

In Memory of Our Town Krzepice

Only twenty years after the destruction of Jewish Krzepice by the Nazis and the wicked ones of other peoples, may their names be obliterated, we set forth to publish the *Yizkor* Book "*Pinkas Krzepice*" for its eternal remembrance. This booklet constitutes no more than the first pages of the great work we are about to publish.

The shock, which we received when the terrible truth regarding the fate of the town and the family of each one of us became known, has continued for a long time. Even after the Surviving Remnant was gathered, we could not come to terms with the notion that Jewish Krzepice had, in fact, been lost forever and that the hope of ever seeing them again, and perhaps also living together with them in our country, had passed - never to return. The shock was so strong, and the pain so piercing and excruciating, that we did not set our minds to giving any kind of expression to our grief and our profound sorrow. And not to mention that we certainly were not capable of thinking about publishing a *Yizkor* Book, which is an endeavour that requires concentration, a certain degree of serenity and the retrospection of time.

Meanwhile, life does its part. Over the course of time, emotions have died down and we got on with our lives. And then, the first step towards commemorating our destroyed community and its martyrs was taken. At the memorial gathering which we held on Mount Zion in Jerusalem on 7th Tamuz 5719 (13/07/1959) for the unveiling of the memorial monument in the Chamber of the Holocaust, where a marble casket was also built for the Scroll of Annihilation, some of those assembled took it upon ourselves to publish, come what may, a Memorial Book.

If truth be told, we must note that this suggestion was not met with any enthusiasm on part of those assembled. We may assume that they did not believe this to be feasible. And frankly, we may reveal that now, also, there are many among us who do not believe the publishing of the book - which for them is only a vision - can be carried out, because they are aware of the deficiencies which they consider impossible to make up for, and namely: the lack of funds with which to execute the project and the lack of literary forces able to write about the destruction of our *shtetl*.

Indeed, we are aware that this is not as easy as it sounds. But experience has shown us that "*Nothing stands in the way of willpower**", as we have already seen with others - the Surviving Remnant of the obliterated communities, who have encouraged us to publish the *Yizkor* Book, which we are strongly determined to do at all cost. We also need to be thankful to *He Who Sits On High* for the Surviving Remnant of Krzepice, who were saved from the severity of the judgement, the majority of whom were able to come to Israel and, from all the meetings we have held, it emerged that although all have more or less settled down and taken on an equal share in building up the country, and almost everyone's life is set upon normal foundations - nevertheless, the Holocaust experiences are fresh in the mind of each one of us as if it had happened today, and with current, modern, recording technologies, it is possible to set all that we went through on paper, thus raising a Memorial Stone for our destroyed town.

Apart from this, we have discovered that, in several institutions in Jerusalem, historical material on Jewish Krzepice is to be found. There is also material with private individuals about the first *Chassidim* in Krzepice. All beginnings are difficult, but everything will be easier in time. Once we retrieve the available materials, we will be able to discover additional sources and, bit by bit, we

* [TN: Jewish proverb of unknown origin, akin to the English "Where there's a will, there's a way."]

shall compile a large work of it all. Apart from this, we hope for “first fruits” from the Diaspora, also. In order to receive materials on the Holocaust period, we shall need to take down the members’ horrifying stories and there is no doubt that, from the Diaspora also, we will be able to receive suitable material for the book. Once we have concentrated all this, it will be necessary to edit it and to polish it literarily.

The first part of the book will include the town’s history, traditions, fathers, events and history of the Jewish populace, as well as about certain individuals. One cannot pass over the history of such an old community as the Krzepice Community because, besides being meant for history, it is a spiritual necessity for us, the Surviving Remnant and the Krzepice townspeople, as it will make the years of our childhood and youth pass before our eyes, which every person calls to mind yearningly and with feelings of holiness. Are these memories not the salt and condiment of a man’s life, when its flavour is diminishing as his sun is setting? A person treasures a photograph from his youth dearly. And yet, this piece of paper on which the image is stamped is mute - at most, it can speak to him with a wink. But a book narrates and reminds [you] of the facts and events which you personally witnessed and even took part in. Indeed, one’s hometown is likened to one’s mother – just like a person’s mother is dear to him even if she has some physical defects, and it would never occur to him to falsify his mother’s picture in order to hide her imperfections, thus he loves his hometown, [even] with all its flaws.

The second part of the book, on the other hand, in which we shall speak of the Holocaust period, is intended equally for us and for the coming generations, because in these hair-raising tales of destruction, we see a lesson and a warning to all the Diaspora communities against complacency and [placing] excessive trust in the enlightened nations.

The book will be divided into two sections: Yiddish and Hebrew. We will be very grateful to our *landsleit* in Israel and in all other countries for personal memoirs depicting the charming and magical Jewish life in the *shtetl*’s many houses. We also thank, in advance, those who will write articles and stories and especially those who survived the Holocaust, who will write down their experiences and describe them with feeling, tears, pain and spiritual suffering. We also wish to thank all those who will send to us photographs and pictures of the *shtetl*, the Jewish life, institutions, [political] parties, etc. These pictures will be returned upon demand and may everyone be blessed.

This current booklet serves as proof that our great ambition to publish the *Krzepicer Yizkor* Book is becoming a reality and we are sure that, with everyone’s help, this book will be published - as a monument to the memory of our destroyed town and to the memory of our martyrs, may God avenge their blood.
