

Two Last Letters ^{*)}

As we take up the quill to mention our *shtetl*, the hand trembles. We are reminded of what we have lost and of the Żarki Jews whose loss we feel. Here and there, one person from a family is left. From many families, none have survived and there is no one to remember them.

Of my own family - one of the largest in Żarki - only two souls survived - a daughter of Gecel Grynszpan and a son of Wolf Grynszpan.

On 11th November 1940, they tore me away from family - from my wife and my little twenty-month-old daughter - and sent me to a labour camp in Germany. All the friends of my youth perished. I hereby commemorate Jechiel Bruder, Icze Kurc and Jakow-Majer Rajchman - the son of Szlojme Shames.

In the camp, I received a letter from Icze Kurc. He writes:

Walking down the street, I met your sister Rachel. She told me that a letter had arrived from you from the camp. I went to your house to see the letter. There, I found your old father lying sick in bed. The militia had attacked him on the Dąbrowa road. This could be the last letter that I ever write to you. My friend, it is very difficult. [These are] days of struggle between life and death, days of living through bitter hell, days of hunger and troubles.

I think that, for you in the camp, behind barbed wire, things are better than for us. Your eyes do not see the tribulations, the pain, of the deportations - the agony of the children and the old people.

With this, I end my letter - once the War is over, whoever survives is not to forget and not to forgive.

Your friend, Icze Kurc
20/7/1941

Through a Christian from Myszków, who was travelling from our camp to Myszków on leave, I was able to send a letter to my wife Karola Grynszpan and, through him, I also received a reply. This is my wife's letter:

My beloved husband Mojsze-Zalman,

Sitting at night, deep in hard and bitter thoughts, I hear a knock on the door. A Christian comes in and says, "Do not be afraid - I have a letter for you". With tears in our eyes, we all read the letter. There are already few of us here. From Myszków, everyone has been driven out. The Christians have robbed everything. Mother and Uncle Chaim-Mendel have been sent to Auschwitz. Just imagine our household's financial state. Father has cut off his beard, shaved, in order to look younger. We hid in a bunker. Following the deportation, we emerged from the bunker and saw our great destruction. It is better that you do not know the names. I believe that this is my last letter to you, my beloved husband. Whoever survives, is not forget the sorrow and not to forgive.

^{*)} Made public by Zalman Grynszpan.