

Icchok-Majer Krel

[He was] a Jew dressed in Chassidic garb, whose patriarchal beard was carefully combed. Two deep, piercing eyes shone out from his good-natured countenance, which bore testimony to his sensitive, Jewish heart. Chassidic and aristocratic - that was Icchok-Majer Krel.

He was an agent for various Italian and Polish insurance companies and, for a certain time, ran his enterprise under the name "Hamburger & Krel Insurance Co. in Częstochowa". He lived in Raków, in his own building, and was bound to Częstochowa with heart and soul.

Krel had a whole series of representatives and employees who ran his business. He, therefore, had time to occupy himself with communal issues. There was no communal institution in which Icchok-Majer Krel did not play a part and with which he did not work.

He did a great deal in the Credit Society, in his capacity as vice-president. By all possible means, he endeavoured to prevent the seizure of Jewish property and always postponed the deadlines. There were cases when Jews were unable to pay the interest on the sums that they had borrowed from the Credit Society, so that there was a threat that their property would be liable to repossession. Jew-haters awaited such moments, in order to be able to purchase the Jewish property for ridiculously low prices. Krel endeavoured to help out such Jews with his advice and actions to prevent requisitions.

He was a religious Jew and one of the most respected political leaders of *Aguda*. Krel was a committee of management member in the Merchants' Union, an active worker in *Machzikei Ha'Das* and an executive member of the *Chevra Kadisha*, as well as in an entire array of other associations.