

**THE JEWISH AGRICULTURAL COLONY
AT COTOPAXI, COLORADO:
REBALANCING THE RECORD**

Editor's note: *In May of 1882, thirteen families of Russian refugees arrived in the hamlet of Cotopaxi, in southern Colorado. The agricultural colony they founded grew to number twenty-two families made up of sixty-three Eastern European Jews. Although the colony survived only two years, its dramatic story has captured the imagination of historians, novelists and the general public alike. All but two of the families that settled in Cotopaxi remained in the West. After the colony disbanded in June of 1884, most of the former colonists settled in Denver, working as peddlers and small shopkeepers, soon becoming pivotal members of the growing town's Orthodox west-side Jewish community. Shul-Baer Milstein, the patriarch of the colony (although he was not an actual colonist himself), and his wife and seven children came to Denver in 1883. Milstein found success in the cattle business and became one of the founders of Congregation Zera Abraham, incorporated in 1889. Ed Grimes, the Cotopaxi colonist who walked to Denver, served as the congregation's first president.*

Historians have long been keenly aware that multiple causes contribute to events, which in turn are often viewed from a variety of individual perspectives. For over half a century, those who studied the story of Colorado's famous, albeit short-lived, Jewish agricultural colony in Cotopaxi, attributed its failure to the machinations of Emanuel Saltiel, the man who procured the land on which the colonists farmed and made it available to them through HEAS (the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society). A historian's thesis rests most strongly on primary sources and since 1950, when Flora Satt wrote the master's thesis which became the principal source for information about the colony, new documents have come to light which invite a re-examination of the conventional story. In the following article Miles Saltiel, a relative of Emanuel Saltiel, carefully analyzes Satt's thesis in the light of these documents and offers new insight into the complex story. Mr. Saltiel was born in 1949 in Norfolk, England. The summer he graduated from Oxford, he drove across the United States to happen on the story of his Colorado namesake. After a career in technology and investment banking, he retired from the capital markets in 2002. Since 1993 he has played a part in reuniting his far-flung family, the Shealtiels, whose emblematic role in the Diaspora was marked in the film which brought him back to Cotopaxi in 1997.

Introduction: setting the scene

On Monday, September 7th, 1970, I was two days into a drive across the States with four friends from England. That evening, we made a pit-stop in Walsenberg, Colorado, and over our dinner we sought some local color from the *Pueblo Chieftain and Pueblo Star Journal*. A companion looked up in astonishment to see my family name in the story leading the Labor Day supplement. The headline was "Jewish Immigrants Victims of Hoax," covering a story of the 1882-84 failed settlement above Cotopaxi, Colorado and making much of the villainy of its promoter, Emanuel Saltiel, who owned the local silver mine.¹

Saltiel was identified as a "Portuguese," that is Sephardic, Jew; so am I. Even so—and despite our shared name, I could find out nothing about him once I got home. There appeared to be no straightforward connection. My own immediate family had arrived in England from Amsterdam in 1869. There was no Emanuel in our clan who could have left for the U.S. to become a mining magnate by 1882. More recently, however, we have been able to draw Saltiel's genealogy, from Yomtob, a presumed brother of Elias, the founder ca.1700 of my own Anglo-Dutch line. Elias moved to Amsterdam but Yomtob stayed in London to found a line eventually engendering Emanuel H. (for Harris, his mother's family), himself, and extending to contemporary descendants in the U.K. as well as in Alberta, California, Indiana, Ontario, Oregon, and Pennsylvania.

In 1998, I returned to Walsenberg with a film-crew making a movie about the Shealtiels (the inclusive spelling of my family's name), as the director had decided to cover this episode in the family saga. While I was in Colorado I met local historians and heard hints which challenged the conventional story.

Subsequently, I came across documents,² some of which call into question the principal source for the generally accepted account of the colony, the 1950 unpublished Master's thesis by Flora Jane Satt, whose work originated the written account of Saltiel's villainy.³ The most important such document came into my hands in September of 2005. This is the report of October 1882 written by the general manager of the colony, Julius Schwarz.⁴ The 1882 report gave rise to correspondence in early 1883, which I saw shortly afterwards, between a committee from the Denver Jewish community and H. S. Henry, the President of HEAS.⁵

My wife suggested that I trace the charity's archives. This led me to Valery Bazarov of the Location and Family History Service of HIAS, the successor organization to HEAS, and Yeshaya Metal, the Public Service Librarian of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. I am grateful to them, as although they lacked the material I sought and brought my initial line of enquiry to an end, they promptly opened up another by putting me in touch with Greta Heintzleman, the Reference/Cataloging Librarian of the American Jewish Historical Society. I extend my warmest thanks to her for drawing my attention to three monographs published after Satt's thesis. The first anthologizes accounts of HEAS' history in the "Russian-Hebrew" press (that is newspapers published in the then-Russian Empire, for Jewish readers, in either Hebrew or Russian);⁶ the second anthologizes such sources about the Jewish agricultural colonies of the era;⁷ the third indexes material from such sources addressing topics of Jewish-American interest.⁸ This is also a good place to express my appreciation to Nancy Sullas of the Widener Library of Harvard University for forwarding a hard-to-find extract from the Saint Petersburg journal, *Voskhoda*, and Hugh Vinter of the Moscow Narodny Bank in London for translating it. As this translation is new, I attach it as an appendix. Many thanks also to my cousin, Moshe Shaltiel of Chicago, for drawing an overlooked article from the Denver press to my attention and making it available to me.⁹ These last two items came into my hands during final proofing, reinforcing certain of my conclusions but adding to the burdens of my editor, Dr Jeanne Abrams, for whose patience and professionalism especial thanks are in order and warmly extended.

Earlier writers on the colony lacked the opportunity to study these newly examined documents. The discovery of new evidence always opens up the possibility of reinterpretation, and it is my hope that by examining some of the documents that have come to light since 1950, we will be able to paint a more accurate picture of the Cotopaxi settlement. In doing so, we should recognize that the episode left a legacy of bitterness among the colonists and their descendants. Some of the insights which emerge from our re-examination of sources offer a clue as to how this bitterness might have arisen either at the time or subsequently. But nothing coming from our review of the record takes away from the harshness of the winter months in the high valleys above Cotopaxi, the uncertainties of the pioneers in a strange land whose customs and language were mysterious to them, or their resource and energies in building successful lives once the colony was disbanded.

Revisiting the Cotopaxi story

We may begin our review by examining one of Satt's most vivid arguments, that Saltiel corrupted HEAS' agent Julius Schwarz to deceive his former employers. She writes, "Too little attention has been paid to the unfortunate role played by the Society's erstwhile investigator, Julius Schwarz, whose complicity with the motives of Emanuel H. Saltiel prevented an adequate forewarning of the problems ahead."¹⁰ Satt's narrative begins:

Michael Heilprin...assign[ed] a young lawyer connected with the society, Julius Schwartz, to go to Colorado, make a thorough investigation of the locality, markets, soil, climate, etc., and return a report to the New York office. Schwartz left New York in January of 1881, but HEAS never received any report from him or word concerning him.¹¹

This statement is unreferenced, with the account of Schwarz's departure possibly attributable to the source cited adjacently, Pollack's life of Heilprin,¹² and the story of his defection attributable to Satt's simple unawareness of Schwarz's 1882 report. The second part of Satt's narrative relies on the recollection of Rose Ornstein who told Satt that "In November, 1881, Jacob Milstein (Ornstein's father) left New York to survey the prospects in Colorado, and to look up Julius Schwartz. He never found Schwartz."¹³ This is because Schwarz hadn't yet left New York. Somehow or other, Milstein or his daughter were misinformed. The very fact of Schwarz's report establishes that he never ceased to regard himself as HEAS' agent. In addition, evidence from four independent and contemporaneous sources show that the proposed 1881 trip to Colorado must have been abandoned, as they attest that Schwarz traveled to Cotopaxi for the first time with the colonists in May of 1882.

Schwarz's own words reveal his unfamiliarity with the Colorado climate: "At the base of the Rocky Mountains, we have a more genial climate [than] in the same latitude near the level of the sea...In Colorado, in a tent, the tenderest babe and the most delicate invalid can live and sleep all the year round..."¹⁴ Schwarz was a great enthusiast for the colony, but comments like this are inexplicable from anyone who has endured a Colorado winter. He had not. The 1883 correspondence substantiates his absence. Kohn and Wirkowski wrote "Julius Schwarz came with the colony as its clerk..." that is in May 1882, and Henry confirms this by writing "Schwarz derived his experience during the summer and a five months residence there..."¹⁵ Finally

on this score, historian Dorothy Roberts cites a contemporaneous source for her account that “Julius Schwarz, a young Hungarian lawyer, was sent to Cotopaxi soon after the arrival of the refugees to look after the affairs of the colony.”¹⁶ From this we learn that Satt’s oral informants are so much at odds with more reliable sources as to demolish her theory that Schwarz arrived before the pioneers to be corrupted by Saltiel and abandon his duties to HEAS. This also signals that her oral sources require corroboration before we can rely on them.



Issues of sequence and oral sources are central to our next topic. This is the heart of Satt’s thesis, that Saltiel promoted the colony and connived at its failure to engineer a pool of cheap labor, summarized in the final words of her first section that maintain that “Saltiel’s ingenious solution to this seemingly insurmountable problem (lack of labor) was to import his own labor supply from Europe.”¹⁷ By contrast Roberts is less definite in her attribution of motive to Saltiel. She wrote that Saltiel promoted the colony to boost the area.¹⁸ Presumably Roberts meant that Saltiel was contemplating speculation in real estate, but this was never his style and a 1998 search of Fremont County archives showed no evidence that he was doing so locally. We may test Satt’s more dramatic thesis by examining the alternative sequences provided by Schwarz and Satt for the events leading to the credit stop and consequent crisis in late autumn of 1882. Schwarz’s sequence is:

- *Before Schwarz’s report to HEAS (i.e., reported in it)*
Settlers work in a mine, presumably Saltiel’s, and on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, either to pay for the supplies of kosher meat or generally to support themselves.
- *On or around 23 October 1882*
Schwarz presents his report to the Committee of HEAS in New York.
- *After Schwarz’s report to HEAS (i.e., unreported in it)*
Potato crop fails and credit stopped.

Satt’s sequence is:

- Potato crop fails and credit stopped.
- Settlers obliged to work in Saltiel’s mine.
- Settlers discover alternative work at the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad and work there instead.

Neither source is wholly satisfactory. The very date of Schwarz’s report is uncertain. It is prefaced, “New York, October 23, 1882.” The location is consistent with Schwarz’s remark about parting from the colonists¹⁹ and tells us that either he presented it personally or was at hand to answer questions. The dating is complicated by a comment in his appeal for funds, where he states that Max Tobias provided assistance between November 2nd and 8th. This is at odds with evidence internal to his report: at the time he wrote he was still hoping for a successful potato harvest,²⁰ so he must have written before the “exceptionally early frost [in] the autumn of 1882” which ruined the crop.²¹ The report’s positive content and tone attest to its composition before the crisis which occurred after store credit was stopped in the late autumn. Perhaps we can resolve this issue by noting that the document in my possession is a printed edition of what must originally have been a manuscript. The layout of the document suggests that the table containing the reference to “November” may have been compressed. On balance, this seems simply to have been a typographical error.

Satt’s account is also defective. On a close reading, her sources—entirely oral—for the incidents leading to the crisis of late autumn 1882 once more turn out to be questionable. She relies on interviews with the two then surviving members of the colony: Mrs. Hannah Quiat on August 6th ²² and August 15th, 1949;²³ and Mrs. Rachel Singer on August 15th, 1949;²⁴ plus the descendant of a colonist, Rose Ornstein on August 15th, 1949.²⁵ In her notes Satt identifies Hannah and Rachel as the “two young daughters” of Isaac Lieb “Shames” (Milstein).²⁶ Rose Ornstein was born into the family of one of the two Jacob Milsteins after the colony was disbanded.²⁷ The Milsteins were the leading clan in the colony, but none of these households is identified by Satt as among the leaders of the settlement.²⁸

The most likely reason for the credit stop is that HEAS took fright at Schwarz’s report which inadvertently makes it clear that the settlers had no provision for the winter and were running up debt which might be laid at HEAS’ door.²⁹ Satt confines her explanation of the credit stop to Saltiel’s perfidy, with no third-party or documentary corroboration.³⁰ No doubt this was to follow the lead of the pioneers’ attorney, George H Kohn, one of the authors of the January, 1883 report to HEAS. Below, we will explore what a good job Attorney Kohn did for his clients: after six or seven months’ campaigning, HEAS reversed its position, writing off the colonists’ debts and providing more cash.

Taking this information into consideration, we must attach greater weight to Schwarz's sequence. This assessment derives from the contemporaneous character of Schwarz's report and the evidence that emerges between the lines from a close reading, rather than its surface argument. By contrast, Satt's sequence relies on family tales remembered by three elderly women, who at the time of the events they were describing were either unborn or minors, in an era in which many women played little part in business. Those alive at the time were unable to speak English and all came from households removed from the center of events. In the nature of things, such first-hand recollections as they had are likely to have been embroidered by family discussions over the following sixty-seven years.

As corollaries to this discussion, we may note that twenty months elapsed between Saltiel's initial letter in September of 1880 and the settlers' arrival in May 1882, an un-businesslike interval for a scheme alleged to be intended to solve an acute shortage of labor. Finally, Saltiel's mine took up only some of the labor represented by the colonists and the colonists were free to work elsewhere.³¹



If we dismiss Satt's account, how are we to account for Saltiel's promotion of the scheme? Notwithstanding the dissent to be expected from those adhering to the tradition of Saltiel's villainy, we have no reason to dismiss the obvious notion that he planned an act of high-profile benefaction. It is far more in accordance with the traditions of Jewish business conduct that a prosperous entrepreneur at the heart of the local Jewish community should seek prestige from public works than that he should court public disdain by abusing his coreligionists above a township formerly bearing his name. On this view, the collapse should be seen as the reverse of Saltiel's intentions. After all, it afforded him no profit; embarrassed him with his neighbors in Cotopaxi and Denver; made for complications with HEAS, however amicably resolved; and has given him a reputation for villainy unchallenged until this article. With hindsight we may say that Saltiel had himself to blame for over-optimism in promoting the scheme to HEAS. With that same hindsight, however, we may also say that there is nothing he could have done: every similar Jewish agricultural colony in the United States collapsed.

We see the validity of this scenario when we come to the next allegation, that Saltiel exaggerated the attractions of the site.³² There is no doubt that his initial approach was enthusiastic, but we should remember that he was no expert and that he seems always to have intended that stock raising would play at least a part in the settlement. His original offer included cattle, horses, wagons and a year's supply of fodder.³³ When the colonists came to inspect their arrangements, they made nothing of the absence of such supplies.³⁴ Evidently plans had changed. This is confirmed by the president of HEAS, who wrote in February 1883 that "...the very nature of the land at Cotopaxi and the kind of farming required there was especially adapted to the Russian refugee, whose previous experience had been chiefly in the planting of vegetables, whose physique was less able to battle with the clearing of land..."³⁵

Parenthetically, this indicates that HEAS subscribed to the notion that the colonists had agricultural experience, though we know that the Ekaterinaslav agricultural colony collapsed eleven years previously³⁶ and that the leadership of the colony came from a clan whose understanding of farming came from owning a substantial seed merchandizing firm in the old country.³⁷ Turning back to the initial plans for Cotopaxi, it appears as though all concerned had disregarded such element of stock as was contemplated by Saltiel and settled upon fruit and vegetables almost exclusively, a disastrous plan given the elevation and lack of irrigation in the area. Such failings should be seen within the context of the times. Schwarz's report makes it clear that agricultural euphoria was the order of the day. Colorado alone saw two such attempts at Jewish agricultural colonies: the first at Cotopaxi and the second ten years later at Attwood, the latter failing despite an excellent location; Satt presents her own examples.³⁸ Two early historians of Jewish agricultural colonies in the U.S., Spivak and Morris, wrote, "...for reasons inscrutable, most of the colonies were planted on land which was unfit for cultivation."³⁹

All the observers miss a larger point. The lands at that time opening up in the high plains were less suited for farming than for stock-raising, though this counted for little against the agricultural utopianism at that time bewitching decision-makers. This was an era of exceptional credulousness in agricultural matters. It was at just this point in the nineteenth century that the steamship and railroad were opening up the vast tracts of land in North America, Argentina and the Antipodes to European settlers. This development promised to satisfy the land hunger of the Old World once and for all and promoted an unprecedented euphoria, which often promoted unrealistic contemporary judgment on the opportunities of the frontier. Thus, the settlement of the high plains and other

arid regions of the American West in the last two decades of the nineteenth century was promoted by Charles Dana Wilber's disastrous doctrine that "rain follows the plow," leading countless would-be farmers to ruin. Notions of this kind contributed to the general lack of understanding on the part of city-dwellers of the distinction between lands suitable for agriculture and for stock-raising, helped by unrealistic optimists such as Schwarz. He went out of his way to rebut the notion that Colorado was fit only for cattle and mining, which he characterized as the folly of ill-informed Easterners.⁴⁰ Not everyone succumbed to agricultural euphoria. The "spiritual leader" of the community from which almost all the pioneers came, Shul (Saul) Baer Milstein, landed in America too late to participate in the Cotopaxi debacle. He arrived in Colorado in 1883, but took little time to form his own view, buying grazing lands to go into the cattle business.⁴¹



Let us now turn to the rebates sought by the colonists. Roberts anticipated Satt's approach to this topic by reporting a newspaper account of the recollections of B. Prezant, a veteran of the colony. He recalled that he tearfully asked Saltiel to give the colonists "their rightful share of money entrusted to him for their needs."⁴² Satt takes the same tack.⁴³ The difficulty for this interpretation of events is that Saltiel would have been unable conscientiously to release cash to the settlers directly. The colonists might well feel themselves entitled to a grub-stake and eventually they got one, but common sense tells us that a claim against Saltiel was bound to fail. Any rebate would have first to take account of advances and would then go not to the colonists but to the source of the money, HEAS.

The lack of foundation to the settlers' grievances is attested by Satt herself: "...a thorough search of Colorado court records indicate that no action was ever initiated against Saltiel by any of the Jewish colonists or interested agencies."⁴⁴ This is a telling omission in a notably litigious society—Satt refers to the "bitter legal battles" of the Royal Gorge Wars⁴⁵ and Denver's Jewish community sent Attorney Kohn to investigate the colony.⁴⁶ Kohn pulled no punches in his memorandum to HEAS;⁴⁷ we may take it that he would have seen Saltiel in court had he felt it would serve his clients' purposes.

Part of Satt's argument rests on the assertion that the pioneers qualified for rebates because Saltiel had overcharged for accommodation.⁴⁸ She writes that, "Saltiel had written to the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society in October, 1881 that the twenty houses were finished and that five large barns would be completed shortly...Now, more than seven months later, the newcomers found only twelve small, poorly-constructed cabins..."⁴⁹

The cabins and surrounding infrastructure evidently fell short of expectations but Saltiel's plea of lack of labor makes sense.⁵⁰ Satt's sources include Quiat and Singer,⁵¹ whose fallibility of memory has already been established. The primary source, Schwarz, appears to be in agreement as to the total number, though where Satt says they were present on arrival, he writes of them being uncompleted in October. He also contradicts himself about the number of completions. Initially he writes of four houses already built, six to be built on homesteads and two to be built in Cotopaxi township leading to the need to erect log cabins to establish homestead rights. This makes twelve in total plus two log cabins. Later in his report, he writes of twelve houses ordered by the committee, of which eight are completed. It is beyond us to reconcile Schwarz's contradictory accounts of four versus eight completions.⁵² We can make sense, however, of the apparent paradox that he should deny completions in October, when Satt reported cabins as present in May, if we consider that they may be describing different buildings.

We are obliged to entertain something like this when we come to examine the detail of accommodations. The cabins were described to Satt by her sources, Quiat and Singer, as "approximately eight feet square, six feet high, with flat roofs and no chimneys."⁵³ This is contradicted in every particular by Schwarz's contemporaneous account which writes of the cabins as sixteen feet by twenty feet, double boarded and insulated, with tar paper insulation, containing three rooms and a kitchen, with a one in three pitch roof, and twelve feet high in the center.⁵⁴ We can square the two accounts by reminding ourselves of Schwarz's remarks about log cabins. These would have been the default configuration for all involved in initial frontier construction, from saw-mill to construction site, built to a pattern intended to satisfy the minimum requirements of the Homestead Acts.

The provisions of the Homestead Act largely dictated frontier home design and construction. The Act mandated that, in addition to other improvements to the land, homesteaders had to build a dwelling that was at least ten by twelve feet in size, and contained at least one glass window. Since more than half of all homesteaders lost their "bet with Uncle Sam" and gave up their claims before their five-year "proving up" period was completed...[c]omfort was often a secondary issue.⁵⁵

After allowing for the exaggeration of children (recognized with Satt's caveat of "approximately"), the partly-built cabins described by Satt's sources would have been primarily intended to satisfy the requirements for home-

steading, which local workmen would recognize as the first objective of pioneers, regardless of such instructions as might have been transmitted to them from Saltiel. The Cotopaxi colonists evidently found the cabins disappointing so they came to serve—if at all—as preliminary lodgings for farmers on remote plots until the more lavish arrangements described by Schwarz became available. Such a second round of construction would have been abandoned after the cash ran out. Finally on the details of the cabins, Satt also mentions that “The men themselves built mud chimneys...”⁵⁶ We should bear in mind that frontier chimneys were invariably a labor-intensive affair of stones or mud; given the local labor shortage these would have been impossible to build prior to the arrival of the colonists.



Satt dwells on the imperfections of the accommodation so as to establish one of the primary points of her case against Saltiel, that he willfully withheld money from the colonists after overcharging HEAS. When we look at the specifics of the allegation, however, we find that it is based upon a misconstruction of documents. Satt argues that “Saltiel...tendered [a bill] to cover the cost of building twenty fine homes at \$280 each.”⁵⁷ This is sourced to Saltiel’s letter to Heilprin, dated September 19, 1880.⁵⁸ Earlier, however, she makes it clear that this letter contained Saltiel’s original offer,⁵⁹ so his figures represented a proposal rather than an invoice. Kohn and Wirkowski priced the cabins at \$100 each;⁶⁰ Satt suggests \$150 each and refers to information (possibly advertisements) in the *Rocky Mountain News* of December 2, 1880 that “Two saw-mills were in operation in the immediate vicinity at this time [with] ‘first-class lumber sold for \$22.50 per thousand.”⁶¹ She declines the final step of working up the price of the lumber for a log cabin and we are unable to do so. In any event Schwarz claimed not for twenty but twelve homes at \$280.⁶² On balance we have to conclude that the allegation of overcharging is based on misunderstandings by Satt’s sources and by Satt herself.

Satt also suggests that Saltiel cut off credit officiously or with a view to coerce the settlers to work in his mine.⁶³ On a close reading of her account, we see nothing to suggest heartlessness in Saltiel’s response to the settlers’ representations on arrival at Cotopaxi. To the contrary, Satt states that he was apologetic and that although he shortly had to leave on a business trip, he instructed his store to furnish supplies to the pioneers without payment. After the settlers lost their oxen,⁶⁴ Saltiel’s partners also lent plows, horses, and seed.⁶⁵ This is hardly the stuff of misconduct; indeed it was the colonists’ lifeline. In the absence of a budget for the purpose, the supplies which kept the pioneers alive could only have come on credit granted by Saltiel’s store. Schwarz reported that by the end of October 1882, HEAS funds were exhausted and that the colonists had spent an unbudgeted \$1,544.87 on food.⁶⁶ Below, we will explore the credit granted to the colonists to discover that the record shows advances of up to \$8,000. In addition, the sequence established in the discussion above on the events of autumn of 1882 shows that the settlers were working in a mine, presumably Saltiel’s, before credit was cut off.

Satt goes on to complain that Saltiel’s mine not only underpaid the settlers, but also paid them in scrip.⁶⁷ We know, however, that the rate for the work arranged by Schwarz at the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was \$2.00 a day in cash.⁶⁸ Saltiel’s mine paid the pioneers \$1.50 a day, the going rate for unskilled “muckers” or laborers, according to Bill Jones of the Silverton Mine and Museum.⁶⁹ All of these were premium rates: at around this time the adolescent Ed Grimes accepted a dollar a day in Denver.⁷⁰ In November of 1998, Dr Abrams of the Rocky Mountain Jewish Historical Society suggested that the colonists were underpaid by comparison with the \$3.30 going rate for experienced miners whose work called for the use of explosives. She now acknowledges that prudence undoubtedly dictated that would-be farmers from Russia should have been kept from dynamite until they had learned the ropes.

If settlers were paid in scrip, we should remember that they owed a tidy sum to Saltiel. The use of scrip was also common throughout the West of the period. Rapid economic expansion coincided with the lack of a Federal central bank, which gave rise to an acute shortage of legal tender in the West for decades on end. Students of the period will recall that this led to fierce political contention, with eastern creditors arguing for a tight gold-backed currency and western borrowers arguing for a loose silver-based system, as articulated by William Jennings Bryant’s famous “I will not see this nation crucified on a cross of gold.” But these were hardly conditions of Saltiel’s making.



The final set of allegations is that the locations or the titles attaching to the farmsteads were engineered by Saltiel to serve his purposes. This is not so much a specific allegation as the accumulation of various critical comments. The first is that the farmsteads were poorly located.⁷¹ In retrospect we can see that this is right—after all, the col-

ony failed. Even so, we have to balance Schwarz's claims of care in allocating lots,⁷² the doubt cast on this by Kohn and Wirkowski,⁷³ the depredations of neighbors upon land and water rights,⁷⁴ the apparent alteration from stock-raising or mixed farming to horticulture,⁷⁵ the agricultural over-ambition of the times, and the failure of all such schemes.⁷⁶

We come now to the absence of deeds for the colonists' holdings. Three conflicting stories come down to us: Schwarz reports that Colorado law provides that colonists could only register claims after occupying and improving them.⁷⁷ Satt indicates that Saltiel was to act as the colonists' agent and file for freehold title to government land.⁷⁸ Roberts is more circumstantial in writing that "the houses were erected upon land claimed by the Cotopaxi Placer Mining Company and it was represented by Saltiel, a director of the company, that the colonists had forty-nine year leases."⁷⁹ Roberts cites no source, but Satt entertains something similar in her speculation that the colonists were *de facto* tenants of Saltiel,⁸⁰ though long leases—presumably *gratis*—would have imposed no immediate liabilities. By the same token, clear—even freehold—titles would have had no commercial value: with local land at that time available for homesteading, the plots would not have been negotiable for sale to third parties or as collateral for loans. In any event, the whole point of Satt's thesis is that these particular plots turned out to be worthless. Both Roberts and Satt agree that no deeds were executed;⁸¹ Satt points out that HEAS concluded that the title issue was too complicated and remote for them to resolve.⁸² Certainly the same holds true for contemporary historians.

Satt and Roberts suggested that the farmsteads were placed on land belonging to Saltiel or his company.⁸³ Schwarz was evidently surprised to discover other occupiers,⁸⁴ but it is not clear why this matters, in that there is no suggestion that adjacent plots would have been more fertile, better irrigated, or closer to markets.



A recent writer, Armstrong, makes two new allegations in a project undertaken to satisfy the requirements of an undergraduate degree.⁸⁵ His contentions are spectacular but wholly unsupported. The first is that the colonists were virtual serfs of Saltiel. Nothing in the record supports such a view, and it may be rejected as hyperbole. The second is that the colonists believed they had to redeem their deeds before quitting the colony. This is not so much an allegation against Saltiel, as a new twist to the account of the colonists' trials. We may take it as an attempt to make sense of Satt's comment about clouded titles, following the story of the 1884 visit to the land office in Cañon City by the last group of colonists to leave Cotopaxi.⁸⁶ It can be safely dismissed. The colonists' leaders were from a clan of businesspeople and proprietors, not illiterate rustics. After autumn of 1882, they were in sufficient contact with the Jews of Denver and their attorney, Mr Kohn, for any such notions to be dispelled. In late summer of 1883 the colonists negotiated a final settlement with HEAS, presumably benefiting from Kohn's counsel. This relieved the pioneers of any obligations to Saltiel as well as to HEAS itself. Good practice would ensure an exchange of indemnities so that all concerned could put the episode behind them. Finally, the record shows several groups of colonists leaving Cotopaxi at will after the October payment, with no evidence of reluctance.⁸⁷

The legacy of bitterness

If the revisionist account of the colony set out above is correct, we should give thought to the legacy of bitterness. A reasoned judgment would be that it comes from seven sources: the accumulation of store credit; the clash of cultures between the colonists and their new environment; conspiracy theories circulating among Jewish refugees at the time; the conditions of the winter of 1882-1883; the negotiations of 1883; the distortions over time of oft-told tales; and the authority of Satt's thesis.

First, let us turn to the issue of the store credit. The colonists were keenly aware of the debts they were accumulating.⁸⁸ We can offer four approximations. To begin with, there is the testimony of Schwarz who writes of \$1544.87 of expenditure for food in the first five months of the colony.⁸⁹ This takes us to October 8th, excludes non-food expenditure and is low by comparison with every other estimate. We may make a calculation from the March 26, 1884 edition of the Warsaw-based Hebrew newspaper, *Ha-Melitz*. This contains an account of the Jewish agricultural colony of Alliance, New Jersey, which failed in 1883. There, "the committee decided to allocate from \$8 to \$12 to each family, so they could live well and not sparingly."⁹⁰ We may take it that this was a weekly stipend. If we take a mean of \$10 for the weekly stipend and apply it to the twenty-two families reported by Satt, we obtain a total of \$4,620 over the twenty-one weeks from May 8th to October 1st 1882.⁹¹ We reach

higher figures if we attempt to work backwards from the earnings from the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad which supported the colony in 1882 and 1883. These were between \$2 and “up to \$3” per day.⁹² Let us once again take a mean of \$2.50 over a six-day working week for twenty-one men to reflect Satt’s “almost all” of the twenty-three adult males.⁹³ Over the twenty-one week period, this totals \$6,615.

These figures are higher than those offered by the writer of a nominally anonymous letter, identified only by his initials, M.H., dated February 8th, and published in the Denver *Tribune* on February 13th, 1883. The letter was headlined, “Denial from Cotopaxi”, and gave the *Tribune’s* sub-editor occasion to insert the cautionary caption, “To be Taken with a ‘Grain of Salt’”. We explore below the place of this article and its editorial treatment in the public relations skirmishes of which it was a part. Here we will confine ourselves to recognizing that its arithmetic fully qualifies for the sub-editor’s warning. M.H. wrote that colonists worked for a month for the railroad, but contradicts this with his report that, “...each man receiv[ed] a check from the pay-car, the average of which was \$40 and some of the checks are still held by the colonists.”⁹⁴ We cannot rely on these figures, as Schwarz and Satt independently tell us that the hourly rate on the railroad was between \$2 and \$3. Even at the lowest rate, the pay-check for a twenty-six day month, in an era without deductions, should have been \$52. This causes us to be wary of M.H.’s figures, here and subsequently.

The highest figure comes from the November 25th 1885 issue of *Ha-Melitz*, which reprinted a private letter to Elijah Sholman from Mordecai Jalomstein, an American journalist who frequently served as a correspondent to the newspaper. Jalomstein wrote of his “intensive study” of “the reports which [had] reached him” and was evidently well-informed. He contrasts Schwarz’s “glowing report...read in the offices of the committee in New York”, with “letters full of heart-rending complaints” sent to him personally at the time of the settlement’s troubles. He reports that the Cotopaxi colony had “eaten up twenty thousand dollars.” Jalomstein then makes the final slightly mysterious remark, that after the colonists left Cotopaxi “their friends had the responsibility of selling the land.”⁹⁵ It is hard to know what to make of this. If the colonists were homesteaders, their claims would lapse once they ceased to occupy them, so “their friends” would have had nothing to sell. Neither Roberts nor Satt make any such suggestion, though both dwelt on land titles. We noted above that at this time unimproved land in the area had no negotiable value and that these plots in particular were worthless. In this light we have to conclude that Jalomstein was misinformed about this aspect of the matter, introducing the anecdote to reinforce his emphasis on the failure of this and all such colonies. If we take the \$20,000 he cites, and subtract the HEAS original budget of \$10,000 plus the October 1883 disbursement of \$2,000, we are left with other expenditures of \$8,000, presumably on store credit. The table below summarizes the expenditures arising under these alternative assumptions.

	Scenarios				Notes
	1	2	3	4	
Travel from New York to Colorado	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250	
Infrastructure at Cotopaxi	8,750	8,750	8,750	8,750	
Final settlement with colonists	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Estimates of store credit					
Scenario 1	1,555				a
Scenario 2		4,620			b
Scenario 3			6,615		c
Scenario 4				8,000	d
Total	13,555	16,620	18,615	20,000	

Notes

- a. Sourced from Schwarz (p. 15).
- b. Based on the weekly family stipend at the colony at Alliance, NJ; Geffen, p. 7 of 28.
- c. Based on the daily earnings of 21 adult males from the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad; Schwarz, p. 13; Satt, p. 26.
- c. Deduction from total cited by Jalomstein; Geffen, p. 24 of 28.

This gives an estimating range (in round figures) between \$1,500 and \$8,000 for store credit, averaging around \$5,500; and total obligations (once again, in round figures) of between \$13,500 and \$20,000, averaging around \$17,500. We do not know how the store credit was settled. In October 1882, Schwarz told *Voskhoda’s* New York correspondent that the settlers were “willingly” using the cash they were earning to pay back debt.⁹⁶ The context of Schwarz’s remarks makes it look—presumably intentionally—as though he was referring to their debt to HEAS, but his form of words could equally well encompass their debt to the Cotopaxi store. Sums of the order of those set out above would be bound to add to the anxieties of the colonists, particularly as there is evidence of arrears of wages; the discussion below examines the extent of arrears and explores how sacrifices to pay back store credit would stir up grievances.



We should also recognize how much the pioneers were at odds with their physical and cultural environment. They fell foul of their neighbors, who grabbed the best land⁹⁷ and whose cattle trespassed upon and ate their crops,⁹⁸ not to mention whatever further depredations H. S. Henry was hinting at in his February letter.⁹⁹ The settlers lacked familiarity with stock, i.e. the ox-team lost on arrival;¹⁰⁰ the roaming cattle of the Wet Mountain valley;¹⁰¹ or game—the bears preparing for hibernation;¹⁰² as well as the wherewithal to thwart such threats as might be posed by begging tribesmen.¹⁰³

We detect their unfamiliarity with local *mores* in the attitude of the *Rocky Mountain News* which responded to the stories of the difficulties at Cotopaxi by noting that “all pioneers must endure some hardship.”¹⁰⁴ The cultural clash extended to the colonists’ coreligionists. Disharmony between “German” and Eastern European Jews was not uncommon during the era, with H. S. Henry, for example, making no secret of his impatience with the colonists’ complaints.¹⁰⁵ Nor should we lose sight of the possible gulf between the ideal of rugged individualism characteristic of America—in particular the frontier—of the period, and the priority attached to charity as a religious obligation among traditional Jews.

The record also reminds us that those feeling themselves powerless are subject to conspiracy theories. We find a contemporaneous example in the lamentation of an anonymous colonist from Winnipeg. He wrote a letter, published in *Ha-Melitz* on July 27th 1882, the first summer of Cotopaxi:

“Like an outcast, I sit looking towards the sky and I hear voices of [my fellow-colonists] weeping...‘Look how we were deceived by the people we trusted and who seemed to be concerned with our welfare. They have sent us to a desolate place as servants and maids to work for nothing for the local inhabitants...Why did they deceive us? Like sheep without a shepherd...we are bruised from top to bottom.’”¹⁰⁶

If we hope that this unfortunate found solace before the Manitoba winter set in, at the same time we need not take his bereft tone fully to heart: those who are familiar with the Jewish writing style of the period will recognize a dramatic style of this kind as characteristic. His tone anticipates the heartfelt remonstrances recalled by B. Prezant and similar sentiments handed down to us by the descendants of the Cotopaxi pioneers, which later writers—unfamiliar with the conventions of larger-than-life idiom—took at face value. A watered-down example is to be found in the appendix, which is a translation from Russian.

More to the point, the content of the Winnipeg lamentation precisely foreshadows the protests of deceit and economic exploitation which come down to us from Cotopaxi. The striking similarity of the two instances of complaint suggests a common source. They tell us that Jewish refugees all over North America at this time were predisposed to view whatever misadventures initially came their way through lenses distorted by rumors picked up on the Atlantic crossing or at the ports of entry in New York, Castle Garden and Ward’s Island, which evidently succumbed to intermittent disorder. The October 23rd 1882 edition of the Saint Petersburg journal, *Voskhoda*, has a lively account of posturing by would-be immigrant leaders, as well as factional disputes at Ward’s Island leading to a full-blown riot.¹⁰⁷ Such conditions were bound to kindle rumors—what we would now call urban myths.



Dramatic expression is also to be found when we examine the winter of 1882-83. At first sight, the story is of unremitting hardship. We read that the pioneers lost their crops to frost and the menaces of cattle, bears and begging tribesmen.¹⁰⁸ Their cabins were meager and lacked windows, doors and chimneys.¹⁰⁹ Some settlers resorted to cut-sod huts and an abandoned cave for shelter.¹¹⁰ One settler swam a flooded river to obtain food for his sick wife.¹¹¹ In sum, the story presented is of destitute and isolated pioneers, who were obliged to scavenge for coal and wood and who benefited from charitable shipments from Denver of “clothing, food, medicine and other necessities,” as well as \$500 in cash.¹¹²

Much of this description turns out to be exaggerated. First the underlying conditions: the Colorado winter would have been no novelty for pioneers who came from what is now the Ukraine. Let us compare February, the coldest month of the year in northern latitudes, at Lviv, the principal town in the region from which most of the colonists hailed, with Monarch Pass, the weather station closest to the colony. We see an average of 25°F and a minimum of 8°F in the old country compared to 15°F and 12°F in the pass above the colonists’ new home.¹¹³ The high plateaus might have been more exposed than Monarch Pass, but we know that many of the settlers planned to stay in the more sheltered conditions of Cotopaxi itself.¹¹⁴ They evi-

dently had no difficulty withstanding the climate in that all survived the first winter and several families elected to stay for a second.¹¹⁵

The failed harvest was an undoubted disaster, but the pioneers' inexperience with the local farming conditions was very unhelpful. The complaints about accommodation attest to similar lack of the "frontier spirit" and to some extent are contradicted by M.H. He confirms Schwarz's report to HEAS about the sturdy character of the houses, but adds to the confusion about their number in Schwarz's report, by writing of six in Cotopaxi itself and an unidentified number "at the colonists' request" on farmsteads.¹¹⁶ This leaves us with what we have taken to be the original log cabins. As discussed above, they followed the priority of satisfying the Homestead Acts and sufficed for hundreds of thousands over many decades; chimneys, windows and doors were a labor-intensive affair to be completed by the occupants themselves or with luck, with the help of neighbors. Cut-sod huts were the expedient for innumerable pioneers who would have counted themselves lucky to find abandoned caves for their first winter on the great plains. Indeed, at this time, Jewish colonists in Vineland, New Jersey, and Cimarron, Oklahoma, found themselves sleeping under canvas in army tents supplied by the U.S. Government.¹¹⁷ The story of the river swim was disputed within a few days of its publication.¹¹⁸



The fragmentary contemporaneous record now available enables us to propose a more realistic reconstruction. Schwarz was appointed manager of the colony on August 2nd, 1882.¹¹⁹ At the end of the month the number of colonists increased by one third.¹²⁰ At that season the increase in population resulted in more people to feed instead of more field-hands, adding to our understanding of the exhaustion of the colony's funds at around that time.¹²¹ Schwartz responded by arranging paid employment at the local zinc mine, presumably Saltiel's, and at the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.¹²²

The colonists continued to deal with the store, which would be willing to maintain credit and cash pay-checks in full—then as now customary in the absence of convenient banking facilities—for as long as there was a reasonable prospect that arrears would be paid promptly. The assumption would have been that HEAS would step in with a cash infusion. We know that Schwarz was popular with the colonists, and he seems to have regarded himself as their friend.¹²³ The record shows that he took it upon himself to go to New York that October to appeal to HEAS. Presumably, his roseate account represented an approach agreed upon between the colonists and their creditors, explaining why he skated over the difficulties *in situ*. He did report a deficit of around \$1,750, but formally asked only for \$500.¹²⁴ We may take it that he acted in the belief that relief somewhere between these figures would have regularized the colonists' position.

In the event, however, his report was spectacularly ill-timed. HEAS had only raised \$22,544.19 from private subscriptions prior to June 1882, so at that point commitments to Cotopaxi represented nearly half of funds raised.¹²⁵ One week before Schwarz's report, HEAS recognized the extremity of its financial position, when the committee reluctantly agreed to accept responsibility for every landed immigrant, in order to get \$50,000 from its European counterpart.¹²⁶ This means that Schwarz's appeal would be unwelcome on receipt and objectionable on examination.¹²⁷ If Schwarz himself lost the confidence of HEAS at this point, it would explain his abrupt departure from the record.

Once the Cotopaxi store gathered that relief from HEAS was not to be forthcoming, a tougher line on credit was inevitable: Satt tells us that it was altogether cut off,¹²⁸ though M.H. denies this.¹²⁹ In fact, the position was more nuanced. In such conditions, it is no more than businesslike to try to get defaulters back on track. The usual course is that a fraction of their cash-flow be applied to arrears. In this instance, the store would want to introduce conditions for cashing checks and/or redeeming scrip. Such a regime may have been introduced prior to October 23rd, on the most chilling view of Schwarz's comment to *Voskhoda's* New York correspondent, that the settlers were "willingly" using the cash they were earning to pay back debt.¹³⁰ If not then, it evidently came shortly afterwards, as we learn from a throwaway comment by M.H. He wrote that in February 1883, several colonists held un-presented pay-checks after many months of working for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.¹³¹ If this is correct, we learn that the colonists were choosing to go without cash, rather than allow part of their earnings to be used to repay debt. Such complexities were simplified to the point of incoherence as requests for rebates, in the recollections of B. Prezant (reported by Roberts), and of Ornstein, Quiat, and Singer (reported by Satt).¹³²

The settlers should not, however, have been destitute. From the Fall, they were able to earn cash and during the Winter almost all the adult men were earning between \$2.00 and “up to \$3.00” per day from the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.¹³³ M.H. reported that from October 1882 to early February 1883, two colonists were earning \$1.50 a day as carpenters for local storekeepers; he also fleshed out Schwarz’s account by reporting that an average of six colonists earned between \$1.50 and \$2.00 per day from the zinc mine. If we accept his word, it adds weight to the evidence presented above which led us to reject the sequence of events presented by Satt.¹³⁴

Earnings of this kind should have been enough to keep the colony: the pioneers had no obligations for rent and a smaller group was able to cover its living expenses the following winter with railroad earnings alone.¹³⁵ Nor were the colonists isolated: after August of 1882 they were in continuous contact with the Jews of Denver, from whom they were obtaining kosher meat.¹³⁶ The pages of *Voskhoda* show that the Cotopaxi colonists joined with other Jewish pioneers in reporting their progress to the newspaper.¹³⁷ Finally, Henry’s prompt and circumstantial rejoinder to Kohn and Wirkowski establishes that Cotopaxi had a telegraph office, from which the colonists could make contact with their coreligionists in Denver or elsewhere at will and without delay.¹³⁸

The assistance from Denver was forthcoming in the first week of February 1883. We know this as, although it was unmentioned by Kohn and Wirkowski in their letter of 30 January, it was reported in the *Denver Tribune* of February 7th, 1883.¹³⁹ A delivery at this point combines with the stories of scavenging for fuel to confirm that despite their earnings, the colonists were on short rations over the first winter. In contrast, M.H.—transparently partisan—presents a more upbeat account of the settlers’ circumstances at that point. He reported that the colonists had some \$1,000 in the hands of families, plus \$60 of communal funds for emergencies. In addition the colonists had wages due from storekeepers and elsewhere and the un-presented pay-checks already discussed.¹⁴⁰

We may resolve this apparent contradiction with a close reading of M.H.’s remarks about wage arrears. He reports that the mine paid “about” \$800 in cash on February 6th 1883 for December work.¹⁴¹ Once again, his figures are unsatisfactory: his “about” undermines any claim to precision and his sums simply don’t add up. Earnings for a twenty-six working-day December of “about \$800” would imply not “the average number...[of] six” miners at \$2 per day but rather some fifteen miners. Other sources fail to clarify this point. Satt is unspecific about the number of colonists who worked in the mine and the duration of their engagement: on the one hand she argues that the abusive conditions of employment in the mine affected most colonists; on the other she reports that “almost all” then found work on the railroad.¹⁴² Roberts is more circumstantial in reporting that only a fraction of the colonists found work in the mine.¹⁴³ Thus, we have insufficient ground to challenge the “average” of six reported by M.H.

This leaves us needing some other explanation for the outsize payroll. M.H. could simply have come up with a high figure to support his claim that the colonists had ready funds of \$1,000. It is more likely, however, that the enlargement represented arrears not just for December, but for much of the Fall. This offers some perspective on Satt’s stories of scrip: no doubt it was issued as advances until cash was delivered, so that the colonists might obtain supplies from the store. In this light, M.H. inadvertently reminds us of the fallibility of Satt’s sources, who reported that the mine paid the colonists only in scrip: had this been the case, no arrears would have been recognized and the February 1883 payment would have been unnecessary.

If the miners had been waiting for their cash for four months—and they might have had to wait for longer; after all the arrears were not cleared until Kohn and Wirkowski entered the scene—it is easy to understand their anxiety. In addition, as discussed above, the colonists were declining to cash pay-checks at the store at a time when their womenfolk were scavenging for fuel. Such sacrifices as arose would understandably contribute to the legacy of bitterness. In warm houses one hundred and twenty five years later, we have the luxury of viewing the colonists’ sense of distress as excessive, both absolutely and by comparison to other pioneers of the period. Nonetheless, like the author of the Winnipeg lamentation, they seem to have seen themselves as so wretched as to have been misused, and they transmitted their sentiments to those who followed them.



Let us now turn to the three-way negotiations between the colonists, HEAS, and Saltiel, which dominated the period between February and the late summer of 1883. Let us scrutinize the sequence of events.

- a) *Before 23 October 1882*
Colonists on generally good terms with the management of the colony.
Colonists acknowledge their debt to HEAS and expect to be in a position to repay. ¹⁴⁴
- b) *Before 30 January 1883*
Colonists in dispute with the management of the colony.
Colonists no longer expect to pay their debt. ¹⁴⁵
- c) *Late Summer 1883*
HEAS agrees to send the colonists a cash sum (received in October).
Note that this reversed the former flow of liability, telling us that HEAS forgave the colonists their debt, and that Saltiel and HEAS mutually settled. ¹⁴⁶

To summarize, the position reversed from (a) where the colonists were to repay \$10,000 to HEAS, to (c) where HEAS actually paid them a further \$2,000. This can only have come after hard negotiations between the pioneers and HEAS, complicated by the presence of a third-party, Saltiel, to whom the colonists also owed money.

The correspondence between Kohn and Wirkowski and H. S. Henry, the President of HEAS, is best seen as the second round of the colonists' campaign, following the failure of Schwartz's approach. The first was the settlers' late 1882 appeal to HEAS for "aid and counsel in how to regain their lost money." ¹⁴⁷ As they had expended only filing fees, we may take it that HEAS dismissed this out of hand. Presumably, however, this appeal also conveyed to HEAS the unwelcome news that the pioneers no longer considered themselves bound to repay the \$10,000 defrayed by HEAS on their behalf, let alone the credit they had run up at Saltiel's store. About this time, the settlers made their position known to the Denver community, from whom they had been buying kosher meat since August. ¹⁴⁸ Kohn and Wirkowski then visited the colony—for less than twelve hours according to Henry. ¹⁴⁹ The record shows that Kohn then took the settlers under his wing; in effect they became his clients, either on a contingent basis or *pro bono* as they had no cash to pay a fee.

Kohn launched the second round of the settlers' campaign with the report he drew up with Wirkowski, which was dated January 30th, sent to HEAS on February 5th, and published in the *Denver Tribune* on February 7th (all 1883). ¹⁵⁰ There then followed a campaign in the *Denver Republican*, which characterized the settlement as a "vile atrocity" and spoke harshly of Saltiel. ¹⁵¹ Even so, at this point Kohn's tack with HEAS was more to emphasize the colonists' hardship than to attack the conception or management of the colony, with his report to HEAS dwelling on the pioneers' financial and physical predicament.

These developments put Henry and HEAS in a spot. Henry presided over a charity which had sought funds on the basis that they were to be loaned to pioneers, not tendered as out-and-out grants. Henry's comments in his letter of February 15th 1883, about the irresponsible character of the Russian immigrant—so grating to modern ears—may be seen not merely as stereotyping, but as a reflection of his alarm that the colonists had signaled their intention to defect from their financial obligations. ¹⁵² In any event, he dismissed Kohn and Wirkowski's report as exaggeration, so the second round of the settlers' campaign came to naught. ¹⁵³

The settlers and their attorney, Kohn, now faced a tactical dilemma. In order to achieve their negotiating objectives, they had to get Henry and HEAS to overcome their scruples about the basis on which moneys had been furnished. They made a third round of approaches, with Satt writing that the settlers renewed their pleas in the Spring. These came to nothing, ¹⁵⁴ with Oswald reporting that on March 2nd 1883 HEAS wrote back counseling "patience and fortitude." ¹⁵⁵ By the late summer, however, HEAS had reversed its position, abandoning its claim on the pioneers and agreeing to send them a further \$2,000, with funds delivered in October, 1883. ¹⁵⁶

What occurred by way of the fourth or such subsequent rounds of negotiation as took place over the following few months? We do not have the full record, but we may find clues from the three documents available for study. The first is the early 1883 stance of the *Denver Republican*, where the management of the colony was severely criticized. ¹⁵⁷ The second is the letter by Mordecai Jalomstein reprinted in *Ha-Melitz* in November 1885. In this, Jalomstein recalled letters "which the colonists wrote with tears in their eyes" directly to him, showing that the colonists' dealings with the Russian press had encouraged them to extend their campaign to the opinion-formers of the day. ¹⁵⁸ The third is the letter from M.H. to the *Denver Tribune*, alleging that Kohn and Wirkowski, now linked with other locals as the "Denver Relief Committee", had misrepresented the position in Cotopaxi. ¹⁵⁹

All the principals appear to have recognized these exchanges for the public relations exercises they were. M.H.'s letter is unmentioned by Satt, but she observes that the Denver *Republican* emphasized the colonist's sufferings, whereas the *Rocky Mountain News* reminded its readers that pioneers could not escape hardship.¹⁶⁰ The *Tribune* followed Kohn, after he chose it to publish his appeal to HEAS. It prefaced M.H.'s letter of rebuttal not just with the sub-header, "To be Taken with a 'Grain of Salt' ", but with an editorial preamble distancing the paper from the letter's thrust and praising the character of Witkowski (*sic*), Strauss, and Kohn. Immediately beneath M.H.'s letter, however, Judge George H Rummel undermines the *Tribune's* accolades to the "Denver Relief Committee", with a brief note taking exception to the committee's unauthorized appropriation of his name.¹⁶¹

From this we learn that Kohn was ready, willing and able to broaden his campaign to attack the operation and very idea of the colony as forcefully and as widely as he could. His purpose was to persuade Henry that HEAS and Saltiel were so implicated in the settlement's failure as to justify a \$10,000 write-off and a further pay-out of \$2,000; meanwhile HEAS and Saltiel had to come to a parallel settlement. As we know, Kohn succeeded. We may take it that even if Kohn did not deliberately set out to make a fall-guy out of Saltiel, he would hardly have exerted himself to shield Saltiel's reputation from the crossfire. It is probable that the descendants of the colonists transmitted to Satt the family tradition of Saltiel's perfidy, in part created for the public relations campaign and embellished over the intervening sixty-seven years of family reminiscences.



This takes us to the distortion attached to much-repeated accounts. Let us examine an example from the written record. In January 1882, Kohn and Wirkovski reported that "One of the colonists...planted four bags of potatoes [and] gathered as a return fifteen bags..."¹⁶² Fifty-nine years later Roberts wrote in the *Colorado Magazine*, "Zedek...sowed fourteen bags (of potatoes) and reaped in return fifteen."¹⁶³ Twenty-nine years after that, the *Pueblo Chieftain* printed a story headlined "Jewish Immigrants Victims of Hoax," saying that, "The new settlers...plant[ed] 14 bags of potatoes [and] harvested 15."¹⁶⁴ It is instructive to observe how this anecdotal example became inflated over eighty-eight years from the experience of one colonist to that of the colony as a whole and from a poor yield of 3.75:1 to a disaster of 1.07:1. Our discovery of the fallibility of Satt's oral sources reinforces this aspect of the matter.

Finally, we are bound to recognize the authority of Satt's work. In her 1950 Master's thesis, she developed an account of the colony which is vivid, cogent, elegant, comprehensive and extensively sourced. The very drama of her central thesis, that Saltiel plotted to engineer a pool of sweated labor and that he and Schwarz deceived HEAS, makes for a dramatic story. Her work has become the principal source for the descendants of the colonists and historians of the settlement, unchallenged until the examination of the new sources cited in this article.



So, what can we conclude? First, the descendants of the colonists have no reason to feel that anything is taken from the dignity of their story by the information now at hand. The Cotopaxi colony was an ordeal for their forbears, with an outcome which does them great credit: they went on to triumph over adversity in the New World. The settlement was patently unwisely located, though we also need to take account of the general climate of agricultural euphoria, the pressures imposed upon HEAS by the torrent of refugees from Russia, the lack of working capital in the colony's budget, the apparent changes of plan from at least some element of stock-raising to pure horticulture, the inexperience of the colonists, and the failure of all such schemes in the United States. Saltiel has left us no record of his motives, but we no longer need to see him as a deliberate villain in order to make sense of the history of the Cotopaxi colony. It is most likely that he, like HEAS, like Schwarz, like the colonists themselves, ardently believed in the agricultural experiment and took no satisfaction in its failure.

The sources examined in this article enable us to recognize the origins of the claims of Schwarz's duplicity, coerced labor, lost rebates, and overpriced infrastructure as the result of all too humanly imperfect recall, *lacunae* in the record, and mistaken readings of such documents as were available at the time of earlier studies. In addition, we are in a position to explain the legacy of bitterness as being rooted in the disappointment among the pioneers at the failure of their dream to become farmers, the attraction of conspiracy theories and a villain to blame for the collapse, and the tough negotiations which freed the colonists from their financial obligations and which are dimly discernable from the imperfect record. Finally, we will do well to recognize that there is more to learn.¹⁶⁵

Appendix 1

Extract from the Weekly Journal "Voskhoda", no 43, published on 23rd October ,1882

Dateline: Saint Petersburg, 22nd October 1882.

Translated by Hugh Vinter.

Page 1165 (For enumeration see note 162).

"...they are working very diligently and are willingly saving the known sum for the payment of the sums paid for them."

"The colonists have also not forgotten about their spiritual food. In September a public school was opened with the cooperation of the Denver governor and courses will be set up for adults. A house of prayer has been equipped in which services are conducted on Friday evenings, Saturdays and festivals."

"For the first time," said Mr Schwarz, "since man first saw the "Roky Mountain" (*sic*, in Latin text in original) covered in snow, golden rays of sun have fallen on the marvellous holy letters of Jewish prayer books and the first, thousand year old flowers are filling a Jewish chapel with their scent in the copper-bearing mountains of "Fremont County" (*sic*, in Latin text in original). In these mountains high under the skies there are shouts of 'God, who led us out of Egypt, out of the land of slaves.'"

Eliaser Maschbir
(*sic* in Latin text in original)

New York 16th October

"What's new in America?" This question really interests our brothers in Russia. "As in the past", we reply. The same Castle Garden, the same Greenpoint, the same Ward's Island. As before the émigrés continue to loll on the square of Castle Garden, just as in the past they eat "gushcha" (which here is called soup) in the committee kitchen on "Greenwich Street 27" (*sic*, in Latin text in original), just as before they continue to be distracted by scandals, which only shame our name and force every intelligent Russian Jew to blush.

Yesterday there was a terrible scandal on Ward's Island in a new building. I call this scandal terrible because there has not been anything like this in the course of this year, the history of which is in general rich in scandals of such a sort. Almost all the periodic journals of New York are filled with this scandal and it has lowered the worthiness of Russian Jews in the eyes of American society. The superintendent of the committee shelter on Ward's Island, Mr Blank, a man not much loved by immigrants, excluded one immigrant by the name of Rabat. The Jews announced that they would not accept this and said that if Blank wants to carry out his decision and expel Rabat then he, Blank, would be without his head (*sic*). Blank called the police and wanted to eject Rabat by force, but...here started a "war" conducted according to all the rules of the art. Jews beat the police and they took to their heels. In quarter of an hour a whole group of police appeared under the leadership of the Captain of the island. When these policemen seized Rabat then the fighting renewed even worse from both sides. Jews beat Blank round the head as well as his assistant, Shottek. From their side the police injured many Jews. The fight carried on till late at night and ended with the complete victory of the Jews. No more police appeared on the island and the Captain had to telegraph New York about the sending of reinforcements to calm down the Russians. Luckily at this time two members of the committee arrived who ordered the police to leave and suggested to Blank and Shottek that they leave their posts immediately. Little by little the aroused immigrants began to calm down and at last by the evening the excitement subsided. What will happen next?—it's uncertain. I spoke with many members of the committee and they all expressed great weariness at dealing with committee affairs.

Page 1166.

To accuse the mass of people with all these scandals would be an unforgivable mistake. The mass of people is unhappy, is suffering and does not know how to escape from this critical position. Some dark personalities are using the unhappiness of the masses. One such person earlier was a certain Kelman. This man was always hoping that the committee would want to separate from him and would send him to Russia. When he saw that the committee was not even noticing him, that the masses were turning away and no longer wished to listen to his false assurances, being convinced that scandals lead nowhere and only worsen their position, then he gathered some dollars from pauper immigrants and sadly went off to Russia. The agitator in the last scandal was the editor of one New York based Jewish newspaper, Mr Brun, a well known cheat and scandal-monger, whom they will not let into polite society here. The "Russian-Jewish" question seemed a good way for this man to correct his faltering business. He often appeared amongst the masses, urging them to make scandals and to chose him as their agent and then "in one month he would collect the donations and look after all the Jewish immigrants". Of course one part of the Russian Jews turned away from this man knowing that for him it is just, as they say in America, "bisdnes machen" (*sic*, in Latin text in original) but the masses remain the masses...

Soon there will appear the first Russian-Jewish newspaper "Der Russische Israelit" (*sic*, in Latin text in original). This will be a popular organ for Russian Jews in America. The newspaper will be daily in a popular format.

From Oregon, the first Odessa group writes that they have all found work and several members of have gone off in search of suitable plots of land.

From Dakota, the Kremenchug party writes that that construction of houses is moving forward, the next group is hoping to come by spring - there are only 6 at the moment.

From Cotopaxi, they write that the colonists are fully provided for the winter; the governor is thinking of establishing a special school for the children of the colonists at government expense.

From Louisiana, they inform us that the 12 remaining families are completely happy with their lot. They have had a good harvest, have got used to the climate and lack for nothing. They criticise their erstwhile comrades for the haste with which they left the colony.

The committee has agreed to the conditions of the European committee. They are as follows: the New York committee, the "Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society" (*sic*, in Latin text in original) undertakes not to send any immigrant back to Europe for which the European committee is giving New York \$50,000. At first many members of the New York committee did not agree to these conditions, but now this question has been resolved at a meeting in a supportive manner.

Today in the evening there will be a meeting of the members of the committee. It will discuss the question - how to provide lodgings for the immigrants for the winter. I will not hesitate to inform you of the resolution of this question.

S.S.

Fragment at bottom of page 1166 untranslated.

Notes

- 1 Victor Miller and Lacy Hembetel, "Jewish Immigrants Victims of Hoax," *The Pueblo Chieftain and The Pueblo Star-Journal*, Page 4A, September 7, 1970.
- 2 These sources include:

Dorothy Roberts, "The Jewish Colony at Cotopaxi," *Colorado Magazine*, July 1941.

Elizabeth Gulliford, "Interesting Historical Facts Concerning Cotopaxi Pioneers," *The Sun*, August 26, 1954, available at:
<http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/co/fremont/history/cotopaxi.txt>.

Ida Libert Uchill, *Pioneers, Peddlers, and Tsadikim: The story of the Jews in Colorado*, (Denver: Sage Press, 1957); This book includes an extract from the 1932 report by Dr. Charles D Spivak and Dr J. M. Morris, which Uchill cites on p.176.

A. Armstrong, Website created by to satisfy the requirements for the final project of the "Nationalism and Zionism" course at the University of Denver and available at:
<http://trader12.home.mindspring.com/index.htm>
This is undated; it has come up only recently on Google searches; on the other hand A. Armstrong is no longer at UD; this dates it between ca. 2000 and 2004.

Nancy Oswald, "Hard Times: The Jewish Colony at Cotopaxi," *Colorado Central Magazine*, No. 132, February 2005, p. 26; and available at:
<http://www.cozine.com/archive/cc2005/01320261.html>.
- 3 Flora Jane Satt, "The Cotopaxi Colony," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Colorado, 1950. References to Satt's text are to my edit at: <http://www.shealtiel.com/history/cotopaxi.pdf>. I have left Satt's text but removed her notes, which go principally to sources, to make room for my own annotations. I have recently learned that Satt survives, but I have been unable to make direct contact with her. I hereby acknowledge her rights as the author of the original material and apologise to her for reproducing part of it on the Shealtiel family website without her permission. Needless to say, she has no responsibility for my work. As I have omitted Satt's notes in my edit, references to these are as enumerated in links pointed to at <http://cotopaxi.25ox.com/index.htm>; This is a website established by Nelson Moore, who has married into the family of a descendant of the Cotopaxi colonists and whose rights as the publisher of the website I hereby acknowledge.
- 4 Julius Schwarz, "Report on the colony of Russian refugees at Cotopaxi, Colorado, established by the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of the United States, 15 State Street, New York City, 23 October 1882," with an *ex libris* label, "Yale University Library, Discovery and Settlement of Western North America, Collection of William Robertson Coe." The copy in my possession is sourced from the Library of Congress, where the original is held under call no. zc49 892sc; location: Beinecke (non-circulating). This can be seen at:
<http://www.shealtiel.com/history/reportofjuliusschwarztoheas.pdf>.
- 5 George H. Kohn and Louis Wirkowski, "Letter to HEAS, President of HEAS," January 30, 1883;" H. S. Henry, "Letter to H. Silver and George H. Kohn", 15 February 1883; excerpts republished in *Rocky Mountain Jewish Historical Notes*, Vol 1 No 3, June 1978. Cited as *RMJHN*.
- 6 Gilbert Osofsky, "The Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of the United States, 1881-1883", *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 49 (Sept 1959-Jun 1960), 1-4; *AJHS Journal*, p. 173 *et seq.*
- 7 Joel S Geffen, "Annotated Documentary of Jewish Agricultural colonies as Reported in the Pages of the Russian Hebrew Press, *Ha-Melitz* and *Ha-Yom*", *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 60 (Sept 1970-Jun 1971), 1-4. *AJHS Journal*, p. 355 *et seq.*
- 8 *Voskhoda*, Saint Petersburg, October 23, 1882. Indexed by Leon Shpall, "Among Books and Periodicals. A List of Selected items of American Jewish Interest in the Russian-Jewish Press, 1860 to 1932", *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, (1893-1961); Sept 1948-Jun 1949; 38, 1.4, *AJHS Journal*, pg 239. Shpall cites an article by "S.S." (presumably S. Sokolofsky, identified in full by Shpall elsewhere) at pp. 1165-1166 of issue 43 of *Voskhoda*, cited below as "Sokolofsky".
- 9 Anonymous correspondent, "Denial from Cotopaxi", *The Tribune* (Denver Colorado) (February 13th 1883), p. 8, column 2; cited below as "Tribune". The coincidence of the final initial of "M.H." suggests association with Saltiel's partner at the Cotopaxi store, A.S. Hart. He certainly seems well informed of events on the Cotopaxi plateau. His stance (possibly disingenuous and certainly attracting editorial scepticism from the *Tribune*) seems to be more concerned to defend Schwarz than Saltiel. Thus, he writes of Saltiel taking the lead in the colony's disbursements prior to Schwarz's appointment on August 2, 1882 (paragraph 1).
- 10 Satt, *op cit*, p. 33.
- 11 Satt, *op cit*, p. 17.
- 12 Satt, *op cit*, II, 23.
- 13 Satt, *op cit*, II, n. 32.
- 14 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 12.
- 15 *RMJHN*, *op cit*, pp.1, 6.
- 16 Roberts, *op cit*, p. 126 and n. 6.
- 17 Satt, *op cit*, p. 7.
- 18 Roberts, *op cit*, p. 127.
- 19 Satt, *op cit*, p. 16.
- 20 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 11.
- 21 Satt, *op cit*, p. 24.
- 22 Satt, *op cit*, III, n. 15.
- 23 Satt, *op cit*, III, n. 7.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 Satt, *op cit*, II, n. 22; III, n. 23.
- 26 Satt, *op cit*, II, n. 35.
- 27 Satt, *op cit*, II, n. 22.
- 28 Satt, *op cit*, p. 23.
- 29 Schwarz *op cit* generally and p.11 for lack of winter supplies; p.15 for the accumulation of debt.
- 30 Satt, *op cit*, p. 24.
- 31 Satt, *op cit*, p. 25; Roberts, *op cit*, pp. 127-8.
- 32 Satt, *op cit*, pp. 14, 18, 19, 20.
- 33 Satt, *op cit*, p. 14
- 34 Satt, *op cit*, p. 20.
- 35 *RMJHN*, *op cit*, p. 6.
- 36 Satt, *op cit*, p. 10.
- 37 Satt *op cit*, pp. 10, 23, II, n. 35.
- 38 Satt, *op cit*, p. 32.
- 39 Cited by Uchill, *op cit.*, p. 176.
- 40 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 7.
- 41 Satt, *op cit*, pp. 10, 29.
- 42 Roberts, *op cit*, p. 129.

- 43 Satt, *op cit*, p. 24.
- 44 Satt, *op cit*, I, n. 19.
- 45 Satt, *op cit*, p. 2.
- 46 Roberts, *op cit*, p. 129.
- 47 *RMJHN*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.
- 48 Satt, *op cit*, pp. 19, 20, 24.
- 49 Satt, *op cit*, p. 19.
- 50 Satt, *op cit*, p. 20.
- 51 Satt III, *op cit*, n.1, n.7.
- 52 Schwarz, *op cit*, pp. 4, 11-12.
- 53 Satt, *op cit* p. 19; II, n. 7.
- 54 Schwarz, *op cit*, pp. 11-12.
- 55 Public Broadcasting System website.
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/frontierhouse/frontierlife/say4.html>
- 56 Satt, *op cit*, p. 21.
- 57 Satt, *op cit*, p. 25.
- 58 Satt, *op cit*, III, n. 18.
- 59 Satt, *op cit*, p. 14; II, n. 27.
- 60 *RMJHN*, *op cit*, p. 1.
- 61 Satt, *op cit*, p. 25; III, n. 19.
- 62 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 15.
- 63 Satt, *op cit*, p. 24.
- 64 Gulliford, *op cit*, paragraph 5.
- 65 Satt, *op cit*, p. 21.
- 66 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 15.
- 67 Satt, *op cit*, p. 25.
- 68 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 13.
- 69 Author's c with Bill Jones, November 19, 1998.
- 70 Roberts, *op cit*, p. 130.
- 71 Satt, *op cit*, p.19; Roberts, *op cit*, pp. 126, 127.
- 72 Schwarz, *op cit*, pp. 3-5.
- 73 *RMJHN*, *op cit*, p. 1.
- 74 Roberts, *op cit*, p. 127.
- 75 Satt, *op cit*, pp.14, 20; *RMJHN*, *op cit*, p. 6.
- 76 Satt, *op cit*, p. 32; Spivak and Morris, cited in Uchill, *op cit* p. 176.
- 77 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 5.
- 78 Satt, *op cit*, pp. 8, 19, 28.
- 79 Roberts, *op cit*, p. 127.
- 80 Satt, *op cit*, p. 29.
- 81 Satt, *op cit*, pp. 28-29; Roberts, *op cit*, p. 127.
- 82 Satt, *op cit*, p. 28.
- 83 Satt, *op cit*, p. 29; Roberts, *op cit*, p. 127.
- 84 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 4.
- 85 Armstrong, *op cit*.
- 86 Satt, *op cit*, pp. 28-9.
- 87 Satt, *op cit*, p. 29.
- 88 Satt, *op cit*, p. 14; Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 16. See also n.96 *supra*.
- 89 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 15.
- 90 Geffen, *op cit*, Page 7 of 28 in reproduced article.
- 91 Satt, *op cit*, p. 29,
- 92 Schwarz, *op cit*, p.13; Satt, *op cit*, p.26.
- 93 That is excluding Ed Grimes, who walked to Denver and Samuel Shradsky, "a very old man," Satt, *op cit*, pp. 26, 29; Roberts, *op cit*, p. 130.
- 94 Tribune, *op. cit.*, paragraph 3.
- 95 Geffen, *op cit*, p. 24 of 28 in reproduced article for figures; p. 6 of 28, n. 7 for identification of Jalomstein.
- 96 Interview with Schwarz; fragment of article by Elieser Maschbir, pp. 1165-6, *Voskhoda*, *op cit*, cited below as "Maschbir".
- Although the page in my possession contains only the latter fragment of Maschbir's article, there can be no mistaking its topic. Schwarz is named and spoke to Maschbir of Fremont County and the "Roky Mountain" (*sic*, in Latin text in original). Schwarz further identifies himself with his characteristic propensity to take plans for facts by telling Maschbir that, "In September a public school was opened with the cooperation of the Denver Governor and courses will be set up for adults." whereas on p. 1166, Sokolofski reported merely that, "From Cotopaxi they write that the colonists are fully provided for the winter; the Governor is thinking of establishing a special school for the children of the colonists at Government expense."
- For remarks on the implications of these and other references in this extract for future researchers, see n. 165 *infra*.
- 97 Roberts, *op cit*, p.27.
- 98 Schwarz, *op cit*, p.11; Roberts, *op cit*, p.127; Satt, *op cit*, pp. 20, 24, 25.
- 99 *RMJHN*, *op cit*, p. 6.
- 100 Gulliford, *op cit*, paragraph 5.
- 101 Schwarz, *op cit*, p.11; Roberts, *op cit*, p.127; Satt, *op cit*, p.20.
- 102 Satt, *op cit*, p. 24.
- 103 Satt *op cit*, p. 25.
- 104 Satt, *op cit*, p. 27.
- 105 *RMHJN*, *op cit* p. 6.
- 106 Geffen, *op cit*, pp. 22-24 of 28 in reproduced document.
- 107 Sokolofski, *op cit*.
- 108 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 11; Roberts, *op cit*, p. 127; Satt, *op cit*, pp. 20, 24, 25.
- 109 Satt, *op cit*, pp. 19, 24, 25.
- 110 Satt *op cit*, p. 22.
- 111 *RMJHN*, *op cit*, p. 2.
- 112 Satt, *op cit*, p. 26; Roberts, *op cit*, p. 129.
- 113 Weather Underground website. February averages for Lviv, Ukraine and Monarch Pass, Colorado.
- 114 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 12.
- 115 Satt, *op cit*, p. 29.
- 116 Tribune, *op. cit.*, paragraph 2.
- 117 Osofsky, *op cit*, p. 7 of 15 in reproduced article, n. 26.
- 118 *RMJHN*, *op cit*, p.6; Tribune, *op. cit.*
- 119 Tribune, *op. cit.*, paragraph 2. Here and at nn. 35, 42, and 44, *infra*, our reconstruction hangs on the slender thread of remarks by M.H. We are willing to rely on these as:
- a) They are incidental to the intended thrust of the letter;
 - b) We have no contemporaneous documentation causing us to challenge them; and
 - c) They contribute to a narrative which makes more sense than the traditional account, which offers no explanation of these events other than the villainy of a *deus ex machina*.

- 120 Schwartz, *op. cit.* p. 6. He wrote that three families consisting of fourteen persons arrived on 29th August 1882, bringing the total to sixty.
- 121 *Tribune, op. cit.*, paragraph 2.
- 122 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 13
- 123 Satt, *op. cit.* p. 23, 24; Schwarz, *op. cit.* generally, especially pp. 11-14, 17.
- 124 Schwarz, *op cit*, pp. 15-16.
- 125 Osofsky, *op cit*, p. 10 of 15 in reproduced article; n. 44.
- 126 Sokolofski, *op cit.* His report is datelined October 16th, 1882.
- 127 We know that Schwartz was a youngster, but did he really expect HEAS to swallow his report? (Schwartz *op. cit.*) We may take it that the Committee promptly penetrated his enthusiasms to dwell on his inconsistencies—four houses built on p. 5 of his report *vs.* eight on p. 11; financial imprecision—expenditures unbalanced with income and deficit unattributed (p.15); and prolonged irrelevance—four pages out of eighteen devoted to erroneous comments on irrigation (pp. 6-10).
- The discrepancies in his report would put HEAS on guard, as would his transparent attempt to play to the gallery, with remarks about the colonists' industry (pp. 13, 14, 16) and "desire to repay every cent" (p.16). It would take scant effort to detect the underlying conditions inadvertently revealed: no crops for immediate sale (pp. 10-11); no cash reserve plus mounting obligations (pp. 15-16) ; imperfect accommodation (pp.5, 11); and uncertain provision to survive the winter (generally, esp. pp. 10-11, 15-16). Neither Schwarz's forensic skills nor his horticultural show-and-tell (p. 11) would deflect the tough questioning to be expected, causing him to reveal the whole story, including the colony's uncovered obligations by way of store credit.
- At that point, the Society's first thought would be to defend themselves against the risk that Saltiel might hold them liable for the settlers' debts. Their response would be to get Saltiel to control credit and ensure the colonists' self-sufficiency for the winter, by earning a livelihood from the employment which Schwarz reports as available.
- But then, how on earth did Schwartz get HEAS to publish his report? Their fury must have redoubled once they realized its inaccuracy and dissembling.
- 128 Satt, *op. cit.* p. 24.
- 129 *Tribune, op.cit.*, paragraph 4.
- 130 Maschbir, *op cit.*
- 131 *Tribune, op.cit.*, paragraph 4.
- 132 Roberts, *op. cit.* p. 129; Satt *op. cit.* pp. 10, 29.
- 133 Schwarz, *op cit*, p.13, as well as his remarks reported in Maschbir, *op cit*; Satt, *op cit*, p. 26.
- 134 *Tribune, op. cit.* This too may not qualify for the sub-editor's "Grain of Salt", as it sits well with Schwarz's report to HEAS, *op cit* and his remarks to Maschbir, *op cit.*
- 135 Satt, *op cit*, p. 28.
- 136 Schwarz, *op cit*, p. 13.
- 137 Sokolofski, *op cit*, in which reports from the various colonies begin, "From [location], they write..."
- 138 *RMJHN, op cit*, generally and p. 6 for the date and circumstantial character of Henry's reply to Kohn and Wirkowski.
- 139 Roberts, *op cit*, p. 29, n. 15.
- 140 *Tribune, op. cit.*, paragraphs 4 and 5.
- 141 *Tribune, op. cit.*, paragraph 5.
- 142 Satt, *op cit*, pp. 25, 26.
- 143 Roberts, *op cit*, pp. 127-8.

- 144 Schwarz, *op cit*, generally and p. 16 for his disarming assurance of the colonists' commitment to repay HEAS, as well as similar remarks reported in Maschbir, *op cit.*
- 145 *RMJHN, op cit*, pp. 1-2, 6; for an expansion on this see the discussion which follows in the main body of this article.
- 146 Roberts, *op cit*, p. 130; Satt, *op cit*, p. 29.
- 147 Satt, *op cit*, p. 25.
- 148 Schwarz, *op cit*, pp. 13, 26; Roberts, *op cit*, p. 129.
- 149 *RMJHN, op cit*, p. 6.
- 150 *RMJHN, op cit*, p. 1.
- 151 Satt, *op cit*, p. 27.
- 152 *RMJHN, op cit*, p. 6.
- 153 *Ibid.*
- 154 Satt, *op cit*, p. 27.
- 155 Satt, *op cit*, p. 27; Oswald, *op cit*, p. 26.
- 156 Satt, *op cit*, p. 28.
- 157 Satt, *op cit*, p. 27.
- 158 Sokolofski, *op cit*, for the colonists' initial dealings with the press; Geffen, *op cit*, p. 24 of 28 in reproduced article for their approaches to Jalomstein.
- 159 *Tribune, op. cit.* generally.
- 160 Satt, *op cit*, p. 27.
- 161 *Ibid.*
- 162 *RMJHN, op cit*, p. 1.
- 163 Roberts, *op cit*, p. 127.
- 164 Miller and Hembuteel, *op cit.*
- 165 One line of further enquiry is immediately suggested by the single instance where I have followed a citation by Shpall. His reference to the Cotopaxi colony is confined to the article by "S.S.", cited at n1 *supra*. The archives concerned are now held by the Widener Library of Harvard University whose archivists were kind enough to send me a photocopy of pp. 1165-6 which contains the article by "S.S.". It is in the original Russian, so to be on the safe side I had the whole page translated.
- Unfortunately, this complicates matters. Shpall locates references in *Voskhoda* with enumerations denominated "pp", i.e. presumably pages; and I have followed this throughout. However, the photocopy in my possession seems to show enumeration by columns, which occur two to a page.
- In any event, Shpall's indexing is imperfect. He accurately locates the article by "S.S." on pp. 1165 to 1166, but omits the fragment of Elieser Maschbir's interview with Schwarz to be found at the beginning of the former page (or column). Shpall's index identifies Maschbir as a frequent contributor to the pages of *Voskhoda* during 1882. This piece carries over from the previous page (or column), not in my possession. Some of Schwarz's comments are highly pertinent to this article, in particular those cited at n. 10 *supra*, where he makes no bones of the settlers' intentions to use their cash earnings to repay debt "willingly".
- The article by "S.S." on pp. 1165-6 also contains a report of a riot at Ward's Island (indexed by Shpall) and an account of HEAS' finances (unmentioned by Shpall) which cannot fail to interest students of Jewish immigration of the period.
- From this we see that pp. 1165-6 of *Voskhoda* turn out to contain something of a treasure trove: four references qualifying for citation in the present article, including two items unindexed by Shpall. This leads me to conclude that future historians of Cotopaxi may improve upon their predecessors by learning Russian and scrutinising the pages of *Voskhoda* of the period in detail.