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Częstochowa Takes in Party Leaders

Exactly like other political parties, "*Poalei Zion*" had special commission to provide "foreign" passes for leading members from Poland and Russia, who were forced to leave. They enabled them to be able to travel through the western border or other foreign borders. There were also cases where we were unable to provide passes. We had to see to it that they could be smuggled across the border by experienced "*schwarzers*" [Yid.; people-smugglers].

It was also the commission's task to wait for the guests at the railway station of the Warsaw-Vienna train and to put them up at a member's house or at a side hotel, where the police were not frequent guests.

During the time, I was in such a commission. It befell upon me to await, among others, such important members as Isaac Zaar, Leon Chazanowicz and A. Revusky.

Never mind Leon Chazanowicz, who was then travelling to Argentina - [he] was more-or-less civilly dressed and it was possible to receive the impression that he was some affluent relative. A. Revusky, by comparison, carried himself simply, as a small-*shtetl yeshivah* student, and from his eyes could be read his alarm that imminently something would happen to him, and that it would be difficult for him to conceal himself from the police's bloodhounds, the imaginary constables and secret agents who would certainly "sniff out" that he was travelling to Lwów to a "*Poalei Zion*" conference.

But the worst "passenger" for me was Isaac Zaar. True, in his later years, when he already lived in America and was an editorial collaborator in "[*Der*] *Tog*" [The Day; Yiddish newspaper], he dressed and conducted himself as a true European. But, when I waited for him early one summer morning at the railway station of the Warsaw-Vienna train in Częstochowa, I became simply alarmed and dumbfounded at seeing, before me, a young man with very long hair and a long "pelerine*", holding in his hands a package with brochures and various written notebooks. Only one small thing was needed. If anyone should accidentally give him a push, the train platform would become flooded with all sorts of party-literature, obviously all illegal.

"*Poalei Zion*" seldom had the opportunity to make use of someone from the great personages of our world-movement, passing through, to hold their lectures. Only once did this occur, when Leon Chazanowicz stayed overnight in Częstochowa and, because bringing him to a hotel was a great hazard, both to him and to the local members, I took advantage of the opportunity that a sister of mine had gone with her husband to their *dacha* [Ru.; country house] and, lightening quick we organised a "*schadzka*" [Pol.; tryst, clandestine meeting]. We also positioned "guards" up to the "German School" and, late in the evening, we asked the guest to speak on the burning theme, "*Zionism and Territorialism*".

We – the thirty youth, boys and girls – lay ourselves down on the floor, left a small lamp lit and, over two hours, we feasted on the teachings of our great theoretician.

* [Translator's note: A pelerine is a woman's cape of lace or silk with pointed ends at the centre front, popular in the 19th century. (oxforddictionaries.com)]

At around 11:00 o'clock at night, we silently left the dwelling one-by-one, in order to not arouse any suspicion with the night-watchmen of the Russian police.

It is interesting to recount that we were so clandestine, that neither my parents nor the young couple ever found out about the great crime that we committed in their flat, without their knowledge and without their permission!