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TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF SOUTHERN JEWISH CONCERNS IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA AS REFLECTED IN THE EDITORIALS OF THREE SOUTHERN JEWISH WEEKLIES

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination

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Cincinnati, Ohio

2001

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Dr. Gary P. Zola who helped me through the writing of this thesis.

To Macy B. Hart who introduced and welcomed me into Southern Jewry.

To Dr. David Colburn who opened an early door to this thesis.

To Dr. Fred Krome who was a resource and continually encouraged me.

To Judith Daniels with all of her patience as she assisted in editing my work.

To my wife Susan Shankman and our daughter Isabel who have given me support and love throughout this process.

DIGEST

The primary focus of this thesis is an examination of the editorials of three Southern Jewish weekly newspapers during the Progressive Era. The approaches used are that of researching the historical background of the period, reading the editorials, interpreting their meaning, and analyzing the trends to gauge how Southern Jews responded to some of these issues.

Chapter One examines the editors' concerns about immigration. It highlights their response to the issue in general and how it affected the Jewish people. In particular, they commented on attempts to restrict immigration. It demonstrates that the editors were concerned about the welfare of other Jews and the best means to help them.

Chapter Two examines the editors' concerns once the immigrant landed in America. The focus of their discussion was how to best relieve the congestion of northern cities and to Americanize and acculturate the newcomers. They discussed the various enterprises that developed to resolve this problem. The chapter illustrates that the editors were connected to the Jewish communities throughout the United States and the world.

Chapter Three explores the editors' views of the early Zionist movement. The writings of these three editors display a spectrum of views on the topic. Two of the papers show strong Zionist support while the third displays a less favorable view. This illustrates the wide range of opinion on this topic in the South.

Chapter Four looks at how the editors viewed the call for increased government authority. In their editorials on health and labor, the writers use Jewish values and

tradition to support changes through government and individual actions. When debating prohibition, the editors call on American values and law to defend their opposition to the movement.

In the final chapter, the author summarizes his research, concluding that the editors were influenced by urbanization, Jewish tradition, and the geographic setting in which they were writing.

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INTRODUCTION

Many people are surprised to hear that Jews have been living in the South from the time European settlers first arrived there. The Jews of the South were perceived "as the provincials, the Jews of the periphery, out on the rim where it did not count - for the great Jewish drama in America was being played elsewhere."[1] The Jews of the South are an important area of research that has not been fully studied.

A close examination of this subgroup of American Jews will provide important information about American Jewry as a whole. Much can be learned from how these people experienced the issues of their time. In addition, their views and perspectives can provide additional insight into their self-identity. "The study provides a sense of continuity with those Jews who preceded us, those who occupied our space before us."[2]

One avenue that provides access into studying the life of Jews in the South is through reading the documents they left behind. In the first half of the twentieth century there were approximately ten regional newspapers that were published by Jews in Southern cities. Robert Singerman conjectures that, "the Jewish press is an essential primary source material for any cultural study of American Jewish life and communal affairs."[3] This paper, then, makes use of this source material in hopes of providing insight into the concerns and issues facing the papers' editors.

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[1] Eli Evans, *The Provincials.* (New York: Free Press, 1997), xx.
[2] Gary P. Zola, "Why Study Southern Jewish History," vol. 1 *Southern Jewish History*, (1998): 13.
[3] Robert Singerman, "The American Jewish Press, 1823-1983; A Bibliographic Survey of Research and Studies." *American Jewish History*, 73:4 (June 1984): 422.

Many studies on Southern Jews have focused on individuals, organizations, or communities. It is difficult to generalize the history of an entire region. Newspapers provide a greater understanding of a specific area during a given time period. In particular the editorial columns of three newspapers were used as the primary research material for this thesis. These papers were written in southern cities during the period between 1905-1913. This paper explores and analyzes some of the regional trends and issues as they manifest themselves in the pages of these newspapers.

The influence of these papers was widespread. The editors themselves were keenly aware of their importance to the entire Jewish community: "In our own behalf," one editor observed, "we state that *The Herald* reaches more Jews weekly than do words from the pulpit, excepting possibly the two great holidays."[4] Another editor declared that, "To the Jews living in small communities the Jewish newspaper is the most potent agency in keeping them in touch with what is going on in the Jewish world."[5] In an editorial column in *The Jewish Ledger*, the editor also argued that the paper influenced a large number of people: "It is far more reaching than pulpit utterances, because old and young read and reflect upon the themes presented to them week after week."[6] Yet another editor boasted about his paper's circulation: "But twelve months from now and the silver jubilee of *The Spectator* may be celebrated. We reasonably expect to have 15,000 subscribers by that time."[7] The growth and popularity of the Jewish press was paralleling the industrial growth of the nation.

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[4] *The Jewish Herald*, 2 September 1909, 4.
[5] "Support a Jewish Newspaper," *The Jewish Herald*, 29 June 1911, 4.
[6] *The Jewish Ledger*, 7 July 1911, 14.
[7] *The Jewish Spectator*, 1 October 1909, 4.

These Jewish newspapers were concerned with Judaism and the issues of the era. "As we have frequently stated, it is our purpose to make *The Jewish Herald* the family paper for the Jews of Texas."[8] "The Jewish paper is a guide, a guard, a champion, a defender, and a sentinel; an instructor, an educator, entertainer; a bond between men and women of Jewish faith; a reflector of their thought and acts, and a stimulus to larger better work."[9] "We have constantly kept our self assumed task in view - to present to Jewish families a wholesome, clean Journal, devoted to Judaism and the Jewish home."[10]

This thesis is based, primarily, on the editorials of three Southern Jewish weeklies written between 1905 and 1913. *The Jewish Ledger* of New Orleans, Louisiana was founded in 1895. When its editor, Dr. Mark J. Lehman,[11] died, the paper mourned his loss. It recognized his fourteen years of work in the editorial columns.[12] Aside from that citation, no other references are provided regarding the editor. The B'nai B'rith Lodges of the city published the paper.

The Jewish Herald of Houston, Texas, was founded in 1908. The editor, Edgar Goldberg had served as an apprentice to the printer of *The Jewish Spectator* in 1893.[13]

The third paper, *The Jewish Spectator*, of Memphis, Tennessee was founded in 1885. It was also distributed in New Orleans, Louisiana. The editor was Rev. Dr. Max Samfield,[14] the rabbi of Congregation Children of Israel.

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[8] "About the Herald," *The Jewish Herald*, July 1909, 4.
[9] "The Jewish Paper," *The Jewish* Herald, 19 August 1909, 4.
[10] *The Jewish Ledger*, 6 January 1905, 14.
[11] For more information see Herbert Friedwald ed., *The American Jewish Year Book 5673*, vol. 14 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1912), 126.
[12] "We Mourn," *The Jewish Ledger*, 12 April 1912, 14.
[13] *Who's Who in American Jewry, 1926*, (New York: The Jewish Biographical Bureau, 1927), 203.
[14] Born in Marksteftt, Bavaria 1846, died in 1915, founder of Tennessee Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Children, founder of United Charities of Memphis, President of Southern Rabbinical Association, founder and editor of *Jewish Spectator* see Cyrus Adler ed., *The American Jewish*

There are reflections of the cities found on the editorial pages. The New Orleans and Memphis papers were both located in well-established cities. The Jewish communities were long settled and a part of the society. The Houston paper was located in a newer city and its Jewish community was not as well established. Houston, like New Orleans had a port that brought a variety of people through the area. Memphis, located in the interior part of the country did not have the same interactions.

During the years 1900-1914, America was undergoing a great social transformation that has been called the Progressive Era. Historians have written extensively about this period in American history and its effect on the country.[15] The people of that age were proudly aware that there was something distinctive about the political and social life of their time, they felt it was sharply different from the preceding era of materialism and corruption.[16] They were particularly concerned about immigration, prohibition, health, and labor. The writings of the three editors of Southern Jewish

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Yearbook 5664, vol.5 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1903), 94-5; Jacob R. Marcus, *The Concise Dictionary of American Jewish Biography*, Vol. 2 (Brooklyn: 1994), 553; Isidore Singer, *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 10 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1904), 684; *Who Was Who in America*, vol. 1. (Chicago: Marquis, 1943), 1074-5.

[15] David Colburn and George Pozzetta, *Reform and Reformers in the Progressive Era*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983); Steven Diner, *A Very Different Age, Americans of the Progressive Era*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); John Gable, *The Bull Moose Years Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Party*, (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1978); Dewey Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, (Knoxville: University Of Tennessee Press, 1983); Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform, from Bryan to F.D.R.*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1963); Richard Hofstadter ed., *The Progressive Movement 1900-1915*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963); William Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Bobby Malone, *Rabbi Max Heller: Reformer, Zionist, Southerner 1860-1929*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 1997); Arthur Mann, *The Progressive Era: Liberal Renaissance or Liberal Failure?*, (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963); George Mowry, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1946); Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, (New York: Dover, 1971); C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South 1877 - 1913*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1971.

[16] Hofstadter, *The Progressive Movement 1900-1915*, 1.

newspapers offer us an opportunity to gauge how Southern Jews responded to some of these issues.

All three Jewish weeklies were concerned about immigration. There was a sharp increase in the number of people immigrating from Southern and Eastern Europe to America between 1880 and 1920. Some people felt that too many immigrants were entering the country, and attempts were made to regulate the flow of people. The editors responded to the issue of immigration in general and how it affected the Jewish people. In particular, they commented on attempts to restrict immigration. The first chapter examines and analyzes the editors' arguments concerning immigration.

Once the immigrant landed in America, an entirely new set of issues was debated. The focus of their concerns was to relieve the congestion of northern cities. Some suggested that the crowding bred criminal behavior. This in turn led to increased visibility of the Jewish immigrant and possible anti-Semitism. The editors debated the best way to Americanize and acculturate the newcomers. They discussed the various enterprises that developed to resolve this problem. The second chapter will explore these issues surrounding the immigrant and acculturation.

Another issue that all the editors wrote about was Zionism, which will be discussed in the third chapter. Although the Zionist movement in the United States was still a fledgling movement during the period of time we are examining in this study, the editors commented on its work. Many historians have suggested that a number of Southern Jews

were anti-Zionists.[17] The writings of these three editors display a spectrum of views on the topic.

In addition, they all expressed their opinions regarding health, labor, and prohibition, which will be discussed in the fourth chapter. At this time, state government grew and became more prominent.[18] Specifically this thesis discusses the areas of health, labor and prohibition. The editors considered these three issues through the lens of Judaism in America during the Progressive Era. At times, their opinions run counter to those of the majority culture.

Although all three papers are from southern cities, this thesis does not suggest that the opinions of these three editors represent the view of all the Jews of the South. Instead, this work should be seen as a glimpse into the way that some Jewish editors used their religion to discuss the issues that were confronting them. Jacob Rader Marcus argued that the Jewish weekly stimulated loyalty to the group, to the totality of Jewry. In that age, when telephones were almost unknown, the newspaper was very important as a welcome means to keep in touch with the Jewish world. The publication might well have been a core around which the Jewish community integrated.[19] The papers also served as a means to connect to the Jews of the region, the nation, and the world.

In the chapters that follow, we will explore in greater detail the content of these editorial columns. Our purpose is to provide a clearer understanding of the attitude of Jews in the South toward a number of salient themes of the Progressive Era.

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[17] Thomas Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism*, (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1990).
[18] Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, 1992; Woodward, *Origins of the New South 1877 - 1913*.
[19] Jacob R. Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, vol. 3 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 591.

CHAPTER 1

Issues of Immigration

The editors of the three Jewish weeklies were concerned with the issue of immigration. This became a topic of debate in the early 1900s. Prior to the turn of the century this had not been a major issue in the United States. In the first years of American history there were no immigration laws. From the establishment of the government of the United States until about 1835, immigration was taken as a matter of course. The only legislation enacted, and practically all that was proposed, was the law of 1819 concerning the regulation of the carriage of steerage passengers at sea. This law for the first time provided that statistics relative to immigration to the United States be recorded.[1]

During most of the nineteenth century, immigration to the United States remained largely unfettered by governmental regulations because most Americans understood that it was necessary to fill up the country and thus they welcomed most of the foreigners who came.[2] Immigration to the United States increased in volume throughout the nineteenth century. The immigrants who arrived were predominantly German and Irish. Although they were different than most of the 'natives,' there were still many similarities. In addition, their relatively low numbers created little friction.

Initially, immigration fell under the jurisdiction and control of the individual states. It was not until 1882 that the national government assumed control of immigration.[3] This occurred as the result of a Supreme Court decision which stated that the laws of individual

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[1] Peter Weirnik, *History of Jews in America* (New York: Hermon Press, 1972), 319-20.
[2] Roger Daniels, *Coming to America* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 265.
[3] Weirnik, *History of Jews in America*, 320.

states concerning the regulation and taxation of immigrants were unconstitutional. The Supreme Court suggested that Congress act. President Chester Arthur approved the first General Immigration Act on August 3, 1882. It provided for a head tax of 50 cents on all aliens who landed at United States ports. The money thus collected was to be used to defray the expenses of regulating immigration and for the care of immigrants after landing. It also provided that foreign convicts, except those convicted for political offences, lunatics, idiots and persons likely to become public charges, should not be permitted to land.[4] Over the years several more attempts were made to regulate immigration and increase restrictions. Through congressional action or presidential veto the changes made prior to the 1920s were minimal.

Government regulation alone did not fully express the anti-immigration sentiment in the country. In fact there were three discrete phases of such nativist activity. Each was a response to a specific wave of immigration to the United States. The first phase was anti-Catholic, aimed at Irish Catholic, and to a lesser extent German Catholic, immigration and flourished from the late 1830s to the mid 1850s.[5] The large number of Catholics and other immigrants who came into the cities aroused distrust in some of those who had previously settled in the United States. During this period, the 'Native American' and 'Know Nothing' movements took form and eventually developed into the 'Know Nothing' political party. Although its main focus was opposition to Catholic immigration, it soon spread to opposition to all immigrants. This group was able to gain some elected offices locally, and even six representatives in Congress. Its relative lack of strength, however

[4] Ibid. 323.
[5] Daniels, *Coming to America*, 265.

prevented any real policy change.[6] This group was one of the first political organizations created for the purpose of limiting immigration and laid the foundation for later challenges to unrestricted immigration.

The second phase of anti-immigration activity was anti-Asian. Chinese immigration from the early 1870's triggered this movement. The result was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.[7]

Finally, the third phase, anti-all immigrants, began in the mid 1880s, when a movement for general restriction of immigration gained popularity, and finally triumphed in the Immigration Act of 1924.[8] The newcomers of the twentieth century were different than those who had preceded them. In the nineteenth century most of the immigrants came from northwestern Europe. Although some of their ways were slightly different, for the most part they looked, sounded, and acted much like those already residing in the United States. Besides, due to their small numbers they were quickly acculturated and Americanized. The new immigration brought in people who seemed much stranger than the Irish and German immigrants of previous decades.[9] After 1896, the great majority of immigrants derived from Southern and Eastern Europe. The numbers coming from the more highly developed countries of northwestern Europe declined as the movement from distant lands increased.[10] To many English-speaking Americans these new immigrants did indeed seem literally dumb. They could not speak the language and many had little or no formal education. Many, perhaps most, came with gross misconceptions about what kind

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[6] Weirnik, *History of Jews in America*, 320.
[7] Daniels, *Coming to America*, 265.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Fon W. Boardman, *America and the Progressive Era* (New York: Henry Walck, 1970), 57.
[10] John Higham, *Send These to Me* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), 43.

of place an industrializing America was.[11] The shift in who was coming served as one of the key factors in a call for restrictions. Established Americans at the turn of the century felt that their way of life was threatened by what they called the immigrant invasion. Some perceived the immigrants as contributing to crime and, even worse, dangerous radicalism.[12]

Not only were these new immigrants from different lands, but they were also entering the United States in large numbers. Between 1905 and 1914, an average of more than one million people annually crowded past the immigration inspectors.[13] The yearly numbers prior to that time were significantly smaller. The restriction issue could hardly remain quiescent indefinitely in view of the size and character of the transatlantic migration.[14]

The general population of the United States at this time was moving to the cities. Naturally, the new immigrant tended to live in ethnic neighborhoods in the urban centers. Unlike the relatively dispersed German Jews of midcentury 1800s, the Eastern European Jewish immigrants settled overwhelmingly in New York and other cities in the Northeast and Midwest. In 1910 more than five hundred thousand Jews were wedged into tenements in the 1.5 square miles of New York's Lower East Side.[15]

The Jews of Eastern Europe were impelled to migrate for two basic reasons. First, like many other contemporary Eastern European migrants they wanted to improve their standard of living. Second, they fled from religious persecution that became more

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[11] Daniels, *Coming to America,* 214.
[12] Ibid. 275.
[13] Higham, *Send These to Me*, 43.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid. 226.

pronounced after 1881.[16] The culture of the Eastern European Jews, both religious and secular, was quite different from that of the Jews of Germany and other Western European countries and even more different from that which had been developed by the highly acculturated American Jewish community with its largely German and Iberian roots.[17] The newcomers from Eastern Europe were poor, had a communal tradition that had been nurtured in the shtetls, and their religious observances often had a messianic fervor foreign to the more staid American Jews, whether of traditional, Reform, or emerging Conservative persuasion.[18]

Most of the German-American Jewish leaders patronized the newcomers and were embarrassed by the squalor in which they lived, and their enthusiasm, both religious and political.[19] Despite the condescending attitude of the established American Jewish community, it served as a great advantage for the Eastern European newcomer. The established American Jewish community provided social services and job opportunities for its coreligionists.

Shortly after the turn of the century, amidst this wave of immigration, attempts were again made to restrict the flow of people into the country. The Immigration Act, approved February 20, 1907, raised the head tax from two to four dollars and strengthened the provisions against the "defective" or "undesirable" classes, but made no innovation or departure from the policy of admitting all who could be expected to be able to provide for themselves and to become good citizens.[20] The act also created an

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[16] Ibid. 223.
[17] Ibid. 227.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Weirnik, *History of Jews in America,* 326.

Immigration Commission to make full inquiry, examination, and investigation by sub-committee or otherwise, into the subject of immigration. This commission submitted its report, in forty-two volumes in 1910, and recommended some strong restrictions so that unemployment would not become a problem. A majority of the commission favored a reading and writing test as the most feasible single method of restricting undesirable immigration.[21] The suggested restrictions were directed primarily against the emigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe who were deemed inferior, poor material for American citizenship.[22]

This was the historical setting in which the editors of the three aforementioned Jewish weeklies wrote. They were influenced both by those who advocated greater restrictions, and those who urged a continued open door. This chapter will look at the issue of immigration amongst the Jewish community to the new immigration after 1881. The view of each of the editors was shaped by the situation of the day as well as his locality. In addition, the chapter will explore the respective editors' overall opinion of continued immigration. The basic issue can be summarized as follows: should the door remain open, should the door be closed? The editors of *The Jewish Herald* and *The Jewish Ledger* argued that the doors should remain open to continued immigration. The pages of the New Orleans *Ledger* refuted the reasons for restriction in its editorial columns. The editor of *The Jewish Spectator* was more guarded in his support of an open door policy. All three papers were concerned with the overcrowding of Jews in the urban centers of the North. This created high visibility, which the editors feared would turn into

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[21] Ibid. 327.
[22] Jacob R. Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, vol. 3 (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 179.

anti-Semitism. The Galveston Plan[23] was put forth as a solution to prevent overcrowding by diverting immigrants to an alternate point of entry. Finally, the chapter will look at the newspapers' reactions to proposed legislation to restrict immigration. Several different arguments concerning immigration restriction were raised and were expressed through the editorial pages. For example, the editor of the New Orleans *Ledger* expressed the greatest level of support for continued immigration. His method of supporting open immigration was by defending the immigrants against accusations that were being leveled at them.

One of the reasons underlying the restrictions was the perception held by the nativists that immigrants would not make good citizens because they did not desire to become permanent residents. There were some who came to this country with no intention of becoming American citizens or even to maintain a permanent residence here. They merely desired to save enough money, by working and living frugally, to return permanently to their home country with capital.[24] Indeed for many the reason for coming to America was to earn enough money to buy land back home.[25] Restrictionists cited this matter as an explanation for why immigrant neighborhoods became a blemish on the city.

One of the main factors influencing Jewish immigration at this time was the pogroms and debilitating legislation in Russia and other European countries. This was not a situation to which the Jews desired to return. One of the attributes that most clearly set Jews apart from other contemporary immigrants was their great propensity to stay in the United States. It has been shown in fact, that the Jewish immigrant had no desire to return

[23] The Galveston Plan will be discussed on page 18
[24] Weirnik, *History of Jews in America*, 326.
[25] Daniels, *Coming to America*, 214.

to his native land, because it was a place in which he was persecuted.[26] The New Orleans *Ledger* agreed with this sentiment: "Every Jewish immigrant is welcome. It is his prerogative to enter the lists and strive to attain his ambitions. These immigrants are regarded as valuable accessions to our population. The Jewish immigrant comes to stay."[27] The editor understood the situation in Eastern Europe as an influencing factor of the Jewish immigrant.

Restrictionists also argued that the strange customs of the new immigrants prevented them from becoming good citizens. In contrast, *The Jewish Ledger* argued that the Eastern European immigrants made good citizens. In Russia the Jews were not given an opportunity to become loyal citizens. "As American citizens we desire to meet the Russian representative in order to lay facts before him, showing that an overwhelming majority of Russian Jews in this country are good law-abiding citizens.[28]" In another article the editor stated clearly that "We have also referred to the subject of immigrants, and have taken the standpoint that they are desirable accessions to our citizenship."[29] He made the case that they were loyal to the United States and followed the laws, becoming a positive addition to American society.

The increase in immigration resulted in a demographic expansion of the cities. The immigrants who arrived on these shores between 1880-1920, came at a time of transition in the United States. They arrived in a country whose frontier was closing. Prior to this time there were still large contiguous regions with fewer than one person per square mile

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[26] Daniels, *Coming to America*, 225.
[27] "Under Which Master?" *The Jewish Ledger*, 13 July 1906, 12.
[28] "Eastside Impertinence," *The Jewish Ledger*, 25 August 1905, 14.
[29] *The Jewish Ledger*, 13 January 1905, 14.

in the Untied States. Due to limited agricultural opportunities and the benefits of group affiliation, immigrants chose to settle in urban areas.

These emerging centers grew faster than expected. As a result of this breakneck expansion, the cities were overrun with a variety of problems. The infrastructure and municipal services were not able to keep pace with the population explosion. The rising level of crime was one of the problems, an increase blamed on the large numbers of foreigners in the cities. "The crowded districts where most immigrants live," said the Commissioner of Immigration in 1903 is "a menace to the physical, moral, and political security of the country."[30] He argued that they were a breeding ground for corruption. Other critics, beginning with the Immigration Restriction League, produced misleading figures, which correlated the immigrant increase with the growth of slums and with a high incidence of crime, disease, and insanity.[31]

To counter this argument, the New Orleans *Ledger* argued that simply because a small number of immigrants turn bad when they arrive does not mean that we should "deny the boon of liberty and the pursuit of happiness to many who are innocent of wrong doing."[32] While admitting that some of the immigrants did turn to crime, the paper asked its readers to consider the overall picture:

> That this overcrowding of our people into the large cities will increase, and, in fact has increased, the number of criminals who are Jews, and thus the good name which our coreligionists as a class have enjoyed in the past will be besmirched and stained. We must admit that there is some truth in this. With the increase in the number of the whole, each individual class will be augmented, and in this respect our people are no exception to other classes, except, we hope, that the criminal class, while it may increase in number will not increase in ratio of population.[33]

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[30] Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, vol. 3, 176.
[31] Higham, *Send These to Me*, 45.
[32] "Dannenbaum Belligerent," *The Jewish Ledger*, 23 February 1912, 14.
[33] "Mr. Dannenbaum's Address," *The Jewish Ledger*, 19 January 1912, 14.

The editor further argued that it was only natural that when a city's population increased the number of crimes committed within the urban setting would also increase. Concern should arise, the editor asserted, only when the ratio of crime to people increased. The editor conjectured that the level of crime was not out of proportion with the size of the cities and, therefore, maintained that the charges were baseless.

The large number of Jews in the city raised the fear of anti-Semitism. Like other Jews, the Jewish Southerners may have felt these new immigrants threatened their status and achievements. In a letter to the editor, a Houstonian wrote the following, "One of the reasons given by those who believe that we shall some day have a Jewish problem in the United States, is the large influx of Jewish immigrants to this soil, or rather to the large cities of this country."[34]

Another Houstonian, Henry Dannenbaum,[35] expressed his concern regarding the large concentration of Jews in New York. He argued that, "Knowing that the sources of our Jewish immigration have become tainted, knowing that our Jewish immigration largely settles in cities already overcrowded, knowing that those cities furnish every kind of temptation to the immigrant to become criminal and immoral, knowing that when panics strike America our idle Jews cannot return to their native lands ... I have with sadness of heart, become convinced that Jewish immigration to this country should be checked."[36] The writers seem to express a fear that the action of some Jews in the large cities would

[34] Oscar Leonard, "Come to Texas," *The Jewish Herald*, 6 January 1910, 4.
[35] Born Columbia, TX ca 1871, died Houston, TX 1940, state district court judge, civic and communal leader, pioneer Zionist, for more information see Jacob R. Marcus, *The Concise Dictionary of American Jewish Biography*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: , 1994), 110; Harry Schneiderman ed., *The American Jewish Year Book 5702*, vol. 43 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1941), 356.
[36] Henry Dannenbaum, "The Guardians of Israel," *The Jewish Herald*, 23 January 1913, 4.

reflect poorly on Jews everywhere. Although these two men spoke out against continued immigration, the editor of the newspaper in which their remarks were published disagreed. In response to the Dannenbaum statement, the editor of the Houston *Herald* wrote, "Granting that Dannenbaum is wrong on the treaty question and on the immigration question we agree with him regarding the white slave traffic."[37] Dannenbaum had spoke out in favor of restrictive immigration. The editor did not believe that potential anti-Semitism was a reason to limit immigration.

The overcrowding of the northeastern cities led some restrictionists to suggest that the United States no longer had room for unchecked immigration. *The Jewish Spectator* challenged this contention. The editor reminded his readers that there was adequate space for the immigrants outside of the cities. "With some States and Territories that have a population of only one inhabitant to the square mile it is certainly unnecessary to restrict the influx of desirable immigrants who stand the test of the laws already in force."[38] The Houston *Herald* took this idea one step further. In acknowledging the problem of the overcrowded conditions of the cities it suggested a solution to this situation.

> We do not argue that this country has enough Jews, but we do argue that our large cities have more than enough of them, and since the bulk of our immigrants stop in the large cities, it is clearly dangerous to permit their further entry under the present policy. Ports of entry should be limited to Southern and Western seaboards, and to those only when the immigrant is destined for some interior point.[39]

Immigrants tended to settle close to their port of entry. Opening new ports was seen as a possible solution to the overcrowding of the northern urban areas. *The Jewish Ledger* hoped that New Orleans would open as a port. "This is an opportunity for every

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[37] *The Jewish Herald*, 15 February 1912, 4.
[38] *The Jewish Spectator*, 26 May 1905, 4.
[39] "Jews and Immigrant," *The Jewish Herald*, 16 December 1912, 4.

one interested in bettering the condition of the Jews, residents of foreign countries where, besides suffering persecution because they are Jews, they are prevented by law from following their trades and callings. Let them come to New Orleans and begin life anew in this and adjacent states."[40] Fortunately this opportunity did occur, but it was through the port of Galveston. This statement was written only a few months prior to the arrival of first group of Jewish immigrants in Galveston.

The Galveston Plan was a means to shift immigration to Southern and Western parts of the country. The Jewish Immigration Bureau was established to help encourage Jews to enter through Galveston. The system included agents in Europe who helped to steer immigrants to Galveston. Once the new arrivals entered Texas, the Jewish Immigration Bureau cared for them. This organization helped to match individuals with job opportunities, throughout the South and West. The Bureau used Jewish networks and organizations as contacts for the purpose of collecting information about labor needs in towns and cities. After matching the immigrants to the available jobs the individuals were put on the appropriate train. Between the years 1907 and 1914, about ten thousand Jewish immigrants entered to the United States at Galveston, settling in virtually every state of the West.[41]

Plans were underway for some time before the initial group landed. A few months prior to this first group, the New Orleans *Ledger* saw this as an opportunity for compassion: "The plan is in accordance with Jewish humanness."[42] The bureau took care

[40] "For Immigration," *The Jewish Ledger*, 1 February 1907, 14.
[41] Bernard Marinbach, *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983), xiii.
[42] "For Immigration," *The Jewish Ledger*, 11 January 1907, 15.

of all the immigrants needs. This benevolent approach displayed the humanitarian aspect of the plan.

The first ship entered Galveston harbor early in the morning of July 1, 1907. By prior arrangement the Jewish passengers were allowed to disembark first. Following their health check, the Jewish Immigration Bureau took care of them. The organization housed and fed these new arrivals until they were matched with appropriate work. The New Orleans *Ledger* provides a detailed description of how the bureau worked:

> Rabbi Cohen of Galveston, Tex., at the port where an Immigration Bureau had been established, the expense of which were borne by Mr. Jacob H. Schiff, the great philanthropist, stated that over 900 Jewish immigrants had been received during the season. All of these were first temporarily housed, provided with bathing facilities and furnished with 'kosher' food.
>
> They were next sent to their destination - either places of their own choice or those communities where coreligionists had promised to receive them and take care of them. They were taken on trains and placed in charge of the conductors. Railroad fares were paid, provisions given them to last for the whole journey, and delays were taken into consideration. They were also furnished with money.
>
> Telegrams were sent to the communities at the destination of the immigrants, that they had started on that particular day and train, and they should be at the depot to receive them. On their arrival, the communities would notify the Galveston Bureau of that fact and further keep them informed of the progress of their wards. These were also requested to keep in touch with the bureau and keep it informed of their progress.[43]

The New Orleans *Ledger* writes of their arrival with optimism. "Give the immigrants to understand the opportunities offered, keep meddlers, religious and other wise, from interfering, and the Jewish immigrants will soon be a factor in developing the agricultural and industrial resources of the West, Southwest and South."[44] The Houston *Herald* echoed these sentiments. "It points to the way to a sane and just settlement of the vexed question of Jewish immigration. It will furnish the country with more of the

[43] "Afterthoughts," *The Jewish Ledger*, 8 May 1908, 14.
[44] "En Route West," *The Jewish Ledger*, 12 July 1907, 14.

splendid type of the Southern and Western Jew and will save American Jewry from more of the base type of Jack Selig and Herman Rosenthal. It will keep open the avenues of hope and liberty for our oppressed people in other lands."[45] The Plan would provide for the individual to make a better life for him or herself, and relieve the overcrowding of New York.

The Galveston Plan was seen as a preventative measure to relieve the overcrowding of northern cities. "But without proper distribution, such as the Galveston movement provides, with the continued dumping of raw immigrants into crowded ghettos, there is no fair prospect in this country for alien Jews and a great danger for these Jews now here."[46] Through distributing the immigrants, the plan served as a potential buffer against anti-Semitism.

The Galveston Plan was also a source of regional pride. A column in the Houston *Herald* noted that, "Mr. Israel Zangwill tells us the Jews of Russia and of other lands of persecution are very welcome to Texas and its inhabitants. His good opinion of the Lone Star State is appreciated."[47] The establishment of an immigration port in Galveston, and

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[45] Herman Rosenthal was born in Friedrichstadt, Russia 1843, died in New York 1917, a pioneer Jewish colonizer, started the first agricultural colony for Russian Jews in America in Louisiana, organized two more colonies in South Dakota and Woodbine New Jersey, head of Am Olam, for more information see Cyrus Adler and Henrietta Szold eds., *The American Jewish Year Book 5665*, vol. 6 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1904), p. 173; Jacob R. Marcus, *The Concise Dictionary of American Jewish Biography*, vol. 2 (Brooklyn: 1994), 533; "Herman Rosenthal," Isidore Singer ed., *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 10 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1904), 478-9. Unable to find information about Jack Selig. Quote from "The Galveston Movement," *The Jewish Herald*, 24 October 1912, 4.

[46] "The "Guardians of Israel," *The Jewish Herald*, 23 January 1913, 4.

[47] Israel Zangwill was born in London 1864, died in 1926, an author, founder of the Jewish Territorial Organization, dedicated to the creation of a Jewish territory outside of Palestine, worked with Jacob Schiff to establish the Galveston Plan. "Zangwill, Israel," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 16 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd, 1971), 930-933. For further details see: Elsie Adams, *Israel Zangwill* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971); Joseph Leftwich, *Israel Zangwill* (London: J. Clarke, 1957); Joseph Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto: the Life and Works of Israel Zangwill* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990); Maurice Wohlgelernter, *Israel Zangwill: a Study* (New York: Columbia Press, 1964). Quote from "Texas Has Room," *The Jewish Herald*, 24 September 1908, 6.

the work of the Jewish Immigration Bureau gave Texas positive exposure. The editor saw this program as giving the area respect, because it promoted Texas as a desirable place in which to live.

In 1910, Immigration Inspectors charged the Jewish Immigration Bureau with breaking contract labor laws. The Bureau and the Jewish Territorial Organization[48] were charged with promising the Eastern Europeans jobs when they arrived in America. It was a violation of contract labor laws to entice people to immigrate with the promise of work. In fact the Jewish Immigration Bureau was telling those already planning to immigrate that there were more opportunities through Texas, and therefore was not violating the law. "We are sanguine," The New Orleans *Ledger* stated, "that when it is shown to the Department of Commerce and Labor that the work of the organizations is simply to divert Jewish immigration from over-crowded sections, and that its efforts are in no manner an infringement of the Contract Labor Laws, the recent decision in the Galveston matter will be annulled."[49] The New Orleans paper viewed the work as humanitarian, not as a violation of law.

In another article, the Houston paper not only saw the work as humanitarian, but also encouraged its readers to help arrange for jobs for Jewish immigrants coming from Europe. The article called on the readers to help the immigrants find jobs in various places in Texas.[50]

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[48] Founded by Israel Zangwill. The organization was dedicated to the creation of a Jewish territory in a country that did not have to be Palestine, worked with Jacob Schiff to establish the Galveston Plan. "Israel Zangwill," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 16 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd, 1971), 930-933. For further details see: Norman Kahan, "A Historical Sketch of the Jewish Territorial Organization," (Rabbinic Thesis, Hebrew Union College, 1952).

[49] "The Galveston Incident," *The Jewish Ledger*, 29 July 1910, 14.

[50] "Placing the Immigrants," *The Jewish Herald*, 5 May 1910, 4.

The Houston *Herald* and the New Orleans *Ledger* were wholehearted proponents of the Galveston Plan. The Memphis paper did not agree with the Galveston Plan. In times of economic trouble there was a concern about increased immigration. The Memphis *Spectator* cautioned against continued immigration during the industrial depression prevailing throughout the country in 1908.[51] "We know from recent personal experience what misery is thus produced and we therefore are justified in making the suggestion that the Galveston Removal Bureau, as well as its headquarters in New York, refrain for the present from encouraging immigration to this country."[52] The editor believed that it would be an especially difficult time for people who did not know the language or customs. In times of financial adversity, such as during the economic downturn of 1908, the editor conjectured that immigration to the South should not be encouraged.

The Memphis paper wrote against the movement of immigrants South. "It cannot be denied that the settlement of Russian emigrants in the South has not been successful." The editorial argued that there were few jobs in agriculture or industry.[53] The South, the editor argued, did not provide ample opportunities for the immigrant. This view is in sharp contrast to that of the other two papers who openly encourage immigration to the South through the Galveston Plan. Memphis located in the interior part of the country had a different character than the two port cities. This may account for the difference of opinion concerning this issue.

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[51] Dewey Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville: University Of Tennessee Press, 1983), 157.
[52] *The Jewish Spectator*, 21 February 1908, 4.
[53] *The Jewish Spectator*, 18 September 1908, 4.

The concern for the economic situation of the new immigrants was not only present in Memphis. Nationally the question was raised as to whether or not the country could absorb the new people into the economic structure. Labor which had moved toward restriction of immigrants since the 1870's was upset by the depression of the 1890's and the of millions of new job seekers in the decades before World War I.[54] The trade union movement saw the seemingly inexhaustible supply of European workers, willing to work for almost any wage, as a threat to the standard of living of American workers.[55] *The Jewish Ledger* argued that not only was there enough physical space but there was a need for more workers. Countering the argument that immigrants took away jobs, the editor asserted that, "To-day the United States has use for immigrants to assist in the development of its ever increasing agricultural and industrial interest."[56] Several years later the editor returned to this argument saying, "Immigrants are required to aid in the further development of the settled sections and to open up other parts of the country."[57] In this editor's opinion, the immigrants would help to improve the economic situation of the country. His arguments were in line with other antirestrictionists at that time. They concentrated on the economic need for foreign labor and on America's moral commitment to humanity.[58]

The Jewish Spectator agreed asking its readers to recall their past and see America as a place of refuge for all persecuted people. "This country was destined by Divine Providence to be and remain the haven of refuge for the oppressed of all lands, and the

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[54] Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985,* 176.
[55] Daniels, *Coming to America*, 275.
[56] "The Immigration Bills," *The Jewish Ledger*, 15 June 1906, 12.
[57] "Humane Immigration Laws," *The Jewish Ledger*, 13 January 1911, 14.
[58] Higham, *Send These to Me*, 44.

doors of the ports can not be locked against the Russian Jews who come here to find protection and shelter."[59] This article shows the great hope that the immigrants would find a new home in the United States.

The call to see immigration as a humanitarian effort was also supported by the New Orleans *Ledger*. Highlighting the plight of the Russian Jews the editor wrote, "It would be a grave backward step for this country to place arbitrary tests upon admission to its benefits without exempting refugees from religious and political persecution. This is not a theory. We are confronted with the hideous massacres of the Jews in Russia."[60] Several years later the New Orleans *Ledger* echoed these sentiments by stating, "It is an inconsistent step to say shut the doors! When you are in and others are out asking to come in."[61] The editor recognized the irony of erstwhile immigrants-- now themselves living in America speaking out in opposition to new immigrants who wish to enter the country.

But not everyone agreed that immigration was at core a humanitarian cause. In a letter to the editor of the Houston *Herald* a man wrote that "If America should welcome all Jews because oppressed, it can not logically deny the same privilege to the Congo negroes, Chinese and East India coolies, Mexican peons, etc. In other words, the test of admission here must be something besides oppression there. And that something besides include not only moral character and physical strength but the vocational supply for our country's economic needs."[62] The paper's editor commented that he did not agree with

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[59] *The Jewish Spectator*, 13 June 1906, 4.
[60] "The Immigration Bills," *The Jewish Ledger*, 15 June 1906, 12.
[61] "Stop It," *The Jewish Ledger*, 15 March 1912, 14.
[62] Oscar Leonard, "Come to Texas," *The Jewish Herald*, 6 January 1910, 4.

this writer's sentiments. It is important to note that this is an example of a reader showing that the editorials of these newspapers did not represent the viewpoint of all the readers.

T*he Jewish Spectator* argued that the burden of caring for immigrants should not only fall on the shoulders of the Jews of America, but must be shared by the Jews of Europe. "No objection can be raised against bringing a certain number of Jewish Russian orphan children to the country, to educate them and to fit them for the struggle of existence which awaits them when emerging from childhood into manhood and womanhood. But Jews in Europe should be made to understand that they must participate in this meritorious, benevolent work."[63] The editor saw the role of America as a refuge, but at the same time recognized the value of *kol yisrael arvim ze bahzeh*, all of Israel is responsible for one another.

The early 1900s saw a variety of legislative attempts to curtail immigration. In almost every year between 1905-1912, a bill was introduced into Congress to achieve this goal. Usually, one of the measures included an increase to the head tax placed on each immigrant upon entering the country. This would help to exclude some of the poor who would not have enough money for the journey and the entry tax. A second action was the addition of a set of physical examinations to determine the physical and mental health of the newcomer. This was the most arbitrary of the proposed restrictions. It could be enforced through strict measures as determined by an individual immigration inspector. Once a decision was rendered, there was no appeal. These two suggested amendments to

[63] *The Jewish Spectator*, 28 September 1906, 4.

the immigration policy were met with limited objections from the papers examined in this study.

A third mechanism that was suggested to restrict immigration was a literacy test. All three papers found several reasons to object to this proposal. The proponents of such an exam had begun the discussion of this idea in the 1890's.[64] The literacy test idea originated among northeast intellectuals who were particularly concerned about the new immigration. They argued that such a test would cut the influx of immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe by 50 percent without seriously interfering with the immigration from the western areas of Europe.[65] At the turn of the century, the literary test was seen as the most effective means to allow the appealing Western European immigrant in and keep the leas-appealing Eastern European immigrant out.

Generally speaking, these papers did support the level of restriction already in place by 1905. The New Orleans *Ledger* agreed that "Restrictive measures are absolutely necessary, and such restrictions as will prevent the introduction of an ignorant, unhealthy, and undesirable people would be heartily endorsed."[66] A year later this paper repeated this same sentiment. "We are on record as favoring a restrictive immigration in accordance with the health laws in vogue and administered by the National government: we protest against the admission of a pauperized element and criminals. Let Jews, Irish, Huns, Slavs and other foreign immigrants be welcome here, always provided they are admitted after the investigation prescribed by the Law."[67] Even though these limited

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[64] Higham, *Send These to Me*, 43.
[65] Ibid. 41.
[66] "Laws to be Revised," *The Jewish Ledger*, 8 September 1905, 14.
[67] "An Insidious Attack," *The Jewish Ledger*, 31 August 1906, 13.

restrictions may have prevented some Jews from entering the country, the paper supported the laws already in place.

All three papers supported the laws limiting immigration based on physical and mental health. At the same time, they spoke out against proposed increases in restrictive measures. Despite their various levels of support for or against immigration in the abstract, when it came to legislation that would control the flow, they all argued against the passage of legislative restrictions.

A bill introduced in 1906, sponsored by Congressman Augustus Gardiner[68] and Senator William Dillingham[69] contained all three of the measures mentioned above.[70] *The Jewish Ledger*, an ever-vigilant advocate for immigrants, spoke out against the bill. "We regret to note that several of our contemporaries have raised the cry that the Dillingham Bill represents 'a cowardly effort to prevent the persecuted Jews of Russia from coming to the United States."[71] The bill called for measures that would have prevented their immigration. In a later editorial the New Orleans *Ledger argued*: "The Gardner-Dillingham Acts proposed levying a 'head tax' far beyond the possibility of the major part of immigrants to acquire in their own country, and an 'Educational test' which in its scope intended to exclude Yiddish."[72] If a literacy test became a requirement for entry to the Untied States, it would have prevented many Jews from coming. If as a part of that literacy requirement, the immigrant had to be proficient in his 'native' language or Yiddish

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[68] Congressman from Massachusetts, son-in-law of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. Thomas Curran, *Xenophobia and Immigration, 1820-1930 (*Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 125.
[69] Senator and sponsor of restrictive immigration measures, head of the Dillingham Commission to investigate the problem of immigration. Curran, *Xenophobia and Immigration, 1820-1930,* 125.
[70] for additional information see Curran, *Xenophobia and Immigration, 1820-1930,* 125.
[71] "The Immigration Bills," *The Jewish Ledger*, 15 June 1906, 12.
[72] "An Insidious Attack," *The Jewish Ledger*, 31 August 1906, 13.

was not on the list of acceptable languages, the number of prospective 'illiterate Jewish immigrants' would have been significantly increased. This clause struck directly against Jews-- mostly Russian Jews. These Jews had been restricted to the Pale of Settlement and excluded, for the most part, from Russian schools. They could not and did not speak or read the language of their oppressors.[73]

T*he Jewish Ledger* argued that the proposed literacy test was not an effective way to help the country gain new workers. "Experience demonstrates that the desirable immigrants are, as a rule, illiterate, not of their own volition, but because they were born and reared in surroundings where educational advantages are the exception not the rule."[74] The editor saw a need for factory and agricultural workers. These people did not have to be literate to do their work. In fact, the paper believed those who were literate would not take those factory and agricultural jobs. The manual laborers would mostly be illiterate.

In response to the proposed bill, the New Orleans *Ledger* and the Memphis *Spectator* called for action. They urged their readers to contact their congressional representatives and try to influence them. The editor of *The Jewish Spectator* wrote "An organized effort should be made on the part of Jewish communities in the South to communicate with the members of Congress from the respective districts in all Southern States, and to request them to cast their influence and vote against the Dillingham bill, which is to impose a 'literary requirement' for the admission of immigrants to this country, which would shut out a large number of Jewish Russian refugees, who are compelled to

[73] Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, 179.
[74] "The Immigration Bills," *The Jewish Ledger*, 15 June 1906, 12.

seek a home in the United States."[75] The New Orleans *Ledger* joined the Memphis *Spectator*'s call. "The time for action has arrived and immediate steps must be taken to present the facts to friendly disposed Senators and Congressmen and a joint effort made to prevent any legislation that would rear insurmountable barriers against desirable immigration."[76]

This bill-- like many of the immigration restriction bills at the time-- was amended during debate. *The Jewish Spectator* wrote that it was pleased to see the changes prior to the bill being passed.

> The immigration restriction bill has passed. Before it left the congressional conference committee its claws had already been clipped. It did not contain the illiteracy test, and the provision of establishing a foreign examination board.... The only objectionable clause which became a law is found in the exclusion of immigrants of poor physique and low vitality. This prohibitory measure is liable to abuse.[77]

The editor did not want this level of legislation preventing immigration.

In 1908 the editor of the News Orleans paper urged all the Louisiana representatives in both houses of Congress to support immigration laws that would not be overly restrictive. "We have of our own volition publicly and in a personal manner, solicited the cooperation of Louisiana's representatives in the two houses of Congress, and it is a source of pleasure for us that in every instance a courteous hearing as been accorded us and given assurance that interest of prospective immigrants will be considered."[78] The New Orleans and Memphis papers were located in well-established cities. The Jewish communities were long settled and a part of the society. Therefore these editors are able to urge their readers to contact their representatives. This suggests

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[75] *The Jewish Spectator*,15 February 1907, 4.
[76] "The Immigration Act," *The Jewish Ledger*, 16 December 1906, 12.
[77] *The Jewish Spectator*, 1 March 1907, 4.
[78] "A Wise Selection," *The Jewish Ledger*, 22 May 1908, 14.

that the readers had contacts that they could use. The Houston paper, located in a newer city with a less established Jewish community did not call for the same action from its readers.

The following year, *The Jewish Ledger* once again spoke out in favor of immigration. A new bill to limit immigration which would have raised the head tax, created an education test, and limited the number of immigrants to 50,000 per country of origin was introduced in Congress. "That precautions will be taken to prevent the introduction of criminals, anarchists, paupers, and those physically or mentally incapacitated from earning a livelihood is a forgone conclusion. It is perfectly correct to prevent immigrants of this kind from entering our ports. Immigrants possessing proper qualifications should be admitted without cavil and we are sanguine that proper laws relative to Immigration, when enacted will be endorsed by all fairminded people."[79]

In 1909 *The Jewish Herald* spoke out against yet another piece of restrictionist legislation. "There should not only be no increase of the head tax upon the immigrant, the existing head tax should be abolished. Only the criminal, the insane and the contagiously infected should be barred."[80] The language is very similar to that of the New Orleans paper. A year later, the Memphis *Spectator* also spoke out against increased restrictions, while simultaneously supporting the current law. "The Hayes and Overman bills have been put on the calendar of House and Senate. Prominent liberal citizens who think and act independently of the labor unions and anti-foreign leagues are formulating a protest against new restrictive laws, those in force now being already rigid enough. Our co-

[79] "The Immigration Question," *The Jewish Ledger*, 6 March 1908, 14.
[80] "A Hold up of the Jews," *The Jewish Herald*, 10 June 1909, 4.

religionists throughout the country should aid in this counter-movement and request members of Congress vote against these bills."[81] Later that year, the paper gave its readers additional reasons to oppose the proposed legislation:

> The census of the population of the United States has been taken and the published statistics show that there are sections in this country where the increase in the number of people is comparatively small, and that a few millions more of new settlers would improve economic conditions considerably. Yet there is again to be submitted to Congress a bill restricting immigration. Whilst the general tenor of the bill does not specifically mention Jewish immigration, yet it is understood that its aim and object is to put up barriers to block the Russian refugees.[82]

In good times like in 1910 when there was great economic opportunity in the industrializing country the Memphis paper wrote in favor of increased immigration.[83]

After the hostile report of the Immigration Commission[84] in 1911, yet another immigration restriction bill was proposed in Congress. Commenting on this proposed restrictive immigration law, the New Orleans *Ledger* wrote, "Organized bodies which have exhibited interest in humane Immigrant laws should also be in touch with the movement and strive to overcome the influence of the restrictionists."[85]

A continuing focus of immigration legislation was the literacy test. In 1912, the New Orleans paper spoke out against this measure "Why impose a literary test? What do we need most? Are we suffering for the want of scholars and savants or do we want laboring men - men who take the raw materials and convert them into valuable products, men who till the soil and raise crops."[86] The editor of the New Orleans paper saw a need

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[81] *The Jewish Spectator*, 11 March 1910, 4.
[82] *The Jewish Spectator*, 16 December 1910, 4.
[83] Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, 157.
[84] originally appointed in 1907-- finally published its massive report in 1911. It called for a literacy law and other restrictions which were directed primarily against emigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, those who were deemed inferior, poor material for American citizenship. See Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985 vol.3*, 179.
[85] "Humane Immigration Laws," *The Jewish Ledger*, 13 January 1911, 14.
[86] "That Immigration Bill," *The Jewish Ledger*, 15 March 1912, 14.

for laborers to help cultivate and develop the ever-expanding country. Again in 1913, the paper argued that the new immigration bill excluded workers who were needed. "We need just the class of people which this act would exclude, common laborers who are willing to engage in the hard and laborious occupations which our American workmen are abandoning in ever increasing numbers."[87] The editor continued to support immigration as a needed supply of manual laborers.

In addition to the proposed legislation which attempted to reduce immigration, over the years there were complaints that restraint was being applied irratically at the ports of entry.[88] This drew protests from the editors of *The Jewish Herald* and *The Jewish Ledger*. The New Orleans *Ledger* wrote, "Judging from well founded criticisms of the methods employed at Ellis Island, it is timely that a protest be entered in behalf of immigrants of the Jewish faith."[89] The Jewish *Herald* also commented on the strictness of Ellis Island. "The natural effect of the increased strictness at Ellis Island has produced one of those human tragedies which ought to appeal to every man with a heart. Eight hundred Russians, the majority of whom were probably Russian Jews, having been rejected at the gates of liberty, were 'repatriated' to Russia, where they were not permitted to re-enter."[90] The Houston *Herald* also spoke out against the tightening control at the Galveston port of entry: "From present indications thirty Russian Jewish refugees are in imminent danger of deportation. The hapless plight of this class of immigration must cause thoughtful men to ponder before executing the full penalty of the law on fugitives

[87] "New Immigration Bill," *The Jewish Ledger*, 14 February 1913, 14.
[88] Curran, *Xenophobia and Immigration, 1820-1930.*
[89] "Executive Committee I. O. B. B.," *The Jewish Ledger*, 20 August 1909, 14.
[90] *The Jewish Herald*, 16 February 1911, 4.

from persecution. What they did wrong was to be truthful that they were cautiously inquiring into their chances of making a living in an unknown land."[91] At this time, the restrictionists were unsuccessful in passing legislation. Instead limitations were imposed through strict enforcement of the laws in place by immigration officials at the ports of entry. This greatly angered the papers that saw these actions as inhumane and directed against the Jews.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at how the editors of three Southern newspapers viewed the immigrant prior to his arrival and at the points of entry. It surveyed attitudes and opinions of the writers about the benefits or drawbacks of immigration. The chapter examined the editorial response to the Galveston Plan as a way to relieve the congestion of the Northeast. It also examined their fight against restrictionist immigration legislation.

The three editors took slightly different positions on the issues concerning immigration. The New Orleans *Ledger*, showed a consistently high level of support for immigration. The editor's support of immigration was a matter of principle. He offered a defense against attacks on immigration and showed the benefits of continuing to support immigration. Not only would the immigrant become a good citizen and serve as a valuable asset to America, but also he or she would benefit the quickly industrializing country that needed laborers.

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[91] "A Premium on Lying," *The Jewish Herald*, 22 December 1910, 4.

The New Orleans *Ledger* recognized the problem of the overcrowded northern cities and expressed his fears regarding congestion and anti-Semitism. The editor supported immigration to the South as one possible solution to that problem. Specifically, the paper's editor supported the Galveston Plan before and during the time of its work. The plan was seen as a humane means to relieve the overcrowding of the northeast urban centers.

When restrictionist legislation came before Congress, this paper spoke out against these bills. The editor not only expressed his opinion but also encouraged action to help assure that his words caused change. Finally when the immigration laws were being enforced zealously, the paper called these actions inhumane and directed against the Jews.

The Houston *Herald*, a paper on the frontier of the West, also recognized the problem of the dense urban population of Jews in the north. Rather than suggesting restrictionary measures, the Houston *Herald* supported the Galveston Plan as a means to allow immigrants to enter the country without contributing to the growing congestion of the urban areas. The plan was seen as a benefit to the American Jewish community. This immigration to Texas was seen as bolstering its self-image. Not only did immigrants want to join them in their state and region, but also national leaders praised their state.

The editor also spoke out in opposition to increased restrictionist legislation and, moreover, to the increased strictness in dealing with immigrants at the ports of entry in Galveston and Ellis Island. In describing the tighter restrictions at these ports, the editor emphasized the treatment of the Jews by immigration inspectors.

In contrast to the two other papers, *The Jewish Spectator* cautiously supported some restrictive immigration measures. While seeing the humanitarian argument for continued immigration, the editor was also concerned with the future lives of those who chose to come to America. Once in America, it was important that the immigrant be able to support himself and improve his life. The orphan and oppressed were welcome, yet the editor warned that economic troubles in the United States could prevent these newcomers from attaining a better life.

The Memphis *Spectator* separated itself from the others even further by asserting that the South would not serve as an appropriate place for settlement due to the limited work opportunities. The editor argued that the United States had room for more immigrants, but not in the overcrowded centers of the North. Instead they should settle in the West. In addition, they should not come in times of economic trouble. Due to the limited opportunities for work, immigrants were only welcomed to the South during times of economic strength.

Despite a pessimistic outlook on the potential for a better life in America, *The Jewish Spectator* was opposed to any legislation that would effect stringent immigration restriction. The paper's editor insisted that these bills would not benefit the country.

The editors were writing for an immigrant community. This may explain why all three of the editors argued in favor of keeping the door open to immigration. Their opinions were informed by their Jewish values and what they perceived as the best course of action for the Jewish community. This chapter has looked at their views about the

immigrants' arrival. The next section will explore their attitudes after the immigrant had arrived.

CHAPTER 2

The Immigrant

The Jews who came to America between 1905 - 1913 tended to settle near the port of their arrival. This resulted in large concentrations of Jews in the northeastern cities. Many of the Jews previously settled in this country viewed this phenomenon with concern. They feared that this new group would foster feelings of anti-Semitism amongst non-Jews. In addition, they were concerned about the physical and spiritual wellbeing of those living in the city.[1]

Following Jewish tradition, which regarded the giving of charity as a great virtue, the wealthy and established Jewish community assisted these Eastern European Jewish immigrants. They helped because they wanted to. In the eyes of the non-Jews, Russian Jews and German Jews were part and parcel of the same group. Nevertheless Many German Jews looked upon the Russian Jews somewhat as poor relatives of whom they were ashamed, but whom they felt compelled to help.[2]

The established Jewish community wanted to assist the new immigrant to assimilate into American society. The nub of the problem was absorption, both economic and cultural.[3] This was difficult to accomplish in the crowded ghetto of New York. The large number of unskilled workers limited opportunities for work in the saturated labor market. At the same time the concentration of neighborhoods divided by ethnicity allowed

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[1] Naomi Cohen, Jacob *H. Schiff: a Study in American Jewish Leadership* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1999), 88-96.
[2] Elaine Maas, The *Jews of Houston an Ethnographic Study* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), 17-18.
[3] Jack Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1998), 16.

only for limited contact with other cultures. These factors initially made it very difficult to acculturate these newcomers to American society.

In addition to these challenges, American society in general was experiencing the process of urbanization. In passing from a rural economy to an industrial one, the United States had become a nation of cities, and in their proliferation and rapid growth, crime and corruption flourished. Sin and city became synonymous; rural life, viewed through the scrim of nostalgia, was tranquil, innocent, healthful, and even patriotic-- the good life.[4] The Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe were a visible part of these developing urban centers.

The editor of *The Jewish Ledger* saw the crowded city as a threat to the well being of the new arrivals. The paper wrote about the problems of the rapid urban growth and the crowded Jewish neighborhoods. "The heaviest burdens which Jews bear are caused by their voluntary and involuntary congestion in cities. The result is that in America they suffer poverty and also vice and crime which is bred in congested quarters."[5] According to the editor, the crime and poverty were due to conditions in the city. An immigrant removed from this environment would be free from these circumstances and flourish.

The editor saw the problem as grave enough to call on the government for action to ameliorate the situation. "If the immigrants are so ignorant as not to recognize the dangers of the overcrowded tenements and other ills, moral and physical, of the congested districts, then it is the duty of the government to intervene and compel them to obey the sanitary laws, and other regulations of a hygienic character."[6] In summary, the editor

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[4] Ande Manners, *Poor Cousins* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1972), 160.
[5] "Doylestown Farm School," *The Jewish Herald*, 17 October 1912, 4.
[6] "The Removal Plan," *The Jewish Ledger*, 30 July 1909 p. 14.

writes, "Both good health and opportunities cannot be obtained in the congested districts."[7] The editor viewed the city as a dangerous place.

Despite the editor's disapproval and disgust with the situation in the crowded ghetto of the city, he simultaneously recognized its benefits: "To the recent arrivals from foreign countries, life even in the congested, tenement districts is far superior to that which they had previously known in their native countries, where many of them knew not the significance of the term contentment."[8] This was especially true for the East European Jew fleeing legal and physical persecution. In America, he was protected by law as an equal and did not fear the pogrom.

Many Jews throughout this country believed that the solution to the problem of the overly visible immigrant was colonization, especially in far off areas. Like other Jews, the Jews of the South feared that they would be judged on the basis of the Eastern European immigrant.

In February 1901, the Industrial Removal Office was founded as part of the nascent Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society. The latter was founded in 1900 and was devoted both to assisting would-be Jewish farmers and to encouraging Jewish immigrant settlement beyond New York.[9] The Industrial Removal Office (IRO) was created to help relieve the congestion of the northeastern cities. A variety of motives had spurred the establishment of the IRO. Packed together in the Jewish quarter, the newcomers endured filth, poor sanitation, disease, and soaring rates of delinquency and

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[7] Ibid.
[8] "Compensation," *The Jewish Ledger*, 17 November 1911 p. 14.
[9] Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto*, 15.

crime. By distributing the immigrants to other locations, the IRO hoped to alleviate these problems.[10]

The IRO hoped that, with assistance and guidance, immigrant clients of the organization might assimilate themselves into American society.[11] Between 1901 and its closure in 1922, the IRO dispatched more than 75,000 Jewish immigrants from the New York area to 1,500 communities in every state of the Union.[12] In addition to the main office in New York, there were also branches in Boston and Philadelphia.

Support could be found for the work of the IRO on the editorial pages of the New Orleans *Ledger*. "Ways and means should be devised to regulate immigrants in so far as to place them in sections of the United States where the economic conditions are such that they will be welcome, and their coming will result in the greatest good to the greatest number."[13]

The South wanted to have a voice in the decision-making process of the dispersion. The editor of *The Jewish Herald* expressed admiration for Henry Dannenbaum:[14] "We admire him for upholding Southern Jewry and telling those of the East that we must be considered; that they cannot decide all questions and expect us to follow without regard to whether it is right or wrong."[15] The editor was upset that the Jewish leaders of the North were making decisions that affected the Jewish communities in the South, but never consulted with them.

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[10] Robert Rockaway, *Words of the Uprooted* (Ithica: Cornell University, 1998), 1-3.
[11] Ibid. 16.
[12] Rockaway, *Words of the Uprooted*, 1.
[13] "Mr. Schiff's View on Immigration," *The Jewish Ledge*, 22 November 1907, 15.
[14] For more information on Henry Dannenbaum see note 35 in chapter 1.
[15] *The Jewish Herald*, 18 January 1912, 4.

Overall, the South was not a popular choice for immigrants. The South received few of the many immigrants who came to the United States after the Civil War; for instance, at the time of the 1910 census, only 2 percent of Southerners compared with 20 percent of Northerners had been born abroad. Historically, there was only a relative handful of better paying industrial jobs to attract immigrants, and few wished to compete with slaves and, later, with the newly freed slave and poor-white labor in agricultural pursuits in a region that already suffered from high under and unemployment and where the standard of living was far below the national average.[16]

The Jewish Ledger reprinted a warning by *The Jewish Exponent* of Philadelphia about the dangers of working the South. "In some of the Southern states peonage prevails to a greater or less extent.'" [17] In the same editorial the New Orleans *Ledger* defended the South against this charge. "We are aware that the charge of peonage has been made against men who had negroes and other laboring men employed as farmers and in the turpentine and lumber industries we have no recollection that any Jewish immigrants had been inveigled into their employ."[18] The article argued that the practice of peonage was illegal. It adds that the most recent charge concerning peonage actually occurred in the North-- Columbus Ohio![19] Although there was an outside perception that this practice was prevalent throughout the South, this local editor defends the region against the charge. In addition, he counter-attacked the other paper by pointing out peonage in the North.

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[16] Alfred Hero, *The Southerner and World Affairs* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1965), 59.
[17] *The Jewish Exponent* as printed in "Come South," *The Jewish Ledger*, 2 August 1907, 14.
[18] "Come South," *The Jewish Ledger* 2 August 1907, 14.
[19] Ibid.

The editor of the Memphis paper expressed opposition to large-scale immigration to the South. He felt that the South did not provide favorable conditions that would allow for large scale absorption of new people

> The industrial conditions in most Southern cities is by no means favorable to the permanent employment and material welfare of the newcomers. As long as but a limited number of those refugees were forwarded it had no detrimental effect upon the persons for whom requisition had been made and upon the Jewish communities in the South, but as the Industrial Removal Bureau continues to increase their number undesirable conditions will arise in consequence and the pauperization of the immigrants will be one of the evils. Considering the superior advantages the Eastern and Northwestern States offer for industrial and agricultural pursuits it is rather strange that the Removal Office sends more immigrant to the South and Southwest than any other region.[20]

In contrast to *The Jewish Spectator*, the other two papers encouraged the immigrants to come South. *The Jewish Ledger* assured the immigrants that they would be treated as an equal in the South. "No immigrant of the Jewish faith need fear that he will not be treated 'white' in the South."[21] "Our agricultural and industrial interests recognize not only the importance of influencing a desirable call of white immigrants to come South, but can also be relied upon to make no distinction because of an immigrant's nationality or religious belief."[22] These editorials point toward another reason many Jews feared going South. They knew that African Americans were not given the same rights as whites. Potential immigrants feared that they would be placed in the same category. These editorials assured the newcomer that they would be given full rights and privileges.

Those immigrants who settled in the Jewish neighborhoods of northern cities were surrounded by familiar language, food, and customs. Moving South they feared a loss of these well-known things, they were apprehensive about new local customs and ways. The

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[20] *The Jewish Spectator*, 30 June, 1905, 4.
[21] "Come to the South," *The Jewish Ledger*, 30 March 1906, 12.
[22] "Restricting Immigration," *The Jewish Ledger*, 30 December 1906, 12.

editor of the New Orleans *Ledger* tried to allay those concerns. "[Jewish immigrants] can be assured, without a doubt that they need not fear that advantage will be taken of their ignorance of our customs or laws at the time of their arrival. On the contrary, they can rely upon being protected and cared for until in a position to care for themselves."[23]

Not only would the new immigrant be treated with proper respect, but also the land itself was ready for the immigrant. "We believe that the 'Sunny South' is the ideal spot for immigrants, who have some means, and are practical agriculturists and adepts in the manual arts. The Southern States have ample space for immigrants of that class. Climate, soil, everything is most advantageous for agricultural pursuits."[24]

The Jewish Ledger hoped that New Orleans would open as a port for immigration. This would provide a direct opportunity for immigrants to come to the city. "This is an opportunity for every one interested in bettering the condition of the Jews, residents of foreign countries where, besides suffering persecution because they are Jews, they are prevented by law from following their trades and callings. Let them come to New Orleans and begin life anew in this and adjacent states."[25]

The editor argued that the Jewish community of New Orleans was willing and able to help in the so-called urban removal effort through the use of its social welfare structure: "Steps have been taken by the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association to assist the Removal Society of New York City in finding positions in various sections for

[23] "Come South," *The Jewish Ledger*, 2 August 1907, 14.
[24] "Come to the South," *The Jewish Ledger*, 30 March 1906, 12.
[25] "For Immigration," *The Jewish Ledger*, 1 February 1907, 14

the country for immigrants, who are either skilled in manual arts, or are laborers, so that they will prove valuable accession to every community where they are placed."[26]

In Texas, *The Jewish Herald* also urged its readers to welcome the immigrants to their community. "Jewish people in communities where Jews would be welcomed ought to do their duty toward their coreligionists and write them about conditions in Texas, as well as other Southwestern states and urge them to come."[27]

One of the favored solutions for the problem of urban congestion of the new arrivals was dispersion to rural areas. Specifically, the goal was to send them to the towns of the interior or farms. In the early twentieth century, the opportunities for farming were greatly limited when compared with earlier times of immigration. When they came to America they could not easily become American farmers: they did not have the capital, nor knowledge of American conditions, nor were there any longer millions of acres of rich farmland to be had for the taking. Consequently, they stayed for the most part in the cities and they stayed where they felt comfortable.[28] The editor of the Houston *Herald* echoed these sentiments in an editorial. "In Europe they are usually not allowed to be farmers."[29] In America they did not have the skills or desire to become farmers. The farm could not supply friends, family, and familiar ways.

Lack of prior experience was a challenge to overcome. One solution was to provide agricultural education; the other option was to create Jewish farm colonies.[30]

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[26] *The Jewish Ledger*, 17 February 1905, 14.
[27] "Come to Texas," *The Jewish Herald*, 6 January 1910, 4.
[28] Fon W. Boardman, *America and the Progressive Era 1900-1917* (New York: Henry Walck, 1970), 56.
[29] "Doylestown Farm School," *The Jewish Herald*, 17 October 1912, 4.
[30] Ellen Eisenberg, *Jewish Agricultural Colonies in New Jersey 1882-1920* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 25. For more information on Jewish farm colonies see Uri Herscher, *Jewish Agricultural Utopias in America, 1880-1910* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981).

Colonization was also romantic; it appealed to those touched by populist notions of freedom and independence, by a belief in the constructive, productive nature of farming; many were subconsciously influenced by anti-Semitic and possibly Marxist concepts of the trader as parasite.[31] Agriculture, on the other hand, was an occupation invested with nobility, for it was productive.[32] The Jewish farm colony provided a utopian ideal. The editors of *The Jewish Herald* and *The Jewish Ledger* strongly supported Jewish agricultural pursuits.

The Houston *Herald* saw labor on the land in romantic terms. "Clearly the best if not the complete remedy consists in putting the Jew on the farm. Where the soul will support him, distance him from enemies and vicious conditions, and give him health and contentment."[33] The editor painted a picture of the farm as a wholesome place. Changing the immigrants' environment would change their wellbeing. "The bureau of commerce would do well to give encouragement to organized labor in its efforts to exclude immigrants and pay a little more attention to the needs of the farmer, the real producer."[34] The editor describes the farmer as the real producer-- a romantic reflection of agriculture in the Progressive Era.

The New Orleans *Ledger* also commented on the superior life afforded to the farm worker. "Procure as ardent workers in the humane cause of settling Jewish Immigrants in

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[31] Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985 vol. 3*, 434.
[32] Manners, *Poor Cousins*, 157; Abraham Peck, *The American Jewish Farmer* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1986).
[33] "Doylestown Farm School," *The Jewish Herald*, 17 October 1912, 4.
[34] "Give the Farmer the Immigrant," *The Jewish Herald*, 26 January 1911, 4.

Agricultural districts of the South and assisting them to work in their careers in a better manner than they could in the overcrowded districts of New York."[35]

One person influenced by these romantic notions was Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf[36] of Philadelphia. Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf looked to Tolstoy[37] when he said, 'Lead the tens of thousands of people of your cities to your idle fertile lands and you will ... spread a good name for your people throughout the land; for all the world honors and protects the bread producer and is eager to welcome him.' Thereupon, Rabbi Krauskopf went home and started the National Farm School in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. For he, too, believed farming provided food for mankind and spiritual fuel for its practitioners.[38]

All three editors of praised the work of Krauskopf's farm school. They saw it as an effective means to get Jews involved in the world of agriculture. *The Jewish Herald* applauded and supported his work.

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[35] "The Prize Paper," *The Jewish Ledger*, 10 July 1908, 14.

[36] Born 1858 in Germany, died in Philadelphia 1923, ordained in the first class of Hebrew Union College, president of Central Conference of American Rabbis, he was influenced by his visit to the Jewish Agricultural School at Odessa, founded the National Farm School at Doylestown, PA, for more information see: Charles Annes, "The Life and Works of Joseph Krauskopf," (Rabbinic Thesis, Hebrew Union College, 1954); Martin Beifield, "Joseph Krauskopf and Zionism: Partners in Change," *American Jewish History*, 75 (1986): 48-60; ———, "Joseph Krauskopf, 1887-1903," (Rabbinic Thesis, Hebrew Union College, 1975); William Blood, *Apostle of Reason; a Biography of Joseph Krauskopf* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1973); Jacob R. Marcus, *The Concise Dictionary of American Jewish Biography*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: 1994), 344; "Krauskopf, Joseph," Isidore Singer ed., *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 10 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1904), 570-1; John Sutherland, "Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf of Philadelphia: The Urban Reformer Returns to the Land," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, 67 (1978): 342-65; Harry Schneiderman ed., *The American Jewish Year Book 5685*, vol. 26 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1924), 421-447.

[37] Count Leo Tolstoy, 1828-1910, Russian author, reformer and moral thinker. *Encyclopedia Britannica* 15th ed., s.v. "Tolstoy, Leo."

[38] Manners, *Poor Cousins*, 158.

> A picture of the poverty existing in congested sections of a great city, and the helplessness of charity permanently to alleviate these distressing conditions, was presented by the Rev. Dr. Joseph Krauskopf in his address entitled 'City Congestion and Farm Desolation,' at the Texas Land Exposition in Houston last Friday afternoon. Doctor Krauskopf's remedy for the evil is the 'natural cure,' or transference of these destitute people 'to the broad fields, where nature fairly clamors for them, where there is room and work and health and wealth and happiness for many thousand times their number.'[39]

The Memphis *Spectator* also praised and quoted Krauskopf. "Dr. Joseph Krauskopf of Philadelphia declares that the Jews living in the congested ghettos of large cities must go back to 'Eden,' which stands for pursuit of agriculture. We fully agree with our distinguished colleague that 'increased immigration can only mean increased misery' in the modern ghetto."[40] The editor, Rabbi Samfield, was not merely an educator, but a spiritual leader. The editor saw this return to the land as a hope for a better future.

The Jewish Ledger took an ordinary gift of one potato and raised it to a spiritual plane. "We have received, with compliments of Rev. Dr. Joseph Krauskopf, founder and President of the National Farm School in Doylestown, Pa., a package containing a potato - just an ordinary Irish potato, but it conveys a lesson, as was intended by the erudite and philanthropic sender. It was raised at the Farm School by Jewish boys."[41]

Despite Jews inexperience in farming, the editor remained upbeat about their involvement in the field. "That the Jew can be taught agriculture, even though he has been separated from the soil for centuries, has been conclusively demonstrated. The success of the agricultural schools and colonies is an indication of what can be done."[42]

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[39] "City Congestion and Farm Desolation," *The Jewish Herald*, 25 January 1912, 4.
[40] *The Jewish Spectator*, 27 December 1907, 4.
[41] "Jewish Potatoes," *The Jewish Ledger* 10 January 1913, 14.
[42] "Jews as Farmers," *The Jewish Herald*, 16 March 1911, 4.

The editors demonstrate that people are listening to this call to the farm. "It may not be generally known that there are over one thousand different agricultural settlements in the United States where farmers and laborers of the Jewish faith enjoy the fruits of their own labor, far removed from the unsanitary tenement houses and sweatshops of great cities."[43] "The annual report issued by the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society accounts for more than 30,000 Jewish-American farmers occupying over 3,000 paying farms. This will prove encouraging to the friends of the immigrant."[44] The increasing number of Jewish farmers bolstered the editor's argument that farming would serve as a viable option for the Jewish immigrant.

In response to those who might have assumed that Jews were not cut out for such work, the editor argued otherwise. "Whatever deficiencies may be his on account of his inexperience, he apparently more than makes up for by his intelligence, steadiness, and sobriety. To the farmer who has had some very unfortunate experiences with the average quality of farm labor, the Jewish farm laborer is somewhat of a pleasant surprise."[45]

In addition to the farm schools which taught Jews about agrarian practices, there were colonies to provide the support and location for work. Many of the colonies were founded on idealistic principles of socialism.[46]

Some of the editors saw the South as a prime location for colonies. The editor of The *Jewish Ledger* was critical of Julius Rosenwald's[47] plan to pay to resettle 450 Jewish

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[43] "A New Era," *The Jewish Ledger*, 19 October 1906, 12.
[44] "Jews Can Farm," *The Jewish Herald*, 9 March 1911, 4.
[45] *The Jewish Herald*, 16 May 1912, 4.
[46] Herscher, *Jewish Agricultural Utopias in America, 1880-1910;* Eisenberg, *Jewish Agricultural Colonies in New Jersey 1882-1920.*
[47] Julius Rosenwald 1862-1932, Chicago philanthropist, president of Sears, Roebuck. "Rosenwald, Julius," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 10 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd, 1971), 297-298.

families from Chicago to Wyoming. "...Our section of country [the South] is by far more suitable to Jewish colonization, because of climate and diversified crops, than another section of the United States. At least the effort should be made to induce Jewish colonists, with a desire, or a knowledge of agricultural pursuits, to come Down South and add to its industrial advantages."[48]

The paper praised the work of the Birmingham Jewish community in its attempt to establish a colony in Alabama. "The initiative taken by Birmingham and the assurance of responsible people of Jackson county, that Jewish colonization would be welcome, indicates that the entire South would be an admirable section for the establishment of Jewish colonies."[49]

Georgia was also chosen as a site for a Jewish colony. "Jewish colonies of farmers are flourishing in the State of Georgia; that there is not a Southern State - or any State in the Union - in which Jewish immigrants seeking opportunities to earn a livelihood will not be accorded a welcome and a helping hand by Gentiles and Jews, who know each other better than the Southern people of Jewish faith know their brethren in faith, the Immigrant Jews."[50]

The Jewish Herald and *The Jewish Spectator* did not favor Jewish agricultural colonies in the South. The Houston paper wrote regarding this issue: "We do desire to place ourselves on record against any back to the farm movement in Texas, except as independent farmers with the right and privilege of purchasing land in any section where land is fertile and without being hampered by any desire of organization or individuals to

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[48] "Jewish Farmers," *The Jewish Ledger*, 20 October 1911 p. 14.
[49] "Colonies for the South," *The Jewish Ledger*, 1 December 1905, 12.
[50] "Baneful Criticism," *The Jewish Ledger*, 24 June 1910, 14.

surround each community with our people alone, thereby destroying the real value of such work and labor."[51] Although the editor opposed collective farming, he did support individual Jews coming South to farm. The concern in this editorial is not the Jewish farmer per say, but the problems of communal colonies, which he opposed, because, the editor saw their communal attributes as a negative aspect.

In reference to the start of a colony in Hoboken, New Jersey the editor of *The Jewish Spectator* expressed his hope and concern.

> We earnestly and sincerely hope that Dr. Levy[52] will succeed in permanently establishing this colony and to cause those farmers to endure in their agricultural pursuits. Thus far every effort of colonizing Jewish immigrants and settling them on farms has failed.... We still remember the dissolution and abandonment of Sicily Island [LA] colony, which was organized and equipped by the Jews of five Southern cities at the expense of $10,000. The colony at Des Arc, Ark., established by the Jewish citizens of Memphis and managed by an experienced farmer and which gave fair promise to succeed also was abandoned by the settlers without cause, and two settlements in Texas also shared the same fate. If our esteemed friend, Rev. A. R. Levy, should remain in possession of the field it might revive the hopes of many Jews in the South who had given up such task as love's labor lost.[53]

Agricultural opportunities were seen as one means to help Americanize the Jewish immigrant.

All three editors urged that every attempt be made to help acculturate their coreligionists. Along with the calls to help, came a negative stereotype of the newcomers. From time-to-time, these Southern editors reminded newcomers that, despite the help offered by the community, the immigrants needed to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. The New Orleans *Ledger* provides one example: "Instances are of record that

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[51] "Back to the Soil and Texas," *The Jewish Herald*, 2 November 1911, 4.
[52] Abraham R. Levy, born in 1858 Germany, died in 1915, Rabbi, Founder and Corresponding Secretary of Jewish Agricultural Aid Society in Chicago, for more information see: Cyrus Adler ed., *The American Jewish Yearbook 5664*, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1903), 74; Marcus, Jacob R. *The Concise Dictionary of American Jewish Biography*, vol. 2 (Brooklyn: 1994), 37.
[53] *The Jewish Spectator*, 22 April 1910, 4.

some of the immigrants are slow to apprehend that they must learn to help themselves after being given ample opportunity in the way of assistance to give them a start in life, as is invariably the custom among Jewish charitable organizations, who are doing their utmost on these lines."[54]

The papers saw this as paternalistic work: the already established were going to help the poor backwards cousins arriving from uncivilized Eastern Europe. "We who are already established must not let our good work stop with the installation of these homeless ones in their new quarters, great and unselfish as that work is. We must not overlook the fact that these hopeless ones no doubt feel entitled to our larger humanity, to our sympathies to the heart to heart contact, which infuses new life, to the fellowship, which brings peace beyond expression. A cheery word would mean more to the wanderers hungry heart than a sack of meal to his stomach."[55]

These Jewish editors took pride in the support they proffered to their coreligionist: "As far as the Jewish immigrant is concerned, he compares in every respect with other immigrants. He has one advantage. He is taken care of by his coreligionists if his condition requires it."[56] "We maintain that the Jewish people care for their own, and that no Jewish immigrant or citizen can or will become a public charge."[57] "Instead of criticizing, or hampering the work done for our Jewish immigrants, it should be lauded. No Jew hoboes or tramps infest public charities, or apply at City Hall for transportation, or aid of any character."[58] It was clear that the Jews felt a responsibility to care for his

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[54] *The Jewish Ledger*, 13 January 1905, 14.
[55] "New Year's Visits to the Immigrants," *The Jewish Herald*, 30 September 1910, 6.
[56] "The Immigration Question," *The Jewish Ledger*, 17 February 1911, 15.
[57] *The Jewish Herald*, 5 July 1912, 4.
[58] "To Test the Law," *The Jewish Ledger*, 26 August 1910, 14.

coreligionist. The Jews helped their less fortunate peers not only in order to fulfill their obligation to the Jewish community, but also to maintain Jewish status in the eyes of the general community. One Jew reflected the stature of the whole group. If one Jew became dependent on public welfare, it cast a negative light on the community as a whole.

The process of Americanization did not only involve integration into the economy, it also implied that the immigrants would become valuable members of American society. Clearly, the editors were proud to be Americans. "We are Americans, whether by birth or naturalization, and our religious faith is no bar to the justice in our claims to be the equals of all other citizens."[59] "And the whole community has much to do in bringing within the sphere of communal activity the newcomers of our race, native and immigrants, who are pouring into our prosperous city. To make them feel at home, to impress them with the value of Jewish fellowship, is the supreme duty of the hour."[60]

Though some American Jews may have been hard on the new immigrants, the Southern papers contended that the Jews in their region had no such prejudice: "There are no insults offered to the recently arrived Jew," the editor of the New Orleans *Ledger* observed, "because of the manner in which he wears his hair and whiskers, or the cut of his clothes...."[61] Outside appearance would not serve as a reason to look down on another. The editor of *The Jewish Ledger* insisted that New Orleans Jewry treat the newly arrived Russian Jews well. "The recital of the facts can be multiplied again and again, if

[59] *The Jewish Ledger*, 24 March 1905, 12.
[60] *The Jewish Herald*, 26 September 1912, 4.
[61] "Come to the South," *The Jewish Ledger*, 30 March 1906, 12.

necessary, to demonstrate that the Russian Jew has not been condemned by his brethren in New Orleans."[62]

In 1912, however, the paper's editor suggested that there were differences in ideas between the two groups. "The consolidation fever has reached New Orleans and a self constituted committee has sent out a circular letter to our people asking them to join the 'Federation of Jewish Charities' and signify how much they will contribute to it for the coming year.... We fear that some of our local organizations among the Russian element will find it impracticable to give to the large one the distribution of their aid, for their ideas differ materially from those of the people who would very likely be placed in control of dispensing of aid."[63] The two groups differ in their ideas concerning *tzedakah.* Although the paper does not provide the details of the differences, this shows a potential source of conflict between the two groups.

The Houston editor urged readers to treat the newcomers with respect. "Many of our young Jewish men and women (boys and girls also) have an idea that because they can talk without accent (such as most of the immigrants have) that they are better beings than their brethren less favored in speech.... It is a most despicable trait and can not be discouraged too strongly."[64]

When non-Jews failed to treat the new Jewish immigrants with regard there were immediate actions taken. "Apprised that a number of our coreligionists, some of whom are recent arrivals, have been threatened and abused by hoodlums, both white and black, the New Orleans *Ledger* investigated several of the incidents.... We called on Monday

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[62] "Mr. Freemason's Address," *The Jewish Ledger*, 17 April 1908, 14.
[63] "Federated Charities," *The Jewish Ledger*, 27 December 1912, 15.
[64] *The Jewish Herald*, 17 March 1910, 4.

afternoon, at the City Hall. On Tuesday morning Inspector of Police O'Connor was waited upon by a representative of *The Jewish Ledger*. Prompt measures were taken to discover the hoodlums."[65] The paper printed the speedy reaction with pride. It showed not only the editor's concern for the newly arrived Jewish immigrant, but also insight into his self-perception. The editor believed that he had a close connection with the established community. It was perceived that the editor could help to protect the newly arrived coreligionist.

There was a resurgence of the power of the nativists.[66] This movement was opposed to foreigners and immigration. The Memphis *Spectator* rejected this anti-foreign movement. "It is just about a half century ago that the secret political society of 'Know-nothings' started in this country for the purpose of opposing foreigners to settle in the United States and to deprive all men of alien birth of the right of citizenship.... but the question of slavery and other political events blotted out this abomination, and the whole party of these un-American evil-doers died an ignominious death."[67]

The editor of The *Jewish Ledger* also spoke out against the nativist movement. The specific incident revolved around a Russian Jewish boy in the public schools of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. "This boy has been at best ostracized by his pupils. He is a harmless little fellow, and the lads at school have nothing especially against him except that he is not of their kind. Because of the fact that he is not of their kind the other lads

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[65] "Hoodlumism Reported," *The Jewish Ledger*, 28 January 1910, 14.
[66] Steven Diner, *A Very Different Age, Americans of the Progressive Era*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform, from Bryan to F.D.R.*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1963); John Higham, *Send These to Me* (New York: Atheneum, 1975); Boardman, *America and the Progressive Era*.
[67] *The Jewish Spectator*, 25 October 1907, 4.

laid for him with missiles, battered him all up and, naturally, his father appealed for redress to Superintendent Woodley."[68] The solution proposed by the school board was to have a separate school for the foreign born. Those who were to be included in the separate school were Italians, Syrians, and Greeks. Following the attack on the Russian Jewish boy, the idea of adding the Russian Jews to the separate school was brought forward. The city council rejected the idea.[69]

The Memphis paper saw this issue as something greater than a local problem. "The good name of the whole South is involved in this scandalous proceeding, and every community in the Southland should publicly express their indignation and denounce this revival of Know-Nothings."[70] This incident was seen by the editors as a sign of difficulties in the region. This kind of behavior was viewed as a problem that required an immediate response. This was something that threatened not only the wellbeing and security of the new immigrants, but also those previously settled. The editor called upon his readers to publicly express their concern over this issue.

The problem in Hattiesburg demonstrated the prevailing belief that the way one Jew in another town acts or treated, reflects on other Jewish communities. That served as one of the reasons the editors were concerned with the congestion of Jews in the Northern cities. The conditions in the ghetto did not provide the best living environment for the immigrants. The crowded neighborhoods were unsanitary and infested with crime. It was

[68] "A Tempest in a Teapot," *The Jewish Ledger*, 25 October 1907, 14.
[69] Ibid.
[70] The editor denounces the ideas and beliefs of the Know-Knothing party that existed in the previous century. Quote from *The Jewish Spectator*, 25 October 1907, 4.

also dangerous for those already settled. The image of the Jews of New York would be a reflection of Jews everywhere.

The Immigration Removal Office provided one solution to the perceived problem. The papers all embraced the idea of resettlement outside the urban crush. In the specifics of the plan the reader finds differences. *The Jewish Ledger* and *The Jewish Herald* supported relocation to the South. They saw many opportunities that would benefit the region and the individuals who would come. However, *The Jewish Spectator* saw limitations in regard to moving immigrants South. The editor felt that his city and other Southern cities could absorb only a limited number of immigrants. In addition, the writer painted a picture of limited opportunities in the South.

The papers also comment on relocation of the immigrants to the farm. This was presented as a romantic solution to the problems of the city. The editors of the New Orleans and Houston papers supported this idea. Recognizing that the agricultural know-how of the immigrant was limited, they saw a need for educational institutions that would address this situation. They especially praised the work of Dr. Joseph Krauskopf and his agricultural school for Jewish boys. The school provided the science for farming that was lacking in the minds of the new Jewish immigrants.

Purchasing and building a farm was very difficult. Jewish farm colonies were suggested as solutions to that challenge. The New Orleans *Ledger* supported such colonies, praising their establishment in nearby Southern states. The Houston *Herald* also supported the idea of the Jewish farmer, but only as an independent enterprise. The

Memphis *Spectator* saw the past failures of Jewish farm colonies as a point of concern for future hopes in the same area.

Those Jews who choose to go South were offered the support of the local editors. They assured those coming and those who already lived there that they would be treated as equals in the general society. In addition, the Jewish community would stand by them and assure the newcomers as well as local citizens that Jews would take care of their own. The editors expressed great pride that the Jews in need were cared for by Jewish social welfare organizations.

When non-Jews threatened Jewish equality, the papers reacted with anger. *The Jewish Ledger* and *The Jewish Spectator* agreed that the hostile treatment of Russian Jews in Mississippi was unacceptable. Not only were they defending the rights of the Jews there, but they were also defending the rights of their readers.

With regard to their outlook on the newly arrived immigrants, the three papers maintain the attitudes expressed in the previous chapter. The New Orleans *Ledger* supported immigration to the South. The editor saw great opportunity in the South both for the Jews who already lived there as well as for the potential newcomers from Eastern Europe. *The Jewish Herald* welcomed new immigrants as well, but did not welcome the idea of settling them on farm colonies. The Memphis *Spectator* saw its city and the South as playing a role in resettlement, but only a limited one. It supported the redistribution of immigrants, but not if the immigrants would relocate in the South. Despite their support for or arguments against Jewish immigrant resettlement in the South, they all agree that the established Jews must care for all Jews in need

CHAPTER 3

Views on Zionism

The term Zionism denotes a movement whose goal was the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. As an organized political movement, modern Zionism typically dates from 1897, when the first Zionist Congress was convened in Basel, Switzerland, under the leadership of Theodore Herzl.[1] Zionism, however, was by no means an exclusively nineteenth century political movement that promised to bring about an ultimate solution to the horrors of anti-Semitism.[2] Its origins go back many hundreds of years.[3]

One historian has suggested that America had two distinct Zionist traditions. One, originated in Eastern Europe and was shaped by the Jewish experience there. This brand of Zionism developed out of a need to achieve political enfranchisement. It was a movement that reflected the painful social realities of the pogroms and the political inequality that Jews suffered in so many of the Eastern European countries. The other type of Zionism was native and uniquely American in its essence. It was shaped by the experiences of Jews in this country.[4] Those imbued with a passion for this latter view of

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[1] Founder of modern Zionism, 1860-1904; for more information see "Herzl, Theodore," Isidore Singer ed., *Encyclopedia Judaica.* 8 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), 407-422; Jaques Kornberg, *Theodore Herzl: from Assimilation to* Zionism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (Chicago: Holt Reinhart, and Winston, 1972); Howard Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to our Time* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1996); Melvin Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1975).

[2] Stuart Knee, *The Concept of Zionist Dissent in the American Mind 1917-1941* (New York: Speller, 1979), 1.

[3] Laqueur, *A History of Zionism.*

[4] Judd Teller, "America's Two Zionist Traditions," 20:4 *Commentary* (October 1955): 343-352; Allon Gal, "The Zionist Influence on American Jewish Life," 41:2 *American Jewish Archives* (Fall/Winter 1989): 172-184.

Zionism believed that a Jewish state could be established based on the ethical tenets of Judaism, principles that seemed parallel to American ideals.[5] The style of this native American Zionism has been called 'Romantic.'[6] Those who adhered to this ideology viewed Zionism as a back-to-the land movement that would strengthen the Jewish spirit. This classification of Zionism in the United States will be useful as we consider the views of the three newspapers.

European Zionism resulted from the interaction of anti-Semitism, the nationalistic mood that pervaded the nineteenth century, and the age-old religious yearning for a return to Zion. Arguing that as long as Jews had no home of their own they would be continuously persecuted, Theodore Herzl declared that the only solution to the Jewish problem was the creation of a Jewish homeland.[7] Zionism served as an answer to anti-Semitism and the regressive atmosphere that so much of European Jewry feared throughout the 1800s.

A large percentage of Jewish immigrants entering America in the early part of the twentieth century came from Eastern Europe. They brought with them their basic sympathy for Zion. Some longed for a national homeland, while others saw Palestine as a refuge. The Eastern European influence served as one piece of the foundation for later Zionist support in America.

In America, there was no long history of anti-Semitism. In fact, some scholars have suggested that 'philo-Semitism' was as evident as anti-Semitism in nineteenth

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[5] Melvin Urofsky, "Zionism an American Experience," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, 63, no. 2 (December 1973): 216-17.
[6] Teller, *Commentary* 343-52.
[7] Urofsky, *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, 216-17.

century America.[8] In contrast to Europe, many Jews insisted that this country was in fact the new Zion. This was a land filled with freedom and equality in which Jews felt comfortable and safe. Thus, the seeds for Zionist support present in Europe were not found in the United States.[9] Support for Zionism in America derived from a unique conglomeration of factoras and in many respects, American Zionism was suigeneris.

In particular, one would not expect to find support for Zionism in the South. Many historians tend to characterize the Jews of the South as anti-Zionist. We know that initially, the Zionist movement garnered a great deal of support among Eastern Europeans. There were few Eastern European Jews in the South, therefore their influence was not felt as keenly as it was in the large urban centers of the North.[10]

Reform Judaism, widespread throughout the South, did not embrace Zionism institutionally. Many Reformers believed that as a nationalist movement Zionism was in conflict with universalism and Americanism.[11] Acculturated American Jews were fearful of accusations of dual loyalty. They saw Zionism as a threat to their welfare.[12] A considerable faction of Southern Jews of established position, particularly in older, more traditional Southern communities, was opposed to Zionism.[13]

For all these reasons and others, one would expect the editors of these Southern papers to write apathetically about the Zionist cause. This is not the case. Two of these

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[8] William Rubenstein and Hilary Rubenstein, *Philosemitism Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews, 1840-1939* (New York: ST. Martin's Press, 1999).
[9] Mark Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust.*
[10] Thomas Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1990).
[11] Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to our Time*, 52-3.
[12] Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 404; Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism*, 31.
[13] Alfred Hero, *The Southerner and World Affairs* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State, 1965), 476.

papers-- the New Orleans *Ledger* and the Houston *Herald*-- supported the movement as a philanthropic cause that would help the Jewish people. Although these two papers were pro-Zionist, there were still differences in their ideology: the New Orleans paper shifted from a position of Territorialist[14] to support for settlement in Palestine. In the early 1900's, the Houston paper argued in favor of the Zionists beliefs and achievements. The editor of the Memphis *Spectator* opposed Zionism on several grounds, but officially took the position of non-Zionist. Rabbi Samfield, the *Spectator's* Reform Rabbi/editor, argued that it was merely an idyllic movement that was not realistic. As Zionist controversies and issues unfolded, the editors of these papers did not hesitate to express their various opinions.

Uganda as a Temporary Solution

The Zionists had approached Great Britain to see if a Jewish settlement could be established in the Sinai peninsula at El Arish, just outside Ottoman Palestine. Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, in turn offered Uganda in East Africa as a site suitable for colonization. Following settlement there, Jews would eventually have political autonomy.[15] This came to be called the Uganda Project.

In August 1903 the Sixth Zionist Congress discussed this proposal. Although Herzl did not consider this plan a true alternative, others saw Uganda as a possible temporary refuge until Palestine could be secured. The horrors of a new pogrom in Russia created a sense that the need for such asylum was absolutely imperative.[16] In the end it

[14] This movement will be discussed in the following section.
[15] Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust*, 26-27.
[16] ibid.

was resolved to study the Uganda Project and decide its outcome at the following Congress.

The Seventh Zionist Congress, held in late July 1905, rejected the project. This resulted in tumultuous scenes and in the exodus of the Territorialist faction under the leadership of author and thinker Israel Zangwill.[17] He and his supporters then formed the Jewish Territorial Association (I.T.O.).[18] This new group worked to seek an immediate homeland for Jews outside Palestine. All three papers commented on the proceedings of this Congress.

The Kishnev pogroms of the early 1900s marked a turning point in American Jewish history, serving as a catalyst for action.[19] At this time many recognized that the Jews of Russia would never receive equality in that country. They needed to be saved from the physical danger that surrounded them. The Territorialists held that the final destination of these refugees was not as important as the lives at stake.

Writing in 1905, *The Jewish Ledger* agreed:

> Those whose hearts bleed for our own poor, oppressed brethren, who we believe, would gladly go anywhere to escape the horrors of Russia and other anti-Semitic countries where their very lives are in the balance, are awaiting the answer to the query. They at least, realize, that Great Britain, in the true spirit of humanity, has given them the opportunity to better their condition. Will they accept?[20]

This editorial, written near the time of the Seventh Zionist congress, urged the Zionists to accept the Uganda proposal of Great Britain in order to provide immediate help. The

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[17] For more information see, Elisie Adams, *Israel* Zangwill (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971); Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 137. Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to our Time*; Maurice Wohlgelernter, *Israel Zangwill: A Study* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964).

[18] Idisher Territorial Organization.

[19] Knee, *The Concept of Zionist Dissent in the American Mind 1917-1941*, 3-4; Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism*, 12.

[20] *The Jewish Ledger*, 28 April 1905, 12.

New Orleans paper wrote in support of Israel Zangwill's Jewish Territorial Association and the Uganda Project in an editorial a few months later: "Far better a territory wherein our oppressed brethren shall enjoy liberty and by the sweat of their brow add to the dignity of manhood than a Zionism as visionary and impracticable to-day as it was in the hour in which it was conceived."[21] This comment may have been influenced by what has been termed the American Romantic approach to Zionism and is reflective of statements that had been presented in support of agricultural colonies in the United States. This same theme of self-improvement through physical labor is being applied to working the land outside this country.

The paper did not, however, limit itself to support of the Uganda project. In fact the editor wanted to see the safety of his co-religionists through any plan. "Zionism as we would have it signifies the founding of colonies, no matter where they may be located, for the benefit of coreligionists who are compelled to leave countries where they are persecuted for no other reason than because they are Jews." The idea of a refuge in Australia was one solution proposed. "The Australian asserts that a vast and fertile area awaits cultivation and expresses the hope that the Zionists will take advantage of the opportunity- should Uganda prove undesirable - and come to Australia."[22] The editor argued that help should be provided without delay.

Although the editor wished to see immediate help, he also saw the Uganda Project as the most effective means to achieve the desired goal of assistance. "We are in favor of any plan which will secure the finding of a heaven of peace and security for the persecuted

[21] "Practical Zionism," *The Jewish Ledger*, 15 September 1905, 14.
[22] *The Jewish Ledger*, 28 April 1905, 12.

of our faith; a country where those seeking a home therein, will find opportunities to earn a competence. We are inclined to the opinion that such opportunities will be gained by following the plans of the I.T.O."[23] At this time the paper was willing to support any plan that seemed to provide relief for the Jews of Europe. The editor of The New Orleans *Ledger* argued that the Uganda Project provided the best means to settle Jews in a safe home.

Initially, the Memphis *Spectator* supported neither the Uganda project nor any other Zionist programs. In expressing its view on the Seventh Zionist Congress, the paper professed dislike for proto-nationalist movements. "The Uganda project was the rock on which the society split, but the territorialists under the leadership of Zangwill are as impracticable as the larger section under the leadership of [Max] Nordau."[24] A few months later, he emended his opinion to show slight support for the Uganda project. "We hope that some practical good may be accomplished by the association; the plans are certainly much more feasible than the Utopian hope of Zionism, pure and simple."[25] Although disappointed with the Zionist proposals, the paper did express hope that these movements would produce beneficial results.

In the following year, the Memphis paper cautiously continued its support for the Jewish Territorial Association. "Without sympathizing with either faction, it appears that the I.T.O., or Zangwill, idea is the most feasible one. It is impossible to transplant five or

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[23] "Under Which Master?" *The Jewish Ledger*, 13 July 1906, 12.
[24] Max Nordau, 1849-1923, helped found the World Zionist Congress, drafted the Basle Program, served as vice-president of the First to the Sixth Zionist Congresses and as president of the Seventh to Tenth Congresses. For further information see, Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to our Time*. Quote from *The Jewish Spectator*, 25 August 1905, 4.
[25] *The Jewish Spectator*, 3 November 1905, 4.

six millions of people, even gradually, to Palestine. The land cannot support them, and starvation would follow in wake of settlement."[26] The editor did not see the theories of Zionism working, arguing that the Zionists' hopes of a mass migration of Jews to Palestine were not practical because there was not a sufficient economic infrastructure in place to support this kind of mass immigration.

The Uganda Project did not materialize into a mass movement. Within two years, territorialism in the United States had died away. Most who had joined felt that the I.T.O. offered a good way to get something done quickly.[27]

Arguments in Favor of Zionism

But the problem of the persecuted Jews remained. *The Jewish Ledger* observed that the Jews of Eastern Europe were living in a terrible environment that required immediate relief. "We have always favored a Zionism which should consist of giving the oppressed and persecuted Jews in foreign countries the opportunities to enjoy Life and Liberty in any country they may select as their adopted homes."[28] About a year later, the paper again argued that Zionism was a necessary means to help Jews in need. This was seen as a philanthropic effort to benefit their coreligionists in Eastern Europe.

> There is no doubt that the Zionist movement is gaining strength every day because the Jewish people are better informed as to the ultimate object, the amelioration of the condition of unfortunate co-religionists residents in foreign countries where there existence is burden. Denuded from all idle dreams and vagaries we are inclined to regard Zionism as a philanthropic movement. If the purpose of the leaders, and if their plans can be executed to rehabilitate Zion by placing those Jews, who are inclined to turn to the Holy Land, in a position to earn a livelihood and better their condition, all the more honor and credit to them.[29]

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[26] *The Jewish Spectator*, 3 August 1906, 4.
[27] Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust*, 114.
[28] "A Timely Opinion," *The Jewish Ledger*, 30 August 1907, 15.
[29] "Federation of Zionists," *The Jewish Ledger*, 18 July 1908, 14.

The argument presented in favor of Zionism is the one that was provided in earlier support of Uganda. The editor was aware of the pressing needs of the oppressed Jews of Europe and was searching for a solution. Palestine could indeed provide a safe haven for the oppressed Jews of Eastern Europe. This was the main concern of the editor.

The Houston *Herald* also conjectured that continued anti-Semitism was directly related to Zionism's salience. In a powerful editorial the writer argued that Judaism could no longer survive the animosity of its neighbors.

> The history of mankind shows that no two races can live side by side without friction; the minority are always made to suffer. Either the Jew must stay where he is - everywhere- and suffer as he does, or he must plant his own vine and fig tree, where there will be none to make him afraid. And when he is on his own soil and in full control of his own destiny, it is probable that he will prove equal to that responsibility. Until then, he cannot properly be held accountable for failure to reach the standard to which the races of the world aspire.... So long as Jews continue as a separate people, so long as they are not allowed to assimilate in part without feeling the effects of prejudice or hostility, the 'Jewish question' will continue to exist, a problem for the Jew and the non-Jew as well. [30]

Using Biblical imagery, the editor called for Jewish sovereignty. He, like Theodore Herzl believed that anti-Semitism could be not be overcome through assimilation. The Jewish problem in Europe would only be solved if the Jews left. There are threads of this theme present in the following editorial:

> This being so, it is a pertinent inquiry whether, after all, the Zionist is not right in his contention that the Jew should have a country of his own, where he can live after his own ideals in his own way, where he will not be curbed by the animosity of those who surround and overwhelm him, where the whole responsibility as well as the whole power will be upon him to reach the status to which as a human being he is entitled.[31]

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[30] "Political Zionism," *The Jewish Herald*, 18 September 1912, 4.
[31] Ibid.

The editor argued that the Jewish state would not only provide a safe refuge for Jews, but also a place for sovereignty. This passion for self-determination can be traced to the influence of modern romanticism that extolled emotion in preference to reason.[32]

Issues related to the Zionist Movement

The Houston *Herald* recognized, with approval, that the holiday of Hanukkah had been appropriated by the Zionist movement. "It is undoubtedly in this spirit that the Zionists have chosen Hanukkah, as their special holiday. We hear so much and are so often impressed with Israel under persecution, that the event celebrated on these days of Israel as fighter and as seeking independence, appeals to the national spirit of those who wish to rehabilitate the Jews in their own country."[33] The Maccabees served as the ultimate symbol of the small defeating the mightiest empire and retaking the land of Israel.

For some Zionists, the *halutzim*[34] symbolized the ongoing Jewish struggle for social equality, dignity, and autonomy.[35] The Houston paper displayed support for this notion. "Palestine is therefore today not only a desirable place for pious old Jews and young idealists, but it is also a good immigration center for all Jews, old or young idealists and non idealists."[36]

The paper also asserted the view that Zionism would facilitate the preservation of Judaism. "Zionism offers by far a better solution for the preservation of Judaism. ... Those

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[32] Howard Sachar, *The Course of Modern Jewish History* (New York: Random House, 1990), 303.
[33] "Hanukkah," *The Jewish Herald*, 17 December 1908, 4.
[34] Jewish agricultural pioneers in Israel.
[35] Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism*, 152.
[36] "How to Dispose of the Baron De Hirsch Fund," *The Jewish Herald*, 26 March 1909, 4.

who so desire cast their lot in Palestine, strikes us to be really by far the better of the Zionistic propositions."[37] The Jewish religion would find preservation through Zionism.

The paper also saw Hebrew as an important cultural component of Zionism. "Now that the Zionists at Hamburg have decreed that Hebrew IS the National language, we await to see if that language will be espoused by that organization over the preference to Yiddish and if so, let us start at home. Send your children to the Houston Hebrew school."[38] This editor supported the revival of the Jewish language as the national language. The Houston paper further argued that the Jews of Texas should learn Hebrew as a means to connect with the wider Jewish world.

Despite its objections to Zionism, The Memphis *Spectator,* like the Houston paper, recognized that Zionism was a part of Judaism. "The optimism of the Zionists deserves admiration and being an attribute of Judaism, it proves that no matter how Utopian Zionistic hopes are and how retrogressive the tendencies of Zionism, it is nevertheless intensely Jewish."[39] On one hand the editorial clearly attacks Zionism, while at the same time extolling it.

Emphasizing Zionism's Practical Accomplishments

The papers frequently recognized the practical achievements that were taking place in Palestine. Between 1904 and 1914 the Zionist movement experienced growing factionalism. Serious disputes arose between 'political' and 'practical' Zionist. The former, sharing Herzl's view, sought to pursue Zionist aims almost exclusively through

[37] "To Save Judaism," *The Jewish Ledger*, 3 November 1911, 15.
[38] *The Jewish Herald*, 3 February 1910, 4.
[39] *The Jewish Spectator*, 28 December 1906, 4.

diplomacy; the latter, generally Eastern Europeans, did not believe political activities alone were sufficient. They stressed the need for settlement and cultural activities in Palestine. Between 1908 and 1914 the proponents of the 'practical' approach gained ascendancy in the World Zionist Organization.[40]

In a commentary concerning the Federation of American Zionist's Convention, the New Orleans editor wrote in favor of the practical approach, "Naturally, the financial aspects of all plans relative to colonization came in for a large part of the discussion. To Mr. Simon Goldman[41] of St. Louis credit is due for the proposal for the organization of land development companies in Palestine, which strikes us is a most necessary plan in connection with the intention to repopulate Palestine with coreligionists familiar with agricultural pursuits."[42] Not only was the practical aspect important, but also the places the Zionist chose to spend their money. Agricultural settlements were seen as an important attribute of the Zionist work. This is again a reflection of the editor's positive views of agricultural work.

Following the Eleventh Zionist Congress, there was more news concerning the movement's practical achievements. The Houston *Herald* applauded the founding of a university. This was another important step toward repopulation. "Every heart which throbs with love for the Jewish people ought to leap with joy at the glad tidings that the Zionist congress at Vienna decided to establish a university at Jerusalem. The Zionist have achieved wonders during the short period of their existence."[43] The university was

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[40] Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism*, 11.
[41] Unable to find additional information on Simon Goldman.
[42] "The Zionist Convention," *The Jewish Ledger*, 18 June 1909, 14.
[43] "The Jewish University," *The Jewish Herald*, 25 September 1913, 4.

another symbol of achievement and a source of Jewish pride for the editor. The Zionists were seen as creating the appropriate institutions necessary in establishing the foundations for a Jewish Homeland.

Unlike the papers that accepted the notion of Palestine as a refuge, the Memphis *Spectator* rejected this approach as romantic. The editor saw it as a utopian plan with no hope of actually being achieved. He stressed the importance of reason and critical thinking. "Sentimentality will never produce any lasting good. It is the basis of Utopian projects built upon sand. Zionism is one of its offsprings, cradled in the romanticism of illusory hope. We have ever and anon expressed our opposition to the aims and objects of the Zionists."[44] A year later the paper continued with its criticisms of the movement of Jews to Zion. "But to settle Palestine with several millions of Jews at the present time is a chimera that can not be realized."[45] The editor saw the limited achievements as proof that the land would not be able to support a mass influx of immigrants.

In spite of the modest success the movement achieved in building settlements in Palestine, the paper was not swayed, arguing that the achievements were too limited to have had a significant impact.

[44] *The Jewish Spectator*, 25 August 1905, 4.
[45] *The Jewish Spectator,* 3 August 1906, 4.

> Two years ago in the columns of our journal we maintained the opinion that Palestine offers no opportunities for any considerable number of Jewish immigrants, and that the expectation of the Zionists to settle their persecuted brethren in the 'Holy Land' as tillers of the soil is but a Utopian dream. Dr. Paul Nathan[46] ... leader of the Jews in Europe... has recently returned from a visit to Palestine, investigating personally the true state of affairs, and he states in his report that Palestine offers absolutely no field for Jewish immigration from Russia, Galacia or Roumania. Dr. Nathan finds industry and agriculture altogether too insufficiently developed to do more than nourish the Jewish population now resident there.... This means that Israelites already living there need looking after, and that education and not immigration is the next thing to bring about. To increase the poverty and misery by crowding into that small territory thousands of immigrants is almost a crime, and we hope that the leaders of Zionism will drop that project.[47]

While the other papers praised the Zionists and their achievements, *The Jewish Spectator* saw their limited progress as failure. The editor argued that the rehabilitation of Palestine did not support those already there, and the economic infrastructure certainly would not be able to absorb additional immigrants. Therefore the Zionist cause could not succeed in its ultimate goal.

Reform and Zionism

In addition to the lack of opportunity for Jews in Palestine, the Memphis paper also argued against Zionism on theological grounds. According to Reform theology, Judaism was a religion with a universal message known as the 'the mission of Israel.' The mission of the Jews was to propagate the universal humanistic religion of the prophets throughout the world. Dispersion - Diaspora- was, therefore, a vital condition according to Reform thinking.[48] Many of Reform Judaism's seminal thinkers during the nineteenth century were influenced by Enlightenment philosophy which figured so significantly in the

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[46] Unable to find additional information on Dr. Paul Nathan.
[47] *The Jewish Spectator*, 21 February 1908, 4.
[48] Naomi Cohen, "The Reaction of Reform Judaism in America to Political Zionism," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, vol. 1 (June 1951): 361.

emancipation in Central Europe. Anti-Semitism in the United States was never commensurate with what European Jews experienced, and this factor helped to shape an almost religious love of Reform Jews as well as other Jews for the United States. This positive attitude created the frequent perception that America was in fact a Promised Land.[49] A consequence of this ideology was that the Reform institutions at the beginning of the twentieth century did not embrace Zionism and in some instances, were hostile to it.[50]

The editor, Rabbi Max Samfield of Memphis, served a Reform congregation. He shared his movement's opinion concerning Zionism. "A Jewish state in Palestine.... It would be regarded as a retrogression, a step back from universalism in the direction to tribalism."[51] The idea was clearly restated a month later. "Reform and Zionism are diametrically opposite."[52] Like many other Reform Rabbis, the editor was opposed to Zionism.

Not only was the editor adverse to Zionism, but he was also against the possibility of those with Zionist tendencies serving in national Reform Jewish positions. When a rumor that a Zionist would be given a leadership role at the upcoming Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis surfaced, the editor viewed this as a reversal of Reform's position. "It is rumored that a prominent Zionist, occupying an Eastern pulpit, is to be placed at the head of the Central Conference. We sincerely hope that this report proves untrue; it would place the official stamp of the American rabbinate upon the

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[49] Karp, *Zion in America.*
[50] Ibid.
[51] *The Jewish Spectator,* 1 February 1907, 4.
[52] *The Jewish Spectator,* 29 March 1907, 4.

Utopian banner of Zionism; and, flung into the face of a very large majority of Reform Jews, who are non-Zionists or anti-Zionist, would be met by their disapproval."[53] The Memphis paper referred to Rabbi Max Heller of New Orleans, a well-known and well-respected figure within the Reform movement.[54] Heller, a Zionist, almost lost the presidency of the Central Conference of American Rabbi due to his pro-Zionist stand. Rabbi Samfield was one of those who did not see Zionism as an acceptable aspect of one of the arms of Reform Judaism.

Opposition to Zionism in Reform arose again in a controversy at the Hebrew Union College. The attitude of the College and other Reform organizations toward Zionism was that Jews no longer believed in or expected restoration in Zion. In addition, they owed their loyalty to the country in which they lived, and Zionism created the impression of a dual loyalty.[55] The then president of Hebrew Union College, Dr. Kaufman Kohler, insisted that there be neither Zionist teaching nor expressions favoring Zionism. The incident that aroused furor occurred in 1907 when Professors Henry Malter, Max Margolis, and Max Schloessinger resigned from their positions at the College.[56] All three men were avowed sympathizers with the Zionist movement.[57] When these men resigned from the College, the Zionists charged that the professors had been forced out because of

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[53] *The Jewish Spectator,* 5 November 1909, 4.
[54] Gary P. Zola, "Maximillian Heller: Reform Judaism's Pioneer Zionist," *American Jewish History,* vol. 73 (June, 1984): 375-397; Bobby Malone, *Rabbi Max Heller: Reformer, Zionist, Southerner 1860-1929,* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 1997).
[55] Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust,* 165.
[56] For further information see Samuel Karff ed., *Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion at One Hundred Years,* (n.p.: Hebrew Union College Press, 1976), 63-69.
[57] Cohen, *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society,* 373.

their pro-Zionist views.[58] Later historians have noted that Zionist persuasions did in fact play a major role in their departure from the College.[59]

The New Orleans *Ledger* urged that there be full disclosure on the matter. There was hope that this was not a controversy in which Zionism was the cause. "The Board of Governors would do a masterstroke by 'showing the cards' and, thereby satisfy the public that neither Zionism nor anti-Zionism was, or is at the bottom of the turmoil."[60] The paper was concerned, like many others, that the resignation of these members of the faculty had been caused by the school's unalterable opposition to Zionism.

Despite what the New Orleans paper wrote, The Memphis *Spectator* understood the faculty resignations as stemming from a conflict between Zionists and anti-Zionists. "Several attempts have been made to call down condemnation upon the action of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College in opposing the teaching of Zionism ex cathedra to the students of the college. We consider the resolution passed most timely and in full accord with the aims and objects of an educational institution which has promulgated the principles of Reform Judaism."[61] In the same article, the editor argued that this was an institutional issue. "Zionism has no place and no claim for recognition in a college designed and maintained for the education of REFORM RABBIS."[62]

Not only did the editor of the Memphis paper believe that Reform and Zionism were in opposition, but also that traditional Judaism and Zionism were also in conflict. Traditional Jews rejected Zionism as a secularist, political short cut that refused to

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[58] Ibid. 374.
[59] Karff, *Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion at One Hundred Years*, 64.
[60] "The College Scandal," *The Jewish Ledger*, 14 June 1907, 14.
[61] *The Jewish Spectator*, 29 March 1907, 4.
[62] Ibid.

recognize that the Jewish restoration of Zion would come only when God was ready for it, and not as the result of mortal man's efforts to anticipate Divine Will.[63] "The chief cause of the opposition on part of loyal orthodox Jews is the tendency and effort of Zionism to accomplish by HUMAN agencies the restoration of the Jews to Palestine whilst the leaders of Jewish orthodoxy insist that this restoration must be entirely the result of DIVINE interposition."[64] This paper found the two extremes of Judaism, traditional and Reform, as being against Zionism. Reform rejected Zionism as anti-universalistic. Traditional Judaism rejected it as humans doing God's work.

Support for Zionism

As the Zionists continued to gain support and produce practical achievements, the two other papers called upon all their readers to be open to the happenings in Palestine and the progress of Zionism. "Elsewhere in our columns we give a synopsis of the proceedings of the (Zionist) convention. It deserves to be noticed by our readers all; not only those who may be favorable disposed towards Zionism, but also the ones who are opposed to it. It is only by becoming acquainted with its aims and doings that a fair and correct opinion in reference to it can be obtained."[65] The New Orleans *Ledger* asked all its readers to be open to and aware of the Zionist cause.

In the earlier editorials, the New Orleans editor supported the Territorialists' camp of the Zionists. When it was no longer an option, the editor shifted to support for

[63] Samuel Halperin, "Zionist Counterpropaganda: The Case of the American Council for Judaism," *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, (March 1961): 451.
[64] *The Jewish Spectator*, 12 February 1909, 4.
[65] "Zionist Convention," *The Jewish Ledger*, 12 July 1912, 14.

Zionism. Clear expressions of advocacy for Zionism were present in the pages of the paper's editorials by 1913. "We look, therefore, forward to the display of much greater interest in the cause of Zionism in this country in the near future, will be due largely to the activity of Mr. Nahum Sokolow."[66]

In the same year the New Orleans paper had another positive prediction for Zionism's outlook. "The Zionists have every reason to look with hope into the future. Even those who are bitterly antagonistic to the Zionistic ideas and ideals must admit that they have taken a strong and enduring hold on a very large number of our co-religionists; that, in fact, its adherents have grown in numbers and importance from year to year."[67] The paper recognized the trend of growing support not only in America but also throughout the world for Zionist activities. Clearly the ideas and ideals of Zionism had taken hold of the editor of the New Orleans *Ledger*.

The Jewish Herald called on the Jews of Texas to support the Zionist cause. In a column regarding a meeting of Zionists, the editor wrote "May their work find new material who will enlist and become active and that the deliberations and meetings be held on a plane which will call for commendation and bring praise to the men and women who believe in Zionism, its purpose, and its future."[68]

Not only did the Houston paper call on people to provide moral support, but also financial help. With the High Holidays approaching, the paper appealed to its readers, "It would seem opportune at such a time to make some contribution to the National Zionist

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[66] European Zionist leader touring the United States; see Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*; "Zionism," *The Jewish Ledger*, 21 March 1913, 15.
[67] "The Zionist Congress," *The Jewish Ledger,* September 19, 1913, 14
[68] *The Jewish Herald*, 28 December 1911, 4.

fund by procuring and using National Fund stamps for various purposes."[69] This was a direct call to provide funds for the Zionist cause-- a level of support not present in the other papers.

Conclusion

All three of the editorial columns expressed their writers' opinions about Zionism. It is evident that world activities were important issues for the editors. Zionism had both a local and an international dimension. The newspapers connected Jews to one another and also linked the readers to larger Jewish movements. There existed a connection to both the American Zionist movement as well as to the international movement. The papers commented on events in the United States, Palestine, and the Zionist Congresses in Europe.

Unlike the other papers, the editor of the Memphis *Spectator* argued that Zionism was impractical. Its editor, Reform Rabbi Max Samfield did not see Zionism as an answer to the problems of Eastern European Jews. In addition, the movement was in opposition to Reform's universalist theology which Samfield clearly embraced. Like many of the institutions of Reform Judaism, the paper did not endorse Zionism. Despite the editor's opposition to Zionism, it is important to note he had some admiration of the work the organization was able to accomplish. "There is one charge that cannot be made against the Zionist in the United States - inactivity and lack of zeal. The editor of the 'Spectator' is a non-Zionist, and as a territorialist looks upon the political hopes of Zionism as a

[69] "An Open Letter to Zionists," *The Jewish Herald*, 22 September 1910, 4.

modern Utopia, more harmful than helpful to the cause of liberal Judaism, but we cannot but admire the indefatigable spirit and steady perseverance of Zionists in making propaganda for their faith."[70] Despite this praise and other criticisms, the paper remained non-Zionist.

On the other end of the spectrum, the editor of the Houston *Herald* displayed a high level of support for Zionism on several grounds. Aligned with those who believed that anti-Semitism would only be solved through the removal of Jews, the paper was in favor of a Jewish state in Palestine. It provided a solution to the problems of the Eastern European Jews.

The Houston paper endorsed Zionism and its agricultural pursuits as a means of physically and spiritual saving the Jews. The spiritual saving would come not only through labor, but also through the cultural aspects of Zionism. The Jewish religion would be preserved through the founding of a state. The Hebrew language would connect the Jews of Texas to Jews everywhere. The editor argued that all the Jews of Texas needed to morally, financially, and culturally support the Zionist cause. The editor argued that Zionism would prove beneficial for the Jewish people.

The editor of New Orleans *Ledger* also looked to Zionism cause as a solution to the problems in Europe. However, the focus of this paper was on saving the persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe. He argued in favor of the Uganda Project and other plans that would help to immediately alleviate the problems of the Jews in Europe. When these other plans did not appear to be viable options, the editor recognized a return to Palestine

[70] *The Jewish Spectator*, 22 April 1910, 4.

and the founding of a Jewish homeland as the only alternative. The main focus of this editor was on the philanthropic nature of Zionism.

The papers' connection to the world Jewish community is evident through their discussions on Zionism. Although all three papers were written in the South contemporaneously, they expressed a variety of opinions on this issue. As with many topics, the reader finds a wide array of opinions that changed over time. Both Zionist and non-Zionist attitudes are present on the editorial pages.

CHAPTER 4

Issues of the Progressive Era: Health, Labor, and Prohibition

Three central issues of the Progressive Era appeared in the writings of the Southern newspaper editors examined in this study. The first concerned the new discoveries and regulations regarding health. The editors focused on Judaism's longstanding traditions and how they conformed to new societal expectations. The second issue was labor. In the South, a region not known for its support of organized labor, the editors concentrated on advocating improved conditions for women and children through legislation. They also saw a specific connection between the value of labor and Judaism. The third subject to which they devoted their time was the movement for prohibition. In this field as with the other two, there had been a fundamental shift in the way Southerners viewed governmental authority. In a region accustomed to a policy of local control with few restrictions, prohibition, like the other two issues, created additional state controls. The editors argued against prohibition because they viewed it as a restriction of personal liberty as well as a mixing of church and state issues. It became an issue of American liberty and protecting the constitution. The nation, the South, and the editors each viewed these matters through their contextual lens.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a thorough restructuring transformed social and political institutions in the United States. Between 1900 and 1930, bureaucratic intervention in education, public health, child welfare, and public morality replaced traditional governance, which until then had relied on voluntarism and community

control.[1] Historians have written of the period roughly between 1900 and 1914 as the Progressive Era, and of the variety of reform agitations at work during it, as the Progressive Movement.[2]

The growth of the nation and its urban centers created a need for new structures of government. The close quarters of the crowded cities magnified the problems which had always been present. The Progressives contended that social evils would not remedy themselves and that it was wrong to sit passively and wait for time to take care of them. They believed that the people of the country should be stimulated to work energetically to bring about social progress. In addition, they argued that the government should use its positive powers to achieve this end.[3] Imbued with the certainty of paternalism, early twentieth-century reformers sought to remake social and political institutions in such a way as to readjust them to the changing conditions.[4] The reformers believed that their work would help the less fortunate and those unable to help themselves.

This transformation took place throughout the country, and the South was also affected. In no region was there a sharper conflict between traditional and modernizing governance, or between republican libertarianism and the trend toward a more powerful state, than in the South.[5] Post-Reconstructionist Southerners shared a common tradition of governance. Imbued with rural republican traditions, they despised concentrated power, including governmental coercion and intervention. Some feared that this type of

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[1] William Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), xi.
[2] Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Movement 1900-1915*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), 1.
[3] Hofstadter, *The Progressive Movement 1900-1915*, 4.
[4] Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, 95.
[5] Ibid. xi.

control anticipated military dictatorship and a negation of personal liberty. They did tolerate the functioning of local, state, and federal governments under strict constraints.[6] The Progressives challenged that resistance to a greater centralized power.

Whether in education, health, or relief for the poor, southern state and local governments exercised social policy in a manner that most late twentieth century Americans would consider strange, even alien. States and localities were primarily concerned with factors such as race, political party, class, locality, kinship, and denomination. Bureaucracy played no role in this system of government.[7] As the population increased-- particularly in urban areas-- the effectiveness of local control began to show signs of weakness. The local governments were unable to deal with the regional and state issues that confronted them.

Public Health

The impressive growth of the South's larger cities created a pressing need for an expansion of municipal services such as public utilities, transportation systems, schools, and health facilities.[8] The rapidly expanding number of people concentrated in one area necessitated new government services. At first, the issues related to matters of basic health and survival. Primitive water and sewage systems constituted a continuing health hazard in many towns and cities.[9] As these areas grew in population and size, their related problems also worsened.

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[6] Ibid. 3.
[7] Ibid. 7.
[8] Dewey Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, (Knoxville, TN: University Of Tennessee Press, 1983), 277.
[9] Ibid.

As a result, both the cities and the states expanded their authority regarding sanitation. Before this time public health functioned under a community controlled administrative system.[10] Much of the South had experienced recurring epidemics of yellow fever, typhoid fever, smallpox, and other infectious diseases in the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth.[11] This was a result of the poor sanitary conditions present in the region. In addition, there was little centralized power to help deal with the outbreaks or much less to prevent them.

There were ineffective state system that existed. But aside from collecting mostly inaccurate statistics, the writing of annual reports, and periodic tours of rural areas, state health officers exercised little effective control over local communities.[12] A lack of funding and coercive power hampered the work of the state boards. State officials were more concerned about avoiding conflict with local authority than doing anything else. In essence, the state officials served in an advisory role to local officials.[13] When problems occurred they were ineffectively handled on a local level.

In 1900, the germ theory of disease was beginning to be accepted and agitation was increasing for better sanitary conditions for water supply and garbage disposal.[14] Individuals recognized the need for better and more effective state control. The states responded and enlarged their functions.

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[10] Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, 5.
[11] Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, 310.
[12] Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, 11.
[13] Ibid. 12
[14] Fon W. Boardman, *America and the Progressive Era 1900-1917*, (New York: Henry Walck, 1970), 55.

The editor of *The Jewish Ledger* became an advocate for increased central authority over health issues. "This proposed State Health Conference is the second of its character held in Louisiana, and from all indications will attract a large and interested delegation from every section of the State." [15] The editor elaborated on his expression of support and hoped that the conference would propose laws for the legislature.[16]

In the same article, the editor argued that the Board of Health needed to expand its authority. "To be thoroughly candid in the face of existing conditions, there is great work to be done on these lines in every section of the State and the State Board of Health should be given every assistance in inaugurating and carrying out the work."[17] In this issue, the editor reasoned that a powerful authority would benefit the region.

The New Orleans *Ledger* and the Memphis *Spectator* also underscored the individual's responsibility in maintaining personal hygiene and proper health conditions. The editors noted that Jewish law and custom served as an aid to those who aspired to maintain a proper home. Differing from *The Jewish Ledger*, the editor of *The Jewish Spectator* believed that sanitary reform was the work of the individual, not the government. "One of the most helpful tasks which the modern woman can impose upon herself, without becoming a stranger to the sphere assigned to her by nature and providence, is that of a sanitary reformer. To preserve the health of her family and have a complete knowledge of the all the conditions and principles of health."[18] The editor

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[15] "For the Public Welfare," *The Jewish Ledger*, 12 April 1907, 14.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] *The Jewish Spectator*, 3 June 1910, 4.

argued that the Jewish woman could work as a sanitary reformer by taking care of her own home. The editor supported the concepts of personal responsibility and local control.

The editor of *The Jewish Ledger* related the sanitation concerns of the day to the Jewish holiday of Passover. "House cleaning at the coming of Spring is regarded to-day as a sanitary measure of the highest importance. The removal of deleterious substances, the cleansing of sinks, gutters and yards, all with a view of insuring health - all of these usages had their origin in the home ceremonies of the Jews, to be observed just preceding the Passover Festival."[19] The writer argued that the customs and laws of the Jewish people were congruent with progressive ideas concerning health.

The importance of hygiene was not only a Jewish concern in the spring, but a weekly duty. Again, the paper connected Jewish law with maintaining proper hygiene. "A pure water supply has always been a Jewish law. Cleanly surroundings have always been an essentially among Jews, and therefore no intelligent housewife welcomes the advent of the Sabbath Eve - or the holidays- without anticipating them by a thorough house cleaning."[20]

The New Orleans paper also supported the Jewish tradition of personal cleanliness while recognizing that the readers were confronting a new set of ideas. "Progressive ideas and higher civilization have not improved upon the time-honored house cleaning of the Jews between Purim and Pesach."[21] Another editorial pointed out that Jewish law demanded proper hygiene. "Just now, when people all over the United States are interested in combating diseases by sanitary measures and many suggestions dealing with

[19] "House Cleaning," *The Jewish Ledger*, 15 March 1907, 14.
[20] "Exempt from Fever," *The Jewish Ledger*, 8 September 1905, 14.
[21] "Spring Cleaning," *The Jewish Ledger*, 27 March 1908, 14.

health laws find their way into the columns of the secular and non-secular press, it is not out of place to refer to Jewish laws and usages, 'for the preservation of physical well-being is looked upon in Judaism as a religious command.'"[22]

The editor reasoned that Jewish health laws provided a safeguard against illness. "Happily so far very few Israelites in this city and in the surrounding country have been stricken with the prevailing fever. There is nothing remarkable, nor is it a coincidence that our coreligionists seem to be immune from the prevailing fever. It is demonstrated that the great majority of people who are victims of the fever are of an element that disregards the most ordinary hygiene and sanitary laws."[23]

Food preparation was another salient health issue of the Progressive Era. In the early 1900s, there were no consumer advocacy groups. In the absence of these organizations, consumer discontent tended to focus on political issues. When the Pure Food and Drug Act was being debated, it had become clear that the consumers' interests would be considered.[24] In 1906, Theodore Roosevelt capitalized on the publication of *The Jungle*, Upton Sinclair's socialist novel exposing unhealthy conditions in Chicago's stockyards. The president won passage of legislation creating the Food and Drug Administration and authorizing the Agriculture Department to inspect meat.[25]

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[22] *The Jewish Ledger*, 16 August 1905, 14.
[23] "Exempt from Fever," *The Jewish Ledger*, 8 September 1905, 14.
[24] Hofstadter, Richard. *The Age of Reform from Bryan to F.D.R.*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1963), 172.
[25] Steven Diner, *A Very Different Age, Americans of the Progressive Era*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 215.

Some time later, there was debate about the Pure Food Department labeling foods Kosher.[26] The message was that it would do so with the same attitude it adopted toward all labels. "One thing can be relied upon and that is, if the Government labels these articles 'Kosher' it may be relied upon that they are just as labeled."[27] The paper was responding to a concern that the way a product was labeled would be accurate.

The paper also praised a book that discussed the ideas of Kashrut. In that work, "[The book] discusses the subject from 'the actual hygienic and sanitary conception of the designation - Kosher and Treifa - which serves as an essential basis whereon to build a scientific consideration of this important subject.'"[28]

Health reformers were active in the Progressive Era. The editor of the New Orleans newspaper urged that the government do more to protect the public. The Memphis *Spectator* and the New Orleans *Ledger* saw a subject matter for which the individual had to take responsibility and for which he could be accountable. The editors showed that their reasoning and support for these opinions came directly from Judaism. Arguing that the value of health came directly from Judaism was a means to bolster Jewish pride. It also helped the readers to understand how these reforms reflected age-old teachings of Judaism. Finally, it was a means to show that the Jewish immigrant was not like the 'other immigrants' that the majority culture perceived in a negative light. *The Jewish Herald* did not comment on this issue. Apparently health problems in Houston did

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[26] For further details see Harold Gastwirt, *Fraud, Corruption, and Holiness: The Controversy over the Supervision of Jewish Dietary practice in New York City, 1881-1940*, (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1974).
[27] "Kosher Legislation," *The Jewish Ledger*, 2 September 1910, 14.
[28] "Jewish Dietary Laws," *The Jewish Ledger*, 26 January 1912, 14.

not concern the editor of the *Herald* as it did the editors of the papers in the other two larger cities.[29]

Labor

Organized labor developed greater strength during the Progressive Era. Workers joined together to protect or improve their economic condition. They formed unions, went on strike, and used collective bargaining.[30] The South did not experience the same explosion in manufacturing plants and manufacturing jobs as did the North. There were fewer opportunities in the South for industrial employment, and those jobs that did exist usually paid a low wage. The lower pay in the South resulted from the dominance of low-income agriculture work, and the comparatively large supply of labor competing for the relatively few jobs in available industry. Decentralization of industry and the lack of legal controls kept wages low. There were few, if any, restrictions on hours, working conditions, and age and sex of operatives.[31]

An estimated 25 percent of the employees in southern cotton mills in 1900 were between the ages of ten and sixteen.[32] They were an important source of labor in the section's burgeoning textile industry, a symbol of the New South in action. By 1901, a number of sporadic and uncoordinated efforts were being made to persuade southern legislatures to deal with the problem of child labor in the South's industries.

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[29] In 1900 the population of the three cities was: New Orleans 287,104, Memphis 102,320. In 1910 the population of the three cities was: New Orleans 339,075, Memphis 131,105, Houston 78,800. From Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, 277

[30] Diner, Steven. *A Very Different Age, Americans of the Progressive Era*, 60.

[31] John Ezell, *The South Since 1865*, (n.p.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 201.

[32] Dewey Grantham, *The South in Modern America*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 48.

One reason for the increasing publicity given to child labor was that cotton textiles in the South were beginning to threaten New England's domination of the industry. Northern manufacturers pointed to the contrast in labor conditions in the two sections and charged that the South's competitive advantage resulted in large part from the exploitation of children and the subsequent depressed scale of adult wages.[33]

By 1910, all of the southern states had established a minimum age for employment, at least in manufacturing. Yet only four southern states had a minimum age as high as fourteen and several of the states lacked enforcement ability.[34]

Advocating child nurture and the sentimental bonds of family, child labor reformers articulated the new ideas of the child-saving movement. The chief objective of the movement was to remove children from the adult, workday world and segregate them in protective institutions such as schools. The challenge was to persuade an often indifferent and even hostile public to endorse radically different notions of childhood.[35]

The Jewish Spectator supported the labor laws designed to protect children. The editor argued that childhood should be protected.

> We have heretofore called attention to the wrongs inflicted upon the children by compelling them to work in factories and thus deprive them of the opportunity to be educated, and, moreover, arrest their physical development and dwarf and thwart their mental and moral faculties. Whilst not many Jewish parents force their children to do manual labor, whilst very young, yet we should participate in any movement which respects and protects the rights of children as much as those of adults. Especially in the South where legislation prohibiting child labor is yet in its making.[36]

The editor supported the notion of childhood as a time for developmental growth.

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[33] Ibid. 50.
[34] Ibid. 51.
[35] Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, 160.
[36] *The Jewish Spectator*, 24 January 1908, 4.

In another editorial, the Memphis *Spectator* made the case that children's rights were being overlooked in the South. "The rights of adults are well defined and well secured by State laws, but we cannot assert that much for the rights of children or else statistics could not reveal the startling fact that over 10,000 children in the South under thirteen years of age are deprived of education by being employed in factories, stores, etc."[37] Working children were not able to attend school. The reformers pressed for a childhood where youngsters could mature properly. The Memphis paper argued that this was one of the essential reasons to protest child labor.

Lack of education not only hurt the children, but also the region. In this editorial, the writer urged the state to expand its role and become involved in what had previously been considered exclusively a family matter.

> The child has a right to be protected by the State against parental selfishness, cruelty, ignorance, indifference, and superstition. No parent has a right to overwork a child for the sake of his little earnings, or to work him at all to the neglect of his education, the State is responsible for this education, and several States in the South are guilty of gross negligence in not placing prohibitory laws against child labor upon their statute books.[38]

The Houston *Herald* also agreed, "There are children who before maturity have wasted their lives in factories where proper regulation would have prevented their employment."[39]

The efforts of child labor reformers in the southern states were slowly transformed into an organized movement that assumed a regional character. The principal institution

[37] *The Jewish Spectator*, 10 March 1905, 4.
[38] Ibid.
[39] *The Jewish Herald*, 25 April 1912, 4.

was the National Child Labor Committee.[40] In 1904, this group began a united effort of both southern and northern reformers to combat the problem of child labor.[41]

The editor of the New Orleans *Ledger* argued in favor of the work the committee was doing. "Four years have transpired since the National Committee has taken up this laudable work, and already improvements in child Labor Laws are manifest. It has been suggested by the National Child Labor Committee, that Saturday and Sunday, January 23 and 24, be set aside as 'Child Labor Day,' and it is recommended that ministers of every denomination throughout the country deliver address or sermons in the interest of the defenseless child workers."[42]

Children were not the only ones seen as powerless. There was the paternalistic view of southern society that women also needed to be protected. The editor of *The Jewish Herald* argued for the protection of women in the labor force. "There is now before the legislature of Texas a bill to limit the hours of labor for women in factories and other industrial concerns.... This bill should by all means be passed. While it is important that men and children should have reasonable hours for labor, it is far more important that women should not be overworked."[43] Women's labor laws were more pressing than those for children.

Legislation provided one means to protect the worker. Organization of workers was yet another means to change the work environment. Since most labor organizations

[40] Grantham, *The South in Modern America*, 50.
[41] Ezell, 215
[42] "Child Labor Day," *The Jewish Ledger*, Dec. 25, 1908, 14
[43] "Pass It," *The Jewish Herald*, 30 January 1913, 4

began in the North, therefore, in the South a new concept had to be introduced.[44] Despite this challenge against organized labor, the editors supported the unioinist movement.

The Houston *Herald* praised the accomplishments of unions as an effective means to change the work environment. "In no other country is labor in such a healthy condition as in these blessed United States. The demonstrations of power by the various organizations and the short hours of the union workers are but slight tokens of the concessions wrested from the greed of capital."[45] The paper also believed that the industrialist placed profit above working conditions and safety. "Mine workers whose lives are daily jeopardized by greed for dividends. Factories, where human lives are not considered worthy of proper protection. These and hundreds of other like conditions confront us today and we should commence to take warning and to appreciate a human life, without regard to wealth or conditions which surround it."[46]

The Jewish Spectator argued that the organization of labor was something to be lauded. "The desire for organization, which is now developing so strongly among women, whilst in the past men only seemed to be destined for that work, is a law of nature, one of the highest expressions of life."[47]

On a national level, Jews were heavily involved in the labor movement. A significant number of garment workers fused their identities as Jews and as workers.[48] Ideals of social justice traditionally associated with Jewish life and thought became mediated through the trade union so Jewish labor leaders embraced the concern for human

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[44] Ezell, *The South Since 1865*, 202
[45] "Labor Day," *The Jewish Herald*, 1 September 1910, 4.
[46] *The Jewish Herald*, 25 April 1912, 4.
[47] *The Jewish Spectator*, 13 December 1907, 4.
[48] Diner, *A Very Different Age, Americans of the Progressive Era*, 66.

dignity that was a central element in the unions.[49] The editors clearly reflected and supported those views in their writings. As in the issue of public health, they never forgot they were Jews.

The Jewish Herald argued that Judaism and labor were deeply connected. "No religion has ever invested labor with higher dignity than Judaism."[50] The editor made the case that fair labor was an expression of Jewish social justice. "The Prophets, the dreamers of our race, predicted that the time would yet come when the rapacity of the few would become the history of the past and that in the end the right would come for each man to reap the fruits of his labors. In this country labor, properly organized, can hasten the coming of that day."[51] The editor drew a strong connection between labor and a messianic age. The union was also seen as the best hope of effecting social reform for the working class in America.[52]

No single development galvanized workers more than the Triangle Shirtwaist fire of 1911.[53] The fire began on the eighth floor of the building and quickly spread through all ten floors. The doors of the workrooms had been locked from the outside, a practice followed by some employers to keep workers from leaving early. The fire escapes were inadequate to support the workers fleeing from their impending destruction. One hundred and fifty-four people perished in the blaze, many of them young Jewish girls who did

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[49] Joan Jensen and Sue Davidson eds., *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 170-71.
[50] "Labor and Judaism," The *Jewish Herald*, 28 August 1913, 4.
[51] "Labor Day," *The Jewish Herald*, 1 September 1910, 4.
[52] Jensen, *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike*, 170-71.
[53] Alan Kraut, *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society: 1880-1921*, (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1982), 93-94; for more on the Triangle Shirtwaist fire see Jensen, *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike*.

sewing work in the shop. Newspaper reports repeated the details of how those trapped inside crowded onto window ledges and then threw themselves into the street, their clothing on fire. The horror of the fire focused the nation's attention on the plight of the sweatshop worker and galvanized support for labor organizers.[54]

The Houston *Herald* connected the tragedy to the upcoming Jewish holiday of Passover. "During seder let us not forget to offer up prayers on the plight of the to alleviate the heartache of those sorrowing for loved ones lost in the holocaust in the Triangle Shirtwaist factory. More than half the victims were Jewish girls. The days of Egyptian bondage are not yet past. Modern Pharaohs demand bricks without furnishing straw. Life is deemed cheaper than thread."[55]

Limited state government provided few if any labor laws in the South. The advocates of child labor legislation worked to change the laissez-faire attitude of state government.[56] The editors, like other humanitarians, and the heads of labor movements supported greater rights for workers. The Houston editor argued that his opinion came from Jewish values of social justice.

Prohibition

The movement to prohibit the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages may well have been the most dynamic and passionately supported 'reform' in the South during the Progressive Era.[57] Prohibitionists were among the most important social reformers.

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[54] Kraut, *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society: 1880-1921*, 93-94.
[55] "Tears for the Living and Prayers for the Dead," *The Jewish Herald*, 13 April 1911, 4.
[56] C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South 1877 - 1913*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1971), 416.
[57] Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, 160.

In the twentieth century, they launched an ambitious crusade to remake southern culture through an unprecedented exertion of public power.[58] The fight for prohibition in the South was a significant aspect of the region's search for social reform in the early twentieth century.[59]

Although the South has long enjoyed a reputation for teetotaling, not until after the Civil War did prohibitionist sentiment emerge in the region.[60] While the temperance movement strenuously opposed alcoholic culture, it held high the concepts of personal liberty and community responsibility. Temperance advocates accepted and strongly endorsed the popular tradition against intrusive governance.[61] Though many Southerners were against the use of alcohol, the sentiments opposed to government interference in the matter were equally potent.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the approach to temperance as an individual responsibility changed. The prohibition movement increasingly embraced solutions that involved government intervention.[62] In the transformation from an individual approach to advocacy of active governance, prohibitionists attacked some 'sacred cows.' One was the distinction between church and state. The Prohibition movement argued that prohibition was a moral issue and not a religious one, and therefore, there was no conflict.[63]

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[58] Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, 95.
[59] Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, 160.
[60] Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, 32.
[61] Ibid. 34.
[62] Ibid. 39.
[63] Ibid. 50.

The second central political conception that prohibitionists attacked was that of personal liberty. The prohibitionists argued that limiting individualism was sometimes necessary for the good of society and the protection of its members. To one extent or another, all laws required limitations over individual freedom.[64] The prohibitionists argued that the benefits of the elimination of alcohol would outweigh the loss of individual liberty. According to these prohibitionists, government was involved in the alcohol trade through licensing of saloons and the control of wholesale distribution of alcohol through the dispensary. Prohibitionists felt that if the government could use its powers to protect the liquor trade, it could just as well use its authority to abolish it.[65] This argument was used to overcome the conflict of those who worried about the intervention of the government in the matter of personal choice. Prohibition was both a coercive reform with strong racial and class overtones and an expression of social concern for those victimized by the South's new urbanization and industrialization. In urging the adoption of prohibition, temperance advocates were calling for an expansion of the influence of state and municipal government.[66]

The prohibitionists began their fight on the local level. Customarily, a city or county voted to decide if it would allow alcohol within its borders. Usually the ordinance passed the vote, and the town or county became dry. However, it took only one wet town to nullify the effectiveness of prohibition in six other dry towns and counties. Southern prohibitionists quickly realized that the elimination of alcohol required a more effective

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[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid. 48-50.
[66] Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, 177.

approach. Thus they endorsed local remedies only until they possessed sufficient strength to enact statewide prohibition.[67]

The more conservative Protestant denominations supported the prohibitionists' cause. They exerted pressure on state and city officials to clamp down on the sale of liquor or better yet to secure referenda in which a majority of voters could deny the right to drink to everyone.[68] Either through local option or statewide prohibition, the great majority of southern territory was at least officially dry by about 1910; according to one estimate in 1907, fewer saloons existed in thirteen southern states than in all of New York City.[69]

Most progressive movements began in the city and then spread to the rural parts of the states. The Prohibition movement in the South moved in the opposite direction, from the rural sections to the cities. The rural areas were the first to become dry and then the urban areas. In Texas, many urban dwellers resisted prohibition.[70]

In Tennessee, by the beginning of 1903, fifty-five of the state's ninety-six counties had made saloons illegal. Yet, despite prohibition's progress in Tennessee, the 'alcohol interests' found sanctuary in the region's largest cities. In Memphis, for example, the state's most populous city, there were 504 saloons in 1903. By 1908 only Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, and Lafollette still held out against the region's trend toward prohibition.[71] In January 1909, the entire state of Tennessee became dry.[72]

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[67] Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, 108-109.
[68] Boardman, *America and the Progressive Era, 1900-1917*, 142.
[69] Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, 96.
[70] Grantham, *Southern Progressivism, the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, 168.
[71] Ibid. 165.
[72] Ibid. 166.

Although the local option approach enjoyed a good deal of success in Louisiana, the cosmopolitan atmosphere of New Orleans and the French and Catholic culture of southern Louisiana proved resistant to the pressures for total prohibition.[73] All three cities, Memphis, Houston, and New Orleans were the last places in their states to outlaw alcohol.

All of the Jewish newspapers examined in this study expressed strong opposition to prohibition. The editors argued that the laws would constrict personal liberty. They argued with a sense of southern patriotism that the country should remain a place with personal liberties for all citizens. The editor of the Houston *Herald* reasoned that prohibition restricted personal rights. "The Statewide Prohibition Amendment which is being attempted in this campaign and which ends on July 22nd, [we] would indeed be derelict in our duty as a paper which belongs to a people who believe in liberty; were we to remain silent; as a people who believe in the rights of the individual; as a people who are temperate and peaceful, we cannot be silent when an attempt is made to throttle the individual by legislative enactment."[74]

The editor of the Memphis *Spectator* echoed the remarks of the Houston paper. "In adopting this policy [of prohibition] it persistently violates the general principle of individual liberty and self government which avenges itself sooner or later in abnormal reaction. The true task of reform is to enable society to take care of itself."[75] The editor argued that if this restriction was imposed, there would be adverse reactions. In addition, others restrictions could follow. "The number of prohibitory laws that are on our statute

[73] Ibid. 171.
[74] *The Jewish Herald*, 20 July 1911, 4.
[75] *The Jewish Spectator*, 6 March 1908, 4.

books, and are now being passed by our legislative bodies are sad commentaries upon a republic that boasts of its liberty of conscience and individual rights."[76]

As Tennessee passed legislation making it a 'dry state', the editor of the Memphis paper again wrote against the movement. "The epidemical delusion of prohibitory legislation continues to rage in the United States, and soon there will be scarcely a single State without having enacted laws which, without the consent of the governed, abrogate and obliterate the individual rights of American citizens to choose what to eat or drink."[77]

The editor of *The Jewish Ledger* also agreed that prohibition would be a restriction of personal liberty. "The prohibition faction was not unanimous, for a number of true Americans stood loyal for personal rights and privileges."[78] A week later, the paper again fought against temperance. "So far as Prohibition is concerned, we cannot conceive how anyone reared in an atmosphere of personal liberties and rights, will permit himself to be coerced into living in accordance with the desires of others."[79]

The New Orleans paper also commented on prohibition from a Jewish perspective. "As far as Jews are concerned, we have asserted again and again, prohibitive liquor legislation, or anything appertaining thereto, is a matter that does not concern us morally or religiously, though as individuals and good and intelligent citizens we protest against the curtailment of our personal rights to obtain a drink of wine, beer, or even whiskey when we want it."[80] The editor played to Jewish pride by arguing that the Jews did not

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[76] *The Jewish Spectator*, 16 August 1907, 4.
[77] Ibid.
[78] "Unamerican and Unfair," *The Jewish Ledger*, 22 November 1907, 15.
[79] "Prohibition Campaign Opened," *The Jewish Ledger*, 29 November 1907, 14.
[80] "The Methodist Campaign," *The Jewish Ledger*, 28 August 1908, 14.

abuse alcohol. Nevertheless, they should be concerned with this as an issue of personal liberty.

The editor of New Orleans *Ledger* also saw a problem with the prohibition movement's ties to religious groups, giving the appearance that it was trying to enact government laws that reflected the religious beliefs of a few. "The advocates of prohibition always are the same elements which favors Sunday laws and restrictions of personal liberty as advocated by Christian doctrines seems to overlook that neither religious denominations, nor any church authority, has any right to autocratically dictate the affairs of state, no matter how much they are in the majority."[81] In the same year, the New Orleans paper commented in a similar way: "Puritanical blue laws are being revived and prosecuted under more modern names - all with a view of supplanting the 'State' with the 'Church.'[82] The face of prohibition in the South was frequently preachers and ministers. The editor argued that this was a bad combination. "Politics and godliness are units which cannot be combined."[83]

The editor of *The Jewish Spectator* also argued that church and government should not mix. "The lobby of a State Legislature is no place for ministers of the gospel. The preacher who mingles with politicians and drags church into the wrangle and turmoil of fierce partisanship degrades himself and his high calling."[84] The editors fought against prohibition on these grounds.

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[81] "Unamerican and Unfair," *The Jewish Ledger*, November 1907, 15.
[82] *The Jewish Ledger*, 4 January 1907, 14.
[83] "Politics and Godliness," *The Jewish Ledger*, 10 January 1908, 14.
[84] *The Jewish Spectator*, 10 February 1905, 4.

Finally, the editors of the Memphis *Spectator* and the New Orleans *Ledger* did not believe that prohibition would solve the problems it hoped to address. The editor of *The Jewish Spectator*, for instance, argued that the proposed remedy would not cure the illness: "The prohibitory legislation which those men recently enacted show plainly how little they know about sociology, physiology and of human nature in general."[85] Similarly, the New Orleans editor recognized that problems existed, but prohibition was not the solution. "An entire community should not be excoriated for the faults of the evil-doers, nor can Public Opinion alone bring about the desired reform. The offenders should be redeemed."[86]

The prohibition movement enjoyed a high level of support throughout the South. Its influence resulted in a serious reduction in the alcohol trade in the region. Despite the fact that many people supported the movement, the editors argued against the movement. They saw prohibition as a restriction of personal rights. Unlike many Southerners, the editors were concerned with the expansion of government into the realm of prohibition. Individual liberty was something that the writers argued was an important part of maintaining a secure life in this country. The second issue of concern was the fact that individual religious groups were advocating prohibition. The movement was seen as mixing church and state. Again, the editors saw this as a danger to their well-being and position in the region.

Conclusion

[85] *The Jewish Spectator*, 8 February 1907, 4.
[86] "The Real Issue," *The Jewish Ledger*, 6 December 1907, 14.

The Progressive Era was filled with movements looking to meliorate the many vexing problems that came in the wake of a rapidly industrializing and growing country. The editor of the Memphis paper argued that there were too many groups trying to do too many things at the same time.

> The Prohibition reform seeks to abolish drunkenness by prohibitory legislation. The Woman reform seeks to rectify woman's wrongs by giving her the ballot; the peace reform seems to get rid of war by convening a world's congress; the Prison reform seeks to convert criminals into good citizens by some new system of penitentiary discipline; the Labor reform seeks to emancipate the working classes by means of trade associations and an eight-hour law; the Civil Service reform seeks to overthrow the evils of excessive political corruption by means of competitive examination.... Some of these reforms are good, some are bad; some of the reformers are enlightened, some are narrow minded; some of practical service, some of mere Utopian speculations. But the great number of these reforms is in itself a source of weakness to the general cause of reform. [87]

These were just a few of the reforms being promoted throughout the country. The South was not immune from this fervor for change. The Memphis editor argued that those who attempted to pursue too many movements simultaneously, in the end , caused all of them to fail.

Health conditions were in dire need of improvement. The editors of the Memphis *Spectator* and the New Orleans *Ledger* advocated greater care in personal hygiene and sanitary measures. The *Ledger* argued for improved state boards of health. This was seen as a means to prevent and relieve epidemics. Although there was backing for increased government power, the Memphis and New Orleans papers also recognized the role for personal responsibility. At this time, the South was moving away from individual and local control and embracing central authority.

The papers also held that Jews had a long-standing tradition of practicing proper hygiene. This was a means to show a sense of Jewish pride. The Jews were not a group

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[87] *The Jewish Spectator*, 6 March 1908, 4.

of 'dirty' foreigners. They were civilized and recognized the importance of personal hygiene. This was a way to educate the reader about a progressive value in Jewish tradition.

In the area of labor, the South was not as active as the North. With fewer factories, jobs, and full time workers, the conditions were poor. Before the twentieth century, the state was a weak institution. It did not provide rules or regulations for work. This is a second area in which the state increased its function. All three papers argued against child labor and for legislation that would protect children. The editors were influenced by the notion that childhood should be a time for maturity and growth. They urged the state legislatures to remedy the situation. The editors also argued that the state should protect women workers from unfair labor practices. Workers' rights was another area in which the editors saw a need for increased state authority.

Although there were few labor unions in the South, the editors of the Houston *Herald* and the Memphis *Spectator* praised these organizations. The Houston paper connected Judaism and labor, viewing the two as an essential coalition for creating a better world. This was especially true regarding women and children. Yet again the regional issue at play is a transfer from local control to a stronger role for the state.

Prohibition was seen as yet another attempt to provide the state with additional power. All three editors argued that it was an unnecessary loss of personal rights. They conjectured that the increasingly popular legislation prohibiting alcohol would not solve the problems in society. In fact, it had the potential to create additional problems. In addition, Christian clergymen were active on behalf of the movement. Creating state

legislation based on the desires of the church and its religious leaders was seen as a dangerous breach of the venerable wall separating church and state.

The change from a decentralized form of government to one that gave the state more authority was one of the major issues of the Progressive Era in the South. The views of Jewish newspaper editors did not always parallel the southern reformers' opinions. With respect to health issues, the Memphis and New Orleans papers held views similar to those of the reformers. Proper sanitary measures would only come about through increased government regulation and personal responsibility. The stance in support of labor was yet another area in which all three of the editors believed there needed to be an increased role of the state authority. Regarding prohibition, on the other hand, all three editors saw the restriction of personal liberty as very threatening. In this area they argued against more centralized power. One historian has suggested that, "Many Jews saw in the Prohibition Act a backlash by the forces of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism against the changing nature of America and its ethnic composition. Allied with immigration restriction and a heightened emphasis on racial thinking, Prohibition was a threat to Jewish life in America."[88] All three issues demonstrate the connection and influence of national, regional, and local movements on the three newspapers.

[88] Hannah Sprecher, "'Let Them Drink and Forget *Our* Poverty': Orthodox Rabbis React to Prohibition," *American Jewish Archives* 43 (Fall /Winter, 1991): 110-111, 136.

CONCLUSION

This study of the editorial columns of three Southern Jewish newspapers during the years 1905 to 1913 has illuminated several significant historical themes. The issues which most influenced the editors were those of urbanization, Jewish tradition, and the geographic setting in which they were writing.

During the Progressive Era, both the general population and the immigrant population were moving to the cities. The growth of the nation and its urban centers created new issues. These concerns related to urbanization included immigration, the acculturation of the immigrant into the general society, health reform, labor reform, and prohibition. The higher concentration of people in urban areas raised these problems and brought them into the public's view.

As more immigrants began to enter the country, their arrival became a controversial issue for the nation. Some suggested that the crowding of immigrants in the city led to an increase in criminal behavior. Others believed that the United States did not have enough room for these newcomers. As the urban immigrant gained greater social visibility, calls came forth to close the open door of immigration. The extraordinarily large numbers of Jewish immigrants who arrived during the same period caused American Jews to pay closer attention to these societal concerns.

All three of the editorial columns examined in this study, agreed that the concentration in urban areas and increased visibility of the Jewish immigrant should be given close consideration. The Houston *Herald* and the New Orleans *Ledger* defended the immigrant, and favored an open-door policy vis à vis immigration. These two papers

saw immigration as a means to provide much needed refuge for their oppressed co-religionists of Eastern Europe. The Memphis *Spectator* cautiously supported a continuation of the status quo, but warned that when the country was not economically secure, and there were few jobs available, the immigrants should not come to America. This paper took a more pragmatic approach.

When legislation was proposed to limit immigration, all three papers spoke out in opposition. In their objections, they argued that the legislation was un-American. The three papers held up the American value of maintaining an open door policy regarding immigrants, despite the increased crowding in urban areas.

The newspapers examined in this thesis advocated programs that would help Americanize and acculturate the newcomers by moving them out of the crowded urban centers. It was hoped that by dispersing the immigrants throughout the country, they would not only become familiar with American ways, but would also blend into the American way of life. They supported the Industrial Removal Office as one avenue for distribution. The New Orleans and the Houston papers argued that Jews should come South. The Memphis paper disagreed and made the case that there were not sufficient opportunities for employment in that region. The New Orleans and Houston papers also supported Jewish agricultural movements. They viewed labor on the land through a romantic lens. The Memphis paper argued that Jews should be cautious about back to the land movements. The editor cited several failed attempts at Jewish agricultural pursuits in defense of this argument. The Memphis paper focused on the practical possibilities of farming while the other two papers focused on the idyllic nature of farming.

The Jews of Eastern Europe were trying to escape dangerous circumstances. One solution to this problem was immigration to America. Yet there was a growing recognition that America could not serve as destination for all persecuted Jews. Therefore another haven had to be found. Zionism was seen as a second solution to the situation in Eastern Europe. The New Orleans *Ledger* supported Zionism as a humanitarian cause. One of the reasons the Houston *Herald* supported the Zionist movement was that the editor saw it as a benevolent movement. Despite the need for a safe refuge for Jews, one of the Memphis *Spectator's* arguments against Zionism was that it was not a practical solution. The editor, a Reform rabbi, believed that Palestine would not be able to absorb a large influx of immigrants. Although the editor criticized Zionism, he also praised its accomplishments.

The close quarters of the crowded cities elevated the problems of poor sanitation which had always been present. The Progressives argued that this problem-- like others mentioned in this study-- would not remedy itself. Instead they believed that the people of the country should work energetically to bring about social progress. In addition, they argued that the government should use its positive powers to achieve this end.

The growth of the South's larger cities created a need for municipal services such as health facilities. The rapidly expanding number of people in the urban centers necessitated new government services. The papers embraced the proposed reforms to improve health through an increase in government involvement in providing proper sanitation and creating effective health departments to protect the citizens of the rapidly growing Southern cities.

The expanded cities also attracted new industry to the South. There were few legal controls to protect the workers who were subjects of exploitation by unbridled capitalist expansion. The emerging cities brought together large numbers of workers. The concentrated and more visible laborers brought the plight of the worker to the forefront. As a result of poor working conditions, the editorial columns in these three Southern papers, argued for legislation and labor organizations. The papers supported proposals to improve labor conditions through greater government involvement and through support of organized labor. The expansion of cities in the South created a concentration of workers whose plight became visible to the public.

The rapid growth of the cities highlighted the problems of alcohol abuse. The dangers of the city were tied to the saloon. The rural advocates of prohibition argued that the city was an unfavorable place because of alcohol. The prohibition advocates argued that the problems of urbanization could be cured through their cause. The urbanization of the Southern cities brought the issue of prohibition to the forefront of discussion.

The editorials reflect the burgeoning urbanization in American society, which played a crucial role in the Progressive Era of American History. The papers also take a distinctly Jewish perspective in approaching these topics of the Progressive Era.

All three papers expressed concern for the Jews of Eastern Europe. There was an underlying notion of the importance of the Jewish value that all Israel is responsible for onp390 one another. This may help to explain their support for an open door immigration policy. In the papers' defense of Jewish immigrants, the editors argued that these newcomers were different from other immigrants. The papers made the case that because the Jewish

immigrants held close to their traditional values, they would ultimately serve as good citizens and benefit America.

Not only were the papers defending their recently arrived coreligionists, but also their own place in society. The editors understood that the action of any one Jew would be reflective of the whole community. Therefore they supported programs to help Americanize and acculturate the newcomers. The papers also supported dispersal programs because they saw these as serving as an example of Jews taking care of other Jews. The editors argued that it was the Jewish community's responsibility to ensure that Jewish immigrants did not turn to public assistance and did not become a burden on the northern city.

The editors saw Zionism as a Jewish issue that was related to the matter of immigration in general. The New Orleans paper viewed this as an question of helping the persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe to find a safe haven. The editor argued that supporting Zionism was a humanitarian effort. The Houston paper believed that Zionism would help to preserve Judaism physically and spiritually. In addition, the paper welcomed the movement's new emphasis on Jewish culture and language. The Memphis paper viewed Zionism more negatively, and this may very well have been due to the fact that the paper's editor was a Reform rabbi who shared his movement's official opposition to Zionism. He believed that the Zionist movement was a step back from universalism in the direction of particularism.

The issues of the Progressive Era were also seen through the filter of Judaism. With regards to health and labor, the papers proudly displayed their religion's connection

to these issues. The Memphis and New Orleans papers carefully described Judaism's long-standing traditions surrounding hygiene. This was an attempt to bolster Jewish pride and display how Judaism's traditional values were compatible with the new discoveries in health. This was also a way to educate the reader about a progressive value that had long been part of Jewish tradition.

All three papers advocated increased protection for industrial workers. The Houston paper drew a distinct connection between labor and Judaism, arguing that social justice would only be achieved through reform. The Memphis and New Orleans papers supported organized labor and legislation to protect the worker as important humanitarian causes that were values cherished by their Jewish heritage. As in the issue of public health, the editors proudly connected a Progressive issue to Judaism.

In regards to prohibition, the editors did not argue from a Jewish perspective. Instead the papers made the case that prohibition was un-American. The editors did not want to suggest that Jews needed or benefited from the sale of liquor. They argued that prohibition was against the Southern tradition of personal liberty that rejected centralized government authority. They saw prohibition as a threatening issue because it was a Protestant reaction against the changing character of America and its ethnic make up. The Jews were one of the groups changing America's composition and so the Jewish editors were obviously responding to these societal pressures.

These communal newspapers served as an essential connection linking the Jews of the South to one another, to the region, to the nation, and to the world. This connection

came out of the editors' Jewish heritage. Their tradition is reflected on the pages of the editorials.

Local culture also influenced these editorial columns. When legislation to restrict immigration was proposed, the New Orleans and Memphis papers urged their readers to contact their congressional representatives. These two papers were located in well-established cities with long settled Jewish communities who were an integral part of the society. Therefore these editors were able to urge their readers to contact their representatives. This suggests that the readers had contacts whom they could use. The Houston paper, located in a newer city with a less established Jewish community, did not call for the same action from its readers.

Memphis and New Orleans were larger cities that were plagued by the problems that accompanied rapid urban growth. This included problems of sanitation and hygiene. The Houston paper did not remark on this topic. It seems that health problems in Houston did not interest the editor of the *Herald* as they did the editors of the papers in the other two larger cities.

New Orleans and Houston were both port cities. They were accustomed to seeing foreigners and traders coming and going. The editors of these papers supported continued immigration. Memphis, located in the interior part of the country, had a different character. This paper only cautiously supported continued immigration. The location and demographic character of the three cities seems to account for the difference of editorial opinion concerning support for unrestricted immigration.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has tried to provide an understanding of Southern Jewish concerns in the Progressive Era. Utilizing the editorials of three Jewish weeklies has served as an excellent resource for this study. More work needs to be done in this area. Few works have been written about Southern Jews during the Progressive Era. The sermons written and preached by the rabbis of these three cities, as well as other southern cities during this time, could be analyzed to gain yet another point of view. A close comparison of these writings would prove to be a complement to this thesis.

Another useful supplement to this thesis would be to read the editorials of three Jewish weeklies written in the North during the Progressive Era. Through analyzing and examining them, the reader would then be able to determine if the issues and positions presented in this work were mainly due to southern influence or were matters of general Jewish concern.

Finally a future researcher could look into the later writings of these three newspapers. Through a careful study, one could determine if these issues continue to be of concern or if other issues emerged. In addition, one could ascertain if the editor's support or opposition concerning any of these issues continues in later years. By reading subsequent issues of these newspapers, we would gain a clearer perspective on the findings uncovered in this research project.

CONCLUSION

The editors of these three Southern Jewish weeklies were aware that they were serving as a vital Jewish link for their readers. "To the Jews living in small communities the Jewish newspaper is the most potent agency in keeping them in touch with what is going on in the Jewish world."[1] As a medium of research, the newspaper editorials analyzed herein have served as effective instruments through which contemporary readers could come to understand how Southern Jewish editors responded to a broad range of salient concerns that affected this community during this time period.

[1] "Support a Jewish Newspaper," *The Jewish Herald*, 29 June 1911, 4.

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