

Mandarin Jew: Herman Rosenthal's Peculiar Eastern-European Legacy in Progressive-Era New York (1881–1917)

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Herman Rosenthal offers an unusual mirror on the massive nineteenth-century Eastern-European immigration to the United States because he breaks stereotypes and affirms the position that the two Jewish immigrations—the “German” and the “Russian” immigrations—have many common attributes.¹ In the case of Rosenthal (1843–1917), the similarity is not based on the fact that both groups of immigrants were equally uneducated, but because both included highly cultured and educated individuals.² Rosenthal was a polyglot and a bibliophile, a poet and a writer, a journalist and a political adviser. For part of his life he was a leader in the Jewish communal farming movement known as Am Olam (“eternal people”). It is impossible to typecast him with other Jewish immigrants from the Russian Empire as backward, ignorant, and provincial—which is how the majority of German Jews in America viewed this group.³ An examination of Rosenthal’s life has implications for the characterization of the Eastern European Jewish immigration (1881–1924) because it shows that among the “Russian” immigrants were Jews of high culture who did not rebel against the earlier arrivals, but collaborated with them.

Rosenthal heralded from Friedrichstadt, Courland, Russian Empire (present-day Latvia), from a well-to-do Jewish family. It is essential to realize that Jews from Courland are distinct because in that part of the Baltic region, German and Russian cultures coexisted, and Jews there were often secular and well educated, like Western Europeans. Rosenthal was a native German speaker whose cosmopolitan orientation made him an antithesis of the shtetl Jew. He was neither poor nor religious; he was an accomplished poet and scholar in a half dozen languages. In his youth he went to live in Kiev, where he helped establish the liberal newspaper, *Zaria*.⁴ This paper reflected the views of a growing bourgeoisie, which hoped to transform the autocratic government into a liberal democracy through the participation of civil society.

In contrast to many immigrants, Rosenthal did not come to America exclusively to find material sustenance. He had an ideological program to develop the Jewish farmer. In this and other efforts he linked himself not with the Jews of the Lower East Side but with the Jewish elite—in particular Jacob Schiff—who had arrived earlier. His employment history reflects those connections. Although himself an immigrant, he found work as a senior government official on Ellis Island. Later he traveled to Asia to investigate investment opportunities on behalf of the Great Northern Railroad. He also worked for the Edison Company as the chief statistician and was finally appointed the head librarian of the Slavonic Division at the New York Public Library (NYPL), a position that he held from 1898 until his death in 1917.



Herman Rosenthal

(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

In fact, Rosenthal helped develop the position that we know today as the Jewish professional, who, thanks to his or her knowledge of the cultures and languages of immigrants, could provide intellectual and practical advice for Jewish philanthropists. A key to Rosenthal's success was his adoption of the ideological positions of benefactors such as Schiff, who felt that the government had the right—even the obligation—to criticize other countries and try to change them according to the universal ideals of human rights.⁵ In addition, the breadth of Rosenthal's

interests was impressive. He was a published poet in the German language and published regularly in German-language newspapers, especially the *New York Staats-Zeitung*. At the same time, he was sympathetic to Zionism and an admirer of the Hebrew language.

In many ways Rosenthal expressed a distinctly New York sensibility. His life mirrored the city's lively multilingual, multicultural intellectual scene. Although he moved to the city when he was already middle-aged, he was accepted in four different circles: He befriended the city's Hebraists, editing a journal in Hebrew; he participated in the German American social scene; he was a friend of Schiff and helped Schiff's campaign to change the tsarist government's treatment toward its Jewish population; and he had serious ambitions for the NYPL and worked hard to build one of the finest collections of Slavonic materials in the world.

Although Rosenthal came to the United States as a new democratic epoch in American Jewish history was in progress, his approach to politics resembles that of the wealthy German Jewish philanthropists who had arrived earlier. They shunned mass politics, maintaining a paternalistic approach; they considered themselves *shtadlonim* (plural of *shtadlan*), notables who appointed themselves responsible for those less fortunate.⁶ Examples of the *shtadlonim*'s successes in the nineteenth century included the rescue of the Jews of Damascus and the creation in 1860 of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. In the former case, Europe's wealthiest and most influential Jews invested a great deal of effort to liberate Jews imprisoned on charges of ritual murder, while in the latter, French Jewish civic leaders established an institution to combat the oppression of Jews worldwide. One may also recall that Baron de Hirsch's Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) helped finance the early Jewish agricultural colonies in the United States, as well as those in Argentina and Eastern Europe.

Cultivating the Jewish Farmer

While still in Russia, Rosenthal became involved in the Am Olam movement and was inspired by the idea that agriculture could rehabilitate Jews and improve their reputation among the nations. He maintained that antisemitism was attributable to economic competition, and Jewish farming would remove the causes for hate and violence.⁷ Although Am Olam included socialists and radical students, Rosenthal

was not a radical. In part he had lost hope in integration and turned to postliberal ideas, such as Jewish communal farming, after witnessing the pogroms in southern Russia in 1881–1882. Although the Industrial Removal Office and Galveston Plan would take place only twenty years later, Rosenthal already wanted to promote occupational diversity among Jews.⁸ He decided to establish a Jewish farming colony among the new immigrants.

It was characteristic of his philanthropic approach that he turned to wealthy Jews for help. Given \$2,800 by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Rosenthal was lured to Sicily Island, Catahoula Parish, Louisiana, three days' journey up the Mississippi River from New Orleans. Although the land was available for purchase on good terms, the place was far from the railroad, and roads were bad. Details are murky, but suspicions abounded that the sale benefited the governor and other political leaders. Nonetheless, some facts are undeniable.⁹ The settlers, 124 individuals, arrived in New Orleans in the fall of 1881, where they received another \$3,000 from the New Orleans Jewish community. Calling themselves "The First Agricultural Colony of Russian Israelites in America," the members embodied the utopian and collective aims of *Am Olam*.¹⁰ The object of the colony was "the improvement of the moral and intellectual condition of its members and families."¹¹ Resources were partially shared, and buying and selling of any kind among members was forbidden, as was the use of alcohol.

During the winter, the women and children remained in New Orleans, while the men traveled to Sicily Island to prepare the spring crop. The land, consisting of marshes and swamps, turned out to be unsuitable for farming. This problem was intensified by the fact that the workers lacked training and experience; many were even unaccustomed to physical labor. Nevertheless, the Jewish settlers did their best to clear the trees, build homes to live in, and get ready for sowing.¹² According to accounts, euphoria characterized the first months.

Evenings the colonists gathered for discussions and debates in one of the three big houses remaining from the Civil War. One member, Borowick, an opera star in Russia, entertained with song. Another, Herman Rosenthal himself, read his poems to an appreciative audience. The community life was reflected in a weekly news bulletin written in Russian and

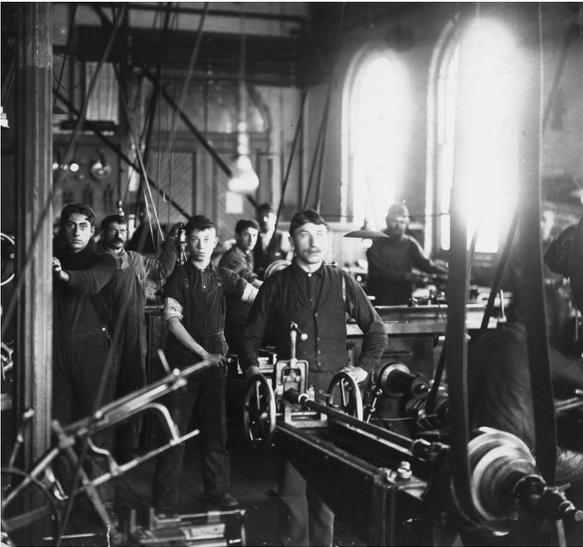
offering a humorous view of life. For the children, who were gradually brought from New Orleans, a school was organized in Rosenthal's house, and two of the members who knew English served as teachers. The adults, too, applied themselves to learning the language of their new home, and many a night was spent in study and reading.¹³

By May 1882, however, attitudes had changed. The settlers complained of the intense heat and backbreaking work. Some members had already abandoned the colony and turned to peddling. In late May, Rosenthal wrote in a private letter, "A viler spot on God's earth would be hard to find."¹⁴ The situation was already grim when intense rains raised the level of the Mississippi River, which broke the levees, flooding the entire colony and destroying the crops and residences. The pioneers fled, some to the cities, others to South Dakota, where Rosenthal helped gather funds to launch a new Jewish agricultural society named Crémieux, after the French politician and Jewish civic leader.¹⁵ At a meeting in New York City on 24 May 1882, Rosenthal nevertheless spoke of the Louisiana colony proudly as "a piece of Jewish history," despite the fact that in the "paradise promised," they had "found only serpents."¹⁶

The Crémieux colony proved short-lived because of a bad harvest, so Rosenthal turned to other endeavors. In the mid-1880s he was hired as the head statistician with the Edison General Electric Company, where, in his own words, he developed an original statistical system.¹⁷ But the dream of creating a successful Jewish agricultural colony still haunted him, and when he was offered the chance to participate in organizing the Woodbine Jewish Agricultural Colony in New Jersey, Rosenthal left Edison.¹⁸ He was hired as an advisor of the Committee on Agriculture for the Baron de Hirsch Fund and provided a salary of thirty dollars a month.¹⁹ The American committee was made up of the country's most successful Jews, including Myer Isaacs, Jesse Seligman, Julius Goldman, and Schiff. Rosenthal's job included editing a monthly journal in Yiddish, *Der Yidisher Farmer*, which cost two cents at its debut in November 1891. The editorial bureau was located at 205 Henry Street, the offices of the Baron de Hirsch Committee, which donated a good deal of the money to establish the Woodbine colony. In the lead article Rosenthal described his optimism about the birth of a new kind of Jew:

The Jewish Farmer! This word will soon ring out and magical, animate images will awaken in every Jewish heart! The Jewish Farmer! A dream guides our life, where, as Jews, we have a free imagination and enjoy the prizes of a life of independent labor. Before our eyes fresh, healthy, and bold images are developing, scenes from a happy, peaceful farmer's life. One hears songs about Jewish farmers, not about slaves who weep in song over their yoke and pain, but songs about the free Jewish nation, independent farmers who stand on a high level of culture.²⁰

Despite his willingness to serve the people by writing in their native tongue, Yiddish, Rosenthal was careful not to use a single Hebrew or Aramaic word in the entire newspaper. True he used the Hebrew alphabet, but the language was merely a step away from standard High German. Although one might conclude that Rosenthal identified with the German-speaking Jews with whom he socialized and therefore adopted their prejudices toward the Eastern European Jew, I am not sure. It seems to me that his goal was not to denigrate



The Machine Shop, Woodbine, New Jersey
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

Yiddish or direct the Eastern European immigrants to learn German, since the new immigrants were trying to learn English. Rather, he hoped to give the immigrants practical advice about farming that they could use immediately and acquire in a language they knew. The language itself was meant to be strictly functional, not elegant. In fact, it reads as a direct

translation from German, which for Rosenthal was aligned with technology and advancement. The journal only lasted a year and a half, and thereafter English became the language of publications for the Woodbine community.

The Woodbine colony survived a mere three years, even though Rosenthal had partnered with Michael Heilprin, Paul Kaplan, and Joseph Rosenthal, enthusiastic and talented experts on agricultural questions with experience in the Jewish colonization movement.²¹ This time the experts left nothing to chance; the leaders chose the area in Southern New Jersey not only for its fertile soil but also its proximity to urban markets and transportation routes. To instill responsibility, they asked the colonists to invest their own money. Moreover, to ensure financial stability during the difficult initial period, Rosenthal encouraged the development of industry. This mixture of agriculture and light industry—textiles and household goods—had the advantage of providing income to the colonists before harvest time and during the winter months.

Although Rosenthal was entrusted with choosing the colonists personally, the Woodbine colony did not achieve its goals. In 1894, during the “year of trouble,” when reckless loans were called in after nearly a decade of easy money, the colonists and the notables who administered the project found themselves in a weak financial position. Low prices for both farm and factory products created a sense of uncertainty. Furthermore, a series of misunderstandings over mortgage payments undercut trust between the colonists and their benefactors.²² Ultimately both groups decided it was easier to close Woodbine than try to recover the financial losses and repair the broken trust. The Woodbine failure ended Rosenthal’s work in Jewish agricultural colonization and pushed him, as we will see, to the New York Public Library.

Lover of Language, Master of Words

In the 1880s and 1890s, Rosenthal simultaneously participated in two different cultural universes in New York City. He became involved in German émigré literature and, at the same time, became active in promoting the Hebrew language. Rosenthal’s major contributions to German poetry include two book-length translations from the Hebrew Bible: *Worte des Sammlers* (New York, 1895), a translation of “Ecclesiastes”; and *Lied der Leider* (1893), a translation of “Song of Songs.” In 1888–1890, he edited with Konrad Nies two volumes of poetry, *Deutsche Amerikanische Dichtung; unter mitwirkung der hervorragendsten deutschen Dichter und Schriftsteller Amerikas*.²³ Rosenthal was also a regular contributor to the *New York Staats-Zeitung*, publishing articles on German literature, European economic life, and Russian politics.

To get a feeling for Rosenthal's position in German-American cultural life, we should note that *Deutsche Amerikanische Dichtung* was the official publication of the National Union of German Literature and Art in America. Among the union's officials were luminaries such as Schiff and Nies. The leading German writers of the day contributed, including F. Pauln, Max Sempfe, Hugo Scheffer, Hugo Andreissen, Otto Soubron, F. Edgar, Herman Goldberger, Anna Nitschke, Julius Fuchs, and Julius Drefer.

An inspection of the volumes does not give one a sense of confidence that the German language had a permanent foothold in America. Rather, one feels (at least in the 1890s) that the authors understood the linguistic threat of assimilation. Nevertheless, these German speakers prided themselves on their heritage, arguing for a revival of German on the grounds that the values of liberal Germany reflect the best that an American can be; therefore, it behooves one to preserve the German language. One writer explains:

In our expansive fatherland we should not allow German-America to dissolve German-American progress, freedom, education, curiosity and discipline, art and morality. We want this and can have it if we remain German-Americans in word and deed, if we want the very best for our fatherland and for all mankind. The laws of nature, nations, and the development of mankind help and support us, and even if we were to doubt our success, these laws would give us confidence in ourselves! And although the language of this new nation has so little resemblance to German that one hardly notices the relationship, its genetic connection will never disappear.²⁴

It has to be acknowledged that, although Rosenthal seems to move easily in the cultural world of German-Americans, such a portrayal of German and German-Jewish interaction is far more harmonious than was the case for most Jews in America at the time.²⁵ In fact, tension between the groups occurred more often. The case of the Arion Society in New York after the Civil War exemplifies the situation. Arion was a German-American choral group that excluded its Jewish members in the post-Civil-War boom period.²⁶ In light of recent examinations of the stresses between the two groups, especially at the century's end, Rosenthal's appointment in 1893 as the secretary of the German American Reform Union in New York seems inexplicable.²⁷ A possible reason for

Rosenthal's participation is his association with Schiff, who provided funding for the National Union and who likely vouched for Rosenthal.²⁸

In fact, Rosenthal never ceased writing original poetry in German. His archive, located in the Manuscript Division at the NYPL, is filled with original and unpublished German lyrics, many of which have been rendered in English by Arthur Guiterman and E.M. Kennedy.²⁹ Rosenthal's German translations of "Ecclesiastes" and "Song of Songs," published in the 1890s, had taken eight years, during which time he had become interested in the study of sources and speculation over the real author of "Solomon's poetry."³⁰ Explaining that the Hebrew author was apparently very sensitive to the historical and philosophical tendencies of the past and his own age, Rosenthal argued that the verses indicate that the author was a "great collector." Because of the "ideologically neutral" allusions and formulations, and the intellectual and even cynical attitudes expressed, Rosenthal concluded that the author was likely a Hellenized Jew, even going so far as to speculate that he was Antigonus of Socoh. Socoh, a town Southwest of Hebron, was in the hill country of Judah that was the site of a pitched battle between the Philistines and the Israelites, as described in Samuel 1:17.³¹ Defending his hypothesis, Rosenthal confessed that, "It would make me glad to discover that fundamental bible scholars were put on the right path thanks to my bold speculation."³²

At this point Rosenthal also began to take a more profound interest in modern Hebrew, establishing the Ohale Shem Association in 1895, a society devoted to "promoting the study of Hebrew" and "encouraging the study of Jewish history and literature."³³ When it opened, the society had more than seventy members, all of whom lived in New York City.³⁴ Among his collaborators were the most important Hebraists in America, S. Brainin, I. Altschuler, J. Eisenstein, and A. Friedus.

A key to understanding Rosenthal's activity in Hebrew publishing emerges from his friendship with Abraham Freidus. Freidus, who was also born in Latvia, was the head of the Jewish Division in the library in the same years as Rosenthal worked there. (Both were first at the Astor Place branch and then moved in 1911 to Forty-Second Street.) A person who loved Hebrew books to distraction, Freidus was admired by scholars, readers, and his assistants.³⁵ According to Edward Kasinec, the long-time head of the Slavonic and Baltic Division at the NYPL, meetings were held

among staff in which Rosenthal, Freidus, and Richard Gottheil, head of the Oriental Division, encouraged Hebrew-language publications.³⁶

Although it is difficult to know how active the members were, the organization apparently had staying power. The members published a journal, *ha-Modia la hodashim* (*The News Messenger*), which came out three times in 1902; and a single volume of poetry, criticism, and essays, titled, *Yalkut ma'aravi* (*Collection from the West*), in 1904. The volume emerged from several simultaneous impulses. As the editors, Rosenthal and Dr. Adolph M. Radin explained, it was published to celebrate the seventieth birthday of Horace Gintzburg, the Russian-Jewish philanthropist and head of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia.³⁷ At the same time, money raised from sales of the volume was to be used to help Jews affected by the recent pogroms in Russia and Romania. Finally, the editors published the volume as recognition of “half a jubilee for our poet, Menahem Mendel Dolitzki,” the New-York-based Hebrew-language poet.³⁸ By “half,” the editors probably meant they were celebrating twenty-five years of Dolitzki’s literary career. In any case, the editors promised that in future years the “society of scholars of Israel in the metropolitan city of the United States” (*hevrat hakhmai Israel ba-metrapolin shel artsot habrit*) would help publish Dolitzki’s books. The editors also published a letter of good wishes and congratulations to Dolitzki signed by luminaries in the Jewish world such as Moses Leib Lilienblum, Asher Ginzburg (Ahad Ha’am), and Yehoshua Khone Ravnitsky.

Dolitzki (1856–1931), the Hebrew and Yiddish poet, moved to New York City after the expulsion of the Jews from Moscow in 1891.³⁹ The tribute to him was written by Doctor Itzhak Virnkovski, who ended on the positive note that, “If this evening [the jubilee] will affect the hearts of our Jews here in the future and will serve as a vision, bold and yet isolated in the history of our poor Hebrew literature in America—then only God knows what [good] might happen.”⁴⁰

Yalkut ma'aravi featured essays about American-Jewish life, including studies of Jewish agricultural colonies in the United States, Jewish education (*hadarim* and *melamdim*), and the condition of Judaism in America. In one essay, Sh. Abel optimistically described the situation: “American Judaism, which only yesterday for example was wretched, is now reborn and like gold amazes us with its latest achievements. The Hebrew society publishes books, a Jewish encyclopedia; new seminarians

will create new Torahs for our future, for the future of Jews in America to win for itself an important place in our life right now.”⁴¹

If such successes were true, Rosenthal could take some of the credit for facilitating Hebrew publication in the United States.⁴² However, they were in fact not true. The numbers of readers did not grow, and the Hebrew press in pre-World-War-I America remained, as it had been a generation earlier, an outlet primarily for the writers of Hebrew themselves.⁴³

Rosenthal’s Mark on the New York Public Library

In his professional career, Rosenthal won the support of wealthy and powerful Jews. This relationship reaches back to the early 1890s, when he tried to obtain a diplomatic post in the Far East with a recommendation from Jacob Seligman.⁴⁴ Although he did not get it, Rosenthal made an extended trip to Japan, Korea, and China to evaluate the development opportunities for the Great Northern Railroad.⁴⁵ In 1894, thanks to powerful friends in the Jewish community, Rosenthal was appointed chief of the discharging department of the Immigration Bureau at Ellis Island, an office he occupied for two years.⁴⁶ In 1898, he accepted the post of chief of the Slavonic Department, NYPL, at the Astor branch. (This later became the basis for the collection at Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street.)

Rosenthal’s attitudes—a love for freedom, diversity of thought, hostility to bigotry, and the search for truth—found a home in the library. The extant documents and memoir literature reveal that Rosenthal took pains to provide the Russian-speaking émigré community with the periodicals it needed to keep fully abreast about events in the homeland. The historian of the Slavonic Collections at the NYPL, Robert H. Davis, has written, “As of June 30, 1898, the Periodicals Department maintained subscriptions to only thirteen Russian titles. One year later, according to the first Annual Report of the Slavonic Department, the collection numbered over 1,300 volumes, of which 570 were bound periodicals.” By 1909, Davis continues, the division “maintained subscriptions to eighty-nine current Russian newspapers and periodicals.”⁴⁷ Rosenthal established ties with Russian libraries, foreign booksellers, and even the Russian government. His efforts can be assessed by examining the 1916 bibliography, *A List of Russian, Other Slavonic, and Baltic Periodicals in The New York Public Library*.⁴⁸

A distinctive feature of the Slavonic Division was the ecumenical atmosphere that reigned there. Rosenthal did not take political sides among the émigrés, but offered a place for all.⁴⁹ Sitting in the same room and reading the same journals were radicals such as the socialist Lev Deich, the Zionist Nahum Sokolov, the elder George Kennan, diplomat and explorer, and many others, who, in other places, might come to fisticuffs. In the Reading Room, however, they obeyed the rules of decorum. George F. Kennan has written:

Tales have come down to us of scenes from the years just after the Russian revolution when the exiled Russian Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries, occupying their different tables in the Reading Room, would glare at each other across the room in quivering hostility and mount sudden sallies to snatch a copy of the latest Moscow newspaper from those at the other table. Yet all of them, when put to the test, submitted meekly to the quiet dignity and authority of the institution itself. Implicitly in this submission and in the respect it entailed was a recognition on their part that the historical past, as embodied in these collections, was something greater and more impressive than all the burning questions of the present.⁵⁰

In the Reading Room, alongside the celebrated and famous, sat a large number of ordinary people seeking edification and an emotional closeness with the land of their origins. In his article, “The Slavonic Division’s First Reader,” Marc Raeff describes how the immigrants from Russia, primarily Jews, employed the collection to educate themselves. Some even used it as a kind of private university.⁵¹ The Reading Room also fulfilled emotional needs. As Kennan explains:

For many of these people, particularly the recently arrived ones, this Division of the Library has (or so I have suspected) played a special role as a mediator between their past and their present. It is a place where the world they have left is still understood and respected, and its printed record cherished, a place where others could be met who shared their interests and sometimes their nostalgia—a place, in short, where the shock of sudden displacement could be eased and mitigated.⁵²

On any given weekend in the early twentieth century, it was not unusual for the Reading Room to be at full capacity. At times, the staff could not satisfy all the requests in a timely manner.

An Era of Activism

From 1903 until his death in 1917, Rosenthal devoted much of his energy to disseminating information about the immorality of the tsarist Russian government. His goal was threefold: to turn American public opinion, and therefore American government policies, against Russia; to justify the hostility exhibited by American Jewish leaders such as Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall toward the tsarist government; and to defend the policy of open immigration for Russia's Jews. If Americans knew about the terrible treatment of the Jews, Rosenthal reasoned, they would look upon mass immigration more favorably, despite warnings from various groups that the influx of poor Jews was detrimental to life in the United States.

Rosenthal's activities were shaped to a large degree by his relationship with Schiff, who used his financial power in an attempt to leverage the tsarist government to treat Russia's Jews with greater tolerance. Although Schiff's position against lending money to the tsarist government became well known, his efforts to wage a propaganda war before the American government and public are less well known.⁵³

The Jewish elite of the day made arguments for a moral foreign policy regarding Russia. Schiff's biographer, Naomi Cohen, has written:

Persecution in Russia and Romania prompted members of the establishment repeatedly to ask the American government for denunciation of the guilty powers. From 1882, when Myer Isaacs memorialized Congress on the pogroms in Russia, until the outbreak of World War I, they aimed for the incorporation of that overriding ethnic interest into American foreign policy. Usually invoking the principles of humanitarian diplomacy, self-appointed communal leaders also used their contacts with officials in attempts to secure equal rights for East European Jews. American self-interest demanded action too, they warned, because otherwise the country would be flooded with impoverished refugees.⁵⁴

Although Schiff embodied the attitude of the German-Jewish elite that had supported restricting the immigration of poor Jews to America in the 1880s and only had begun to change in the 1890s, Russia's policy was viewed as a problem because it impacted on Jewish immigration to the United States.⁵⁵ At the same time, Rosenthal and Schiff disagreed about the solution to the fate of Russian Jewry. From the few documents available, it is possible to say that Rosenthal thought that Palestine would play a role in absorbing Jews from Eastern Europe, whereas Schiff considered Zionism a terrible illusion that would cause widespread disappointment once it became clear that it would not meet the high expectations.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Rosenthal and Schiff could agree to promote political change in Russia even if they differed about ultimate solutions.

Rosenthal began to collaborate with Schiff in proliferating information about the injustices committed by the tsarist government in 1903, in the aftermath of the Kishinev pogrom.⁵⁷ In a letter to the banker immediately after the pogrom, Rosenthal protested the lukewarm response of the U.S. government, demanding that attempts be made to elicit a more vigorous response. The letter gives us a vivid image of Rosenthal at the time. He was very knowledgeable about Russian affairs, having gleaned information from a number of sources and periodicals. Moreover, he directly accused the Russian government of fomenting violence, a position that today has a number of detractors.⁵⁸ Finally, Rosenthal demanded that "civilized nations" follow a policy inspired by moral imperatives, such as the need to protect Jews and aid them to emigrate from Russia.

Regarding Kishinev, Rosenthal was aghast at what he perceived to be the U.S. government's minimal response. He believed the government's tepid actions to be the result of faith in the Russian ambassador, who had assured the American press that nothing serious had occurred.

To Christian civilization of our day, after all the striving and struggling for better things, for Justice and Truth above all things, is it to stand idly by and see a great crime scarcely paralleled since the darkest days of the Inquisition committed without a word of protest? Is it not the duty of the United States, which of all countries has ever stood for what is noblest and best in all mankind to do all that can be done in the matter? While it is true that the United States has no right to

meddle with the internal affairs of Russia without a just cause, it is well to remember that there are two issues at least, which concern us directly: 1. American citizens of Jewish faith even when provided with an American passport are not allowed to enter Russia, and our diplomacy has failed to right this wrong in the last twenty years; 2. We cannot ignore the increased emigration [sic] to our shores, which is bound to follow in the wake of the Kishinev massacres. Mere respect for international usage is not a sufficient excuse for enlightened nations to shrink from a duty which is clearly theirs. Considerations of far greater moment and of great concern to the world at large, should impel them to utter a stern warning in the name of Righteousness.⁵⁹

Although the United States was ultimately pushed to present a letter of reproach to the Russian government (Theodore Roosevelt forwarded a petition from the B'nai B'rith to the American ambassador in Moscow, who presented the petition), the Russians refused to accept it. Rosenthal contributed to the enormous response of the Jewish community in particular and the American public more broadly.⁶⁰ Jewish and non-Jewish Americans gave money to Russia for the victims, sent petitions to the U.S. government, held public protests, and used the press to disseminate information about the tragedy of Kishinev.⁶¹ Even Rosenthal's complaint about the government's inaction should be put into context. He wrote to Schiff about the events only days after they had happened and was worried that the story would be buried.

After publishing articles on Kishinev in *American Hebrew*, a weekly newspaper in New York, Rosenthal promoted awareness of Russia's repressive government with his translation of Hugo Ganz's *The Land of Riddles (Russia of Today)*, published with Harper and Brothers in 1904.⁶² Ganz, an Austrian intellectual, related his first-hand experience of visiting the repressive police state in the 1890s. He described the intense police control over society, the excesses of an uncontrolled bureaucracy, the tsar's personal paranoia, and the use of the Jews as scapegoats for the government's failures. He also transmitted the frustration of ordinary Russians—peasants, lawyers, intellectuals, students, and socialists—who expressed unanimously that the government bore the full blame for ruining Russia.

In the preface to his translation, Rosenthal drives the point home, negatively comparing Russia to Japan, which, one should note, was not the American public's favorite during the Russo-Japanese War, since the public felt threatened by the dangers of "yellow peril," an Asia rising in power and influence.⁶³ According to Rosenthal, the public should reverse its views of Russia, since Russia did not act like a European nation:

Were not the reputation of the author and the standard of his informants alike absolutely above suspicion, it would seem incredible that such conditions as those depicted could exist in the twentieth century in a country claiming a place among civilized nations. Indeed, whereas Japan has incontestably proved that she is emerging from the darkness of centuries, Russia is content to remain in a state of semi-barbarism which might be found in the Middle Ages.⁶⁴

Throughout 1905, Schiff encouraged Rosenthal to publish translations of articles from the Russian press, some of which appeared in the *New York Staats-Zeitung*.⁶⁵ After the failure of the revolution in Russia, Rosenthal translated and published Prince Serge Dmitriyevich Urussov's *Memoirs of a Russian Governor* in 1908. Schiff's role in the genesis and distribution of the volume is beyond doubt.⁶⁶ In *Memoirs of a Russian Governor*, Urussov described his appointment as the Russian governor to Bessarabia in the days after the Kishinev riots. His job was to calm the public and to ensure that no further disorders occurred. Although Urussov was mildly critical of the government, Rosenthal did not choose the book for that reason. Rather, he was attracted to Urussov's positive and unprejudiced attitude toward the Jews of Bessarabia.

The book starts with Urussov calling into question the basic premise of the Kishinev riots. "It was asserted with much pleasure, even in Government circles, that the Jews themselves were to blame for the riots—they had been the attacking party, and, meeting the resistance of the people, suffered defeat because of Russian bravery and their own cowardice. However, I had read the actual facts in the case, and realized that this was an exaggerated interpretation."⁶⁷ It had long been a staple of government propaganda that the Jews were behind the revolutionary movement. Noting that the police were nervous about the formation of a Jewish self-defense militia, Urussov drew his own conclusions.

On the whole, the Israel of Kishinev was not warlike. I gained the conviction that among our Jews the inclination towards a peaceful, bourgeois life and an indifference to the more ideal side of politics may be stronger than among the other races in Russia. The Jewish revolutionaries of Kishinev in the poorer strata of the population were almost entirely made up of the very young. A newly married man, as soon as he acquired about fifty rubles, went over to law and order, and all his energy was directed towards finding means for the support of his family. Therefore I came to the conclusion that the Kishinev police were too frightened by the prevalent belief of the prominent role played by the Jews in the revolutionary movement of Russia, and hence exaggerated the importance of the power and organization of local Jews.⁶⁸

One cannot doubt that Urussov's expressions of admiration for Jewish farming colonies sponsored by the Jewish Colonization Association warmed Rosenthal's heart.

A very interesting sight was presented by the Jews, mostly young people, by whose labor alone the ground was tilled, the plants nurtured, and the fruit processed. There were no frightened, haggard faces to be seen; no dried-up, diseased images; no timid, uncertain movements. The brown, red-cheeked youths, with their shining eyes, broad shoulders, and muscular arms, I saw in the J.C.A. reminded me of the Jewish narratives of the strong field laborers whom the Bible contrasts with the wild men living in tents.⁶⁹

Urussov, a leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party [Kadets], served as a model for what Rosenthal wished more Russians would emulate—a lack of prejudice, open-mindedness, a love of freedom. Urussov represented exactly the kind of leader that Rosenthal hoped would take power in Russia, a man who might usher in an age of peace, prosperity, and equal rights for all the ethnic minorities living in the empire. It must be acknowledged, however, that many within Russia, especially those on the political right, perceived the Kadets to be a “tool of the Jews.”⁷⁰ The truth is that Jews were attracted to the Kadets, especially in the elections to the first State Duma in 1906, because the party's policy did not discriminate against any of the national minorities, and therefore was in favor of equal rights for all. In

addition, several Jews, such as Maxim Vinaver and Henrik Sliozberg, held high positions in the Kadet party.⁷¹

Rosenthal's and Schiff's shared disdain for the tsarist regime did not let up. In subsequent years, Rosenthal published numerous writings on Russia, some of which Schiff provided help in publishing. Among Rosenthal's articles were "A Phase of the Russian Spy System" on Yevno Azev, which appeared in the *American Review of Reviews*, and "The Martyrdom of the Jew," which came out in *The Outlook* in 1911.

Uneasy Identity in a World at War

The outbreak of World War I offered Rosenthal the opportunity to express his views on Europe and America. In an article in the *Bethlehem Outlook* from mid-1914, Rosenthal explained that war was a natural phenomenon:

This terrible European war which is just beginning, will not be the last great war, as some of the learned editors of our newspapers are trying to make us believe. They assert that "at the conclusion of this war permanent peace can be assured only through the overthrow of the Hohenzollern, Hapsburg, and Romanov dynasties. Emperors who govern by 'divine right' are a monstrous anachronism—they are a menace—since great and prosperous people may at any time be forced, against their own interest, into a war for dynastic interest." The students of history beg to differ with them.⁷²

According to Rosenthal, humanity has an atavistic drive to fight:

The lust, the eager desire to fight and to kill has not yet died out in the human heart. The savage forces and impulses may be suppressed for a while by education, by culture, by the teachings of the Utopians, of the genial poets, and writers of a given period; but the animal instincts of the human heart can still, at any moment be aroused, stirred up by some political agitators, by strong and brutal leaders. ... We believe in evolution! Progress, however, does not always move forward in a straight, but often in a curved line. At a given period it circles and turns backward; the law of average!⁷³

Like Schiff and so many other Americans (including many American Jews), Rosenthal initially felt sympathy with Germany's need for greater

political and economic opportunities. Rosenthal feared that the situation in southern Europe remained unresolved, and he noted that China and India both represented future threats. Furthermore, he worried that Russia might gain a victory over Germany, which would lead to the spread of tyranny over Central Europe. But there was a counterbalance to Europe—the United States. The United States, he writes, has shed its instinct for killing; therefore, it alone can serve as a mediator between the belligerents and help them to come to peace through arbitration.⁷⁴

As the war progressed, and especially after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Rosenthal felt great discomfort as sentiment in the United States turned against Germany in favor of England, France, and Russia. But the war made Rosenthal ponder why America had remained uninvolved in the fighting. The United States, he came to believe, had risen to a higher degree of human perfection. Using the ideas of Franz Oppenheimer, an early German sociologist, Rosenthal argued that the United States was the only country in which the class system did not fully overshadow the promise of liberty. “The United States may yet be far from the utopian ideas fostered by Plato and his followers, but it is probably the best republic which the human race has so far been able to establish.”⁷⁵ Americans, he continues, “love peace and hate aggression.” Therefore, “let us look forward to the coming peace and prepare for the role which this country should play in helping to arrange for an early termination of hostilities.”⁷⁶

Rosenthal admired Woodrow Wilson and placed his hope in the formation of postwar institutions. He allowed himself room to imagine whether and how this terrible experience of war would help the world to seek new ways of behaving. In one article, he posed a series of questions:

Shall we rise to the opportunity of organizing universal sentiment against the recurrence of cruel and devastating conflicts? Shall we assume leadership in a concert of powers to provide guarantees against inhuman warfare? Shall we see the realization of our hope for an international council which will use force, if need be, only for preserving peace among nations? Shall we succeed in bringing about universal disarmament with an international police to preserve peace with justice? What part will the labor organizations play in extending the power of democracy; and what is to be the role of women,

with or without suffrage, in establishing world peace? Shall we succeed in preventing the dynasties from waging war without the consent of the governed? Let us hope that the very excesses and horrors of the present war will strengthen our resolve to establish in all lands the reign of justice and tolerance; and that the nations, taught by bitter experience, will make the Hague Tribunal in truth the High Court of Peace.

The above quote was to have been the introduction to a book that Rosenthal had intended to publish after the war's end. Unfortunately, he died in 1917, and the book was never published.⁷⁷ Rosenthal, like so many immigrants to the new world, became an ardent patriot who adopted the values and praised the tolerance of the United States. He was hopeful that the tragedies of war might lead humanity to a higher understanding of justice and proper behavior, both within society and among states. He was in favor of a League of Nations.

Although I called him a "mandarin" in the title of this article, Rosenthal was not a bureaucrat; he was a true intellectual, a poet, and a thinker. In one of his talks in Bethlehem, New Hampshire, he described the superiority of artistic fiction to other kinds of writing. Distinguishing between the two Russian writers Leo Tolstoy and Ivan Turgenev, Rosenthal explained that "one believed in literature as an art, and hoped to achieve progress through it, while the other denied the value of all art and regarded literature as a means for carrying to the people religious, social and political doctrines."⁷⁸ While both may be right, said Rosenthal,

We cannot forget that the work of the masters in art and literature has persisted for ages, while the best of the dogmatic writings, political or religious, written for the moment have exerted a great influence only at the time for which they were written. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* will be read as a literary masterpiece long after his political and theological pamphlets shall have passed into oblivion.⁷⁹

Although it might seem unrelated, this perspective gives us insight into Rosenthal's life. More often than not, Rosenthal's activities were directed by utopian goals. With the agricultural colonies, he wanted to change the image of the Jew in the world; as a librarian, he wanted to build a collection of newspapers and magazines for the needs of the

day; through Hebrew, he wanted to link American Jews with the Zionist movement; as a journalist, he hoped to aid his coreligionists and perhaps positively influence the democratic opposition in Russia; and finally, as a poet, he wanted to shape matter aesthetically, transform quotidian language into art. In my view, it was the artist that inspired the rest of his activities, making him a particularly rarified individual whose life and work forces us to rethink a number of preconceptions about the “Russian” and “German” immigrations to the United States.

Appendix

To give you an impression of Rosenthal’s work as a poet, I present here one short poem and its translation by E.M. Kennedy.

Künstlerherz

Tage des Sommers! Ihr schwindet, verschwindet so bald,
 Rauh ist der Spätherbst! Der Sturmwind entblättert den Wald.
 Jäh sind die Lieder verklungen der Sänger der Flur;
 Denn es ergrimmte im Zorne die Mutter Natur.-
 Schon ist das Ende der Träume des Herbstes so nah,
 Bald ist der Winter, der kalte, der schaurige da.-
 Herz, du mein armes! Warum bist so jung du geblieben?
 Möchtest noch immer vertrauen und hoffen und lieben.

Bright days of summer! How swift to your closing you wear.
 Chill is the autumn! Its stormy winds strip the trees bare.
 Then dies the song of the birds in the woods and the fields.
 And to the wrath of the wind Mother Nature then yields.
 Dreams of the Autumn; Your sad end already is near
 Soon will the winter becoming-so cold and so drear.
 My poor heart! Why for you is not youth on the wing?
 Must you ever trust on and to hope and love cling?

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Center, the Imre Kertész Kolleg, Yad Hanadiv, Alexander Von Humboldt, and the Lady Davis Foundation.

Notes

*The author acknowledges the advice of the two anonymous reviewers who provided a good deal of wisdom. Any mistakes, however, belong to the author alone.

¹Hasia Diner writes, "While this standard version has a dramatic ring to it, it is based on a misunderstanding of the era before. It ignores the striking similarity in the motives for migration, aspirations for success in America, and the cultural identification of Jews both before and after 1880. Indeed it is much more accurate to talk about a century of migration and consider the immigration from the 1820s through the 1920s as a single movement that began in western Europe and moved gradually and unevenly to the east." *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 232. Nonetheless, we should be careful about going too far in seeing only comparisons. As Diner notes, "But the era after 1880 did usher in a new period in American Jewish history. It was not that those who arrived in the four decades after 1880 subscribed to a fundamentally different view of their Judaism or came out of a profoundly different Jewish culture. Rather, they showed up in America in numbers so much larger than the immigrants of the previous era that they had a greater impact on the institutions and communities in which they lived. After all, in the sixty years between 1820–1880, 150,000 Jews, at the most, arrived in the United States, whereas between 1880 and 1925 (despite the dislocations of World War I), over two and a half million arrived." Diner, 233.

²Diner has also noted that, "Moreover, the Jews who came to America in the six decades before the end of the nineteenth century represented a geographically broader swath of Europe than the term 'German' could convey. Jews from Poland and Galicia, Lithuania and Hungary, Moravia and Bohemia arrived alongside the 'Germans,' who themselves ought not to be viewed as the bearers of the culture of Goethe and Schiller or as the starry-eyed revolutionists of 1848." *A Time for Gathering*, 234.

³See Selma Berrol, "Germans Versus Russians: An Update," *American Jewish History* 73 (1983): 148. "Russian Jews" refers not only to those from Russia proper, but from Romania, southeastern Europe, and also the Baltic area, where Jews belonged to the German cultural orientation.

⁴For more on Kiev as a cosmopolitan city for Jews, see Natan M. Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis: A History, 1859–1914* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 180.

⁵Diner writes about Jews in the middle of the nineteenth century who, on multiple occasions, petitioned the U.S. government at the highest levels to protest the mistreatment of Jews and, if possible, to intercede with foreign governments. Diner, *A Time for Gathering*, 154.

⁶On the *shtadlan*, see Brian Horowitz, *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 17–28. Naomi Cohen writes, "Schiff's leadership in all its dimensions was *sui generis*. In no other communal figure did the same constellation of personality and assets ever appear." He was "at one and the same time the defender of Jews, the philanthropist par excellence, and the lobbyist for Russian Jewry."

Naomi W. Cohen, *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership* (Hanover, NH & London: University Press of New England [for] Brandeis University Press, 1999), xiii.

⁷A. Menes, "Di 'Am Olam' Bevegung," in *Geshikhte fun der Yidisher Arbeter Bavegung in di Fareynikte Shtatn* 1, ed. E. Tcherikower, 2 vols. (New York: YIVO?, 1945), 223–227.

⁸Farming had been practiced by Jews in Russia as early as the 1820s, although the government often placed obstacles before Jewish farmers. See Iulii Gessen, *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda v Rossii* 1 (Moscow and Jerusalem: Evreiskii Universitet v Moskve, 1916), 98. It is also important to recall that the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) was created in 1891, and, using Baron de Hirsch's money, it devoted most of its energies to attracting Jews to farm the land either in Russia or Argentina.

⁹Uri D. Herscher, *Jewish Agricultural Utopias in America, 1880–1910* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), 32.

¹⁰These colonists did not represent the first Jewish initiative in farming in the United States. That tribute belongs to a farm colony started in Alchua Country, Florida, in 1820. See Gertrude Dubrovsky, "Jewish Agriculture in America," in *The American Jewish Farmer: An Exhibit Sponsored by the American Jewish Archives*, ed. A.J. Peck (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1986), 5. One can also gain information about Rosenthal's Louisiana colony in Uri D. Herscher's article, "Jewish Agrarian Utopias in America: The Craving for a Great Ideal," in *The American Jewish Farmer: An Exhibit Sponsored by the American Jewish Archives*, ed. A.J. Peck (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1986), 9–11.

¹¹Herscher, *Jewish Agricultural Utopias*, 34.

¹²"They fenced in some 450 acres; 200 acres they ploughed and sowed with grain; they planted corn and vegetables: they cut down trees; planted fruit trees, repaired roads, dug wells and built three two-room cottages in addition to the two large houses on the place. But there were only two yoke of cattle and two mules in the entire colony; the colonists complained of the heat and the lack of drinking-water; they were disappointed that their wives and children could not join them; they missed intellectual and spiritual sustenance; they were discouraged by the uniform failure of the farmers around them, who, it is said, respected them for their diligence." Max Heller, *Jubilee Souvenir of Temple Sinai, 1872–1922* (New Orleans: American Print Co., 1922), 70.

¹³Herscher, *Jewish Agricultural Utopias*, 35.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁵Adolphe Crémieux (1796–1880), French Jewish civic leader and statesman.

¹⁶Heller, *Jubilee*, 71.

¹⁷*Encyclopedia Judaica*, 17 vols. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1973), 15: 293.

¹⁸Herscher, *Jewish Agricultural Utopias*, 124.

¹⁹Herman Rosenthal Papers, New York Public Library Special Collections, New York. Baron de Hirsch, a multimillionaire, devoted a large portion of his wealth to aiding the poor Jews of Eastern Europe through encouraging immigration to other lands. Hirsch wanted to move Jews out of less-respected occupations such as peddling, money lending, and the sale of alcohol, and into more productive work, such as farming and craft-making.

²⁰*Der Yidisher Farmer* 1, no.1 (1891): 1–2. Translations of some articles from *The Jewish Farmer* can be found in Uri Herscher's book, *Herman Rosenthal, The Jewish Farmer* (Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, 1976).

²¹Although he was himself not a participant, Rosenthal wrote about these individuals in “A History of the Communitarian Settlement Known as ‘New Odessa,’” in *The American Jewish Farmer: An Exhibit Sponsored by the American Jewish Archives*, trans. Gary P. Zola, ed. A.J. Peck (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1986), 14–17.

²²Herscher, *Jewish Agricultural Utopias*, 90.

²³On Konrad Nies, see Regine Wieder’s introduction to “The Revenge of the Forest Primeval,” in *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature: A Reader of Original Texts with English Translations*, ed. Marc Shell and Werner Sollors (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 377–379.

²⁴L.M. Stäger, “Deutsch-America,” *Deutsch-Amerikanische Dichtung: Unter Mitwirkung der hervorragendsten deutschen Dichter und Schriftsteller Amerikas 2* (1888–1890): 44–45.

²⁵Sonja Mekel, “Herren from the Tribe of Judah: The Relationship between German and German Jewish Immigrants in Milwaukee and Chicago, 1840–1900,” doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 2009, 17.

²⁶Mekel, “Herren from the Tribe,” 12.

²⁷“Rosenthal, Herman,” in *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* 10 (New York and London: Funk and Wagnals Co., 1905), 479. In the union, Rosenthal was known as Nekrasov for his translations into German of the Russian poet, Nikolai Nekrasov. Incidentally, Rosenthal had published a book of translations of Russian poetry into German in the Ukrainian city of Kremenchug. See Herman Rosenthal, *Gedichte* (Kremenchug, 1878).

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹Arthur Guiterman (1871–1973) became a well-known poet. A full bibliography of his works can be found at http://www.poetry-archive.com/g/guiterman_arthur.html (accessed 30 September 2013).

³⁰In his article, Harry M. Orlinsky notes Rosenthal’s contribution to the beginnings of biblical scholarship in the United States. See “Jewish Biblical Scholarship in America,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 47, no. 4 (April 1957): 343–353.

³¹Information about Antigonus of Socho can be found at http://www.hebrewbooks.org/pagefeed/hebrewbooks_org_40026_37.pdf (accessed 30 September 2013).

³²Herman Rosenthal, *Worte des Sammlers (Kohélet)* (New York: International News Company, 1895), 1. Harry M. Orlinsky has noted Rosenthal’s contribution to the study of Jewish religion in late-nineteenth-century America. See Orlinsky, 350–353. Many scholars agree with Rosenthal that the author was likely a Hellenized Jew. See Norbert Lohfink, “Der Bibel skeptische Hinterter: Versuch, den Ort des Buchs Kohélet neu zu bestimmen,” *Stimmen der Zeit* 198 (1980): 17–31; Lohfink, “Zu einigen Satzereöffnungen im Epilog des Kohéletbuches,” in *Jedes Ding Hat Seine Zeit...*, ed. A.A. Diesel (Berlin: De Gruyter 1996), 131–147.

³³*Constitution and By-Laws of the Ohale Shem Association* (New York: Baron Press, 1895), 5. Ohale Shem, the tents of Shem, is used only once in the Bible: Genesis 9: 27. The context refers to Shem and Japheth, Noah’s two sons, whom he blesses for covering his nakedness.

³⁴Some information about Hebrew-language culture in New York at this time can be found in Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York’s Jews, 1870–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 103, 131–132.

³⁵Rebekah Kohut, “Freidus—A Personal Reminiscence,” *Studies in Jewish Bibliography and Related Subjects in Memory of Abraham Solomon Freidus (1867–1923)* (New York: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1929), IXL.

³⁶Personal discussions with Edward Kasinec, 3 April 2010.

³⁷*Yalkut ma'aravi* 1 (1904): 1. On Baron Gintsburg and the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment, see Brian Horowitz, *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

³⁸On Dolitzki's role in American Hebrew, see Michael Weingrad, *American Hebrew Literature: Writing Jewish National Identity in the United States* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2010), 4–5.

³⁹“Dolitzki, Menahem Mendel,” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 6 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), 154–155.

⁴⁰*Yalkut ma'aravi*, 166.

⁴¹Sh. Abel, “Le tahita ha'yahadut ba-amerika,” *Yalkut ma'arivi*, 135.

⁴²For more on Hebrew publications in New York, see Weingrad, *American Hebrew Literature*, 1–28.

⁴³Michael Gary Brown has written, “But the Hebrew press was unlike other immigrant press. It was not created to serve the needs of a public that did not yet read English. The Hebrew press came into being here as it had in Europe, because it was felt that people should read Hebrew, not because they wanted to or could. In actuality, although the number of journalists increased, the reading public did not.” “All, All Alone: The Hebrew Press in America from 1914 to 1924,” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 59 (1969): 140–141. See also Hutchins Hapgood, *The Spirit of the Ghetto* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1902), 53–66.

⁴⁴Herman Rosenthal letter to the Hon. Walter G. Gresham, Secretary of State, New York, 14 August 1893. Herman Rosenthal Papers, New York Public Library (NYPL hereafter), New York.

⁴⁵The Great Northern Railroad was owned by James J. Hill and financed by Loeb, Kuhn & Co., the New York banking firm led by Jacob Schiff. Rosenthal published a report of his findings in 1893 in St. Paul in a 150-page volume: Herman Rosenthal, *Report on Japan, Corea [sic.] and China* (St. Paul, MN, 1893).

⁴⁶*Jewish Encyclopedia* 10 (1905), 478.

⁴⁷R.H. Davis, “Slavonic and Baltic Library Resources at the New York Public Library,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 29, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Summer 1995): 9.

⁴⁸*A List of Russian, Other Slavonic, and Baltic Periodicals in The New York Public Library* (New York: NYPL, 1916). Edward Kasinec, former head of the Slavonic and Baltic Division, and Robert Davis, his former assistant and current Slavonic librarian at Columbia University, have written about Rosenthal's work that his “ambition was to collect both current and retrospective materials. The Library's annual report for 1911 mentions the acquisition of Ivan Reikhel's eighteenth-century description of Japan and another edition of Herberstein's description of Moscow. The report for the following year notes the acquisition of the first edition of Mikhail Lomonosov's *Grammar*, and in 1913 of Petrine and Church Slavonic texts, for instance Leontii Magnitskii's *Arithmetic* and two seventeenth-century Ruthenian Slavonic imprints. Building upon its fine Rossica holdings, the Library acquired such important and unusual items as Angelo Nonni's depiction of Tsarevich Paul I's visit to Venice

in January 1782 and an account of a reception in London for Emperor Alexander I in June 1814.” Edward Kasinec and Robert H. Davis Jr., “Afterword: Collecting Slavonica at the New York Public Library,” *Russia Engages the World, 1453–1825*, ed. C.H. Whittaker (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 167.

⁴⁹According to Davis and Kasinec, “In 1911, the Library moved from the cramped confines of the Astor Library into a grand new Beaux-Arts building at the ‘crossroads of the world,’ Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street.” *Ibid.*, 165.

⁵⁰G.F. Kennan, “Preface,” *Canadian American Slavic Studies* 29, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Summer 1995): viii.

⁵¹Marc Raeff, “Our First Reader: David Shub and His Times,” *Bibliion: the Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 108–125.

⁵²Kennan, “Preface,” vii.

⁵³Raeff, “Our First Reader,” 125–140.

⁵⁴Naomi Cohen, “The Ethnic Catalyst: the Impact of the East European Immigration on the American Jewish Establishment,” in *The Legacy of Jewish Migration: 1881 and its Impact*, ed. David Berger (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1983), 134.

⁵⁵Esther Panitz, “The Polarity of American Jewish Attitudes towards Immigration (1870–1891),” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (Dec. 1963): 105, 110–113 119.

⁵⁶Schiff’s ideas on the solution to the Jewish problem in Russia can be seen in his letter to Rosenthal from 23 November 1904, published in Brian Horowitz, *Empire Jews: Jewish Nationalism and Acculturation in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Russia* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2009), 269. On differing attitudes between German Jews and Russian Jews, see Berrol, “Germans Versus Russians,” 142–156.

⁵⁷It seems that the German language in which they carried on most of their correspondence also solidified their relations. For example, see Schiff’s letter from 8 January 1906: “Mit all der Arbeit und den Verpflichtungen, die ich habe, ist es ganz unmöglich für mich, lange und häufige Korrespondenzen zu führen, aber ich bin fast immer am Samstag Nachmittag zu einer frühen Stunde zu Hause und werde mich stets freuen, persönliche, russische und andere Angelegenheiten mit Ihnen zu diskutieren.” Herman Rosenthal Papers, NYPL, New York.

⁵⁸The culpability of the government for these and other anti-Jewish pogroms has been called into question. See John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁵⁹Rosenthal to Schiff, 19 May 1903, Herman Rosenthal Papers, NYPL, New York.

⁶⁰Edward H. Judge, *Easter in Kishinev: Anatomy of a Pogrom* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 90.

⁶¹Evidence of the huge response to the Kishinev pogrom is outlined in a number of places, including Philip Ernest Schoenberg, “The American Reaction to the Kishinev Pogrom of 1903,” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 63 (March 1974): 262–283; Cyrus Adler, ed., *The Voice of America on Kishineff* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1904); and Michael Davitt, *Within the Pale: The True Story of Anti-Semitic Persecutions in Russia* (London: Barnes, 1903).

⁶²See Horowitz, *Empire Jews*, 265. Rosenthal’s articles on Kishinev in *American Hebrew* appeared on 8, 15, and 22 May and 3, 8, and 12 June 1903.

⁶³Diner, *A Time for Gathering*, 178–179.

⁶⁴Herman Rosenthal, "Preface," in Hugo Ganz, *The Land of Riddles (Russia of To-Day)* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1904), v.

⁶⁵Schiff to Rosenthal, 8 January 1906, Herman Rosenthal Papers, NYPL, New York.

⁶⁶This letter from G.P. Putnam's Sons publishers to Rosenthal clarifies Schiff's role: "We should be prepared to supply to the order of Mr. Schiff, or of the Jewish Publication Society, an edition of five thousand copies, either in cloth or in sheets, this edition to be printed specifically for such order, and to be delivered intact at the time the book was published. We should expect to print, at the same time, a supply of not less than one thousand copies for the use of the general public." G.P. Putnam's Sons to Rosenthal, 10 July 1907, Herman Rosenthal Papers, NYPL, New York.

⁶⁷Serge Urussov, *Memoirs of a Russian Governor* (London and New York: Harper & Brothers, 1908), 8.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 53.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 118.

⁷⁰Hans Rogger, "The Formation of the Russian Right," *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 203–211.

⁷¹However, as it turned out, the Kadets were hesitant to insist on equal rights during the first Duma and did not get the chance in later Dumas. It is worth noting that the anger of Kadet members toward the government regarding the pogroms that broke out in October 1905 might have had the opposite effect than members wanted—i.e. instead of reigning in the government's license to use violence, it increased the government crack-down against leftists and the curtailment of franchise in the next Duma elections.

⁷²Herman Rosenthal, "A Balance of Power," *Bethlehem Outlook* 4 (1914): 14.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 13–14.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 13.

⁷⁵Herman Rosenthal, "Why do Nations Rage?" *Bethlehem Outlook* 3 (1915): 15.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁷I have not been able to locate a manuscript copy of the book.

⁷⁸Herman Rosenthal, "On the Golden Age of Russian Literature at the Town Hall in Aid of the Library Fund," *Bethlehem Outlook* 5 (1913): 8.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*



ISAAC MAYER WISE DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (1819–1900) was the leading organizational genius behind the rise of American Reform Judaism in the late 19th century. He played a central role in the founding of three major Reform Jewish institutions that still exist today: The Union of American Hebrew Congregations [1873], now the Union for Reform Judaism, the parent body of Reform synagogues; the Hebrew Union College [1875], the Reform movement's rabbinical seminary; and the Central Conference of American Rabbis [1889], the Reform rabbinical association.

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Timeline: Life of Isaac Mayer Wise

BROWSE ARCHIVE

- Correspondence
- Hebrew Union College Reports
- Manuscripts
- Books
- Contributions to Books
- Contributions to Periodicals
- Editorials
- Photographs
- Selected Writings on Wise

Year

- 1847-1854
- 1855-1859
- 1860-1864
- 1865-1869
- 1870-1874
- 1875-1879
- 1880-1884
- 1885-1889
- 1890-1894
- 1895-1899
- 1900-1901

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Isaac Mayer Wise
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Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (1819-1900) was the leading organizational genius behind the rise of American Reform Judaism in the late 19th century. He played a central role in the founding of three major Reform Jewish institutions that still exist today: The Union of American Hebrew Congregations [1873], now the Union for Reform Judaism, the parent body of Reform synagogues; the Hebrew Union College [1875], the Reform movement's rabbinical seminary; and the Central Conference of American Rabbis [1889], the Reform rabbinical association.

This digital archive is a freely accessible comprehensive electronic edition of Rabbi Wise's correspondence and extensive published writings. Consisting of approximately 3,300 items captured in nearly 20,000 digital images, the collection documents the life and work of the architect of Reform Judaism in America.

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