

Raphael Federman

## Aron Peretz

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Aron Peretz was born in Zamość in 1881. His father was a relative of the writer I.L. Peretz. After completing *cheder*, he received a secular education. He completed the *gymnazjum* in Siedlce. As a young lad, he was around the I.L. Peretz family. Already as a *gymnazjum* student, Aron Peretz was active in the revolutionary Workers' Movement. In 1905, he was arrested and jailed in the Brisk [Brest; Brześć Litewski] Fortress for participating in the Bund's revolutionary demonstrations. In 1907, he was sent to Siberia. From there, he fled to Tiflis [Tbilisi, Georgia] and then to Charków, where he completed his higher education and received a dentist's degree.



Aron Peretz

In 1911, Aron Peretz settled in Częstochowa with his wife Chana, also an involved Bund activist. His dental practice made a name for itself. He was quiet and shy man by nature and, over the course of time, became one of the most beloved people in town.

Besides his private practice, he was very actively involved in community work. In the years 1911-1913, we see Aron Peretz as stage-manager of the amateur groups which performed the plays of I.L. Peretz, H.D. Nomberg, Mark Arnstein, F. Bimko and others. He continued his cherished work around literary evenings until the outbreak of the Second World War. He was especially active in the Jewish Literary Society [and], later, in *Lira*. He was chosen as MC of all the important literary functions, such as the inauguration of the Jewish library at which I.L. Peretz was also present. He was also Chairman of the *Lira* Society for many years. In 1921, he also became Chairman of the Sport and Gymnastics Association. In 1926, he became a member of the Medem Library administration.

In the 1920's, when the Bund elected two councillors to the City Council, Aron Peretz was one of them. In 1936, Aron Peretz was chosen as a *parnes* in the Jewish *Kehilla*. He also found time to lead the Bundist *Morgensztern* [Morning Star] sports organisation. At the end of 1937, at the Bund's impressive 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, which was attended by more than 500 people, Aron Peretz was acclaimed as a veteran of the Bund.

The Peretz family's dwelling was an open house for all the Bundist speakers, men of letters [and] artists who visited Częstochowa. Their son and daughter walked in [their] father's and mother's footsteps.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, they migrated to Soviet Russia and lived a hard life, together with the thousands of refugees. When Poland was liberated from the Nazi murderers, Aron Peretz, his wife Chana and their son Mietek returned to Częstochowa. Their daughter was married in Russia and remained there. But Jewish life was already dwindling and Aron Peretz later settled in Gliwice. He reopened his dental practice there and worked until his last day. He took part in the work of the local social and cultural life, but he lived with a longing for his former Bundist activity. This he showed in his correspondence with the writer of these lines.

One year ago, his wife Chana was torn from him by a heart attack.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 1957, the always silent, but ever so sensitive, smiling, Aron Peretz breathed his soul out in Gliwice - in solitude and in his belief in genuine socialist ideals.

With the death of Aron Peretz, one of the few remaining members of the I.L. Peretz family departed. For many years, he was a revolutionary, a loyal Bundist [and] a Jewish social [and] cultural activist. One of the last among those who helped create the cultural institutions of bygone Jewish Częstochowa has departed.

Surviving Bundists, as well as other Jews from the city of Częstochowa, will long remember him with the greatest reverence and affection.

May his memory be honoured!