In the background, her farmhouse.

6. Group work is a big thing in the Polish YMCA. Hardly begun in 1923, the March 1938 report shows 187 organized groups and clubs enrolling 3839 members, and that number will be considerably exceeded this winter.

7. The 15,831 books in our libraries are read by 1612 enrolled readers.

8. The roll of volunteer workers, different every month of course, was 150 in 1923 and is 1020 in this our 15th year.

9. We began with 18 young Polish YMCA secretaries and 7 Americans. There are now 40 Polish secretaries and 1 American.

10. In 1928 we began our first work for underprivileged boys, 45 of them. We now have two large branches for these boys, enrolling 1144.

11. That first year's budget was 243,051 zloty. It has grown to roughly 1,500,000 zloty, or a little less than \$300,000. That is a large budget in Poland. That first year 60% of our funds for current expenses came from the American YMCA. By 1928 we had reached 86.7% self support and today the local associations are entirely self-supporting. The American YMCA supplies one secretary and a small fund for sending Polish secretaries abroad for training.

12. The American YMCA turned \$40,000 worth of property over to the Polish YMCA in 1923. Thanks to further American gifts, of \$35,000, \$150,000, \$300,000, and \$200,000, and to funds contributed in Poland, the Polish YMCA today possesses over \$1,800,000 worth of property, including three fine modern YMCA buildings, the one in Lodz not yet completed but in use by 10,000 persons.

Program

These figures give a very inadequate picture of the extremely rich program of the Polish YMCA, the whirl and mass of activity in its buildings, its strength and service in the communities in which it is located, its reputation throughout Poland. But they do show how the Poles have taken up the YMCA idea, made it their own, and developed one of the largest and strongest YMCA movements in Europe.

Thank you

Rejoicing in this growth and wide usefulness, the Polish YMCA here says "thank you" to all who have had a part in creating it. Givers of gifts large and small. Members and secretaries of the International Committee. Sayers of words of encouragement in difficult days. YMCA secretaries and volunteer workers in the United States and Canada who have collected funds for the support of the YMCA in Poland. Merle Scott, A. A. Ebersole, Dr. W. J. Rose, Frank Eyman, who worked here during those early trying years; E. O. Jacob, who built the Krakow YMCA building; E. R. Cummings, who erected the Warsaw building; H. J. Rounds for his sacrificial work in Lodz. Dr. John R. Mott for his powerful backing. To all who read this and know they have had a part in our work and growth, thank you. For many achievements beyond our own strength and skill we humbly thank God.

Poland's 20th Birthday, November 11th

In this issue we are not writing about the 20th anniversary of the restoration of Poland after its 146 years of subjection to Germany, Russia, and Austria, because it is our plan to devote part of the January issue to the setting forth of a number of interesting facts about Poland, geographical, ethnographical, economic, and cultural.

Growth Charted

Let us take the rate of growth of the Polish YMCA as shown by 9 of the chief indices, membership, volunteer workers, students in educational classes, members in the physical department, members in groups and clubs, daily attendance, non-members enrolled in physical work, annual budget, and value of property, average them, and see what result we get as the general line of growth.

The first civilian work began in December 1921, two years before the transfer to the Polish YMCA. We will take that initial point as zero. Then December 1923, 1928, 1933. And, as December 1938 figures are not yet available, we will take March 1938, which will be somewhat less but satisfactory enough. Here is the resulting graph. It shows a steady growth until the first of January 1929. A slowing up during the great depression, and a big jump when we got into our Lodz and Warsaw buildings, notwithstanding the depression.



Chart showing the growth of the Polish YMCA
Average of 9 major items

Mr. D. C. Fu in Poland

As this goes to press the Polish YMCA is honored to have as its guest Mr. D. C. Fu, Ph. B. University of Shanghai and M. A. University of Chicago, one of the most distinguished secretaries of the Chinese YMCA.

Mr. Fu is dividing his week in Poland between Warsaw and Lodz giving special attention to those phases of Polish YMCA work which are considered especially strong; its method of building program, processes used in the method of training volunteer workers, its financial methods, and its extensive work for underprivileged boys conducted in three different branches.



