

Lajbisz Lehrer

Częstochowa, My Częstochowa

It is already so long since I was in Częstochowa - in 1906-1907. And yet, there are few details from my life, before and after, that are mirrored so vividly in my memory. In total, I was in Częstochowa for less than a year. And yet, I feel as if I had spent my entire youth there, intoxicated with the wine of warm friendship and the ecstasy of a new revelation. During this short period, I was only connected to one corner, to one single circle - the SS Party. And yet, the echo of Częstochowa's wave-like masses has remained with me, rocking and rising, drenching and rousing, and spreading – spreading as far as the physical and spiritual eye can reach. My illegal functions in Częstochowa forced an assumed name upon me, Aleksander - a name with which I identified my life only for a few months. And yet, I feel as if someone had secretly attached this name to me at birth. In this name, I sense such a profound significance and its afterimage is so captivating - that its light has pierced through the margins of all the subsequent periods of my life.

Częstochowa, my Częstochowa - whether at the *kawiarnia* [café], the SS Bourse [viz. Labour Exchange], where I learnt to play *kęgle* [bowling], at sessions of the Party's committees, or going on walks alone or with friends in the *Aleje*, which beautify and grace the city centre - all places exhaled the secret of intensive life, which sings out with such an inner contentment even in moments of grief or aggravation. For me, the city has remained not a point in the map, but a symbol of sweeping life - one of those symbols that sing out from each one of us in silent moments of soul searching.

Częstochowa, my Częstochowa - in the fearsome tragedy which has now poured down upon you, upon my beloved and dear ones who remained inside you, I weep for your great disaster along with all your mourners. With my last strength, I strain to maintain within me the hope that glad tidings will yet come from you.
