

M.Sh. Geshuri

## Amstov [Mstów] (*Emes-Tov*) [Truly Good]

The town of Mstów, which is fourteen kilometres from Częstochowa, is surrounded by mountains and crossed by the Warta. The Warta crosses it – which made it a holiday destination.

In total, 110 Jewish families lived in Mstów. Some earned their livelihoods from petty trade and others from carpentry, shoemaking and from taking cattle and fattened fowl to [sell in] Częstochowa. Despite all the work, the blessings were few and, usually, great poverty prevailed amongst the town's Jews and many families did not have enough bread to satisfy [themselves].

Nevertheless, they excelled in the traits of charity, goodwill, hospitality to guests, etc. As a result, beggars would come from afar to Mstów - especially for *Shabbes* - and not in vain did the famous tzadik Reb Duwid'l of Lelów *ztz"l* say of Mstów Jews that they were "*Emes-Tov*", after which they no longer wrote its name Amstov [in Hebrew characters] with a *Samech*, but *Emes-Tov* [with a *Tav*]. Immeasurably great was their love for Jews [in general] and amongst themselves [in particular].

Followers of Ger, Radomsko, etc. prayed together in one study-hall and did not split up into separate groups - a very rare phenomenon in those times. There were many Torah scholars and students in the town and, despite their hard and bitter struggle to make a living, they gathered every evening to learn a lesson in Talmud with *Toisfes* [commentaries]. The lecturer was my deceased father *z"l*. Those who did not take active part in the lesson, sat and listened most attentively.



*The synagogue and study-hall where the writer H.D. Numberg studied.*

Mstów never had a *Kehilla* and election-wars and fraternal quarrels were unknown to us. We were not annexed to Częstochowa and were exempt from the [*Kehila*] tax, which was called "*Etat*" [Ger; budget].



**Rabbi Berisz  
Ajnchorn of Mstów**

The town's rabbi, the rabbi and prodigy Reb Berisz Ajnchorn z''l, was proficient and sharp, learned and studious. He studied Torah for its own sake, day and night, and devoted all his energy to the management of the *yeshivah*, which was famed throughout all corners of Poland, Germany, Hungary and Czechia. The rabbi devoted himself to this *yeshivah* without wishing to receive remuneration. He was unfamiliar with the appearance of a coin [fig.]. He earned his livelihood mainly from the selling of yeast and cards for [shares in] ritually slaughtered meat. The existence of the *yeshivah* and its maintenance depended solely on the residents. No collections were conducted but, instead, each homeowner donated one day [a week] to take in a guest and, as a native of the locality [myself], I bear testimony that many "homeowners" skimmed on a taste of butter and a glass of milk from the mouths of their own children, that there should be enough for a *yeshivah* student who was eating with them that day.

Mstów had the following institutions: the *Chevra Kadisha*, a Charity Loans Fund [and] a Hostel for the Poor. There was also a magnificent synagogue, two study-halls (one on the *yeshivah* premises), a *mikvah* (which was managed by Reb Shabse Grinberg), a *Beis Yaakov* [school] (headed by the rabbi's wife) and the Szalom Asz Library.

### **[Political] Parties**

*Betar* was founded by the brothers Nojeh and Józef Szydłowski (now in Tel-Aviv). *Ha'Tzohar* [Revisionist Zionists] was founded by Jakób Kalman Bencelowicz (now in Tel-Aviv) and [there was also] *Tzeirei Agudas Yisroel*.

### **Personalities and Public Figures**

Reb Shabse Grinberg z''l, whom people called *Shepsil*, was known as a loyal public activist and intercessor [with the authorities], who felt the pain of others. [Both] Jews and Christians came to him seeking counsel. Because he was astute and sharp-minded, he represented the townspeople, on a regular basis, at the Regional Council ("*Rada Gmina*") and was, most often, elected through the votes of non-Jews - until the War in 1939.

Jakób Kalman Bencelowicz is dynamic man who shows initiative and a great philanthropist (now in Tel-Aviv).

Natan Federman, who was nicknamed *Tan Dayan* [Rabbinical Judge].

Binem Goldberg, the son-in-law of Heniek Wajnrajch, was an educated man and was nicknamed *Heniek Kotok* [?].

Pinkus Gryman was the permanent *gabay*<sup>1</sup>.

Mordche Szydłowski was one of the town's rich men.

Mojsze Rozinski, Abram Mruwka, Icze Majer Kon, Izrail Juda Woznica, Izrail Juda Fuks and many others.

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: It is unclear whether he was the synagogue warden, a collector of charity money or both.]

With the onset of the War in 1939, many refugees came to Mstów from around Łódź, especially from Aleksander (next to Łódź), and they found shelter in the town. We had no ghetto, but it was forbidden to leave the town limits and many were shot for the offence of going outside them.

In 1942, on the Eve of *Sukkos*, a transport to Radomsko was conducted and, from there, to Treblinka.