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East European Jewish migrants and settlers in Belgium, 1880–1914: a transatlantic perspective

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This article analyses whether the Jews leaving Tsarist Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, part of the transatlantic mass migration of the end of the nineteenth century, became subject to state control. Most emigrants from Eastern Europe in this period passed through the ports of Bremen, Hamburg and Antwerp. In the 1880s only a few emigrants were not welcome in America and sent back to Europe, but economic competition and the supposed health threat immigrants posed meant the US became the trendsetter in implementing protectionist immigration policy in the 1890s. More emigrants were returned to Europe because of the newly erected US federal immigration control stations, but many more were denied the possibility to leave for the United States by the remote control mechanism which the American authorities enforced on the European authorities and the shipping companies. At the Russian–German border and the port of Antwerp, shipping companies stopped transit migrants who were deemed medically unacceptable by American standards. The shipping companies became subcontractors for the American authorities as they risked heavy fines if they transported unwanted emigrants. The Belgian authorities refused to collaborate with the Americans and defended their sovereignty, and made shipping companies in the port of Antwerp solely responsible for the American remote migration control. Due to the private migration control at the port of Antwerp transit migrants became stuck in Belgium. The Belgian authorities wanted these stranded migrants to return "home." It seems that the number of stranded migrants remained manageable as the Belgian authorities did not make the shipping companies pay the bill. They were able to get away by making some symbolic gestures and these migrants were supported by charitable contributions from the local Jewish community.

Keywords: migration control; Jewish migration; refugees and emigrants; Jewish charity; Belgian, Prussian and US border policy; Jewish community in Antwerp; Red Star Line; cholera; Ellis Island; quarantine; sovereignty; medical examination; Antwerp

This article attempts to improve our understanding of the Jewish transatlantic migration process at the end of the nineteenth century by looking into the political dynamic of this process. The focal point of this study are the Jewish migrants from Tsarist Russia and the Habsburg monarchy who passed through the Belgian port of Antwerp. Between 1880 and 1914, almost every Central and East European Jewish emigrant travelled through, in declining order of importance, the port of Bremen, Hamburg, Antwerp, Rotterdam or Liverpool. A number of factors meant that these became

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increasingly attractive destinations to East European Jewish emigrants in this period. First of all, various political and economic entrepreneurs played an important role, but so, too, did the increasing sophistication of the continent's transportation network. Emigrants were able to reach these places ever more swiftly, which in turn accentuated the importance of these ports within the context of the wider nineteenth-century mass transatlantic migratory flow. In the early twentieth century, ports such as Fiume, Trieste and Libau also tried to attract the flow of migration moving to North America, but the migrant transportation networks of the more established ports prevented them all from developing into fully fledged direct migrant gateways.

Figure 1 illustrates that from 1885 onwards, the transatlantic migration through Antwerp, originating from imperial Russia and Austria–Hungary, remained somewhat slow-moving until the very end of the nineteenth century, whereupon the numbers exploded. (These figures only refer to passengers sailing from Antwerp in steerage and, therefore, the total emigration figure to the United States was probably slightly higher).[1] The peak years for transatlantic migration were 1906 and 1907, during which nearly 80,000 people from the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires departed the continent through Antwerp. After a dip in 1908, the upward trend resumed; in 1913 almost 90,000 people from these states left through the Belgian port for the New World. In that year, Russian imperial migrants actually surpassed those leaving from Austria–Hungary. Although Jewishness was no category in Belgian migration statistics, we know from qualitative sources that the passengers from the Russia Empire, and to a lesser extent Austria–Hungary, were mainly Jews.[2]

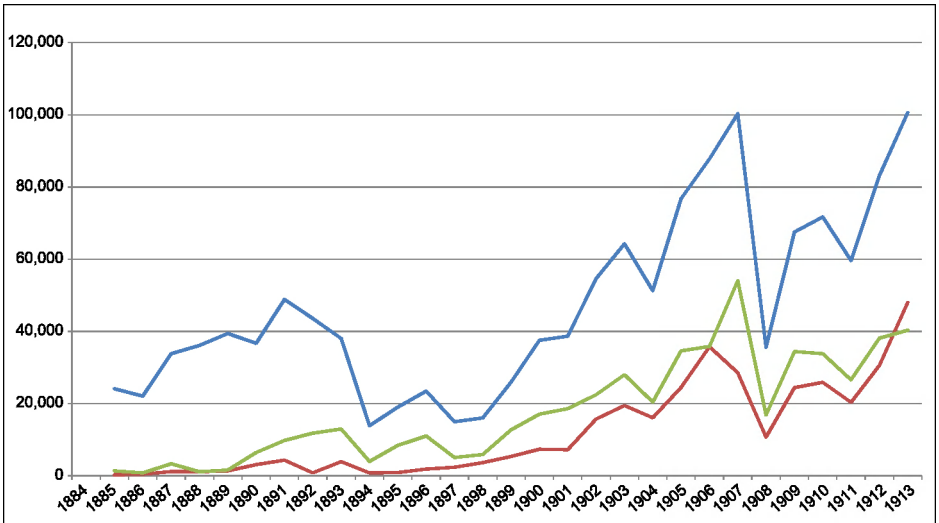

Figure 1. Steerage passengers leaving for overseas from Antwerp, 1885–1913.
Note: These figures are based on the annual reports of the Emigration Inspection Service. Archive Ministry of Foreign Affairs Brussels, Emigration, 2020, VIII, 2951, I-IV and 2953 I-II and PAA, Landverhuizing- Emigratie, 45, 54, 67.

For migrants travelling through Antwerp, the economic pull of the US was an obvious one, especially in the wake of the 1880s recession in the industrialised world. To be sure, economic issues were a major factor in the push and pull of the transatlantic migratory flow, but politics also played an important role. Individual states had a hand in the volume and origin of the flow that passed through Antwerp. So, too, did private actors, in the form of transportation companies. In this article, we therefore focus on the state policies of both receiving and transit countries. The period under investigation – from 1880 to 1914 – is often seen as a unique era in the history of human geographical mobility, as crossing state borders then is regarded as having been fairly unrestrained. However, recent historiography has challenged this notion, and instead observes an escalation in restrictive immigration policy throughout Europe.[3] This study further considers this interpretation by looking at the policies of the Belgian, German and US authorities in relation to the Jewish migratory flow to and through their respective states. We will also look into the strategies of private actors and the policies developed by various shipping lines, especially the Red Star Line (RSL), which was the principal carrier from Antwerp. Likewise, the role of local Jewish communities is considered. This study is, in particular, interested in the extent to which US immigration policy and, most importantly, its remote control mechanisms as outlined by Aristide Zolberg, influenced the policies developed in Europe towards Jewish transit migrants.

1. Jewish transmigration through Antwerp (1881–91)

Antwerp started attracting transit migrants during the 1840s; they predominantly came from southwestern Germany. At this time, the port and government authorities in Belgium used measures and laws adopted by the Bremen authorities as a model for state support in this matter. In that German port, transatlantic migrant transport had led to a revival of the merchant marine under the Bremen flag. Thus, attracting part of this lucrative migratory traffic, which bore economic significance in the form of increased trade, fitted in with Belgium's political consolidation, following its recently acquired independence. As a consequence, the government promoted Antwerp as an emigrant gateway and invested in railway connections to the German and Swiss hinterland. In 1843, the Belgian government founded the Emigration Inspection Service. This service fell under the responsibility of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and was created to promote the image of Antwerp as an emigration port. In Belgium itself this service was mainly meant to prevent the tarnishing of Antwerp's reputation by unscrupulous agents and swindlers. Physicians also were part of the Emigration Inspection Service. They had to ascertain the medical fitness of transmigrants for travel. This medical control was particularly intended to prevent high death rates at sea resulting from epidemic outbreaks.

By the 1850s, Antwerp was the third most important emigrant gateway in continental Europe. Yet the repeated failure to opening a steamship line between Antwerp and New York led to a decline in its popularity when transport shifted from sail to steam during the 1860s.[4] Only when the RSL opened a steamship service connecting Antwerp with New York and Philadelphia in 1873 did the Belgian port regain its pull for those people who wanted to emigrate to the Americas.[5] At that time, it was predominantly German and Swiss emigrants who passed through Antwerp. They took advantage of the expanding liberal migration regime, which reached its climax during

the second half of the nineteenth century. Only from the 1880s onwards did East Europe Jews start to make use of this opportunity.[6]

The first group of Russian Jews to leave for the US through Antwerp were probably a hundred or so who, in 1881, were among those who fled across the border to Brody in the Habsburg Empire. They were part of the thousands of Russians Jews who had suddenly taken off to Brody after a rumour had circulated in the Pale of Settlement that the journey to America was arranged free of charge once one made it to Brody.[7] These Russian Jews, who travelled through Antwerp to the US, were assisted in their journey by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the French-based Jewish philanthropic organisation, which also campaigned, through various channels, for Jewish civil rights in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. The Jews in Brody were considered a deserving case, not because of their need for protection, but rather due to their potential to sustain themselves in America. Their professional qualifications and health had qualified them for this support.[8] In 1881, a local committee, Comité anversois pour la surveillance de l'émigration, was founded in Antwerp to take care of the temporary reception of these emigrants. Louis Strauss, a member of an established Belgian family of Jewish migrant brokers, arranged their transport to the US by steamship, which also provided them with kosher food.[9] It is difficult to affirm whether these passengers were the pioneers of Jewish migration through Antwerp, as we have little information for the years immediately after 1881.[10] But, the Jewish aid committee founded in 1881 seems to have continued its activities into the 1890s, though it has left behind little documentary trace. Given that it was part of the Alliance, the support in Antwerp was probably somewhat limited.[11] In any case, many Jews made their way overseas without the assistance of such organisations.

At this time, departure from Europe was mostly undertaken through a Western European port, rather than any port in the Russian Empire, as none there had a direct steamship connection to the US. In terms of geographical distance, therefore, leaving from Antwerp or a German port made little difference. In the early 1880s, the only effective border control Jewish emigrants had to pass through belonged to the Russian Empire. In order to cross into the German or Habsburg Empires, a passport was required, which was often hard to obtain. As a consequence, numerous Russian Jews left their country in an illegal manner, which was, given the long and not very well-guarded border, not that difficult.[12] Once Russian Jews were on Prussian or Austrian–Hungarian territory, they could then take a train to the main continental European emigration ports, such as Bremen, Hamburg, Le Havre, Rotterdam and Antwerp.

Inspections at the German–Russian border intensified in the mid-1880s, following the forced repatriation by the US authorities of several Russian Jews who had left German ports bound for New York. Needy immigrants had never been welcomed by American state law, as it did not want them to be a financial burden on society. From 1882 onwards, when immigrant restrictions moved to federal level, federal law was made to formally state that immigrants could be rejected on economic and medical grounds. As US immigration policy had always aimed at keeping the destitute at bay, the authorities had at times resorted to deportations. In 1885, however, the arrival of these returnees in Prussia was perceived differently than it had been on previous occasions. In the mid-1880s, the Prussian authorities felt that the German identity of their lands was under threat from Polish nationalism and Jewish infiltration. Thus, the Prussian authorities refused any further Jewish or Polish settlement on their territory

and closed the eastern border to them. Even at the western border, East European nationals were only accepted if they were returning to their own country and had sufficient funds for the transit fare. In the view of the Prussian authorities, the settlement of Polish and East European Jewish immigrants had to be prevented, as they were considered subversive.

At the same time the US returned several emigrants to Germany, about 40,000 immigrants, mostly Poles and Jews of Austro-Hungarian and Russian nationality, some of whom were long-term residents, were expelled from Prussia. This radical decision was part of the German political strategy to protect the integrity of the German nation.[13] Thus, the return of those destitute emigrants refused by the US was considered more of a risk than their merely becoming a financial burden to the state. These returnees were considered a security risk and the Prussian authorities took swift action. From 1885 onwards, East European transit migrants at the eastern Prussian border who had a ticket for passage across the Atlantic had to prove the possession of 400 marks (100 marks a child). This sum would ensure that if these migrants were deported from the US, they would be able to pay for their own repatriation.[14] Had this decree been strictly implemented, the transmigration through Prussia would have been cut short. At the time, 400 marks amounted to five times the price of a steamship ticket. However, the absence of any means of enforcement and the important economic interests at stake ensured that the implementation of the decree was very selective. But, it allowed the authorities to refuse access to Prussian territory to any transit migrant who they considered unwanted.

In a report to his superiors in 1886, an Austrian police officer, Kostrzewski, observed the rejection of Russian and Romanian emigrants at the Prussian–Austrian border. He noticed the selectivity of the border officials, as some were granted passage, though "less money was required" than officially cited.[15] By 1888, Saxony also intensified its border controls (under Prussian pressure) and stopped Russian migrants from entering the German Empire, especially through the less well guarded German–Austrian border. By that time, the measure calling for the prevention of border crossing by emigrants carrying less than 400 marks had been revised. In 1887, German transport interests lobbied the authorities and obtained permission for transit migrants with a German shipping ticket to pass over the border even if they were without the 400 marks previously required. After 1887, the measure could only be used against those migrants who had no steamship ticket. The main continental transatlantic shipping lines, including the RSL, had joined a cartel to curtail competition. All companies in this cartel could profit from the arrangement with the German authorities.[16] Even for those travelling with smaller companies that were not part of the cartel, the required sum was only selectively demanded and they could always cross the Prussian border illegally, often with the aid of smugglers.[17]

The Prussian obsession with East European immigration control may have caused the transmigration to be diverted slightly to non-German ports, such as Antwerp. However, we do not have conclusive evidence for this supposition, as there is only limited information available on East European migration through Antwerp before 1885. We notice, however, that from 1885 onwards it seems that numerous Russian migrants took a long route to get to Antwerp in order to bypass Prussian control. They crossed the Russian border and passed through the Habsburg Empire, Saxony and the South German states to Belgium. By the 1890s, the controls in the German Empire were stepped up (see below), and some transit migrants even travelled through the

whole of Austria in order to make their way to Switzerland, from where they took a train to Antwerp.

2. The cholera scare and the origins of (medical) migration control (1892–93)

In the US, nativists called for the restriction of immigration. Already in 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act had imposed harsh quotas on immigrants from China, though this legislation was only made possible by an institutional shift in US immigration policy. In the early 1880s, such policy had fallen under the remit of individual states, but after 1882 it moved into the domain of the federal authorities. In addition to excluding Chinese labour, the federal authorities decided to exclude those likely to become a public charge and the mentally ill. Nativism grew stronger in subsequent years and called for broader exclusionary practices. In 1891, federal immigration policy was strengthened when a new federal administration was created, the US Treasury Department's Immigration Bureau. All immigration control stations fell under federal responsibility. Many new immigration control stations were set up, among them Ellis Island, which opened in 1892. A medical check became part of the immigration control and those who were considered not fit were debarred.[18] The US authorities tried to subcontract immigration control partly to the shipping companies. The return of all medically rejected immigrants was to be paid for by the transportation companies, a financial incentive to ensure they only brought suitable immigrants to the US. At the same time, these companies became responsible for filling out the passenger manifests. These passenger manifests had been introduced to facilitate inspection on arrival in the US, as they contained information to establish whether passengers belonged to the excluded classes.[19]

In February 1892, an epidemic of typhus fever erupted in New York City's Lower East Side. How the typhus contamination spread was not rationally understood at the time; it was not until 1909 that lice were identified as carriers of the disease. In 1892, about 200 people contracted the highly feared disease, mostly Russian Jewish refugees who had travelled on the steamship *Massilia* of the Fabre Line. This typhus epidemic prompted the development of an irrational fear of Russian Jewish immigrants. The federal authorities decided overnight to detain transatlantic steamers in quarantine at Hoffman Island. Russian Jewish steerage passengers were isolated at the quarantine station for five days, while ships went on to land the other passengers. One of the first ships to be detained was the RSL's *Belgenland*. In total, several thousand Russian Jews were quarantined until the typhus epidemic was officially over in April 1892. As stipulated by the 1891 Immigration Act, steamship companies had to pay for the return of all the medically rejected. With room to spare on the return leg, this expense was limited to feeding the passengers during the crossing. However, larger financial repercussions were felt, since the maintenance costs of detained passengers were also billed to the shipping companies. Upon the arrival of the *Belgenland*, the RSL had immediately stopped transporting Russians and thus large expenses had been avoided.[20] Although the whole typhus scare caused a disruption of the Russian traffic, from May 1892 onwards it returned quickly to its pre-typhus-epidemic rates.

Four months later, when a ship with cholera-infected passengers arrived from Hamburg in New York, the reaction of health inspectors was immediate. Having received much criticism in the press, and from a special congressional committee, for having landed the *Massilia* passengers, the Ellis Island immigration inspectors took no

risks. Ships were held for several days. Steamship companies collaborated by tightening controls at the ports of departure, disinfecting the luggage and refusing passengers from infected areas. The US administration, under President Benjamin Harrison, used the political capital accrued in keeping the typhus epidemic under control to restrict Russian Jewish immigration. Based on a disputable interpretation of the federal quarantine law, they imposed a 20-day quarantine on all steerage passengers on vessels originating from infected ports. This decision was explicitly conceived as a financial brake for steamship companies to halt steerage immigration from the Russian Empire.[21]

A number of the Russian passengers who had left Antwerp shortly after the outbreak of cholera in the Tsarist Empire were not allowed to disembark in the US, and were returned to Antwerp. As these passengers did not possess the means to return home and since the Belgian government was eager to be rid of these returnees, the authorities allocated a small budget to pay for their fare back home.[22] The RSL refused to transport any more Russian Jews, in order not to provoke the US authorities and, as a consequence, the influx passing through Antwerp dropped (see Figure 1). Other shipping lines were more eager to honour the many outstanding tickets of Russian Jews. As the shipping companies were involved in immigration control by being charged to complete the passenger manifests, they had an opportunity to make sure the answers fitted the US requirements of entry. They declared Russians as Galicians or Slovaks in order to ensure the landing of as many passengers as possible. Russian Jews were therefore still able to make their way across the ocean, but not in the same numbers as they had done before they became stigmatised as a health threat.[23]

The US immigration restrictionist movement gained momentum using the threat to public health. With cholera and typhus, the immigration threat became more real because immigrants could be carriers of dangerous germs. Although the cholera danger was officially called over in October 1892, the US authorities continued to impose long quarantine periods for steerage passengers on ships carrying Russian Jews. Public health protection and immigration restriction motives became closely intertwined. This lasted until shipping companies grew tired of the losses caused by the arbitrariness with which quarantine was imposed. On 1 January 1893, the lines collectively suspended third class passenger transport. Partly out of fear that the tourist industry would also come to a standstill and jeopardise the organisation of the Chicago World Fair, the US authorities relaxed the quarantine measures. In March 1893 the shipping agencies, including the RSL, resumed steerage traffic.[24] In the meantime the US authorities decided to send US physicians to foreign ports to monitor and report back on epidemic diseases. A new system of medical control was taking shape.

3. The rise of medical control on transit migrants in Belgium (1893–1913)

In 1892, as soon as it was known that cholera was spreading, the Belgian authorities took preventative measures. Older, more environmental approaches to the causes of epidemics were still adhered to, but the germ theory made the Belgian authorities focus on medical screening and disinfection. The closing of Hamburg, with its 8000 cholera cases, caused numerous transit migrants to head for a port in Belgium, Holland or France.[25] In Belgium, the danger from abroad was minimised, partly because there were important economic interests at stake. Belgium was an open

economy, which implied that closing the country would be very difficult and entail high costs. The Belgian authorities did not restrict the passage of transit migrants from the Russian Empire or Austria–Hungary. They relied on the German efforts to stop cholera carriers at their land borders and ignored the possibility that Russians were travelling by alternative inland routes.[26] In Belgium, no border quarantine was imposed, but instructions were given to the police and railway personnel to look out for sick people on international trains. If sick people were detected, they had to be isolated. Only those Russian emigrants who arrived on Belgian territory by sea had to stay on their ship in the quarantine zone at Doel, near Antwerp, for a period of seven days since their date of departure from a cholera-infected zone.[27]

As of August 1893, the Belgian authorities only allowed Russian migrants who had a ticket overseas to continue their journey if they carried a sum of 500 Belgian francs (BEF). This was five times the equivalent of their ticket to New York, which they were also required to possess. The money would assure that if they were not accepted in the US they would be able to pay for their repatriation. A police brigade, specially stationed at the border, was to check if all transit migrants crossing the green border on international trains coming from the East had enough cash on them.[28] The authorities were afraid that destitute and sick Russians would arrive en masse in Antwerp. The RSL was outraged; this financial threshold would push Antwerp out of the market. The RSL probably saw great business opportunities in diverting the migrant traffic from Hamburg to Antwerp and now the Belgian authorities were thwarting their efforts.[29] The insistence of the RSL paid off; by 1894 transit migrants had only to carry 125 francs.[30] Akin to the Prussian decision of 1885 to reject transit migrants with a ticket for overseas who did not possess 400 marks, this decision was overambitious, especially given that the economic interests involved in the transatlantic movement had to be considered. The measure was very leniently implemented, as at the green border there seemed to be hardly any control at all, while for those who arrived by ship we have found only one reference in 1896 to 61 Russians arriving by ship from the Russian Empire who could (probably) not disembark because they were not carrying the necessary money on them.[31]

The US authorities had little confidence in European public health policy. They made it clear to the Belgian authorities and the RSL that they had the power to enforce what they considered were their interests. It took until summer 1893 to prepare US health inspectors for their European mission. These officers had to decide whether to impose a five-day quarantine period at the port of embarkation on people coming from supposedly infected areas. They also had to medically inspect all passengers, particularly for cholera, prior to departure. In August 1893, a dozen doctors were sent to the principal European emigration ports to prevent cholera carriers from travelling to the US. One of them, a Dr Rosenau, was sent to Antwerp. When this doctor arrived in Antwerp, he ordered all emigrants from infected areas to be quarantined for five days. He took the idea of quarantine literally; he ordered Russian Jews who wanted to leave for the US to be locked up in their boarding houses for five days. The Belgian authorities were shocked and intervened; Rosenau had no legal authority to deprive people of their personal freedom.[32] Rosenau was more successful in restricting departures. Just after the Belgian doctors officially mandated by the Belgian authorities performed the medical inspection of the passengers before embarking, the US doctor re-examined them. He prohibited the departure of additional would-be emigrants he personally found medically suspicious. The Belgian physicians felt humiliated and protested

loudly. Together with transportation interests, they contested the US medical screening as time consuming and not cost effective. Doctor Rosenau screened only 40 passengers in ten minutes while Belgian physicians examined 50 and he even had the audacity to ask the RSL to allow him a half hour for each batch of 40 passengers.[33] According to Belgian rules, medical inspection should only be a cursory examination. The demand of Rosenau was considered exaggerated, as it would lead to delays in the departure of the ships.

All over Europe shipping companies bombarded the US authorities with complaints about the arbitrariness of their health inspectors, who failed to act in a uniform way. Some inspectors declared certain regions to be infected and imposed a five-day quarantine, while others in rival ports did not. This created important competitive disadvantages between ports. Moreover, there was no possibility of appeal, which laid the decision in the hands of only one person. Shipping companies argued that the US doctors were inclined to refuse more than they should in order to justify their function. Finally, their actions on foreign soil were against the principles of international law.[34] Under mounting pressure and as the cholera danger receded, doctors were called back to the US in January 1894. The RSL complained that the Rosenau episode had cost the company 250,000 BEF.[35]

Fairchild indicates that the actions of US quarantine officials in not only European, but also in Asian and South American ports left a legacy of deep resentment on the part of foreign governments.[36] In Belgium, the government took a firm stand and decided that it had to remain sovereign on its territory. No American could decide the fate of foreigners on Belgian soil.[37] In 1900, another US doctor, Spragne, was sent to check the situation in Antwerp as a consequence of an outbreak of bubonic plague, but he was not received very hospitably. The situation even degenerated into a quarrel and a RSL representative had to intervene when Spragne questioned the competence of the head of the Belgian Emigration Inspection Service. The Belgian government refused to delegate any authority to this "arrogant" official during the inspection of the emigrants.[38] When, in 1904, the US authorities demanded that an American doctor be allowed to inspect immigrants in Belgium before departure, the Belgian authorities flatly refused to allow this.[39]

On the other hand, the RSL did not want its clients to be detained at a high cost in the US or refused disembarkation. Such cases weighed heavily on the budget and the reputation of the company. The uproar caused by the cholera scare had manifestly shown the threat of US public intervention in profitable transatlantic business. As a deterrent, the US authorities had inflated the maintenance and repatriation costs. The shipping company realised that they had to take into account US interests and, as a consequence, closely collaborated with the US health department. With its assistance, advice on disinfection material was complied with proceedings for luggage, vaccination and inspection of passengers, measures on board and the like.

From 1894 onwards, several control stations managed by the German shipping lines were erected at the German–Russian border. At these stations transit migrants were identified and, if they were considered unwanted according to US admission criteria, they were refused access to the German Empire. Thus, from this time, only migrants whom private migration control agents assumed could travel to the US unhindered were able to pass through the German–Russian border.[40] After passing through the border, most transit migrants "hardly entered Germany." Instead, they were channelled through "an increasingly hermetic transit

corridor" from border to port, a corridor managed by the shipping lines.[41] The German shipping lines had the advantage of having undertaken the first selection of the transit migrants at their border stations. This strategic advantage was used to improve their market share of the emigrant business. In 1892, the continental cartel agreements had been solidified by dividing the market into shares, which, four years later, included all the British shipping lines. The German border control stations allowed German lines to avoid risking deportation costs. At the same time, at the German border control stations the employees of the German shipping lines rebooked their passengers who might possibly be barred entrance to the United States with the cartel partners, including the RSL. In this manner they were not lost to the pool and the liability had shifted to the other companies.[42] Non-German shipping lines became more dependent on the goodwill of their German competitors.

The geographical position of Antwerp caused RSL to have a larger pool of "defective" clients than its German competitors. Russian emigrants who were refused outright at medical stations at the German border were sometimes able to reach Antwerp, often with the help of smugglers.[43] That they had been blacklisted at the German border was not known to the RSL. Even fit Russian transmigrants increasingly circumvented the medical control stations at the German–Russian border by travelling through Austria–Hungary. This was not simply a cunning strategy, but was forced upon migrants who, because they did not possess the right ticket and insufficient money, were often not allowed to cross the German–Russian border. If they wanted to continue their journey, they had to cross the border between the Russia Empire and Austria–Hungary.[44]

All transportation businesses took preventative measures in the ports of departure in order to prohibit immigrants medically unwanted by the US authorities from boarding their carriers. The US managed to project its restrictive policy into Europe, where it became a preventative measure. Some European shipping companies partly subcontracted medical supervision at the ports of departure to the US authorities. US physicians advised these private companies on which customers not to transport to the US. Because the Belgian authorities were opposed to any US intervention on Belgian soil, the RSL organised its own preventative medical examination. It deemed the official Belgian medical screening to be insufficient. The medical examination organised by the RSL excluded those would-be immigrants who might be turned back on Ellis Island. As a consequence, Antwerp had one of the best deportation records at US ports, which was significantly lower than the ports under US medical supervision.[45]

After the first check by the physicians, employed by the Belgian government, immigrants were checked a second time by the RSL physician. This second check was more rigorous in order to assure that no immigrant who was liable to deportation was able to board the carrier. The RSL had done its arithmetic; this policy of prevention cost less than the maintenance and repatriation of passengers who would be turned back in New York. For example, RSL physicians rejected any boarding emigrant with an eye infection and diagnosed them as having trachoma.[46] In contrast, Belgian government inspectors let these emigrants through and complained that RSL doctors made no distinction between trachoma and other infections. (Trachoma is an eye disease that can lead to blindness if left untreated and, in the 1890s, was regarded as a dangerous infectious disease at Ellis Island; it was often a reason to deny entry to the US.)[47] Diagnosing trachoma at an early stage was not a simple matter in this

period, and the RSL physicians did not want to take any risks. It was better to refuse too many than too few. A high refusal rate also justified the position of RSL medical inspectors.[48]

4. Public hopes in private migration control in Antwerp

Jewish transmigration through Antwerp from the Russian Empire and Austria–Hungary began to increase after 1895. At that time, the RSL embarked on a new recruitment strategy. Russian emigrants were considered less interesting customers, because of the negative American attitude towards them and the prices for transporting Russian Jews were subsequently raised. Austria–Hungary was considered a more promising recruitment area and an intensive campaign was launched in that region, with Antwerp promoted as the port for transatlantic transportation. This clearly bore fruit. By advertisements, and offering rebates and other incentives to agents in those areas, the number of Austria–Hungarian clients increased steeply. However, the discriminatory prices for Russians were only retained for a short time and later on the RSL even made special efforts to attract Russian Jews.[49] The competition for Jewish clients was heightened in 1906, when the Russian Volunteer Fleet leaving from Libau promoted itself as the Jewish line and provided kosher food. The line was not the first to do so. HAPAG (Hamburg-Amerikanische Packetfahrt-Actien-Gesellschaft/Hamburg-American Line) and at least one British line also served kosher food at the time. But, the RSL had refused to do so under the motto "Equal treatment to all nationalities."[50] By 1912, RSL seemingly considered itself at a comparative disadvantage in regard to other shipping lines by not accommodating the dietary demands of its Jewish customers and therefore soon followed suit.[51]

The Belgian and US authorities wanted the transportation companies to take into account their national interests. The US authorities wanted the shipping companies to be more selective and choose their customers in line with US expectations of what was a desirable immigrant. Ships should no longer bring in "defective" immigrants and if transport companies did so they would be financially sanctioned by being billed for all detention and repatriation costs and in certain cases they were even fined. These were important financial incentives for companies.[52] The RSL accepted the role of being a subcontractor for the US immigration control authorities in Antwerp. As the Belgian government still insisted on defending its national sovereignty, the RSL managed medical inspections itself and excluded those considered unhealthy according to US standards. This remote control was not only a negative choice of the RSL.

Obviously, the transport companies would prefer no immigration control at all, but they realised that they needed to anticipate moves in immigration control. In this way, they could organise this control themselves instead of being the passive victim of political decisions taken in New York and Washington. It is even likely that the decision of the Belgian authorities not to tolerate any direct US immigration control in the port of Antwerp was suggested by the RSL. They certainly did not oppose it, as it made them independent from the whims of US officers. George Glavis, a lawyer in the service of the shipping lines, took up this matter in his lobbying in Washington. In 1894, he contacted various congressmen and explained to them that imposing US controls on European soil had its drawbacks: "it will make the US morally responsible for the many acts of cruelty and injustice, for migrants unrightfully rejected access to the land of the free, not by laws of the US, but by the decision of an US inspector."[53] Glavis advocated leaving the screening of immigrants up to the private transport companies. This screening process, implemented by a private actor, was advantageous

because it meant that basic rights could be denied to these would-be immigrants. The decision of the RSL, a private company, could not be contested, while in Ellis Island immigrants had the right to appeal the decision of the US authorities. Screening by the RSL was limited to contagious diseases, while other grounds for refusing immigrants access to US territory (such as those likely to be dependent on public welfare, criminal, contract labourer, anarchist, etc.) were never used by this shipping agency to refuse passengers travelling from European soil. If they had prepaid tickets, refusing passengers for non-medical reasons exposed them to liability suits in the US. The purchaser of the ticket could, in turn, sue the company for breach of contract.[54]

The Belgian authorities were less positive about this preventative policy of the RSL. More and more immigrants, some barred from admission to the US in Ellis Island, but mostly immigrants who never made it on the RSL ships, were stranded in Antwerp. The RSL considered these people medically untransportable and left them to their own devices.[55] However, the Belgian authorities obviously did not want to be financially liable for migrants stranded in Belgium because they were (likely to be) refused entry to the US. Those without means were ordered to leave the country. Mostly migrants debarred for medical reasons were not willing or able to return to their place of origin. As a consequence, there was growing hostility towards the RSL in Belgian official circles, as the authorities were forced to foot the bill of the US admission policy. In addition, these stranded immigrants posed a health risk for the local population. While the Belgian authorities had for a decade trusted German sanitary border controls that prevented sick persons entering Western Europe, in 1905 the Belgian authorities decided that all emigrants for the New World were to undergo sanitary control immediately upon arrival at the Antwerp central railway station. This was a medical control to detect contagious diseases that could pose a health risk for the population of Antwerp.[56] The following year, 1906, at the peak of the transit movement, Venesoen, the director of the Emigration Service, called upon the authorities to stop the invasion: "As America we have to protect ourselves against the invasion of undesirable people, suffering from defects and who cannot render any service to our population."[57]

The Belgian authorities took little initiative. As mentioned before, in 1893, at the time of the cholera epidemic, the Belgian authorities had tried to make stranded migrants pay the bill by imposing a regulation stating that all transit migrants must carry enough money on them to pay for their return trip. If refused in Antwerp by the RSL or by the US authorities on Ellis Island they would have the means to return home. It seems Belgium lacked the means (and will) to enforce this admission criterion. Since 1860 immigration was no longer controlled at the Belgian borders. Free mobility was a corollary of free trade and considered in these liberal times a benefit to all. The labour needs of the booming industrial economy, as well as the business interests in the growing popularity of tourism, were powerful economic motives that favoured unrestricted international mobility.[58] Only in times of emergency, as during the cholera epidemic, were there personnel at Belgium's (green) borders to assure a minimal kind of control at the main crossing points. For most of the time, nobody even checked the people crossing the border on international trains. Such border control was deemed to hinder international traffic.

An additional problem was that the police were not able to distinguish transit migrants from the other migrants. Immigrants were welcome if they could find a means to earn a livelihood. Only if they were a burden on the public purse did they have to leave. Just like in the US, destitute immigrants were not welcomed in

Belgium. However, forcing the departure of stranded transit migrants who had no means of support was not that straightforward. Many were a long way from home and, in order to return, they had to pass through the German Empire. In the 1880s, Germany was annoyed by the Russian and Austro-Hungarian subjects who were forced from the Netherlands, France and Belgium but were prevented from a swift return home by their lack of financial wherewithal. They ended up stranded in Germany, thereby increasing its population of poor and ethnically unwanted individuals. In 1884 the German authorities therefore imposed a national logic upon deportation procedures. Destitute aliens who the police force of neighbouring countries wanted to expel to the German Empire were not permitted entry into German territory. Only if these migrants could prove that they needed to pass through the German Empire to return home, and who possessed sufficient funds for the fare, were allowed to pass by the Prussian border guards.[59]

So, it was only on exceptional occasions that Russian or Galician Jews stranded in Belgium were told to leave the country, but sometimes due to their lack of money or their poor health they were unable to leave. Nevertheless, the German authorities found out that, even if these returnees had funds, the selective border control was not that effective. In some cases, Russian or Galician Jews who had been forced to return, and whose return had been subsidised by the Belgian authorities or by the transport agencies, looked upon arrival in Germany in the Cologne railway station for an opportunity to sell their return ticket.[60] The small amount of capital they accrued from this sale gave them an opportunity to either settle in Germany or attempt departure overseas on another occasion.

With a selective recruitment policy in the countries of origin the shipping lines were able to win the favour of the various authorities in the states of transit and final destination. However, avoiding those clients who belonged to the excludable classes was a very difficult task. It meant that the migrant agents in the towns and villages in the Russian Empire and Habsburg Galicia had to screen the would-be immigrants according to the ever more restrictive US admission criteria. Moreover, by the early twentieth century, more than 30% of the tickets were sold by agents in the US, who did not see the migrant in person, as this was undertaken by the third party paying for the crossing. These migrants often reached ports without contacting any local agent in Europe.[61] The US authorities hoped that the shipping companies would recuperate the costs of repatriation of so-called "defective" immigrants from their agents so that they would be inclined to be more selective.[62] However, putting in place this chain of command turned out to be problematic. Shipping immigrants overseas was a very lucrative business and restricting the activities of their agents in the Pale of Settlement or Galicia was considered contrary to the interests of the shipping companies. The transport companies were willing to take the risk of letting some "defective" emigrants come to Antwerp. Most of them were refused anyway when they attempted to board the steamship, so the risks for the RSL were minimal. The complaints of the Belgian authorities fell on deaf ears. The obligation to carry enough money for a round trip was considered excessive by the RSL and contrary to their interests, given that only a few of their emigrants were turned back at Ellis Island and the authorities in other transit countries, except for Prussia, did not impose this obligation.

There was, however, strong pressure on the RSL and the company was willing to make an effort for high profile and exceptionally deserving cases. One young woman, Chaja Grodsky, was such a case. She was born in 1887 in the city of Mazeikiai, in present-day Lithuania. In 1904, aged 17, she received a prepaid ticket

from her mother's brother, who was then living in New York. She left her parents in Mazeikiai and took a train to Antwerp. In Antwerp, before embarking on the *Kroonland*, she was medically checked. The RSL physician, as well as the physician in the service of the Belgian government, considered Chaja Grodsky to be in good condition. So she sailed in steerage on 20 August 1904 with the *Kroonland* of the RSL from Antwerp to New York. Nine days later, she arrived on US territory, in Ellis Island. She was declared an unwanted immigrant, but appealed the decision. She had to stay several weeks on Ellis Island but the final verdict was that she was "feebleminded." By the early twentieth century, not only were disease carriers rejected, but so was anyone who, in the opinion of the medical staff of Ellis Island, could not meet the productivity requirements of the industrial world. Nearly three months after her arrival, Chaja had to return to Europe. She sailed in November 1904 with the *Vaderland* from Ellis Island to Antwerp at the expense of the RSL. The costs of her detainment in Ellis Island were also defrayed by the RSL. RSL tried to recoup the maintenance costs from her New York uncle and her father still in the Russian Empire, but to no avail.

In Antwerp, Chaja was transferred to an asylum. She was considered incurable and the doctors in charge thought that there was little chance she would ever be able to leave the asylum. She came under the charge of the Belgian authorities. In June 1905, the asylum director considered that her mental situation had improved – she was slowly coming back to her senses and anyway she was very meek – and that if she were accompanied she could go back home. Her father, Chaïm Grodsky, was still in Mazeikiai. He was very willing to take his daughter back, but was unable to pay for the stay in the asylum, or her trip back home, not least as she could not travel alone. Subsequently the RSL agreed to pay Chaja's trip back home. On 31 July 1905 – one year after she had left Mazeikia – she returned home. During this trip she was accompanied by a Belgian military officer, whose round trip back to Belgium was covered by the RSL.[63]

The RSL was by no means a charity, but pressure by the Belgian and US authorities explains its willingness to pay for the repatriation of Chaja Grodsky, who was considered an exceptionally deserving case. To take care of her repatriation was largely a token gesture by the RSL in order to appease the Belgian authorities and to prevent an obligation being imposed on them by law. In particular, the US Immigration Law of 1907 could even require that certain deportees were to be repatriated to their place of origin with an attendant, an obligation that could carry an extra-territorial extension.[64] Just a few, who were not allowed to board RSL ship or were returned from the US, were totally dependent on public care, as in the case of Chaja Grodsky. Most comparable migrants had relatives to take care of them and civil society offered a hand in dealing with those who were a problem for migration management. In general, the RSL preferred these private arrangements.

5. (Jewish) civil society in Antwerp and the (trans)migrants

The growing number of stranded immigrants at the beginning of the twentieth century inspired the Antwerp Jewish community to take the initiative and try to meet the needs of these people.[65] In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Antwerp branch of the Alliance had dedicated most of its activities towards transit migrants, but by the twentieth century it seems its activities had dwindled. However, the general welfare organisation of the Jewish community in Antwerp, the Caisse

israélite de secours, which supported local destitute Jews, also took the transmigrants under its wing.

It was only in 1906 that a specific aid infrastructure for transit migrant Jews was reconstituted. Isaac Tolkowksy, a Russian Jewish diamond entrepreneur, had been indignant about the treatment of a young Jewish woman by a passage agent, and therefore founded, along with other Russian Jews residing in Antwerp, the organisation Ezra. The following year, the number of Jewish transit migrants increased and the need for such an institution was therefore evident. Although an initiative of immigrant Jews, this aid committee was soon condoned by the liberal Jewish establishment in Antwerp and became part of the welfare infrastructure of the city's Jewish community. The eminent jurist Paul Errera, who was close to the Consistoire Central Israélite de Belgique, the supreme religious authority in Belgium, assumed the honorary presidency of the organisation. Specialised knowledge was built up and served the community throughout the subsequent decade. Although only a minority of the transit migrants used the services of Ezra (see Table 1), this still amounted to a few thousand Jews, mainly from the Russian Empire, who were assisted each year.[66]

In their fundraising campaigns, among Jews as well as Gentiles in Antwerp, they depicted Jewish emigration from Russia as an escape from persecution. Thus, Russian Jews who were mentally ill were depicted as the victims par excellence of the horrors of the pogroms. In this way, the lasting presence of these migrants was legitimised.[67] This aid committee was able to finance its operations itself, and only in emergencies did it seek recourse to funds from the Jewish Colonization Association.[68]

Ezra offered migrants stranded in Antwerp assistance that enabled them ultimately to reach their destination. Most of their financial aid went towards the purchase of shipping tickets.[69] Medical treatment might also help stranded transit migrants qualify for the transatlantic journey.[70] When cured – for example medical treatment for trachoma could last up to six months – they were keen to move on and fulfil their original plan.[71] The same was the case for those who were stranded in Antwerp due to lack of financial means.[72] These poor migrants could increase their funds by doing odd jobs in Antwerp. Even women and children got stranded in Antwerp. In the main, their husbands or fathers had departed first and once they were settled in the US with a

Table 1. Immigrants supported by the Jewish community aid organisations (Caisse israélite de secours, from 1906 onwards Erza, 1903–13).

	Administrative support	Financial support
1903		598
1904		1012
1905		1934
1906	3059	
1907	3335	
1908	1141	
1909	2429	
1910	2015	1003
1911	1702	
1912	7318	967
1913	9304	

Source: Ezra reports (see footnote 49).

minimum of comfort they would contract a travel agency to bring their wives and children over. These husbands had few financial reserves, yet they wanted to bring their families to the US as soon as possible, so the trip was usually paid for in two instalments. The first instalment was paid when the contract was signed, and the second was due before boarding the ship at the port city. During the US economic crisis of 1907–8, many East European Jews in the US were not able to come up with the money to pay for the second instalment. As a consequence, wives had to wait in Antwerp with their children until their husbands had saved up enough money.[73]

When transit migrants realised their original plan was not possible, the Jewish aid committee could offer assistance for repatriation. Yet, very few were willing to return home.[74] Many more, who did not qualify for immigration to the US, moved on to Great Britain or France. Britain was not always an end station; for many poor Jews it was another stage in their transatlantic journey.[75] From 1905 onwards, Britain erected its own immigration barriers, as each emigrant had to carry five pounds, but this did not impede the flow from Belgium to Britain. It only slightly increased the prices for crossing the English Channel, as the Russian and Galician Jews stranded in Belgium bought second class tickets. The Belgian shipping lines abolished all third class tickets, thereby relieving all patrons from examination, as only vessels with more than 20 steerage passengers were classified as immigrant ships and subject to inspection.[76] France, and in particular Paris, attracted East European Jews in ever greater numbers until the First World War. The Belgian Jewish committee in Brussels insisted that destitute stranded migrants move to Paris, as assistance was more likely to be available for them, given that the Jewish community in the French capital was wealthier than in Brussels.[77]

If stranded migrants wanted to settle in Belgium, they were not assisted by Ezra and were simply left to their own devices.[78] They were strongly encouraged by the Jewish committee to return home or to move on. It was believed that too great an increase in poor co-religionists would risk affecting the reputation of the Jewish community. Yet, the presence of stranded Jewish transit migrants in Belgium was merely ephemeral, and it seems only few of them finally settled in Belgium.

Conclusion

The (Jewish) mass migration from Eastern Europe to America between 1880 and 1914 became the focus of ever more ambitious states. In the early 1880s, states in Western Europe and North America hardly influenced the volume and direction of migration flows. At worst, states refused destitute immigrants access to their territory, but, in general, able-bodied immigrants were considered able to provide for their upkeep. In Central and Eastern Europe, the Habsburg and Tsarist authorities tolerated the departure of their (Jewish) citizens, partly by default, as preventing their citizens from leaving was a difficult task, especially as ever larger numbers of Jews were determined to leave their native lands.

When a small number of destitute immigrants were forced by the US authorities to return to Prussia in the mid-1880s, the Prussian authorities realised that transit migrants could be forced to stay in Prussia. This was not appreciated by the Prussian political elite, characterised by nationalistic and antisemitic attitudes. The authorities quickly decided that those who did not make it to the US had to be prevented from remaining in Prussia. From 1885 onwards, a financial guarantee was demanded of the emigrants. This impediment to the free flow of Jews from Eastern Europe

through Western Europe on their way overseas was used very selectively. Important economic interests were at stake and national capacities were insufficient to enforce this regulation strictly. In addition, part of the transit migration flow shifted direction in order to bypass Prussian control.

From the 1890s onwards, the US became the trendsetter in protectionist immigration policy by developing an administrative capacity to restrict immigration from overseas. The economic crisis of that decade, and the supposed health threat posed by immigrants, offered US nativist forces leverage to push through restrictive legislation. In 1892, cholera in particular became the trigger for a drive in US restrictionist immigration policy. Shipping interests realised that they had better abide by US demands at all costs, since medical controls were undertaken at their expense. German shipping interests quickly took the initiative to medically control this transit flow before the migrants arrived on German territory. This private migration control at the German borders, in keeping with US sensibilities, was not considered sufficient by the US authorities. The US authorities wanted to medically control the emigrants themselves at the port of embarkation, including the port of Antwerp. After a short-lived experiment in 1892, the Belgian authorities insisted that a foreign power had no jurisdiction on Belgian territory. The US managed to enforce its remote migration control indirectly at the port of Antwerp. The RSL became a subcontractor for US immigration policy and transit migrants deemed medically unacceptable by US standards were debarred from leaving Antwerp for overseas. The Belgian authorities tried to convince the stranded transit migrants to return home, but repatriation was not an option for most of the (Jewish) migrants and also difficult to enforce. The Belgian liberal regime, still an adherent of free international mobility, was caught between Prussian nationalist border policy and US restrictionism. The Belgian authorities were also unwilling to force the RSL to pay the bill, which was able to get away with making some symbolic gestures. The local Jewish community was the main support of the Belgian authorities, offering financial support to stranded immigrants to enable them to move on.

Large numbers were involved in the transit migration flow through Antwerp. In the early twentieth century, when the migration control in Antwerp that the RSL had developed in concert with US policymakers was fully operative, a considerable number of passengers were stopped from leaving for the US. The number of stranded migrants considered a nuisance seems to have remained manageable for the authorities, as no public action was taken against this inflow or against the shipping companies that were the magnet attracting these transit migrants. Most stranded transit migrants received support from private sources – the Jewish aid committees and relatives abroad – and could make use of alternatives considered more interesting than remaining in Antwerp. It was only after the First World War that state intervention in migration would cause a fundamental reorientation in the destinations of Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe and only then would Antwerp become a significant settlement city for Jewish mass migration. After the First World War, the powerful US lobby that had advocated an unrestricted inflow to meet the labour needs of the industrial economy would change its strategy and nativist forces would grow in strength. US but also British immigration control became much more ambitious. Remote control would remain their most important migration control mechanism, but this would no longer be mainly privately, but rather publicly, organised. The visa system and border control would give US and British public authorities the power to manage migration efficiently, while the continental European countries would, owing to their green borders (and less ambitious agenda), become the destination of mass migration.

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Notes

1. Emigrants could also be found among the second class passengers, including those who were willing to pay slightly more to circumvent US immigration control. Around the turn of the century, second class tickets were about US$10 more than steerage, and the volume of passengers in this class was about 10% of the total in steerage. See correspondence between the directors of the Holland America Line (HAL) and their head agent in New York and the minutes of the Continental Shipping Conference 1885–1914, Municipal Archives Rotterdam (MAR), HAL collection, 318.04, 72–7, 221–6, 265 and 580; 318.14 1. See also Fairchild, *Science at the Borders*, 126–8.
2. Letter of head of emigration inspection to governor, 29 April 1900. Provincial Archive Antwerp (PAA), Scheepvaart, 98; Annual Report of the Emigration Inspection, 1913. City Archive Antwerp, Modern Archive (MA) 13830/462. Between 1905 and 1914, 10% of those "thousands of" Russian Jews who had already bought a ticket and addressed the Jewish Colonisation Association's information bureaux for help in financing the train fee travelled via Antwerp. See Alroey, "Bureaucracy, Agents and Swindlers," 14. The Jewish mass migration from Romania seems to have been well organised by the Jewish philanthropic organisation in concert with the authorities in Britain and the US, and they probably bypassed Antwerp, as no trace of them is to be found in the archival documentation we consulted. See Kissman, "The Immigration of Rumanian Jews," 2–3.
3. Fahrmeier et al., *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World*; Caestecker, *Alien Policy in Belgium*, 1–52.
4. Engelsing, *Bremen als Auswanderungshafen*, passim; Feys, "Gateways to the New World," 133.
5. In 1898, 90% of the transatlantic passengers from Antwerp travelled with the RSL: Schreiber, *L'immigration juive en Belgique*, 171.
6. In this paper we do not address the push factors explaining the emigration or flight of Jewish migrants; thus our analysis has little to say about the volume of the migration flow, which was largely determined by factors in the countries of emigration. An analysis of the volume is only possible starting from the places of departure and looking into those who left and those who stayed. For the dynamics of out-migration, see Klier, "Emigration Mania in Late-Imperial Russia"; Massil, *Patterns of Emigration*; Haumann, *Geschichte der Ostjuden*; Kuznets, "Immigration of Russian Jews"; Alroey, "And I Remained Alone"; Gartner, "Women in the Great Jewish Migration."
7. Klier, "Emigration Mania in Late Imperial Russia."
8. Siegel, *Österreichisches Judentum zwischen Ost und West*, 97–109.
9. Meeting Alliance Antwerp, 1881. Yiddisher Visns Haftelekher Institut, New York (YIVO), Folder 13/5960-6071, no. 6193. Schreiber, *L'immigration juive en Belgique*, 179; Spelkens, "Antwerp as a Port of Emigration," 97ff.
10. We have only a breakdown of the number of transit migrants based on nationality from 1885 onwards and the qualitative data on transit migration are also limited, as the yearly reports of the Belgian Emigration Inspection Service were minimal before 1885. The annual reports of the Belgian Emigration Inspection Service are the source of our quantitative data.

11. Schreiber, *L'immigration juive en Belgique*, 175–7
12. Alroey, "Out of the Shtetl," 111ff.
13. Neubach, *Die Ausweisungen von Polen*; Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers.*
14. Brinkmann, "Travelling with Ballin," 467.
15. Internal correspondence police, 1886. Governor of Galicië to police and heads of border districts, 3 July 1892, Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie. C. k. Dyrekcja Policji w Krakowie (ARKR DPKR) 124: 3 and 43, quoted in Ronin, *Eindverslag researchopdracht Archiwum Panstwowe Krakow.*
16. Brinkmann, "Travelling with Ballin," 470.
17. Kowalski, *Przestepstwa emigracyjne w Galicji*, 163ff.
18. We focus in this article on medical control, although many more immigrants were refused in the immigration control stations because of the likelihood that they might become a public charge or contract labour, but these latter refusals did not cause structural changes in the manner by which shipping lines and the authorities in the transit countries and the US processed the emigrants. Fairchild, *Science at the Borders*; Feys, "A Business Approach to Transatlantic Migration," 392–403.
19. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design.*
20. Markel, *Quarantine!*, 16–81.
21. Ibid., 87–100.
22. PAA, Scheepvaart, 40, quoted in de Coster, *Eindverslag research in Provinciaal Archief.* Such a budget (25,000 Belgian francs) had already been voted for once in 1879, in order to repatriate 161 Russian Mennonites who had returned penniless from Brazil. From 1892 onwards, repatriation was probably an item on the budget of the Ministry of Justice, but the sum was small and mainly to be used for the repatriation of the insane, sick and very young. Ronin, *Antwerpen en zijn "Russen"*, 209–16; Caestecker, *Alien Policy in Belgium*, 174.
23. We do not know whether the RSL resumed the transport of Russians before March 1893: correspondence August 1892 to March 1893, MAR, HAL, 318.02, 112–21, 318.04, 221–6.
24. Markel, *Quarantine!*, 137–49.
25. "Many transatlantic aspirants got routed through Paris, hoping to get on the next boat out of Le Havre." Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*, 43, 113, 221–2; PAA, Landverhuizing-Emigratie, 60, quoted in de Coster, *Eindverslag research in Provinciaal Archief.*
26. General Belgian Archives (ARA), Archives Alien Department (AAD), 265–8.
27. The incubation period of the cholera bacillus was believed to be seven days and a sea trip from Russia generally took five days, so another two days in quarantine were considered necessary: Rapport du Conseil Supérieur d'hygiène publique, 1893, 54–8 and 187–190; PAA, Landverhuizing-Emigratie, 60, quoted in de Coster, *Eindverslag research in Provinciaal Archief.*
28. Letter of Minister of Justice to head of police in Brussels, 11 August 1893, PAA, D60, 185 099, quoted in de Coster, *Eindverslag research in Provinciaal Archief*; Ronin, *Antwerpen en zijn "Russen"*, 221–5.
29. Letter of RSL to governor, 16 August 1893, PAA, Landverhuizing-Emigratie, 60, quoted in de Coster, *Eindverslag research in Provinciaal Archief.*
30. Letter of the Minister of Justice to governor, 13 March 1894, PAA, Landverhuizing-Emigratie 60, quoted in de Coster, *Eindverslag research in Provinciaal Archief*; Ronin, *Antwerpen en zijn "Russen"*, 221–5; Spelkens, "Antwerp as a Port of Emigration," 72–3.
31. Annual Report of the Emigration Inspection, 1896, PAA, Scheepvaart, 98.
32. When the US newspapers reported that due to the bubonic plague the US would send physicians to control the European ports, Venesoen, the head of the emigration inspection, recalled the experience with Rosenau and warned his superiors, "Once a whole group was locked up, literally with a key. I had to intervene to liberate them": letter of head of emigration inspection to governor, 28 December 1899, PAA, Scheepvaart, 98.
33. PAA, Scheepvaart, 57, 61, 63, 67, 82–3, 98, quoted in de Coster, *Eindverslag research in Provinciaal Archief.*
34. Letters 21, 24 April, 5 May, 31 July, 8, 22 August, 11 November and 22 December 1893, MAR, HAL, 318.04, 221–6.
35. Letter of head of emigration inspection to governor, 13 January 1900, PAA, Scheepvaart, 98.
36. Fairchild, *Science at the Borders*, 62.
37. Feys, "A Business Approach to Migration," 452.

38. Letters of head of emigration inspection to governor, 13 January 1900 and 4 July 1900, PAA, Scheepvaart, 98; Feys, "A Business Approach to Migration," 409.
39. Fairchild, *Science at the Borders*, 62; "Report on the Conditions Existing in Europe and Mexico Affecting Emigration and Immigration Being a Compilation in Digested Form of Reports Submitted," 113, National Archives Washington, Records of Immigration and Naturalization Service (RINS), 54411/1; Wheeler, "Immigration Conditions Europe and Mexico," 1906.
40. Just, *Ost-und südosteuropäische Amerikawanderung*, 77–85; Wüstenbecker, "Hamburg and the Transit," 234–44.
41. Brinkman, "Travelling with Ballin," 470.
42. Correspondence with Berlin and New York agents 1896–1903, MAR, HAL, 318.04, 1, 74, 226.
43. On smugglers assisting defective emigrants in 1906 see ARA, AAD, 265–8 and PAA, 60, quoted in de Coster, *Eindverslag research in Provinciaal Archief.*
44. The German shipping lines proposed to the Austrian–Hungarian authorities that they open medical stations at the Prussian border with Austria–Hungary in 1904 and 1906. It does not seem that these plans were ever realised, HAPAG to Minister of Interior, Vienna 19 April 1906, ARKR DPKR 124, 3 and 43, quoted in Ronin, *Eindverslag researchopdracht Archiwum Panstwowe Krakow*; Alroey, "Out of the Shtetl," 120–1; Brinkman, "Travelling with Ballin," 473; Würstenbecker, "Hamburg and the Transit," 224–34.
45. See Dillingham Commission Reports, vol. 4, 1911.
46. In 1906 they rejected 15 to 30 Russian emigrants a week for trachoma: letter of maritime commissioner to Minister of Justice, 22 December 1906, AAD, 265–8.
47. Luthi, *Invading Bodies*, 248–90; Maglen, "Importing Trachoma," 87–99.
48. Annual Report of the Emigration Inspection, 1903, PAA, Scheepvaart, 67. The financial interest in medical screening at the ports of embarkation increased in the early twentieth century when the transport companies had, on top of the repatriation costs, also to pay a fine of US$100 for bringing in migrants with infectious diseases; letter of head of emigration inspection to governor, 6 April 1898, PAA, Scheepvaart, 98.
49. Feys, "A Business Approach to Migration," 262.
50. Alexander Harkavy, "Diary of a Visit to Europe in the Interests of Jewish Emigration," 1906–7, 5 (Antwerp), American Jewish Historical Society, Harkavy Papers (an archival document generously put at our disposal by Gur Alroey [henceforth, "Harkavy Diary"]).
51. Letter of New York head agent to directors, 22 April 1912, MAR, HAL, 318.03, 48.
52. Feys, "The Visible Hand," 46–7.
53. Glavis was in fact quoting Van den Toorn, the chief agent of HAL in New York who proposed this strategy to Glavis and elaborated this argument even further: "not by laws which the United States have the perfect right to enact for their protection, but by well meant, but ill-considered acts of an official of the United States, who of necessity cannot be competent to be accuser, jury and judge and even Supreme Court all at once": letter of HAL head agent New York to directors, 8 August 1894, MAR, HAL, 318.04, 221–6.
54. Feys, "A Business Approach to Migration," 395.
55. In September 1906, 3% of the passengers ($n = 1830$) were not permitted to board a ship in Antwerp bound for the US due to medical reasons: "Report on the Conditions existing in Europe and Mexico Affecting Emigration and Immigration Being a Compilation in Digested Form of Reports Submitted," 114, National Archives, NWA, RINS: National Archives Washington, Records of Immigration and Naturalization Service, 54411/1; Wheeler, "Immigration Conditions Europe and Mexico," 1906.
56. See Daman, "Logement à terre," 21. Probably this change of policy was also due to the increase in transit migrants who had not passed through the medical control at the Prussian border.
57. Letter of head of emigration to governor, 28 September 1906, AAD, 265–8, document quoted at length in Ronin, *Antwerpen en zijn "Russen"*, 229–31; Spelkens, "Antwerp as a Port of Emigration," 72–3.
58. The Belgian industrial economy started to recruit abroad from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards. In 1910, labour for mines was recruited in Galicia and Italy, and employers even thought about recruiting Chinese labour. During the nineteenth century the national labour market had been sufficient for Belgian industry. Caestecker, *Alien Policy in Belgium*, 47–8. On tourism as part of international travel see among others Morgan, *National Identity and Travel* and Simmons, "Railways, Hotels and Tourism."

59. Caestecker, "The Transformation of Nineteenth-Century West European Expulsion Policy," 126–8.
60. Report of special immigrant inspector Marcus Braun in Report of the Commissioner-General on Immigration, 1903, 94, NAW, RINS, 52320/47.
61. Murken, *Die grossen transatlantischen Linienreederei-Verbande*, 48; Dillingham Commission Reports 1911, vol. 3, 359–63.
62. Feys, "A Business Approach to Migration," 232–5.
63. AAD, individual alien's file, 772505; Ellis Island, list of manifest of alien passengers from the US immigration officer at port of arrival, List D, SS *Kroonland* sailing from Antwerp, American Family Immigration History Centre, Ellis Island. For similar, albeit less well-documented cases of aliens considered insane by the US authorities or the RSL and repatriated at the expense of this shipping line, see AAD, individual alien's files, 772530 (Hungarian Stangl, François, returned to Antwerp November 1904 and interned in asylum St Amadeus in Mortsel) and 785986 (Brynda Paria from Rays Ko [Austria–Hungary], returned to Antwerp May 1909 at age 20); notes, 12 April 1905, National Archives Washington, file record 85, Naturalization and Immigration. For the Belgian aliens files see Caestecker et al., *De individuele vreemdelingendossiers* and Caestecker and Luyckx "Het individuele vreemdelingendossier."
64. Letter of Minister of Justice to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 12 May 1905, PAA, Scheepvaart, 104, quoted by de Coster, *Eindverslag research in Provinciaal Archief*.
65. On the Jewish community initiatives in Europe towards the transit migrants, see Bar-Chen, *Weder Asiaten noch Orientalen*, 78–9; Brinkmann, "Travelling with Ballin," 475–7.
66. Of the Jewish transit migrants effectively supported by Ezra, 90% were from the Russian Empire and only 5% from Austria–Hungary: Ezra, Société philanthropique pour la protection des émigrants, Anvers Rapport, 1911–12 and 1908. On Ezra, see Ronin, *Antwerpen en zijn "Russen"*, 248–50 and Schreiber, *L'immigration juive en Belgique*, 338.
67. Rapport annuel 1907, Ezra, AAD, 1029; Harkavy Diary: 5.
68. Dernière Heure, 30 January 1908; *L'étoile Belge*, 30 January 1908, AAD, 1029.
69. "Aid only temporary and intended only to give destitute transmigrants a chance to communicate with relatives and friends. Maximum aid 24 days' lodging and board": Harkavy Diary, 5. The financial reports of Ezra point out that in 1907 and 1908 60% of its expenses were spent on tickets; this percentage increased in the following years and reached 70% by 1913: Rapport général à l'occasion du vingt-cinquième anniversaire, Anvers, 1920, 34–7; Ezra, Société philanthropique pour la protection des émigrants, Anvers Rapport, 1911–12, Anvers, 1913, 5; Ezra, Société philanthropique pour la protection des émigrants, Anvers Rapport, 1907, Anvers, 1908, AAD, 1029.
70. City archive Antwerp, MA 27816, quoted in de Coster, *Eindverslag research in Provinciaal Archief*.
71. Annual report of head of emigration inspection for 1898, PAA, Scheepvaart, 98.
72. Schreiber, *L'immigration juive en Belgique*, 200, refers to 418 Jews stranded in Antwerp in 1906 due to the bankruptcy of the travel agent who would have provided them upon arrival in Antwerp with shipping tickets.
73. Ezra, Société philanthropique pour la protection des émigrants, Anvers Rapport 1907, Anvers, 1908, AAD, 1029; Alroey, "Out of the Shtetl," 96; Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, 170–1.
74. Schreiber, *L'immigration juive en Belgique*, 173.
75. The rumour went, according to a US official, Marcus Braun, that it would be easier for diseased passengers to get to the US from London. Report of special immigrant inspector Marcus Braun in Report of the Commissioner-General on Immigration, 1903, 88, NAW, RINS, 52320/47.
76. The Belgian emigration service in 1906 thought this barrier would imply that Belgium would be stuck with the poor migrants because they would be no longer able to make it to Britain. Letter of maritime commissioner to Minister of Justice, 22 December 1906, AAD, 265. The UK 1905 Aliens Act defined an alien as being a steerage passenger: Report of agents who had been sent to Europe, 1907, NAW, RINS, 54411/01; Simmons, "Railways, Hotels and Tourism," 217; Hofmeester, *Jewish Workers and the Labour Movement*, 156–74.
77. Schreiber, *L'immigration juive en Belgique*, 180–1; Ezra reports (see footnote 67).

78. David Toback, a Russian Jew was returned to Antwerp from Ellis Island in 1898 because of the likelihood of him becoming a public charge. The Jewish aid organisation, Ezra, was only willing to assist him to return to Russia. He finally got to the US: Toback, *The Journey of David Toback*.

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