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Information, Decision, and Migration: Jewish Emigration from Eastern Europe in the Early Twentieth Century

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This article discusses the importance of the availability of information in making the decision to emigrate. It argues that this had a major impact on Jewish emigration: the availability of knowledge alleviated the fear involved in moving to a new land and enabled hundreds of thousands to carry out their decision. The ramified activity of the information bureaux laid a foundation of data that became more and more sophisticated as the volume of emigration increased.

Keywords: Eastern Europe; Jewish emigration; Palestine, United States

Introduction

In March 1913, at the height of the mass emigration of Jews from the Russian Empire, David Kohelet, the eldest son in his family, wrote to the migration information bureau in Jaffa. His letter gives a stark description of the family’s bleak situation in a small town in the province of Mogilev. One after another he listed the trials and tribulations of a Jewish family that was having a hard time surviving in the socio-economic circumstances of the Russian Empire in the early twentieth century. David Kohelet’s description of his family’s dilemmas, hardships, financial situation, and relations with the neighbouring non-Jewish population tells us of the issues which the family took into account in deciding whether to emigrate and where to go. A rare document from the period of the great migration, the Kohelet letter covers the whole gamut of factors that led to the emigration of Jews from Eastern Europe. These factors combined mercilessly to undermine the
fragile finances of the Kohelets and many other Jewish families in the Pale of Settlement, and led them and many like them to consider emigration.

The Kohelets lived in the small village of Zakharino in the province of Mogilev. They were a family of 10: a father and mother, both aged 53, and eight children—six boys and two girls. The eldest son, aged 27, was the head of a Jewish charity school. Two sons were shoemakers who could barely support themselves in their trade, so they found jobs in a nearby sawmill for a rouble a day. Two sons, aged 15 and 17, stayed at home with their sisters, aged 12 and 6, and a boy of 8 was in school. The father of the family—whose name is not given in the letter—was a shoemaker whose trade, ‘due to the large number of artisans engaged in it and the intense competition among them, brings in just barely enough food to survive on, and even this with great difficulty’. The poverty and privation in the town in which they had previously lived—probably Mstislavl—prompted them to move to Zakharino. There they leased a plot of land and raised some vegetables, which they sold in the market once a week. Besides the financial hardship and the difficulty of supporting a family of 10, the Kohelets suffered from harassment by their non-Jewish neighbours:

The family does not feel any solid ground under its feet, and feels that [its members’] lives are in danger. Being completely dependent on the uryadni, who could evict us at any moment, the family must suffer humiliation from the village farmers, and must flatter them while its blood flows at the sight of their cruelty.

The situation had totally undermined the Kohelets’ sense of economic security and personal safety. Financial hardship, minuscule wages, the constant search for work, the move to a new place, and the abandonment of shoemaking work for a job in a local sawmill, combined with local harassment, led them to feel that their future was uncertain and that they would not be able to survive much longer. The letter goes on to state:

In light of all this, the family has decided to leave this country and head for another country, which will treat them in a more welcoming fashion….We family members are aware that it will not be easy to attain our goal, but we trust that with hard work we will succeed. We are not aiming for a life of luxury or asking for easy work; we just long for a quiet, satisfying life. We are not idealists, but we are willing to sacrifice—but only if we are assured that our future will eventually be certain and stable, and that the ground under our feet will not collapse. If we see that there is no way for the entire family to leave the country together all at once, then we have decided that the older sons—i.e., the second and third sons—will emigrate first, and after some time the rest of the family will go. Sir! If you have a chance to voice your opinion in this matter, please help us by writing to us with your instructions and your advice: Would we be able to
move to Palestine, to settle on the land or even in some city, and will we find what we are looking for in the Land of Israel? or would we better off heading for other countries because the living conditions in Palestine are not suitable for us? We are afraid we will fail and ruin our already precarious position. Please do not delay in replying.

Respectfully, in the name of the entire family, D. Kohelet[.]

David’s letter reveals his family’s hesitations in choosing a destination country, fear of what the morrow will bring, the financial hardship, and the family’s powerful but modest aspiration for a ‘quiet, satisfying life’. Although the information bureau’s reply has not been found, letters from similar families with the same amount of capital – and sometimes more than the Kohelets had – were usually answered in the negative. Without enough money it was impossible to sail to Palestine, settle there, and start a successful business that would support the family.

The Kohelet letter is one of thousands of letters that were sent during the period of the great migration to Jewish migration information bureaux in the countries of origin and destination of Jewish migrants. Most of the letters are in Yiddish; a few are in Hebrew. The vast majority were written by the potential emigrants themselves, although some were written by local scribes who formulated the letters for people and sent them to the desired address. Sometimes a copy of the bureau’s reply is attached to the letters; these replies no doubt helped them make their decision.

The potential emigrants’ letters to the information bureaux are a mine of information from the period of the great migration that are only just starting to be used by historians of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were written at the height of the mass migration by ordinary Jews who wanted a little information so that they could make a reasonable, risk-free decision. The towns from which the letters were sent, the financial status of the writers, their family composition, their full names, and the questions that they asked enable us to explore the westward emigration from Europe from the perspective of the individual potential emigrant and his family. Through them we can learn who was hiding behind the statistics and quantitative research on Jewish emigration and flesh out the numbers.

For a scholar of migration, these letters are a rare, extraordinary primary source that makes it possible to trace the decision-making process regarding emigration and the various factors that people considered when making the decision.

The purpose of this article, then, is twofold. First, I intend to explore the activity of the information bureaux against the backdrop of the period of
the great migration and to try to assess their contribution to the huge wave of migration in the early twentieth century. In other words, I will try to understand the relationship between information and emigration. Dudley Baines, a scholar of migration, says that 'the key to emigration may have been the availability of information. Information was important because it reduced uncertainty'.7 The economist and historian Arcadius Kahan writes in slightly different words about the importance of information: ‘Another precondition for voluntary migrations is knowledge about imagined information that would provide a rational justification for migration. The information might be first- or second-hand based upon some recognizable authority, but it has a critical influence on the actual decision to migrate’.8 In view of these statements, I intend to show empirically that in the early twentieth century a foundation of information was laid that had a direct impact on Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe to the American continent and enabled Eastern European Jews to make reasonable, considered decisions.

The second aim of this study is to use the letters to the information bureaux to answer one of the most challenging questions of migration research: how did families make the decision to emigrate and what factors did Eastern European Jews consider even before deciding whether to emigrate and where to go? The attempt to answer this point sheds new light on Jewish migration in the early twentieth century and makes it an interesting case in terms of emigration among various ethnic and national groups in those years. But even before I try to answer these two questions, I would like to explore critically the primary sources on which this article is based.

Critique of the sources

In the early twentieth century, information bureaux were opened in the Pale of Settlement in the Russian Empire and Galicia in order to help prospective Jewish emigrants reach their destinations safely. The family character of Jewish emigration and the emigration of women and children made the emigration process very complicated and complex.9 Emigrant families faced countless difficulties and obstacles: obtaining the documents needed to leave the country legally or, alternatively, sneaking across the border and meeting up with smugglers, purchasing train tickets, travelling thousands of kilometres by train from their home towns to the port of departure, orienting themselves in space, purchasing tickets for the ship that would take them to their destination, and selling their businesses and homes. In order to cross the ocean and reach their destinations safely
despite unexpected obstacles, emigrants had to be resourceful and able to improvise. Because this was the first time many of them had ever left their towns, they were incapable of coping with the unknown, and many of them found themselves lost and at their wits’ end.\textsuperscript{10}

Indeed, the newspapers of that era are full of stories about prospective emigrants who sold all their property and set out, only to discover too late that they could not continue. There were many family tragedies, and heartbreaking stories were frequently printed in newspapers and journals in order to arouse public opinion and help the Jewish emigrants reach a place of safety. The public pressure, combined with fear among Western and Central European Jews (especially German Jews) that the Eastern European Jews (\textit{Ostjuden}) would settle in the ports of departure instead of crossing the ocean, led to the establishment of a series of information bureaux along the migration routes. Their main purpose was to help the emigrants carry out their decision and give them as much information as possible about emigration and everything that it entailed.

Six bureaux were founded for Jewish emigrants in the early twentieth century: the information bureau of the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA), founded in 1903; two Zionist bureaux established in Odessa in 1905 and Jaffa in 1906; the information bureau of the Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO), established in Kiev in 1907; the information bureau of the Industrial Removal Office (IRO) in the United States, established in 1901; and the Central Office of Migration Affairs, established in 1904 by the Hilfsverein, the Alliance Israëlite Universelle, and the ICA. The bureaux did not coordinate with one another and sometimes they even competed. Their main function was to provide prospective Jewish emigrants with information about the destination countries, help them obtain the documents required for emigration, warn them of dangers they could expect on the way, obtain discounts for them on tickets for the ship, and solve any problem that might hinder them on their way to their new land.

The information bureaux engaged in an impressive range of activities and left behind a large amount of archival material that enables scholars of Jewish migration not only to explore how they functioned, but also to focus on central issues that historians have not yet addressed due to a lack of primary sources. The files of the information offices can found in three main archives: two in Israel and one in the United States. In the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem there are files of the Zionist and Territorialist information offices. In the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People there is the archive of the ICA which contains the file of the main information office in St Petersburg. On the other hand, the American Jewish Historical Society in New York contains the archive of the IRO in
which there are many letters from migrants who applied to it for advice and support.

Most of the bureaux did not intervene in the emigration process and did not direct emigrants to a particular country. Their entire purpose was to provide relevant, reliable information so as to facilitate decision making. The guidance literature, other printed material, and potential emigrants’ letters constitute the empirical foundation for this study, and I would like to use them to answer the two questions that I raised in the introduction.

The Jewish migration information bureaux

The Jewish Colonization Association (ICA) was the first to establish an information system for Jews who wished to emigrate westward.\textsuperscript{11} ICA information offices were scattered throughout the Pale of Settlement, providing important information about the emigration process, the dangers involved, and of course prospects in the desired destination country. Within a few years, there were information offices in all the major cities and places with large numbers of emigrants to help Jews cross the ocean. The ICA had 160 information offices in the Pale of Settlement in 1906; 296 in 1907; 449 in 1910; and 517 in 1913.\textsuperscript{12} For those interested in moving to Palestine, the Zionist Movement founded a central information bureau in the port city of Odessa (the main port of departure for Palestine) and another information bureau in Jaffa (the port of entry into Palestine). The Territorialist movement established the Jüdische Emigrations Gesellschaft in Kiev in 1907 and dozens of information offices throughout the southern and south-western Pale of Settlement. Information bureaux were established in the destination countries as well. Various American Jewish organizations served as information bureaux, providing information to Jews who had not yet left their homes and had not finalised their decision as to their future.

The information bureaux published an enormous range of guidance literature containing valuable information for potential emigrants who wanted to know about their prospects in the new land. The activity of the bureaux was of tremendous importance for carrying out the decision to migrate and making the move a success. The emigrants’ welfare was not always the information bureau’s main interest. Often local officials treated the people who contacted them in a patronizing manner. Nevertheless, they played a key role in the success of the journey and arrival in the destination country.

A great deal of effort was put into the dissemination of information by the information bureaux. The booklet with the largest circulation, sold
by ICA information bureau officials for a nominal price of six kopecks (3 cents), was *Algemeyne yedies far di vos viln forn in fremde lender* (General information for those wanting to emigrate to foreign countries). The booklet contained a concise explanation in simple language of what emigrants should know before setting out, practical advice, and a brief description of the destination countries. It advised readers not to leave without a certain amount of money, informed them of exchange rates and the locations of border crossings, and warned them against unscrupulous agents. It described seasickness and how to deal with it; explained where to buy tickets for the ship and what the risk was in purchasing prepaid tickets, how to obtain a passport, and what baggage to take; and summarised the rules of etiquette in the destination lands: the United States, Canada, South Africa, South America, Australia, and Palestine. The ICA published the booklet – the first of its kind – in 1906, and 10,000 copies were printed every year. Prospective migrants could also obtain detailed, up-to-date information on the destination countries in special booklets devoted to each country: Argentina, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Chile, and of course the United States. Each booklet came out in several editions, updated each time. Readers found a map and a description of the geography of the destination country, as well as information about the climate and fauna in the region, the local population, the exchange rate and value of the local currency, farming and other occupations, the cost of living, and the fare for the sea voyage to the destination country. The most comprehensive booklet was the one on the United States; it contained information about each state and prospects of employment there; the policy of the information bureau was to prevent a concentration of immigrants in the big cities and to encourage their dispersal throughout the interior. This booklet had a circulation of 6,000 copies per year and was updated annually.14

Eastern European Jews who read the guidance booklets could get real information about the destination countries and calculate feasibility in terms of income and expenses. They knew, for example, that a carpenter in the United States would daily earn between 50 cents and $2 a day; a locksmith would earn $2.50; a tailor, $1.50 to $2; whereas a shoemaker would receive $10 a week.15 They found out how much the train fare was from New York to various other American cities (St Louis, $18; Cincinnati, $14), and what basic food cost in American money and converted into Russian currency: a loaf of bread, 3 cents (6 kopeks); a quart of milk, 8 cents; a dozen eggs, 20 cents; sugar, 5 cents a pound, and meat, 15–20 cents a pound.16 Based on the booklets, a prospective emigrant could calculate income and expenses and compare his situation in his native town with what he could expect in his preferred destination country. Thus, by means
of a simple calculation, he could figure out when he would earn back the cost of the trip, how much he could save per month, and when he would be able to buy tickets for the rest of his family and bring them over to join him.

In 1907 the ICA began publishing a newspaper – *Der Yudisher Emigrant* – devoted entirely to migration. It came out twice a month and contained regular updates and information for prospective emigrants about destination countries. Baron David Guenzburg was the editor of the paper until his death in 1910; he was succeeded by Samuel Yanovsky, the general secretary of the information bureau. In 1911, the ITO and its information bureau began publishing a newspaper on migration matters entitled *Vohin* (Where to?). Almost every issue had an article or two on an aspect of migration (‘Trade and Industry in Argentina’, ‘Trachoma’, ‘The Economic Crisis in the United States’, ‘The Port of Bremen’, ‘Emigration from Bessarabia’ and so on), news from the regional and local offices, questions from potential emigrants and the editors’ answers, information about rogue agents, a table of fares for the sea voyage, names of ships, the duration of the voyage, and ports of call (if any) on the way.

The circulation of these newspapers was very high for those times: *Der Yudisher Emigrant*, for example, had a circulation of 5,000 in 1906, 50,000 in 1907, 70,000 in 1908 (the peak year), and 50,000–60,000 in subsequent years. Assuming that several people read each copy, the readership was much larger. In addition, the bureau published dictionaries – English-Yiddish and Spanish-Yiddish – to help immigrants adjust to their new land. In 1912, the ICA issued a booklet entirely about swindlers: entitled *Emigrantn un agentn: nit keyn oysgetrakhte mayses* (Emigrants and agents: not figments of the imagination), it told prospective migrants that crooks, far from figments of the imagination, were a very real threat. Spread over 20 pages are descriptions of methods used by swindlers that the bureau had found out about while helping emigrants. This booklet had a twofold purpose: first, to inform prospective emigrants of the dangers facing them and to warn them about swindlers who would try to cheat them, and second, to frighten the prospective emigrants into asking the bureau for assistance. It stated as follows:

Jewish emigrants should know that they cannot make the long journey by themselves. After many years of migration the time has come to realize that one cannot emigrate without assistance. There we [the ICA information bureau] provide explanations and advice on how to get a passport, what route to take, where to go, what conditions are like in the destination country, and so on. This is why we are present in every important city in the Pale of Settlement to give emigrants the appropriate information at no charge. This is the only way to prevent
Jewish emigrants from getting into trouble – to accompany them from the moment they start considering emigration, through the course of their journey, until they set foot on the soil of the new land.\(^{18}\)

On several occasions information bureau officials travelled the migration routes themselves. They visited border stations and conversed with migrants, negotiated with travel agents, met with local government officials in order to ease bureaucratic procedures, and even journeyed by train and ship to America as if they were migrants. Their reports on their experiences were turned into newspaper articles and published in guidance booklets for migrants that were distributed for token prices in Eastern Europe. The information in these reports was invaluable for potential emigrants, as it helped them make their decision and carry it out. Because many of them had never been far from their towns and the long ocean voyage was considered daring and dangerous, the information in the guidance literature substantially allayed their fears.

In November 1909, *Der Yudisher Emigrant* printed an article by S. Bloch, an ICA representative whom the information bureau had sent from Bremen to Argentina and back in order to describe conditions and tell prospective emigrants what to expect. In the article, Bloch drew his readers’ attention to the problem of the distribution of sweet water during the voyage: ‘Frequently, quarrels would break out over the use of sweet water [*zis vaser*].’\(^{19}\) Steerage passengers were not given enough water, and Bloch recommended that they be adamant and insist on the amount they deserved. But what is interesting about Bloch’s story is not the struggle over the distribution of water but the need to explain to prospective emigrants what sweet water is: ‘Seawater is salty and unfit for drinking. Therefore the ship has to be supplied with drinking water on land. This is called sweet water.’\(^{20}\) Merely from this explanation we can get an idea of how little general knowledge the Jewish emigrants had; many of them who came from small towns in Ukraine and Belorussia had never seen the sea and it had never occurred to them that the water in the ocean was not potable. Their limited understanding of space and geography made emigration daunting – perhaps even beyond the ability of many of them.

The information bureaux made information accessible and available, thereby substantially alleviating prospective emigrants’ fears and enabling them to make a good decision with a minimum of risk. The more people knew, the less distant their country of origin became from their desired destination.

Map 1 shows the distribution of information offices in the Pale of Settlement and Poland in 1909. The most interesting and most important
fact that can be seen from the map is that offices were located in almost all the provinces from which Jewish emigrants came. Potential emigrants who wanted to know about the complexity of the emigration process and the
living conditions that they could expect in the destination country could obtain this information near their homes without any difficulty. The information offices varied in size and composition. In small towns and places with relatively few emigrants, there was no physical office. In the town of Neswizsch (no. 31 on Map 2), in the province of Minsk, the local official (B.L. Eisenbud) was a dentist who stored the publications sent by the central bureau in St Petersburg in his private clinic. In places with a large outflux of emigration such as the cities of Minsk, Pinsk and Kiev, there were regular offices with paid local officials. As stated, there were information offices in remote towns in the periphery as well, so no area was left unserved. The network of information offices in the Pale of Settlement enabled every prospective emigrant to obtain information about the emigration process and the preferred destination country without any geographical or financial difficulty.

If we compare the emigration rates with the number of information offices, we find an almost perfect correlation. In regions where emigration
rates were high (the south-western and north-western Pale of Settlement), the number of information offices was also high. Conversely, in southern Russia the emigration rate was the lowest, as was the number of information offices. This region is particularly interesting because it was the site of most of the pogroms between 1903 and 1905, in which thousands of Jews were murdered. Thus the murders and robberies targeting the Jewish population had little impact on the dynamics and scope of Jewish emigration. A similar conclusion was reached by the historian Saul Stampfer, who analysed the distribution of emigration from emigrants’ regions of origin by studying the New York landsmanschaftn associations established at the time of the Great Emigration by natives of different shtetlekh. From his research it appears that most of the Jewish landsmanschaftn in New York were composed of the migrants who came from the north-western part of the Pale of Settlement while relatively few came from the southern region of it. This led him to the conclusion that the rate of migration from the north-west of the Pale of Settlement was higher than that from southern Russia. Joel Perlmann reached a conclusion similar to Stampfer’s and analysis based on the data of the ICA information bureau. In a sample of 8,897 immigrants who entered New York in the early twentieth century, the rate of emigration from the north-west was higher than that from the southern part of the Pale of Settlement. In addition, the Soviet statistician V.V. Obolensky showed in the late 1920s that emigration from south-western Russia was significantly less than that from the north-western portion of the Pale of Settlement.

Another fact that emerges from Map 1 is the especially high number of information offices in the province of Minsk. Map 2 shows, with higher resolution, the distribution of 56 of the 61 offices in the province (the other five towns that had offices have not been identified).

As we can see from Map 2, the offices were located from Dokshits in northern Minsk (no. 1 on the map) to Ljubischow in the south (no. 21), in places that had a large Jewish population and a high emigration rate respectively. It seems that there is a correlation between the availability of information and the extent of migration. However, our data does not tell us which led to which. Were the information offices established due to large-scale emigration, or did they increase the flow of emigration? Presumably, the two factors were interdependent, and the dynamic that developed made the move to a new land easier.

Another possible explanation for the relationship between the information offices and the scope of emigration is the location of the offices near railways and rivers. Map 2 shows that railroads passed through or near 22 of the 56 towns and cities marked. In the province of Kiev (see Map 3), 23 out of 30
towns and cities were near main roads or railroads.\textsuperscript{26} The combination of available information and access to trains that they could take to the port enabled many emigrants to carry out their decision. Towns that were far from railroads tended to be near rivers; one could take a raft to the nearest railroad and from there travel to a border station and port.

Another source for understanding how the decision was made are the letters written to the information bureaux, which give us a close-up view of the kind of information that potential emigrants wanted, their concerns and the questions they asked the local officials in order to facilitate the decision-making process.

**The Decision to Emigrate**

In addition to distributing guidance literature in the Jewish emigrants’ countries of origin, the information bureaux answered letters from potential emigrants who wanted specific, precise information about the destination countries that they could not find in the general guidance literature. These letters, which were stored in the files of the information bureaux, not only tell us directly about the role of information in the decision-making process but also let us trace the very early stages of the process, before people decided whether or not to emigrate and where to go.

Tracing the decision to emigrate is one of the most difficult and complex projects that a scholar of migration can undertake. Historians of both

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**Map 3** Distribution of ICA information offices in the province of Kiev, 1909.
Jewish and non-Jewish migration have pointed out how problematic it is, chiefly due to the dearth of primary sources. This lack has forced scholars to use memoirs and oral testimony – written down many years after the immigrants settled in their new land. With these sources, they could not trace the dynamics involved in making the decision to migrate or the path migrants followed from the moment they left their old homes until they arrived at their destinations. In his monumental book *World of Our Fathers*, the historian Irving Howe notes that it is doubtful if even the memoir literature reflects the migration drama reliably. He writes:

The statements one finds in the memoir literature are persuasive through their repetition. We came because we were hungry; we came because we were persecuted; we came because life in Russia or Poland had grown insufferable. These are the answers one gets over and over again, and there is not the slightest reason to doubt them. But what they do not, perhaps cannot, explain is why some Jews acted on these urgent motives and others did not.

In his book on Jewish immigration to Argentina, Haim Avni writes that ‘this subjective drama multiplied by hundreds of thousands merits a fascinating study of its own’. Historians who have studied non-Jewish immigration to America have pointed out a similar difficulty in trying to understand how the decision was made to migrate and what hardships the migrants faced before reaching safe haven in another land. This difficulty led them to the insight that if they wanted to understand the motive for migration they would have to focus on the towns and villages from which the migrants had come and look for the reasons there. Philip Taylor, in *The Distant Magnet*, notes:

It is never enough to think of migration continent by continent, or nation by nation. Emigrants were not Europeans or even Germans and Swedes: they were dwellers in a Norwegian valley, or in the Black Forest district of Württemberg; they were Slovaks from the northern hills of the Kingdom of Hungary, Bulgarians from Macedonia, or Ashkenazite Jews from Western provinces of Czarist Russia. No scholar, of course, will ever be able to comprehend all this local detail.

In *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise*, the scholar of Italian migration Samuel Baily emphasises the importance of the ‘local level’ in understanding the causes and characteristics of migration. If we want to know how the decision to migrate was made, says Baily, we have to focus on the Italian village, which is where all the macro factors that led to westward migration came together. For this reason he studied the village of Agnone as the exemplar of many small towns in southern Italy from which emigrants left for the United States.
Dudley Baines, in *Emigration from Europe, 1815–1930*, also warns against regarding the emigrants’ country of origin as a single geographical unit, and advises scholars to focus instead on the individual provinces and villages. Baines raises a series of problems and methodological difficulties involved in migration research and offers solutions. For example, he recommends emphasising issues that have been considered self-evident and relegated to the sidelines of research, such as the decision-making process regarding whether to emigrate and where to go; the selective migration process, the actual move to a new land, and the hardships involved in reaching the new country.

Since one of the main problems in migration research is that ‘we cannot know what actually passed through the minds of potential emigrants’, Baines suggests several sources and methods that can further migration research. For instance, emphasis can be placed on databases of names, which are naturally more oriented towards individuals and contain more copious and richer information than aggregate data. In addition, letters from emigrants, in his opinion, are an excellent source for understanding the dynamics of emigration and the motivations of the emigrants. The letters sent to the Jewish information bureaux by Jews who were considering emigration and the answers that they received enable us to trace in real time the emigrants’ dilemmas and vacillations before they set out and to answer some of the challenging questions raised by Baines in his book. Even though each letter to an information bureau is a separate source describing the situation from the individual writer’s perspective, we can find a common denominator among the thousands of letters. They all express an intense desire for a modicum of information that would enable the writers to consider rationally whether to uproot themselves and move to a new land. This desire, along with the vacillations and uncertainty, indicates that the decision was the product of rational thinking and considerations of profit and reasonability, and certainly not a case of panic-driven flight.

The following are a few examples of this. The first example is that of Moyshe Zelnik. In 1913, Moyshe Zelnik of the town of Dubossary in Bessarabia sent a letter to the directors of the Industrial Removal Office (IRO) in New York asking for information about Americans’ drinking habits. Zelnik, a distiller of liquor, wanted to work in his trade in the United States, but before making a final decision he had a few questions:

> Having nowhere else to turn for a satisfactory answer, I have the honor to write to you and I believe that you will not refuse me and will answer my questions below. By my profession I am a liquor distiller, that is I have served in factories that make various sweet liqueurs and spirits, now I have decided to leave for America as a result of the terribly critical
situation in our area. But before I commit myself to the journey, I want to know whether there will be something for me to do in America connected to my profession, and therefore, I would need to know the following:

1. Do people in America drink a lot of liqueurs, or do they mainly drink unsweetened spirits like Gin or Whiskey and liquor distilled from wheat, corn, rye, and such?
2. Are there many distilleries in the United States of America and is it possible to quickly obtain a position in such a distillery?
3. If you happen to know, how much does the government get for each level of alcohol percentage per one hundred liters of liquor? If this is not practiced there, then I don’t need the information.
4. Especially this one: How does one go about getting work and what does one need to do to obtain such a position? Is there a reputable bureau or society that can fill such positions or does one have to advertise oneself in a special journal devoted to my line of work?

And awaiting your honored reply, with the deepest respect, I remain Moyshe Zelnik35

The second example concerns Israel Nevelstein, who was considering moving to Palestine. To be sure of making the right decision, he contacted Arthur Ruppin, director of the Palestine Office, asking:

1. Can I establish a factory in our country for whatever oil is in great demand in Palestine or abroad? What kind of oil is this?
2. Can I obtain all the machinery and apparatus necessary for the factory there, and will 6,000 rubles be sufficient for establishing such a factory?
3. Can I hope to earn at least 100 rubles a month?
4. What is the name of the place where I can open such a factory?
5. Let me know the name of the flower or seed from which I can make oil. How much will it cost me by weight and volume before it is processed in the factory, and how much profit will I make on the oil produced from that quantity?
6. What would my monthly expenses be in such a factory?36

Thirdly, Moshe Furgin, a pharmacist from the town of Kretingen in the province of Kovno, wrote to the directors of the IRO, explaining that he had decided to move to the United States but did not know where he would have the best chance of finding work. He therefore asked them questions that would help him make the decision:
1. What region or city is more suitable for me, considering my profession?
2. Can a person in this field find work in these kinds of businesses: drugstores, pharmacies, hospitals, drug warehouses, etc.?
3. What are the average earnings of someone working with these kinds of products?
4. What would a person coming from Russia be required to know to attain this goal? \(^{37}\)

Fourthly, several Jews in their twenties from Plonsk (Poland) wrote to an information bureau in the United States asking for information before emigrating. Although they were young and unmarried and had no children, even they were afraid to take risks and wanted to minimise the uncertainty involved in moving to a new country. Thus:

1. A single man of eighteen. He is familiar with the textile trade and his capital consists of two hundred fifty rubles (250 rubles). And he is fluent in Russian and Hebrew. Where in America should he go so that he can earn a living and learn the language?
2. A single man of twenty-three (that is, 23), a pattern designer, fluent in three languages: German, Russian, Hebrew, with capital amounting to one hundred fifty rubles (150 rubles). Where in America should he go to be able to earn a living?
3. A single man of twenty, fluent in Russian and Hebrew, with capital amounting to six hundred rubles (600 rubles). Where in America should he go so that he can enroll in a technical school where his capital will last him until he will be able to earn a living in his field?
4. A single man of eighteen, an agricultural worker, fluent in Polish and Hebrew, and his capital amounts to 200 rubles. Where should he go to be able to earn his living in agriculture? \(^{38}\)

The deliberations and requests for information show that the decision-making process was a rational one. It was not the image of a goldene medina with gold strewn all over the streets that drew the Jews to the United States or Palestine as a fatherland, but rational thought based on the actual economic situation, planning, reasoning, and thinking that minimised the dangers involved in moving to a new land. First they found out how much it would cost to start a business, familiarised themselves (at least minimally) with market conditions, prices of raw materials, wages and the cost of living, received advice on whom to send over before the rest and figured out how long it would take to earn back the cost of migration. This claim conforms to Table 2 below that gives a quantitative analysis of
the reasons that led the migrants to apply to the Palestine information office.

The conclusions that can be derived from Table 2 indicate that the greater majority of the migrants (65%) requested information and were interested in a profitable source of livelihood in the Land of Israel. In other words, they expressed their wish to come to Palestine and engage in their previous occupation in the new country. Only 10% of the letters showed a clear ideological tone that explicitly noted Zionist ideology as the main motive for migrating to the Land of Israel. If the migrants to the Land of Israel – migration to which was considered to be ideological in the religious and national sense – wished to receive relevant and updated information, and were in no hurry to migrate there before knowing exactly what their chances of absorption were, how much more so would this be for other migration countries across the seas. The receipt of information was important for deciding whether to migrate or to remain in the country of origin.

Nevertheless, the letters from potential emigrants faithfully reflect the profile of Jews who moved to the destination countries. Many of them were skilled tradesmen who had difficulty supporting themselves under the socio-economic conditions in the Russian Empire and Galicia at the turn of the century. Accelerated industrialisation in Russia and the move of tens

Table 1 Jewish emigration from regions of the Russian Empire, 1905–14 and the distribution of information offices.39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Jewish emigrants (%)</th>
<th>Jewish population (%)</th>
<th>No. of information offices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North-west</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-west</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Reasons for application to the information office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requests of applicants</th>
<th>Number of applicants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it possible to continue gaining a livelihood from the same profession in Palestine</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in land acquisition</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for the Zionist idea</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in the development of industry</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of thousands of farmers to the big cities had changed Russian society unrecognisably. Internal migration from impoverished villages to industrialised cities had created harsh conditions in the urban areas. The tremendous demand for work compared with the limited availability of factory jobs had lowered wages and raised the cost of living, thereby increasing poverty and socio-economic disparities.

These changes did not spare the Jews in the Pale of Settlement; in fact, they affected the Jews even more than other people. Natural increase among the Jewish population accelerated the migration of Jews from small towns and villages to the cities. This internal migration caused major changes in the Jews’ way of life and employment structure: about 70% of Jewish men in the Pale of Settlement were engaged in petty trade or were skilled tradesmen. Pedlars going from town to town offering their wares became a common sight. Competition with destitute farmers for jobs only exacerbated the Jews’ plight, and unlike their brethren in the West, they were unable to find their place in the new economic environment. In the competition between Jewish and non-Jewish workers, who may even have arrived in the city on the same train, the non-Jews were more likely to be hired by the big factories, while the Jews were forced to eke out a living in small, dark, cramped workshops. The difficulty the Jews had in adapting to the new economic conditions aggravated their distress and led to competition between Jewish skilled tradesmen and shopkeepers for every job. This competition brought down prices and forced many shopkeepers to sell their wares at a loss.

This situation made the lives of the Jewish skilled tradesmen and merchants even more bleak, as reflected in the letters to the information bureaux. Many of the writers lived in small and medium-sized towns where the proportion of Jews was high. Competition and the struggle to earn a living exacerbated the economic hardship and prompted the Jews to take an interest in countries overseas.

Based on the towns from which the letters were sent, we see that the Jewish emigrants came from those places in which the number of Jews was higher in proportion to the non-Jewish population. This led to competition between the Jewish residents of the town and had aggravated the economic hardship.

For instance, a letter was written to the IRO from the town of Neswizsch in the province of Minsk; of the 8,460 people living in the town, 4,687 (55.4%) were Jews. Another letter came from Wengrow, in the province of Siedlce, Poland; 12,102 people lived in the town at the beginning of the twentieth century, and 8,136 of them (67.2%) were Jews. Similarly, according to a census conducted in Czarist Russia in 1897, Brest-Litovsk, in the province of Grodno, had 46,621 inhabitants, including 30,527 Jews.
Ljubischow in the province of Minsk, had a population of 2,739, of whom 1,888 – almost 70% – were Jews. Of the 12,972 residents of Ponewesch, in the province of Kovno, half were Jews; and of the 53,355 inhabitants of Berdichev, in the province of Kiev, 78% were Jews. David Kohelet expressed this well in the letter that opens the article, where he states that: ‘Due to the large number of artisans engaged in it and the intense competition among them, brings it just barely enough food to survive on, and even this with great difficulty.’

At the same time, many of the applicants received negative replies and even evasive ones to their questions. The migrant Elyakum Froykin, for example, noted in his application to the IRO in New York that he ‘must emigrate from Russia to search out bread for my family, which consist of eight members’. His question was whether as a shochet (a ritual slaughterer) and a Hebrew teacher he could find the means to support himself and the members of his family. The response of the IRO was very circumspect and did not provide the necessary information:

Dear Sir. In answer to your postal of recent data where in you desire to know whether a Hebrew teacher and ‘Schochet’ could find employment in this country, we beg you to state that we cannot give you and definite advice in this regard, owing to the fact that it depends entirely upon the man himself whether or not he could succeed in the profession mentioned, in this country. However, we know for a fact that there are hundreds of Hebrew teachers and Schochetim in this country who are out of employment. The supply of men in this profession is much greater than the demand for them. As far as teaching Hebrew is concerned, we beg to state it is very difficult for a man lacking the English language to teach Hebrew in this country. Hoping this information will be satisfactory to you, we are, yours very truly, Industrial Removal Office.

N.H. Kaplan, a melamed (Hebrew teacher) aged about 40 from the town of Lipsko in the district of Radom applied to the information office in Palestine and noted that because of economic difficulties he wished to migrate to the Land of Israel. The reply of the information office was:

We have read his letter with attention but unfortunately we cannot give him a positive reply. Anyone who does not have a profession and is without much property can only find a livelihood as an agricultural or garden laborer, and this hard work would not, of course, suit a person of his age.

From Table 3 it appears that the greater majority of the applicants to the Zionist information office in the Land of Israel were given negative replies and clear recommendations not to come. A comparison with the replies by the agents of the information offices in the United States shows that the
information office was afraid to give the migrant any definite answer and to take responsibility for his absorption in the new country. On the basis of the information that he received both from the office and from other sources (newspapers, guide booklets, and relatives who had already migrated) he would have to balance the advantages and disadvantages in migrating to a new country and then reach a decision.

The questions asked of the officials show that the decision involved precise planning by the family. The letters indicate that government persecution and pogroms had little effect on the decision. In many cases the family had already been considering emigration even before these events occurred. It is highly unlikely that mass emigration would have come to pass – even at a time of robbery, violence and destruction – were it not for the information received by the Jews of the Russian Empire at an ever-increasing rate at the beginning of the twentieth century. For many of them, the fear of living in a foreign country where they were unfamiliar with the language and way of life far outweighed their fear for their lives in a familiar environment. Uncertainty about what to expect would have bound them to their old homes and reduced their mobility. The more their fears were allayed by the information they received, the more likely they were to emigrate. Even if it was not always possible to know whether a family that applied to the information office with a request for help or advice really did migrate eventually to the country of destination, the letters allow us to trace the hesitations and dilemmas that were involved in the process of migration. This was not a spontaneous kind of decision of the moment but a complex process in which the migrant had to exercise his common sense judgment.

**Conclusions**

This article has discussed the importance of the availability of information in making the decision to emigrate. Based on archival sources from Jewish migration information bureaux established in the first decade of the
The Information and Its Impact on the Extent of Jewish Emigration

The information that flowed into the Russian Empire had a major impact on the extent of Jewish emigration, which reached previously unknown peaks in the early twentieth century. Between 1875 and 1914, about 2.2 million Jews emigrated from Eastern Europe to various countries overseas. But if we divide up this period into two parts – the first from the mid-1870s until the end of the nineteenth century (1875–99) and the second from 1900 until the outbreak of the First World War – we find that Jewish emigration in the two periods was disproportionate. More than 80% of the Jewish emigrants left for the destination countries in the 15 years between 1900 and 1914. In other words, only half a million emigrated between 1875 and 1899 – an average of 16,500 per year. In contrast, during the period 1900–14, about 2 million Jews emigrated, four times as many as in the previous three decades, the period 1875–99 (see the Appendix). The numbers for 1914 are also indicative of the power of information and its impact on Jewish emigration. If we look at the emigration figures for the early twentieth century as they appear in Table 2 in the Appendix, we might think that 1906 was the peak year of Jewish emigration. But a closer look shows that in fact most Jews emigrated in 1914. In just eight months (January–August) almost 150,000 Jews emigrated – an average of approximately 19,000 per month. It is very likely, therefore, that had the First World War not broken out, Jewish emigration would have exceeded 200,000 that year. For this reason 1914 should be considered the peak year of Jewish emigration, even though the total for that whole year was less than in 1906. It should be noted that there were no pogroms in Eastern Europe that year, the economic hardship was no worse than at the very beginning of the twentieth century, and we do not know of any significant event that year that could explain the impressive volume of Jewish emigration.

What, then, happened in the Russian Empire that led to a huge wave of 200,000 Jewish emigrants a year on average in just 10 years? What made the first two decades of the twentieth century different from the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and why did two million Jews choose to
emigrate in those specific years? Although the macro factors involved in Jewish and non-Jewish emigration (demographic growth, urbanisation, deterioration of the economy, improvements in mass transit and the desire of the American continent for working hands) already existed in the 1870s and 1880s, Jewish emigration westward from Eastern Europe was negligible then. The explanation for the emigration of two million Jews in just 15 years must therefore be not just the push and pull factors that operated in the countries of origin and destination, but also reliable information that started to flow into the countries of origin in 1900, both from the information bureaux and from the half-million emigrants who had left earlier. Thus there was a foundation of information in place that made it possible for two million Jews to follow in their footsteps.

The Decision-making Process as a Rational, Considered Process

The letters to the information bureaux indicate that the mass Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe was not a case of fleeing the Russian Empire; nor was it the outcome of panic. It was a considered process that took preparation and planning. From the questions asked of the local officials, we see that the potential emigrants wanted to know what their job prospects would be in the destination country, how much money they would earn, what it would cost to move there, what city they should settle in, how much money they would have to bring with them, what kind of competition they could expect from the local population, and much more. After considering the pros and cons, they made their decision. The fact that they read the guidance literature, formulated their questions in writing to the local official in their town, and dealt with the complexity of the emigration process indicates that they did not take their decision lightly. In Eastern European Jewish society, some people were capable of coping with the tension and difficulties of moving to a new land, while for others it was beyond their ability. Indeed, despite the scope of Jewish immigration – especially in the first decade of the twentieth century – most Eastern European Jews ultimately decided to remain in the country they already lived in and not move overseas.

Financial Hardship, Pogroms and Emigration

We can learn about the decision not only from what the letters say, but also from what they do not say. Few of the letters to the information bureaux mention pogroms or hostility by the local population as a factor in the writer’s decision to contact the bureau. Even those that do mention
conflict with non-Jewish neighbors emphasise the financial hardship. A quantitative (and not qualitative) analysis of hundreds of letters to the information bureaux indicates that pogroms and other persecutions were not the cause for migration but were only a spur. It is highly unlikely that the mass emigration would have come about – even at a time of robbery, violence, and destruction – were it not for the information received by the Jews of the Russian Empire at an ever-increasing rate from the early 1880s onwards.

Availability of Information and Access to Railroads

After potential emigrants wrestled with the issue, weighed all the factors and made a decision, they had to carry out their decision. Proximity to a railroad or a main road made it relatively easy to reach a port of departure in Western Europe (generally Bremen or Hamburg). Our examination of the correlation between the location of the information offices and the routes of the railroads shows that in three provinces that had high rates of emigration (Minsk, Kiev and Podolia), the offices were located in towns served by a railroad. In other words, not only did potential emigrants have information about the migration process and the destination country, but they could also make use of it. The combination of reliable and available information and access to a railroad was another factor that enabled hundreds of thousands to carry out their decision.

Notes

[1] We do not know how many Jews lived in Zakharino at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, Mstislavl, the nearest city, had 8,516 inhabitants according to the 1897 census, including 5,076 Jews (59.6%). Presumably, the number of Jews in Zakharino was much smaller. See Segall, *Veroeffentlichung des Bureaus fuer Statistik der Juden*, 78.

[2] David Kohelet to Arthur Ruppin, November 11, 1913, CZA, L2, folder 133/3, 2 (CZA throughout the article refers to the Central Zionists Archives).


[5] The writer refers to the country as both *Palestine* and *the Land of Israel*. In the early twentieth century these terms were ideologically neutral.


[9] The demography of the Jewish emigrants was different from that of other ethnic groups that emigrated in those same years. Among the Jewish emigrants there was a high percentage of women and children (45 and 25%, respectively) and a low rate of return, estimated at only 5.2% in the period 1908–24. See Liebman
Hersch, 'International Migration of the Jews', 471–520. On the return migration, see Sarna, 'Myth of No Return'.

On the hardships suffered by the emigrants on their way to the destination countries, see Alroey, 'Out of the Shtetl'; and three studies by Nadell, 'Journey to America'; 'From Shtetl to Border'; 'En Route to the Promised Land'.

On the ICA information bureau, see Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety, 106–12. See, also, Alroey, 'Bureaucracy, Agents, and Swindlers'.

CZA, A156, folder 26, Emigration, 6.

Ibid., 10.

See Carr, Guide to the United States for the Jewish Immigrant.

Di faraynigte staten fun amerika, 47–53.

Ibid., 63.

CZA, A156, folder 26, Emigration, 13.

Emigrantn un agentn, 20.


Ibid.

On pogroms in the early twentieth century, see Klier and Lambroza, Pogroms. Lambroza notes that more than 3,000 Jews were murdered in 657 pogroms in 1905 and 1906.

Landsmanschaftn, association of immigrants from the same hometown; shtetlekh, Jewish towns in Eastern Europe.

On the impact of the pogroms on emigration, see Alroey, 'Patterns of Jewish Emigration'. See also Stamper, 'Geographic Background'.

See Levy Institute, Joel Perlmann, http://www.levyinstitute.org/publications/?docid = 791

Obolensky, 'Emigration from and Immigration into Russia'.

See Appendix, Maps 4 and 5: distribution of ICA information offices in the provinces of Mogilev and Podolia. The picture in these provinces is similar to that in Minsk and Kiev.

For example, see Cohen and Soyer, My Future Is in America.

Howe, World of Our Fathers, 57–8.

Avni, Mi-bitul Ha-inkvizitsya Ve-ad ‘Hok Ha-shevut’, 106. Historians who have studied non-Jewish immigration to America have pointed out a similar difficulty in trying to understand how the decision was made to migrate and what hardships the migrants faced before reaching safe haven in another land. See, for example, Taylor, Distant Magnet, 27; Baily, Immigrants in the Lands of Promise, 35.

Taylor, Distant Magnet, 27.

Baily, Immigrants in the Lands of Promise, 35.

Dudley Baines, Emigration from Europe, 26.

Ibid., 9.

Ibid., 11, 12, 25.

Moshe Tselnik to IRO, January 12, 1913; see AJHS, I-91, box 22 (AJHS throughout the article refers to the American Jewish Historical Society).


Moshe Furgin to IRO, July 6 [no year stated]; see AJHS, I-91, box 122.

Letter from several young people to IRO, January 19, 1905; see AJHS, I-91, box 122.

[40] Rubinow, 'Economic Condition of the Jews, 500.


[42] AJHS, I-91, box 122.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.


[49] The reply of the IRO to Elyakum Froykin, June 9 1913, AJHS, I-91, IRO, box 122.


Notes on Contributor

Gur Alroey is an Associate Professor in the Department of Land of Israel Studies at the University of Haifa. His book ‘Bread to Eat and Clothes to Wear: Letters from Jewish Migrants in the Early Twentieth Century’ will be published by Wayne State University Press in Summer 2011.

References


Emigrantn un agentn: nit keyn oysgetrakhte mayses. St Petersburg: 1912.


### Appendix

**Table A1** Jewish immigration to the United States from the Russian Empire, 1875–98.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of immigrants</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>1,796</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>28,881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>25,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>1,426</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>28,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>51,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>988</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>76,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>4,332</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>76,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875–80</td>
<td>10,401</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>35,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>5,692</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>29,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>13,202</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>26,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>8,731</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>32,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>11,445</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>20,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>16,862</td>
<td>1881–98</td>
<td>541,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>21,173</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>33,044</td>
<td>1875–98</td>
<td>551,503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Data on Jewish immigration in 1875–80 has been taken from Glazier, *Migration from the Russian Empire*, xv–xvi. The data for 1881–98 is taken from Joseph, *Jewish Immigration to the United States from 1881 to 1910*, 93.
### Table A2

Jewish immigration from the Russian Empire to various destinations, 1899–1914.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Argentina</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Palestine(a)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>37,415</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>61,764</td>
<td>2,765</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>58,098</td>
<td>1,015</td>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>57,688</td>
<td>2,066</td>
<td></td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>76,203</td>
<td>3,727</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>106,236</td>
<td>7,715</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>129,910</td>
<td>7,127</td>
<td>7,156</td>
<td>298</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>153,748</td>
<td>6,584</td>
<td>13,518</td>
<td>394</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>149,182</td>
<td>7,712</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>394</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>103,387</td>
<td>1,636</td>
<td>5,444</td>
<td>383</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,097</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>57,551</td>
<td>3,182</td>
<td>8,557</td>
<td>501</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>84,260</td>
<td>5,146</td>
<td>6,581</td>
<td>749</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>91,223</td>
<td>5,322</td>
<td>6,378</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>80,595</td>
<td>7,387</td>
<td>13,416</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>101,330</td>
<td>11,252</td>
<td>10,860</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>3,050</td>
<td>106,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>138,051</td>
<td>3,107</td>
<td>3,693</td>
<td>1,492</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>148,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,486,641</td>
<td>75,743</td>
<td>82,103</td>
<td>8,477</td>
<td>20,069</td>
<td>32,951</td>
<td>1,705,984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Emigration via Odessa.
(b) Including 17,200 in 1900–11.
(c) Including 10,000 Jews who arrived in 1904–14 after travelling via Trieste.
(d) Total migration for which a breakdown is available by destination country.

Sources: For immigration to the United States, see Hersch, 'International Migration of the Jews', 2: 474. For immigration to Canada and Argentina, see Lestschinsky, Di yidishe vanderung far di letste 25 yor, 19–20; and Liebman Hersch, 'Jewish Migrations during the Last Hundred Years', 1, 413. For immigration to Australia and South Africa, see Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety, 293–4. For immigration to Palestine from the ports of Trieste and Odessa, see Alroey, Immigrants: Jewish Immigration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century, 235.
Map 4 Distribution of ICA information offices in the province of Podolia, 1909.
Map 5 Distribution of ICA information offices in the province of Mogilev, 1909.