

TEA ARCISZEWSKA – THE STAGE ARTIST AND WRITER

*translated from the Yiddish by Shoulamit Auvé-
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She came from the well-known Lipski family in Kutno. Her father and grandfather were of lovely pedigree, pious and preserving traditional traditions. The old Lipski, the devout chassid, even believed that this would last forever. His daughters, however, began to look at the world differently.

The eldest left her husband, came to Paris, settled in Montparnasse *bohème* neighborhood and completely broke with her parents' ways. The second was attracted to the dance-art. She dreamed of becoming a ballet dancer. Her third daughter, Tea (or by her nickname – Totshe), wanted to become an actress. Ever since she was a child, she had been attracted to the stage. As a child, she dreamed of her roles, posing in front of a mirror. And so, dreamy and stubborn, she approached artistic perfection.



When Y. L. Perc discovered her, he saw in her the soul of the rising Jewish theater. She did not return to the *shtetl* anymore, even left it far behind – but did not seek to forget the old home, did not want to tear herself away from her past.

I do not know by what means the Muses arrived at the strictly orthodox home of the Lipskis, the merchant of glassware on the broad street in Kutno, or at the other humble homes of the Trunks, Aszs, Glicksmans, Erdbergs, and others – where they appeared unexpectedly. One thing is certain, however: all of our esteemed members of the city have been inspired by the great spirit of the well-known R' Shie'le Kutner.

She clung to Jewish history, to the ancient Jewish traditions and customs, symbols and wonders, thus showing all this authentic Jewish, deep beauty. She considered herself as a branch of the five-hundred-year-old Kutner-

Jewish tribe. And she was one of its prodigal children. She spoke Yiddish with Kutner's taste, as our Shalom Asz spoke, as our fathers and mothers spoke and as the surviving Kutners still speak today. She loved meeting and chatting with her peers, feeling at home in the Kutner family. It was good for us to know that we had such a good friend here – and she really wanted us to keep her as our own.

The Jewish Kutno will no longer rise from its catastrophe, such beauties as Tea Arciszewska will no longer grow up with us. Later generations will take over part of the great spiritual heritage, from the accumulated treasures – and of course meet Arciszewska's immortal work "Miryaml"¹, with which she got inscribed in golden letters in Yiddish literature.

Kutner Jews are proud of their spiritual personalities and we will bow our heads in awe at the glorious memory of Tea Arciszewska.

Henech SZLAJFER, Paris.

¹ TN: "Little Miryam", a dramatic cycle in fifteen scenes.