

EHRI Online Course in Holocaust Studies
AZIH Ring I 673 (1064)
Ghettos under Nazi Rule – Everyday Life
Translation: C07 The celebration of the Yiddish poet Perets in the Warsaw Ghetto

Ghettos_C_7_ARG 673 Ring I 1064.

The Peretz Academy in the Jewish Library Building.

On Saturday 24th May, a large meeting of the Peretz Academy was held in the Jewish Library Building on Tłomackie 5. First the Children's choir from Kitchen no. 145 at Nowolipki 68 sang a spring song. Then Mr. Zagan gave a speech and after him a second man, then teacher Lichtenstein and a fourth man. Their speeches were beautiful, many people enjoyed them!... After the speeches Miss Shifman sang, after her our children performed two dances: A Broygez dance [dance of anger] and a Hasidic dance, then Comrade Sorele sang Yiddish folk songs, and later a man read out stories written by Peretz. After him, Mr. Samberg told very beautiful stories!.... At the end we, the choir, sang a few beautiful songs and the celebration ended.

The Saturday Peretz Academy

The Peretz Academy was held in the library at Tłomackie 5. I had to wait a few minutes and when people were allowed to enter, I went in with my girlfriend. When I entered there were already people inside. When the room was full the youth choir began the Academy's gathering with songs, they sang Peretz's spring songs. After the singing, four members of the Joint came forward to speak, the first to speak was Comrade Zagan: he said that Peretz did a lot for Jewish children and the Jewish people in the World War. Comrade Zagan spoke words of comfort that all will be well. Afterwards Mr. Linder spoke. Mr. Linder said that it doesn't look good, because in this war things do not look good. Mr. Linder asked a question: why do we mark the death of Y. L. Peretz? And he answered: During the World War there was a terrible crisis. Y. L. Peretz founded kitchens and distributed [food to] the hungry. And he remembered the hungry, today we must remember him. And for that reason we commemorate the day on which Peretz died. After Mr. Linder, teacher Lichtenstein spoke. The teacher mostly told stories about Peretz and his writings. After the speeches a singer came out and she sang a few songs. After the songs there were dances and afterwards Comrade Sorele came out and she sang for us a song of Bitokhn [faith] and a lot of other songs. The people felt happy and brave. After this the choir concluded the meeting of the Peretz Academy with singing.

Warsaw 30th May 1941, Kheniek Zigelman.

The Saturday Peretz Academy

The Saturday Peretz Academy took place at Tłomackie 5. When I arrived and entered, the hall was already packed with people. First the children's choir came forwards and sang one of Peretz's songs. After this Comrade Zagan gave a speech in which he related who Peretz was and what he had created and what he did on behalf of Jewish children. And he gave the people courage that we would survive the war. After Mr. Zagan, Mr. Linder spoke. He also spoke a lot about Peretz and he said that he is not so sure that Comrade Zagan is right that we would survive the war. Following Mr. Linder, Comrade Teacher Lichtenstein told a lot stories written by Peretz and spoke about who Peretz was and what he did for the Jewish people. After all the speeches the people were very happy and felt extremely joyful. They completely forgot about their troubles. After the speeches there were a couple of dances. Then a great Jewish singer sang a song by Peretz. A few minutes later the great Yiddish artist Comrade Somberg came out onto the stage. He told a very beautiful story which Peretz had written. He was given very great honor. After this Comrade Sorele sang a couple of Yiddish songs. The Peretz Academy's meeting concluded with a few songs sung by the children's choir. The people were very pleased with the Academy.

Warsaw 23rd May 1941, Chayim Gluzstein.