

# Hubs of transregional migration : organising the mass movement of people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries : towards a research agenda

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# Hubs of Transregional Migration: Organising the Mass Movement of People in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries – Towards a Research Agenda

Frithjof Benjamin Schenk

## Abstract

This article explores the history of «Hubs of Transregional Migration» in the age of mass migration. Russia was a location of considerable significance in the landscape of transnational processes and migration regimes around the turn of the twentieth century. It was the starting point for millions of Poles, Jews, Germans, and Balts to leave for a new home in the Americas. In the meantime, the Tsarist empire itself was the scene of internal transcontinental migration processes on a gigantic scale, as Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian colonists sought to establish livelihoods beyond the Urals, in Siberia, the steppes and in the Russian far east. Millions of emigrants from the Russian Empire passed through reception camps at the Russian-German border, in Germany and the US. Simultaneously, hundreds of thousands of their compatriots encountered comparable socio-spatial conditions in the transit camps established for trans-Ural migrants. These «resettlement points» (*peresenlencheskie punkty*), located, for example, in the city of Cheliabinsk, were significant sites in these migrations. The paper describes the modern institution of reception and transit camps for trans-migrants, as they emerged at various locations along global migration routes in the late nineteenth century. They are regarded as a specific form of a «site of modernity» (*Ort der Moderne*) with typical features. Apart from the *pereselencheskii punkt* in Chelyabinsk, these Hubs of Transregional Migration included the *Auswandererhallen* in Hamburg, the *Auswandererbahnhof* in Ruhleben near Berlin, privately-run transit-camps and check-points at the Russian-German and Russian-Austrian border, as in Mysłowice, and the much better-known and much more thoroughly researched checkpoints and transit points at the US border such as Ellis Island near New York City and Angel Island near San Francisco.

## Introduction: Mary Antin and Jewish emigration to the USA

In the spring of 1894, the twelve-year-old Maryasche Antin (1881–1949) from the provincial town of Polatsk (Polotsk) in the western part of the Russian Empire (*Vitebskaia guberniia*) boarded a train to Dvinsk (Dünaburg/Daugavpils), accompanied by her mother and her three siblings. The Jewish family had just sold their house and most of their personal belongings. The tickets for their passage from Hamburg to Boston were sent by Mary Antin's father, who had emigrated to America three years previously. We know of Mary Antin because of the letter she wrote to her uncle immediately after her arrival in the

United States, containing a detailed account of her journey. In 1899 Mary Antin translated the letter from Yiddish into English and submitted it to the journal *American Hebrew* for publication.<sup>1</sup> Her account was later to appear as a book which enjoyed a number of print runs and indeed new editions almost a century later.<sup>2</sup> – Mary Antin's account tells us that, after changing trains in Dvinsk, the family proceeded to the city of Vil'na (Vilnius) and further to Verzhbolovo/Eydtkuhnen at the Russian/German border. After a ride of several hours in a densely crowded fourth-class train carriage, they found themselves stranded at a strange location on the outskirts of the German capital, Berlin. Mary Antin later described this experience as follows:

In a great lonely field opposite a solitary wooden house within a large yard, our train pulled up at last, and a conductor commanded the passengers to make haste and get out. [...] Here we had been taken to a lonely place where only that house was to be seen; our things were taken away, our friends separated from us; a man came to inspect us, as if to ascertain our full value; strange-looking people driving us about like dumb animals, helpless and unresisting; children we could not see, crying in a way that suggested terrible things; ourselves driven into a little room where a great kettle was boiling on a little stove; our clothes taken off, our bodies rubbed with a slippery substance that might be any bad thing; a shower of warm water let down on us without warning; again driven to another little room where we sit, wrapped in woollen blankets till large, coarse bags are brought in, their contents turned out and we see only a cloud of steam, and hear the women's orders to dress ourselves, quick, quick, or else we'll miss – something we cannot hear. We are forced to pick out our clothes from among all the others, with the steam blinding us; we choke, cough, entreat the women to give us time; they persist, 'Quick, quick, or you'll miss the train!' Oh, so we really won't be murdered! They are only making us ready for the continuing of our journey, cleaning us of all suspicions of dangerous germs. Thank God!<sup>3</sup>

This «lonely place» was the so-called «Emigrants' Railway Station» (*Auswandererbahnhof*) at Ruhleben, erected in 1891 by the Prussian authorities on a railway yard belonging to the Berlin-Hamburg Railways, twelve kilometres west of the Berlin city limits. This camp for trans-migrants, most of whom were from East-

1 Sunny Yudkoff, The Adolescent Self-Fashioning of Mary Antin, in: *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 32/1 (2013), p. 4–35; Sunny Yudkoff, Translation of Mary Antin's Yiddish Letter (Precursor to From Plotzk to Boston), in: *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 32/1 (2013), p. 36–66. Monica Rüthers, Zwischen Bedrohung und Hoffnung. Migration in die Neue Welt. Der Bericht von Mary Antin, in: *Hamburger Schlüsseldokumente zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte*, 27.06.2017. <<https://dx.doi.org/10.23691/jgo:article-53.de.v1>> (17.04.2020).

2 Mary Antin, *From Plotzk to Boston*. With a Foreword by Israel Zangwill, Boston 1899. Editions came out, for example, in 1970 (Upper Saddle River, N.J.) and 1986 (New York). Mary Antin's memoirs (*The Promised Land*. [Experiences of a Russian emigrant in the United States]), in which she included long passages from her travelogue, were published in 1912, translated into numerous languages and reached a wide audience.

3 Antin, *From Plotzk to Boston*, p. 42–43.

ern Europe, consisted of five large corrugated iron sheds, cordoned off from the outside by black fences. With its establishment, emigrants arriving in large numbers from the Russian Empire were – at least officially – no longer allowed to enter Berlin and populate the third- and fourth-class waiting rooms of the capital's railway stations. Instead, their trains were now sent straight to Ruhleben, where they underwent registration by civil servants, medical examination, and disinfection procedures. Most of the trans-migrants who passed through Ruhleben stayed there for only a couple of hours. Those who were ill or carried contagious diseases were either transferred to a specially equipped isolation ward or immediately sent back to where they had come from.<sup>4</sup> The Antin family passed through the Ruhleben checkpoint without any further delay. But just a few hours later, at the port of Hamburg, they found themselves once again in a reception centre for trans-migrants, and equally at a loss as to what to expect:

The room where we were sitting was large, with windows so high up that we couldn't see anything through them. In the middle stood several long wooden tables, and around these were settees of the same kind. [...] When the doctor was through with us, he told us to go to Number Five. Now wasn't that like in a prison? We walked up and down a long yard looking, among a row of low, numbered doors, for ours [...] It looked something like a hospital, only less clean and comfortable; more like the soldiers' barracks I had seen. I saw a very large room, around whose walls were ranged rows of high iron double bedsteads, with coarse sacks stuffed with something like matting, and not over-clean blankets for the only bedding, except where people used their own.<sup>5</sup>

This was the transit point for emigrants (*Auswandererbaracken*) at Hamburg's America Dock; built in July 1892. It was run by the private German steamship company HAPAG (*Hamburg-Amerikanische Packetfahrt-Actien-Gesellschaft*), which at that time was about to become one of the two dominant players in the emigration business between Europe and the Americas.<sup>6</sup> The Antins spent an eight-day quarantine in an accommodation reserved for Jewish emigrants. Once again, the whole family had to undergo registration, medical examination and disinfection. All this was meant to prevent the outbreak and spread of contagious diseases. Just two years earlier, in 1892, cholera had struck Hamburg and

<sup>4</sup> Nicole Kvale, *Emigrant Trains: Migratory Transportation Networks through Germany and the United States. 1847–1914*. PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009, p. 109–110 and 154–157.

<sup>5</sup> Antin, *From Plotzk to Boston*, p. 51–53.

<sup>6</sup> Nicole Kvale Eilers, *Emigrant Trains. Jewish Migration through Prussia and American Remote Control, 1880–1914*, in: Tobias Brinkmann (ed.), *Points of Passage. Jewish Transmigrants from Eastern Europe in Scandinavia, Germany and Britain 1880–1914*, New York, Oxford 2013, p. 76; Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure. Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World*, New York, London 2016, p. 36.



killed more than 8'000 people.<sup>7</sup> False rumours had spread that Jewish emigrants from Russia had brought the disease to Germany.<sup>8</sup> Finally, after a week and a final check of their vaccination status, the Antins were permitted to board the ocean liner *Polynesia*, which took 17 days to cross the Atlantic Ocean. After questioning (and most likely another medical examination) by the US immigration authorities in Boston harbour, the Jewish family was happily reunited on American soil.<sup>9</sup>

This article will seek to situate the transit points and checkpoints for emigrants from Eastern Europe in Ruhleben, Hamburg and Boston, described in Mary Antin's travelogue, in a larger, transnational context. It is well known that, at the same time as the «great migration» to the Americas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, people elsewhere on the globe likewise set out in large numbers in search of a new home. Fewer of us are aware of the fact that these emigrants, like the Antins, also had to pass through facilities for the management of transregional migrants, established during this period by private and state agencies at various nodes of transnational and transregional migration routes. To date, there has been no systematic, comparative investigation of these «Hubs of Transregional Migration» (HoTM). The intent of this article is to illuminate the potential of this field of research and propose a description of HoTM as «sites of modernity» (*Orte der Moderne*) with a specific set of features and characteristics. I will commence by comparing checkpoints for American immigrants from Europe (such as Ruhleben) with transit points for peasant colonists in the Tsarist Empire, who migrated in large numbers to start new lives beyond the Urals. A comparison of the trans-Atlantic and the trans-Ural migrations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is apt because they developed almost simultaneously, and the Russian Empire was a key site of the emergence of both. Moreover, there are intriguing structural similarities between these large-scale social processes. One of these parallels, and the focal area of this article, is the growing wish of contemporary public and private bodies to control,

7 Richard J. Evans, *Death in Hamburg. Society and Politics in the Cholera Years 1830–1910*, Oxford 1987. – In 1902, HAPAG moved the camp for trans-migrants to the so-called Emigrants' Halls (*Auswandererhallen*), a veritable emigrant village on the Veddel peninsula. Rebekka Geitner, «Das größte Gasthaus der Welt?» Die Auswandererhallen der HAPAG auf der Veddel in den Jahren von 1901 bis 1934, in: Rolf Hammel-Kiesow (ed.), *Die hanseatisch-amerikanischen Beziehungen seit 1790*, Trier 2017, p. 309–338; Tobias Brinkmann, *Ellis Island an der Elbe? Die Entstehung der Hamburger Auswandererhallen und die osteuropäische Massenmigration in die Vereinigten Staaten 1880–1914*, in: *ibid.*, p. 339–350.

8 Tobias Brinkmann, «Mit Ballin unterwegs». Jüdische Migranten aus Osteuropa im Transit durch Deutschland vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg, in: *ASCHKENAS – Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Juden* 17/1 (2007), p. 75–96, here p. 87.

9 Mary Antin's travelogue is an oft-cited source in migration history. Cf., for example, Tobias Brinkmann, «Grenzerfahrungen» zwischen Ruhleben und Ellis Island. Deutsche Durchwandererkontrolle und Ost-West-Migration 1880–1914, in: *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Kultur* 2 (2004), p. 209–229; Zahra, *The Great Departure*.

channel and monitor movements of people. Examples of institutions serving and embodying this need include well-known HoTM such as Hamburg's *Auswander-erhalten* and the «immigrant station» of Ellis Island, alongside little-researched transit facilities for Siberian peasant colonists in Tsarist Russia.

## The «Bogdanov» family and the Great Migration to Siberia

We will commence our comparison by examining the origins of the trans-Atlantic and trans-Ural migratory movements in the Tsarist Empire of the late nineteenth century. The Antins, before emigrating to the US, had lived in Polatsk, a centre of Jewish settlement in the province of Vitebsk. In the late 1880s, the population of the Vitebsk governorate (*Vitebskaia guberniia*) was 1,3 million, of which about 55 % were Russian Orthodox, 25 % Catholic and 12 % Jewish. In some of the region's towns and *mestechki* (small towns), such as Polatsk, Jews formed the majority.<sup>10</sup> The population of *Vitebskaia guberniia*, similarly to that of other provinces of the Russian Empire, experienced significant growth in the late nineteenth century, swelling by more than 1,5 % in the year 1887 alone.<sup>11</sup> Alongside other factors, these demographic developments triggered both the emigration of an increasing number of Russian Jews and significant internal migration of Orthodox peasants to the non-European parts of the Tsarist Empire. We are regrettably without figures for 1894, the year of the Antins' journey to the US. What we do know is that, two years later (in 1896), 6'967 Orthodox peasants left their homes in *Vitebskaia guberniia* to find new arable land east of the Ural Mountains. Between 1896 and 1909, more than 122'900 inhabitants from Vitebsk province underwent registration as peasant colonists at some point on their journey to Siberia.<sup>12</sup> These migrants were part of the 3,8 million Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian peasants who moved to Siberia, the Russian

10 According to the *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Brokgauz Efron*, Polotsk (Polatsk) had 20'321 inhabitants in 1891. Roughly 50 % of them (10'797) were Jewish, 6'989 Orthodox. The town had 23 synagogues and Jewish houses of prayer. See *ibid.* vol. 24, Sankt Peterburg 1898, p. 368–370, s.v. «Polotsk», here p. 368.

11 *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Brokgauz Efron*, Vol. 6a, Sankt Peterburg 1892, p. 557–562, s.v. «Vitebskaia Guberniia». For an account of annual population growth in Russia in the late nineteenth century reaching, in some years, almost 2 %, see Ralph Melville, *Bevölkerungsentwicklung und demographischer Strukturwandel bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, in: *Handbuch der Geschichte Russlands*, vol. 3/2, ed. by Gottfried Schramm, Stuttgart 1992, p. 1010–1071.

12 *Krestianskoe pereselenie i russkaia kolonizatsiia za Uralom*, in: *Aziatskaia Rossia*, Vol. 1: *Liudi i poriadki za Uralom*. Izдание pereselencheskogo upravleniia glavnogo upravleniia zemleustroistva i zemledeliia, Sankt Peterburg 1914, p. 440–499; N. Turchaninov (ed.), *Itogi pereselencheskogo dvizheniia za vremia s 1896 po 1909 gg. vkluchitel'no*. Izдание pereselencheskogo upravleniia, Sankt Peterburg 1910, p. 34–35.

steppe region or Central Asia between the abolition of serfdom in 1861 and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.<sup>13</sup>

Jews, apart from a tiny minority of highly educated and skilled specialists, were not permitted to take residence in Russia outside the so-called «Pale of Jewish settlement» in the western part of the Empire. Their options in terms of changing their place of residence were therefore limited to emigration. The situation for Orthodox (i.e. «Russian») peasants contrasted sharply; the Tsarist authorities made great efforts to prevent their emigration, wishing them to help populate and «Russify» the vast territories belonging to the multi-ethnic Empire's eastern part rather than colonising the «New World» on the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>14</sup> The proportion of ethnic Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians among emigrants from the Tsarist Empire registered at Ellis Island and other US border stations was thus relatively low.<sup>15</sup> Between 1899 and 1913, only 7 % of these immigrants were «Russians»; the proportion of «Jews» was 41 % and that of «Poles» 29 %.<sup>16</sup> As these figures reflect, millions of Jews, Poles and members of other minorities from the Russian Empire dreamt of a new life in the Americas; «Russians», meanwhile, increasingly imagined Siberia and other Eastern parts of the Empire as their «land of the future».<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, there is no written account by one of this group comparable to that of Mary Antin. We can rely only on a very limited number of documents detailing the first-hand experiences of Russian peasants moving east in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>18</sup> I will therefore illustrate structural

13 Leonid Goryushkin, *Migration, Settlement and the Rural Economy of Siberia, 1861–1914*, in: Alan Wood (ed.), *The History of Siberia. From Russian Conquest to Revolution*, London 1991, p. 140–141. V. Obolensky-Ossinsky estimates that 4,7 million Russian peasant colonists settled in Asiatic Russia between 1801 and 1914. *Emigration from and Immigration into Russia*, in: Walter F. Willcox (ed.), *International Migrations*, vol. 2: Interpretations, New York 1931, p. 521–580, here p. 556. Some researchers cite even higher numbers. According to Melville, 6,5 million Russian Orthodox peasants found new land east of the Urals between 1861 and 1914. Melville, *Bevölkerungsentwicklung und demographischer Strukturwandel bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, p. 1066.

14 Zahra, *The Great Departure*, p. 30.

15 Eric Lohr, *Population Policy and Emigration Policy in Imperial Russia*, in: Cynthia J. Buckley, Blair A. Ruble (ed.), *Migration, Homeland, and Belonging in Eurasia*, Washington 2008, p. 165–181, here p. 170.

16 Obolensky-Ossinsky, *Emigration from and Immigration into Russia*, p. 529. At 7 %, the «Russians» were on a par in terms of numbers with Finnish emigrants from the Tsarist Empire. In contemporary usage, the term «Russian» included Belarusians, Ukrainians and (Great) Russians.

17 Obolensky-Ossinsky, *Emigration from and Immigration into Russia*, p. 521. On the motivation of Russian peasants to look for new land in Siberia, see Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne. Mobilität und sozialer Raum im Eisenbahnzeitalter*, Stuttgart 2014, p. 279–280. The idea of Siberia as the «land of the future» became increasingly widespread in Russia at the outset of the twentieth century. See, for example, S.P. Alisov, *Krai budushchego: Iz vpechatlenii poezdki v Sibir'*, in: *Vestnik Znaniia*, 1903/12, p. 9–34 and 1904/1, p. 96–116.

18 Willard Sunderland, *Peasant Pioneering: Russian Peasant Settlers Describe Colonization and the Eastern Frontier, 1880s–1910s*, in: *Journal of Social History* 34/4 (2001), p. 895–922.

similarities between the experience of (largely Jewish) emigrants from the Tsarist Empire on their way to America and that of Orthodox farmers on their journey to Siberia by tracing a typical trajectory of a «Russian» (most likely Belarusian) family from Vitebsk governorate travelling to Tomsk province in Siberia. Lacking a first-hand account comparable to that of Mary Antin, we will resort to the artifice of a fictitious historical family we will call the «Bogdanovs».<sup>19</sup> Describing the story of their migration in the 1890s, as a model of an experience whose structural features we can reliably reconstruct from primary sources, will reveal shared features of people's experiences on different transregional migration routes.

Like the majority of Russian peasant colonists, the Bogdanovs belonged to the impoverished stratum of peasants with small land holdings, yet were able to stretch to covering the expenses of the trip and recommencing farming in a new location.<sup>20</sup> Having received permission from the local authorities to leave their home village and sell their house and property, they would have bought a train ticket at a special reduced fare for peasant colonists introduced by the Russian government in 1893.<sup>21</sup> Before the family gave up their old life, its head would have sent a scout to Siberia with the task of identifying a suitable piece of land for settlement.<sup>22</sup> The Bogdanovs, like the Antins, would have commenced their journey by train, yet travelling eastward rather than westward in a converted freight wagon. It is most likely that they would have left Polatsk in early spring. Crossing the river Volga on the new Alexander bridge in Syzran', the train would have proceeded slowly towards Samara and the moderately high-altitude regions of the Urals. In Chelyabinsk, on the boundary between the Tsarist realm's European and Asian parts, the Bogdanovs and their fellow travellers would have been made to disembark. Along with hundreds of other peasant colonists, our family would now have been led into a transmigration camp strikingly reminiscent of the emigration facilities at the port of Hamburg and the *Auswandererbahnhof* in Ruhleben. In the vicinity of Chelyabinsk station, the local authorities had erected a fenced-off village of huts that offered sleeping accommodation, supply and medical facilities to a growing number of peasant colonists.<sup>23</sup> As in Ruhleben and Hamburg, migrants entering the camp were registered and medically examined; one representative of each family then had to complete a questionnaire

19 Siberian archives record the emigration of a family called Bogdanov from Vitebskaia to Tomskaiia governorate between 1890 and 1924. Cf. <https://gen-tomica.jimdo.com/> (17.04.2020).

20 Obolensky-Ossinsky, *Emigration from and Immigration into Russia*, p. 563.

21 Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne*, p. 275, FN 237.

22 Lewis Siegelbaum, *Those Elusive Scouts. Pioneering Peasants and the Russian State*, in: *Kritika. Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 14/1 (2013), p. 21–58.

23 *Pereselencheskoe upravlenie* (ed.), *Cheliabinskii pereselencheskii punkt*, Sankt Peterburg 1910.

compiled by the Russian resettlement administration.<sup>24</sup> After a short stay of one or two nights, the *Bogdanovs* would eventually have boarded their train to the east.

## The Resettlement Camp in Chelyabinsk: A Short History

The «medical and nutrition centre (*vrachebno-pitatel'nyi punkt*)» or «colonists' point (*pereselencheskii punkt*)» in Chelyabinsk, where the Bogdanov family would have been registered, came into being at almost the same time as the facilities in Hamburg and Ruhleben. Its development was closely intertwined with the history of the Trans-Siberian Railway, which was built between 1891 and 1903.<sup>25</sup> In the 1890s, Chelyabinsk evolved into the «capital of the colonisation movement» to Siberia.<sup>26</sup> Chelyabinsk was the starting point of the West Siberian Railway, which had a lower transport capacity than the Samara-Zlatoust railway that connected the city to the west of the Empire. This circumstance led to the town, then referred to with irony as the «Chicago of the East», serving as a temporary refuge for thousands of peasant colonists.<sup>27</sup> The first wooden accommodation huts were constructed in 1892 and 1893. As early as 1895, the structures of a larger camp with heated log cabins, an infirmary, canteen and administration buildings had been established.<sup>28</sup> After the West Siberian Railway and the railway line to Ekaterinburg went into operation in 1896, the facility grew rapidly, eventually attaining an area of 11 hectares.

The *pereselencheskii punkt* in Chelyabinsk most likely came into being on the initiative of the local authorities. The numbers of peasant colonists camping on the bare ground at Chelyabinsk station, waiting to continue their journeys, called for disease prevention measures. In 1895, the Russian resettlement administration started to build a rapidly growing and professionally organised camp for trans-migrants, which was soon able to accommodate up to 30'000 people. In 1908, when the Siberian colonisation movement reached its peak, 716'599 peasant colonists (including scouts) were registered at the *pereselencheskii punkt* in Chelyabinsk.<sup>29</sup> In 1898, in order to avoid direct contact between the waiting colonists and the local population, the camp was connected directly to the rail net-

24 On contemporaries' perceptions of the *pereselencheskii punkt* in Chelyabinsk, see I. E. Beliaikov, *Pereselenetsy o Sibiri*, in: *Russkoe bogatstvo*, 1899, no. 3, p. 1–14, here p. 7; M. Sumkin, *Sibir' za zemleiu: Iz Kaluzhskoi gub. v Semipalatinskuiu oblast'*. *Zapiski khodoka*, Moskva 1908, p. 11.

25 Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne*, p. 92–94, 277.

26 Vladimir Platonovich Voshchinin, *Na Sibirskom prostore. Kartiny pereseleniia*, Sankt Peterburg 1912, p. 7.

27 V. E. Smirnova, *Cheliabinskii pereselencheskii punkt (konets XIX veka – 1920e gody)*, in: *Vestnik Cheliabinskogo Universiteta*, 2000/1, p. 47–53, here p. 48.

28 *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (RGIA)* f. 391, op. 2, d. 1184, l. 20.

29 Turchaninov, *Itogi pereselencheskogo dvizheniia*, p. 82.



work, acquiring its own separate platform for colonists to embark and alight from their trains.<sup>30</sup> Alongside disentangling services for settlers from those for ordinary passengers and freight, this measure sought to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.<sup>31</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, the transit centre had evolved into a «town within a town», with over 60 buildings and facilities. The administrative authority for internal colonisation (*pereselencheskoe upravlenie*) that had been founded in 1896 maintained an office there. The centre had dormitory huts for colonists, canteens, a hospital and a pharmacy, laundries, bathhouses, facilities for disinfecting clothing, stables, a chapel and a primary school. Between 1894 and 1909, more than 4.4 million people passed through the centre, among them approximately 800'000 returners to European Russia from its non-European parts who had not succeeded in setting up a new farmstead in the east.<sup>32</sup> On some days, two or three colonist trains arrived in Chelyabinsk, carrying up to 12'000 passengers in total.<sup>33</sup>

The facility's principal remit included housing the farmer colonists while they waited for their next train, providing medical attention, and supplying food when needed. To identify carriers of contagious diseases and prevent their spread, all arrivals in Chelyabinsk were subject to medical examination, while clothing of sick people, and the freight wagons in which they had travelled, underwent disinfection.<sup>34</sup> At peak times, the facility employed up to 150 people working in two shifts. They included officials from the resettlement administration authority, two doctors, a pharmacist, twelve surgeons (known as *fel'dsher*), nurses, janitors, warehouse workers, bookkeepers, statisticians, note-takers, technicians, and security personnel.<sup>35</sup> Like the *Auswandererbahnhof* in Ruhleben, the transit facility in Chelyabinsk served the purpose of collecting data on the farmer-migrants who arrived there.<sup>36</sup> The information required included the

<sup>30</sup> RGIA f. 265, op. 4, d. 1103; f. 391, op. 2, d. 117.

<sup>31</sup> RGIA f. 391, op. 2, d. 117, ll. 18–18ob.

<sup>32</sup> L.P. Stepanova, Rol' zheleznoi dorogi v razvitii sotsial'noi sfery Cheliabinskogo zheleznodorozhnogo uzla v svete pereselencheskoi politiki Rossii kontsa XIX – nachala XX veka, in: Rol' chastnogo predprinimatel'stva v razvitii zheleznnykh dorog Rossii. Materialy konferentsii, Moskva 2004, p. 51–59, here p. 56.

<sup>33</sup> M.S. Fonotov, Pereselencheskii punkt, in: Rodnaia starina. Ocherki istorii Iuzhnogo Urala, Cheliabinsk 2011, p. 185–187, here p. 186.

<sup>34</sup> Édouard Romanovich Tsimmerman, Po velikoi Sibirskoi doroge, in: Vestnik Evropy 38 (1903), no. 1, p. 107–137; no. 2, p. 486–512, here no. 1, p. 109; Voshchinin, Na Sibirskom prostore, p. 7; Pereselencheskoe upravlenie (ed.), Spravochnaia knizhka o pereselenii za Ural v 1906 god. Svedeniia neobkhodimye kazhdomu khoziainu, zadumavshemu pereselenie v Sibir' i kazhdomu khodoku, Sankt Peterburg, 1907, p. 79–80; Smirnova, Cheliabinskii pereselencheskii punkt, p. 50.

<sup>35</sup> Smirnova, Cheliabinskii pereselencheskii punkt, p. 49.

<sup>36</sup> Systematic questioning of the colonists and the collection of this information began in 1896 using a method proposed by the Russian statistician G.A. Priimak. Cf. S.S. Smirnov, Cheliabinskii pereselencheskii punkt, in: S.S. Smirnov, V. E. Smirnova (ed.): Materialy nauchnoi kraevedcheskoi konferentsii «Cheliabinsk v proshlom i nastoiashchem», Cheliabinsk 2001, p. 62–65, here p. 64.



emigrants' precise provenance, their reasons for leaving their home region, and whether they had sent a scout ahead of them.<sup>37</sup> The data generated at the migratory bottleneck in Chelyabinsk had the dual purpose of providing useful information both to state authorities in their endeavours to manage migratory movements and to the peasant colonists with the aim of tackling the problem of failed resettlement.<sup>38</sup> Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, an office was opened in Chelyabinsk where colonists could make enquiries and find out about life in the regions available to resettlement. Informative and morale-boosting activities also took place in the facility's school and chapel, where daily readings of religious, morally edifying and historical works were put on.<sup>39</sup>

Like other transit points for transregional migrants, the *pereselencheskii punkt* at Chelyabinsk found itself redeployed for military purposes in wartime. During the Russo-Japanese War, the facility was used as a transfer point for consignments of troops and as a field hospital.<sup>40</sup> A similar repurposing took place during the First World War. The end for the *pereselencheskii punkt* came at the close of the 1920s, when the Soviet policy of enforced collectivisation and the first Five-Year Plan opened an entirely new chapter in the history of Russian agriculture.<sup>41</sup> As in Ruhleben, present-day Chelyabinsk has retained few traces of its erstwhile migration facility. Two street names point to the history of a site otherwise left essentially to itself. Apart from some articles by local historians, research to date has not systematically explored the history of this important transit site of mass migration.

## Hubs of Transregional Migration: «Sites of Modernity»

My accounts of the voyages taken by the Antins and the fictitious Bogdanov family and my brief sketch of the history of the *pereselencheskii punkt* in Chelyabinsk are intended to point to a broader picture and purpose. The history of migration frequently tends to explore specific migration processes in isolation from others, notwithstanding their chronological simultaneity and the various interesting structural features they may have in common. The existing work on

37 G.A. Priimak (ed.), *Tsifrovoy material dlia izucheniia pereselenii v Sibir' po 1895 god*, vol. 1, part 2, Moskva 1898.

38 *Pereselencheskoe upravlenie* (ed.): *Sibirskoe pereselenie. Chto nuzhno znat' kazhdomu khodoku. Prilagaetsia dorozhnaia karta Sibiri*, Sankt Peterburg 1899; *Pereselencheskoe upravlenie, Spravochnaia knizhka o pereselenii za Ural v 1906 god. Svedeniia neobkhodimye kazhdomu khoziainu, zadumavshemu pereselenie v Sibir' i kazhdomu khodoku*; *Pereselencheskoe upravlenie* (ed.), *Pereselenie v stepnoi kraii v 1907 godu. Spravochnaia knizhka o pereselenii v oblasti Turgaiskuiu, Ural'skuiu, Akmolinskuiu i Semipalatinskuiu*, Sankt Peterburg 1907.

39 RGIA f. 391, op. 4, d. 627.

40 Smirnova, *Cheliabinskii pereselencheskii punkt*, p. 51.

41 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, Leslie Page Moch, *Broad Is My Native Land: Repertoires and Regimes of Migration in Russia's Twentieth Century*, Ithaca 2014, p. 32–48.

transatlantic migration, specifically of Jewish people from the Tsarist Empire, and on the «Great Siberian Migration» (Treadgold) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may stand as examples of this tendency.<sup>42</sup> The research literature on American history applies the term «age of (mass) migration» to the years 1870–1924, when millions of migrants left their homes for the «New World». Approximately 23,5 million «new immigrants» from Southern and Eastern Europe reached American shores between 1880 and 1924. Among them were around three million Jews, mostly from the Tsarist empire.<sup>43</sup> At roughly the same time as this great wave of transatlantic migration, the numbers of «Russian» peasants migrating within Russia across the Urals rose significantly. From the 1880s onward, the imperial government came to accede to the view that, seeing as there was no stopping this intra-Russian transregional migration, the best one could do would be to regulate it.<sup>44</sup>

Part of my intent in telling these two stories together is to highlight the structural commonalities linking the broadly simultaneous phenomena of Jewish emigration from the Tsarist Empire to the Americas and the mass migration of Orthodox peasants from the European to the Asian part of Russia. Issues in home regions, including demographic pressure and economic problems, and hopes for a better life elsewhere drove both migration processes.<sup>45</sup> Of course, legal discrimination against Jewish people and increasing anti-Semitism in Tsar-

<sup>42</sup> Donald W. Treadgold, *Great Siberian Migration*, Princeton 1957. – There is only a handful of studies analysing transatlantic and trans-Ural migration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as simultaneous, interconnected phenomena. Among them are Obolensky-Ossinsky, *Emigration from and Immigration into Russia* and Lutz Häfner, *Russland und die Welt. Das Zarenreich in der Migrationsgeschichte des langen 19. Jahrhunderts*, in: Martin Aust (ed.), *Globalisierung imperial und sozialistisch. Russland und die Sowjetunion in der Globalgeschichte 1851–1991*, Frankfurt/M. 2013, p. 64–83. Lewis Siegelbaum highlights the parallels between the migration «fevers» that set in with regard to both movements: *Paradise or Just a Little Bit Better? Siberian Settlement «Fever» in Late Imperial Russia*, in: *The Russian Review* 76 (2017), p. 22–37.

<sup>43</sup> Barbara Lüthi, *Invading Bodies. Medizin und Immigration in den USA 1880–1920*, Frankfurt/M. 2009, p. 14; Kevin Hillstrom, *The Dream of America: Immigration 1870–1920*, Detroit 2009, p. 26. Ewa Morawska asserts that 7,5 million people (including two million Jews) emigrated to the Americas from the Tsarist Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy between 1880 and 1914: Ewa Morawska, *From Myth to Reality. America in the Eyes of East European Peasant Migrant Laborers*, in: Dirk Hoerder, Horst Rössler (ed.): *Distant Magnets. Expectations and Realities in the Immigrant Experience, 1840–1930*, New York, London 1993, p. 241–263, here p. 241.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander Kaufmann, *Das russische Übersiedlungs- und Kolonisationsgesetz vom 6./19. Juni 1904 und die Aussichten der inneren Kolonisation in Rußland*, in: *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, N.F. 22 (1906), p. 371–423, here p. 371–372; Willard Sunderland, *The Colonization Question. Visions of Colonization in Late Imperial Russia*, in: *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 48 (2000), p. 210–232, here p. 214.

<sup>45</sup> Adam Walaszek, *Central Eastern Europeans in the Euro-Atlantic Migration System Before the First World War*, in: Michael Boyden, Hans Krabbendam, Liselotte Vandenbussche (ed.), *Tales of Transit. Narrative Migrant Spaces in Atlantic Perspective, 1850–1950*, Amsterdam 2013, p. 29–44.

rist Russia doubtless played an additional role in the emigration of Jews.<sup>46</sup> Both phenomena unfolded against the backdrop of the first era of modern globalisation, marked by a leap in demand for labour among thriving capitalist economies, the increasingly rapid transit and exchange of people, goods and information across continents thanks to developments in transport and communications, and a growing public understanding of global interconnections, supported by the spread of the mass-market press.<sup>47</sup>

One of the specific structural features common to these two distinct processes is the noticeable and growing desire on the part of state agencies to control, monitor, regulate and document the increasing movement of people across and within national borders. In both the cases I discuss in this article, authorities harnessed modern infrastructure to exercise these powers and functions, while specialists, working at various points on the courses of global migration movements, used new scientific findings and techniques in the fields of statistics and medicine to manage and direct these complex social processes. My chief interest lies in those newly established facilities that supported these state and expert remits. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a number of locations across the globe experienced almost simultaneously the emergence of a new type of site, or socio-spatial configuration, with highly distinct features. Using today's language, we might term these sites «gateways», «hubs», or «portals» of transregional migration. As in the cases of other «sites of modernity» (*Orte der Moderne*), such as the railway station, the factory and the cinema, the late nineteenth century evolution of the modern reception and transitional facility for migrants was inextricably linked to contemporary historical developments and innovations.<sup>48</sup> These include the spread of modern infrastructure such as the railways, the telegraph and steamships; increasing specialisation in the scientific sphere and the emergence of new academic disciplines; the rising influence of medical knowledge and statistics on the actions of states; the forging of global links and networks among particular cultures of expertise; the intensifying phenomenon of mass transregional migration; and the contemporary faith in the capacity of

<sup>46</sup> Tobias Brinkmann stresses that we still know far too little about the causes of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: *Points of Passage: Re-examining Jewish Migrations from Eastern Europe after 1880*, in: Tobias Brinkmann (ed.), *Points of Passage. Jewish Transmigrants from Eastern Europe in Scandinavia, Germany and Britain 1880–1914*, New York, Oxford 2013, p. 1–23, here p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Dirk Hoerder, *Migration in the Atlantic Economies: Regional European Origins and Worldwide Expansion*, in: Dirk Hoerder, Leslie Page Moch (ed.), *European Migrants. Global and Local Perspectives*, Boston 1996, p. 34–42; Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact. World Migrations in the Second Millenium*, Durham, NC 2002, chap. 13 and 14.

<sup>48</sup> Alexa Geisthövel, Habbo Knoch, *Orte der Moderne. Erfahrungswelten des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt/M. 2005.

state and non-state actors, guided by reason, to manage and control complex societal processes.<sup>49</sup>

Comparative research in the history of the modern migrants' reception and transit facility may contribute to the emerging field of research on «portals of globalisation».<sup>50</sup> Proponents of the concept have described this term as an analytical category whose purpose is «to investigate how global interactions are anchored and managed in particular places», bringing processes of globalisation – such as flows of people or goods and the circulation of knowledge – into the sphere of the tangible via «place as an entry point [for understanding] the character, mechanisms, and effects of global connectivity». Research into portals of globalisation therefore investigates «the management of global flows in particular places».<sup>51</sup> As happened at other «portals of globalisation», reception and transit facilities for transregional migrants served elites as instruments of the attempt «to channel and therefore control the effects of global connectivity».<sup>52</sup> Not all migration that passed through these facilities was genuinely «global», and some of it did not extend beyond the borders of nation states;<sup>53</sup> I therefore propose the term «Hubs of Transregional Migration» (HoTM) as more appropriate to my intent in this article.

My argument is that the facilities in Hamburg's port (both the emigrants' huts of the 1890s and the emigrants' halls – *Auswandererhallen* – that opened in 1902), in Ruhleben, and in Chelyabinsk all represent variations on an archetypal «Hub of Transregional Migration». Others existed across the globe, including – but by no means limited to – the perhaps best-known example, Ellis Island in New York;<sup>54</sup> its «little sister» Angel Island in San Francisco Bay;<sup>55</sup> the Galveston

<sup>49</sup> Christiane Reinecke, *Staatliche Macht im Aufbau: Infrastrukturen der Kontrolle und die Ordnung der Migrationsverhältnisse im Kaiserreich*, in: Jochen Oltmer (ed.), *Handbuch Staat & Migration in Deutschland seit dem 17. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2015, p. 341–384, here p. 342.

<sup>50</sup> Matthias Middell, Katja Naumann, *Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization*, in: *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010), p. 149–70; Claudia Baumann, Antje Dietze, Megan Maruschke, *Portals of Globalization – An Introduction*, in: *Comparativ. Zeitschrift Für Globalgeschichte Und Vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 27/3–4 (2017), p. 7–20. Following Middell and Naumann, Alison Bashford has applied the «portal» metaphor to quarantine facilities: Alison Bashford, *Maritime Quarantine: Linking Old World and New World Histories*, in: Alison Bashford (ed.), *Quarantine*, London 2014, p. 10–12.

<sup>51</sup> Baumann, Dietze, Maruschke, *Portals of Globalization*, p. 8–9.

<sup>52</sup> Middell, Naumann, *Global History and the Spatial Turn*, p. 162.

<sup>53</sup> Matthias Middell, *Transregional Studies. A New Approach to Global Processes*, in: *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, London 2018, p. 1–16.

<sup>54</sup> Ronald Baylor, *Encountering Ellis Island. How European Immigrants Entered America*, Baltimore 2014; Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage. The History of Ellis Island*, New York 2009; Barry Moreno, *Encyclopedia of Ellis Island*, Westport, Conn. 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Erika Lee, *Judy Yung, Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America*, Oxford 2010; Robert Eric Barde, *Immigration at the Golden Gate. Passenger Ships, Exclusion, and Angel Island*, Westport 2008.



immigration station on the Texan Atlantic coast;<sup>56</sup> Grosse Isle<sup>57</sup> and Pier 21 in Halifax in Québec, Canada;<sup>58</sup> the *hospedarias* for immigrants in the Brazilian cities of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro;<sup>59</sup> the *Hotel de Inmigrantes* in Buenos Aires, Argentina;<sup>60</sup> the numerous sanitary checkpoints at the Russian/German and Austrian/German borders, managed by the private steamship companies HAPAG and German Lloyd (among them Eydtkuhnen<sup>61</sup> and Myslowitz<sup>62</sup>); and transmigration facilities in European harbours such as Hamburg, Bremen, Rotterdam and Antwerp. I suggest that these HoTM share a specific set of features and characteristics. We may describe them as a network of sites that served as settings for the coordination, inspection, and medical supervision of, and the creation of statistical records on, transregional migratory movements undertaken by millions of people in the age of mass migration. Before proposing a list of research questions of potential relevance to a comparative history of Hubs of Transregional Migration, I will attempt to summarise a number of their characteristics as an initial step towards a model definition of these loci as «sites of modernity». Ten typical features – all applying, in my view, to the three exemplary cases outlined above – comprise this provisional outline:

*Temporality:* Hubs of Transregional Migration (HoTM) came into being in the final two decades of the nineteenth century and continued to operate into the first half of the twentieth century.

*Intersection:* HoTM were established at points of transition and/or intersection between modern transport networks, primarily at sea ports and railway inter-

56 Bernard Marinbach, *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West*, Albany 1983.

57 Marianna O'Gallagher, *Grosse Île: Gateway to Canada, 1832–1937*, Ste-Foy, Québec 1984.

58 Joachim Baur, *Einwanderungsmuseen als neue Nationalmuseen*, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, issue 3, 2005, online edition <https://zeithistorische-forschungen.de/3-2005/4406> (17.04.2020).

59 Laurent Vidal, Alain Musset (ed.), *Les Territoires d'attentes. Migrations et Mobilités Dans Les Amériques XIX<sup>e</sup>–XXI<sup>e</sup> Siècles*, Rennes 2015.

60 Laura Olivia Gerstner, *El Alojamiento de inmigrantes en el río de la plata, siglos XIX y XX: Planificación estatal y redes sociales*, *Biblio 3W Revista Bibliográfica de geografía y ciencias sociales* (Serie documental de Geo Crítica) Universidad de Barcelona 13/779 (March 25, 2008), <http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/b3w-779.htm> (20.04.2020).

61 Zosa Szajkowski, *Sufferings of Jewish Emigrants to America in Transit through Germany*, in: *Jewish Social Studies* 29 (1977), p. 105–116; Tobias Brinkmann, «Travelling with Ballin»: The Impact of American Immigration Policies on Jewish Transmigration within Central Europe, 1880–1914, in: *International Review of Social History* 53 (2008), p. 459–484; Kvale Eilers, *Emigrant Trains*, p. 68–71; Jan Musekamp, Eydtkuhnen and Verzhbolovo: Big History and Local Experiences: Migration and Identity in a European Borderland, in: Tabea Linhard, Timothy Parsons (ed.), *Mapping Migration, Identity, and Space*, New York 2019, p. 55–83, here p. 68–69; Jan Musekamp, *From Paris to St. Petersburg and from Kovno to New York. A Cultural History of Transnational Mobility in East Central Europe* (Habilitationsschrift), Frankfurt/O. 2016, p. 286–290.

62 Elisabeth Janik-Freis, *Grenzregime am Dreikaiserreichseck*, in: Magdalena Baran-Szoltys, Nina Gude, Elisabeth Janik-Freis (ed.), *Galizien in Bewegung. Wahrnehmungen, Begegnungen, Verflechtungen*, Wien 2017, p. 173–187.

changes. The existence of links to modern infrastructure is a crucial factor. Their specific location enabled them to direct migrants through «inspection channels». Migrants were hard pressed to avoid passing through HoTM.<sup>63</sup>

*Isolation:* A defining characteristic of HoTM was their – at times literally – isolated location, either surrounded by water or set apart, and spatially separated (fenced off), from settlements inhabited by local populations. In this respect, HoTM clearly follow the tradition of quarantine stations.<sup>64</sup>

*Assertion of administrative authority:* The emergence of HoTM is firmly linked to the modern state's increasing wish and need to secure its boundaries («territorialisation») and intervene in transregional processes of migration with intent to direct, manage and control them.<sup>65</sup> HoTM are «systems of power enabling the development of state intervention and administration over entire populations via specific practices, techniques and forms of knowledge.»<sup>66</sup>

*State/non-state interaction/cooperation:* HoTM were set up by state or non-state institutions and frequently entailed close cooperation between state and non-state actors. The latter included, for instance, railway or steamship companies.<sup>67</sup> Religious organisations, such as Catholic or Jewish charity committees, likewise frequently cooperated with state authorities at HoTM.<sup>68</sup>

*Components:* The basic ensemble of a HoTM included a registration centre, a hospital or sickbay, disinfection facilities, communal bathrooms, living quarters, kitchens and canteens, and administrative offices.

*Cultural interaction:* HoTM were spaces of encounter between people largely from underprivileged social classes and representatives of state power, flanked by academically educated professionals such as medics and statisticians. Where a HoTM managed international migration, it brought together people of diverse nationalities, languages and religious denominations. This makes HoTM loci of wide-ranging cultural interaction.

*Modern medicine:* HoTM were arenas of action for medics who, usually in close cooperation with state authorities, examined migrants in accordance

<sup>63</sup> On attempts to «channel» flows of transregional migration in the nineteenth century, see also Valeska Huber, *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and beyond, 1869–1914*, Cambridge 2013.

<sup>64</sup> Alison Bashford (ed.), *Quarantine: Local and Global Histories*, London 2016.

<sup>65</sup> Baumann, Dietze, and Maruschke, *Portals of Globalization*, p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> Lüthi, *Invading Bodies*, p. 12.

<sup>67</sup> Szajkowski, *Sufferings of Jewish Emigrants to America in Transit through Germany*, p. 106; Tobias Brinkmann, *Why Paul Nathan Attacked Albert Ballin: The Transatlantic Mass Migration and the Privatization of Prussia's Eastern Border Inspection, 1886–1914*, in: *Central European History* 43 (2010), p. 47–83.

<sup>68</sup> Brinkmann, *Points of Passage: Reexamining Jewish Migrations*, p. 11–12.



with scientific categories of «illness» and «health». One of their central tasks was to limit the spread of contagious diseases.<sup>69</sup>

*Statistical data generation:* Many HoTM acted as accumulators of knowledge and comprehensive statistical material on processes of migration. This knowledge, collected by officials and statisticians, was subsequently made available to state authorities and academic research.

*Transformations of functionality:* Periods of war frequently lead to the repurposing of HoTM for military institutions such as field hospitals. To this day, the architectural remains of HoTM continue to embody the memory of the network of intersections which carried worldwide movements of migration in the first age of modern globalisation.

All these structural commonalities of HoTM notwithstanding, a number of differences between distinct types of this institution merit explication in this context. Some HoTM were located at state borders and installed by private companies or state authorities seeking to control immigration to the country in question and identify and reject «undesirable» would-be immigrants (or transmigrants), whereas others were set up within state borders and served primarily to provide migrants with food and medical aid. This means that there are at least two different basic types of HoTM. Whereas the emigrants' railway station in Ruhleben, the emigrants' huts in Hamburg harbour, being part of the US' «remote border control system»,<sup>70</sup> and, of course, Ellis Island and Angel Island represent the first type, the *pereselencheskii punkt* in Chelyabinsk, where nobody divided «desirable» from «undesirable» would-be peasant colonists, is an example of the second. Establishing whether the *pereselenka* in Chelyabinsk was a unique institution or whether others with similar purposes and structures existed elsewhere in the world exceeds the scope of this article and must be left to further research.<sup>71</sup> A second difference – manifest less in contemporary materiality than in retrospective memory – becomes apparent when we take a look at present-day approaches to the architectural remnants of HoTM. While there is little in today's Ruhleben and Chelyabinsk to remind us of their erstwhile histor-

<sup>69</sup> Barbara Lüthi, *Germes of Anarchy, Crime, Disease, and Degereracy: Jewish Migration to the United States and the Medicalization of European Borders around 1900*, in: Tobias Brinkmann (ed.), *Points of Passage: Jewish Transmigrants from Eastern Europe in Scandinavia, Germany, and Britain 1880–1914*, New York 2013, p. 27–46.

<sup>70</sup> Aristide R. Zolberg, *The Archeology of Remote Control*, in: Andreas Fahrmeir, Oliver Faron, Patrick Weil (ed.), *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the United States from the French Revolution to the Inter-War Period*, New York 2003, p. 195–222.

<sup>71</sup> Alongside Chelyabinsk, medical and nutrition centres on the migration route from Russia's western provinces to Siberia included Nizhnii Novgorod, Kazan', Perm, Kurgan, and other small railway stations along the West Siberian Railway. Anatolii Nikolaevich Kulomzin, *Vsepoddanneishii otchet stats-sekretaria Kulomzina po poezdke v Sibir' dlia oznakomleniia s polozheniem pereselencheskogo dela*, Sankt Peterburg 1896, p. 37–48.

ical significance as liminal loci in global migration routes, there is a lavishly designed emigrant museum in Hamburg harbour, housed in what was once an accommodation shed for emigrants to America. Similarly, during the 1980s, former HoTM in Ellis Island, Buenos Aires and Halifax were converted into museums of immigration that today attract large visitor numbers.<sup>72</sup> We would evidently be justified in terming the *Auswandererbahnhof* in Ruhleben or the *pereselencheskii punkt* at Chelyabinsk loci of a «disappearing Europe».<sup>73</sup> The Hamburg facilities, by contrast, hold a prominent place on the mental maps of this prosperous city's present-day residents. The exploration of the reasons behind these divergent processes of collective commemoration and forgetting appears a promising subject for future research on HoTM.<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusion

In their remit of managing, monitoring, generating statistical information on, and providing welfare assistance to large numbers of migrants crossing continents, *Hubs of Transregional Migration* were pulse points on international routes of transit in the new age of global movements of people. The experience of being in one of these places, the medical examinations and official interviews, the sensory impressions received, and the hopes and fears associated with the institution inscribed themselves into the memories and mental maps of millions of migrants. Passing through a Hub of Transregional Migration was, so to speak, an iconic experience of modern migration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and one facet of the complex «experience of modernity». From this perspective, the current lack of comparative research on the history of HoTM is rather intriguing. Undoubtedly, the story of some of these transit points is well-researched and relatively well-known; but others remain largely shrouded in obscurity. Research of a comparative nature that examines mutual perceptions and transnational knowledge transfer in the historical field of transregional migration management is in its infancy, and virtually none of it covers both phenomena of trans-border emigration and forms of internal migration,

72 Joachim Baur, *Die Musealisierung der Migration. Einwanderungsmuseen und die Inszenierung der multikulturellen Nation*, Bielefeld 2009; Luke Desforges, Joanne Madderb, *Front Doors to Freedom, Portal to the Past: History at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum*, in: *Social & Cultural Geography* 5/3 (2004), p. 437–457; Gareth Hoskins, Jo Frances Maddern, *Immigration Stations. The Regulation and Commemoration of Mobility at Angel Island, San Francisco and Ellis Island*, New York, in: Tim Cresswell, Peter Merriman (ed.), *Geographies of Mobilities. Practices, Spaces, Subjects*, Farnham 2011, p. 151–165; Gareth Hoskins, *Materialising Memory at Angel Island Immigration Station, San Francisco*, in: *Environment and Planning* 39/2 (2007), p. 437–455.

73 Katharina Raabe, Monika Sznajderman, *Last & Lost. Ein Atlas des verschwindenden Europas*, Frankfurt/M. 2006.

74 Matthias Middell, *Portals of Globalization as Lieux de Mémoire*, in: *Comparativ. Zeitschrift Für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 27/3–4 (2017), p. 58–77.

such as the large-scale movement of Russian Orthodox peasant colonists from the European to the Asian parts of the Tsarist Empire.

A research agenda for this topic would presumably need to begin by compiling as complete a list as possible of HoTM along transregional and transcontinental migration routes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, paying attention to the presence of the defining features outlined above. Comparative analysis of specific cases might generate insights into reciprocal perceptions of actors in this arena and the transnational circulation of knowledge. A comparison of the spatial structures and standardised processes in place at the various HoTM also appears promising: What was the nature of the medical examinations carried out; which statistical data were collected, and where did they end up? A further crucial item on such an agenda would seem to me to be the place of HoTM in the longer-term history of quarantine-facilities and prisoner-of-war and concentration camps, a matter research to date has not been able to resolve. Recent work on the pre-history of mass containment facilities, including concentration camps, has tended to omit HoTM.<sup>75</sup> A particularly fruitful route to new insights may lie in identifying the specific modern developments in the domains of medicine, hygiene and statistics, and the innovations in the fields of infrastructure, communication and transport, that influenced HoTMs' emergence and operational characteristics.<sup>76</sup> Here, too, the transnational circulation of knowledge is a matter of relevance. To what extent did the operators of HoTM mutually observe and learn from one another? Did certain HoTM serve as models for others? Was there a transnational discourse among experts on the best possible organisation of HoTM? Were HoTM topics at, for example, the international sanitary conferences that commenced in the late nineteenth century (Washington 1881, Rome 1885, Venice 1892, Dresden 1893, etc.)? A further particular challenge is investigating individual experiences of HoTM. The vast majority of those who passed through them were illiterate and/or occupied, once arrived at their destinations, with business other than writing travelogues. First-hand documentation of the «HoTM experience» is therefore sparse, despite exceptions such as Mary Antin's account and other migrants' memoirs.<sup>77</sup> A final question of substantial pertinence, in my view, is why we see

<sup>75</sup> Christoph Jahr, Jens Thiel (ed.), *Lager vor Auschwitz. Gewalt und Integration im 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2013; Bettina Greiner, Alan Kramer (ed.), *Die Welt der Lager. Zur «Erfolgsgeschichte» einer Institution*, Hamburg 2013.

<sup>76</sup> On the dynamic field of infrastructure history, see Dirk van Laak, *Alles im Fluss. Die Lebensadern unserer Gesellschaft – Geschichte und Zukunft der Infrastruktur*, Frankfurt/M. 2018. On the impact of modern medicine on new forms of migration management, cf. Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers. Germs, Genes, and the Immigrant Menace*, Baltimore 1994; Amy L. Fairchild, *Science at Borders. Immigrant Medical Inspection and the Shaping of the Modern Industrial Labor Force*, Baltimore 2003.

<sup>77</sup> Sunderland, *Peasant Pioneering*; Gareth Hoskins, *Poetic Landscapes of Exclusion: Chinese Immigration through Angel Island, San Francisco*, in: Richard Schein (ed.), *Race and Landscape in*

such differences in the treatment accorded to the material remnants of HoTM. Why are some successfully foregrounded as national *lieux de mémoire* and tourist attractions, while others are left to decay?<sup>78</sup> In our current, renewed «age of mass migration», we would likely find resonance and relevance in explicit remembrance of the transnational network of HoTM from the first modern age of globalisation.

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America, New York 2007, p. 95–111; Thomas Dublin, *Immigrant Voices. New Lives in America, 1773–1986*, Urbana, Chicago 1993; Uri D. Herscher, *The East European Jewish Experience in America. A Century of Memories, 1882–1982*, Cincinnati 1983; Peter Morton Coan, *Ellis Island Interviews. In Their Own Words*, New York 1997.

<sup>78</sup> Middell, *Portals of Globalization as Lieux de Mémoire*; Hoskins, Maddern, *Immigration Stations*; Baur, *Die Musealisierung der Migration*.