

With the Appearance of This Book

This book, which we have before us and which is dedicated to our *shtetl*, contains testimonies and memoirs near to the heart of all the Żarki *landsleit* wherever they may be.

Before our eyes, the book raises Żarki's distant and recent past, as well as the days of the Great Holocaust which passed over our town, until its bitter end, when all the people of the *shtetl* were annihilated - and now only a few individuals are scattered throughout the globe, the majority in Israel.

For years, we deliberated on the question as to in which manner and form to immortalise the memory of the *shtetl*, its inhabitants and the lifestyle there. When a few of us came up with the idea to publish a *Yizkor Book*, we thought it was just a dream. We knew that our numbers were very small and that our means were also extremely meagre. And while we were still struggling with numerous issues - how to approach the matter as regards the material, the required funds, etc. - the few organisers began working, still having nothing substantial before them, besides the goodwill and sense of obligation that were beating in their hearts.

We may now reveal that, more than once, the Organising Committee stood on the threshold of despair. Doubts and disappointments gnawed at the heart. Would we be able to execute such a weighty mission? But the cherished goal - to raise a memorial monument to our town - is what kept us going. In order to put an end to the doubts, the committee members sat down and embarked on the task.

We contacted the Żarki *landsleit* in Israel and abroad. We prioritised collecting literary material, viz. procuring the contents of the book, to raising the funds needed for its publishing and this was due to our lack of confidence that we would reach this stage. We took the written work upon ourselves, dividing up the subjects and time periods according to the field of expertise of each one of us. Bit by bit, the people of Żarki began to respond - some sent written material and others financial aid - and each new page, each additional fact and each promise to help us encouraged us to carry on. Not everyone replied but, from time to time, additional members joined us from city and *kibbutz*, *moshava* and *moshav*¹, and memoirs, pictures and descriptions of daily life and of the past also began to arrive. That is how we reached this point and we consider it quite a respectable achievement. We are not oblivious to that which the book is lacking. We realise that it is not a paradigm of perfection and not everything has found its full expression in it, because the contributors are not many and those, whom we attempted to make speak, in order to rescue from their mouth or from the fruits of their pen any possible detail, are not literary folk.

It is only natural that, here and there, one may find an inaccuracy in some data, the lack of this or that detail or that certain things are repeated in different articles. After all, this book is no more than a reflection of a reality spanning many years, with a wealth of events, which has passed and gone together with its people and is no more.

Thus, all that is written in this book is the fruit of a collective effort by people, for the majority of whom this is their first attempt to set down, on paper, the thoughts of their minds, the feelings of their hearts, and the fruit of their memory. Hence the advantage of this writing is simplicity, unmediated wholehearted honesty and truthfulness of soul.

¹ [TN: A *kibbutz* is a commune, a *moshava* is a rural settlement of privately owned farms, and a *moshav* is a cooperative settlement made up of individual farms.]

We decided to publish part of the book in Yiddish, which broadened its scope and increased its budget. Due to the latter reason, not everything was translated from Hebrew to Yiddish and vice-versa. Both sections together provide, of course, a more complete picture of the life and the destruction of our town.

In conclusion, we herewith extend our deepest gratitude to all the members who lent their hand to carrying out this project, both materially and spiritually, and especially to the book's editor, Yitzchak Lador, who dedicated so much energy and commitment to the editing and processing of the material, and also contributed to the book with the fruits of his pen. May you all be blessed, and *yasher koyach*²! It is our hope that this memorial endeavour will stand as a living monument for the younger generation and for those of the future.

The Organising Committee:
Pinchas Wajnberg, Jakow Fiszer, Abram Ajzenberg



The Extended Committee:

Standing, from right to left: A. Lauden, Sz. Korcfeld, M. Rotenberg, A. Fajfkopf, A. Ajzykowicz and K. Lubinski; Seated: A. Ajzenberg, A. Snopkowski, P. Wajnberg, Sz. Preger and J. Fajner.

² [TN: Lit. "May your strength be firm"; expression akin to "May your hands prosper."]