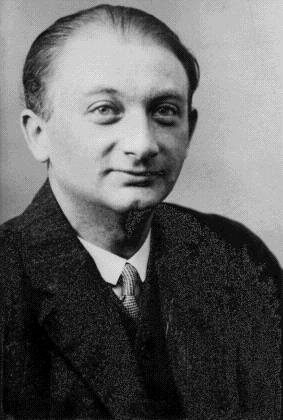
Lene Rock

**Roth, Joseph (1894—1939)**

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bb/Joseph\_Roth\_%281926%29.jpg

Joseph Roth was an Austrian-Jewish journalist and novelist. He was born in the shtetl of Brody, near Lemberg (Lviv, Lvov) in Galicia, in the easternmost part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Quitting his studies in philosophy and German literature in Lemberg and Vienna, he volunteered for the army in 1916. During military service he started reporting for various periodicals. After moving to Berlin in 1920, he achieved success as a socially engaged journalist, occasionally writing as ‘Der rote Roth’. He wrote for *Die neue Berliner Zeitung,* the *Berliner Börsen-Courier,* the social democratic newspaper *Vorwärts* and the renowned liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung*, for which he reported from all over Europe. Roth participated in the *Gruppe 1925*, a Berlin-based association of mostly leftist artists and authors who resisted the increasingly repressive laws on culture of the Weimar Republic. Roth’s first novel *Das Spinnennetz* (*The Spider’s Web*, 1923) was serialized in an Austrian newspaper. Much like his subsequent novels throughout the 1920s, it explores life in postwar Europe, especially the political and social instability of a generation falling victim to right-wing radicalism. Roth’s breakthrough novels *Hiob* (*Job*,1930) and *Radetzkymarsch* (*Radetzky March*,1932) address themes characteristic of his entire oeuvre: Judaism – Eastern Jews, more specifically – and nostalgia for the former Dual Monarchy, which he portrays as a safeguard of ethnic, religious and cultural tolerance. Both novels and journalistic work are characterized by vivid and factual depictions of great historical and sociological precision, reminiscent of the style of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, to which Roth himself however could not entirely relate. In 1933, on the day Hitler was appointed *Reichskanzler*, Roth went into exile in Paris.

Roth’s wistful treatment of Eastern Jewry as an endangered people shares with his utopian portrayal of the Dual Monarchy an underlying sense of rootlessness carrying political value. Novels such as *Radetzky March* and *Die Kapuzinergruft* (*The Emperor’s Tomb*, 1938)symbolize the loss of a fatherland, resulting in an uprootedness which Roth also portrays as characteristic of Jewish existence, as reflected in his essay *Juden auf Wanderschaft* (*The Wandering Jews*, 1927), or in the rootless Jewish protagonists of *Hotel Savoy* and *Flucht ohne Ende* (*Flight without End*, 1927). Against both Zionism and Jewish assimilation as types of Jewish *Heimkehr*, Roth held the ideal of a transnational Jewry, in line with the ideal of cosmopolitanism which he recognized in the former Dual Monarchy.

**List of works**

*The Spider’s Web* (1923)

*Hotel Savoy* (1924)

*The Flight without End* (1927)

*The Wandering Jews* (1927)

*Zipper and his Father* (1928)

*Right and Left* (1929)

*Job* (1930)

*Radetzky March* (1932)

*Confession of a Murderer* [(1936)](http://www.amazon.de/exec/obidos/ASIN/3462024213/josephrothhomepa)

*Weights and Measures* [(1937)](http://www.amazon.de/exec/obidos/ASIN/346202051X/josephrothhomepa)

*The Emperor’s Tomb* [(1938)](http://www.amazon.de/exec/obidos/ASIN/3462018280/josephrothhomepa)

*The Legend of the Holy Drinker*[(1939)](http://www.amazon.de/Die-Legende-vom-heiligen-Trinker/dp/342313237X/josephrothhomepa)

[*The Leviathan* (1940)](http://www.amazon.de/exec/obidos/ASIN/346202082X/josephrothhomepa)

**References and further reading**

* Hofmann, M. (2012) *Joseph Roth: A Life in Letters*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
* Bronsen, D. (1981) *Joseph Roth: eine Biographie*, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.
* [Mehrens, D. (2000) *Vom göttlichen Auftrag der Literatur. Die Romane Joseph Roths. Ein Kommentar,* Hamburg: Libri BoD*.*](http://www.amazon.de/exec/obidos/ASIN/3831104727/josephrothhomepa)