

CULTURAL STUDIES

SHOLOM-ALEICHEM MUSEUM IN PEREYASLAV-KHMELNYTSKYI

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Sholom-Aleichem (Solomon Nohumovich Rabinovich) was born in Pereyaslav, Poltava province on March 2, 1859, and spent the best years of his childhood and youth here. Sholom-Aleichem – Peace be with you! It was with this name that he came to literature and became a favorite folk writer.

The National Historical and Ethnographic Reserve «Pereyaslav» holds an interesting exhibit – the newspaper «Pereiaslav Collectivist» dated by February 14, 1939. Under the heading «To the 80th Anniversary of Sholom-Aleichem's Birthday» the events of the regional jubilee committee were published: In order to commemorate the memory of Sholom-Aleichem, it was approved to erect a monument to the writer in Pereyaslav, to turn the house where Solomon Rabinovich was born and spent his childhood, into a house of his name – a library museum, to rename the street where the writer was born to his name, to install a plaque in Ukrainian and Hebrew languages on the house where the writer was born [1].

In 1976, the scientists of the museum prepared an appeal to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine and the regional party committee «About the creation of the Sholom-Aleichem Museum in Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky». But there they rejected this appeal and stated that the museum did not need to be done, and offered to be submit the collected materials to the Union of Writers of Ukraine. Mikhail Sikorsky, the director of the Museum of History, answered this strongly: «There must be a museum. The city already has the Skovoroda and T. Shevchenko Museums. And Sholom-Aleichem is our countryman and we do not want any known name associated with Pereyaslav to be forgotten» [5]. This idea was supported by both Jewish and Ukrainian writers, artists, literary critics – Hryhoriy Polyanker, Mykola Bazhan, Valentina Kaminchuk, Abram Chubinsky.

In the journal «Sovietish Geymland» No. 7 of 1978 the letter of the director of the Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky State Historical Museum was published requesting assistance in collecting materials for the creation of an exhibition of the Sholem-Aleichem Museum. An initiative group was organized, consisting of writers, artists: poet H. Bader, bibliographer M. Rosenhaus, artists I. Mastbaum, O. Kolesnichenko and others. The group was engaged in the selection of books, paintings, drawings, documents. A considerable number of materials were handed over to the museum by A. Chubinsky, the residents of Kyiv, Hasler, S. Bentsianov, the wife of the writer

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Y. Smolich, the widow of the famous artist Z. Tolkachov. There are also letters in M. Sikorsky's archive with that he addresses to Moscow and a letter of appeal to the Chernivtsi regional library to assist in the collection of materials (printed publications) related to the life and work of Sholom-Aleichem [4, p. 93].

The original plan was to create a museum of the Jewish classic Sholom-Aleichem in the synagogue of the city of Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky, but the local authorities did not transfer the building to the museum, so the museum was created in the house of a miller from the village of Somkova Dolyna of Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky District on the territory of the Museum of Folk Architecture and Life of in the Middle Dnieper AREA [4, p. 93]. Through joint effort in September 1978, the first European Museum of Classics of Jewish Literature Sholom-Aleichem opened its doors to visitors.

The Museum of the Classic of Jewish Literature has a unique collection of exhibits that tell about the culture, traditions of the Jewish people and most importantly – about the life and work of the writer, whose fate is closely connected with Ukraine. During the years of fruitful and multifaceted work and active educational activity, the Museum of the Classic of Jewish Literature Sholom-Aleichem became the focus of Jewish culture.

The museum exposition is divided into several thematic segments. The memorial space of the living room seems to return visitors to the beginning of the twentieth century, acquaints with the life of the family. Furniture, utensils, a mirror from the Kiev house, where Sholom-Aleichem and his family lived in 1905, religious objects that accompanied Jews throughout their lives. His father's study where he wrote his first literary works «Daughter of Zion», «Jewish Robinson Crusoe» and compiled «Dictionary of Curses and Swordsmanship by the Stepmother», that he would name later it his first literary masterpiece [5, p. 6].

The third hall is dedicated to the life and work of the classic of Jewish literature Sholom-Aleichem and to the memory of him and gives an opportunity to get to know the spiritual and material culture of the Jewish people.

The museum exhibits books, family photographs, letters, works of art, Jewish periodicals in Russian. XIX – early XX century: «Dawn», «Sunrise», «New Sunrise», «Russian Jew», «Jewish Week», «Jewish News», «Jewish World», «Jewish Life», «Jewish News», «Weekly Chronicle of the Sunrise». Thanks to them, it is possible to make an idea of the life of Jewish communities in the Russian Empire, to get acquainted with the works of Jewish publicists, writers, poets [3, p. 101].

Special attention is paid to lithographs and autolithographs by famous artists Zinoviy Tolkachev and Mikhail Gorshman, based on the works by the classic of Jewish literature Sholom-Aleichem. In the artists' portraits of individual characters are complemented by pictures of the true life of the Jewish town, where people were the main ones, who, despite all the difficulties, radiated good and faith in a better future.

A part of the collection of the Museum of the Classic of Jewish Literature Sholom-Aleichem is the author's ceramics of the decorative and applied purpose of the Polonsk Ceramics Factory. Author's works – decorative plates by M. Kozak and Z. Oleksenko with views of Pereyaslav of late XIX – early XX century and the works

in which the world of heroes of Sholom-Aleichem's works was created allow to show the facets of the writer's work more widely [2, p. 139].

A separate section of the museum is dedicated to the theme «Sholom-Aleichem – playwright». The exposition presents works by the writer, bills of the plays, which were staged on the stages of the theaters of Odessa, Kyiv, photos of actors, as well as sketches of costumes for the play «Traveling Stars».

Thousands of visitors have visited the museum for over the 41 years of its existence. Numerous opinions in the review book tell about their impressions of the exposition. Words of gratitude of the average visitor as well as of writers, poets, writers, scientists, who are known worldwide. Particularly valuable in the book is the response left by the granddaughter of writer Bel Kaufman, who visited the museum in 1999 and wrote: «The Sholom-Aleichem Museum from the granddaughter of the Bel Kaufman. With deep love and gratitude for the fact that my grandfather is so sensitively remembered. I wish you all the best. Bel Kaufman». In 2019, director of the Sholem-Aleichem House-Museum in Tel-Aviv, Professor Abraham Novershtern, wrote after his visit to Pereyaslav: «We are pleased to visit the Sholom-Aleichem Museum and make sure that it is faithfully kept in memory of him» [6].

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