
Report of the Jewish Alliance.

Delivered to the National Convention of the Socialist Party, New York — May 19-22, 1923.

by Alexander Kahn

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Regarding the JSV [Jewish Socialist Verband of the Socialist Party], I am in a position to report very gratifying progress. In reporting on the progress made by our organization it is necessary to give you a brief review of events since the last National Convention of the Socialist Party [Cleveland: April 29-May 2, 1922].

At the last convention I had the honor to report that the JSV had just organized; that the JSF, the former Jewish Socialist Federation, fell into the hands of a group which was not sincere enough to withstand the crisis in the Socialist Party, and not foolish nor mad enough to join the Communists. By every device known to the political trickster they packed the convention [New York: Sept. 1921] and our comrades who were loyal to the SP abandoned that convention and organized the JSV. The others had control of the National Office [of the JSF], the weekly party newspaper, the literature, and the membership rolls. Of course, they also confiscated the debts of the National Office, and the deficit. All we had left was a majority of the membership but in an unorganized condition. We had a very valuable asset, but it was in the form of raw material that required a tremendous amount of labor to weld it into an effective Socialist organization.

That group that seceded from the SP had very large ambitions, and a larger appetite. They captured the JSF; their next move was to capture the *Jewish Daily Forward* and then capture all the Jewish trade unions. There was no intention at that time to deliver the same immediately to Moscow. The intention was to use it for domestic consumption.

But when they started to do it they discovered that neither *The Forward*, the trade unions, nor any part of the Jewish Socialist and trade union movement

consented to be captured. Realizing that they were too insignificant and too clumsy to impress anybody themselves, they combined with the Communists. Having no desire to build and strengthen the labor and socialist movement they began a campaign to destroy it. Every socialist and labor institution was attacked jointly and severally. They tried to undermine every Labor Lyceum of the chain that has been built up in all large cities by heroic sacrifice of 30 years. They tried to break up the Workmen's Circle, a benevolent and cultural institution that has a membership of 90,000; they tried to break up all the Jewish trade unions that were built up by the pioneer Jewish Socialists in America.

But every move that they made was anticipated and checked by the Jewish Socialist Verband with the help of the trade unions and the Workmen's Circle. The danger was greater than any one of us estimated. We figured on a fight with men who, we thought, had the labor movement at heart and would not do anything to break it up, but we found out that breaking it up was their first objective. We figured on a fight with Socialists who were sincere, we found out that they were the lowest kind of demagogues. The industrial crisis is well known to you. Tens of thousands of Jewish workmen were idle and suffering and these men have utilized the suffering of these men and directed the wrath of the workmen against their organizations by holding up to them false hopes of an immediate social revolution, which would bring about a paradise worked by the miracles of the saints in the Kremlin. They have succeeded for a short time in bringing in, if not chaos, at least indifference in the labor and socialist movement here.

But we stuck to our job, and by untiring and

consistent effort we have actually demolished them, and every remnant of their influence.

There was a time when some of the unions found it convenient to stand on the fence and reserve the right to jump on either side, but that time is passed. At the last convention of the JSV, every Jewish trade union was represented by fraternal delegates.

Our weekly paper, *Der Wecker* [The Awakener], flies like a steel arrow, directly, not only on every question of socialist policy, but to the house of every officer, organizer, manager, or assistant in the trade union movement. When a fellow does not subscribe for it (which seldom happens) someone else pays for his subscription and he gets it regularly every week. We have sent out from 6,000 to 10,000 every week. *Der Wecker* is an excellent socialist weekly, containing regularly 24 pages.

We have translated [into Yiddish] and are circulating Hillquit's *From Marx to Lenin* and Oneal's *History of the Socialist Movement*, and they are being sold in thousands.

The party membership is not large, we have about 800 members, and when we organized we had only 250. But our strength cannot be judged by this. Our organization is very similar to the Independent Labour Party in England. As compared to the rest of the movement the membership is small. But nothing

is done in the Jewish labor movement without the cooperation or leadership of the Verband.

The Jewish Daily Forward, the United Hebrew Trades, and all the unions severally, the Workmen's Circles, all work together now for the common aim, the Socialist Cooperative Commonwealth.

There is one thing I will touch on before I close. The East Side was for a number of years represented by Meyer London in Congress and in the state legislature, and in the NY Municipal Council; this year we have no representatives whatever. This is due not only to the indifference that existed because of the factional fights, but it is also due to the fact that every time we elect a man in a district, the district is gerrymandered.

When London ran last year he found himself a candidate for Congress from Chinatown. The only successful League of Nations exists in London's district now. There is a little of the Italian district, a little of the Greek, Syrian, Turkish, Irish, and Jewish.

We have given up most of our time the last few years in putting our house in order. We are through with this, and I can assure you that before long you will hear again of political successes in our districts.

Faternally submitted,

Alexander Kahn.

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