

MY SHTETL KROŚNIEWICE

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translated from the Yiddish by Leon Zamosc

The publication of the memorial book "Kutno and its Surroundings" gives us, the survivors of Krośniewice, an opportunity to describe the economic, cultural and religious life of our town and perpetuate the memory of our Jewish community. In most respects, Krośniewice was similar to many other Polish *shtetls*, but the Jews of our town were known for their especially strong drive to learn. This is not a simple rhetorical flourish. When businessmen, political activists, and religious personalities from the big cities came to visit, they would tell us: "You do not need to bring us from the outside – you have enough knowledgeable and talented people here in your own town."

The following lines do not claim to offer an all-encompassing history of Krośniewice. They only reflect my recollections of how the Jews of my town lived, struggled, suffered and perished in *Kiddush HaShem*.

I am writing this as a modest personal contribution to our Holocaust literature and as a tribute to the memory of all those who were tortured and murdered by the Nazi assassins ym"sh¹.

This is what our town looked like

Krośniewice was only thirteen kilometers away from the city of Kutno. Visitors entering the town immediately found themselves at the heart of the Jewish way of life. On both sides of the main street there were small houses, mostly made of wood. The hub of religious life was on the right side of the street, including the *Beit Midrash*, the synagogue, the *shtiebel* of the Ger chassidim, the *mikveh*, and the house of the rabbi. The left side of the street was lined with the fields of Count Rembieliński², where the animals of the town used to graze, the Dyzner steel foundry, and some houses inhabited mainly by Jews.

The street led to a large square where the market fair took place twice a week. There, Jewish merchants and dealers set up their tents and stalls to make a living.

Beyond the market square, to the left, ran the street towards Kłodawa, where the youth used to walk. At the end of the street was the railway station, from which a small train that traveled at a speed of fifteen kilometers per hour connected Krośniewice with Łęczyca, Ozorków and other places.

To the right of the square was the street leading to Ostrowy, with the famous park of Count Rembieliński, a relative of the late Russian Tsar Nikolai II. On the left of the square stood the church. From there, Łęczyca Street led towards the "pig market".

That was the layout of the town of Krośniewice, whose 3,500 residents included about 1,300 Jews.

Jewish occupations

How did the Jews earn their livelihood? In this respect, there was little difference between Krośniewice and the other *shtetls* of pre-war Poland. Commercial activities predominated. Some Jews traded in grain, horses and cattle. Many others were shopkeepers and peddlers in the surrounding villages. Of course, there were also plenty of craftsmen, especially tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and carpenters. Whenever the opportunity arose, someone would become a matchmaker or a teacher. In all these occupations, it was not easy to make a living, but as we used to say: "People do what they can".

There were jobs that gave people their nicknames, if not a livelihood. In some cases, nobody knew the real family name of a particular Jew. For example: the soap-boiler, the oil-presser, the pin maker, the cotton maker. When someone mentioned the oil-presser, it was understood that he was talking about Reb Yitzhak-Feivish Rybski, and everybody knew that the cotton-maker referred to Yaakov-Wolf Gajger. Very often, the occupation was simply added to the person's first name: Shaul Glezer, Zelig Beker, Hershel Szuster³, etc.

The conditions in the *shtetl* had always been tough, but in the times of prime minister Władysław Grabski⁴ the economic situation became extremely difficult. The town sunk into recession and the tax collector's office auctioned the last possessions of some poor Jews. The men were unemployed – shopkeepers, craftsmen and workers simply disappeared.

That image of Krośniewice in the years 1929-1930, is deeply engraved in my memory.

In 1934, when I returned to Krośniewice from Africa, the local Jews were like ghosts. People in their forties looked old and the youth languished without prospects for anything. It was depressing. They were leaving town, going to the larger cities in the hope of learning a trade and earning a livelihood. The elderly people, the artisans and shopkeepers, stood in the street corner all day, where Wolf Kirsztajn's small iron shop was, looking for earnings: maybe a farmer will show up with a rabbit's skin, or a bag of wheat?

In the evening, the Jews went to the *Beit Midrash* for *mincha-maariv*. They talked about politics and waited for a miracle from heaven.

Emigration and aliyah to *Eretz Israel* allowed some young people to escape the insecurity of life in the small town. Among those who received visa certificates and went to *Eretz Israel*, I remember: Yukish Grabinski, David Rozen, Abraham Troman with his wife, and Yechezkel

¹ TN: Hebrew abbreviation "yimach shmam" ("May their names be blotted out").

² TN: probably Rajmund Rembieliński (1775, Warsaw – 12 February 1841, Łomża). Politician and economic activist.

³ TN: respectively, "glass-cutter", "baker", "shoemaker".

⁴ TN: PM of Poland in 1920 and between 1923 and 1925. Member of National Democratic party ("*Endeks*").

Bagno. The latter was killed in *Eretz Israel* by the English.⁵

Still, despite all the calamities in Krośniewice's Jewish way of life, there were also many bright moments, and the survivors of our small town proudly remember that the Jews of Krośniewice were recognized for their scholarship, piety, secularism, and colorful social life.

Some history

In the last years of the 19th century, Krośniewice was famous all over Poland for its leader Reb Yaakov Engelman, a Torah-learned man and a great lumber trader. He had manor estates in several villages, including one that bore his name: Jankowice⁶. Important personalities and Torah scholars, such as Rabbi Yehoshie'le Kutner, paid regular visits to his estate in Głaznów⁷. His coach, with its lovely horse, was always ready to pick up the most distinguished guests at the train station.

Yechiel Yeshayahu Trunk of Kutno, great-grandson of the famous rabbi Israel Yehoshua Trunk, native of Kutno⁸ and author of the seven-volume book "Poyln: My Life Within Jewish Life in Poland", describes the manor estate of Yaakov Engelman saying that dozens of poor people, chassidim, scholars and plain tramps, were hosted there with their families – sometimes for weeks. They were treated to food and drink, and all the barns, possessions and goods were open to everyone. There was a *Beit Midrash* full of scholars, as well as separate *mikvehs* for men and women. The place was set up like all the great manor estates of the nobility in Poland.

"On summer Thursdays", writes Trunk, "the roads were full of wandering orphans who were on their way to spend the weekend at Engelman's estate in Głaznów. They installed their canvas tents between R' Yaakov's carts and wagons. The beggars' wives did not ask permission from anyone – they went to the barns and milked the cows as if they owned the place."

In those times, that kind of wealth did exist among some Polish Jews.

Among Engelman's guests was also the great Rabbi Yeshayahu Prywes, grandfather of Trunk's wife. In the history of Polish Jewry, Rabbi Yeshayahu Prywes was one of the most prominent figures.

Krośniewice was also present in the scholarly world through its Rabbi Abrahamele Bornsztain, a son-in-law of the Kocker Rabbi Mendel Morgensztern. After his service in Krośniewice, Rabbi Abrahamele became the founder of the Sochaczewer chassidic dynasty. Along with Rabbi Yehoshua Kutner, Rabbi Abrahamele was considered one of the two greatest geniuses in Poland.

After the passing of R' Yaakov Engelman, there were other leaders in the town. While in wealth he could not be compared with Engelman, Krośniewice was also proud of Abraham Rozen, who entered the synagogue on

Shabbat with a top hat on his head and, in addition, wearing shorts. This was at that time a complete mess in such a small town.

Gradually, winds of change began to blow in Krośniewice. The youth read "forbidden" books and the socialist activists of the *Bund* party were busy organizing the town's craftsmen. The first members of the *Bund* included Benjamin Plachte, Shmaryahu Kaufman, and others.

The failure of the 1905 revolution had repercussions in the town. Lots of people were arrested and many activists escaped to other countries. Still, those first revolutionary stirrings left an important legacy.

That was how the years went until the First World War.

The First World War

In November 1914, the Germans occupied Krośniewice. The shootings stopped, but there were other troubles: hunger, disease and epidemics.

In time, the town came back to life. The Jews returned to their trades and crafts and the youth made serious attempts to establish cultural organizations. They succeeded in founding "*HaZamir*"⁹ society.

Various political and Zionist groups emerged. Initially, they did not have clear programs or organizational frameworks, but there were passionate discussions and conflicts in "*HaZamir*" and each group strived to get a majority in the library management.

An outstanding young activist of those times was Yaakov-Meir Kujawski. He was an excellent speaker and had been a driving force in the establishment of the *Bund* library. In 1920, he emigrated to the United States. After graduating from college, he became a prominent trade-union leader in New York. He was even included by his movement in a list of electoral candidates for the city's municipal council.

There were also distinguished young people in Krośniewice's religious circles. The *Beit Midrash* was full of students. They studied day and night, but they were not religious fanatics. They paid attention to what was going on in the secular world, reading newspapers, discussing the issues, and participating in election campaigns. One of them was Hersh-Abraham Opoczinski, who left the *Beit Midrash* to lead one of the local Zionist organizations (now he is a rabbi in one of the American cities).

Among those boys, I also remember Chanan Gajger, Yechezkel Zajde, and Moshe-Yosef Hoffman. The latter, a devout Torah scholar, never missed reading the daily newspapers. In the evenings, he would sit to write until late at night. Eventually, we learned that he had completed a novel in Hebrew, entitled "*Shema Israel*". In the novel, during World War I, two Jewish soldiers from conflicting countries meet on the front lines. They stab

⁵ TN: in fact, he enlisted in the *Hagana* and in the British Jewish guard brigade and died with other guards in a car accident, on 10 February 1939.

⁶ TN: most probably the one 4km south-west of Krośniewice.

⁷ TN: about 3km west of Krośniewice.

⁸ TN: Y. Y. Trunk was probably born in the village of Osmólsk Górny, 35km east of Kutno, nearby Sanniki, Gąbin.

⁹ TN: Hebrew, "The Nightingale".

each other and when they fall, they both shout "*Shema Israel*"... That novel, however, never saw the light, because Moshe-Yosef did not have enough money to publish it. Some years later, when the typhus epidemic broke out in Krośniewice, Moshe-Yosef passed away. The manuscript of the novel vanished with him.

The years of Poland's independence

With the end of the First World War, Poland gained independence. A new era began, but the peace did not last long. War erupted between Poland and Soviet Russia and the youngsters were drafted into the Polish army. At the same time, Jews were arrested *en masse*, under the charge of espionage, of sympathizing with communist Russia, and the detainees were sent to a camp south of Cracow. Among those "enemies of Poland" were several youngsters of our town, including Michael Midlak, Aharon Kujawski, Mordechai Wigdorczyk, and Shabtai Kirszt with his sister Chaja-Race. Shabtai Kirszt returned to Krośniewice sick and broken and later died. In the group of survivors, Chaja-Race Kirszt and Wigdorczyk. The others perished later in Łódź ghetto.

During the war against Soviet Russia, the antisemitic troops of Polish general Josef Haller, known among the Jews as "*Hallerczyks*", went on the rampage. They attacked people in the streets, on the train and in public places, beating, stabbing, and tearing the beards of the Jews. They made an appearance in Krośniewice, but the pogrom was stopped and they disappeared.

There seemed to be no end to the troubles. A big typhus epidemic broke out, causing death and destruction in Krośniewice. Hundreds of people died. In every home there were victims of the deadly disease. The bad sanitary conditions increased the danger, especially among the Jewish population. Large families lived in small rooms, and food was never plentiful.

Children mourned parents and parents mourned children. There was panic and people were trying to save themselves. The pious Jews asked the rabbis to help. They decided that, to stop the epidemic, they had to set up a chuppah in the cemetery. They found a pair, a poor water-carrier and an elderly maid, and held a wedding ceremony. The survivors of the older generation of Krośniewice will always remember how the whole community accompanied the orchestra with lighted torches to the chuppah in the cemetery. It was truly a sad spectacle. It took several months for the epidemic to subside.

When the Polish-Soviet war ended, there was terrible poverty among the Jewish population. Help was urgently needed. The American Joint Committee ("*Joint*") sent food and clothing for those in need. The Craftsmen's Committee of Krośniewice was responsible for distributing the aid. A communal kitchen was also established to give free lunches to children, while the elders received dry products. The committee members were Mordechai Blumenfeld, Hersht Kirszt (the synagogue *shamash*), Abraham Koszik, Yaakov Wigdorczyk, Pinchas-Leizer Hoffmann and others. All of them are in heaven.

Parties, political activists and social workers

In the years 1924-1925, Krośniewice's public life heated up with the appearance of organizations and branches of Jewish political parties that promoted a wide range of activities for local workers, those dealing with public needs.

The political activists struggled for control over the Jewish street. The main contenders were the Bundists and the Zionists. They organized youth clubs, sporting societies, dramatic circles and libraries. The *shtetl* boiled and stirred. People wanted both to forget the war-years and the later troubles that followed, and at the same time get themselves out of the dismal present.

Of course, the main competition was over the youth, with meetings, lectures and debates trying to convince new sympathizers. The *Bund* got its support among the workers and artisans. The Zionists succeeded in having the middle class and the more prosperous Jews on their side. Among others, the Zionist activists included Hersht-Abraham Opoczinski (now lives in America), his wife Perel Szmerlowski, Kopel Gajzler, his wife Andrzej Fogel and others.

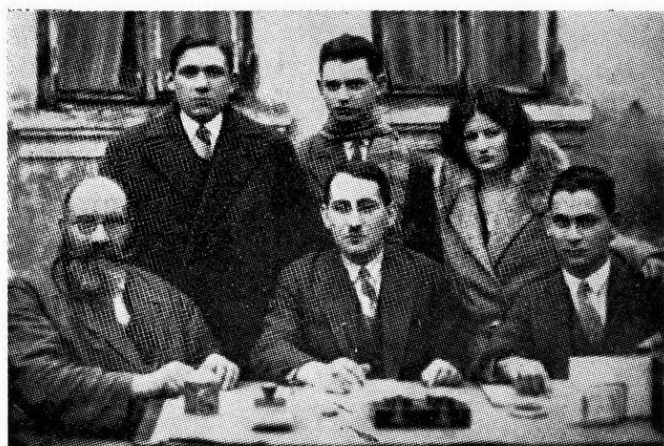
The activists of the *Bund* party included Benjamin Plachte, Leizer Kujawski, Yeshayahu Szwarcbard and the youngest of them – Israel Hoffmann, who later became the most prominent figure in the public life of Jewish Krośniewice. He was the heart and soul all the social activists in the town.

Israel Hoffmann was born in Krośniewice in 1902. His father passed away when he was just nine years old. Still very young, he became a tailor and got involved in the public life of the town. He joined the *Bund* and founded the Needle Union, which included all the tailors of Krośniewice. He became a popular figure in the town.

Israel was a very talented speaker. The town loved him, and he inspired a whole generation of young people to get involved in social action. Even the opponents of his party talked about him with respect. He delivered fiery speeches during the electoral campaigns for the town council and the *Sejm*. He also founded a dramatic circle, directing plays and giving solo performances. As usual, he also excelled on the stage. His success had a lot to do with his handsome appearance (black eyes and thick black hair) and his bold demeanor.

Krośniewice became too small for Israel Hoffmann. He went to Łódź, where he became a leader of the Needle National Union. Later he moved to Warsaw, where he served as a member of the Central Council of the Polish Confederation of Trade Unions. In Warsaw, he married a sister of the writer Yehoshua Perle and had a son. In September 1939, he participated in the defense of Warsaw against the Germans. Then, he remained in the Warsaw ghetto where he was active in the underground committee. He worked in the Többens and Schultz textile factory and had the courage to warn one of the owners, a

*Volksdeutsche*¹⁰ from Danzig, about the consequences of sending the Jewish workers to their destruction. After the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, Israel Hoffman was transported to Poniatowa concentration camp near Lublin, where he was also active in the underground. On November 15th, 1943, a report from the Jewish National Committee was received in London. It was signed by Dr. A. Berman ("Borowski"), Isaac Zukerman ("Antek") and D. Guzik ("Kaftor"). It stated that on November 3, the camp of Poniatowa with its 15,000 Jewish prisoners had been liquidated. There had been a Jewish resistance organization in the camp led by Fajnkind of the *Poalei Zion* Left, Etkin of the *Bund*, Schmidt of *Poalei Zion* Socialists, and Israel Hoffman of the *Bund*. The Jewish fighters had managed to set fire and destroy the camp's food and clothing warehouses.



Management Board of the Popular Bank in Krośniewice

That was how our landsman Israel Hoffman lived, fought and died. May his memory be a blessing.

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The Zionists of Krośniewice organized their activities in the house of Wolf Appel. Their larger meetings took place in the town hall, and sometimes in the premises of the Bundists.

The Zionist club was home to the revisionists and all the Zionist parties and groups, as well as the youth organizations. They had their own library, drama circle, and even a wind orchestra.

Kopel Gajzler and his wife Andrzej Fogel were at the forefront of the Zionist movement in the town. Gajzler was a noble man from a learned family. Among the other Zionist activists, it is worth mentioning Alush Kirsztajn and his wife (the daughter of Wolf-Gecel Korn), Meir Fogel and others.

The Communist Party, which included mainly former Bundists and students, was also active in the city. Its illegal activities involved Jewish and Polish youngsters. The Polish government gave them harsh prison sentences, and some of them were interned in the Bereza Kartuska¹¹ concentration camp.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Poland declared an amnesty and opened its prisons. Most of the freed Communist activists fled to Russia. A group of

Communists from Krośniewice remained in Białystok, including Eliyahu-Hersh Szczeciński, Aharon Troman, Yaakov Bigelajzen and others.

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From the older generation of chassidic leaders of our town, I remember Reb Moshe-Leib Shochet – a pious, scholarly Jew. He was once traveling by train when a woman went into labor during the journey. The passengers were helpless. Only Reb Moshe-Leib had the presence of mind to help the woman give birth like a genuine midwife. He saved the lives of the mother and child. His son Yeruchem is now living in Israel.

I remember other beloved Jews of the town. Rafael Kolski, with his handsome white beard, who used to go to the *Ger shatiebel* every day, greeting everybody on his path. Berish Laufer, a large grain merchant, whose picture-perfect daughter married Israel Rajman, president of the Cooperative Bank, which had been jointly founded by all the parties in town. And others, like Meir Fogel and Berish Rozen. They all perished in Chełmno and in Auschwitz.

Another memorable personality was Herman Goldberg. He came to Krośniewice from his hometown Gostynin. He was an educated man, with a lot of knowledge, who knew several languages and played the violin. He represented the *Bund* in the town's municipal council as council member and lay judge. Before the war, he went to *Eretz Israel* hoping that, later on, his wife Tsharne and his children would be able to join him. But the war broke out and his wife and children were killed in Chełmno with all the other Jews of the town. Goldberg went on to reach a senior position in Israel before his sudden death.

Among the religious Jews, I would like to mention Yitzhak-Feivish Rybski, Yehoshua Mamlok, Moshe Troman, Becalel Troman, Gad Bigelajzen, and Yechezkel Zajde. These Jews were a model of piety and honesty. Yehoshua Mamlok, who never had too much to eat at home, always opened his doors to guests and poor people. He used to say: "Share what you have and God will give double your blessings".

Among those devoted to social work, I should mention Leizer and Moshe-Yaakov Kujawski, and also Alush and Hersch Kirsztajn. Thanks to his Aryan appearance (blond hair and blue eyes), Leizer Kujawski was able to sneak out of the Krośniewice ghetto and bring food and medicine for those in need. Today, the Kujawski brothers live in Canada.

Of the younger activists, I can recall Reuven Bornsztajn, Benjamin Wigdorczyk, Israel and Itzik Blumenfeld, Yaakov-Mordechai Strykowski (today in Israel), Henech Apel, Hersch Fasenfest and many others whose names have faded in my memory over the years. They had one thing in common: they all loved Yiddish books. The library of Krośniewice was too small for some of them, who were also members of the Perec Library in Kutno.

¹⁰ TN: ethnic German, living in Poland.

¹¹ TN: now Biaroza, in Belarus.

In describing the different characters of Krośniewice, one should not overlook Simcha Lisak, who was totally blind and a hunchback. His home was a reading room. The youngsters used to read aloud to him – books and newspapers. He was interested in everything and had opinions on all the events. He was obsessed with knowledge – literature, poetry, sociology and all kinds of scientific works were familiar to him. Astonished by his erudition, visitors from Łódź and Warsaw went to his place to chat and discuss things with him. Since his father was the strictly religious Jew R' Moshe-Leib Shochet, the pious Jews could not forgive him that his son had gone "off the straight road." The German murderers shot Lisak in Krośniewice, before taking all the others to be exterminated at Chelmno.



Hoffman from Krośniewice –
perished in the Warsaw ghetto

There were many others, dear people whom I will never forget, like Melech Miłosierny, Eliyahu Strykowski, Pinchas-Leizer Hoffman, Mordechai Blumenfeld, Leib Kujawski, Itzik-Hersh Kirsztajn, Yantshe Kirsztajn, Chaim-Shlomo Midlak, Eliyahu Barg, Henech Nasielski, Mordechai Kujawski, Benjamin Plachte, Kozak the tailor, Anshel Troman, Wolf Kafke, Abraham Kafke and many, many others.

Among the more progressive folks, I should mention the teacher Abraham-Shlomo Baumgarten, a father of five sons and three daughters. The children, like their father, were involved in the revolutionary movement and in the various cultural organizations.

And among the chassidim, I remember such masterful Jews as Shlomo Grabinski, Libzon, Shepsel Bornsztajn, Eizyk, Israel Grabinski and Szmerlowski. They all perished in *Kiddush Hashem*.

The destruction of Krośniewice

In recounting the Holocaust and the destruction of Jewish Krośniewice, I will refer to some passages from Moshe-David Kujawski's book, which was published in America. He reports that Krośniewice was bombed on the first day of the war, September 1st 1939. The bombings continued until September 15th, when the Germans entered the town. Several people were killed during the airstrike of September 10th, including Meir Pasternak, Abraham Kapke, Sara Apel (a blind woman), Yechiel-Wolf Wassertreger (the man whose wedding had taken place in the cemetery during the typhus epidemic, as described previously), and Fradl Kujawski.

As soon as they occupied the town, the Germans began to abuse the Jews, especially those who went to pray. They were beaten, their tallits and tefillin torn and thrown away. The Germans took every opportunity to impose fines and extract money from the Jews. For the pious Jews, the most important thing was saving the Torah scrolls. On their own, they would not have been able to accomplish it. Fortunately, Leizer-Mordechai Strykowski had worked for a local German woman for many years. The woman, who was very involved in Jewish life, was given the Torah scrolls. She wrapped them in a cloth and carried them like a child to the cemetery. They hid the scrolls there. That German woman is now living in Israel – she went there together with Strykowski's son, Nathan.

In his book, Moshe-David Kujawski recounts how the Germans looted the synagogue and set it on fire. They also ordered that Yitzhak-Feivish Rybski, Yaakov-Wolf Chelminski and other Jews clean the streets with their bare hands. Kujawski's descriptions of life in the ghetto are ghastly – the suffering of women and girls, the hunger and diseases, and the bestialities inflicted by the Germans to a defenseless, destitute population.

They ordered Jewish girls to strip naked and have beaten them to death. They took Yantshe Kirsztajn and Mrs. Rubinsztajn (older woman in her fifties and sixties) to a stable in Błonie¹², in Rembieliński's village, where



A matzeva memorializing the martyrs of Krośniewice in
Kiryat Shaul cemetery, Tel Aviv

they were forced to strip naked, put on tallits and tefillin, and dance for the rejoicing Germans. Fishel Frankental

¹² TN: northern part of Krośniewice.

was beaten to death and his dead body was dumped in a rubbish bin.

Until the very end, when they were sent to Chełmno, the entire population of the Jewish ghetto were subjected to all kinds of torture and death that the devil would certainly not have been able to imagine.

March 2nd 1942 was Judgment Day for the Jews of Krośniewice. Many were killed in *Kiddush Hashem*, in the gassing vans of Chełmno or in the gas chambers and crematories of Auschwitz.

Remember!

This is the story of my hometown Krośniewice. I can still see the streets, the alleys and the houses where a whole community of Jews experienced suffering and joy.

I can still see Yaakov Fuks, who shared the fate of all the Jews of the *shtetl*. His son, who went to Israel, fell in the war for the establishment of the Jewish state.¹³

I see my brother Pinchas-Leizer. He was deported to Auschwitz, where he tried to avoid eating non-kosher food. He nodded when his son Moshe-Hertzke brought him a potato, a piece of bread and, on one occasion, a drop of schnapps.

I see my sister Esther-Rose with her husband Yitzhak-Moshe Landau and their children, as they were taken to the death camp in Chełmno.

I remember all the tormented, beaten, gassed and burned. Let these lines be a holy memorial to the fallen and their last cry: never again!

Krośniewice after the Holocaust

Recently my wife and I visited Poland. While in Warsaw, we decided to drive to Krośniewice, see what remains of "our" town. In the bus from Kutno to Krośniewice, we passed the villages that lead into the town – and that reminded us of our youth.

With trepidation, we stood on Kutno Street – where the Jewish ghetto had been located.

The wooden houses where the Jews used to live were no more. Wild grasses and bushes were growing in the empty yards. There are only piles of sand and stones, nothing more.

We could not recognize those places. We asked ourselves: is this where we lived?

We were soon surrounded by a group of locals. They tried to guess who we were. For one, we were Americans, for another, we were journalists. Until we said who we were and then stopped giving explanations. They asked if we knew who used to live in those places. Then, they wanted to know if we had come "to sell the houses" and if we had vacant lots to sell.

We told them that we did not own any of those houses and places – that was not the purpose of our visit.

The synagogue on Kutno Street was now a cinema with a romantic name – "*Tęcza*" ("Rainbow"). We strolled through other streets. Then we went to the Town Hall to ask whether anything was left of the former Jewish life. Nothing, they responded. They send us to the pharmacist Borkowski, saying that he had something that might interest us.

Borkowski received us warmly and showed us a dozen broken Jewish tombstones, which he had collected after the war. The Germans had used them to pave the streets. He considered the stones as a relic and expected that some Jewish organization would want to do something about them.

We spent five hours in Krośniewice. Went to all the places where the Jews used to live. We searched, asked, hoping to find out about things we did not know.

With a heavy heart, deeply depressed, we left the town where 1,300 Jews had once lived. The streets were empty, fear embraces the place...

Let these lines be a memorial to the Jews of Krośniewice, who perished in *Kiddush Hashem*.

¹³ TN: Chaim Fuks. See article on page 311 of the original book.