
CHAPTER 1

Origins

The first large-scale pogroms broke out ostensibly as a reaction to the assassination of Czar Alexander II on March 13, 1881. They began at Easter and continued into the summer. In a hundred localities throughout the southern provinces of Russia, the scene was always the same. At first, rumors and threats were circulated. Then the Jewish quarter was invaded by laborers supported by peasants. Houses were destroyed, sacked, and burned. The Jews were savagely beaten, many being wounded or killed. The police and the troops, who were called out too late, were passive when they arrived on the scene. The Russian government did nothing to assure the Jews that more devastating pogroms would not follow. On the contrary, it encouraged any development that would cause its Jews to emigrate. "A veritable panic seized the Jews of southern Russia."¹ By the end of the summer of 1881, thousands of Jews were fleeing westward across the Russian border. The May Laws of 1882, which prevented the Jews, with minor exceptions, from living on the land, further accelerated the pace of emigration.

During the preceding decade, Jews had been emigrating from Russia at a slow but steady rate. A small number had settled in Germany, but the majority, about four thousand annually, had chosen the United States as their final destination. That was the beginning of the third wave of Jewish immigration to America, following the early Spanish-Portuguese and the more recent German immigration.²

The vast majority of the Russian-Jewish immigrants settled in the northeastern port cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, and

GALVESTON: ELLIS ISLAND OF THE WEST

New York, notably the latter. In these cities, especially in New York, the Jewish immigrants crowded into slums, which were soon labeled ghettos. The German Jews, many of whom were by this time well established and "Americanized," were dismayed and not a little embarrassed by the spectacle of their Russian coreligionists living in squalor. By the end of 1881, a Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society (not to be confused with the later Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) was organized, seeing as its chief task the dispersion or "removal" of Jewish immigrants from the northeastern slums to the rural areas of the country. Its endeavors in this direction were taken over at the end of the following year by the United Hebrew Charities, which succeeded in dispersing 3,440 immigrants by 1889. This organization, which had been founded in 1874 as a union of five New York City charitable associations, had no intention, however, of letting its resources become overtaxed by a multitude of unemployed persons. Between 1882 and 1889, the United Hebrew Charities returned 7,534 unemployed immigrants to Europe.³ In fact, from 1870 to 1891, when America as a whole was pro-immigrant, organized American Jewry was restrictionist in its approach.⁴ There was still hope that the Russian government could be moved to alter its anti-Jewish policy and that large-scale emigration could be avoided.

In 1891, a new wave of pogroms, combined with the expulsion of thousands of Jews from Moscow, Kiev, and other cities of the Russian interior, convinced world Jewry that the only solution to Russian Jewry lay in emigration. In that year, the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA) was founded in London. Capitalized at \$10 million, all of which was contributed by Baron Maurice de Hirsch (1831-1896), a German Jew, the ICA remained for a long time the world's greatest Jewish philanthropic organization. Meeting annually in Paris, its governing board assisted and promoted Jewish migration from countries where they were being oppressed to territories promising opportunity, notably Argentina. At the same time, recognizing that the main stream of Jewish migration was to North America, Baron de Hirsch contributed two and a half million dollars to set up a special fund in New York, known as the Baron de Hirsch Fund, to aid in the settling of Jewish immigrants throughout the United States. Its trustees were chosen from among the lay leaders of American Jewry, including such personalities as Oscar S. Straus, Myer S. Isaacs, Mayer Sulzberger and, most important, Jacob H. Schiff, the leading American Jewish philanthropist of the time (perhaps, of all times).

ORIGINS

If the Baron de Hirsch institutions throughout the world could be said to share a specific ideology, that ideology would be the dispersion of the Jews and the encouragement to settle on the land. Accordingly, the Jewish Colonization Association and the Baron de Hirsch Fund joined together in 1900 to establish a credit institution for the establishment and maintenance of agricultural and industrial homesteads, known as the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society.⁵

Apart from the creation of rural settlements, the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, with the help of the ICA, created a separate organization whose job it was to remove Jewish immigrants on an individual basis to small urban centers throughout the United States. The new organization, founded in 1901, was called the Industrial Removal Office. Based in New York, with numerous committees extending throughout the South and West—usually organized by local B'nai B'rith Lodges—the Industrial Removal Office acted as a sort of nonprofit employment agency. The local committees usually committed themselves to accept a certain number of immigrants per month and would constantly keep the main branch informed as to what jobs were available in their cities and towns. The New York office placed advertisements in the Yiddish newspapers encouraging men with the called-for skills to apply at the office for placement.

The Industrial Removal Office operated until 1922 and distributed 79,000 immigrants. (This figure includes 5,000 removed by the Philadelphia and Boston branches.)

On the basis of an immigration of one and one-half million Jews in the United States between 1901 and 1913, and a distribution—direct and indirect—of 100,000, it appears that the Industrial Removal Office removed between six percent and seven percent of the total number of arrivals. The hope of the Industrial Removal Office that every family removed would attract others appears to have been substantially realized.⁶

A major reason for its success lay in the ability and devotion of David M. Bressler, a young lawyer, who became its general manager in 1903 and remained in that position until his resignation in 1916, when the war had greatly reduced the flow of immigrants. As we shall see, Bressler was equally active in the workings of the Galveston Movement. In fact, the *modus operandi* of the Galveston Movement was patterned after that of the Industrial Removal Office, and its

GALVESTON: ELLIS ISLAND OF THE WEST

success was dependent, to a large extent, upon the cooperation of that organization.

The official United States government attitude was highly favorable to the removal idea. Commissioner-General of Immigration Franklin Pierce Sargent, in his annual report of 1903, declared that removal was much more important than anything concerning immigration actually provided by law, since it prevented the creation of "immigrant colonies." Furthermore, two government bodies similar in function to the Industrial Removal Office were formed. These were the National Labor Bureau of New York and the Division of Information of the Department of Commerce and Labor. It soon became clear, however, that the vast majority of Jews who came to New York City would never leave. Indeed, the Ellis Island Experiment, a project undertaken by the Industrial Removal Office to convince immigrants while still at the immigration station not to settle in New York, lasted only from 1902 to 1904 and was a self-acknowledged failure.

In 1903 and 1904 new pogroms broke out in Russia, even more vicious than those which had taken place before. It appeared imperative to American Jewish leaders that something be done to distribute the Russian-Jewish refugees throughout the United States. With each passing year, Congress came closer and closer to passing a bill restricting immigration. The arguments used by the restrictionists included charges that the northeastern ghettos were hotbeds of disease, sedition, and moral depravity. A book issued in 1907 by the National Liberal Immigration League, which opposed the restrictionists, pointed out that "artificial distribution is of itself one of the strongest advocates of unrestricted immigration and will continue to be so as long as it is effective."⁷ It was feared, however, that artificial distribution, or "removal," as it was known, was not effective enough to forestall the restrictionists, for the vast majority of Jewish immigrants remained in the ghettos of New York in spite of the efforts aimed at their "removal." There seemed only one way to change this: to prevent the immigrants from reaching Ellis Island by rerouting them to immigration stations in other areas of the country. The first suggestion that this be done came from Jacob H. Schiff, the universally acknowledged philanthropic leader of American Jewry.

The problem of spreading the immigrants throughout America had concerned Mr. Schiff for quite some time. As early as 1891, Schiff, in reply to a request from Baron de Hirsch to investigate conditions in Mexico, said that while he would be happy to do so,

“in the last analysis the United States remains the best field for colonization . . . especially in the states west of the Rocky Mountains. What we are now doing is [trying] to induce those who are already here to relieve the tremendous congestion in the seaboard cities.”⁸ Schiff was a founder of the Industrial Removal Office in 1901 and remained one of its staunchest supporters. By the end of 1904, however, he had reached the conclusion that only by rerouting immigration could immigrants be induced to settle in cities other than New York.

On December 28, 1904, Jacob H. Schiff wrote a letter to Dr. Paul Nathan, secretary of the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden*. In this letter, Schiff wrote:

I suggest to you the following suitable ports, to which part of the emigration could be advantageously directed: Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah, and Galveston; also Montreal.⁹

His reason for addressing the letter to the *Hilfsverein* was that most Russian Jews who emigrated did so through the German ports of Hamburg and Bremen. (Schiff's attempt of July 1904, to relieve congestion there by helping to establish a direct shipping line to New York from the Latvian port of Lebau had failed.) Thus, the cooperation of the *Hilfsverein*, which was the all-encompassing German-Jewish relief organization, was essential to the success of any venture to channel Jewish immigration.

The German Jews, for their part, were all too anxious to facilitate emigration of the destitute Russian refugees who were flocking to their ports. In July 1905, the Hamburg branch of the *Hilfsverein* came up with a plan, which it presented to the Industrial Removal Office. It proposed that the Industrial Removal Office cooperate by giving the *Hilfsverein* regular and reliable information as to the industrial situation all over the United States in order that those whose transportation expenses they assisted might be forwarded to the interior rather than to New York. The Industrial Removal Office rejected this proposal as being likely to create the impression among United States immigration authorities that these immigrants were “assisted” and, therefore, illegal.¹⁰ No action was taken during 1905 concerning any plan to divert immigration from New York. At this time, however, unrelated events in Switzerland were working to create an organization which would eventually deal with this problem.

The Seventh Zionist Congress meeting in Basle from July 27 to August 2, 1905, was the first which took place without the presence of its great leader, Dr. Theodor Herzl, who had died during the previous year. The 1905 Congress marked the climax of a stormy debate on the issue of whether to accept the British offer of a territory in East Africa, commonly referred to, somewhat inaccurately, as the Uganda scheme. At the congress, the "Zion Zionists," mostly Russian Jews who refused to consider any substitute for Palestine, gained the upper hand and voted to reject the British offer. Most members of the opposition accepted the decision of the majority, but a small group of diehard "Uganda" advocates, led by Israel Zangwill, Dr. Max E. Mandelstamm and Dr. David S. Jochelmann, withdrew from the congress and, meeting separately in Basle, formed the Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO), with Zangwill as president.

Israel Zangwill, the celebrated English writer, was best known for his sympathetic sketches of Jewish immigrant types, such as those portrayed in his novel *Children of the Ghetto*, which was based on his own experiences. Himself the child of a poor Russian family that had emigrated to London, Zangwill demonstrated in his writings a binding emotional attachment to the values of the Jewish past contrasted with an irresistible impulse to break away from the physical and spiritual restrictions of the ghetto. The dilemma of choosing between the ghetto and the surrounding world, never fully resolved in a satisfactory manner, was a theme which ran through Zangwill's life and work, emphasizing the paradoxical nature of modern Jewish existence in the Diaspora. Zangwill was one of Herzl's earliest supporters. Besides being the most popular contemporary Jewish writer in the English language, he was an extremely witty and even brilliant orator. Zangwill's election as president of the Jewish Territorial Organization greatly enhanced its prestige, and he continued to hold this office throughout the entire twenty-year period of the ITO's existence. At the same time, the contradictions inherent in Zangwill's approach to the Jewish experience prevented the ITO from ever establishing a clearly defined policy.

Dr. Max Emmanuel Mandelstamm, a renowned ophthalmologist, had been one of Herzl's most influential supporters among the Jews in Russia. Mandelstamm's enthusiastic advocacy of Jewish nationalism was in marked contrast to his ideological upbringing. Two of his uncles had been leading advocates of Russian-Jewish assimilation, and from childhood on he had been given a thorough

secular education. After the pogroms of 1881, however, Mandelstamm was convinced that emigration was the only solution for Russian Jewry, and he became an avid supporter of the budding Zionist Movement. In his visionary novel, *Altneuland*, Herzl used him as a model for the president of his imaginary Jewish state ("an ophthalmologist from Russia, Dr. Eichenstamm"). After Herzl's death, Mandelstamm joined Zangwill in founding the Jewish Territorial Organization and became the head of operations in Russia, with his home in Kiev serving as headquarters. His overriding concern was to find a haven for the masses of Jewish emigrants from Russia. Despite many attempts by leading Zionists to tear him away from Territorialism, Mandelstamm, a beloved figure, remained the ITO's leading advocate among Russian Jews, until his widely mourned death in 1912.¹¹

Dr. David S. Jochelmann,* born near Vilna, had spent his youth studying in a yeshiva, preparing to become a rabbi. At age eighteen, financial circumstances forced him to cut short his studies, and he went to work in a Jewish agricultural colony, where he became an avid advocate of farming among Jews. His enthusiasm for Jewish agricultural work led him into the Zionist Movement. Along with many other young Russian Jews, Jochelmann obtained his higher education in Switzerland, beginning his studies at the University of Berne in 1900 and earning his doctorate in philosophy several years later. During this time, Jochelmann became chairman of Berne's Zionist Academic Society and a leader in the Democratic Faction. The latter was a group initiated by young East European Jews studying in Switzerland and Germany who opposed Herzl's characteristic preoccupation with the attainment of international recognition and called, instead, for social and cultural action among the Jewish people as the main activity of the Zionist Movement. The Democratic Faction, which was Herzl's main opposition within the Zionist Movement from 1901 to 1903, was led, among others, by Chaim Weizmann, then a student at the University of Geneva, who was a friend of Jochelmann's. When Herzl first presented the British East Africa proposal in 1903, the Democratic Faction joined other "Zion Zionists" in fierce opposition. At that time, Jochelmann, a "Uganda" advocate, broke from the Democratic Faction, combining his political defection with personal estrangement. Weizmann regretted the loss of Jochelmann as a friend, commenting, "It is strange how Uganda divides and unites people." Two years later,

* Years later, during the First World War, when Jochelmann was living in England, he changed the spelling of his name to "Jochelman." (See the end of chapter 9.)

GALVESTON: ELLIS ISLAND OF THE WEST

when the proposal was finally defeated, it was Jochelmann who organized the walkout from the Seventh Zionist Congress, persuading Zangwill to accept the leadership of the Territorialists.¹²

Far from considering themselves renegades, most of the Territorialists viewed themselves as the representatives of true political Zionism, referring to themselves at first as "Herzlian Zionists." They recalled that Herzl, along with some other early Zionist leaders and theorists, had seen the overwhelming necessity of a legally recognized, autonomous Jewish territory and would have initially considered any land that was suitable for such a purpose. It was only when he sensed the romantic appeal of the Land of Israel that Herzl had turned his attention toward that land. By 1903, when he had realized that he was unable to attain legal recognition for an autonomous Jewish settlement in Palestine, Herzl had been willing to sacrifice the dream of Palestine for the reality of East Africa or of any other territory that would offer such legal autonomy.

Herzl's death in 1904 was followed by the defeat of the British East Africa proposal at the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905. Zangwill and his associates saw this as a rejection of political Zionism, which aimed for the establishment of an autonomous Jewish state, in favor of practical Zionism, whose chief advocates seemed to be engaging in haphazard pioneering work in Palestine, while giving no thought to achieving autonomy there. Although Zangwill admired them for their pioneering efforts, he considered the practical Zionists to be, basically, irresponsible adventurers who were sowing the seeds of yet another expulsion of the Jews.¹³

The Territorialists viewed themselves, then, as the true standardbearers of orthodox Herzlian Zionism. In characteristically dramatic fashion, Zangwill expressed this position as follows:

Alas! The Palestine Charter is at present out of the question. Some suggest that we should go back to the methods of the Chovevei Zion [members of early Zionist groups founded in the 1880s] and merely establish agricultural colonies in Palestine. But Palestine without a Charter offers no security of land tenure, no open method of holding property. Zion without Zionism is a hollow mockery. . . . No, better Zionism without Zion than Zion without Zionism.¹⁴

As soon as it became organized, the Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO) informed the British government that it was ready to accept its offer of a territory in East Africa. The government, however, hastily withdrew the offer following its rejection by the

Seventh Zionist Congress, and it considered the matter closed. (The plan had aroused considerable opposition among British settlers in East Africa, and the government was somewhat relieved at its rejection by the Zionists.)

Having eliminated Palestine as being both unattainable and impracticable, the ITO established a geographical commission composed of some internationally known Jews whose object was to locate a territory suitable for Jewish colonization on an autonomous basis. Such a territory became known, in Territorialist parlance, as "IToland." The search for such a territory took the geographical commission to such unlikely locations throughout the world as Cyrenaica, Angola, and Mesopotamia. Other territories which were briefly considered at various times were the Guianas, Mozambique, Cyprus, Northern Australia, and Mexico. Years later, Zangwill admitted "there was not a land on earth that we did not think about."¹⁵

Curiously, the Territorialists never doubted their ability to direct the masses of Russian Jewish emigrants to IToland, once such a land would be found. Their abilities, however, were never called to the test, for none of their plans was actualized. Ultimately, the search for IToland was an abject failure. In retrospect, it would seem that, while the practical Zionists were building up the Land of Israel, the Territorialists were searching for a land that did not exist. After its first year of existence, the ITO remained an organization in search of a project, and its members were demoralized by frustration.

At this low point in its activity, the Jewish Territorial Organization was given a tempting offer to enter into a grand project which, however, completely belied its ideology and everything for which it stood. This project was first proposed to Zangwill by Jacob H. Schiff.

In the beginning of 1906, according to Schiff's own recollection, he had been approached by United States Commissioner-General of Immigration Franklin Pierce Sargent, who knew of Schiff's ardent wish to relieve immigrant congestion in eastern port cities. Sargent suggested that the most effective way to accomplish this would be to divert immigration to the U.S. ports on the Gulf of Mexico. This suggestion from a high public official inspired Schiff to formulate a plan of action, which he outlined in his letter to Zangwill, dated August 24, 1906.¹⁶

Schiff was unalterably opposed to Territorialism. In addition to regarding its goal as being unattainable, he felt that attempts to

establish Jewish autonomy in one territory would arouse doubts about the patriotism of Jewish citizens in other countries throughout the world. Schiff was convinced, furthermore, that America offered the best hope for the masses of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe. His efforts, therefore, were directed at facilitating Jewish immigration to the United States, and he was now convinced that this immigration had to be diverted from the congested cities of the Northeast.

Schiff was so convinced of the necessity to reroute American Jewish immigration that he decided to enlist the aid of the Territorialists in this plan, despite his complete opposition to their ideology. In fact, Schiff later confided that he had purposely invited the participation of the Territorialists in a conscious effort to divert their attention from what he considered to be their dangerous ideology.¹⁷ For their part, the Territorialists, too, realized that by accepting Schiff's plan they would be compromising their principles, but at least it offered a constructive outlet for their energies, a chance to get their feet wet in channeling the stream of Jewish migration. After all, they would be gaining valuable experience in the business of sending Jewish refugees to a safe haven. While agreeing to work on Schiff's project, however, they never abandoned their search for an autonomous Jewish territory.

The Jewish Territorial Organization's task in this project, as outlined in Schiff's letter to Zangwill, would be "to make propaganda to Russia itself for a change of this flow of emigration to the United States, from the Atlantic ports to New Orleans and other Gulf ports, to arrange with steamship lines to furnish the necessary facilities and to do all the manifold work which is necessary to promote a large immigration into the indicated channels." As an indication of the seriousness of his commitment, Schiff offered to personally contribute \$500,000 to the American end of the project, with the assumption that the European end would be sponsored in Europe.¹⁸

Three days after Schiff wrote his letter to Zangwill, he sent a copy of it to Dr. Nathan, expressing the hope that Nathan would help convince Zangwill to undertake the project.¹⁹ A personal feud, however, broke out between Nathan and Zangwill. The latter demanded total control of the project, including the American end. This Schiff refused, since he feared that Zangwill would attempt to establish an autonomous territory in the West. Arguments between Zangwill and Nathan delayed the inauguration of the project through the first part of 1907, but they were eventually resolved

in the following manner: While remaining secretary of the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden*, Nathan agreed to become an active member of the Jewish Territorial Organization's newly formed Emigration Regulation Department, which took charge of the European end of the project. Thus, while Nathan exerted a strong influence on the operation through the *Hilfsverein*, he was also accountable to Zangwill through the ITO.

Schiff attempted to secure the participation of the Jewish Colonization Association as well, but it proved impossible to get the Jewish Colonization Association and the Jewish Territorial Organization to cooperate in the same venture. Only July 15, 1907, Schiff wrote to Cyrus L. Sulzberger:

It is a pity that it is so difficult for Zangwill to get along with people, or it should have been possible for him to assure the cooperation of the ICA which, I am convinced, at heart, these gentlemen are desirous to give, if it were not for Zangwill's brusque manner, in which he endeavours to claim everything for the ITO, and his unwillingness to give others their due.²⁰

Another, underlying cause for the ICA's refusal to cooperate—it too, like the ITO, demanded exclusive control—may have been political rivalry between the Paris-based ICA and the Berlin-based *Hilfsverein*, which Schiff, of German family connections, might be expected to favor.

Schiff resigned himself to doing without the ICA's cooperation, satisfying himself with the participation of the Jewish Territorial Organization and the *Hilfsverein*. But while Schiff now had a European organization he still lacked an American one. For this purpose, he enlisted the cooperation of the Industrial Removal Office, managed by David M. Bressler in New York.²¹ The Industrial Removal Office agreed to take the first steps toward the establishment of a new organization, which would be in charge of the project. Bressler's assistant, Morris D. Waldman, was assigned the task of locating a new port suitable for receiving mass Jewish immigration.

Zangwill wrote Schiff that it might be a good idea to bring Jewish immigrants to the South, since he had heard that more whites were needed, to diminish the influence of blacks. Schiff vetoed this idea for precisely that reason; he did not want the Jews to be used as pawns in the poisoned racial politics of the South.²² Nevertheless, in November 1906, he sent Morris D. Waldman to Charleston,

GALVESTON: ELLIS ISLAND OF THE WEST

South Carolina, to see if that might be an appropriate port of entry for his project.

Waldman reported that Charleston was inhospitable to Jewish immigrants; they encouraged only "Saxon and Anglo-Saxon immigrants." He recommended that New Orleans and Galveston be favored for Jewish immigration. They were, after all, closer to the West, which offered much better economic opportunities than the South, and were far from the northeastern ghettos, whose congestion the Industrial Removal Office wanted to relieve. Between New Orleans and Galveston, Waldman recommended the latter,²³ and his recommendation was accepted for several reasons. First, Europeans feared New Orleans as a center of yellow fever epidemics. Second, Galveston was closer to the West and, in fact, served as a large terminus for railroad lines from every portion of that region. At the same time, Galveston had the advantage of not being a big city. Schiff, after all, did not want the immigrants to congregate in the port of arrival, but to spread throughout the country. New Orleans, with its many economic opportunities, might have tempted the immigrants to stay.

The most important reason that Schiff chose Galveston over New Orleans was that in Galveston a direct passenger line, run by the Bremen-based Nord Deutscher-Lloyd, or North German-Lloyd Shipping Company, was already in existence and, in fact, European immigrants had been arriving there for some time. New Orleans did not have a direct passenger shipping line from Germany. Schiff's efforts to persuade the Hamburg-American Line to run a passenger steamer to New Orleans failed.²⁴ Thus, Galveston became the port of entry for Schiff's project.

Galveston proved to be a fortunate choice from still another standpoint, for it was the home of a dynamic spiritual and communal leader, Rabbi Henry Cohen. Cohen, a circuit-riding rabbi to many Jews in southeastern Texas, was a colorful figure. He was very active in civic and state affairs, and his influence ranged far beyond the members of his local reform congregation. Interestingly enough, Cohen had been born and raised in London, was a contemporary of Zangwill's and knew him well from the days when both studied at the Jews' Free School in London's East End.

On January 3, 1907, Schiff received word from Europe that Zangwill and Nathan had finally resolved their differences. (Actually, this information later proved to be a bit premature, but their differences were eventually resolved.) Without further delay, Morris Waldman was instructed to proceed to Galveston to organize

the project.²⁵ Waldman, who had been a practicing rabbi before going into social work, formed a fast friendship with Rabbi Cohen. As soon as he was approached, Cohen began devoting himself wholeheartedly to the new enterprise.

On January 28, 1907, after some discussion regarding its name, the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau (JIIB) was established in Galveston, with Waldman as general agent. With the help of Rabbi Cohen and other local Jews, Waldman began to lay the groundwork in Galveston for welcoming the first party of immigrants, which was expected soon after Passover.²⁶ David M. Bressler, general manager of the Industrial Removal Office in New York, agreed to serve as the JIIB's "honorary secretary." This title was a misnomer, for Bressler's role in the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau was much more than honorary. In effect, Bressler ran both the Industrial Removal Office and the JIIB from the same New York office.

Bressler and Waldman were of similar background. Coincidentally, they shared a common date of birth, having both been born in Europe on May 1, 1879, and each had been brought to America when he was four or five years old.²⁷ More importantly, the two men were personal friends, sharing a youthful enthusiasm for the newly inaugurated project, and they worked on it very well together—Bressler from New York and Waldman from Galveston.

At about this time, a bill was proposed in Congress calling for the establishment of an immigration station in Galveston. Schiff used his influence in lobbying successfully for passage of the bill. He was helped in this endeavor by his friend Oscar S. Straus, secretary of Commerce and Labor, under whose jurisdiction immigration lay.²⁸

To carry out the active recruitment of Russian-Jewish emigrants for Galveston, ITO's Emigration Regulation Department formed the Jewish Emigration Society, with Dr. Max E. Mandelstamm as president, Dr. David S. Jochelmann as secretary, or manager, and Joseph Michaelowitz as assistant manager. The Jewish Emigration Society was based in Kiev and operated many committees throughout Russia for the purpose of recruiting emigrants for Galveston. Dr. Jochelmann was authorized to organize the first expedition to Galveston, and he immediately instructed his agents to begin recruiting the emigrants.

The Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau sent the Jewish Territorial Organization a set of guidelines to be used by Jochelmann's agents in their recruitment of emigrants for Galveston.

GALVESTON: ELLIS ISLAND OF THE WEST

These guidelines indicated the types of immigrants that could be most easily absorbed. According to this list, strong laborers below the age of forty were needed. Men of the following trades were also encouraged to come: ironworkers, carpenters, cabinetmakers, butchers, tinsmiths, painters, paper-hangers, shoemakers, tailors, masons, plumbers and machinists.²⁹

Among the guidelines laid down by the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau was one which became a considerable point of controversy: "Nor should *Schochtim* (ritual slaughterers), *melamdin* (Hebrew teachers) and others who do not work on the Sabbath be sent." Zangwill, who was not at all religiously observant—he was married to a Christian woman and refused to have his first son circumcised³⁰—professed himself to be scandalized by this rule. Ironically, Schiff, who was quite well known for his refusal to conduct business matters on Saturday,³¹ saw nothing wrong with this stipulation. He defended it as being entirely consistent with the labor conditions of the West. He accused Zangwill of using this issue as a pretext to promote his ideology that large autonomous settlements offered the only solution to the Jewish problem.³² In the end Zangwill backed down, but he brought up the issue again several times in later years. For its part, the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau agreed to slightly modify its wording, which now read as follows: "It is but proper that intending immigrants should understand that economic conditions everywhere in the United States are such that strict Sabbath observance is exceedingly difficult and in some cases almost impossible."³³ Even with this modified wording, it was obvious that the JIIB was giving notice that it had little patience for the religious sensitivities of its future protégés.

In anticipation of the arrival of the first group, Waldman visited various cities throughout the West. Before his first visit to Galveston, Waldman had stopped off in Chicago, where he obtained the support of Adolph Kraus, president of the Independent Order B'nai Brith. This endorsement proved to be very valuable in convincing locally prominent Jews to participate actively in the reception of Jewish immigrants from Galveston. In each community, Waldman established a committee which accepted responsibility for finding jobs for a certain number of immigrants.

Waldman jokingly referred to himself as a travelling salesman who was in the business of "selling Jews." Here and there, however, he encountered a bit of "sales resistance." For example, the owner of a large shoe establishment in a small Kansas town recalled that

he had once provided work for a poor immigrant shoemaker who had been sent to him from New York by the Industrial Removal Office. Within two years, he complained, this destitute refugee had become his biggest competitor. The gentleman finally agreed to cooperate with Waldman provided that no shoemaker would be sent to this town. Generally, however, the Jewish communities were very receptive. Waldman attributed this to the profound sense of shock they had experienced as a result of the Russian pogroms of 1905.³⁴

In Galveston, the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau rented an empty warehouse, which it remodeled as a shelter for the immigrants for the few days during which they were to be selected and routed. It installed washrooms, showers, baths, and various items of furniture designed to make the immigrants' stay a pleasant one. The chairman of the local committee, a prominent citizen, was the leading insurance agent of Galveston. Naturally, Waldman asked him to provide coverage for the new fixtures. The contract job was finished on a Saturday evening, and the insurance was to be placed on Monday morning. At midnight, before the insurance went into effect, a fire broke out which destroyed the whole building. At the time Waldman happened to be in New York, where he had returned for a conference, and he had to answer directly to Schiff on the matter. Upon his return to Galveston, Waldman found another building, but Schiff had to pay for the new installations. Years later, Waldman wrote of this incident, "It was my first lesson in the direction of business hazards and the importance of taking business precautions."³⁵ In any event, the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau was now ready to receive immigrants.

The first immigrants who were recruited by Jochelmann's agents in Russia began arriving in Bremen during May 1907. The North German-Lloyd Shipping Company had arranged for kosher hotel accommodations for these emigrants. However, this kosher hotel-restaurant, which was called the *Stadt Warschau*, was closed at the time, for disinfection. The local innkeepers seized the opportunity to take advantage of the emigrants by charging them exorbitant rates. Fortunately, the Jewish Territorial Organization's Emigration Regulation Department was able to undo the damage by forcing the return of the overcharged expenses to the emigrants. One of the innkeepers was actually summoned before a court of law. In addition, the director of the Lloyd Company reprimanded the

GALVESTON: ELLIS ISLAND OF THE WEST

exorbitant businessmen, warning them not to repeat their repugnant behavior.³⁶

The Russian-Jewish emigrants found the Germans to be obnoxious toward emigrants in general and toward them in particular. Dr. Jochelmann, who came to Bremen to see them off, advised the emigrants to choose from among themselves someone who would act as their spokesman. The captain agreed to meet daily with this representative. The S.S. *Cassel*, bound for Baltimore and Galveston, left Bremen on June 6 with approximately 1,500 passengers on board. Of these, eighty-seven were Jews bound for Galveston—sixty-six men, six women and fifteen children. Of the eighty-seven, fifty-six had been recruited in Russia by the Jewish Territorial Organization. Jochelmann accompanied the group to sea for about an hour, returning on a cutter, together with the American Consul. The Galveston Movement was on its way.³⁷

After stopping in Baltimore, where it discharged half its passengers, the S.S. *Cassel* continued on its way to Galveston at a deliberately slow speed in order to conserve fuel. The ship entered the Galveston harbor early in the morning of July 1, 1907, which was the first day in which a new U.S. immigration law went into effect. Among other provisions, this law made the steamship companies subject to a \$100 fine for transporting physically or mentally defective immigrants, or those afflicted with loathesome or contagious diseases. More important, it replaced the \$2 head tax per immigrant with one for \$4, thus doubling the expense to the steamship companies. Thus, while saving between \$100 and \$200 worth of coal, the captain had cost his company over \$1600 in taxes!³⁸

The S.S. *Cassel* arrived at her pier at 7:30 A.M., and by 8:00 passengers were coming down the gangway. By prior arrangement, the eighty-seven Jewish passengers were allowed to disembark first, followed afterward by the cabin and general steerage passengers. After they had passed inspection by the Port Marine Surgeon, interrogation by the immigration inspectors and examination of baggage by the customs officers, the Jewish immigrants were loaded with their belongings onto large wagons. They were then taken about half a mile to the headquarters of the JIIB, which impressed many of them with its roominess, good lighting, and ventilation. There, they were given the opportunity of taking baths, after which they were treated to a fine kosher dinner. The immigrants were very appreciative of the kind hospitality shown them by their American coreligionists, especially after the poor treatment they had suffered in Germany.³⁹

The immigrants were met in Galveston by Rabbi Cohen, Morris Waldman, and his assistant, Mr. J. Lippman. Also on hand was Jacob Billikopf, newly appointed superintendent of the Federation of Jewish Charities in Kansas City, Missouri, who came especially to assist in welcoming the new arrivals. Formerly superintendent of Charities in Milwaukee, Billikopf had cooperated closely with the Industrial Removal Office in that city. Together with Bressler and Waldman, Billikopf was one of the leading figures in the field of Jewish social work. He proved to be instrumental in making Kansas City a showplace for the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau.

The JIIB had received from the ITO a list containing the occupation of every immigrant in the group. The immigrants were called up individually to tables, where this information was verified. Working mainly on the basis of the immigrants' occupations, the JIIB officials assigned them to various locations throughout the West—nineteen cities in all.

During the afternoon, the mayor of Galveston, Mr. Landes, visited the headquarters of the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau. Rabbi Cohen called the immigrants together and, speaking in Yiddish, told them in glowing terms of the democratic country to which they had come. Then he introduced Mayor Landes, whose words he translated into Yiddish. "You have come to a great country," the mayor said. "With industry and economy all of you will meet with success. Obey the laws and try to make good citizens." He then shook hands with each member of the party. One of the immigrants, formerly a school teacher in southern Russia, responded in halting English to the mayor's words of greeting, with the assistance of Rabbi Cohen:

We are overwhelmed that the ruler of the city should greet us. We have never been spoken to by the officials of our country except in terms of harshness, and although we have heard of the great land of freedom, it is very hard to realize that we are permitted to grasp the hand of the great man. We will do all we can to make good citizens.⁴⁰

Most of the immigrants were sent off that very day. The rest of them spent the night there and were dispatched during the following day. Billikopf took nine men back with him to Kansas City. Three immigrants, who had arrived in Galveston ahead of the first group,⁴¹ were already in Kansas City, making it the leading host city for immigrants sent by the JIIB, a distinction which it continually retained throughout the existence of the Galveston Move-

GALVESTON: ELLIS ISLAND OF THE WEST

ment.⁴² Seven men were sent to Saint Joseph and two to Saint Louis, making Missouri the largest receiving state of Jewish immigrants from Galveston. Minnesota came in second, with nine immigrants being sent to Minneapolis, three to Saint Paul, and one to Duluth. Iowa was represented by five cities, more than any other state: Cedar Rapids received three immigrants, Des Moines and Dubuque two apiece, and Davenport and Sioux City one each. The rest of the immigrants were distributed among the following cities: Denver and Pueblo, Colorado; Lincoln and Grand Island, Nebraska; Quincy, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The State of Texas was represented by Fort Worth, which took in four immigrants. None of the new arrivals remained in Galveston. In keeping with its policy, the Galveston Movement discouraged its immigrants from staying in that city longer than necessary.⁴³

On July 14, 1907, the second party, consisting of twenty-six Jewish immigrants, arrived in Galveston. These immigrants complained of the poor treatment they had suffered on board the ship, the S.S. *Frankfurt*. The Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau relayed this complaint to the *Hilfsverein*, which took the matter up with the North German-Lloyd Co. in Bremen. Some of the passengers on board the *Frankfurt* had originally been booked for the *Cassel*, which carried the first group, but, for various reasons, they actually sailed with the second group.⁴⁴ Among these was a woman with six children, whose husband had gone ahead with the first group and had been sent to Pueblo, Colorado. Naturally, his wife and children were sent there to join him. The rest of the immigrants were distributed among the following cities: Des Moines, Sioux City, and Burlington, Iowa; Duluth and Saint Paul, Minnesota; Topeka and Leavenworth, Kansas; Joplin, Missouri. One man, a baker, was sent as far north as Fargo, North Dakota.⁴⁵

Having disposed of the second group, Waldman decided to visit some of the cities where the first immigrants had been sent, beginning with the twin cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota. In Saint Paul, Waldman was glad to note that the three immigrants who had arrived with the first group were quite pleased with their situation. One, a shoemaker, worked at his trade for \$7.50 a week, with a promise for an eventual salary of twice as much. The second man, who claimed to have been a watchmaker in Russia, had really been an unskilled hand in a watch factory. The local committee decided to send him to school to learn how to become a barber. The third immigrant, formerly a noodle and macaroni maker, was given a job washing cars. A fourth immigrant,

a member of the second group, was also living in Saint Paul. He had been a grain dealer in Russia, but he arrived in America too weak to work. The committee decided to buy him a horse, a wagon and some stock and send him on the beaten path to fortune. The immigrants were generally pleased with their reception in Saint Paul.

The immigrants in Minneapolis were much less satisfied, being bitterly disappointed with the salaries they were receiving. They did not find fault with the local committee but, rather, they blamed the Russian agents of the ITO for exaggerating the opportunities in America. Three of the immigrants stated that Dr. Jochelmann and his representatives had explicitly promised them salaries of between \$12 and \$18 per week. In reaction to Waldman's report, the JIIB wrote Jochelmann asking him to discontinue these empty promises.⁴⁶

Waldman next visited Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he had sent three immigrants from the first party. One immigrant, who said he had been a farmer, was given a job at the Quaker Cereal Factory. The other two men claimed to be carpenters, so they were put to work at that trade. Neither of them qualified, however, and they were soon dismissed. One of them, who was quite mediocre, was placed in another carpentry position with a starting salary of \$12 a week. The other "carpenter," however, was discovered to be a fraud, as he could not even tell the difference between a saw and a plane. In addition, he was not used to hard labor. The local committee finally found him an easy job in a packing house at \$1.25 per day. This incident illustrates a problem which was to plague the JIIB in its placement of immigrants: Frequently, immigrants claimed to be members of certain professions in the hope of being able to learn on the job. The failure of these men, once placed in positions, to demonstrate even the minimum necessary skills, reflected badly upon the credibility of the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau.⁴⁷

Before returning to Galveston, Waldman visited Kansas City, Missouri, where he had sent twelve immigrants including three who had preceded the first group. He discovered that they were doing fine and generally earning comparatively good wages for immigrants. Two carpenters were earning salaries of \$12 per week. A tailor was receiving \$8 weekly plus room and board. Another tailor was earning enough to support himself and his wife, who was not working. A laundry presser was making \$8 with the promise that he would eventually make \$15 per week. An unskilled laborer

GALVESTON: ELLIS ISLAND OF THE WEST

was earning \$9 a week in a junk yard. A factory hand was working at a packing house for \$1.75 per day, steady work, and had already sent 20 rubles to his family. Another man who was working at the packing house was actually a mason, but could not do teamwork because of his ignorance of English. After going through four jobs as a bricklayer, he was given a job at the packing house for \$10.50 per week. As in Cedar Rapids, the lowest-paying jobs were reserved for those who could not demonstrate the skills they claimed to have. One man, who declared himself to be a tailor, had to satisfy himself with a job as a pants presser for \$6 a week. Another immigrant did not tell the truth when he claimed to be a book-binder. He was put to work in a factory at a weekly salary of \$5.⁴⁸

The men who were sent by the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau to Kansas City were doing better than most immigrants who had arrived there on their own. Unfortunately, many of them had been led to believe, by Dr. Jochelmann and his agents in Russia, that they would be earning even more money. Their complaints, however, were not as vociferous as those of the immigrants in Minneapolis. Waldman attributed this to the fact that Billikopf met with them twice a week, taught them English and otherwise encouraged them in their endeavors. By taking a personal interest in their progress, Billikopf had a profoundly uplifting effect on the morale of the immigrants in Kansas City. It soon became clear that, as a general rule, the personal attitudes of the local representatives of the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau often contributed to the degree of adjustment shown by the immigrants in the various cities.

Largely satisfied with the results of his trip, Waldman returned to Galveston to prepare for the reception of the third immigrant party.