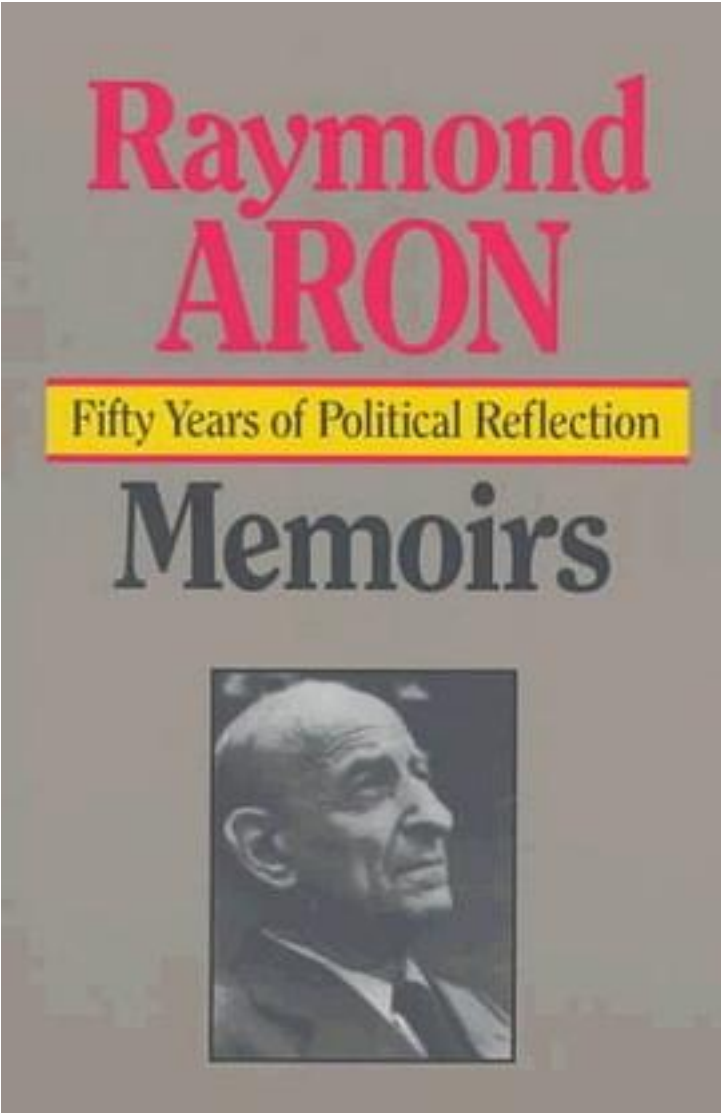


Memoirs



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I was lucky enough to be born grow up and become toughened by labour in a worker's family in a large working class settlement. One of the earliest and strongest impressions of my childhood was the factory whistle. I remember that the dawn would just be breaking when my father was already in his overalls and mother was seeing him off at the door. The deep-throated whistle would roar and it seemed to me that the whole world could hear it. There was no radio and the workers did not possess watches. So it was the factory itself that called everyone to work. The first warning whistle would go off at 5.30 in the morning and then at 6 o'clock for the shift and in the evening the advance hooter would go off at 5.30 and again at 6.00 for the next work shift. There were then about 25,000 people in our settlement of Kamenskoye later to become the working town of Dneprodzerzhinsk and all the time-telling daily life style customs and manner even the work itself in a word all one's life was governed by the hooter. I would get dressed quickly and without eating run barefoot after my father. If he took my hand I would look around proudly as if to say: Look how big I am now that I'm already going to the factory and I had only just turned four then. Other workers would come out of neighbouring houses, little side streets and lanes and soon there would be more and more of us. Practically everyone dressed in worn jackets and coarse nankeen trousers. And I remember that it would give me great pleasure to walk with them. In our thousands we would sweep down towards the Dnieper to Bazaar Slope. Father would leave me there and shortly afterwards his peaked cap would disappear amongst the multitude of peaked caps, cloth caps and felt hats. I could just see the black hole of the entrance.

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