

Rywka Lipszyc's diary

Categories: Objects

Rywka Lipszyc (vide) wrote a diary in the Łódź Ghetto between 3 October 1943 and 12 April 1944. She was encouraged to write the diary by Sara Zelwer, an older friend and mentor in a circle of girls gathered around a teacher, Fajga Zelicka (vide). The diary, though not written regularly, consists of 94 daily entries. From the very start of the diary, one feels Rywka's immense sensitivity. For this young writer, the diary became a form of therapy, enabling her to confront her innermost fears, dreams and memories. The text is interspersed with poems and letters addressed to her closest friend, Sarah Zelwer, affectionately referred to as Surci in the diary. The world Rywka described was limited to the flat she lived in with her sister Cypora and her cousins, the group of friends she met with at literary gatherings, and the Glazer resort (vide), where she worked and studied at the so-called nursery school (vide). Rywka's ghetto neighborhood was just a few streets of the Old Town: Wolborska, where she lived; Franciszkańska, where she worked; Dworska, where the Young People's Welfare Committee was located (vide); and a few nearby streets, where her friends lived and where meetings of various groups took place. She mostly described events in her family's life – both current and pre-war. Her emotions pour out from the writing. A striking feature of the manuscript includes long sequences of dots and numerous exclamation marks. Rywka not only ended sentences with them, but also began sentences in that way. For her, it was a way of expressing her feelings, and, yet, concealing a lot.

The diary text was written on 57 pages of a checkered school notebook. The preserved diary has no cover. It cannot be ruled out that there were some entries before 3 October 1943. Rywka may also have continued writing the diary in another notebook.

The diary entries were written in beautiful Polish. There are some words in Hebrew or Yiddish, usually concerning religious matters. Rywka wrote with a pen that she shared with her cousin Esther. She struggled with a lack of ink. As a result, there were times when she

could not write. On the pages of the diary, one can see changes in the colour of ink, which Estera brought from work. There are several colours of ink throughout the notebook, ranging from various shades of blue to black, often faded.

Rywka took the notebook with her to Auschwitz-Birkenau (vide), where, after liberation, it was found in the ruins of Crematorium III by a Red Army doctor, Zinajda Berezowska. In 2015, her granddaughter gave the diary to Rywka's cousins living in Israel. The family subsequently decided to donate the diary to Yad Vashem.

In 2014 , the diary was published in English. A second edition came out in English, followed by other translations , including Italian, French, German, Finnish, Spanish, Catalan, Slovak, Czech, Portuguese and Hebrew. The Polish edition was published in 2017.

Resources

The Diary of Rywka Lipszyc: Found in Auschwitz by the Red Army in 1945 and First Published in San Francisco in 2014, red. A. Zapruder, tłum. M. Markoff, San Francisco: Jewish Family and Children Services, 2014; R. Lipszyc, Dziennik z getta łódzkiego, oprac. E. Wiatr, Kraków: Austeria, 2017.

References

<http://www.rywka.com>

Tags

writing in the ghetto youth

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