

Moshe

Mojsze Klarman z''l



We used to affectionately pronounce the name "Clarus", without thinking of this Latin word's meaning - "pure". Indeed, he will always remain as such in our memory.

He excelled in the simplicity of his ways - his vigour, perseverance, intelligence and, above all, in his obstinate stance, without yielding in [matters of] principle - from his schooldays to his last hour.

In his private life and in his public activities, he was not deterred by obstacles and he fought tirelessly to change the face of reality. All the years of his life were dedicated to the [*Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair*] Movement and to the *kibbutz*.

At the Częstochowa cell, he was the director and instructor and, soon, he became instructor for the entire Zagłębie region. Prior to his emigration to Palestine, he was active in the central leadership division in Równe¹ and, later, in the central leadership in Warsaw.

In 1938, he arrived in a *kibbutz* in Palestine and, with his characteristic vigour and consistency, he began to become accustomed to the hard, physical labour. In the evenings, after work and on Saturdays, he dedicated himself to cultural activities in the *kibbutz* and to the consolidation of the movement's standing.

In 1942, he joined the British Army, in the artillery corps. There, too, he dedicated himself to public works among the soldiers and gained their trust. Clarus attentively followed every project that was implemented and would sharply criticise any error or deviation in our social life².

Once he had completed his service, he took upon himself an even more difficult task - instructing the *Cherut* ["Freedom"] nucleus [of] immigrants [who had survived] the Bergen-Belsen camp which, despite the state of emergency, was becoming integrated into the life of the *kibbutz* and the country.

In the War of Independence, Clarus fought at [*kibbutz*] Yad Mordechai³ and, as an experienced mortar-man from the days of the Jewish Brigade, he was sent from position to position in order to strike at the concentrations of the enemy. However, once the shells had been exhausted, he fought on as a fusilier in the first line of fire. When the heavy armoured vehicles stormed his position, Clarus did not retreat, but held the trench - where he was hit by the enemy's bullet.

¹ [TN: Rivne or Rovno, Ukraine, which was at the time annexed to Poland.]

² [TN: It is unclear whether the author refers to projects within the British Army, or in Jewish Palestine in general.]

³ [TN: Kibbutz in Southern Israel, which was attacked by Egypt in the War of Independence in 1948.]

Excerpt from Clarus' last letter to his young lady:

The ruins of Yad Mordechai, Saturday, 22nd May 1948.

I take the opportunity to write you a few words. Perhaps we will manage to evacuate the injured and the [female] members, who will deliver this letter of mine to you. They will also tell you what happened here with us. You surely recall my views from before the 15th of May and of what awaited us after this date.

I had not foreseen such destruction and ruin to the [kibbutz's] farmland. The landscape around me seems so alien, that it no longer reminds me at all of our home and our kibbutz. I am happy that, at least, we were able to save the children and women. Let us hope that some of our men may live to see victory and give a hand to rebuilding the ruins.

Thus far, I have been lucky - let us hope we shall see each other again. But, if not, I have no doubts that you will manage to cope. If we succeed in repelling the enemy and do not allow him to take the position from our hands, this sacrifice will not have been in vain.

Tell Amos that there are tens of thousands here, with shells and other kinds of weaponry.

Warm kisses to you, Amos and Shulamit, and to the rest of the family.

