

E. Ben-Moshe

## Fizel Blumenkranc *hy*"d



I had the great honour of being counted among Fizel Blumenkranc's close friends.

As Secretary of the Częstochowa *Kehilla*, he became the living soul and "walking encyclopaedia" of our city. He attained this honour because he was a great scholar, in the full sense of the word, and one of the most intellectual individuals amongst Częstochowa's Jews.

He began by publishing his articles in "*Częstochower Zeitung*" and "*Unser Weg*", among others, and he eventually accessed all the newspapers published of the time in Yiddish and Polish, in Warsaw and in the provincial cities.

His writing was most enjoyable. He was especially noted for his articles about figures in the theatre and in the world of film. He was a very capable reviewer, whose words carried much weight with both the actors and the public, for his critique was appropriate and unbiased. His reports and novels were something quite special, which aroused interest amongst the educated readers, who rallied round him.

Blumenkranc was perfectly fluent in Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish and English, which was rare at the time he lived in Częstochowa.

Shortly before the War, Blumenkranc was chosen as the secretary of a committee to publish a monograph on Częstochowa Jewry. He devoted much of his time, energy and great talent to this. In one of his letters to me, written in July 1939, he gave me the news that they were to publish two volumes. The first was to be written by himself and Engineer Wilczyński, while the second would be collective and encompass the political, public and cultural life of the Jewish community in Częstochowa. It would, of course, also include detailed biographies of world-famous figures from Częstochowa, such as Bronisław Huberman, Dr Józef Kruk and such others.

(To our great sorrow, he was unable to carry out this very valuable ambition. He was swept away in the torrent of the cruel deluge of blood. Hitler's troops "overpowered" this sensitive and very talented man. They sent him to the death camp, where his blood was spilt and merged with the blood of his fellow townspeople, for whom he had worked during his entire active and glorious life!

I must shed yet another tear, in my sorrow, for my dear and trusted friend. Fizel had a sister named Miryam in Israel. Her husband, S. Ben-Ami, fell in the War of Independence and, due to her great grief for his loss, she too died.)

Her children - a son and daughter - who now live in [*kibbutz*] Degania Alef, invited me to join them in the unveiling ceremony of the tombstone for this honoured personality, in which I found some small consolation - as far as I can be consoled at all.