

SHMUEL HALEVI LAZNOWSKI

Shmuel-Halevi, son of Mr. Yitzhak Laznowski was born in the month of Tevet 5643 (8.1.1883). His father owned a mansion in Wolbrom and a manufacture of candles and soap. The mother of Mr. Shmuel-Halevi, Ryvka daughter of Mr. Moshe Barmhercig, was also from a wealthy Jewish family, since Mr. Moshe Barmhercig owned estates and was known in his city and surroundings as a generous benefactor.

Shmuel-Halevi Laznowski, like all the children of Israel in those days, studied in a *cheder* and in a *yeshiva* until he married Miriam-Esther, daughter of Abraham Zvi



Mordechai HaLevi and Miriam Esther Laznowski

(Hirsh) Walter, who was a mohel and perseverant¹, a descendant of the genius Rabbi Yehoshe'le of Kutno. Mrs. Miriam-Esther was a noble-minded and gentle woman, educated and fluent in many languages.

After his marriage, Shmuel Halevi Laznowski left the *Beit Midrash* bench and went out into the world of action. In his new path, his cleverness stood out and his sharp mind soon paved the way for his new life. He was fluent in several languages and this mastery helped him in negotiations with people, was successful in the sales of the manufacture and was also a partner in his father's business. He even marketed his father's produce (candles and soap) in his store he opened on Królewska Street in Kutno.

Apparently, however, these businesses did not satisfy his soul and he did not find in them an interest that would bind him, so he detached himself from them. His attraction to Israel was greater than material success in a diaspora town. Indeed, as early as 1914, he immigrated to *Eretz Israel* with all his family, since one of his aspirations was to educate his sons in a national and traditional spirit faithful to the values of his people. After immigrating to Israel, he settled in Jaffa and since he was fluent in languages, he was accepted as a clerk in the Turkish government offices in the Jaffa district (in the "Syria" building). Rabbi Shmuel-Halevi was liked by all the officials of the Turkish government and even by the Turkish governor of those days, Hassan Beck, whose name was despised by all the country inhabitants, due to his tyranny and his hostile attitude towards country Jews. During the First World War, when by order of the Turks

¹ TN: Perseverance or diligence in Torah study, is devoting full time to study without wasting time on other things.

they began to expel the Jewish residents of Jaffa and Tel Aviv from the country², Mr. Shmuel Halevi took advantage of his many connections with the Turkish authorities to prevent the deportation of many Jews. He also helped many to be released from conscription into the Turkish army, imprisoned or severely punished for violating government orders.

But he himself was also forced to move to Haifa during the deportation (Nisan 1917), where his wife Miriam-Esther died on the 6th of Nisan 5678 (March 19, 1918).

After the First World War he was already a veteran in the country and served as an address for all the new immigrants who began to reach the shores of the country. In their first steps in the new land, he assisted them with advice and guidance, as he continued to do good and kindness with all who sought his help.

In the summer of 1938, he left for Poland to have his two twin daughters, Leah and Pnina who were born in Tel Aviv, make *aliyah*. Meanwhile, World War II broke out and they could no longer return to Israel. One day, Mr. Shmuel-Halevi went to visit his older brother, Mr. Berish Laznowski in Wolbrom, who was one of the leaders of the community there and a member of the Wolbrom municipality.

Yosef Welner, a Wolbrom man, tells of the death of Mr. Shmuel Halevi, in a book published in memory of the Wolbrom community. Y. Welner and Shmuel Laznowski were captured by the SS and transferred to a labor company. One day, on their return from work, a sick Jew, who was in their company, fell to the ground. Mr. Shmuel Halevi and Y. Welner immediately rushed to the Jew who had collapsed behind them, to lend him help. But the SS officer saw this. He handed them a gun and ordered them to shoot the sick Jew. Yosef Welner immediately left the sick and returned to his place in a row, while Mr. Shmuel did not abandon the poor man and continued to attend to him. This angered the Nazi killer who fired at both the sick man and Mr. Shmuel Halevi.

May his memory be blessed.

These are the descendants of Mr. Shmuel Halevi Laznowski:

Yocheved, wife of Yaakov Werner (pharmacist at Rambam Governmental Hospital in Haifa); Yona z"l, wife of Abraham Gradom, from Lipno. She perished in the Holocaust with her husband and two children; Bracha, the wife of Yaakov Rimon (poet, former secretary of the Tel Aviv municipality's Social Assistance department); Abraham Zvi-Halevi, (a teacher in the *Beit Midrash* for teachers in New York, poet and secretary of the Pen-Club there); Mordechai Halevi (philatelist in Tel Aviv), twins Leah and Pnina perished during their visit to Kutno during the Holocaust.

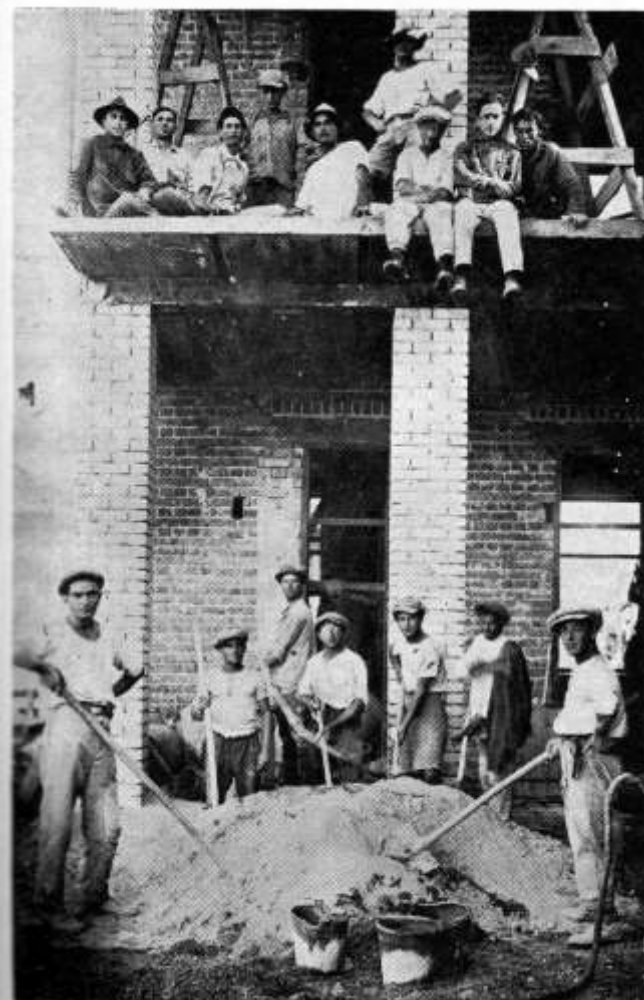
² TN: because they were Polish or Russian, therefore enemies of Turkey. Some, who accepted the deal of taking Turkish citizenship, were subsequently conscripted into the Turkish army.

Mr. Yitzhak Laznowski

Mr. Yitzhak Laznowski was a God-fearing and faithful chassid. A noble-minded man, whose house was open to all the needy. *Admors*³ and rabbis, in passing Kutno were accustomed to lodge only with him. But not only them, all those having a difficult day and resentments would turn to his home for help. For his wife – Ryvka born Barmhercig – was also known for her hospitality. Everyone who approached her, she supported generously because she knew their needs both in summer and winter.

It was an open house for all. Even ordinary *yeshiva* students would dine at his table, as was the custom in those days, to have "eat days"⁴.

A well-known *Admor* once stayed at his house for a month. The *Admor* did not come alone, but brought with him an entire "court" of devotees and servants. Upon



House of the Rojer family in Tel Aviv, built by Kutno workers

learning of the *Admor's* stay at the home of Mr. Yitzhak Laznowski in Kutno, followers from all over Poland began to flock to his home. Each chassid brought with him a "note" asking for help from the *Admor*. An entire floor was

³ TN: Hebrew abbreviation "ADonenu, MOrenu, veRabbenu," meaning "Our Master, Teacher and Rabbi", honorific title given to scholarly leaders of a Jewish community.

⁴ TN: Yiddish "esen teg", every landlord would feed a *yeshiva* boy, one or two days a week.

given to the *Admor* because of this, and the house hummed of Jews like a swarm of bees. However, it is not only these days that the house was full of chassidim, since it had a synagogue and every Jew could pray in it and all-year round, the house of Mr. Yitzhak Laznowski served as an address for all Jews in distress.



Poet Abraham Zvi Halevi
Laznowski



Yitzhak Laznowski

Descendants of Mr. Yitzhak Laznowski and his wife Ryvka are: Berish hy"d; Sara hy"d (wife of Mr. Shlomo Freudman of Będzin); Wolf; Ida hy"d (wife of Chaim Yaakov Walter hy"d from Kutno); Shmuel-Halevi hy"d; Henich hy"d; Nathan hy"d; Ruzha hy"d.

Abraham Zvi Halevi (Laznowski)

Born 29 Elul 5667 (September 8, 1907) in Kutno, Poland, to his father Shmuel Halevi Laznowski and to his mother Miriam Esther daughter of Abraham Zvi Walter⁵ (on his father's side, well-known merchants and industrialists, and on his mother's side, a family of rabbis).

First studied in the *cheder* and then in an improved *cheder*.

In 1914, the whole family immigrated to Israel and settled in Jaffa. He graduated from the boys' school in Neve Shalom and studied at the teachers' seminary for *Mizrachi*.

As a student, he edited student newspapers called: "*Zikei-Naar*", "*HaNitzutz*" and "*Shabririm*". He was active in the Youth Association for the Distribution of Hebrew Products, and participated in articles on this subject in "*The Bell*" and "*The Good of the Land*."

He began writing poems at an early age, and in 1912 a collection of his first poems (in a hectograph) called "*Sounds of the Heart*" appeared in student publishing.

In 1924 he traveled to Brasil and from there to the United States for further education. He graduated from the *Tarbut* Teachers' Seminary in New York, under the direction of the poet Dr. Shimon Ginzburg.

In 1929, during the events, he returned to Israel, worked in the valley and joined as a member of the kibbutz "*Kiryat Anavim*". In the late 1930s he returned to New York and was active in the Professional Association for the Leatherware Industry. He served there as the organizer and director of strikes in New York and other cities.

In 1935 he emigrated to Israel again and began his literary work in poetry and reviews. His remarks were published in the "*Davar*" supplement and in the "*Gilayonot*". Was among the organizers of the Young Writers Association and served as secretary. At the end of 1938, he traveled again to the United States via Poland and some European countries. In New York he published his remarks in the "*Post*," "*Book of the Year for the Jews of America*," "*Batzron*," and "*HaTkufa*," and continued to participate in "*Issues*." In 1941 he was with the poet Shimon Halkin, Mordechai Newman, Reuben Wallenrod and another group of writers and activists from the founders of the *Ohel* publishing house, where he served as secretary for several years. *Ohel* Publishing was founded as a cooperative by the writers themselves and has published to date about 10 books in poetry, storytelling and critics. From 1942 to 1945, he was drafted into the United States Army, as a sergeant. He also continued his literary work in the army (he published articles on the Jewish Brigade in "*Batzron*" and in newspapers). When he was discharged from the army at the end of 1945, he continued his secretariat at the *Ohel* and in 1948 was elected secretary of the Pan-Ivri Club in New York, under the presidency of the poet Zalman Schneur. That same year, *Ohel* published a book of his poems "*Between Parentheses*" which gives expression to the concerns of a man from Israel in the American diaspora. A special section in the notable book is a series of poems on the big city New York. Also included sonnets called "Furnished Rooms". For a while he published review pamphlets and participated in a regular section in "*Batzron*" called "Line and Weight", which commented specifically on the literary work in the country. He signed the review articles under the name: A. Zahal⁶.

(David Tidhar – Encyclopedia of the Pioneers of the Yishuv and its Builders, Tel Aviv, 5712, p. 2347).

⁵ TN: "Wetler" in the original text, contradicting the previously-mentioned "Walter".

⁶ TN: Hebrew acronym for Abraham Zvi Halevi Laznowski.