

## Felix (Fizel) Szapira *hy''d*



He was born in Kielce to Jakób Elio and Arli<sup>1</sup> Szapira, a respected and prosperous family, owners of the “Borków” estate. He studied at the Polish high school in Kielce and, after receiving his bachelor’s degree, travelled to Switzerland, where he studied at the Faculty of Philosophy and Political Science in Bern. There, he became acquainted with Socialist circles and, upon his return to Kielce for the summer holidays, he was caught by the Russian police engaging in an illegal activity. He was arrested and sat for a long time in prison as a political prisoner.

In the meantime, his parents moved to Częstochowa. When he was released, his thoughts took a revolutionary turn. He joined the nationalist and Zionist movement and, being a naturally active person, he very soon became rooted in these circles. Thanks to his loyalty and commitment, he became one of the Zionist movement’s central activists. He was naturally kind-hearted and sympathetic. He welcomed anyone cheerfully and so found favour with the nationalist public, who placed him in the front row of their activists. He was leader of the Zionist Organisation for some time and represented it at the City Council as *ławnik* [city councillor]. As such, he was able to protect the interests of the Jewish residents [and ensure] their rights not be violated.

He was also one of the best activists for the National Funds, as well as dedicating himself to Jewish affairs in the city’s financial institutions, the administration of the Hebrew high school and the sports institutions.

[Just] before the outbreak of the Second World War, when the occupation of Częstochowa by the Nazis was imminent, his Polish friends within the City Council advised him to flee the city, telling him that the Nazis were sure to take revenge upon him, before all others, for his public appearances against Nazism.

(He left Częstochowa and moved to Słonim, where his brother-in-law’s relatives lived. But, when the war between the Nazis and the Soviet Russians broke out on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1941, he was unable to flee in time. On July 17, 1941, he was captured, together with his two sons, Józek (aged 19) and Czesiek (aged 17), both pupils of the Częstochowa Hebrew high school and, together with another thousand Jews, were taken to the outskirts of Słonim, shot, and thrown into pits which they themselves had previously dug.

So ended the glorious and very active life of one of our city’s greatest activists – together with his sons. His brother-in-law Szmul (Staszek) Brum (his sister Helena’s husband) also met the same cruel death.

Felix Szapira’s wife, Hala, who was saved by chance, fell ill due to her grief and died shortly afterwards in Słonim.)

---

<sup>1</sup> [TN: Spelled “ארלי” in the Heb. original; this name does not exist.]

His sister, Dr Czesława (*née* Szapira) Orlinska, who was director of one of the departments of "TOZ" in Częstochowa, and later a paediatrician at the Częstochowa Jewish Hospital, was able - after great suffering - to arrive in the Land [of Israel], together with her husband, the engineer Abraham Orlinski (now Orli). However, a severe illness ended her life and she died on 23<sup>rd</sup> Adar 5726 [15<sup>th</sup> March 1966], in Tel-Aviv.