

Yizkor Book – a *Matzevah* [for] our Town Krzepice and the Vicinity

To all the *Krzepicer Landsleit* in the world:

Esteemed Landsleit:

With great satisfaction, we announce that the Committee of the *Krzepicer Landsleit* in Israel has set out to publish a Yizkor Book dedicated to the sacred memory of our dear and near *Krzepicer* Jews, who were exterminated during Hitler's occupation of Poland.

As we embark upon this sacred work of very great responsibility, we are aware of the colossal difficulties standing before us in collecting the appropriate materials which we require in order to publish this Yizkor Book, until this work emerges from the printer.

In connection to this, we warmly appeal to all our *landsleit* in Israel, America, Australia, Canada, Argentina and other countries: assist us, within the limits of your possibilities, with what you can. In doing so, you will make our work, of realising the publishing of this Yizkor Book in commemoration of the Krzepice Martyrs, easier.

The Yizkor Book is to include the following chapters:

- a) *Krzepice's First Days* (a historical overview with dates and numbers regarding the first Krzepice Jews who settled in the shtetl);
- b) *The Life of the Krzepice Jewish Populace to the Outbreak of the First World War* (documents and memories);
- c) *Between the Years 1914-1918* (memories);
- d) *In Independent Poland – 1918-1939* (materials, memories, pictures);
- e) *The Destruction of Krzepice* (testimonies, documents, memories, photos);
- f) *Necrologies, Photos*;
- g) *Yizkor* (a list of the names of the Krzepice Martyrs, who were murdered by the Germans and their collaborators);
- h) *Following the Fall of Nazism* (memories, testimonies, memoirs, and descriptions);
- i) *From the Land of Israel to the State of Israel* (what well-established residents, new immigrants and tourists tell about the Land of the Patriarchs);
- j) *The Activities of the Krzepicer Landsmannschaften in Israel, America, Australia [& Other Countries]* (reports on the activity, photos, etc.)

We wish our Yizkor Book to be a collective work, created by the entire Surviving Remnant of Krzepice and the vicinity. With this, we wish to erect a written *matzevah* to the Jewish community without a grave, who perished for the sanctification of God's Name and Our People.

The task of us all is to immortalise, in this Yizkor Book, yesterday's Krzepice, which will never be again.

Dear Landsleit, write to us and promptly send us your memoirs, reminiscences, depictions and narratives about our home of old. Describe each one within the limits of your abilities, the day-to-day life of your nearer and more distant family members, acquaintances, neighbours and Jews in general. Describe the houses, the daily livelihood concerns, the joys and sorrows, the *Shabbosim* and Holidays [and] the weddings and funerals.

Allow us present, in an appropriate, objective manner, the financial, religious, political, social and cultural life of the Jewish populace. Let us tell of our *shules* in Krzepice and Kuźniczka; of the societies, *shtieblech* [and] *chederim*; of the *Chevra Kadisha* and the cemetery. With fondness and reverence, let us mention our Krzepicer rabbis and *shoichets*, rabbinical judges and *melamdim*; our *Chassidim* and simple Jews; the merchants and craftsmen, small traders and those who travelled to markets, coachmen and smugglers, water-carriers and just individuals, in general, who should not be forgotten.

We are in need of materials regarding the activity of the Jewish *kehilla*, about the *dozores* [*kehilla* representatives] and the Jewish members on the City Council.

It is our obligation to depict the kaleidoscopic activity of our social institutions and [political] parties – all the active figures who carried out their work with devotion and passion: the Zionists and Aguda people; the Left and Right Poalei Zion; the Communists and Revisionists; all the activists of the youth organisations; [and] the I.L. Peretz Library's extensive activity and its role in shaping the consciousness of *Krzepicer* youth.

The period of destruction and annihilation of six million Jews in Europe, during the Second World War, will need to find a suitable portrayal in our Yizkor Book. To our immense sorrow and agony, we must state that the vast majority of the Krzepice Jews shared the tragic fate of the Polish Jewry and were annihilated by the Nazi murderers and their collaborators.

From Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and from the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, we have received certain materials which tell about this horrifying period.

Yet this does not suffice - it is our desire that all the survivors should describe their experiences, in order to give the full picture of the occupation years in Krzepice, beginning from 1st September 1939 to the eventual liquidation of the Krzepice community.

In the "Destruction and Annihilation" section, we wish you to tell of your lives in the German labour and death camps, on the so-called "Aryan side" and as refugees in the Soviet Union.

We have also set ourselves the task of publishing, in the Yizkor Book, a full list of the names of all the Krzepice Martyrs, who perished in the years 1939-1945. In order to obtain all the necessary information, we have created a special questionnaire.

Esteemed Landsleit – the speedy response to all these questions will make easier our work of publishing, alphabetically, the names of all those who perished for the sanctification of God's Name and Our People.

In the Yizkor Book, each one of us, survivors, will also tell about our first steps following the downfall of Hitler's Germany, the return to Krzepice after the destruction and the attitude of the Christian populace to the Surviving Remnant.

Of great particular importance for us are also the recollections regarding the first wanderings of the survivors across lands and cities, until coming to Israel or to other countries, where they have settled down to a new life.

Already, at the start of the 1920's, Krzepice Jews were leaving their old home and travelling to the Land of Israel. In this special chapter, the well-established residents among us will describe their first steps in the Land of [Our] Forefathers - their difficulties in finding a roof over their heads and enough bread. We shall also tell about the share of the Krzepice Jews in building and fortifying the country, until the establishment of the State of Israel. In particular, we shall tell of the new immigrants who came into the country following the Liberation.

Our Yizkor Book will conclude with reports on the activities of the *Krzepicer Landsmannschaften* in Israel, America, Australia and other countries.

We appeal to all those from Krzepice and to the friends of our town who hold, in their possession, photographic images of their family members [and] of different celebrations of cultural-historical worth, as well newspapers, journals or other materials on Krzepice and the vicinity - that they should send them to us. All the pictures and other documents received will be returned after they have been used.

We are deeply convinced that each one of us, for whom the destroyed home is near and dear, will grasp the importance of our work and, with advice and deeds, will give his contribution to the Yizkor Book which will reverently immortalise the memory of Krzepice Jewry.

Israel, in the month of Nisan 5723 [March/April 1963].

With hearty greetings from Israel,

Organisation of Krzepice and the Vicinity Jews in Israel
The Committee for the Memorial Book