

THE TEN WHO WERE HANGED
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translated from the Yiddish by Murray Citron

Who by slaughter and who by strangulation... multifarious were the deaths by which our near and dear were overcome in those dark years, when the Hitler-plague was rampant over the most vital and creative part of world-Jewry, which found itself in Poland. When not only Jewish belongings and everything holy and precious fell into abandonment, but even the last physical naked lives were also condemned to death through the devilish, fully-thought-out plan of those "supermen" who wanted and still want to rule the world.

Łęczyca was only a branch of that beautiful mature tree that was Jewish Poland, which over many generations absorbed the nourishment and sap from its healthy roots.

And just as branches are like each other, so also was Łęczyca like the countless Jewish towns and *shtetls* in Poland with their customs, holidays, occupations, unions, party struggles and cultural organization-work.

The Nazis, who committed every crime that can be found in a criminal codex, with the addition of their own sadistic inventions, accused the starved and weary Łęczyca Jews, confined to the ghetto, who had given away their last valuables for a few potatoes, or a piece of bread, in order to keep themselves alive – if it could be called that – of dealing in gold, and sentenced them for that to death. And they did not only accuse Jews from the ghetto, but Jews whom they themselves had thrown in prison.

When the condemned were brought from their cells, one of them died of fright. When all the Jews were assembled in the market, where special gallows for the ten Jews had been prepared, the officer of the SS-men first took out the best Jew from the first row to replace the dead man. The unexpected corpse, which lay next to the SS-man with his wife and two children, was Yankel Szpigel z"l, before the war a wealthy Jew.

The fact that one was dead already did not count. If gallows were prepared for ten, ten must be hanged. So, the German ordinance would be followed. With one hanging

holiday of Purim... An order was proclaimed that all Jews must be present and witnesses at the execution, no one was permitted to remain at home, the doors must not be locked or left open...

Among those hanged were two brothers: Israel and Eliyahu Shajbe z"l, one had first to hang the other. There were also among them a father and a son: Ben-Zion and Yaakov Moszkowicz z"l; the son had first to hang his father... To such a level had the German people descended in the middle of the 20th century, when, seeking to rule the world with force, they put themselves in the hands of a



The confined "Jewish street" – a part of the ghetto, where all the Jews of the town were crammed in

there was a complication, the rope broke. The still living Yankele Wiszegródzki said to the German officer that according to international law it was not permitted to hang him, and he must remain alive. "For Jews there is no law," was the answer.

Ten Jews had been sentenced to be hanged in the market. The deceitful unspoken thought was: the Jewish

degenerate mass-murderer.

Following the destruction of our Jewish Łęczycza, we mourn among all the Jews the ten who were sentenced to be hanged, and also the four other Jews: Naftali Kohn, Yitzhak Szpringer, Mordechai Sztar and Yaakov Chaim Lesman z"l, who all died a martyr's death for their *yiddishkayt*.

Honor to their memory!



The "*Judenrat*", headed by Mucznik, and an SS agent review the list of Jews for deportation