

YIZKOR – THE MEMORIAL MONUMENT

Blessed be God*, on the day 7th of Tamuz 5719 [13th July 1959],

The Organisation of Krzepice and the Vicinity Jews
in Israel and in the Diaspora

Memorial Scroll

We hereby commemorate the names of our dear ones and relatives who were annihilated in the years of the Holocaust. May this scroll be for an everlasting remembrance in the Capital of the World on Mount Zion, and may this monument serve as a headstone for all those who were murdered and were not brought to a Jewish grave.

The Memorial Day has been set for the day 7th Tamuz; on this day, every year,
we shall commune with all those who [once] were and are no longer to be found.

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

[May their souls be bound in the Bond of Life]

Yizkor

On 7th Tamuz 5719, when a monument was erected for the Krzepice Community in the Chamber of the Holocaust on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, a eulogy for the souls of the thousands of our dear Krzepice martyrs, was delivered by **Mojsze-Icek Monic**.

On the second day of the week [Monday], 7th Tamuz, 5719 [years] since the creation of the world, the eleventh year to the State of Israel and the seventeenth year since the destruction of our community – the Community of Krzepice, in the Częstochowa district, Poland - we, the Jews of Krzepice and the vicinity in Israel, have gathered on Mount Zion in the Holy City of Jerusalem. [Here,] we have erected a memorial monument for the martyrs of our town and the vicinity, who perished at the hands of the Nazi foes and their accomplices, may their name be obliterated, on the day 7th Tamuz 5702 [22nd June 1942].

May this monument serve as an eternal memorial for the sacred and pure ones whose Thread of Life was severed in such a horrifying manner, and may their souls be bound in the Bond of Life. And may this monument serve as a mark of shame for the eternal contempt and disgrace of the foul murderers who spilt the blood of innocent ones.

May the innocent blood strain their repose and not grant their souls peace. [O, God], pour Your Wrath upon them and may Your Fury chase them down. Pursue them in rage and obliterate them from under God's heavens.

* [TN: The heading "Blessed be God," or "With God's aid" is typical to letters or announcements written in the traditional Jewish style. The context of this announcement (in Hebrew in the original) is not given, nor is it translated to Yiddish, as the rest of the booklet is. We have as yet not been able to view the memorial scroll mentioned here, or ascertain its whereabouts – or indeed its very existence. The scroll was presumably to be kept at Yad Vashem.

However, a memorial scroll (in Hebrew) commemorating the heads of the Krzepice families (does not include wives and offspring) annihilated by the Nazis was eventually compiled by Fiszl Rotbard z"l in 1995, and was published in Moshe Dekel's 2015 work "Beyond Silence."]

The Unveiling of the Monument



The Memorial Monument to the Krzepice Martyrs in the Chamber of the Holocaust on Mount Zion in Jerusalem

[Text: *A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children* [Jeremiah 31:15]. The Memorial Day – 7th Tamuz. To everlasting memory. To the martyrs of the Community of Krzepice and the vicinity, next to Częstochowa (Poland), who were murdered and annihilated by the accursed Nazis, may their name be obliterated, during the Holocaust Years 5699-5705 [1939-1945]. May God avenge their blood. Their sacred memory shall never depart from us. May their souls be bound in the Bond of Life. The natives of Krzepice in Israel and in the Diaspora. (At the bottom of photo: Chamber of the Holocaust, Jerusalem, Mount Zion.)]

The honour of unveiling the monument was given to Reb Aron Zawacki.
The honour of lighting the first candle was given to Reb Szlojme Wajsfelner.
The honour of lighting the second candle was given to Reb Szraga Ajzykowicz.
The honour of lighting the third candle was given to Reb Dow-Berisz Lederman from Australia.

The following lines were spoken before [reciting of] *El Moleh Rachamim* [memorial prayer]:

This day is for us, Krzepice Jews, gathered here - a historic moment. Today, on 7th Tamuz - seventeen years after the tragic day on which our homes were destroyed - we, the Surviving Remnant who were saved by chance, have gathered in the newly established Jewish State, in the city of Jerusalem, next to King David's tomb, opposite the Wailing Wall, in order to erect a memorial monument to our fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, sisters and brothers, women and children, and to the entire congregation of Krzepice which was murdered by the German killers.

It is the customary, among Jews, to speak words of eulogy at a weighty moment such as this one. Destiny willed that it should befall me, Mojsze-Icek son of Wolf-Lajb and Towa Monic, to eulogise the entire Krzepice Community:

We, in the present, are unable to grasp the historic aspect of the occasion. And why do I call it "historic?" Because we are, at the current moment, once again carrying out that which the Jewish People did upon entering the Promised Land for the first time. In the Vayechi [Genesis 47:28–50:26] weekly Torah section it is written: "And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, [If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me:] bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt. But I will lie with my fathers..." [Genesis 47:29-30]. And Joseph took an oath of his brothers, saying: "God will surely visit [viz. remember and redeem] you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence..." [Genesis 50:25]. And I say – "God will surely visit us..." We have had the privilege to live [to see] a Jewish State in the Land of Our Forefathers. We have not been able to bring the bones of our kinsmen with us, as the German beasts incinerated them. But we have brought with us their memory for [all] generations, and have immortalised it on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, thus fulfilling the last wishes of "But I will lie with my fathers.

*At this moment, I see, before me in my mind, the High Holidays at the study-hall where my father used to worship. The prayer-leader was Reb Becalel Shoichet, peace be upon him. Before the Mysef^{*1} prayer, preparing to go before the pulpit and plead with the Lord of the Universe for his congregation of Jews, as he said the prayer "Hineni He'Uni Mima'as" [Here I am, impoverished in deeds], his tears moistened his tallis [prayer-shawl] and kittel [liturgical white gown] - [for] it was no small matter to represent such a study-hall [full] of Jews. And this is much more so when an insignificant individual such as me is tasked with eulogising an entire Jewish community.*

*I stand and gaze at the monument commemorating the destruction of Krzepice and the years, during which the town's Jewish community still existed, pass once again in my mind before me. I see the cheders full of cheder-boys. I [can] still hear the children's voices from Reb Jechiel's cheder. I hear the voices of the boys at Reb Mojsze-Chaskel's. I see the pupils of Reb Hersz-Mojsze and those of Reb Benditl [given name^{*2}]. I see the adolescents in the study-hall, at the Rabbi's lesson, [or] at the Shoichet's lesson. I see the Jewish schoolgirls going home from school. The evenings at the Jewish social and [political] party institutions are alive once more. I can still listen in on the heated discussions at the [I.L.] Peretz Library on how to rebuild the world in such a manner that everyone*

^{*1} [TN: Also pronounced "Musaf"; the additional prayer which is recited following the morning service on Shabbosim, Holidays, and the first day of the Hebrew month.]

^{*2} [TN: This given name is extremely rare – it appears only once in the official records available on JRIPoland.]

*should be happy. I see the Jews in their shops and businesses, and the craftsmen in their workshops – Duwid the Yellow, Big Uszer, and Uszer the Yellow. I see the Jews wrapped in the long prayer-shawls with the silver crowns^{*3} in the study-hall, in the shule, and in the Chassidic shtieblech [prayer-rooms/clubhouses]. And before my eyes I see our rabbi, Rabbi Duwid-Szlojme [Baumac^{*4}], wearing a silken caftan [and] spodik^{*5}, accompanied by the [local] religious authorities as they went around [on Friday] checking whether the eruv^{*6} was in order, or when they went about checking if the roofs [of the houses] were not touching, in order to enable Josef Willinger the Cohen to spend the night in his own home^{*7}.*

*I also see the weddings and circumcisions in the shtetl, and I can still hear Lajzer the Shames announcing on a Friday night that So-and-So, son of So-and-So, was inviting the whole congregation to partake in a [Szulem-]Zuchor [ceremony^{*8}]. I see our golden youth on a Saturday afternoon, promenading in the street, [or] in the forest, with fresh horizons [and] new ideas. Alas, I also perceive the dark clouds approaching, and billowing up over our shtetl.*

Fuming Polish picketers are by the Jewish shops. The atmosphere becomes increasingly poisoned from day to day, and I see the sorrowful day on which the German hordes came into our homes, killing our fathers and mothers, burning the children [and] torturing our sisters and brothers to death.

The monument tells us: Yizkor – Remember! Engrave this upon your hearts. Pass this on to your children and, when one day the willingness to forgive the Germans arises, see the rivers of the blood of your kinsmen. See the trembling souls of your dearest by the furnaces [and] the unnatural deaths [they] devised for our most beloved ones. And the most important thing: to remember, and to be aware, that here in the country in which we are building our old-new home up, is the only assurance for us and the whole Jewish People in the world that such a catastrophe, such a destruction, can never happen again.

^{*3} [TN: Unlike the scarf-like garments people nowadays call “prayer-shawls,” a Chassidic tallis is basically a large, thinly woven woollen blanket which is worn like a hood over the head, and which completely envelops the worshipper down to his knees. An intricately embroidered “crown” made of gold or silver marks the part of the garment which is meant to be placed on top of one’s head.]

^{*4} [TN: See http://swietokrzyskisztetl.pl/asp/en_start.asp?typ=14&menu=210&sub=173]

^{*5} [TN: From the Polish “spodek” – or saucer; traditional fur hat worn by Polish rabbis and Rebbes (and nowadays by regular Chassidim too) much akin to a shtreimel, but rather taller and narrower – much like the Queen’s Guard’s bearskin hats, only smaller.]

^{*6} [TN: A technical boundary made of wire strung from post to post around a town, which allows Jews to carry in public areas within its limits on Shabbes. Were the eruv not to be in order, no one would be allowed to carry anything outside their homes on their person on Shabbes until it was repaired – even essentials.]

^{*7} [TN: According to Halacha (the Jewish religious code of law), a Cohen, even in the times during which there is no functioning Temple in Jerusalem, must not come into contact with any Jewish corpses. He is therefore also forbidden from passing the night within an enclosure which contains a corpse. If just one dwelling in the village houses the dead body of a Jew, and it is linked to the other buildings via the connected rooftops, the entire area is viewed as one large unit containing a corpse, and a Cohen is thus forced to spend the night elsewhere.]

^{*8} [TN: Literally “Peace of the Male One”; a festivity held among Polish Jews upon the birth of a male child – preceding the actual bris. It is held on the first Shabbes of a baby boy’s life, in order to celebrate his birth. An identical protocol is followed upon the birth of a girl, which is called “Kiddush.”]