Max Mandelstamm, Palestinophile and Zionist Leader

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The grief of Jewish people is my grief.
Max Mandelstamm¹

Max Emelianovich (Emmanuel) Mandelstamm (1838 -1912) was one of the most prominent Palestinophile and Zionist leaders in late Imperial Russia. His vigorous personality allowed him successfully to combine varied public activities with his professional career. Mandelstamm was a prominent ophthalmologist and he established in Kiev one of the best ophthalmology clinics in Russia. He was also one of the founders of the Palestinophile movement, and was later one of the leaders of the Zionist, Territorial and Jewish emigration movements in Russia. Mandelstamm was the first President of the Jewish Emigration Society that was established in Kiev in 1909. At the turn of the twentieth century he was also the Vice President of the Kiev Jewish community.

Mandelstamm was born on 14 May 1838 in Zagare, Kovno Gubernia (now Lithuania) into a renowned family of Russian maskilim.² His father, Ezekiel Mandelstamm, was a well educated merchant who wrote a biblical lexicon entitled The Book of Names (1862). Max Mandelstamm’s uncle Leon Iosifovich Mandelstamm was a ‘learned Jew’ at the Ministry of National Enlightenment of Russia and author of several novels and Jewish textbooks, ‘Russian-Jewish’ dictionaries and articles about Jewish education. Several members of the Mandelstamm family became Russian and Jewish authors and scholars. The prominence of the Mandelstamm family was even recognized by the Chief of the Kiev Provincial Police, V. Novitskii. He wrote in a letter to the Director of the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior on 23 June 1900 that

The Mandelstamm family is very large, has seven brothers, all with distinguished abilities, and all have higher [University] education, the above mentioned [Max Mandelstamm] is the eldest of them, the most influential among the brothers. Only one of them, Iosif Mandelstamm, has converted to Christianity...³

¹ Pamiati Maksa Emilievicha Mandelshtamma: rechi, statii i nekrologi. (Kiev, 1912), 135.
² Ibid, 59.
Max Mandelstamm, like many maskilim of his generation, received two educations: traditional religious and secular in a Vilna gymnasium, where his family moved when Max was twelve years old, and thereafter in Dorpat (Derpt, now Tartu) and Kharkov Universities. During his studies at the Vilna gymnasium and at Dorpat University Mandelstamm encountered antisemitism for the first time. Mandelstamm even challenged an ‘Aryan’ student in Dorpat University to a duel for calling him a ‘Yid,’ but the student publically apologized and the duel did not take place.\(^4\)

In 1864 - 1866 Mandelstamm continued his education in Berlin and Heidelberg Universities, where he became the favorite student of the famous German physician and physicist Hermann von Helmholtz (1821-94). In 1866 Mandelstamm directed the eye clinic in Wiesbaden, at the same time he received the offer to become the head of an eye clinic in America, but after much hesitation he rejected the offer. His father called him back to Russia and he returned there in 1868.\(^5\) The time of ‘the Great Reforms’ in the 1860s-70s was a period of great hope for Russian Jewry. In these comparatively liberal years the Tsarist government abolished some restrictions and limitations for Jewish people. The maskilim believed that soon all Jews would receive equality in the Russian Empire. Perhaps Ezekiel Mandelstamm thought in the atmosphere of great hope in the 1860s that his son Max would be able to make a good career in Russia, when he insisted on his return. And at first everything seemed to work out well for Max Mandelstamm in Russia. After successfully defending his doctoral dissertation in the St. Petersburg Medical-Surgical Academy in 1868, Mandelstamm was appointed in 1869 as an Assistant Professor (i.e. docent) at Kiev University.\(^6\)

In the same year he opened a private ophthalmology clinic in Kiev that soon became the best in the Southwestern region (Kiev, Volhynia and Podolia provinces) of the Russian Empire. The clinic was located in Mandelstamm’s house (from 1878 to his death Mandelstamm lived and worked on 25 Aleksandrovskaia Street in the heart of the Jewish district Podol; the previous location of the clinic is unknown). In 1870 Mandelstamm asked the Board of St. Vladimir University in Kiev to allow him to teach his students at the clinic, thus the patients, who came there ‘provided rich scholarly material’ for their education. In 1871 the University Board, with approval of the Minister of Enlightenment of Russia Dmitry Tolstoy, honoured his request.\(^7\)

The Jewish historian Shimon Dubnov wrote in his memoirs Kniga zhizni (The Book of Life) that Mandelstamm helped him with his vision problem after other ophthalmologists had failed. Mandelstamm's clinic provided aid to over a hundred patients per day. The clinic accepted patients irrespective of their financial status: poor patients received treatment there for free or at a low cost. Yekhezkel Kotik recalled that

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\(^5\) Ibid.


\(^7\) The Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in city Kiev (TsDIAK U), f. 707, op. 37, d. 30, l. 1-3; f. 274, op. 5, d. 3, l. 11.
poor Jews came to the clinic ‘from all regions and corners.’ Many ophthalmologists came to Mandelstamm for consultation, especially for training in eye surgery. In 1896, during the Sixth Pirogov’s [Medical] Convention in Kiev, the group of ophthalmologists who came to the convention observed each morning the reception of patients and operations performed by Mandelstamm at his clinic.

Mandelstamm contributed to the development of ophthalmology by publishing from 1888 to 1893 a five-volume work about ophthalmologic illnesses. He also published many articles on ophthalmologic problems in Russian and German medical journals.

For twelve years Mandelstamm taught at the St. Vladimir University in Kiev, and in the last four years of his academic career he was the Head of the University Ophthalmology Clinic. However Mandelstamm abandoned his academic career when the University Board refused to give him the title of Professor even though the members of the medical faculty elected him to this position three times. He was deprived of a professorship at the Kiev University because he was a Jew. Mandelstamm declined the proposed ‘compromise’ to receive his professorship if he converted to Christianity. The destruction of Mandelstamm’s academic career occurred at the same time as the first wave of mass anti-Jewish pogroms shook Russian in 1881-1882. These pogroms were a shock for all Russian Jewish intelligentsia including Max Mandelstamm. According to the Kiev rabbi Dr. P. Yampolsky:

Max Emelianovich, as a real European man and gentleman by his nature, could not tolerate nor be reconciled with brutal physical violence toward Jews. From this moment and until the end of his life he became the mortal enemy of the golus [Jewish dispersion] and the disgraceful golus situation of Israel.

A similar explanation of Mandelstamm’s evolving political views was given by Shimon Dubnov, who discussed the situation of Jews in Russia with Mandelstamm during his visit in Kiev in 1887:

He [Mandelstamm] talked with hatred about the Russian government and with bitterness about the Russian people, even about the Russian intelligentsia. He admitted that these feelings first appeared after he was an eyewitness to the Kiev pogrom in 1881; then he had been invited to Ignat’ev’s ‘Gubernsky commission,’ where the people who allowed the street pogroms were creating a legislative

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9 Pamiati Maksa Emilievicha Mandelshtamma..., 60.
11 Ibid.
12 Dr. P. Yampolsky. Pamiati doktora Maksa Emilievicha Mandelshtamma. Slovo, proiznesennoe v Kievskoi khoral’noi sinagoge v subbotu, 7-go aprelia 1912 goda, vo vremia panikhidy po pokoinom M. E. Mandelshtame. (Kiev, 1912), 12.
pogrom. Mandelstamm was by then an adherent to the territorial ideas of Pinsker and saw the salvation of Jews in their emigration from Russia.\textsuperscript{13}

Max Mandelstamm believed that because of state and popular anti-Semitism, Jews did not have good prospects for a future in Russia, so the best solution for them was emigration. At a conference of representatives of Jewish communities in St. Petersburg in 1881 he supported the emigration of Jews from Russia as a possible solution for their problems. From that time onward, the emigration Jews from Russia became central to his outlook on public affairs.\textsuperscript{14} ‘Go away from here,’ Mandelstam told Russian Jews, ‘we are not like Hercules and cannot solve the problem that should be solved by the native population’.\textsuperscript{15} Soon Mandelstamm realized that the immigration of Russian Jews to other countries helped them to save their life, but not their Jewish identity. To preserve their national culture Jews, according to Mandelstamm, should have own land. ‘People without land remain a rootless people,’ he stated, so Jewish people should acquire the own land.\textsuperscript{16} Thus Mandelstamm came to Palestinophile and Zionist ideas.

Mandelstamm was one of three founders of the Palestinophile movement in Russia. Rabbi Yampolsky wrote:

> On the first day of the Jewish New Year (the beginning of September 1882) in Odessa in the apartment of Doctor [Leon] Pinsker the first Palestinophile group in Russia was founded. It was established by three people: Dr. Pinsker, Dr. Mandelstamm, who came from Kiev to Odessa especially for this meeting, and our famous writer-nationalist M. L. Lilienblum.\textsuperscript{17}

In the beginning of the 1880s Mandelstamm established in Kiev the Brotherhood of the Admirers of Zion (Hovevei Zion), which collected and sent money to Jewish colonists in Eretz Israel. The secretary of this society was the Hebrew poet Judah Leib Levin (who wrote under pseudonym ‘Yehalel’ in the Hebrew press). The society was closed by the Kiev authorities soon thereafter when the police discovered it.\textsuperscript{18}

Max Mandelstamm later became one of the leaders of the Zionist and Territorial movements in Russia. He was a delegate to the first seven Zionist congresses and was elected to the Zionist Action Committee, the highest institution of the World Zionist

\textsuperscript{13} Dubnov S. M. Kniga zhizni…,136. Gubernskie (Provincial) Commissions were created after the anti-Jewish pogroms of 1881 to investigate ‘the harmful economic activity of Jews.’ Count N. Ignat’ev was the Minister of Interior at that time.
\textsuperscript{14} Encyclopedia Judaica. CD-ROM Edition.
\textsuperscript{15} Pamiati Maksa Emilievicha Mandelshtamma..., 28.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Dr. P. Yampolsky. Pamiati doktora Maksa Emilevicha Mandelshtama..., 12.
\textsuperscript{18} TsDIAK U, f. 442, op. 538, d. 52, ll. 13-15 Letter of Kiev Vise-Governor to Kiev, Podolia and Volynia Governor-General, June 6, 1885.
Organization in the interim between Congresses.\textsuperscript{19} From the First to the Sixth Zionist Congresses Mandelstamm was the head of the so called ‘financial center’ of the Russian Zionist Organization. He together with A. Lurie carried out the complex work of fundraising in Russia for the Jewish Colonial Bank. Mandelstamm travelled to many Russian and Western European cities giving Zionist speeches and presented his talks to all the Zionist congresses in which he participated.\textsuperscript{20} He talked about the persecution of Russian Jewry, anti-Jewish pogroms, the miserable economic conditions of the majority of Jews in Russia, and the necessity of Jewish emigration. At the Fourth Zionist Congress Mandelstamm presented a speech ‘The Physical Development of Jews’, where he showed the horrible pictures of life of Russian Jews in the ‘modern ghetto’ – in the shtetls under unbearable moral and hygiene conditions. He said

Jewry cannot physically and morally recover in the ghetto; it could be done only outside on our own native land… Only mass emigration to Palestine… can give us a new generation of Jews.\textsuperscript{21}

Mandelstamm was a close friend of the founder of the Zionist movement, Theodor Herzl. Herzl had great respect for his friend and lovingly depicted him in his 1903 novel \emph{Altneuland} as the elderly President of a utopian Jewish state in Eretz Israel in 1923 ‘\textit{an ophthalmologist from Russia, Dr. Eichenstamm}’.\textsuperscript{22} Mandelstamm and Herzl shared similar views on Zionism. Mandelstamm wrote to Herzl on March 30, 1899 that the secular nationalist is more Jewish than somebody who focused on the observation of the laws of the Torah.\textsuperscript{23}

The leadership of Mandelstamm in the Russian Zionist movement was well known to the authorities. They asked Mandelstamm to write an informative note about Zionism for the Department of Police of the Russian Ministry of the Interior in 1900. Before 1903, the Zionist movement was legal in Russia and the authorities had not yet defined their attitude toward the movement. Thus Mandelstamm was selected as the most competent person to write the note about the Zionist movement. The Chief of the Kiev Provincial Police characterized Mandelstamm as a ‘very clever university educated man’ with great influence among Russian and foreign Jews.\textsuperscript{24} Later, in 1904 police Lieutenant Colonel Spiridonov wrote in a secret report to the Director of the Department of Police of the Ministry of the Interior,

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Pamiati Maksa Emilievicha Mandelshtamma...},155.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 56, 150-151.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ha-Olam}, 1938, 43.
\textsuperscript{24} Victoria Khiterer. \textit{Dokumenty, sobrannye Evreiskoi istoriko-arheograficheskoi komissiei...} 213.
Mandelstamm is leading the Zionist movement of Russian Jews, he has eminent connections in the world of Jewish capitalists, who live in different cities, among whom is his close friend the wealthiest man of Kiev the millionaire Lazar Brodsky. Mandelstamm is also acquainted with all the Kiev Jewish elite.\textsuperscript{25}

When the authorities asked Mandelstamm to write the note about Zionism, he attempted to gain their support for Zionist movement by trying to persuade them that it would be financially beneficial for Russia. In his note, he wrote that the resettlement of Jews in Palestine will be an advantage for everyone, particularly for Russia, ‘which could use Jews as creators of new Asian markets for [Russian] industry.’\textsuperscript{26} Mandelstamm consulted with Herzl about the text of the note.

The Russian authorities hardened their attitude toward Zionism in 1903, when the Minister of the Interior, Viacheslav Plehve, banned the Zionist movement. The stated reason was disappointment in the small number of Jewish emigrants from Russia. Plehve wrote in his circular of 24 June 1903 that Zionists, instead of promoting the resettlement of Jews to Palestine ‘for creation there the independent Jewish state, postponed this mission for the far future and focused their activity on the development and strengthening of the national Jewish idea... in places where Jews currently live.’\textsuperscript{27}

After the prohibition of the Zionist movement in Russia, all Zionist leaders, including Mandelstamm, were under surveillance by the police. For years the Kiev police inspected all of Mandelstamm’s personal correspondence. Police transcripts of his correspondence show that Mandelstamm considered the Russian monarchy a backward and barbaric regime and hoped that Japan would defeat Russia during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). The police reported that he wrote in a letter to his brother Dr. Leon Mandelstamm in Poltava that, if Russia wins the war

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the country will have even more moral degradation and the people who live there will suffocate under the yoke of the Christian Orthodox religion. We Jews in peculiar will perish then... I made a bet with many people [on who would win the war], and if I win I shall take a bath with champagne for many weeks, if I shall lose it, woe to me, I shall perish.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

Jewish immigration to Eretz Israel at the turn of the twentieth century met with significant obstacles due to the opposition of the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, who refused to recognize the right of Jews to settle in Palestine. The \textit{Uganda Plan} emerged as an alternative for Jewish emigration and for creation of a large Jewish settlement. The British government proposed that the Zionist Organization establish an autonomous

\textsuperscript{25} TsDIAK U, f. 274, op. 5, d. 3, l. 11.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Dokumenty, sobrankiye Evreiskoi istoriko-arheograficheskoi komissiei ...}, 217-218.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 215.
Jewish colony in British East Africa (now Kenya). Herzl introduced the Uganda Plan to the Sixth Zionist Congress (August 1903), resulting in a sharp disagreement among its delegates. Debates about the Uganda Plan continued after Herzl’s death in 1904. At the Seventh Zionist Congress in Basle in 1905, a majority of the delegates, as well as the Russian Zionists, voted against the Uganda Plan. A small group of supporters of the Uganda Plan ‘led by Israel Zangwill, Dr. Max Mandelstamm, and Dr. David Jochelmann, withdrew from the congress and, meeting separately in Basle, formed the Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO), with Zangwill as president. Mandelstamm became President of the Jewish Territorial Organization in Russia with headquarters in Kiev.

However, with time, it became obvious to all that the Uganda Plan was unrealistic. The special commission sent to East Africa by the Sixth Zionist Congress found it not suitable for a large Jewish settlement. The Jewish Territorial Organization searched for alternate places for Jewish emigration and the creation of Jewish settlements and simultaneously supported greatly increased Jewish immigration to America. ‘Jewish people strive to go to the West’, said Mandelstamm, ‘and we cannot change this natural stream’.

The turbulent life in the Russian Empire in the early twentieth century, with the increased level of violence, revolution, anti-Jewish pogroms, and difficult economic conditions; all of these induced the rapid increase of Jewish emigration from Russia. Between 1901 and 1913 over one and a half million Jewish emigrants came to the U.S. Most of them settled in the northeastern port cities: New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Many Jewish immigrants had problems finding work in these cities and lived in overcrowded slums. The Jewish sociologist, Yakov Leshchinsky, who researched Jewish immigration, wrote in his article in 1909 that two thirds of Russian Jews who immigrated to America were unemployed for an average of one year. The majority of Russian Jews who found jobs in America worked in sweatshops, where working conditions were harsh. Jewish immigrants created colonies - ghettos - in these cities, which, according an opponent of immigration, ‘were hotbeds of disease, sedition, and moral depravity’. The U.S. Congress considered restricting Jewish emigration at the beginning of the twentieth century. The U.S. administration also attempted to spread the immigrants around the country. Several state governments and one Jewish organization attempted to convince immigrants to settle in other places, but without much success. It became obvious that immigrants who were already settled in the northeastern American cities were not inclined to move elsewhere.

Leaders of the Jewish Territorial Organization decided to try to redirect Jewish immigration to America from the overpopulated northeastern cities to the West where labour was badly needed. The gate for this new flow of immigration was the port city of

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30 Ibid., 7.
31 *Pamiati MAKsa Emilievicha Mandelshtamma...*, 112.
Galveston, Texas. Thus the *Galveston Movement* was established, in which the Jewish Emigration Society in Kiev played a key role. To support of emigration of Jews to Galveston, Mandelstamm founded and led in 1909-1912 the Jewish Emigration Society in Kiev. The Society spread its activity across the fifteen provinces of the Pale of Settlement and the Kingdom of Poland.\(^{34}\)

The Galveston Movement was founded in 1906 and the emigration of Jews to Galveston began in 1907. Ninety per cent of Jewish emigrants who came to Galveston were from the Russian Empire and Galicia. It is still unclear who supported emigration of Russian Jews to Galveston from 1907 to 1909, before the Jewish Emigration Society in Kiev was established. Only Russian Jewish organizations could have done this, because any help to emigrants from America was against U.S. law and could not be distributed within Russia. Help for the emigrants in the Russian Empire could be provided only by local branches of the Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO). However, as this organization was illegal in Russia, similar to all other Zionist organizations, it could not publicize its work. Perhaps the Kiev leaders of the ITO transformed their organization into the Jewish Emigration Society in order to legalize their support for Jewish emigration. It is also unclear whether or not the Jewish Emigration Society in Kiev was subordinated to the Jewish Territorial Organization. The leaders of the Jewish Emigration Society in Kiev claimed that it was an independent organization. However, Bernard Marinbach, in his book *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West*, wrote that the Jewish Emigration Society in Kiev belonged to the ITO.\(^{35}\) We can assume that the leaders of the Jewish Emigration Society in Kiev just pretended that they represented an independent organization in order to hide its connections with the Zionist-Territorial movement, and thus received permission to operate from the Russian authorities.

The Kiev Jewish Emigration Society had a number of local committees and representatives in various cities and shtetls of the Pale of Settlement. In 1913 the Society had 324 representatives.\(^{36}\) These committees were responsible for the selection of candidates, helping them to receive necessary emigration documents, giving them information about emigration to Galveston, and organizing for them their preliminary medical exam (the final medical exam was upon arrival in the U.S.) It was essential for many emigrants that the Jewish Emigration Society in Kiev and its local departments paid up to fifty per cent of travel expenses to America. This made emigration feasible for even the poorer Jewish families.

The majority of Jewish emigrants who arrived in Galveston were very poor indeed; some of them were literally barefoot and dressed in rags. The Pale of Settlement forced the concentration of Russian Jews into small shtetls, where competition among craftsmen and traders was so great that many of them could not earn enough to support themselves and their families. Almost two thirds of the emigrants (60.7 per cent), sent to America by the Jewish Emigration Society were from shtetls, 23 per cent were from

\(^{34}\) *Program of Jewish Emigration Society.* (Kiev, 1909), 6.


\(^{36}\) *Otchet o deiatel’nosti Evreiskogo emigratsionnogo obschestva za 1913 god.* (Kiev, 1914), 40.
towns and district centers, and only 16.3 per cent from large cities. Shtetl residents suffered from greater unemployment than Jews who lived in cities. The majority of shtetls did not have industrial enterprises and markets. Therefore it was more difficult for Jews to find work there. Unemployment and lack of modern life in shtetls forced Jewish youth to look for a better life in large cities or in other countries.

Immigration to the U.S. changed for the better the financial situation of many Jewish immigrants from Russia. According to the report of the Jewish Emigration Committee for 1913, the average salary of Jewish immigrants in the U.S. was from $7.50 to $15 per week. At same time the salary of Jewish craftsmen in Russia was 5 to 10 rubles per week ($2.50 to $5) on a not very permanent basis.

After the death of Mandelstamm in 1912, Lev (Leon) Brodsky, the sugar industrialist and philanthropist, was elected as President of the Jewish Emigration Society. Brodsky was a close friend of Max Mandelstamm, and he often made contributions to the Jewish Emigration Society from the moment of its establishment. The Galveston Movement lasted until the beginning of World War I. Ten thousand Jewish immigrants arrived to America through Galveston from 1907 to 1914. Most of them received support from the Jewish Emigration Society.

Mandelstamm successfully combined energetic Jewish public activity with his professional work. In spite of his disbelief in a better future for Jews in Russia, Mandelstamm put much effort into improving the living conditions of his Jewish contemporaries. He worked for forty five years in the different branches of the Kiev Jewish Community, was for a long time the Vice President of the Kiev Jewish community, and was a member of various Jewish organizations. Mandelstamm was the head of the Committee for the Aid to the Victims of Pogroms in Kiev after pogrom of 1881. Jonathan Frankel wrote that in Kiev starting in the spring of 1881 the relief committee operated, organized ‘under the leadership of Dr. M. Mandelstam… In the crises of 1881 – 2 Mandelstam was to emerge as a highly articulate spokesmen and effective organizer.

Mandelstamm also generously donated money for various Jewish needs in Kiev. In gratitude for his public activity and counting on his eloquence and political experience, Kievan Jews proposed to Mandelstamm that he become a candidate to the First State Duma. The attorney and Jewish public figure, Arnold Margolin, wrote that if Mandelstam accepted this proposal he would be ‘the first and most desirable candidate for all [Russian] Jewry.’ But Mandelstamm rejected this offer, because he did not see a viable future for Jews in Russia. He did not believe like the Jewish radicals that revolution or a

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38 *Otechet o deiatel’nosti Evreiskogo emigratsionnogo obschestva za 1913 god.* (Kiev, 1914), P. 27-28.
41 Ibid., 29.
change of the government could improve the situation of Russian Jewry. Mandelstamm saw the reason of oppression of Jews not in the policy of some particular government, but he considered that antisemitism had much deeper roots: Jew-hatred based in the racist prejudices of people among whom Jews lived. These people despised Jews, but were afraid of their spiritual power. The only solution for Jews, according to Mandelstamm, was the creation of their own state or at least until that became possible, emigration of Russian Jews to America.

However Mandelstamm realized that the emigration of Jews from Russia would be a long process that would take many decades. Meanwhile he believed that Jewish youth should receive a good education. He ‘played a leading role in the Kiev Jewish Student Fund’, an organization that supported the higher education of Jews in Kiev. Mandelstamm was also a member of the Central Committee of the Society for Spreading Enlightenment among Jews in Russia (OPE) and one of the founders and the head of the Kiev branch of OPE. Sugar industrialist, millionaire Lazar Brodsky was officially enlisted as the President of the Kiev branch of OPE, but Max Mandelstamm had the actual role of running the society in whose apartment gathered all meetings of this organization.

Mandelstamm actively participated in the establishment of new OPE schools especially in the province and Saturday schools for Jewish working people. Mandelstamm believe that OPE should focus their efforts on preparation of well-educated Jewish teachers for these schools. He did not believe that OPE could itself solve all problems with Jewish education. He wrote that philanthropic donations were not enough to solve these problems, they could be solved only by all of Jewry (perhaps he meant in the future Jewish state). In spite of his pessimism regarding the prospects of Jewish education in Russia he tried hard to improve what could be improved and provide a good Jewish education for at least some Jewish children and adults.

Mandelstamm put much effort into practical work for the Jewish emigration movement and for the Kiev Jewish community. Probably his name is almost forgotten today because unlike some of the other leaders of the Russian Palestinophile and Zionist movements, such as Leon Pinsker, Peretz Smolenskin, Vladimir Zeev Jabotinsky and Ahad Ha-am (Asher Hirsch Ginsberg), Mandelstamm did not leave significant theoretical Zionist writings on which he published only a few short articles. These were written in an elegant style and contain some interesting insights. However Mandelstamm did not believe that words alone could change much in the situation of Jews in Russia. Thus he consciously rejected theoretical work in favor of practical efforts. In an open letter to the editor of the Illiustrirovannyi Zionistskii Al’manakh (Illustrated Zionist Almanac) Mandelstamm refused to cooperate with the periodical, because he did not believe that this almanac could change the mentality and awaken the national feelings of Jewish people. In an Open Letter, which was published in the Illiustrirovannyi Zionistskii Al’manakh, he wrote that ‘[Russified] Jew, who considers himself an intellectual,
does not read Jewish journals and newspapers, nor Jewish books... Mandelstamm noted the assimilationary tendencies among the educated Russian Jewish elite and wrote that during the last third of the nineteenth century the ‘Russian-Jewish intelligentsia made a big step forward in their denial of everything Jewish.’ He said that for the realization of the Zionist plans he counted on Jewish masses ‘tied together by the cement of tradition and suffering.’ Mandelstamm also expressed his hope that the Russian Jewish intelligentsia would join the Zionist movement later when it achieved success in Erets Israel. Mandelstamm concluded that there is no reader to whom the *Iliustrirovannyi Sionistskii Al’manakh*, which was published in Russian, could be addressed. The Jewish masses did not read Russian Jewish periodicals due to their lack of knowledge of Russian; while at the same time the vast majority of the Russian Jewish intelligentsia did not have any interest in Jewish themes at all.

Perhaps Mandelstamm liked the epistolary genre, because his other article, *The Quintessence of Zionism*, also has the subtitle *The Letter of a Zionist to His Daughter*. In this Mandelstamm contrasted cosmopolitanism with nationalism and argued that by serving to your own nationality it is possible to serve all mankind. Therefore, Mandelstamm concluded that Jews should devote themselves to work for their own nationality and to take Jewish people away from the ghetto, where Jews were degraded physically and morally.

Max Mandelstamm had the talent of attracting people and made many friends and followers among different Jewish circles. Rabbi Yampolsky recalled in his eulogy about Mandelstamm on 7 April 1912,

> Dr. Mandelstamm was not only popular, he had the respect of all classes of Jews: Orthodox and liberals, conservatives, capitalists and progressives, rich and poor, old and young; first of all, all of them sincerely loved him.

The secret of this general love and popularity of Dr. Mandelstamm, Yampolsky saw in his willingness to help all Jewish people irrespective of their social status. The well-known lawyer and Jewish public figure Genrikh Sliozberg wrote in his memoirs that Max Mandelstamm had a major influence on the Kiev Jewish community.

His leading position in the Russian Zionist movement and his work as a prominent ophthalmologist, gave Mandelstamm a robust sense of self-esteem. In the

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he called himself ‘one of the leaders of Zionism.’

Mandelstamm wrote to his brother Leon, on May 31, 1904, ‘Recently I was elected President of the Ophthalmology Society and I delivered a brilliant speech in the University Clinic.’

Mandelstamm often expressed his thoughts with a degree of pathos that was quite typical for the nineteenth century. But in the 1900s, this already seemed archaic to the young. A friend of the Russian poet Osip Mandelshtam (a distant relative of Max Mandelstamm), Sergei Kablukov, wrote in his diary about their conversation regarding modern literature with Max Mandelstamm in 1910. He said that they defended the superiority of new literary styles and schools while Dr. Mandelstamm was very backward and conservative on this question. He pointed to the writings of the famous [Zionist writer and critic Max] Nordau and called his feuilletons ‘pearls.’

However neither Kablukov, who wrote the sarcastic comments about Max Mandelstamm’s literary taste, nor his friend Osip Mandelshtam, a Christian convert, had any interest in the Jewish national movement. So perhaps they could not really appreciate the Zionist views of Max Mandelstamm and his contribution to Russian Zionism. These people were from quite different backgrounds.

Max Mandelstamm made a very different impression upon the Hebrew writer and President of the World Zionist Organization, Nahum Sokolow (1859-1936), who was a generation younger than Mandelstamm. Sokolow wrote

Many were struck that a Russian Jew could be such a gentlemen with such noble manners and speaking such exquisite German! Yes, the German language of Mandelstamm had solemnity, even an oracular character... His speeches had a romantic shade, and he simultaneously had the soul of a poet and child. He lived in Western Europe for a long time... and became an adopted son of the Enlightened German culture. All his life he resembled more a German Professor than a Russian Jew.

The last months of Mandelstamm’s life were embittered by the Beilis affair. He wrote in his letter to Jewish writer, Zionist and literary critic Ruvim Brainin,

The grief of the Jewish people is my grief and my great misfortune, and this misfortune by deadly poison has taken all pleasure from my life. I feel that the torment of two thousand years exile is killing me, and my great pain will abate

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50 M. Mandelshtam. Open Letter..., 44.
53 Pamiati Maksa Emilievicha Mandelshtamma..., 120.
only when the sons of Israel will sing the songs of appreciation to their God in the country of their ancestors.\textsuperscript{54}

Beilis’ lawyer Arnold Margolin visited Mandelstamm on the last day of his life. Margolin recalled that they talked for over an hour about the Beilis affair. Mandelstamm with great interest asked him about the status of the affair.

For what are we losing our energy, Mandelstamm exclaimed with bitterness, for what are we spending all our efforts? It would be better to direct all the efforts of all Jews to one goal, to emigration, exodus…\textsuperscript{55}

Mandelstamm died in Kiev on 5 March 1912 from heart disease and was buried on Lukianovskiy Jewish cemetery on the next day. His funeral turned into a mass procession, in which thirty thousand people participated. The newspaper \textit{Kievskaia Mysl’} (Kievan Thought) wrote on 7 March 1912,

Yesterday Kiev buried Mandelstamm…
Kiev for a long time has not seen such a grand funeral, where so many people came.
The entire city buried Mandelstamm.

Many Jewish intellectuals wrote obituaries for Mandelstamm. A leader of the Territorial movement and author Israel Zangwill called Mandelstamm ‘the real King of Israel’.\textsuperscript{56} The Zionist leader Nahum Sokolow wrote in his Mandelstamm eulogy,

He was one of our favorites, one of brightest and popular figures [in the Zionist movement]. He was our patriarch… [and] the most national leader… His nationalism appeared in his faithfulness to the interests, hopes and strivings of his nation.\textsuperscript{57}

The literary critic M. Lirov (pseudonym of M. I. Litvakov) explained in his eulogy why Mandelstamm was so popular among Western Jewry

For Jews of entire world he was the most authoritative representative of Russian Jewry. He represented in himself a living connection between Jews of the West and East, because he combined the diversity of the culture of western Jews with the national-public striving of Eastern [i.e. Russian] Jewry.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 135.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 140.
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{The Jewish Chronicle}, March 1912.
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Pamiati Maksa Emilievicha Mandelshtamma...}, 123.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 137.
Due to these unique qualities Max Mandelstamm was well known and respected by Russian and Western Jewry. The Jewish Chronicle described him in 1880 as ‘Dr. Mandelstamm, the eminent Jewish savant well known in London.’

Condolences regarding the Mandelstamm’s death came to Kiev from many Jewish communities in Russia and abroad. Many thousands of people mourned his passing. Mandelstamm devoted much effort to improving the life of Jews in Russia, since he understood that the immediate mass emigration of Russian Jews was impossible. As a Palestinophile, Zionist and Territorialist he continually searched for the best way achieve emigration of most Jews from Russia, where so many of them lived in miserable conditions. As a flexible politician, he changed his views depending upon the possibility their realization, but he always remained faithful to the national interests of the Jewish people. So we should appreciate his great practical work for organizing the emigration of Jews from the ‘country of pogroms’ and for giving thousands of them a chance for a new and much happier life in Erets Israel and America.

Russian Jewish immigrants in America dreamt of establishing an agricultural colony ‘Mandelstammia’ in his memory. Perhaps this dream was not realized due to World War I, which interrupted the emigration of Russian Jews to America. Other Jewish agricultural colonies in the U.S. existed only for a short time due to modernization and urbanization. Although not all of Mandelstamm’s plans were realized and the Zionist-Territorial movement could not help to all Jews leave Russia, his contribution to the Palestinophile, Zionist and Territorial movements in Russia really deserves our attention and appreciation.

59 Natan Meir. Kiev, Jewish Metropolis…, 43
60 Pamiati Maksy Emilievicha Mandelshtamma…, 153.