

בנימין אָרענשטיין

[Benjamin Orenstein]

דער אומקום און ווידערשטאנד  
פון א יידישער שטאט

[Destruction and Resistance  
of a Jewish Town]

ארץ אל תכסי דמי

*O earth, cover not  
thou my blood*  
(Job 16:18)

קאנאדע

[Canada]

מאָנטרעאל

[Montreal]



This publication is dedicated to the seventh anniversary of  
the destruction and resistance of Częstochowa Jewry

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**DESTRUCTION AND RESISTANCE  
OF A JEWISH TOWN**

by **BENJAMIN ORENSTEIN**  
Montreal, Canada

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## On the Seventh Anniversary

Seven years ago, black clouds descended from the heavens and darkened Jewish life in Częstochowa. The Nazi sword rampaged indiscriminately, cutting down Jewish lives like ripe ears of corn in the field. Thousands of Jews gave up their souls in the streets, like the last drops of a stormy rain. Tens of thousands were devoured in the Treblinka gas ovens [viz. chambers] and then turned into ashes by horrific tongues of fire.

The sun over the Jewish sky went down. Instead of conveying hope, courage and life energy, it looked on mutely at the great misfortune and devastation. The world of integrity and justice turned into a mindless and heartless hulk. The world was transformed into a slaughterhouse and the people into wild beasts. The higher rose the culture of the Germans, the lower all their ethics and morals sank. German science and culture turned into gas, bombs, bullets and hangings. Hitler's gospel turned murder and plunder into a sacred virtue.

Jewish Częstochowa! You fell victim, along with all the Jews in all the European cities where the boots of the Nazi barbarian armies trod. The Germans brought death, desolation and destruction to the Jewish people in Europe and to the Jewish community in Częstochowa.

Is it possible for someone to penetrate the cells of the brain of an innocent person, who has been condemned to death, and bring his thoughts to expression on paper? It is difficult - very difficult. The Częstochowa lawyer, Estera Epszajn, attempted to do this and explained,

*"When one awaits death, those are moments of nerves stressed to the point of insanity, moments of destroyed hopes and aspirations and moments of desperation and thoughts of suicide."*

Dr Cwi Kantor encapsulates the tragedy of Częstochowa in the following words,

*"Jewish Częstochowa is no more! No more are the orthodox and the Maskilim<sup>1</sup>. No more are the great Częstochowa spirits, who enriched the world; no more are the giants and colossuses, each of whom stood alone in his entire generation."*

The Nazi barbarians, during the time of their murderous rule, spiritually poisoned the atmosphere and influenced a group of Jews from Częstochowa, who assisted them in the systematic extermination of their ethnic brothers and sisters. With embitterment, sorrow and rage, one of the pioneers of the underground movement in Częstochowa, a presidium member of the *Arbeiterrat* [Workers' Council], Cwi Rozenwajn, evaluates this state of affairs,

*"Isolated from the outside world and encircled by enemies from all sides on the outside, and also with degenerates from the inside - that was the factual situation of the Częstochowa Jewry."*

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: Followers of the Jewish Haskala (Enlightenment) movement, the foundation of Reform and secular Judaism.]

Jews in Częstochowa died in battle - old people, women and children in the passive struggle with hatred and a curse on their lips for the murderers, as well as with the full consciousness that they were victims for belonging to the Jewish people. Those, who were fit for resistance in the heroic struggle, held weapons against the enemy.

For us, these heroes have grown into symbols. For us, they have become spiritual beacons who show us the way. These spiritual torches have been transformed into gleaming floodlights for us, paving the life-path of fighting for freedom.

To the writer of these lines, the tragic events in Częstochowa reappear, [events] to which he is a living eyewitness. In his ears, the cries of the fallen martyrs and heroes echo,

*"Do not allow the rain and snow to wash away the memory of our spilt blood. Do not allow the sun to dry the drops of our blood in the combat bunkers, forests and other places where we fell. Do not allow the wind to blow away the ashes of our bones burned in Treblinka! Let a memory remain after us - immortalise us in the history of the Epoch of Destruction."*

Oh, you brothers and sisters, who have fallen in the active and passive struggle - I immortalise your sacred memory with the blood of my heart!