

ŁECZYCERS IN AUSTRALIA

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translated from the Yiddish by Carole Turkeltaub Borowitz and David Shirman.

The horrible news that had come soon after the war about the annihilation of the Eastern European Jewry and of our town of Łeczyca prompted us to create an administrative body in Melbourne that would carry out supportive action for the surviving Jews of Łeczyca. Around that time a homeland association of Łeczyca survivors was created in Melbourne. The first committee was composed of the following members: Zvi Rizman, Z. Bornsztajn, Shimshon Lisner, David and Efraim Rogoziński. It was, as a matter of fact, a rescue committee.

We contacted the city council of Łeczyca in order to find out how many and who of the Jews were alive. We learned that Dr. Holcer and his wife and several more people came back to Łeczyca. Everyone was concentrated around their house. We managed to establish contact with them. We immediately conducted a money raising campaign. The first aid that we gave – we sent a package with food. Our committee has developed ties with the General Jewish Aid Committee in Australia.

It was permitted for the Jewish representatives to work with the government, which will allow some of the surviving Jews to be brought into the country. For the sake

of this purpose the Łeczyca *landsmanschaft* crew undertook an initiative so that all who wished to come to Australia could receive an entry permit through us.

Along with all that a lot of money for the ship tickets was needed. We have turned to our country men in America, but we have not received any material help from there.

The first people of Łeczyca who came to Australia were Smit from Grabów with his wife (the daughter of Harinak). This was still before the First World War. The Jewish immigration from Łeczyca to Australia started with them. Soon also the brother of Harinak with his wife (maiden name Rizman) came. In the beginning of the 1920s also Simon Joskowicz came with his family. Later, when the Jews of Poland could no longer survive because of harsh taxes, also Rizman, Shapiro and Czernikowski with their families arrived in Melbourne. There also came: Ch. Hariniak, Yente Rizman, S. Pietrkowski and David Rogoziński.

At the end of the 1920's, during the economic crisis in Australia, the immigration had ceased. In the year 1936 the gates were opened again, but only for the close family

members. And again, the people of Łęczycza started to come: Leah Czernikowska, the Szwarcfeld sisters, Zalman Bornsztajn and his wife, Yosef Hirsh Lusner from Paris with his family, Kolski, Frajman with his family, Aharon Lesner with his family, Shlomo and Efraim Rogoziński, Gershon Szwarcfeld, Eliezer Szkolnik, Sh. Lisner and G. Klugerman (the last three had lost their wives and children in Poland).

In September 1939 when the Second World War had broken out, we were again cut off from our old home. It was only at the end of 1945 that the committee of homeland association of Łęczycza had obtained a full list of the Jews of Łęczycza who remained alive. The first who came to Melbourne were: Dr. Holcer, and Yehoshua-Hirsh Jachimowicz with their wives. After them, there came Abraham Wyszogródzki with his wife, Akiva Hariniak, Abraham Benedig, Szkolnik, the Szlamowicz brothers, the Benedik brothers, the Jachimowicz brothers with their wives, Lida Rogozińska, Kuba Rogoziński, the son of the engineer Yechiel Meir, Yankel Brzezinski, with his sister Rojze, Landau with her husband, Berisz with his wife Etki, Benkel from Grabów, Czelski and his wife, Eliyahu

Srebna's daughter and husband. After them Szajbe the lawyer came from Paris.

Not all of those who received the entry-permissions forms are now in Australia; some went to Canada, America and Israel.

In the last years we have brought several families of Łęczycza here, those coming back from Russia to Poland. These were the following families: Sztar, Erike Goldman, Wajselner, the Engelman brothers with their families, the family of Shimon Hariniak. All of them have settled down.

Our fellow Jews materially contributed to the edition of The Book of Łęczycza, which was published in Israel and edited by Rabbi Frenkel. We have planted trees in the Valley of the Martyrs¹ with the names of Łęczycza community members. At present a committee has also been established, composed of Zalman Bornsztajn, Abraham Wyszogródzki, Shimshon Lisner and the author of the article.

Our fellow Łęczycers get together on various occasions. We have preserved this deeply rooted sentiment for our former town, that had been so tragically destroyed by the bestial, German murderers, may their name be blotted out.



A committee of the people of Łęczycza in Australia.

¹ TN: in Institute Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem.