

**FRANK** Szmul (1891-1947), journalist, editor, workers' leader, actor. He was born on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1891 in Truskolasy, the son of → Icchak Majer Frank, a merchant, and Alta Chaja née Berkowicz, He had eight siblings.

He probably began his education in a *cheder* or in a community nursery. He came to Częstochowa, with his family, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Here, he continued his education at the Talmud Torah of the *Gmina* (just like his older brother). He taught himself his secular education. (He read everything that he could lay his hands on.) Perhaps, some role, here, was played by his older brother or mother, who was the daughter of a famous teacher.

He began work in a toy factory. He absorbed the ideas of the workers and participated in the Workers' Party of the Socialist Zionists' "exchange". He was active in the Jewish Literary Society and the "Lira" Singing Society. He performed in the theatrical sections of these societies. Here, his abilities to recite, deliver monologues and sing Jewish songs were revealed. Often, he would perform at open events, He was an excellent interpreter of Yiddish literature. He became a star of amateur theatrical troupes, being entrusted with the most difficult roles. He also performed with professional troupes (as an understudy in the event of an actor's illness).

In 1912, he was called up for military service and served in the Helsinki garrison. After a year, he became sick and had to undergo an appendectomy, after which he went on furlough. At the end of 1914, when he was due to return to his regiment, the War broke out and he remained in Częstochowa. There, he took part in the Educational Union for Jewish Workers, cooperatives of Jewish schools and trade unions, run by the Socialist Zionist Party. He became one of that party's leaders. At rallies and meetings, he was one of the most popular speakers. He was still involved in theatrical life, organising amateur troupes and performances. In 1922, when the Socialist Zionist organisation merged with the Independent Socialist Party, for a while, Frank remained in the party. However, he then joined the Bund and, finally, *Poalei Zion*. However, his level of activity diminished.

Soon, he began working with Częstochowa newspapers, publishing articles and columns. When "*Dos Naje Wort*" ceased to be published, he was the editor of this magazine. He was a permanent contributor to the "*Częstochower Cajtung*" (probably from 1922). He kept a permanent chronicle. He wrote historical articles and reports. In 1939, beginning with issue No. 9, he was co-publisher of the "*Częstochower Cajtung*" (together with its owner → Bernard Bocian).

In May 1926, he was accused of delivering a lecture, in Radomsko, calling for the overthrow of the existing social system in Poland. In 1927, at his trial in Piotrków Trybunalski, he was acquitted. Advocate → Mieczysław Konarski defended him *pro bono*. In 1931, he was the chairman of the Child Care [Committee] at the No. 12 Primary School in Częstochowa.

When the War broke out in 1939, with his wife, he left Częstochowa and then moved to the Soviet Union. In 1946, he returned to Częstochowa, but he was already ill with bone tuberculosis. He intended to leave communist Poland as soon as possible. (He pleaded with his friends to help him to leave.) Frank planned to write two books (about the establishment and activities of the Częstochowa *Kehilla* and a memoir about his experiences during his six years in Russia). He died on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1947 in Częstochowa and was buried in the local Jewish cemetery (grave No. 972 I).

His first wife was Helena née Dyskin, the granddaughter of a Łomża rabbi and niece of Józef Nowiński. In September 1937, she filed for and obtained a divorce. They had a daughter, Hanka (her husband was Szlama Wajntraub), who, after the War, was a contributor to one of the Warsaw magazines. In 1938, Frank married again - to Sura Szterling, the daughter of Henocho and Helena née Konicpolski.

R. Federman, *Szum Frank un zajn miszpoche*, in: *Czenstochow*, pp. 147–151. -“Kurier Codzienny” 1927, No. 87, p. 3; “Częstochower Cajtung” 1927, No. 16, pp. 1 & 4; 1931, No. 5, p. 2. – APCz, unit No. 58, marriage record No. 37/1938.

**Wiesław Paszkowski**