

Majer Rotholc

How the Banners Were Concealed

It was the beginning of September 1939. The Germans had already occupied the city and the streets were empty of people, as no one wished to be caught and, under blows, be taken for work.

On a certain day, a few of us, members of the Left *Poalei Zion*, met and decided to hide the banners which were in our rooms in the Stary Rynek (Old Market).

The group consisted of Mordche Baromhercyk, Szyja Gelbard, Szlojme Szymonowicz and the writer of these lines. One by one, we went to our rooms. Once there, we took a few bricks out of the wall of a small room in the loft, packed up, in newspaper, all the banners which we could find and hid them inside a hole which we had hacked in the wall. We then quickly put the bricks back in place and then sealed, smeared and wiped off all traces.

Some years later, when I was in Lithuania at the Szawle [Šiauliai] ghetto, I often wondered about the fate of my friends and of the banners which we had concealed.

At the end of summer 1945, I was on my way home. It was already evening when I arrived in Częstochowa and I made my way straight to the Old Market. Already, from afar, I could discern that the house where we had hidden the banners was still intact. There, I found Izaak Owieczka, who told me that, of those together with whom we had hidden the banners, no one had survived.

Izaak Owieczka and I took a hammer and tools and went to the rooms in the Old Market. With the caretaker's assistance, we found the door of the locale. I found the hiding-place and we extracted the package with the banners. It contained the *Jugend* [Youth] flag, the *Gwiazda-Sztern* Sport Club's flag and two storm [demonstration?] banners. Sadly, the party-banner was not there, [because] it had not been there at the time we hid the flags.

Sometime later, when I was already in Israel, I found out that Jakób Zerubavel z"l, in Poland after the War, received the flag of the Częstochowa *Jugend* movement, which he ceremoniously presented to the Borochoch Youth in Israel.



A Bund demonstration in Częstochowa in 1946. In the first row: Brenner, Sztajnc, and Krauze.