

Szaja Borensztajn

Szaja Borensztajn, the son of a Częstochowa cufflinks manufacturer, showed proclivities for the theatre from his youngest years. He belonged to the *Lira* Society and became an amateur [actor]. He very quickly became well-known and popular for his appearances as a humourist and comedian. He participated in a film competition, where he played the role of Charlie Chaplin, as a result of which he was given the nickname “The *Częstochower* Charlie Chaplin”.

He distinguished himself through a whole series of monologues, copying the Łódź actor from “Ararat”, Dzigan. There was not a single show in which he did not appear. The Jewish public attended these shows eagerly, because his appearances entertained everybody and caused unceasing laughter. He particularly excelled in the roles of a *shadchen* [match-maker] and a *badchen* [jester]. He had become one with these roles, as it were, reaching the culmination points of theatrical artistry.

Borensztajn belonged to the right-wing *Poalei Zion* Party and actively participated in all its work. He married the sportswoman Libka Szlezynger. In his private life, he was just as he was on stage – always joking and with a smile on his lips.

During the Nazi era, he lost his wife and family and was imprisoned in the HASAG-Pelcery camp, like all the others. During the most difficult moments and tragic experiences, he remained an actor, holding clandestine shows and performing up-to-date creations from life in HASAG - among other things, with a “eulogy” mimicking the foreman Herr, who killed himself.

On 15th January 1945, he was evacuated to Buchenwald and then to Dora. Unable to bear the emotional and physical suffering, he perished in the concentration camp as one of the many *Częstochower* victims of the Nazi regime.