
Loyal Jewish Socialists Quit Seceding Body: Federation Convention Votes, 41 to 34, to Leave Party — New Group is Immediately Organized: Resume Work Today: Bigger and More Active Movement Promised by Those Who Refuse to Bolt Organization.

Unsigned article in the *New York Call*, v. 14, no. 248 (Sept. 5, 1921), pg. 11.

Delegates loyal to the Socialist Party yesterday afternoon [Sept. 4, 1921] withdrew from the convention of the Jewish Socialist Federation in Forward Hall, and organized a new group, after the majority voted to leave the Socialist Party.

The vote in favor of withdrawal was 41 to 34. The decision was taken after 6 hours of debate. After the loyal 34 delegates left the convention, the group that remained announced that it would convene this morning [Sept. 5] and work out its plans.

At the organization meeting of the 34 delegates, in another hall in the Forward Building, addresses were made by Judge Jacob Panken; J. Baskin, General Secretary of the Workmen's Circle; Alexander Kahn; and Otto Branstetter, National Executive Secretary of the Socialist Party.

A spirit of optimism prevailed, the delegates declaring that the division was in the interest of the party's work, since the existence of the two schools of thought in the party had made party work impossible for years.

Plan Bigger Federation.

"We will have a bigger, better, more active Federation in 2 months than the old Federation had been for years," said one of the delegates.

There was a little discussion as to whether the new organization within the party would be a federation or an organization committee, such as has been organized by the Finns.

A committee of 9 was elected to draw up plans,

and to report this morning [Sept. 5, 1921] at 9:00 o'clock, when the convention will resume work.

It is not known just where the 41 [majority delegates] are going, J.B. Salutsky saying that to take on a new wife before getting rid of the old one was adultery. He said he knew what organization he wanted to go with, but he declined to reveal his desire.

Morris Winchevsky of Harlem, who represented a Milwaukee women's branch, said that he was for going into the Communist Party, only he didn't believe in secrecy and underground methods.

Dr. M.J. Olgin of the Bronx, who carried the mandate of a branch in St. Paul, said that he didn't want to destroy the party, but that he wanted to seed a great, powerful Left Wing revolutionary party of Jewish workers that will bring about the revolution in America.

Dr. B. Hoffman, who is known as Zivien, said that the Federation couldn't expect to be admitted into the Communist International, so he thought that the Federation would do well to sit around and wait for developments after it got out of the party.

Hyman Schneid of Chicago said that the Federation would carry propaganda into every union and Workmen's Circle branch in the country.

34 Claim Major Following.

The 34 delegates, their spokesmen claim, represent the largest part of the old Federation, including the largest and most influential branches.

Of the 41, two men voted in violation of their instructions and 3 were delegates of a brand new Yip-sel [YPSL] circle, organized for the purpose of getting delegates seated, it is charged. The large number of proxies, invariably given to leading spokesmen of the withdrawal plan in New York, all voted against the Socialist Party. Loyal party spokesmen openly charged fraud in that the largest part of the proxies represented branches that exist only on paper.

The withdrawal issue was the only thing on the agenda. The hottest spot was when J.B. Salutsky, the leading supporter of the withdrawal sentiment, informed the delegates that *The Call*, in reporting the convention, was a God damned liar. He spoke in English at the moment in order to make himself perfectly plain.

The convention began with a little flare-up over Alexander Trachtenberg, who wanted to make a speech as a representative of the "Committee of the Third International in the Socialist Party," he said. There was objection to his speaking on the ground that he represented no organization, and that he had not been invited. He was permitted to speak, however, the chairman, P. Yuditz, asking for tolerance.

The Socialist Party is no good, Trachtenberg declared, saying he is a member of the party. He said that the party betrayed the glorious principles of the St. Louis manifesto, and that it has been busy selling out Socialism for several years.

"What did you say in the Senate?" a number of delegates cried.

The reference was to Trachtenberg's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when, in advocating the resumption of trade relations with Russia, he said, according to the minutes as printed in *The Call*, that he was against the establishment of a Soviet regime in the United States.

Record is Open Book.

When the excitement died down a bit, Trachtenberg shouted that his record in the party is an open book and that he stands by everything he ever said in the party and in the Senate committee room.

"Max Pine said yesterday," he said in his conclusion, "that if the machinery breaks down, fix it up. But you can't fix up the Socialist Party machinery. It's

a lot of junk. It's rotten."

Salutsky said that he wasn't going to indulge in personalities and then made personal attacks upon Vladimir Medim, Alexander Kahn, Julius Gerber (*The Call's* representative at the convention), Abraham Beckerman, Morris Hillquit, Otto Branstetter, and John Hagel of the *Oklahoma Leader*.

Salutsky attacked the Socialist Party because some of its members had supported the war.

"However," said the speaker, "prior to the Chicago Convention of 1919, the errors of the Socialist Party had been errors of omission. Since then, they have been errors of commission, beginning with the defense of the Socialist Assemblymen at Albany, when Morris Hillquit said that the Socialists would take up arms to prevent the establishment of a Soviet in the United States."

N. Chanin of the Bronx, a former chairman of the United Hebrew Trades, and a leader in the Cap Makers' Union, was selected to lead off for the party.

"There is little use to talk now," he said, "in the face of the crazy hysteria that prevails these days."

Charges Fraud by Delegates.

"You will notice that 2/3rds of Salutsky's speech was devoted to criticism. Criticism is the specialty of the Federation officials. The Federation officials eagerly wait for errors and blunders of the party to give them something to talk about. This convention is a fraud. Your delegates are seated as a result of fraud.

"If you are so revolutionary, why is it, Comrade Salutsky, that you wrote a letter in 1918 to President Wilson, asking him why he barred such a loyal paper as the one you were editing [*Naye Welt*] from the mails?"

"The Federation was never a friendly portion of the movement. It long ago lost all influence in the movement. What do you want now? Is it that you want a revolution and Branstetter won't let you have a revolution? If you are so anxious for action, act. In West Virginia things are happening, and the schoolmasters are sitting around here and discussing.

"It is more of an honor to stand with even a conservative portion of the working class, if that section does something for the working class, than to be with a lot of phrasemongers in a hall."

Morris Winchevsky evoked a storm of applause

and cheering from the packed galleries when he said:

“I am a Communist. I am going out of the party. I am writing now for the best Communist paper in New York, the *Volkszeitung*. I would unhesitatingly advocate going into the Communist Party, but I am a little doubtful about the secret and illegal work required. My one regret is that I will be unable to remain with the Forward Association and celebrate the 25th anniversary of the *Forward* next spring. With me there is one question — Lenin or Hillquit?”

Leaders are Denounced.

Alexander Kahn assailed the Federation leadership, saying that they were ignorant of American conditions and that they responded, not to Socialist feeling, but to nationalist feeling.

Dr. M.J. Olgin summed up for the bolting faction. He ended with a plea for the building up of a powerful Jewish party in the United States.

Samuel P. Kramer, of Chicago, closing for the party's side, said:

“The Federation says that the party is doing nothing. What is the Federation doing? The Federation says that the party is not big enough. The way to cure that is to make the party big and strong, to build it up, to set it right, to get back of it and make it the influence that it should be.

“The Federation thinks that the party is wrong. The Federation had a delegate to the New York Convention [May 8-14, 1920]. He wasn't there. He didn't

show up to set the convention right, to tell the delegates what to do about it. He had a seat, but he didn't occupy it.

“At the Detroit Convention [June 25-29, 1921], the delegate from the Jewish Federation wasn't there. At the first day, when the big debate was on the Communist International, the delegate didn't show up to say what the party should do. Only on the second day did the Federation send a telegram and say that they couldn't get the delegate there on time. They have no right to condemn the party for its errors when they did not take the trouble to be present and have their say.

Urges Support for Party.

“Let us all get into the party and build it up; let us all make it strong and great and powerful, so that the party will have its proper influence in American life.”

Louis Schaffer of Chicago was permitted to make a personal statement. He said that he felt that the party was remiss in its duty, and that it was not doing what it should.

“But I am opposed to going out of the party,” he said. “Salutsky has been talking about marriages. The party is not my wife, it is my stepmother. But my real bride is the Jewish labor movement, and the Federation is not close to that movement. The party will be made close to that movement. That is why I am voting to remain in the party.”

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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