

KUTNERS IN MEXICO

(press news)

translated from the Yiddish by Jaime Grabinsky Steider

A Kutno and Surroundings society was founded, whose object is to preserve the memory of the destroyed communities of these districts of Poland forever, and present the significance of these places to the young generations. A committee was formed, headed by Engineer Grabinsky and Mr. Kohn; the honorary presidents are Messrs. Grabinsky and Czonstkowski. On Thursday 27th of June (1962) at 8pm a meeting open to all the Kutners and those from the surroundings will be held at the premises of the Cultural Center (Culiacán St 71); important subjects will be attended to, all are invited.

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On the 27th of June, in the room of the Jewish Cultural Center, the meeting of Kutners and those from the surroundings took place with a large attendance, with the participation of the young generations.

The president, Engineer Yitzhak Grabinsky, kicked off the meeting and gave a serious and full explanation of the goals of the meeting and invited the honorary presidents, Betzalel Grabinsky and Meir Czonstkowski, to light the first two candles, and Mmes Chana Bild and Genia Opoczynski-Czonstkowski, the following four.

Yitzhak M. Bild says the prayer "*El Male Rachamim*", which brings tears to the eyes.

The President gives the floor to Secretary Shmuel Kohn, who explains the necessity of setting up a "*landsmanschaft*", with the aim of solidarity with Kutners wherever they are. Kutno, in all aspects, developed in its daily life a true spiritual center; he talked about the importance of Yehoshua Kutner and of the world-famous Shalom Asz, and on the necessity that all that heritage should take a privileged place in the social life of Kutners.

He reminded us of the Kutners in Israel, to participate and help to the publishing of the Yizkor Book.

The vice-president, Y. Bild, tells of his visit to Israel and his meeting with Kutners who already have the works of the historian Y. Trunk, which tells the history of the development of the Kutno pioneers from the 14th century until its final destruction.

He called on the audience to bring their personal testimonies, to include them in the Yizkor Book. He asks for the financial support of all in attendance to help in the publishing to perpetuate the memory of the holy martyrs of Kutno.



Kutners' committee in Mexico

Mr. Leib Bronsztajn salutes the audience and expresses his surprise about its size, for a *shtetl* meeting, Kutno, which had an important impact on the Jewish world with its famous personalities. He calls for the union of the group and for it to play a special part in the Jewish life.

After a short recreation, a fundraising is organized and a modest sum is collected for the Yizkor Book.

The president Y. Grabinsky gives a few enthusiastic words of farewell.

The assistance gives its thanks to the Cultural Center who made it possible for the meeting to take place.

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On Sunday 8th of March, the Kutno and surroundings' *landsmanshaft* commemorated an anniversary, *Yorzeit*, for the 21 years of the holy martyrs.

The president Eng. Y. Grabinsky opened the ceremony by giving a long explanation, to the young generation of the significance of the mourning customs and their relationship with what happened in the old country.

After this, he lights the six lights in memory of the six million lives destroyed.

Mr. Sh. Kohn invites Eng. Grabinsky to light a seventh candle for the holy martyrs of Kutno and surroundings, as well as for the honorary president, Betzalel Grabinsky, who was recently "taken away from us". The president says *Kaddish* for all the departed.

Kutners Genia Czonstkowski and M. Lasman are invited to unveil the memorial honoring the martyrs. Y. Bild

says "*El Male Rachamim*", which gives way to some crying out loud. Then follows an outstanding rendition of F. Chopin's "Funeral March" interpreted by Ida Bild.

The graduate students of the Israelite College and present students at the Professors' Seminar, Dvora Majkon and Dvora Rener, brilliantly recite Y. Kacnelson's "Wagons" ["A Song about the Murdered Jewish People"] and M. A. [Yuri] Suhl's "... And the Earth Rebelled", which moved the audience.

Mr. Alter Czonstkowski, who had the opportunity to visit the ghettos in Kutno and surroundings several times, pretending to be a Christian, and was able to give some help to our tortured ones, talked about the moments of horror he witnessed.

Mr. Lasman, a survivor of various concentration camps, brings an extraordinary sense of courage when he told some episodes of his memories.

Mr. Sh. Kohn tells an account of all what happened from the first day the murderers entered Kutno; the creation of the ghetto and the hardships suffered there. How they organized their lives, so as not to allow their spirit to break, until its annihilation in the Chełmno death camp.

The vice-president Y. Bild talks about the significance of the funeral ceremony and calls on the audience not to forget our brothers and sisters, and to honor every year those who died in that tragic way.

With repressed emotion the president concluded the memorial ceremony with a partisans' hymn.



Kutners in Mexico



Memorial ceremony in Mexico



Project of a cover page for the Kutno Yizkor Book, drawn by the son of our compatriot Yitzhak Meir Bild in México. The drawing was printed as a project for the book.