In early 1917, Leon Trotsky burst onto the New York scene as a forceful, uncompromising proponent of revolutionary socialism. He propagated ideas and advanced political positions that radicalized the city’s immigrant Jewish community and the political left in which they predominated. Ten weeks after Trotsky’s arrival, he returned to Russia and eventually rose to the upper echelon of the Soviet government. His stay in America was brief, but Trotsky made a lasting impact. In the eyes of many immigrant Jews, Trotsky—the leader of the victorious Red Army—was a hero: an intellectual genius and world revolutionary, a man of both ideas and action, a Russian by cultural attainment but still a Jew in some essential sense. Many other Americans, however, viewed Trotsky as a dangerous subversive: the foremost leader of an international Jewish conspiracy. Considered positively or negatively, Trotsky could not be easily ignored. He seemed to personify the revolution.