

Rav Avrohom Pronman

Recently, we profiled Rav Chaim Tzvi Konikov of the Zemach Zedek Shul in Williamsburg who served energetically in this position—as well as his valiant work in bringing Yidden closer to Yiddishkeit. His successor in the rabbinate of the Shul on Moore Street in old Williamsburg was Rav Avrohom Pronman, who served in a number of congregations all around the New York area, and spent many years as a rof in the Williamsburg neighborhood.

Rogachov

Rav Avrohom was born in the town of Rogachov, in the Volinsk region of Russia in the year 1898. Not much is known about Rav Avrohom's early life, but we can presume that he learned in the town's cheder. A newspaper clipping from many years later informs us that he "learned in the Birsker yeshiva which was founded by Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik."

He married Rebbetzin Beila who hailed from Kamenitz-Podolsk, Russia, and the couple settled there. Two children were born to the Pronman's in Kamenitz. From there, Rav Avrohom embarked on his career in Rabbonus, beginning in the town of Zvonchick, Russia, and there two more children were born to them. In 1928, we find Rav Pronman in the town of Medzibuzh, Ukraine, where another child was born to them.

Most likely due to the persecution and the difficult conditions that the family was experiencing, the decision was made to accept an invitation for rabbonus and emigrate to America.

America

We find the following record regarding the departure of the Pronman's in the spring of 1930 from the European continent. "Male passenger, departed Bremen, Germany on 22 May 1930, aboard the Europa Ship, on the Nordd. Lloyd, Bremen shipping line. Destination: Boston."

As we learn, once again from a later newspaper article, Rav Pronman was not just another immigrant who happened to land in Boston; he arrived at the behest of the Vilna Shul in Boston, which likely heard about his reputation and pedigree.

The Vilna Shul is now a historic landmark building housing a cultural center, community center, and living museum. It was built as a shul for an Orthodox congregation in 1919 by immigrants primarily from Vilna, Lithuania. The building stands on what is known as the back side or north slope of Beacon Hill in Boston, Massachusetts.

But Rav Avrohom would take on a prominent position in the city, beyond the rabbonus of the Vilna Shul—as we read in *Der Morgen Zjournal* on December 3, 1934:

"Harav Avrohom Pronman, (Medzibuzher Ruv), Rov of the united kehillos of the West End of Boston, says a shiur every Wednesday at 8:00 in the evening, a page of gemara with chiddushei Torah, in the West End Talmud Torah Chofetz Chaim, 3 Poplar Street, and asks all lomdim to come and hear him."

Williamsburg of Yore

The chinuch of his children was paramount to him, and he enrolled them in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas. This is presumably why he left Boston for New York. The Rebbetzin would travel on a weekly basis to bring food to her sons, a number of whom would become rabbonim, musmachim from Yeshiva Torah Vodaas.

As we noted, Rav Kanikov of the Zemach Zedek shul on Moore Street became unwell, and could not continue his leadership of the shul. It seems that Rav Pronman would have succeeded him sometime in the early 1950's.

But we have evidence of Rav Pronman's existence and work in Williamsburg long before that. On the outside of the Bnei Torah Shul at 231 South Third Street, we find the following sign in the year 1940: "Beis Din office of Harav Avrohom Pronman of Congregation Sheves Achim Anshei Slonim takes on all kinds of Rabbinic opportunities. Reserve 231 South 3rd Street. Telephone Evergreen 7-2852." He also gives his place of employment in 1942 as Congregation Bnei Torah, which was located in the same building on South 3rd.

In 1950, we find him as the rav hamachshir of Cohen's Wine Cellars, located at 132 Rivington Street. "Strictly Kosher for Passover and all year under supervision of Rabbi Abraham Pronman of the Lubavitcher Synagogue." This tells us that he was rov in the Lubavitcher Shul as early as 1950.

Rav Pronman stood at the help of the Zemach Zedek Shul until the year 1968. This coincided with the time that this part of Williamsburg was deteriorating, and he took a position as the rov of Bnai Yisroel of Edenwald in the Bronx, where he served for another decade.

Finally, in the year 1977—at close to eighty years of age—he assumed the helm of Congregation Ahavas Achim in Jersey City, where he would remain until the end of his days. He succeeded one Rabbi Aaron Songolowsky who previously held this position.

As noted, three of his sons were ordained rabbonim, and two of them had longstanding careers in rabbonus. One son was Rabbi Akiva Pronman, a rov in Scranton and in Brooklyn, among other places. "Rabbi Pronman graduated from Mesivta Rabbinical Seminary..." wrote *The Scrantonian*.

Another son, Rabbi Alex Pronman, served as the spiritual leader of United Synagogue of Hoboken, in New Jersey. Before this, he was a rabbi in Lyndhurst, Long Island. "Ordained by the Yeshivah and Mesivta Torah Vodaath Rabbinical Seminary of New York, he is a member of the Rabbinical Council of America, comprised of 750 ordained American-trained rabbis. His father, Rabbi Abraham Pronman, is the spiritual leaders of the Brooklyn Congregation Zemach Tzedik," wrote *The Herald News* at the time of his appointment.

Through his children, Torah-true generations of Rav Pronman continue to live on.

Rav Pronman was niftar in the year 1982, following a lifetime dedicated to Torah and leadership of his fellow Yidden—with close to two decades spent in old Williamsburg.