

THE IMMIGRATION OF LEVANTINE JEWS INTO THE UNITED STATES

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NOMENCLATURE

The title "Oriental Immigration" or "Immigration of Oriental Jews," chosen for the paper allotted to me, is not free from objections.

ORIENTAL

The term Oriental is too broad to be exact. It leaves an impression in the mind of many that this immigration is one with the immigration of Hindoos, Japanese and other Eastern Asiatics.

It is not easy to find a term which is exactly descriptive of this immigration and which is at the same time free from objections.

TURKISH

To speak of these Jews as Turkish is inexact. Greeks, Bulgarians, Servians, etc., are included among them. We are also apt to think of Turkey as comprising only Turkey in Europe without including Turkey in Asia.

LADINO

It is also decidedly inaccurate to talk of this element as Ladinos, Espanols or Spagnualis. A considerable proportion of them use Arabic or Greek as their mother tongue and are quite ignorant of Ladino. Moreover, it is just as inexact to speak of a Ladino immigration as it would be to speak of a Yiddish immigration. The Ladino immigration includes settlers from no less than three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa, since Ladino is spoken along the coast of North Africa, in Asia Minor, and in Greece, Turkey and the Balkans. Such a designation is therefore loose and superficial in its implied classification.

SEPHARDIC

Another term sometimes used is Sephardic. This term is the most objectionable of all. A certain percentage of the immigrants in question are not Sephardim, *i. e.*, descendants of the Jews expelled from the Spanish Peninsula in the Middle Ages. Some are Ashkenazim, who have settled in the Orient. Many of the Greek Jews claim

that they have been settled in Greece for many hundred years and that they therefore have no Sephardic or Spanish ancestry. The term Sephardic also has no definite geographical implication. An extreme indication of this is shown by the fact that the Committee on Aid of Sephardic Jewish Immigrants of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society last year dealt with Jews from Turkey in Europe, Turkey in Asia, Russia, Greece, Egypt, the West Indies, Bulgaria, Persia, Syria, France, Spain, Italy, Roumania, Morocco, Servia, Austria, China, Cuba, India and Portugal. But the greatest objection to this term is the fact that it classifies Jewish immigrants according to religious ritual. On the analogy of Sephardic, one would classify other immigrant Jews as Ashkenazic, Chasidic, Orthodox, Reform, etc.

LEVANTINE

There remains only one term which is free from all these objections, *viz.*: Levantine. The Levant is defined (Century Dictionary) as "(1) the eastern Mediterranean and the coasts of Syria, Asia Minor and Egypt. (2) The regions between Italy and the Euphrates." The immigration under discussion comes from exactly these districts, whether the narrower or the broader definition of the Levant is accepted.¹ It would be as well if we could agree to use the term Levantine as the technical and standard description of this immigration. It is at once comprehensive and exactly descriptive of the locality whence come these immigrants, regardless of language and religious ritual.

In referring to the languages spoken by the Levantine Jews, it would be as well to determine upon and adhere to a uniform terminology. The terms Greek, Ladino and

¹ There is an occasional arrival in the United States of one of the B'nai Israel of Bombay, of a Sephardic Jew from India, of Jews from Bokhara, Tiflis and Persia. There is also a regular, but very small, immigration of Sephardic Jews from the Northern coast of Africa, notably from Mogador, Tangier, Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Alexandria and Cairo. There is also a noticeable settlement of Palestine Jews of all kinds in the United States.

RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

The Arabic-speaking group is the most observant religiously. All the members are Sabbath keepers and observers of the dietary laws. They have a good Hebrew knowledge and can often converse or write in Hebrew.

The Greek-speaking group is also religiously observant. But many of them, through economic pressure, are now engaging in work that does not allow of Sabbath observance. As a rule, they are fairly well educated in Hebrew and are inherently religiously observant.

The Ladino-speaking group is divided among the observers of traditional Judaism and those who have drifted far from it. The latter, some of whom have given up all Jewish observance, are often past pupils of a school of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. The Hebrew knowledge of the Ladino speakers is not as good as that of either the Greek-speaking or the Arabic-speaking Jews.

RELIGIOUS SEPARATISM

All three groups in the United States show very exclusive tendencies. The large majority are Sephardim. They regard themselves as belonging to a different strain from their North European brethren, and argument or coercion fails to overcome this exclusiveness in the older generation. Those living away from their own compatriots, even though in the midst of a Jewish community, rarely identify themselves with that community. With the exception of the two old Sephardic congregations, the one in New York City, the other in Philadelphia, they feel at home in none of the existing synagogues. Their own Hebrew accent and liturgy and religious ceremonial and traditions are all sufficiently individual to prevent their uniting with their American, German or Russo-Polish brethren in synagogal life. This is a serious phenomenon in so far as these first settlers find here no congenial Jewish atmosphere or life. But this condition is growing less common as their numbers increase. We need not regard this separatism as presenting any real problem to the general Jewish community. Time's relentless attrition will wear down these prejudices, which at pres-

Arabic are to be preferred. For Ladino, the term Spaniofic is sometimes used, but it has little to recommend it. Judaeo-Spanish, although more descriptive than Ladino, is clumsy. Syrian is not so correct a term as Arabic.²

CLASSIFICATION BY LANGUAGE

Although we describe the immigration in general as Levantine, we must distinguish between three main groups, as the vernacular used is Greek, Arabic or Ladino.

Comparatively few of the Jews who speak Greek come from the Jewish communities in Greece proper. The majority of the Greek-speaking Jews are from Janina; a few come from Prevesa. But these cities, until recently under Turkish rule, are now included in the Kingdom of Greece.

Arabic is the language of Jews coming from Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut and Bagdad. It is also the vernacular of the few Jewish immigrants from North African communities such as Cairo, Tripoli, Tangier, etc.

Ladino is the language of most of the Jews from Bosnia, Bulgaria, the districts formerly comprised by European Turkey (except the Greek-speaking sections), the Aegean Islands and the numerous communities in Western Asia Minor. A few of the Jews from Roumania speak Ladino, and a number of the Jews from Greek-speaking communities are also able to speak this language. The chief centers from which Ladino-speaking settlers are arriving are Constantinople, Monastir, Kastoria, Kavala, Smyrna, Rhodes, Salonica, Gallipoli, Dardanelles, Angora, Tchorlu, and Rhodosto. A number of Ladino speakers have reached these shores also from centers such as Brusa, Silivri, Lule-Bourgas, Adrianople, Uskub, Seres, Nevrokop, Drama, etc. Ladino is the mother tongue of by far the largest number of the Jewish emigrants from the Levant.

² It may be added that the term settler is in every way preferable to the term immigrant. This immigration consists almost entirely of settlers. Turkish Jews in America rarely return to Turkey, where they would often be liable for not having served in the army. Economic and living conditions, which are far more favorable in America than in the Levant, also ensure their remaining here. There are very few transmigrants among them.

ent fill a useful function in stimulating these settlers to create their own religious organizations.

SYNAGOGUES

As is usually the case with immigrant Jews, the first form of organization effected is a burial society, composed of a group coming from one city or district. This society in time conducts a synagogue, at first temporarily for the holy days and later permanently. The result is a mushroom growth of small, struggling synagogues which should be encouraged to unite for mutual benefit, increased efficiency and dignity of worship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

These synagogues are unable to make provision for the religious education of the young other than through the services of a pitifully underpaid reader. In New York City there are several Talmud Torahs, which are usually quite primitive in equipment and methods, but which are surprisingly efficient in inculcating a knowledge of Hebrew. The parents of the children, through a fine but disproportionate love for their own tradition of Hebrew pronunciation and synagogue liturgy and ritual, often will not send their children to the existing Talmud Torahs or Hebrew schools of the Russo-Polish, German or American type, so that the children especially in the smaller centers outside of New York in very many cases are growing up without any religious instruction. There is a plethora of Hebrew teachers, mostly of the old-fashioned type, but an almost complete lack of qualified *Schochetim* and *Mohelim*, and a complete lack of rabbis.

LACK OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

The lack of qualified rabbinic leaders encourages many abuses, especially in connection with marriages. Consanguineous marriage prohibited by the State law, such as that between uncle and niece; or marriage of those who are otherwise not legally free to marry according to the law of the land, such as between those who have received *Get* without a civil divorce; incomplete or invalid marriages which the bride, and sometimes the groom, believed to be valid; desertion of the bride after the

dowry has been obtained; the illegal granting of *Get* and many similar abuses flourish, largely through ignorance. A religious authority qualified to perform rabbinical functions would safeguard the community from the assumption of religious offices by unscrupulous or ignorant persons, and counteract or prevent many of these abuses. Effective organization alone can provide these communities with their needed religious officials and can satisfy the crying need for religious education among the young.

ILLITERACY

Four hundred and twenty-seven adults (over 16 years of age) out of 1,762 who passed through the Sephardic Bureau of the Hebrew Immigrant and Sheltering Aid Society during 1913 were illiterate, *i. e.*, a percentage of 24.2. This is noticeably higher than 20.8, the average percentage for all the Jewish immigrants during the year.

GENERAL EDUCATION

The standard of education among these settlers is considerably higher than that of the countries from which they come; but it is not high according to American standards, even though many of them speak several languages, notably Ladino, Greek, Arabic, Turkish, French and Italian. None of the Greek-speaking community may be called highly educated. Most of the Arabic-speaking community read and write Arabic. The Constantinople and Salonica Jews are better educated than their brethren from other Turkish communities. But the best educated are those who have been pupils in the schools of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Smyrna, Salonica, Constantinople, etc. These have received a good modern education on French lines.

LACK OF LITERATURE

The Yiddish-speaking settler finds here Yiddish newspapers, Yiddish books, a Yiddish drama and a fully developed Yiddish life. But there is no possibility of a native Ladino, Greek or Arabic culture being developed in this country. The Levantine Jews, whether they speak Greek, Arabic or Ladino, find here no Judaeo-Greek, Judaeo-Arabic or Judaeo-Spanish educational and cultural instruments whatsoever. Among the theaters, only those devoted to moving

pictures appeal to them.³ They make practically no use of the facilities offered by the public libraries.

The only reading matter available for them is the weekly Ladino newspaper, *La America*, a Ladino counterpart of the Yiddish newspapers of New York City. It follows that the only means of educational approach is through the English language. In the small colony in Cincinnati there are "134 persons over 16 years of age who do not know how to read, write or speak English." (Hexter.) These figures are probably characteristic of conditions in other cities. Apart, therefore, from all economic reasons, special and tactful efforts should be put forward to teach these settlers the English language as rapidly as possible, in order to bring them out of their social and mental isolation.

NATURALIZATION

Together with this teaching of English should go encouragement of naturalization. The Levantine Jew being *par excellence* a settler, should be quick to become naturalized when the desirability of naturalization is brought to his notice. But so long as he remains isolated from the general life of the country by his non-conducting languages, his civic interest remains latent. Thus "of 29 men in Cincinnati over 21 years of age who have been in America longer than five years, only one is naturalized." (Hexter.)

TEACHING OF ENGLISH

It may often be necessary to form special classes in English and Civics for these settlers, since the teachers in the regular classes do not understand Ladino, Greek or Arabic. It is usually desirable that the teachers should know the vernacular of his pupils even though he does not necessarily use it in class work. The adult learners have more confidence in a teacher who they feel understands them and is one of them. In addition, there is a decided unwillingness to mix with non-Levantines, which causes the majority to struggle away from mixed classes. Only the most ambitious remain in a mixed class for a period long enough for the teaching to bear fruit. Two win-

³ On several festival occasions amateur presentations of Ladino plays have been given.

ters ago, at the instance of the Sisterhood of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue Shearith Israel, the Board of Education of the City of New York formed separate classes for the Levantine Jews in two night schools situated in the districts where the Levantines have settled. Within a short time there was an enrollment of 215. The attendance rapidly diminished, so that the Sisterhood found it expedient to pay one of the Americanized Levantine Jews to go around in the colony in order to work up the attendance, and to be at the schools in the evenings in order to encourage the learners and to make them feel at home. Notwithstanding these efforts, the attendance rapidly dropped to almost a vanishing point. That this failure was due in large measure to the fact that the learners were not taught by their own fellow-countrymen is indicated by the fact that at the same time as these public school classes were failing to attract, a class conducted by the Sisterhood and taught by one of the Levantines maintained its standard of attendance. Even though it may appear to be costly to form special classes for the Levantines, the invaluable results of such classes in benefiting the economic and educational standing of the elders and in preventing the widening of the abyss between parents and children justify the outlay and the concession of exclusiveness.

SEPARATISM

We may not altogether sympathize with this exclusiveness, but we must accept it as a fact. The Levantine Jew is marked by a strong historic consciousness, a pride and self-respect which express themselves in a dignity of deportment, dress and manners, an innate gentlemanliness, a refined sensitiveness, and a mettle which makes these settlers recoil from and reject any crude or patronizing offers of help. We should hesitate long before trying to break down this aloofness by any means which would invoke a weakening of this self-respect and awakening of this Jewish historic consciousness. These assets are too valuable and too uncommon among our poor Jewish settlers to be lightly sacrificed. The deficient feeling of kinship with the Yiddish-speaking Jew is only a passing phase which will

rapidly give way under the larger synthesis of Americanized Jewry.

SOLIDARITY AND DIVISION

The Levantine Jews evince solidarity among themselves in opposition to those with whom they do not sympathize; otherwise the powers of disunion and individualism are far stronger than those of cohesion. They form many small agglutinative groups of those who were fellow-citizens in the Levant, so that their societies are characterized by names such as Hebrat Ahava ve Achava Janina (Love and Brotherhood Society of Janina Jews), Ahi-Ezer of Damascus (Brotherly Help of Damascus), Ahavath Shalom Mi Monastir (Love of Peace of Monastir), Hayyim ve Chased Mi Gallipoli (Life and Love of Gallipoli), Anshe Rhodes (Men of Rhodes), etc. But in the smaller communities, where the numbers from the several cities do not suffice to form separate societies for each city, Levantine Jews from various cities and countries unite together without undue friction.

CHARACTERISTICS

It is difficult to form any accurate and general estimate of the qualities especially characteristic of these settlers without falling into platitudes or statements so broad as to be without value. In general, it may be said that a sense of dignity and pride and a mettlesome excitability differentiate them most notably from their North European brethren. Like the other denizens of Eastern lands, they are apt to conceal their real feelings from the stranger. This habit of avoiding open expression of feelings and thoughts often gives the observer an impression of slyness or trickiness which is very often undeserved. Their standards of honesty, truthfulness, etc., seem to differ in nowise from those of other Jews.

CRIMINALITY

Certainly their contribution to Jewish criminality in the United States has so far been negligible. They not infrequently find themselves haled before the magistrate for violations of city ordinances committed through ignorance, or for peddling without a license. Otherwise the Levantine Jews have a well-nigh clean record for criminality. But there is every sign of a rapid

deterioration threatening this community in America unless prompt preventive measures are taken and wise and timely guidance is offered.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The influences which do not favor a healthy normal morality are many. A considerable number of the community are engaged in evening and night work in hotels, cloakrooms, moving picture shows, etc. But the Oriental cafés are a far greater social menace. These coffee houses are the only recreation centers attractive to the Levantine Jewish men. In them they spend their leisure and some of their business hours, together with their compatriots. But in them also idleness and other evils grow apace. By far the most serious and general of these evils is gambling.

The cafés are also the happy hunting ground for the unscrupulous who live by exploiting their ignorant and un-Americanized brethren. This deleterious attraction of the café is the strongest force opposing every effort at religious, educational or social uplift.

PREPONDERANCE OF MEN

Many of the settlers are single or married men who have sought these shores to avoid a ruinous conscription in the Turkish army. Others, the advance guard of immigration, are married men who have come to seek the fortune of their families, which have remained in "the old country." This has resulted in a large preponderance of men over women, an ominous condition which is apt seriously to affect the healthful normality of social life, especially in view of the infrequency of intermarriage between the Levantine Sephardim and their Ashkenazic co-religionists. In Cincinnati there are among the Levantines 58 single men over 18 years of age to 15 single girls over 16 years of age. (Hexter.) Time is remedying this disproportion as the immigration of Levantine Jews becomes more regular and whole families are joining the male pioneer who has blazed the American trail. In keeping with the common tendency as immigration advances, the later comers are, in a growing measure, entire families arriving with the intention of making this coun-

try their permanent home. Of 2,344 who passed through the Sephardic Bureau of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society during 1913, 1,421, or 60 per cent, were males, and 923, or 40 per cent, females, a proportion which seems to promise a speedy attainment of sex equipoise.

WOMEN

The comparatively secluded and protected life led by girls in the Orient renders them ill-prepared for American conditions. There are possibilities of grave danger during the period of adjustment to these conditions. The married women of the community bring with them an Eastern feeling of subordination to the men. They are patient Griseldas wedded to dominant lords and masters, instead of being companions and helpmeets. Tactful encouragement with educational effort soon arouses in them a more American self-consciousness, redresses this social disparity, and fits them for the more independent life of a woman in America.

HOUSING CONDITIONS

Physical conditions in the home are rather better than those obtaining among the poor Jewish settlers from Northern Europe. The pride of the Ladino-speaking Jew very often leads him, or rather her, to keep the little home spotlessly clean and neat.

When it is remembered that in the Levant miserable houses, overcrowding and a lack of water, make it very difficult to keep the home in a satisfactory condition, all the more notable will this cleanliness appear, and the examples of unsatisfactory home conditions which are also found here will be fully intelligible. As is usually the case, the great enemy of cleanliness and hygiene in the home is economic pressure, producing colonies in the poorest quarters of the town and overcrowding the tenement dwellings. In Cincinnati Mr. Hexter estimates that there are 27 persons per sleeping room. In New York City the figure is probably considerably higher. Overcrowding is found even when the family is small because the overplus of single men produces a large class of boarders. The boarder, who helps pay the rent, is a very usual element of the household furniture. But in these cramped and limited homes the

young man boarder is apt to be an intrusive element, overcrowding the physical, the domestic and the moral happiness of the home.

HEALTH CONDITIONS

The physical well-being of these settlers is injuriously affected by these overcrowded homes in poor and congested quarters. As a rule, the Levantine Jews are of better physique than the Russo-Polish Jewish settler. But they seem to have no greater powers of resistance of disease. The overcrowding of the community in dark and unhealthy tenements in New York City is a serious condition. Effort should be made in the smaller communities to prevent the growth of similar conditions, by inducing the early settlers to congregate in the more modern and more open quarters of the town. The exclusiveness of these settlers, added to the natural gregariousness of the immigrant, ensure that the new community will grow up around the first settlers. Timely action will prevent the growth of a center of congestion with all its attendant ills.

Diet change is another factor to be reckoned with in considering the health of these settlers. The change from a diet which has been largely vegetarian and cooked in oil to American food and cookery, together with ignorance of the right and proportionate use of the foodstuffs most suited to conditions in America, result in digestive troubles.

But the most serious cause of physical breakdown is tuberculosis, due to bad housing, unhealthy indoor occupations, poverty, under-nourishment and exposure. Tuberculosis is claiming an appalling number of victims from this community of exotics, transplanted to the cities of the United States from the sunny, sub-tropical lands of Turkey, Greece and Asia Minor.

POVERTY

Movements of peoples throughout the history of the human race have been usually migrations of the poor. The immigration of Levantine Jews into the United States forms no exception to this. The first settlers are, as a rule, of the poorer class who have nothing to lose and everything to gain by leaving their homes in

the Levant. But it is as well to remember that among a people with a history so checkered as that of the Jews, the poorer classes are not necessarily lower classes. Indeed, many of the Arabic-speaking Jews who are settling here, although poor, are of very good families. As we have seen, the tradition of a noble past and the possession of an honored family name have never allowed poverty and oppression to degrade the Levantine Jews and rob them of their self-respect. We would be wrong were we to regard an Aboulaia, an Aboab, a Kimchi or a Chagiz as members of the lower classes, even though they may be peddlers or shoe polishers. They do not so regard themselves, and no social work among the Levantine Jews will meet with success if the fact of their poverty is brought into the foreground.

With few exceptions, there are no wealthy Jews in the Levant. Yet, even though the Levantine Jewish settlers in this country are poor, while the average sum of money brought by the Jewish settlers in 1913 was \$21.32 per settler, the average sum brought by the Levantine Jews was \$47.69.

OCCUPATIONS

A large proportion of them are without any special trade, and are unemployed, except at unskilled labor of the lowest grade. They have consequently been compelled to turn to day labor, peddling, polishing shoes and simple factory work. Others are masters of a trade or are skilled workmen, but are unable to use this advantage because of their ignorance of English. For both these classes, the teaching of English is the first and most important step to be taken in raising their economic standing. Reference has already been made to the necessity for forming special classes in English, in order to break down the social and educational isolation of these settlers. When to this is added the high economic value of the ability to talk, read or write English, it will be clear that there is no simpler, cheaper or more effective method of helping the Levantine Jews than by encouraging them to learn English.

The Greek-speaking Jews are usually peddlers of candy, fruit and vegetables, cloakroom attendants, bootblacks, laborers in kimono and apron works, in cigarette

factories and electrical factories, and a few are tinsmiths. The more prosperous are usually manufacturers of kimonos, aprons and petticoats.

The Arabic-speaking Jews almost all begin life in America as peddlers. The more prosperous now keep stores for Oriental goods, imported and domestic rugs, laces, shawls, silks, embroideries, curtains, tablecloths and novelty goods. Almost the whole of the remainder of the community is composed of itinerant peddlers trafficking in the goods supplied by these stores. Bootblacks or fruit and candy peddlers are hardly found among the Arabic-speaking Jews. In this respect they differ from their Greek or Ladino-speaking brethren.

The Ladino-speaking Jews are largely peddlers of candy or post-cards, bootblacks, factory hands, etc. A large number find employment in hotels, usually in the cloakrooms, sometimes as waiters. The more prosperous are lessees of cloakrooms, dealers in candy or post-cards, import merchants, etc.

Most of the single girls are factory hands, working in factories of cigarettes, kimonos, clothing or candy.

These occupations draw the members of all three groups to the large cities. Even the itinerant peddler, who is to be found especially at Coney Island, Atlantic City, Niagara Falls, Palm Beach and all summer and winter resorts, has his headquarters in the large cities to which he returns regularly for Passover and the autumn holy days. With the exception of some individuals who have been trained in the agricultural school, Mikveh Israel, at Jaffa, there are practically no agriculturists among them, so that it is only in urban communities that Levantines are settling. Their occupations as unskilled day laborers or factory workers involve much seasonal unemployment. Mr. Hexter found that 57 out of 88, or nearly 65 per cent, of the Levantine Jews in Cincinnati were earning \$10.00 a week or less. The writer of this paper is of opinion that the earnings of the Levantine Jews in New York City, where the cost of living is higher, are considerably less than this figure. Yet despite the low scale of earnings and despite the frequent intermission of employment, as a rule, it may be said that most of the

Levantines are earning a living. Especially the Arabic-speaking Jew is a shrewd, keen and careful business man. As a general rule, the Levantines are satisfied with small profits and a modest income. They are not restlessly and insatiably ambitious, nor are they especially quick to use modern business methods. But they are very thrifty and know how to support a family and save money on an income considerably less than that which is generally regarded as a living wage.

CHARITY

Consequently they appeal to the local Jewish charities only when prolonged unemployment, sickness of the wage-earner or similar urgent causes compel them to do so. They rarely appeal a second time, except when they are impelled by dire destitution or when they have been demoralized by an indiscriminating and effusive giving. Such relief rapidly trains them to take advantage of the opportunity of getting something for nothing. The societies to which they belong generally combine with their burial purposes a modicum of relief work for the living, especially for the sick. These societies, and individuals in the colony are the first to extend help, so that it is only the residue of a residue who come to the organized communal relief agencies. At these agencies they find that they are not readily understood. They feel that they are regarded as sports in the garden of American Jewry, and that they are treated as queer and outlandish because they do not understand Yiddish. They take it amiss when they think that they are being used by the philanthropic societies for advertising purposes. Proudly sensitive and acutely conscious of their Jewish work, they do not willingly apply to institutions which they feel are designed to deal with Yiddish-speaking Jews. It is well that this feeling should be respected. It is in the highest degree unwise to train them to wend their way to the general Jewish relief institutions. The effect of so doing is to pauperize, to develop in them the *schnorrer* instinct, and, above all, to break their spirit. The true and the only right method of relief in the smaller communities is through their own societies, in so far as these have responsible and trustworthy men at their head. But in New

York City, the over-rapid growth of the community and especially the disproportionate increase in number of its poorer elements, have created a situation which it is far and away beyond the resources or the powers of the local Levantine community to cope with alone. In this case, the general Jewish philanthropic and social agencies of the city must bear the brunt of the burden.

NUMBERS

Owing to a variety of causes, it is impossible to arrive at an exact estimate of the number of the Levantine Jews in the United States today. Chief among these causes are the varying classifications of the immigrant, and the overlapping due to his describing himself as Greek, Turkish, etc. An example of the difficulty of arriving at exact figures is furnished by the differences between the United States Government's official figures for the immigration of Jews from Turkey in Asia between 1909 and 1912 and those given by the Hebrew Immigrant and Sheltering Aid Society for approximately the same period. The immigration authorities put them down as 1,854, whereas the Society brings the total to 2,865. The latter figure is the more reliable.

The following are the statistics of recent immigration of Levantine Jews into the United States according to both the immigration authorities of the United States Government and the Hebrew Immigrant and Sheltering Aid Society. The annual figures never agree, because the fiscal year of the immigration authorities ends June 30th, while the figures for the Society are reckoned for the civil year.

Year	Bulgaria alone H. I. A. S.	Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro, U. S. A.	Greece H. I. A. S.	Greece U. S. A.
1899-1902	..	20
1903-1905	..	59	..	33
1906	..	20	..	23
1907	..	11	..	9
1908	2	25	1	15
1909	31	14	11	8
1910	15	14	36	19
1911	5	13	45	35
1912	21	15	43	31
	—	—	—	—
Total, 5 yrs.	74	81	136	108
Total, 10 yrs.		171		173

For Turkey in Europe and Turkey in Asia together the Society gives the following figures: 1890, 10; 1891, 11; 1892, 144; 1893, 42; 1894, 45; 1895, 65; 1896, 70; 1897, 53; 1898, 106; 1899, 60, making a total for the decade, 1890-1899, of 606. Between 1899 and 1902, while the Government reckons 487, the Society gives a total of 656 (60+94+214+288). Between 1903 and 1905, while the Government reckons 697, the Society gives a total of 826 (284+255+287). The later figures are as follows:

Year	Turkey in Europe		Turkey in Asia	
	U. S. A.	H. I. A. S.	U. S. A.	H. I. A. S.
1906	252	...	209	...
1907	588	...	330	...
1908	379	...	256	...
1909	346	561	344	658
1910	953	755	435	835
1911	723	688	454	431
1912	760	872	621	940
Total, 4 yrs.	2,782	2,876	1,854	2,855
Total, 7 yrs.	4,001		2,649	
Total, 14 yrs.	4,604		3,230	

The latest figures, those of 1913, according to the Society are as follows:

Turkey (Europe)	1,319
Turkey (Asia)	790
Greece	42
Egypt	40
Bulgaria	13
Persia	9
Syria	7
Servia	2

Total for 1913..... 2,222

Highly significant of the growing volume of this immigration is the remarkable fact that 2,222, the total for the year 1913, is no less than one-quarter of the total number of Levantine Jews who arrived in America in all the fifteen years preceding 1913.⁴ Altogether between ten and eleven thousand Jews are recorded as having reached these shores from the Levant. Yet we cannot estimate the number of

⁴ Of this number, about 40 were transients. These 2,222 Levantines entering the United States in the year 1913 constitute only 1,835 per cent of the total Jewish immigration (127,743) for the year.

Levantine Jews in the United States more exactly than as between ten and fifteen thousand.

A few landed at ports other than New York. A considerable number have not been included in the figures given above because they have been passed as Turks or Greeks, not being easily recognizable as Jews, either in name, language or physical appearance. Others may have been included in the figures reported for Roumania and Austria when their wanderings carried them to America through these neighboring lands. On the other hand, some of the immigrants have returned to their original homes, and others have gone on to Cuba, Mexico, Panama and elsewhere on the Western Continent. As the immigrants are mostly young men, the mortality has in all likelihood been more than counterbalanced by the growth of population through births. Taking account of the various factors involved, we may estimate the number of Levantine Jews in the United States to be over 10,000 and below 15,000.⁵

But when it is remembered that the United States Census places the number of Hindoos in the whole country at 6,556 and Immigrant Inspector Caminetti estimates that there are 30,000 Hindoos in the State of California alone, this estimate of mine must be regarded entirely as an individual estimate subject to correction.

The immigration of Levantine Jews in large numbers began with the Turkish revolution in 1908. It is likely to continue in the future along normal lines until a social, religious and economic equilibrium is attained in the Turkish Empire. The attractive force of those already settled here, the glamor of the riches to be picked up in the streets of American cities, the insecurity of life and disturbed business conditions in Turkey incidental to the revolutions, counter-revolutions and religious and racial warfare which have seared the face of the Balkans, and a series of natural disasters, pest, fire and earthquake, all pervading poverty, hatred of conscription with

⁵ This estimate is considerably below the one usually given. Already at the end of 1911 the editor of *La America* estimated that there were 20,000 Levantine Jews in the United States, of whom 10,000 were in New York City.

its break-up or ruin of the family and its preclusion of religious observance, all these conditions will in all probability continue to stimulate emigration to the United States for some years to come.

DISTRIBUTION IN THE UNITED STATES

Levantine Jews have found their way into every corner of the United States. It is characteristic of this general dispersion that their two largest communities are in New York City and Seattle, one on the Atlantic Coast, the other on the Pacific Coast.

NEW YORK CITY

In New York City the majority occupy the district from Chrystie Street to Essex Street, between East Houston and Canal Streets. But there is a growing community uptown in Harlem in the section bounded by 110th and 125th Streets and First and Fifth Avenues. The Greek-speakers number several hundreds, the Arabic-speakers are at least a thousand (mostly settled downtown), and the remainder, who may be from five to eight thousand strong, are Ladino-speakers. These estimates, which have been carefully made, are considerably lower than those given by the local enthusiasts.

The oldest immigration, dating back to the last decade of the nineteenth century, was largely from Constantinople. In the *American Jewish Year Book*, 5674, pp. 214-219, I have given some description of the New York community of a year ago, listing its seventeen societies, synagogues and organizations.

ADDITIONS

The following additions must now be made to those lists: The Oriental Jewish Community of New York, 1913, an attempt to form a unified, central community for the whole city. The Tseror Hachayim (Bond of Life) Society, formed 1913, mostly of Constantinople Jews (98 Forsyth Street); and the Oriental Aid Society, formed mostly of Aleppo Jews, are societies for relief and synagogue purposes. A permanent synagogue has also been created by the Sisterhood of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in its Neighborhood House at 86 Chrystie Street. The Sister-

hood is also conducting two Talmud Torahs, one in its house on Chrystie Street, and one in the building of the Uptown Talmud Torah on East 111th Street. The Agudath Talmud Torah Mizrahi (The Oriental Talmud Torah Society) also supports a Talmud Torah. The Keneseth Israel Janina Assembly of Israel Society) gives medical aid to its members. The Oriental Hebrew Association, 75 East 116th Street, is social; the Oriental Jewish Social Club, 186 Chrystie Street, is social and educational; the Oriental Jewish Maccabi of America, 197 Eldridge Street, is gymnastic, and the Jewish Friendship Circle of the Sisterhood of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue is literary in its purposes. In all, there are now twenty-nine societies, synagogues and organizations.

Several attempts have been made to bring about harmony among the different elements and interests and to organize them as a whole. But the lack of funds within the Levantine community and a characteristic jealousy and mistrust of help from without make it very difficult to effect any general permanent organization. The Federation of Oriental Jews in America, formed in March, 1912, although nominally a national body, is, in effect, almost entirely a New York City organization. Its ambitions are praiseworthy; but lack of funds, lack of workers and excessive desire for complete self-dependence have handicapped its work considerably. The constituent societies support the Federation in a half-hearted way. The result is that the community is practically without organization. There are no funds to pay a qualified religious leader, to support a worthy Talmud Torah or to grapple in a large way with any of the problems facing the community. Some of the groups conduct their own little synagogues and Talmud Torahs, both of which are of the primitive type described above. But generally these various groups exist like meteors following their own paths through the system in which they move. Others are only irregular nebulae or loose conglomerations of units.

The Educational Alliance, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue Shearith Israel, its Sisterhood and its Hebrew Relief Society, the United Hebrew Charities, the

Employment Bureau for Handicapped Workers conducted by the *Kehillah*, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, the Industrial Removal Office, the Uptown Talmud Torah and the Recreation Rooms in Chrystie Street have all done valuable and constructive work for this community; but other communal agencies seem as yet hardly to be aware of the problem that has grown up within recent years.

The primal need of the New York City community would seem to be a central building, from which influences for hygienic, educational, social, moral and religious uplift shall radiate. In such a building could be held classes in English and in American citizenship, classes in hygiene and better living conditions, an advice and legal aid bureau, an employment office and a large and efficient Talmud Torah. It could also provide rooms for social meetings to counteract the deleterious influences of the cafés and it could supply synagogue accommodation. In other words, a special branch of the Educational Alliance is needed to grapple with this new problem.

The existent Educational Alliance cannot cater successfully to these Jews, because it is already working to its fullest capacity, because it is too far from their living center, and because, being designed to aid the Russo-Polish Jew linguistically and culturally, it cannot succeed in attracting the Levantine Jews.

Such a center would earn for itself some income from the renting of its rooms for meetings of the various societies, for synagogue and Talmud Torah accommodation, for weddings and other gatherings. Some of the classes would be almost self-supporting from the fees paid by those in attendance. But like the Educational Alliance, the Y. M. H. A. and other similar institutions, this central institution would need a generous measure of support from the general Jewish community. It is estimated that if \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year can be guaranteed by the community for three years, an excellent beginning could be made along these lines in safeguarding the Levantine Jewish community in New York City from physical, mental, moral and religious deterioration.

SEATTLE

Owing to the frequency with which the Levantines move from place to place, it is very difficult to obtain accurate estimates of their numbers in the various cities. Small communities form themselves, live for a year or so, and disappear through the majority of the settlers moving to another city. Seattle, with a community numbering perhaps 600 souls, is the greatest attractive center of the West. The nucleus of its community was formed by a number of Levantine Jews who were sent there by the Industrial Removal Office, six or seven years ago. The Jews from the Island of Rhodes and from Marmora are numerous enough in Seattle to have formed separate societies for themselves. The community in Portland, Oregon (c. 100), was formed originally through an overflow from Seattle. The majority are from Rhodes, others are from Marmora and Tekir Dagh (Rhodosto).

CHICAGO

In Chicago there are close upon 250 Levantines and about fifty Jews from North Africa; 55 families with 119 children and 58 single men have been counted. The community was organized in 1910 by Moroccan and Turkish Jews under the name of Union Israelita Portuguesa.

SAN FRANCISCO

The first Levantine Jews in San Francisco (c. 70) arrived there nearly thirty years ago. Others were attracted by the exhibition in 1890. About 15 years ago Arabic-speaking Jews from Bagdad and Aleppo arrived and opened stores for the sale of Oriental rugs, etc. Most of them prospered. The latest stratum is composed of Ladino-speaking Jews from Turkey, who are starting at the foot of the ladder. Some years ago the community was larger than it is now and was strong enough to maintain a small congregation.

LOS ANGELES AND OTHER CENTERS

Los Angeles contains a relatively large community. Indeed, throughout the State of California Levantine Jews are to be found. Cincinnati (250) with a number of settlers from Dardanelles; Atlanta, with a settlement of Jews largely from Budrum and Rhodes; Indianapolis; Rochester, with

a settlement of Jews largely from Monastir; Glenham, N. Y.; Raritan, N. J.; Montgomery and Gary all contain or have contained larger or smaller colonies of Levantine Jews. Some of these colonies, such as those in Gary and in towns in Ohio, have been formed through the Industrial Removal Office. Those at Glenham, N. Y., and Raritan, N. J., where the Levantines are employed in an embroidery works and a woolen mills, respectively, have been formed by the New York *Kehillah's* Bureau for Handicapped Workers. In these larger centers, the communities are usually organized in one or more organizations of the type described above. A partial list of these societies will be found in my article in the American Jewish Year Book, 5674, p. 214. Other centers where Levantine Jews are known to be or to have been in some number, are St. Louis, Baltimore, San Diego, Oakland, Denver, Louisville, Philadelphia, Cambridge, Mass.; Buffalo, Detroit, Newport, R. I., etc. Individual Ladino or Arabic-speaking Jews may be found as peddlers throughout the Union, particularly in the New England States and at the summer and winter resorts of the country. Indicative of their wide distribution is the fact that they are to be met with as far afield as Honolulu. We may note in passing that Latin America has naturally attracted them.

In Havana, Buenos Ayres and similar centers there are communities which are beginning to prosper. But not only those who speak Ladino have been attracted to these countries. In Mexico City, Colon and similar centers Arabic-speaking Jews are settled in some numbers.

DISTRIBUTION IN 1913

The following table published by the Hebrew Immigrant and Sheltering Aid Society shows the destination of the Levantine settlers in 1913:

New York State.....	1,911
New Jersey	88
Illinois	67
Washington	53
Indiana and Massachusetts (each)	29
Pennsylvania	24
Ohio	21

Georgia	14
California	11
Michigan	8
Oregon	7
Alabama and District of Co- lumbia (each)	6
Connecticut and Virginia (each)	5
Texas	4
Rhode Island	3
Iowa, Maryland and Missouri (each)	2
Minnesota, New Hampshire and West Virginia (each)	1

From this we gather that out of a total of 2,300, 2,069, or no less than 89.9 per cent, settled in the Eastern States; 130, or 5.65 per cent, in the Central States; 91, or 3.1 per cent, in the Western States, and 30, or 1.3 per cent, in the Southern States. New York State, which in this case stands almost entirely for New York City, claimed 1,911 out of 2,300, or 83 per cent. Probably some of these were subsequently distributed. But the problem presented by the settling of Levantine Jews is at present almost exclusively a New York City problem. Yet it is significant to observe that according to Mr. Hexter's figures there were in 1908 in Cincinnati 34 Levantines; in 1909, 60; in 1910, 65; in 1911, 116; in 1912, 182, and in 1913, 219, or, including the native-born children, 249. In five years this community has increased between six and sevenfold. This would indicate a possible nation-wide reproduction of the problem in its beginnings in many of the larger centers of the Union, especially in the Eastern States.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this paper has been to sketch the problem, its nature and extent, to suggest methods and means of coping with it as it exists in New York City, and of anticipating and controlling it in the smaller centers. From all the foregoing we may sum up the following recommendations:

UNIFORM NOMENCLATURE

(1) A uniform nomenclature should be adopted.

A SURVEY OF CONDITIONS

(2) In all the centers where Levantine colonies are growing, exact surveys should be made of the conditions obtaining in those colonies. Mr. Hexter's study of the conditions obtaining in Cincinnati is an admirable example of the form that these studies should take. Because of the comparative isolation of these Jews and their physical variations from the generally known Jewish types, the general Jewish community rarely learns of the existence of this new element until it has become large enough to constitute the beginning of a problem. In Cincinnati when the common estimate of the number of Levantines was about 70, there proved to have been 249 by actual count. At the present time, their number in Philadelphia is reckoned by one observer as not above 25 and by another as at least 250. In other cities also it will possibly be found that the number of these settlers is already considerable enough to warrant some action being taken. It would be well if this Conference would appoint a committee to supplement and coordinate these local surveys by a national survey of conditions. An accurate census and survey is the necessary preliminary to any intelligent and comprehensive action.

(3) Action by the general Jewish community should touch (a) the religious, (b) the social, (c) the educational, and (d) the philanthropic needs.

RELIGIOUS WORK

(a) In the religious field we must recognize the indefeasible right of these Jews to create their own religious institutions in which they may carry on their own religious traditions. So markedly do they differ from other Jews in America in their Hebrew accent, liturgy and ceremonial and in Jewish culture generally, that their right to their own Jewish individuality cannot be challenged. It is a mistake, based on lack of knowledge, to claim that since they are in America they must go to the synagogues and Talmud Torahs which they find here. In effect this would be inviting them to "Yiddish-ize" themselves. A curious example of this is furnished by Ladino-speaking children in New York City learning in the Talmud Torahs to translate

Hebrew into Yiddish, a tongue to them quite unknown. When we remember that usually the Levantine Sephardim will rather pray at home *en famille* than attend services with which they are not familiar and which they do not understand, and when we remember that they will very rarely send their children to the religious schools of the German, Russo-Polish or American types, we realize that it is our bounden duty to encourage them in the formation of their own religious institutions. Individuality is too valuable a feature in society for us to spend our zeal in helping the steamroller of Americanism to crush it out of our Jewish life. But this love of individuality should not be allowed to run riot. There is no need for each tiny group of Levantine Jews to form itself into a separate congregation perchance because of differences in the pronunciation of the letter 'ayin. The good offices of the influential leaders of the general Jewish community should be used in persuading the petty congregations to unite for enhanced efficiency. Only in this way will it be found possible to support worthy religious officials who will safeguard the growing communities from many possible and actual abuses and corruptions. And only in this way will it be possible for the little communities to maintain effective Talmud Torahs with modern and capable teachers from whom the children may learn Judaism as well as the Hebrew language. We dare not allow the youth of this new community to grow up a religionless menace.

SOCIAL WORK

(b) In the social field efforts should be directed almost entirely toward encouraging the formation of clubs and circles for any and every legitimate purpose. These clubs are the best means of satisfying the neutral group instinct. Only in this way can we overthrow the selfish, all-engrossing and evil sway of the café as the only recreative facility of the community. Clubs or circles for philanthropic, mutual benefit, literary, social, gymnastic, dramatic, musical, educational or civic purposes have been formed at various times in New York City. In the case of New York City it would be desirable to house these in the central building which some day may arise to unify the

community. The best of clubs or circles is reacted on injuriously by unfavorable meeting quarters. In the smaller towns, the existent communal buildings should be placed at the disposal of the clubs without charge. By encouraging dignified clubs under reliable leadership, the strongest blow is struck at the pernicious influences of the cafés and the influences of common meeting rooms in poor districts.

EDUCATIONAL WORK

(c) In the field of education it should be clear from the foregoing that the most needed and most rewarding activity is the teaching of English. Its value as a training for citizenship, its educational and social value in breaking down the isolation of the Levantines and its economic value in fitting them for more remunerative and higher grade employment, cannot be overestimated. It should be clear also that to ensure the best results separate classes should be formed for them, if possible with one of their own number at the head.

PHILANTHROPIC WORK

(a) Distribution

(d) In the field of philanthropy two main suggestions emerge. The first is the necessity of exercising timely control of the wandering and settling down of the Levantines instead of leaving these to chance. The Industrial Removal Office should continue and increase the excellent work it has done at various times in the past, by a studied distribution of these settlers throughout the country. This work can be done intelligently only when a Levantine Jew, knowing the needs and the languages of his fellow-countrymen, acts as the agent of the Removal Office. The New York City conditions of congestion, poverty and often of hopelessness are already far more serious than is recognized by ninety-seven out of a hundred New York Jews. The distribution effected in the past has been successful. Very few of those who were transplanted to a center at any distance from New York City have returned to the metropolis. This transplanting away from New York City is a true aid toward self-help. It has been the experience of the Industrial Removal Office

that a comparatively large number of those who were sent to cities such as Gary soon gave up the relatively well-paid situations to which they had been sent, and took up other work such as peddling. This feature of the distribution work is not as unsatisfactory as might appear at first sight. It betokens an initiative, a desire to be one's own master, an ambition to take up work where the prospects of advancement and development are far brighter than they are for an employe in a factory or steel works, and perhaps also a desire to be free to observe the Sabbath, and religious holy days. The cost to the Jewish community of transporting these settlers rapidly pays for itself, because of their attractive power in drawing others from New York. But the extra-metropolitan Jewish communities must prepare for the growth of these communities, especially by inducing the first settlers to congregate outside of the commonest and most unhealthy districts. This can be done the more easily, because the Levantine Jew does not necessarily gravitate to a so-called Jewish or Yiddish district. The location of their settlements can still be chosen with comparative ease, also because the number of Levantines outside of New York is yet small. The problem is still manageable in the cities outside of New York, although delay in grappling with it may be disastrous.

(b) Co-operation Rather Than Almsgiving

The second point that should emerge clearly is the desirability of keeping these settlers away from the local Jewish charity organizations. It would be the gravest error to pauperize them or break their fine pride. In the smaller centers they need very little relief from without. As a self-contained Jewish community they look after their own poor, almost exclusively. But in cases where employment or hospital care or legal aid is called for, the services of the communal organizations are required. Yet it would be the crudest and most unfortunate of errors for the local Jewish Federation of Charities to force itself on the Levantines uninvited. If there appears to be an urgent need for work to be done, approach should be obtained through a trustworthy representative of the Levantine

community rather than through any employe of the Federation of Charities. An Americanized member of that community will serve to bridge the gap between the two communities by interpreting the real needs of the Levantines to their fellow Jews, and by ensuring a sympathetic reception in the Levantine community for the efforts made by the general Jewish community. It is sometimes difficult to find a man responsible and trustworthy enough to act in this capacity. But among the younger men, especially among past pupils of a school of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, such a man with a modern education can often be found. Many mistakes, misunderstandings and heartburnings will be avoided if the various philanthropic, social, educational and religious agencies will show consideration for the peculiar sensitiveness and the jealous love of self-dependence shown by the Levantines. It is not true in this instance that he who plays the piper may call the tune. Help must be given in a way that respects the feelings and to some extent also the prejudices of the recipient. What we wish to give and how to give it is surely no more important than what they wish to receive and how they wish to receive it. Benevolent intentions without an understanding of the community, its spirit and its needs will work havoc with the peace and good understanding which should subsist between the older settlements of Jews and these newcomers. If our object is to achieve results and not merely to flatter our souls and our systems of communal help by working for the Levantines whether they wish it or not, we shall have to keep in constant touch with the responsible leaders of the Levantine colony. Where there are no worthy leaders, it becomes our duty to step in and save the community from the mismanagement of irresponsible leaders and to assume the leadership.

Yet at all times the ideal help is that given through their own societies. These agencies which they themselves have created contain the germ of much good. At the present they are too often exploited by individuals for their own honor or profit. The societies are the pivotal point in the life of these colonies. We should there-

fore interest ourselves in these societies to aid them in realizing their religious, educational, social and philanthropic potentialities. A most useful influence will be exercised if the societies can be impressed with the fact that their responsibilities do not begin and end with ensuring the burial of the dead. In encouraging the fullest development of the societies under reliable leadership will be found the best means also of aiding the living.

A final word of warning may be given against impatience and too ready discouragement. Especially while there exist imperfect sympathies between the two communities, the best-meant and most disinterested efforts to aid the Levantines will often meet with failure. There are apt to be overhasty generalizations and quickly formed prejudices on both sides. Let us not forget that the differences between these Levantine brethren and ourselves have been crystallized through centuries of differences of environmental development. We cannot expect to annul these differences over night. We must be prepared to allow some years to elapse before a fuller, mutual understanding and more nearly perfect sympathies shall have established themselves. We shall make an unpardonable mistake if we try to force the Levantine Jews into line with their fellow Jews too rapidly. If the melting pot is overheated it is apt to bubble over and scald those who are heating it, leaving scars and unpleasant memories. We can afford to work deliberately. Americanization can be trusted to shape the young generation in the American mould. The personality, the individuality, the traditions and the associations of the older generation must be accorded every respect. There is a serious responsibility on us to exercise all possible tact and self-restraint in our relations with these sensitive brethren. Patronizing addresses, officious offers of help, attempts to capitalize the needs of the Levantine community, injudicious and overhasty attempts at Americanization, offenses against their religious scruples, will all rapidly evoke resentment, engendering a feeling of mistrust and hard feeling in both the Levantine and the general Jewish community. It would be a thousand pities were we to repeat these

mistakes of the past. The problem of the Levantine community in New York City offers work enough for a small army of social workers. But outside of New York City the function of the general Jewish community is one of giving guidance more often than of giving concrete help. The Levantine settler needs guidance and counsel in his early years of adjustment. He rarely needs gifts; let these not be forced on him. "We do not quite forgive a giver. The hand that feeds us is in some danger of being bitten." But, Emerson adds, "We can receive anything from love." Our efforts will assuredly be crowned with success if all our actions toward our Levantine brethren be guided by the highest conception of sympathy and brotherhood which we call philanthropy or love for our fellow-men.

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Discussion

Maurice B. Hexter
Cincinnati

After the kind, copious and complimentary references by Dr. Pool to a minor survey made in Cincinnati it would not be politic for me to attempt to point out any errors or to criticise conclusions. I am, however, spared this feeling of propriety due to the excellent paper that has just been presented to you. It would also be foolish further to burden you with statistics, much as such figures would be "surrounded with a certain halo of mathematical positiveness." I shall confine myself to the

ways and means of handling the situation—the *modus operandi*, if you please.

In the paper just read Dr. Pool has, in his usual forcible way, presented the psychic and psychological difference between the Levantine Jew and our Russian, Austrian and Roumanian co-religionists. So great is the difference that there seems to be little in common. The points of similarity are few. Even the synagogue does not present a point of contact. It is, then, logical and imperative that any situation among these peoples that must be handled, should be handled as a distinct problem, separate and apart from the non-Levantine situation. The remarkable degree of cohesion that exists among these peoples makes this possible. To be sure, America's melting pot will be just as potent with regard to the children of these immigrants as it is to the children of our older Jewish immigrants. Minor differences and petty jealousies disappear in the second generation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Levantine Jew, stirred by a powerful self-consciousness, is loth to apply to charitable or educational institutions supported only too frequently by American Jews and administering more particularly if not solely to Austrians, Roumanians and Russians. It is with a certain insolence of condescension that the Levantine Jew looks upon his North European brother. Marriage with a Yiddish-speaking Jew is frowned upon as intermarriage. Yet who is there who will say these co-religionists, our newest strain in the Jewish *Völkerwanderung*, do not need the advice and financial assistance of those who are able and willing to assist. The question is how to reach them. They distrust all strangers. They resent bitterly all intrusion. Alone, they are as yet unable to cope with the problem. With the Russian immigrant the situation was somewhat different. He had developed out his own group-leaders of thought and action. With the Russian immigration came doctors, lawyers, social workers, professors, statisticians, nihilists and anarchists. Not so with the Levantine Jew. Even in their mother country they developed no leaders. Outside leadership was needed. This strong feeling of homogeneity that exists among them—and one would be false to his trust

to attempt to break up this sentiment—presents a solution. As Dr. Pool has pointed out, most of these immigrants come from that district which is best described by the term "The Levant." The philanthropic agency, universally known to all Jews throughout this region and also trusted by them, is the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. Their schools have trained thousands. Their friendship and reputation is established. Their whole-hearted disinterestedness is known to them. Moreover, the psychological tendencies of these people are well known to those in charge of this work. Why should not the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* extend its protecting and uplifting arm with regard to their charges to America. All of this under the guidance of the Industrial Removal Office.

After-care is the watchword of the hour. Why should this agency stop its work when the Levantine Jew emigrates to America? They are responsible for them. These immigrants are their charges. The *Alliance* knows their every whim. Besides, the Levantine Jew trusts implicitly the endeavors of this organization. I submit that the work of supervising the Levantine Jew in his changed environment in the United States is the function of the *Alliance*. American Jewry ought to subscribe funds to the *Alliance* with which to do this work. This is the only proper way efficiently to accomplish this end. With such funds at their disposal there will be little excuse if we cannot prevent the formation of those problems which lack of experience—I shall not say lack of foresight—did not permit us to do with reference to the immigration of our North European co-religionists.

It is incumbent upon us to point out the difficulties which should be avoided. When the enormous Russian immigration broke upon our shores in the early eighties, the underlying thought in all our work was that they were unkempt. We were ashamed at first to acknowledge them as our co-religionists. We thought they were ignorant. They were careless in their habits and had little self-pride. We thought they were liabilities. We paid little or no attention to their aesthetic feelings. But *Haskalah* has done its work. Too late we awoke to the fact that these, our uncouth brethren,

had a distinct individuality. They had an art, they had knowledge and intelligence. They had their own leaders. They had a large heart underneath their often rough exterior, and, above all, they had an ideal. Indeed, it was for an ideal that they had left their fatherland and home ties. Let us not duplicate the mistakes we have made with reference to the non-Levantine immigrants. Like the older immigrants, this newest strain in this Jewish immigration brings a definite contribution to American Judaism and to American citizenship. The Levantine Jew is a potentiality. In the degree that we will foster and nurture this ideal and individuality to just such proportion will this newest accession to American Jewry become an asset. Neglect will change such a possible asset into a distinct liability.

You have probably admired the tapestries hung upon the walls. The smaller picture shows the Levantine booth at the exhibit, "The Jews of Many Lands," held at the Cincinnati Jewish Settlement about one year ago. These tapestries are their art and their treasures. They are the handwork of the young girls. Who will be so crass a materialist as will want to stifle and choke that instinct in the hurly-burly of America? Instead, this instinct should be encouraged and nurtured. It offers an outlet. This makes possible trade education and trade adaptation. This is extremely desirable, for the Levantine Jew is difficult to orient in America.

One word more and I am through. Before we can persuade the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* to take up this problem we must of necessity know its extent. Adequately to handle any situation presumes a knowledge of its extent. And I was wondering whether it would not be within the province of this Conference to appoint a committee whose duty it would be to inquire into the extent and distribution of these immigrants, to inquire also into their social, educational and religious needs. Such a committee would do much to crystallize and focus public opinion. This subject demands immediate notice and attention. Dangers from delay are cumulative and irretrievable. Let us not neglect the problem or it will be the old story of ghettos and their attendant evils repeated.

Joseph Cedelecia

New York

I wish to begin my discussion by complimenting Dr. Pool on his able effort. I know no greater compliment to pay him than to say that I wish he were an Oriental Jew. I believe "Oriental" is the appropriate term. I feel proud to be classed with Hindus and Chinese and Japanese and other Asiatics. Besides the name reminds us of dear Turkey, to whom we owe so much gratitude and love for protecting us when the civilized countries were oppressing us. The word Levantine may be more accurate, but "Oriental" expresses the Turkish Jew, and we are nothing but Turkish Jews; although we have passed under the dominion of other countries, we still have the old characteristics. I must differ with Dr. Pool in that.

The Oriental Jews—I must class myself with Oriental Jews, indeed, I have been accused of being the entire Oriental Jewish community of boasting *l'état c'est moi*—the Oriental Jews do not plead to be heard. We, as Orientals, are here to warn you that for your own sakes you must take up this problem before it becomes too big for you to handle. We do not ask for charity; you know it is said that no Oriental ever gives or takes charity.

As to Americanization, we do not want the steam roller over us. But about 90 per cent of our young men are attending evening schools. I would rather have the missionaries take up this work than the *Alliance Israélite*—that's what the Turkish Jews think of the *Alliance*. I agree in every particular with Dr. Pool. It is a surprise to me to think that he is not an Oriental. He has simply absorbed the problem. He understands it. I do not mean the technical point of view, but as to the prejudices and the weaknesses; but of course, there are some inevitable mistakes. As to the café, you know the café in Turkey represents the center of commerce, of social, of cultural, and of political intercourse. You go there to discuss educational problems, or business matters or any other question. And, let me say, the Jewish social recreation centers here do not do anything to attract our young men. The Young Men's Christian Association do, but the Jewish have done

nothing as yet because they were ignorant about the problem, and now that they do know about it there is hysteria. We are not responsible for the hysteria.

As to statistics, Dr. Pool was very careful in his work. When he needed statistics he came to the Orientals and then went to the statisticians. I am reminded of the physician in Germany who met a patient whom he had ordered to die two years previously and exclaimed: "*Sie leben noch; sie sind ein Widerspruch der Wissenschaft.*" Not every Oriental Jew or every group of Jews that stop on the way to America for any purpose, or for any length of time, in any country, come here as Jews. I came from Paris, so I came as a Frenchman; others came from Greece, etc., and it is due to the spirit of the *Alliance* that they hide their Jewishness. And, therefore, no accurate statistics are possible for the statistician, but we do differently; the president of the Monastir Community, for instance, has 250 males attending the synagogue, and 5 per cent are married; that is surely 300—that is how we make statistics in Turkey, unscientifically—but we are not exaggerating, although we may be prone to hyperbole—we are Orientals—all Jews are.

I am just trying to explain some of the points Dr. Pool left unexplained, but I agree with him *in toto*.

Now, I want to answer Mr. Hexter. "We have no leaders of thought, no professors, no lawyers, no doctors, no dentists like the Russian Jews." We have in our community here a dozen and a half physicians, three lawyers, sixty teachers and four professors, civil engineers and manufacturers, and as to financiers and capitalists, we have more multi-millionaires than the Russian, Galician and others—if that counts for ability—more, not in proportion, but absolutely. Have you a multi-millionaire among the Roumanians or among the Galicians? We have that among our people. That shows that we have latent forces.

The Oriental seems more of a troublesome problem, and not a difficult or serious problem. But it is a problem you do not understand. When the Yiddish Jews go to Turkey they, too, are a serious problem there.

The Levantine Jew is as human, or almost as human, as any other, except that he is a polyglot; like every other Jew, he speaks every language except his own, knows every profession and trade and commerce except what he can apply to his daily task; he is handicapped because he is a Jew, whether he comes from Russia or from Turkey. It is all a problem just now, and Dr. Pool has shown you how to tackle it. Up to this time no one has had any idea of how to handle this problem, or how to solve it; with the exception of Dr. Pool, Mr. Waldman, Mr. Bressler, Mr. Sulzberger and one or two other men, no one ever took a sympathetic interest in the Oriental community—I forgot to include Dr. Magnes. These have taken up the problem with a view of solving it in the right way, and the Removal Office stands ready to receive every co-operation for their removal. We do not want any money. We want your interest. If you can take some of the Jews away from New York for the purpose of relieving congestion and help solve this problem you will do an infinite amount of good. No amount of money given could do as much as that. These people are thrifty and sober. The Oriental Jew never drinks; first as a Jew, and then as a Turk, he is forbidden; his ethical standard is both Eastern and Jewish, and this means something. In morals the people of the East are inferior to none. The Oriental is a hard worker—oh, yes—he is lazy when he is not paid adequately. He deteriorates in the congested towns because he comes from a sub-tropical climate. Tuberculosis will play havoc with him in a town and the sooner he is removed from a city the better.

I would just repeat: try them; if you don't like them you need not take them.

Rev. I. Lewinthal, Nashville: Am I to understand that it is owing to the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* that the Oriental Jew loses his Jewish consciousness?

The Chairman: I do not know that we want a discussion about that now. I do not think we want an attack on a reputable Jewish organization.

Mr. Sulzberger: I think there is more danger in allowing the question to go unanswered than in answering it.

Mr. Gedelacia: It is very important it should be answered. Let us imagine that there were no public school system in America, and a Jewish organization from Europe came to these shores and opened schools for the higher education of Jews and did not teach English or even Hebrew, but tried to spread the French language and influence, an influence antagonistic to the United States, what would you call that? Proper or improper? This is what happened in Turkey. They teach French and revere French culture and government and do not teach the language of the country, or even Hebrew. Then when they see an able young man they export him to France, where he remains, robbing our community of the ablest young men and spreading the spirit of Voltaire, so that almost every Oriental educated young Jew is a Voltairian. You find bootblacks speaking French and reading Jean Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire. They spread French opinions and French influence in every way. And what do we gain by it as Jews, or as Turks? It is unpatriotic, un-Turkish, and it is criminal. We Turks think so.

Albert J. Amateau, New York: May I add just a few words? I want to say that if they did not teach Hebrew it would be better than what they did when the Turkish Jews asked to have the children taught Hebrew, and the *Alliance* went round the city and hunted up all the most shabby-looking rabbis, men who knew as much Hebrew as a foreign priest, or less, and put such men as that to teach the children, and you can imagine what the children think of a rabbi who teaches religion and Hebrew and is shabby and ignorant.

Dr. Pool: I have very little to add, especially after Mr. Gedelacia's explanation of the influence of the schools of the *Alliance*. I feel sure that Mr. Hexter has not seen the work of the *Alliance* schools at close range, and that he does not know the spirit of them; for his suggestion, if carried out, would bring about the situation against which I warned. It would mean helping the people in the way in which they do not wish to be helped by people who are not able to help them. The heads of the *Alliance* are men of the stamp of the Reinach brothers, cultured men with a

definitely anti-religious attitude. The purpose of the *Alliance* under their leadership has been to spread French influence, French opinions, French culture and French business interests—everything French and nothing Jewish. Its spirit is often anti-Jewish. The *Alliance* understands the spirit of the question far less than any American who knows nothing about it. But Mr. Hexter's suggestion, in any event, is unworkable. We could not call in a foreign body to help us in a domestic concern.

As to the question of the name, I must differ from Mr. Gedelacia, not because of any misunderstanding under which we would labor, but because of possible misunderstanding on the part of the restrictionist, anti-immigration orators, who would seize hold of the fact that 2,300 "Oriental" Jews entered this country last year. The "Orient" is a broad, inexact, indefinite term, covering two continents, the whole of Asia and parts of Africa. If the word Levantine is correct and exact, why not use it?

Finally, as to the question of population, Mr. Gedelacia is an enthusiast. He is right, and I am right; we both are right; we are both perfectly right and both utterly wrong, for there exist no exact figures to test any estimates. I estimate the number as between seven and ten thousand in New York City and between ten and fifteen thousand, partly from my own observation and partly from statistics. He estimates the number in New York City alone as fifteen thousand. There are two current estimates, one by Mr. Elmaleh, who says there are not more than twenty-five, and another by Dr. Cyrus Adler, who says there are at least two hundred and fifty. The Levantine Jews in Cincinnati when asked how many they were said seventy; Mr. Hexter got to work and counted two hundred and fifty.

These varying estimates affect the extent of the problem, but not its nature. The important fact is that this immigration is increasing year by year, and that distribution will present greater difficulties year by year. The extra-metropolitan communities would be well advised in taking prompt steps to anticipate and forestall the growth of the problem.

The Chairman: I would suggest to Dr. Pool that he refer to the Committee on Resolutions the suggestions made in his paper; and I believe it is the sentiment of this Conference that we have been highly instructed by the able presentation of this topic on the part of Dr. Pool and the excellent discussion by those who followed. (Applause)

Council Home for Jewish Girls

The Council Home for Jewish Girls (Amalie Seldner Memorial) is an activity of the Brooklyn section of the Council of Jewish Women, and is supported by the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities, of which the Brooklyn Section of the Council is a constituent society.

It is designed to provide a home for the proper care and education of such female delinquents between the ages of six and sixteen as may be committed to it by the Children's Court for the County of Kings (Brooklyn) on charges of improper guardianship. Its directors may also accept, at their discretion, children voluntarily entrusted to them by parents or guardians.

The Home, which was dedicated May 3, 1914, is situated on Rockaway Road, Jamaica. The alterations and addition to the old building so purchased, and the entire equipment, were the gifts of the Seldner family, made in honor of their late mother, the late Mrs. Amalie Seldner. As vice-president of the Brooklyn Section, Mrs. Seldner had long been interested in the problem of caring for the young girl who through no fault of her own, but simply from lack of proper guardianship and home surroundings, found herself a subject for court care. In many years, during which the Brooklyn Section was deeply interested in the work of the Children's Court, no institution existed to which a Jewish girl of this type could be committed. Through the generosity of the Seldner family, and the co-operation of the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities, the solution of this problem has been made possible in the Council Home.

The officers of the Home are: President, Miss Rose Brenner; vice-president, Mrs. Mark M. Salomon; secretary, Mrs. Frederick Herrmann, and treasurer, Mrs. Max Schey. The superintendent is Mrs. Hattie Senger.

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