

Mr. YONATHAN MAJRANC

I would like these few lines to be a memorial to the figure of my father z"l, who was one of the well-known figures in Jewish Kutno who perished under the Nazi oppressor.

My father, R. Yonathan Majranc z"l, received his education in his youth in the city of Kalisz, with Rabbi Chaim Wax ztz"l, and after his marriage he moved his residence to Kutno, where he was a follower of the late Rabbi Yehoshua Trunk. Dad told me a lot about the genius Rabbi Yehoshua Trunk: the main area of activity of my father z"l was in "*Bikur Cholim*"¹, where he served as chief gabbai. Who will not remember the blessed actions of this institution during the First World War in 1914? After the Russian government, in those days, abandoned Kutno, a committee of dignitaries of the city was established for local authority. Among the 12 members of the committee elected was also my father z"l, who was appointed deputy mayor and served in this post until the establishment of independent Poland. But more than once, father z"l filled the place of the German mayor when he was absent from the city, during the German occupation in that war, and this not in order to receive a reward. Dad was also a judge in the court established by the Germans in our city. And I remember the instructive case of a priest brought before

¹ TN: Visiting the sick.

the court on a charge of espionage in favor of the Russians. The German judge sentenced the priest to death but Dad, who was sitting at the trial with other public figures, refused to sign this deadly verdict and thus the priest escaped death.

When community institutions began to be established in German times, father was the chairman of the community. Dad continued working in public affairs even after the establishment of independent Poland. Although his private business suffered greatly from it, Dad did not stop devoting himself to public affairs. After the war, under Polish rule, father z"l was a member of the city administration for a long time, and won not only the sympathy of the Jewish public but the sympathy of all the citizens of the city knowing that he was dealing with public needs with faith. Only his illness forced him to cease his occupations, as instructed by the doctors.

Father z"l also devoted himself to Zionist activity, before the "*Mizrachi*"² was established in our city, but when the political parties began to organize, father turned away from the activity. Despite this, he continued to contribute to the Zionist funds, buying the Zionist shekel³ and in the elections for the Polish "*Sejm*"⁴ he conducted vigorous propaganda for the Zionist list.

Interesting detail: a year before his death, elections were held for the Zionist Congress and for father who was already ill, it was difficult for him to climb the stairs, so the election committee responded and came down to him, to allow him to vote.

The appreciation and respect that the entire Jewish public in Kutno felt for him was also expressed with his passing. Since there were two "*Chevrot Kadisha*"⁵ in our city, one of which did not want to accept the authority of the community committee, father z"l tried during his lifetime to make peace between them. But he failed. And when father died on Saturday night, the two burial societies came to our house on Saturday night to take care of his burial and began to quarrel over which of them would get to take care of the deceased. We, the family members, when we saw what was happening, called the rabbi of the city and he ruled that the quarrel between the two companies must end once and for all. And thanks to the deceased, peace was made between them and since then there has been only one burial society. In his obituary for father z"l, the rabbi noted that thanks to the honorable deceased, a long-standing dispute was put to an end.

Dad was a public activist who was always looking for the common good; he was attached to his people in every fiber of his soul.

May his soul be bound in the bundle of eternal life

Yitzhak MAJRANC

² TN: Orthodox Zionist movement established in 1902.

³ TN: Symbolic currency giving the right to vote in Zionist Congress elections.

⁴ TN: Polish parliament.

⁵ TN: Burial societies.