1926, the Kharkov literary journal Di royevelt (The Red World) published his story “Gesheems” (Events), whose heroes participate in the revolution. Shortly thereafter, that journal featured some of Rosin’s apolitical poems, including one about a stag with golden antlers. Still, it was the revolution and civil war that dominated his writings, as reflected in the poem “Shayn” (Light; 1921)—which he would later regard as his first mature work—and other poems and stories written in the 1920s.

Soviet critics generally hailed Rosin’s literary output, though they noted that his heroes had difficulty balancing their personal quests with the needs of the revolution. According to Yekhezkl Dobrushin, who in 1925 edited the Moscow almanac Nayerd (New Land), to which Rosin contributed, Rosin’s poetic collection Tsu ale, tsu undz (To Everyone, to Us; 1929) marked the writer’s complete transformation into a proletarian literary figure.

In addition to publishing a dozen of his own volumes, Rosin contributed to numerous collections. In 1932, he settled accounts with his Bundist past by taking part in the anti-Bundist almanac Der veg fun farat (The Road to Treason), edited by Kushnir and Vozsef Rabin. For the almanac Sovetish (Soviet), published in 1934 on the eve of the First Congress of Soviet Writers, Rosin poeticized the story of the non-Jewish revolutionary Mishka, who was born out of wedlock after his mother was impregnated by her employer, a landowner. Indeed, illegitimate children were typically regarded as a good reservoir of revolutionaries. That same year, Rosin’s poem “Zin un tekhter” (Sons and Daughters) also appeared in unabridged form.

Rosin collaborated with Shmuel Halkin on a Yiddish translation of the Armenian epic David of Sasun in 1940. In his final long poem, Trayhayt (Loyalty), published the following year, he portrayed a young Jewish worker who matures as a soldier of the revolution. Rosin volunteered for the Red Army in July 1941 and was killed in action that October.


---Gennady Estraikh

ROSTOV-ON-DON, town on the Don River; administrative center of the Rostov province of Russia. In 1761, the Rostov fortress and settlement were founded, and the town gained official status in 1796.

By 1811, there were 20 Jewish families living in Rostov, a number that rose successively: in 1836, there were 73 Jews (less than 1% of the population); in 1846, there were 289; and by 1853, Jews numbered approximately 500. In 1820, a Jewish cemetery was established on the left bank of the Temernik River (the site was closed in 1871, later built upon), and Jewish businesses and entrepreneurship played a leading role in the development of trade, industry, banking, and transport.

Three main railroad lines, laid in 1867–1871 by the Poliakov brothers, turned Rostov into a major transportation center [see Poliakov Family]. From the mid-1800s, the Jewish population increased tenfold in less than 30 years, reaching 5,000 (about 5% of the city’s population) in 1880, and 11,838 (10%) in 1897. While 44 percent of the Jewish working population was engaged in trade and services, another 42 percent was involved in crafts and industrial production. Jewish professionals boasted a large proportion of doctors, lawyers, teachers, and mining industry experts.

By the end of the 1840s, the Jewish community had a prayer house, and from 1855 a synagogue, on whose site the Main Choral Synagogue was built in 1868. Attached to it were a public library and a school. From 1863 to 1888, the community was led by Fabian O. Gnesin, a rabbi and public figure (father of the composer Mikhail Gnesin). A Jewish hospital was founded in 1881, followed by an almshouse with a prayer house in 1894 (destroyed in the 1990s). In 1888, when Rosin was made part of the Don military region, it was detached from the Pale of Settlement and thus was closed to Jewish residence. However, Jews who had settled there prior to 19 May 1887 were allowed to remain.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jewish organizations maintained a children’s shelter, a day nursery, an eating hall, and other charitable institutions. Many of Rostov’s Jewish children attended general schools: in 1883–1885 Jews constituted 34 percent of pupils in the gymnasium (after 1887 within the limits of numeros clausus). In 1910, Rostov had three Talmud Torahs, a Jewish school for women, and a school attached to the main synagogue.

The Hoveve Tsiyon movement was popular in the 1880s, followed at the turn of the century by other Zionist organizations. Among those advocating Zionism was Moisei Aizenshadt, a figure active in public life who served as crown rabbi of the town from 1889 to 1910. In 1907, the Tse’ire Tsiyon group opened a library; in 1917, Zionists published the periodical Mir ereistva (World of Jewry); and in 1919 they issued Buletten’ vremenovo merkaza sionistskoi organizatsii (Bulletin of the Provisional Center of the Zionist Organization).

On 18–20 October 1905, a pogrom raged in Rostov with the participation of Cossack units. More than 150 Jews were murdered, some 500 were wounded, and Jewish shops, stores, warehouses, and mills were damaged. A small Jewish self-defense detachment, organized by the Po’ale Tsiyon organization, resisted the attackers. Measured by the number of victims, this pogrom was the second largest after that of Odessa in the same year.

During World War I, many Jewish refugees from the battlefield came to Rostov. In 1916, the rebbe of the Lubavitch Hasidic movement, Sholem (Shalom) Dov Ber Shneerson, settled there with his family; in 1920, his son, Yosef Yitschak Shneerson, moved the Tomikhe Temimim yeshiva to Rostov. The town remained a center of Lubavitch activity until 1924.

At the beginning of the civil war in 1918, the Jewish industrial and social elite supported the Whites. In 1918–1919, several Jewish organizations were founded, including the Jewish Cultural and Educational Society (which opened a private Jewish gymnasium), the Kulturlige, the student Zionist organization He-Haver, the Union of Jewish Refugees, and the Relief Society for Jewish Victims of the Civil War.

With the establishment of Soviet authority, the local Eveskiis in the 1920s...