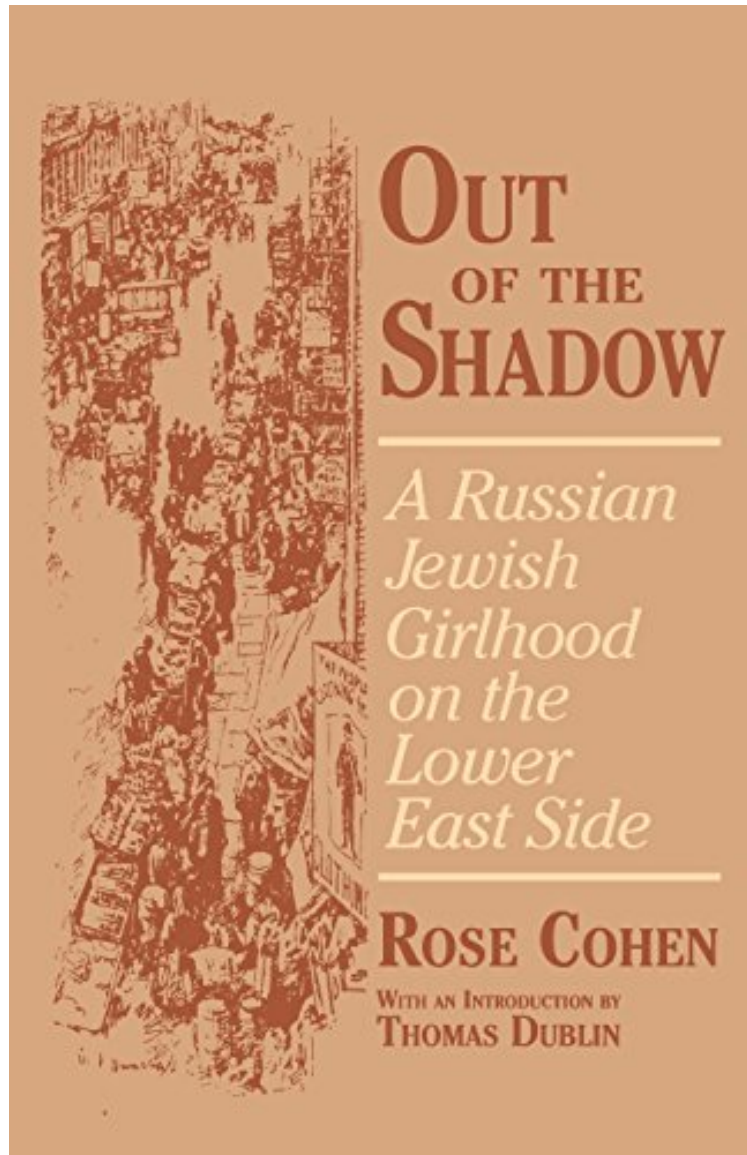


(Download) Out of the Shadow: A Russian Jewish Girlhood on the Lower East Side (Documents in American Social History)

Out of the Shadow: A Russian Jewish Girlhood on the Lower East Side (Documents in American Social History)

Rose Cohen

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Rose Cohen : Out of the Shadow: A Russian Jewish Girlhood on the Lower East Side (Documents in American Social History) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Out of the Shadow: A Russian Jewish Girlhood on the Lower East Side (Documents in American Social History):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A hand-to-mouth existence
By Luc REYNAERT
Rose Cohen's autobiography is the story of the illegal emigration of an illiterate Jewish Russian family to New York in the 1890s. The family doesn't arrive in the land of 'milk and honey' but in a brutal world of 'hunger and exploitation'. The father and his child daughter have to work in sweatshops for survival wages: 'Fourteen hours a day you sit on a chair, often without a back, close to the other feller hand feeling the heat of her body. Fourteen hours with your back bent. Your eyes close to your work you sit stitching often by gaslight. In the winter your body is numb with cold. In the summer, no sun. The black cloth dust eats into your very pores.' When the two come home, they live with the whole family of seven in two rooms, where the sun never comes in. On top of that, there is the daily anxiety for losing one's job. This became a reality in the massive and extreme depression of the 'memorable years' of 1893-1894. People survived on a loaf of bread per day and could barely (or not) pay the rent with their savings. As a reaction, labor became organized ('Each of you can do nothing.') When there is a sparkle of hope and love (marriage), religion becomes an insurmountable barrier. There is fanaticism on both sides and the 'others' speak 'wild talk'
This moving and sometimes very emotional autobiography is a tale of pure survival in a world without pity and solidarity. It reminds us from where we all come from. Highly recommended.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. More Like A Journal
By Lisbeth
Interesting reading and very informative about the NYC immigrant experience. It read more like a journal than a narrative. I enjoyed this book but I wasn't "compelled" to keep reading, although I did. I wish there had been more detail about her later life but I realize this was not possible.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Immigrant's Story
By Geoffrey
Wonderful memoir of a young Russian girl's immigration to the U.S. She and her family left modern-day Belarus for New York in the late 19thC. It almost could be considered as a follow-on to "Fiddler on the Roof."

In this appealing autobiography, Rose Cohen looks back on her family's journey from Tsarist Russia to New York City's Lower East Side. Her account of their struggles and of her own coming of age in a complex new world vividly illustrates what was, for some, the American experience. First published in 1918, Cohen's narrative conveys a powerful sense of the aspirations and frustrations of an immigrant Jewish family in an alien culture. With uncommon frankness, Cohen reports her youthful impressions of daily life in the tenements and of working conditions in garment sweatshops and domestic service. She introduces a large cast, including her co-workers, employers, mentors, family members, and friends. In simple yet moving terms, she recalls how, while confronting setbacks caused by poor health and dilemmas posed by courtship, she finds opportunities to educate herself. She also records the gradual weakening of her family's commitment to religion as they find their way from the shadow of poverty toward the mainstream of American life.

From Library Journal
The title here pretty much says it all. In this 1918 volume, Cohen recounts her own and her family's struggle to acclimate themselves to New York after emigrating from Russia at the turn of the century. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Out of the Shadow . . . remains the most sensitive and insightful first-person account of a particular immigrant experience." New York History, July 2000
A little-known but powerful and moving account of Jewish immigrant life in turn-of-the-century America. It stands with the fiction of Anzia Yezierska in beautifully illuminating the consciousness of an immigrant daughter struggling to reconcile the cultures of the old world and the new. Thomas Dublin has performed a remarkable service by bringing Cohen's work back into the light
Susan A. Glenn, author of Daughters of the Shtetl
From the Back Cover
In this appealing autobiography, Rose Cohen looks back on her family's journey from Tsarist Russia to New York City's Lower East Side. Her account of their struggles and of her own coming of age in a complex new world vividly illustrates what was, for some, the American experience.