Trains and Shelters and Ships

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I must express my gratitude to a number of persons who have facilitated this paper, including nearly two hundred undergraduates, but in particular to my research associate, Mr Nicholas Evans, who has given me some new insights on particular parts of migration studies.

From the early decades of the nineteenth century there was a constant stream of movement from Europe, originally from Germany but also from many other countries. There is for example an important Institute set up to study migration from Finland, while other streams emanated from Scandinavia as well as, increasingly, from Eastern Europe and the Balkans. We are aware for example also of the importance of the Mormon records, but one of the significant streams of migrants was indeed of Mormons heading to the States. However, so long as we are aware of the importance of this non-Jewish stream of migration, it would make some sense to concentrate on the Jewish migrants. I want also to point to the initial importance of the fact that at the beginning of the process much of this migration went through Great Britain, since Britain was the home of the most important transatlantic shipping companies.

The starting point must be the individual in his original place of residence. What would be the principal reason for migration? Many would point to pogroms and persecution. Nonetheless all the evidence is that in Lithuania and its immediate neighbourhood there were no Cossack attacks and no pogroms as we would understand them. There is instead clear evidence of a steady stream of migration through Britain from Poland throughout the period 1850 to 1914. Many of these, immigrants and transmigrants, were Jews, and in the mid-1850s between 500 and a thousand Jews a year arrived via Hull alone. Poverty, disease and epidemics, the desire to go to a better place - all these are very important, and linked with those 'push' factors are a large number of 'pull' factors. Not least of them are those linked with promotional activities of locally based shipping agents and representatives. From at least the 1860s whole networks of local agents operated from most of the villages of central and northern Europe. These agents worked under the auspices of regional agents who had direct links with shipping companies such as Cunard, Allan, White Star, and the Wilsons. Undoubtedly as conditions worsened in the Pale migrants from Kovno developed links to agents in their villages just as there were in provincial Norway. Certainly from l902 onwards the traffic of Russian Jews, like that of cattle, general cargo and iron ore, were carved up between the shipping magnates who dominated the Baltic trade. The Det Forende Dampskibs Selskab of Copenhagen, Thomas Wilson and Sons of Hull, and Det Dansk Russisk Dampskibs of Copenhagen agreed to maintain regular services in the Baltic, carefully splitting the traffic between them. Between them these companies that competed for traffic out of Russia dominated the movement of migrants from the Pale to the Cape or Ellis Island. Once in England this cargo was then handed over to the transatlantic lines who would take this easily made revenue to their final destination whether it was Canada. America or South Africa. In the period 1850 till 1880 Hamburg dominated as the main port of Jewish migration out of Europe (most of its passengers travelling through Great Britain) but as the numbers leaving Europe soared other ports such as Bremen, Copenhagen, Antwerp, and Rotterdam began to secure an increasing share in this port, acting as ports where additional freight of human cargo could be picked up.

A great deal of light is thrown by the records of the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter upon much of these activities, as is done also by much contemporary anecdotage. Most of these agents were undoubtedly honest, but there were a number of rogues amongst them. Many entries in the Shelter's records illustrate individuals coming to the Shelter, proceeding to various addresses in London, and then noted as going on to America 'per Stern' or per 'Kahn' as agents. Often the registers note individuals buying their tickets in their place of origin and sometimes they add how much money had been paid for the tickets. There was one very celebrated case noted in the Minutes of the Shelter committees where five individuals had paid for their tickets in Bialystock, had come to London to collect them, only to find that the London agent claimed to know nothing about the case. The five, with the support of the Shelter authorities had gone to the Thames Justices of the Peace, but the magistrates had been unable to help. All that could be done was to give the luckless five their return fares to Russia and also to give them letters from the Chief Rabbi and others in London so that they could publicise the proceedings in newspapers in Russia and thus try and prevent others from being swindled. There are however many

anecdotes of persons in Russia being sold tickets that they thought would take them to America only to find that they were good only as far as London or some other port in the United Kingdom. Often prepaid passage tickets had been sent from America, London, or South Africa. There was a series of 'Immigrant Banks' whose services were called upon for this purpose. One print of a 'Ghetto Bank' in London displays posters on the wall advertising the Cunard, Allan, and Union Shipping companies. The overjoyed recipients of such tickets made feverish preparations to leave.

For all the first stage in the journey was the move from their homes to the port from which the migrant was shipped to his ultimate destination - be it North America, South America, South Africa or elsewhere. It was rare to have ships travelling directly across the Atlantic from Baltic ports, though for a short while there were direct sailings from Libau or Riga to North America. The so-called Volunteer Fleet did sail from there, but this was not the most common means of leaving Russia. Direct shipping from Russia to the United States was infrequent, inconvenient, and often uncomfortable. The route from Libau was for a time suspended after 1907, and the Finnish port of Hangoe took its place. A committee to look after migrants was established in the nearby city of Helsinki. But after 1909 Hangoe and the Latvian city of Riga lost their importance and Libau again became the chief port of embarkation. In 1909, 14,960 Jews sailed from Libau; in 1910, 18,815; and in 1911,17,000. The other passenger route from Russia, that from Odessa to New York, was not at all popular, even for those coming from southern Russia, and in any case it took a much longer time than the journey by way of the Baltic ports.

Where passengers left from Riga or Libau they travelled either to Hamburg or, more usually, to Great Britain. The ships used for the journey to Great Britain were not necessarily luxurious, or even necessarily built for the passenger trade. There are accounts of the use of cattle boats or even timber boats for this purpose, often carrying the normal commercial traffic as well as passengers. The conditions, especially on the cattle boats, are not comfortable reading, especially if one bears in mind that the cattle were the primary concern of their captains and that cattle need constant mucking-out, usually by water pumped over the cattle decks and often percolating over the passengers in the cramped holds below. Even where the ships were supposedly built exclusively for passengers the conditions aboard were far from satisfactory, and my research associate has discovered reports from the Hull port sanitary authorities which describe human excrement flowing down the outsides of these ships. A number of shipping companies catered for migrants coming either directly from the Baltic or on the shorter run from Hamburg or Bremen.

Even when the passengers had left Europe on the transatlantic boats conditions were far from ideal, and there are many accounts of how bad steerage conditions could be. However it must be said that the passengers were not beyond reproach, and there was a report of notices on the walls of the steerage cabin on one ship stating that 'All couples making love too warmly would be married compulsorily at New York if the authorities deemed it fit, or should be fined, or imprisoned.'

One of the further problems of the sea route was that the Russian authorities could control the flow of sea passengers, and could create financial hurdles through the issue of passports. These were not required to enter the countries of Western Europe or America but in order to leave Russia. There are accounts of how the Russian authorities would delay each stage of issuing these documents, at each stage levying an additional fee. Alternatively there are accounts of how the various agents would exploit both the Russian authorities and the migrants themselves:

It became a common practice to put a number of persons of different families on a single passport. In many cases the shipping agent pocketed the difference after charging each individual for the passport. I recall the case of six young men and women who were manifested as brothers and sisters. They looked so utterly unlike one another that our suspicions were aroused. They were all a bright group, and readily admitted that the agent had insisted on listing them as one family

The alternative to travelling by ship all the way was to use the land route through Hamburg or Bremen or through Amsterdam or Rotterdam. Many travelling by land started by having themselves smuggled across the frontier. In many cases even those who were legally entitled to leave the country almost by habit had themselves smuggled across by a local agent or even smuggler who appeared in the village

in some disguise', often that of a moujhik *who said he was going to the town on the German side to sell some goods, carried for the purpose of ensuring the success of the ruse. When several such tricks had been played on the guards, it became very risky, and often, when caught, a traveller resorted to stratagem, which is very diverting when afterwards described, but not so at a time when much depends on its success. Sometimes a paltry bribe secured one a safe passage, and often emigrants were aided by men who made it their profession to help them cross.*

Intending migrants from *Guberniya* in the south of Russia often went through Austria-Hungary, the town of Brody being one very important crossing point. One factor in the choice of these crossing points was the difference in railway gauge between the broad Russian gauge and the standard Central European one. Crossing often involved the leaving of trains on one side of the border and re-embarkation on the other. The difficulties of such movement from south Eastern Europe might perhaps also be illustrated by reference to the *füss-gayers*, the migrants from Rumania who walked in 1900 from Rumania to the North Sea coastline. Those who came from the northern Pale would usually arrive at the frontier posts set up by the German government to control the flow of migrants. At first many of the new arrivals had not been properly processed by the German authorities until they had arrived at the Charlottenberg or Ruhleben railways stations in Berlin. But as a result of the arrival of large numbers of Russian Jews there was set up in May 1891 the German Central Committee for the Russian Jews. Although Hamburg had originally been not only the chief port of embarkation but also the main processing centre this soon became impracticable. Instead the German - more accurately the Prussian - government set up a chain of control stations, some sixty in all. At Koenigsberg there was situated the Chief Border Committee with the responsibility for sifting immigrants lodging them, clothing them and looking after those who were rejected for onward movement. Elsewhere there were subordinate committees at others of the northern crossing points. In Upper Silesia there was another group of controls administered through a committee at Beuthen which was also responsible for those coming Austrian border agencies. Refugees going through Koenigsberg were provided with direct tickets for America by way of Stettin, Hamburg and Bremen. Others were routed to Hamburg for examination. So far as the German government was concerned this process had a further important aim, the provision of passengers for the Hamburg-Amerika Line. Those migrants who did not already have tickets for America but who were intending to travel there had the choice of either buying them there and then or being refused admission. Those who claimed, rightly or wrongly, that they were proceeding to Great Britain were subjected to very close questioning, while those who intended to settle elsewhere in western Europe were often refused all help. There were comments on the way that many travellers were treated:

The treatment of Russian emigrants by the Prussian authorities or the eastern border during the past weeks has been a matter of lively comment in the daily press. The real facts are the following: the German shipping companies and those associated with them have been for some time in sharp competition with the British Cunard Line. Upon the order of the Prussian government, the German shipping companies built barracks ... in which to examine the health of the emigrants. ... The use of these barracks is permitted only to those travellers who have booked with German companies. Under the circumstances, Jewish emigrants coming from Russia, Galicia and Rumania, but not possessing German steamship tickets, are urgently asked to bear in mind the acute difficulties facing them at the German border.

Many had to stay for varying lengths of time in the control stations set up at the frontiers by the two leading German shipping lines, the Hamburg-American and the Norddeutscher Lloyd. These centres were erected by the shipping firms with the consent of the German authorities to safeguard Germany's maritime interests; but to the outside world they functioned as quarantine stations. Even when they had arrived at these control stations their tribulations were not an end, for even when many of them arrived at the German border with prepaid passages purchased by their relatives in Canada and the United States the authorities and shipping companies often refused to acknowledge these payments or found some error in them. Sometimes fraudulent agents in America had swindled their clients by handing them worthless scraps or paper instead of valid tickets. The unfortunate refugees then had to return to Russia. Others arrived at the frontier with valid steamship tickets but for such lines as the Cunard, which were not licensed by the German authorities. They were likewise forbidden to continue their journey. Sometimes, local Jewish committees neglected to inform such ticket owners that they would be turned back at the border and it was only after protracted negotiations between the

Berlin Central Emigration Office and the shipping companies that the invalid tickets were exchanged for valid ones. During this interval, the travellers suffered extremely unpleasant personal experiences.

One observer commented:

People were fleeced by being forced, sometimes, to twist their intended route, for the benefit of competing steamship lines. At these control stations, where it was necessary to bathe and have the clothes disinfected, a simple fleecing device of the agents was to tell the people as they passed m their clothing for fumigation - while they went from the outer to the inner room wrapped in a sheet - to take their money in their hands as the intense heat during fumigation might destroy the bills. Thus they came to know to what extent they could bleed the immigrant.

At Hamburg the shipping companies had established enormous receiving areas. As early as 1855 the Hamburg City Council had established a Board of Emigration to try and control the transit of passengers, as against the activities of the so-called 'Litzers' who worked for the clerks of the shipping companies, for the landlords, the keepers of the stores who sold the migrants useful (and useless) utensils, and the moneychangers. When in 1881 and 1882 there was a sudden flow of Jews out of southern Russia through Brody the Jews of Hamburg, in company with many other Jewish communities, took action to assist those coming through; they founded a relief organisation which took care of the migrants from their arrival at the railway station to the departure of their ships. Another organisation was set up to deal with the migrants coming from Austro-Hungary or Rumania. By 1890 there were in Hamburg 40 lodging houses registered with a total of 1200 beds. From the time they crossed the German border to the point of embarkation German Jewish Associations, controlled and mobilised from Berlin, thus ensured that the migrants were not just passed from one Jewish welfare organisation to the next as often they were in England. That meant of course also that there was no danger that any of them would decide to stay in Germany.

In 1891 the State Authorities made a big shed available for migrants, and in addition the Hamburg Amerika Line was ordered to provide further accommodation. The city provided a site on the 'America quay' on which there were erected eight sheds, with room for 1400 persons. The migrants paid one mark a day for accommodation and food. Trains were directed straight to the sheds and those in possession of steerage tickets were not allowed to leave the train before the camp was reached. There they were medically examined and their clothing was disinfected. Some ten years later, in 1900, the Hamburg Amerika Line built a new camp nearby, with many more but smaller buildings; each with dormitories for up to 40 persons and with bathroom, toilets, and a living room. The area was divided into three areas, A for unclean, B for clean, and C which was an isolation ward. Food was prepared on the site, and we have for example, a bill of fare for one day in 1907: In the morning tea or coffee with sugar and milk and white bread; at noon soup with meat and vegetables; and in the evening tea or coffee with sugar and milk and white bread. The price for board and lodging was 2 marks a day. From Hamburg many migrants travelled direct to America, and this was one of the major sources of revenue for the German North Atlantic liners.

Many however travelled indirectly through Britain, as did many other would-be migrants from Bremen, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Antwerp. There were a number of ships that catered for the migrant traffic; at one stage the report of a House of Commons committee, commenting on the arrivals in London, stated:

The alien traffic to London is mainly carried on by four steamship lines, viz.: the 'Batavier' line from Rotterdam, the 'Argo' line from Bremen, the United Shipping Company from Libau and other Russian ports, and the 'Kirsten' line from Hamburg. A steamer of the Batavier line arrives at Gravesend every day, except Monday, at about 6 am, and discharges at Customs House Quay. The 'Argo' line has three boats a week, arriving at Gravesend at varying times and discharging at St Katherine's Dock. The 'Kirsten' Line has two boats a week, arriving on Monday nights and Friday nights and discharging at St Katherine's Dock; and the United Shipping company has one or two boats a week arriving on Mondays or Tuesdays at varying times and discharging at Hay's Wharf (south side) or at Millwall Docks. Besides these there are also boats from different ports at irregular intervals for the Albert and West India Docks, the Surrey Commercial Docks, and Tilbury Dock

In addition several other ports were major ports of entry into Great Britain, mainly Hull and Grimsby, although ports such as West Hartlepool, Leith, or Newcastle also saw such traffic. In Hull it was mainly the Wilson Line to Scandinavia and the Baltic which either on its own account or in conjunction with DFDS landed most of the migrants; in Grimsby the shipping company was largely under the control of the railway company, the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (later the Great Central Railway) transporting the migrants to Liverpool. Incidentally, It has always amused and even amazed me to hear or to read accounts of migrants arriving by boat from Europe to Liverpool, and then proceeding on to America. The only occasion when migrants did arrive at Liverpool by water was in the early days of railways when it was cheaper and more comfortable to travel from Hull to Liverpool by canal boat. In moving people from Eastern Europe to the west it was obviously quicker and cheaper to take the migrants by as short a sea voyage as practicable and then herd them over-land to Liverpool.

In 1882 there was a massive influx of refugees coming through Great Britain as part of the clearance of the Brody refugees. The Liverpool Commission, operating on behalf of the [London] Mansion House Relief Fund, was established for a short period of time in 1882 and its Report is a very full account of how these travellers were dealt with at a local level:

As early as last October, 1881, many refugees passed through Liverpool en route for America, and their wants were attended to here by the local branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association. In the spring of this year, however, the relief of the Jews in Russia was undertaken on a large scale by the London Mansion House Committee ... and a Commission of honorary officers was appointed in Liverpool ... to them was entrusted the reception and destination to Canada and America of the many thousand refugees sent to Liverpool by the Lemberg Commissioners.

To receive the refugees arriving via Hamburg, Grimsby, and West Hartlepool to Liverpool; to board and lodge them whilst in Liverpool; to destinate [sic] to such localities best suited to their individual trade and capacity; to provide them with drafts payable at destination ... and to attend to the religious supervision connected with the food in Liverpool and on the steamships, was the charge entrusted to the Liverpool Commission.

Owing to the crowded state of the emigration of Germans and Scandinavians to America great difficulty was at first experienced in securing lodgings in Liverpool for the refugees, but this difficulty was successfully overcome. The same remark also applies to the Steamship Companies, whose contracts for the carrying of continental passengers were of such dimensions, owing to the great stream of general emigration, that the Liverpool Commission had the greatest difficulty to secure room for the Jewish refugees.

The premises that were used could provide for 400 persons under cover, and the refugees came in bands of 200. The Commission provided for security of the luggage, the provision of tickets and money for the journey and subsequent activities in America. The Commission was also able to secure very favourable rates on the ships and the North American railway lines. The original fare was £4, afterwards reduced to £3. 10s, and then to £3 and eventually £2. 15s. Provision was also made to ensure that the travellers were not left on their own on arrival in America. 'Our refugees were met at the landing station and at once despatched to their final destination'. Between 27 April 1882 and 12 July over 6,000 refugees were dealt with, travelling on 31 ships in all. The total cost was just over £30,000 of which the bulk went on fares and less than a thousand on general administration.

Needless to say after the initial intense competition between the railway companies between Hull / Grimsby for the traffic to the west the trade was fixed between them and there was a sharing of traffic. A memoir by a railway superintendent reports under the year 1871:

the large flow of emigrant traffic from Scandinavia and Central Europe, to the States , by way of Hull ... reached very large proportions, and for many years was regularly divided between the respective routes from Hull and New Holland to Liverpool, by minuted arrangement (supplemental to the Humber Conference); so heavy was the traffic that the Lancashire and Yorkshire and the London and North-Western had to provide special storage rooms for emigrants' luggage at their respective stations at Liverpool, to meet this occasional glut of traffic. Interpreters had to accompany the trains, as English was quite unknown to this class of traveller. The fares, at one time, from Hull to Liverpool were very good; but gradually owing to long sea competition, this cross-England traffic could only be retained by still reduced charges, and when divided between the Cheshire Lines new route, the Lancashire and Yorkshire, and the London and North-Western, the traffic became almost valueless.

A little later, in the same volume of Memoirs, under the year 1890, the author wrote about the secretary of the 'Joint Conference' which dealt with the conveyance of the Norwegian and Baltic emigration parties to America, using the port of Hull:

His duty, carried out with perfect impartiality, being to allot as equally as possible the shipment of these emigrants arriving in the Humber by the various routes available across to Liverpool. At one time the flow of this emigrant traffic from the north of Europe to Hull, thence cross England to Liverpool, and so to the United States, was very large, and the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company had extensive barrack waiting rooms at Tithebarn Street Station for the accommodation of the emigrants who came over in the through trains from Hull; but latterly the establishment of steamers making the voyage throughout from Scandinavia to the American ports, has consequently reduced this flow of traffic.

In 1894 he again reported that the rivalry of Southampton with Liverpool for the American traffic had been developing during the year. Whereas earlier the main task of the Railway Companies' agent had been so to arrange the traffic as to distribute the passengers according to the agreed proportions. Later there were transhipments from Hull or Grimsby to Southampton, so that Liverpool had to struggle for its share of the trade.

Unexpectedly the news came that one of these boatloads was destined no longer from Hull to Liverpool but for the Inman steamers to Southampton; and Mr Davis [the agent] found himself requisitioned to arrange their transit from Hull by railway through London and then to Southampton - services and routes not contemplated by the old Humber arrangement, and in direct competition with the majority of companies working in friendly alliance over the routes to Liverpool

As part of their reaction and in order to maintain the port's share of the Atlantic traffic the authorities at Liverpool had to remove the 'bar' at the mouth of the Mersey and the railway companies had to establish a line which would allow the passenger trains to cross the city and use as their terminus a station at the pierhead, alongside the landing stage.

It is interesting however that once the full flow of Jews out of Russia began in real earnest the railway companies were once again extremely active, and my research associate is at present establishing the various methods by which the companies secured a strong, almost stranglehold on the cross-country traffic to Liverpool. The flow of the traffic through Hull was of almost staggering proportions. In 1896 nearly 20,000 passengers passed through en route for Liverpool, London, Glasgow, or Southampton, and although there were temporary blips in 1897 and 1898 the figures grew steadily until they reached a peak of nearly 70,000 in 1903. There were further blips in the next few years but in 1907 nearly 80,000 arrived in Hull.

Aliens leaving Great Britain, 1896 -1910

Emigrants transported from Hull by the North eastern Railway

	Liv'pool	London	Glasgow	So'ton	TOTAL		Tot Hull
1896	17573	514	847	1055	19989		23559
1897	12462	263	619	1031	14375		17218
1898	14080	79	510	699	15368		17028
1899	21331	298	913	2441	24983		29962
1900	31411	416	1959	2766	36552		45548
1901	37007	73	1041	2106	40227		44748
1902	61261	438	2056	3361	67116		68544
1903	63702	438	1888	3406	69434		71391
1904	41288	93	869	1218	43468		51018
1905	49620	34	1928	1652	53234		66719
1906	57953	20	6394	1552	65919		92102
1907	65641	48	9410	3490	78589		99657
1908	19051	32	1107	2619	22809		36325
1909	36970	289	1811	5726	44787		58088
1910	46916	86	2571	4779	54352		68969

The figures for the total of migrants through the Humber ports is impressive.

	GRIMSBY	HULL
1884	3769	31039
1885	10000	31420
1886	6313	43525
1887	6315	62752
1888	8601	75578
1889	6600	58076
1890	10106	56139
1891	N.A	63869
1892	N.A	60508
1893	N.A	46553
1894	7880	19309
1895	9564	23786
1896	9564	23559
1897	32027	17218
1898	12210	17028
1899	35392	29962
1900	41212	45548
1901	43945	44748
1902	34885	68544
1903	33971	71391
1904	41120	51018
1905	N.A	66719
1906	38004	92102
1907	33515	99657
1908	21183	36325
1909	31355	99657
1910	33588	68969
1911	21057	38376
1912	23983	51211
1913	33658	65259
1914	N.A	25507
	590772	1543783

In other words, if some allowance is made for the missing years, over a period of thirty years nearly 3 million migrants passed through the Humber ports Many of them went through Liverpool reaching a height of over 65,000 in 1907. A few went to London but Glasgow became temporarily important while Southampton was becoming equally significant as a UK destination, so that the trade was becoming less concentrated on Liverpool.

To cope with these passengers the Railway Companies had to establish not merely waiting rooms but special facilities for the needs of their Jewish passengers. It should also be pointed out however that by no means all of the passengers who arrived at Hull or Grimsby were intending immediately (even if at all) to travel to America. Many of them moved onto to such other places as Leeds or Manchester, and there they were caught up in the pattern of support to the recently arrived poor, arrangements which at various places went under the title of Shelter.

In looking at the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter in London due attention must be paid to the appearance of parallel, or apparently parallel organisations elsewhere, both in Great Britain and abroad. In virtually every community in Britain, where it was possible to find a number of poor Jews who had recently arrived or who were (it was hoped) in transit, there was some organisation set up to help the stranger poor. Often enough its basis was to encourage the movement of such strangers onward to some other community; it was rare for example to find the quasi-official Jewish Board of Guardians being willing to take on such responsibilities lest it be thought that they were encouraging the arrival of such immigrants. In London, for example, there was a ruling that the Board of Guardians would not look at any applicant who had not been resident in the country for at least six months unless the application was for money to enable an immediate return back to the country of origin. Other communities applied such rules in practice if not in theory. On the other hand, there was a long-standing religious tradition of help to strangers in transit, and so there is a chain of assistance which in some places went under the 'formal' title of Shelter. Jewish organisations existed in a number of places such as Brighton, Cardiff, Grimsby, Hull, Leith and Edinburgh, Newcastle, and Southampton. Again, my research associate has recently discovered a number of provincial institutions in Great Britain which adopted the title of 'Shelter' - Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester. On the continent as well there was in Paris, for example, an '*asyle*', while in Rotterdam the Montefiore Vereinigen was available above all to act as a channel through which transients could be assisted on to a further destination. There were also various Hilfsverein in Vienna and in Berlin. The scale of these operations varied enormously, just as a need for them varied. One of the problems common to most ports of entry was the presence of various crooks and confidence tricksters who attempted to exploit the bewildered new-arrivals. In Grimsby however the railway company itself controlled its migrants from ship to train. Equally in Hull there was no desire to have a formal shelter since that might well have impeded the onward movement of Jews, and all involved wished to see onward movement as rapidly as possible.

What however marks out the institution which developed in London, The Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter, is the scale of its operations and the particular role it developed in the whole pattern of migration, usually affecting Jews but also on many occasions involving non-Jews as well. What also marks out the London Shelter is the important part it plays in the migration of east European Jews to South Africa, and the closeness of its links with various shipping companies, above all with the Castle and Union lines, amalgamated eventually into the Union Castle shipping company. Its operations throw considerable light upon the activities of other companies as well, as well as the part it played in the movement of transmigrants after the passage of the Aliens Act of 1905. The institution took its origins from the informal activities of a Jewish baker in the East End, one Simcha Cohen or Becker, who made the back of his bakery available for numbers of destitute foreigners. These activities became known more widely within the community, and eventually a group of communal leaders had the 'institution' closed down, officially because of its unhygenic nature. The resulting uproar led to the establishment of a formally constituted Shelter designed to give assistance to these transient migrants but operating within very narrowly confined rules. Its original constitution laid down that it was to offer not more than fourteen nights shelter, and that it was not intended to act as a source for cheap labour, and its public notices insisted that it was not intended to act as a magnet for an increased migration from eastern Europe. At the same time it also pointed out that it was in part intended to remove the various criminal elements which were preying upon the new arrivals by providing some sort of point of reference and by giving them a short respite in order to find their feet. From the

beginning its protagonists insisted that many of those using its services were in fact intending to proceed onwards, usually overseas, and that many of those who came, who found themselves unable to proceed further had been encouraged to return to their original homes.

The formal Minutes of the Executive and General committees for the early years are extremely enlightening. There was from the beginning a fear that the mere existence of the Shelter would in itself attract migrants to London. There was also a continuing realisation that there were many potential dangers facing the new arrivals. Immigrants were entrapped by so-called porters who would fleece them under the guise of buying unnecessary railway tickets for them or by directing them to unscrupulous lodging house keepers who would then dump them onto the street after the migrants had been left penniless. It was suggested that someone in authority who could speak German (or Yiddish) should be present at every disembarkation. Placards with instructions in Juedisch Deutsch to be posted on wharves and on the ship conveying immigrants from the principal foreign ports

The activities of the Shelter met these problems which however continued to have attention drawn to them. As late as the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration many witnesses still commented on them. But the Shelter found itself having to deal with a variety of issues concerning the misfortunes of migrants, including the ill-treatment of persons returning from New York and shipped by New York charities as cattle-men, for cheapness sake, aboard various cattle boats, as well as missing luggage. It would appear however that the Shelter took on a new way of life as a consequence of a decision by the Committee in February 1893 ‘steps be taken to obtain agencies to such steamship companies as would facilitate the booking of immigrants at the institution’, a step confirmed in September in that year. I would suggest that it was this decision which transformed the Shelter. Not only numbers increased but its whole organisation developed and became much more sophisticated. Arrangements were made to receive lists of passengers on their arrival at Gravesend so that proper and prior arrangements could be made for their reception in Leman Street. Some of the passengers who arrived at Hull or Grimsby made their way to London and the Shelter, and the port authorities and railway companies in both Hull and Grimsby were persuaded similarly to give due notice to the Shelter.

It was however shortly after the passage of those resolutions by the Committee in 1893 that the first signs appeared of a close link between the Shelter and Donald Currie, the general manager of the Castle Shipping Line, as well as with the parallel Union Line, and there can be seen the growth of a substantial traffic to South Africa. This certainly developed rapidly from 1893 to 1896, and a considerable increase in the numbers passing through the Shelter was almost entirely due to the appearance of passengers going to Africa. This rapidly became a flood, and in itself led to the decision in 1896 to open the series of registers on which I and my students have been so busy over the past years.

Before I go on to discuss this migration to South Africa in greater depth I would like to draw attention to the series of registers on which we are now working. We started originally on a series of thirteen volumes which more or less cover the period from 29th May 1896 till the outbreak of the first World War; there are gaps, so that there is no point in asking us about arrivals before May 1896, between 24 June 1905 and 28 November 1907, or between 28 November 1911 and 30th July 1913. Broadly speaking this section of the work has been completed. But in addition there are five volumes, supplementary registers, which cover various dates between 1st November 1897 and 24th February 1903. In some respects these are very much fuller than the main registers, containing many more names, often giving first names rather than initials, even giving places of birth which seem to be the localities in detail rather than merely the Guberniya. Virtually all those in the Main volumes are also in these supplementary ones, but there are clearly large numbers - sometimes three times as many in any month - who are not included. Many of these additional names are listed as going to a variety of London addresses or else as going to America and listing a number of agents in London presumably from whom the tickets were to be collected. We have to begin a policy of analysis of the addresses to which these migrants go; many of them go to a small number of addresses which might perhaps be either registered lodging houses or else ticket agencies. Elsewhere in the Shelter records is another register beginning in 1906, but probably the continuation of a lost volume, noting persons who had deposited money in the Shelter, who had acquired tickets thorough the Shelter and were proceeding on to America. These registers give a number of indications of how the Shelter was doing its work. At the same time it must be emphasised that these volumes were not designed to be of direct assistance to genealogists one hundred years later. Their main purpose was to keep check on how effectively the

Shelter was sending in its bills to the various shipping companies and allowing both the shipping companies and the Shelter itself to match numbers of passengers with the shipping companies' own records. Thus there is often a note that a number of passengers were 'met and seen off only': they did not stay in the Shelter; there was no need to note their nights in the Shelter; and so their names do not appear. The only reason why the supplementary registers appear is I think because the Shelter was bound to ensure that all those 'released' to the Shelter had a proper address to go to or else to make its own accommodation available.

At all times the Shelter was concerned for the welfare of the migrants, trying to ensure that passengers were not merely 'dumped' in London by their shipping companies. The secretary wrote to one company for example about passengers arriving from Riga without anybody meeting them when disembarking. '[last summer] you were good enough to give us permission to send our officers on board your ships to give your passengers the same protection and advice as given to all other new arrivals.' The secretary wrote to another company:

May I respectfully suggest that you instruct your agents abroad to send their advises to us as well as to you when your passengers leave the Continent, so that we may be able to await them on their arrival without any possibility of losing any of them. I may mention that Messrs Donald Currie have such arrangements with their Continental agents which have been working most satisfactorily for the past 15 years. I am enclosing herewith copy of Messrs Donald Currie and Cos agents advice, above mentioned which we usually receive a day or two before the arrival of the passengers.

It would remain true however that the mainspring of the Shelter's activities had increasingly become its links with this particular and even peculiar migration to South Africa. It was certainly peculiar in terms of eastern Europe. We have reports from the Jewish Colonisation Association, ICA, which in discussing population movements in the Pale of Settlement draw attention to the surprising feature of two provinces in the north east that only from there is there a desire to go to South Africa. We know that virtually all of the movement to South Africa through the Shelter is from Lithuania and indeed within that area overwhelmingly from Kovno. There is a strong argument that this represents what I would describe as the Uncle Haimie syndrome, the chain reaction, that persons go out to join their relations and friends who have already gone and done well for themselves. While I would not deny that this has a degree of strength there are also other factors attracting people to go to South Africa. When we see notices in the Hebrew press put in by local representatives of the Union and Castle Lines advertising the services of those shipping lines the question must arise as to how far the demand for shipping to Africa might have been created by these agents and resulted from a shipping surplus having come into existence. The existence of an agreement between the various Baltic shipping firms and agents on the one hand and Donald Currie and Co on the other indicates a close connection. Some details of how these companies operated together are now available. My associate's analysis of the Wilson line illustrates the part it played in the trade. Taking one voyage as an example, he has been able to analyse the log book of one of the line's ships, the SS Romeo. On one voyage the ship loaded 41 emigrant passengers (of whom 26 were adults, 9 children, and 6 infants), 20 tons of pork, and 35 horses and left Libau on 19th August 1909. When the ship arrived at Gravesend it would have been subject to medical inspection - no longer than two and a half hours, and arrived at Hay's Wharf London at 5.30 pm on 23rd August. Twenty eight of those passengers appeared at the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter where they stayed for 3 days, to depart on 26th August for South Africa on the Union Castle Line ship Tintagel Castle. The overall figures coming from the Wilson Company records indicate how closely linked the fortunes of Currie's shipping companies and the 'feeder' companies in the Baltic.

I would now produce as a tentative conclusion that many of the migrants bought as a single package a ticket from Lithuania to South Africa by way of London, and that an essential part of that package was an arrangement between the Shelter and Donald Currie that the Shelter would meet these migrants at the London docks, look after them while in London, and then see them off onto their boats. We certainly know that the Shelter charged Currie a standing fee of five shillings (twenty-five pence) a head to meet and see off as well as one shilling and sixpence a night (seven and a half pence) for food and accommodation. Further indications can be found in references to passengers arriving in Southampton and having been put into accommodation there at the Shelter's expense - 'no voucher for board or lodging was brought by this passenger'; other references are to passengers arriving and presenting vouchers issued by Knie, Falk and Company, one of the forwarding shipping agents in

Libau. Other agents in the Baltic included Helmsing and Grimm (at least since 1884). This firm not only acted as agents for Wilson and the United Shipping Company but also` owned and operated ships on its own account. Further signs that a very close relationship had been developed between the company and the Shelter came in 1906 when the Shelter embarked on a substantial programme of rebuilding and refurbishment and had no hesitation in approaching Donald Currie and Company which had promised help:

May we hope that Messrs Donald Currie and Co will take into consideration the good work we have done in connection with the South Africa emigration and furnish us with the promised donation.

The donation duly arrived. Further proof of the availability of through packages and of the closeness of the links between the Shelter and Currie and company is afforded by the events of 1903 when the Cape Government tried to impose restrictions on immigration of East European Jews by insisting that all entrants had to be literate in a European language. Either this was imposed at very short notice or else Currie and Company had been ignoring warnings, for all of a sudden the Registers list numbers of would-be travellers who had reached the Shelter but were unable to proceed further. The Shelter notes not only that they had been unable to proceed but also that their fares had had to be refunded to them. It is a clear indication of how far Currie had come to depend on these travellers.

It would be wrong to conclude however either that all those who came to the Shelter and then went on to Africa all came on what might be described as a package tour; we know of a large number of complaints from several agents and money-changers that the Shelter was behaving unfairly to them. The Shelter was denying them access to potential travellers, and instead was not only insisting on buying the tickets for its inmates but on returning to the individual purchaser all commission and fees paid over by the shipping companies. One name which appears many times in this connection was Haimsohn of Whitechapel who complained that he had been prevented from serving the travellers for the benefit of himself and his brother in Johannesburg. On one occasion he even sent another brother, the Revd Haimson, to make representations on his behalf. The weight and frequency of these complaints testify to the profits which were open to these agencies and above all the importance of the Shelter having taken on board the role of a shipping agency.

Another factor in assessing the significance of the Shelter in the migration to Africa is that of all those aliens who are recorded as having gone to Africa the majority never passed through the Shelter's records. It would be interesting to examine the passenger manifests of those ships which called in to Cape Town and analyse them in the same way as we have been analysing the Registers of the Shelter itself.

The influx of foreign migrants, the public reactions, and the passage of the Aliens Act made a great difference to the way in which aliens were treated and processed. While there were supposedly restrictions placed upon those intending to settle transmigrants were affected only marginally. The shipping companies were given the responsibility of ensuring that those allowed into the country went on to their declared destinations; as an inducement the companies had to deposit a bond guaranteeing performance. The Shelter took a prominent part in making these arrangements on behalf of the various shipping companies and indeed took the opportunity of extending its activities after the passage of the Act. In 1906, shortly after the Act came into operation, the secretary of the Shelter wrote to a number of the North Atlantic shipping companies offering the services of the Shelter to meet and see off their passengers under the Act in the same way as the Shelter had been doing for the previous thirteen years on behalf of the (by-now united) Union Castle Line.

Perhaps I may be permitted to say that the Institution on whose behalf I am now writing is entirely a philanthropic organisation whose object is and has been for the last twenty-two years to look after and protect the interests of the large number of continental Jewish transmigrants who annually pass through this country for the United States, Canada, Argentina, South Africa and all parts of the world. Our officers meet all boats arriving in any part of the docks in London and we have also made arrangements whereby we are advised of the arrival of travellers at the various railway stations. For the reception of such, we have just built a new and commodious building registered by the London County Council complete with every sanitary detail, lavatories, bathrooms, disinfecting chambers etc. I may perhaps be permitted to add that although the Institution is mainly intended for Jewish transmigrants we make no distinction in the matter of creeds.

Our officers sometimes find that transmigrants holding your tickets are not met on arrival and are left to make the best arrangements they can for getting from here to the port of departure. In cases even where an agent is employed the charges entailed on the transmigrants are considerable and often they are housed temporarily under conditions which have aroused the resentments of the local sanitary authorities. If any confirmation be required of these statements may we ask you to write to the sanitary authorities in question. the London County Council and the Stepney Borough Council. For many years we have acted as the receiving institution of the Union-Castle Line, meeting their passengers. housing and feeding them till the time comes for them to leave when we see them off either at the steamer at Blackwall or at Waterloo, our representative at Southampton conducting them to the steamer. For the sake of the poor transmigrants and in their interests alone - we are not a business organisation - we ask you to enter into a similar arrangement with us, whereby we shall be authorised to take charge of the passengers holding your tickets with a view of either housing them here till your boat is ready to sail, with a due observance of their religious susceptibilities or sending them on at once to your Liverpool boarding house. The charge we would make would be no more than the actual cost entailed on the Institution.

A further indication of the work which the Shelter intended to undertake is the agreement recorded in the Minutes with the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company which proposed to take passengers to Argentina and Brazil. The Shelter had offered to take over the responsibility for that Company's transmigrants. It was informed that if it wanted to assume responsibility in cases of such transmigrants it would be necessary for the Shelter to apply to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company for authorisation under their bond to take charge of them. Three weeks later the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company replied that they were willing for the Shelter to take charge of transmigrants released by the Immigration authorities under the Company's bond, subject to the Shelter agreeing to become responsible to the company for every such transmigrant who might escape from the Institution. The secretary wrote to Royal Mail:

I have been instructed to say that they are quite prepared to indemnify you against any loss in connection with transmigrants that will be released by the Immigration authorities to this Institution under your bond. Care will be taken that such persons should either proceed to their destination or go back to the country from whence they came.

In the course of its activities the Shelter acquired a great deal of expertise in handling large numbers of transmigrants. In 1910 there was an influx of some 11,000 transmigrants belonging to the Thomson Line, and the Shelter was asked to cope with them since no-one else seemed to be able to cope with them. The Jews and some non-Jews were accommodated at the Shelter whilst the bulk of the others were boarded out in registered lodging houses in the neighbourhood. It was not really satisfactory since the lodging houses could not cope. There was also always the chance of a disaster hitting the Shelter. There was the occasion when the Shelter had dealt with a large number of these transmigrants and had seen them off on the Cairnrona. Unfortunately the ship caught fire off the port of Dover, so that all the passengers had to be taken off with only the clothes they were wearing; they were all sent back to the Shelter which had with very little notice find accommodation for them and make arrangements to send them once more on their travels. It was agreed that whilst in future the shelter officials at the docks would offer gratuitously assistance at the docks but would have no further responsibility. It was eventually also agreed that there was to be no arrangement with any shipping company to house or be responsible for any non-Jewish transmigrants unless the accommodation in the Shelter was not being fully utilised. It was agreed however that such a resolution was not to apply to Union Castle passengers.

As you can gather we have been doing a great deal of work on migration studies and South African migration in particular. We are certainly coming to the point where we will need to reassess where we are going. On the one hand, we have a possible opportunity of looking at the migration to South Africa, and in particular pay more attention to those who did not go through the Shelter. We have the details of those ships that called into Cape Town and deposited passengers, and we can trace the names of those passengers through the various manifests still preserved in the Public Record Office. It will involve the copying of the manifests, transcription of the names on them, checking against the various Shelter Registers, and the creation of a further database. It will involve money and it will involve not merely a team of volunteers to do the work as well as a strong direction.

It is important to have a complete picture of migration. Let me add for example that I have said nothing at all about the impact of this migration upon the countries of settlement. We are hardly likely here at this meeting to be in danger of forgetting that Great Britain was one of those countries, but this paper has not touched upon the ways in which for example the channel of transmigration between the

Humber and Mersey impacted upon the growth of Jewish communities along that line, the result of transmigrants who decided not to be transients any longer. Nor have we examined the reactions in the United States, in South America, or in South Africa, the ways in which in each of these areas there had to be established a series of institutions designed to assist the plight of the travellers, to persuade them to go on from wherever they had landed - be it New York, Cape Town or Buenos Aires. The knowledge of what sort of reception waited them was obviously one factor determining the decisions by the inhabitants of the Pale as to whether they should go on or stay; the placards which every such country of destination caused to be placed in the Pale warning people not to come to them was clearly one factor of consequence. Nonetheless millions did decide to make those journeys.

While we here have a particular interest in the migration of Jews it is important that we put it into a proper context, that we understand how the whole machinery of transportation came into existence not just for Jews but for a world-wide pattern of movement. One factor that must be taken into consideration is that of the transport revolution developing during the course of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the extension of the railway system through Europe and above through and into eastern Europe, facilitated the movement of large numbers of migrants. The existence of a railway line through to the North Sea is a vital aspect of these years. At the same time the development of the large ocean-going steamers made the steerage crossing to America or South Africa merely unpleasant as distinct from almost impossible, while the competition between the various companies for what could be a very lucrative trade - even at the bottom end of the market - brought such a passage into the realms of the possible. A time developed what in effect appeared was a close linkage between the railway companies and the shipping companies so as to create what could be regarded in effect as a direct line to America, whether it was from Germany or through the cheaper and not less convenient route through Great Britain. This ease of transport must be considered amongst the ‘pull’ factors behind migration as much as the existence (or fear) of pogroms and poverty are rightly placed among the ‘push’ factors involved. Such ease of movement was facilitated when Liverpool followed Hamburg in allowing railway lines onto the dockside, and when Hull followed suit in opening its own riverside quay. At that stage, if I may quote my research associate, the boats became trains on water linking the ghetto with New York, Kovno with Johannesburg.

Arrival of Alien Immigrants into Britain 1888-1905

Year	Lond.	Grims	Hull	Hart'l	Tyne	Leith	Newh'n	Dover	So'ton	Ha'ich	Other	Total
1888	10953	0	215	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11168
1889	9846	0	364	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10210
1890	12618	0	1129	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9444	23191
1891	15291	2222	1632	754	2748	1373	0	0	0	0	301	24321
1892	10954	1970	2084	578	1732	1472	0	0	0	0	3347	22137
1893	11505	2119	2759	309	1917	1606	7457	0	0	0	3384	31056
1894	11044	1201	2662	284	1648	2234	6616	0	0	0	2993	28682
1895	13413	1478	2289	454	1513	2134	6766	0	0	0	2480	30527
1896	16208	1665	2379	613	1552	1810	7599	0	0	0	2621	34447
1897	19696	1604	2236	656	1736	1742	8365	0	0	0	2816	38851
1898	21161	2144	2407	714	1659	1861	7903	0	0	0	2936	40785
1899	24589	5295	2518	106	2106	1895	9891	0	0	0	4484	50884
1900	30593	6862	3508	131	2190	1745	12945	1935	0	1402	1194	62505
1901	27070	4722	2576	131	2010	2173	12552	2306	0	327	1557	55424
1902	33046	6777	2540	150	1976	2146	14664	2450	0	498	2223	66470
1903	36374	5337	2991	114	2048	2190	13981	2043	1857	574	1649	69158
1904	47536	8404	3807	90	2037	2272	14480	14480	1567	686	1633	599816
1905	41577	7369	4009	146	1911	2394	13285	1202	393	474	1626	76291

Arrival of Alien Transmigrants into Britain 1888-1905

Year	Lond.	Grims	Hull	Hart'l	Tyne	Leith	Newh'n	Dover	So'ton	Ha'ich	Other	Total
1888	0	0	62901	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62901
1889	0	0	41593	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41593
1890	0	0	47027	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	47027
1891	16	0	62923	0	0	1373	0	0	0	0	35766	98705
1892	0	0	60235	0	0	1472	0	0	0	0	33566	93801
1893	205	17927	50435	393	525	1606	8488	0	0	0	1545	79518
1894	310	7880	16685	2342	68	2234	5379	1	0	0	2847	35512
1895	141	9564	23376	2019	355	2134	4694	0	0	0	4488	44637
1896	338	10519	22207	1123	673	1810	1343	0	0	0	3833	40036
1897	77	6544	16402	1179	934	1742	612	0	0	0	3473	19221
1898	334	8097	17331	675	1446	1861	896	31	0	0	3367	32177
1899	6	10792	30699	4	2998	1895	1140	0	0	0	4308	49947
1900	5	15288	42931	6	2942	1745	2224	0	0	0	100	63496
1901	4	19148	44898	3	2841	2173	2341	152	0	8465	1288	79140
1902	14	23973	70082	2	4017	2146	3726	11	0	10184	3469	115478
1903	18	27427	73771	2	6097	2190	3890	35	0	9489	339	124591
1904	2005	31372	50927	3	3016	2272	2699	78	0	6272	242	99278
1905	97	22025	61760	29	3648	2394	4974	131	4	8209	235	108408

It should be noted that the statistics are insufficiently clear as to the distinctions between those stated as 'immigrants' and 'transmigrants'.