

Title: Jewish Argumentation as an Element of Russian Revolutionary Rhetoric
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The Russian revolutionary and student circles in Western European university towns in the two decades before 1917 were contact zones where ethnic Russians and Jews discussed politics and culture and debated the effectiveness of various methods of propaganda. Given the attention they paid to oral and written style, it is not surprising that some of them would distinguish Jewish from non-Jewish speech or writing, seeing it as particularly combative, as conveying the sense of physical performance, and, in the case of speech, as using attention-getting gestures and voice. In this paper, I use memoirs by Russian radicals (Chernov 2007, Medem 1979) to identify prevalent notions of Jewish style.

A set of rhetorical devices that can be found in Talmudic hermeneutics might be argued to characterize Eastern European Jewish speech, which was strongly influenced by these rabbinic modes, even for women or non-elite men who themselves did not participate in rabbinic debate (Weinreich 2008). Note that these rhetorical devices are all characteristic of classical as well as Talmudic rhetoric. In some cases these devices also characterized Jewish speech as it is described in marketplace contexts.

Analysis of stenographic transcripts of speeches as well as printed propaganda brochures suggests that these rhetorical devices appeared more frequently among Jewish speakers than among non-Jews and increased over time in the speech of non-Jewish males who socialized with Jews (Selishchev 1928). The sources are all in Russian and drawn exclusively from the Socialist Revolutionary Party (*Partija socialistov-revoljucionerov*), whose leadership contained a significant minority of Jews. I argue that some elements of Jewish speech entered the arsenal of Russian revolutionary rhetoric because they responded to the need to speak and write in attention-getting, combative, and persuasive ways.

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