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DIE ZUKUNFT : 1892-1905

A Study of the Early Jewish Socialist
Movement of the U.S.A.

by

Bernard H. Bloom.

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Master of Arts and Hebrew Letters
Degree and Ordination.

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PREFACE

In examining the early years of the Jewish Socialist movement in America, we have the opportunity to study the workings of an institution, which, despite its own particular purposes and problems, may still be regarded as typical. What we see taking place in the span of a single generation is the transformation of one movement, with a given ideology, purpose, and program, into something quite different, yet retaining the same name, personnel, and format. We observe the roles played by individual leaders, the jockeying for positions of authority, the schisms based upon ideals and the realignments based upon convenience.

The Russian Jewish Socialists who arrived in the United States in the early 1880's were a small group of theoretical Marxists. In Russia the whole program of the Socialist movement was the hastening of the social revolution. This was carried on underground by a relatively small number of individuals. Jewish participation in this movement was due originally to the Russian Jews' conviction that only with the overthrow of the Czarist government could Jewish emancipation be achieved. The Jewish Socialists were intellectuals, atheists, and assimilations, who as they became more active in the affairs of the Russian party, increasingly lost touch with and interest in Russian Jewry.

Forced to flee, these men came to America, where they found things considerably different. The Socialist movement which they encountered was not a single unit in which they could participate as they had done in Russia. The movement was one consisting largely of refugees from other countries, and essentially organized on the basis of national groupings. Thus these Russian cosmopolitans were required to make a first concession to their ideals by working as a separate Jewish group on a par with national groups. Their only link to the Jewish immigrants was the Yiddish language.

It was this frail link which ultimately became the *raison d'être* of the Jewish Socialists. Their theoretical Marxism came to grief in the traumatic attempts made to implement in American politics and the labor movement. The Socialist movement in America became native in both composition and interests. Finally the influx of immigrants with the diaspora-nationalistic approach to Socialism overwhelmed the previous cosmopolitans, and they conceded here too. By 1905 the former political movement became essentially a literary movement, retreating into the last citadel -- the Yiddish language. Of the original assimilationist Marxists there was no more: in their place was a number of constantly bickering individuals, intent on dominating some tiny aspect of American Jewish life.

1: The Origins of American Jewish Socialism

In January of 1892 a new magazine appeared on the news stands of New York's Jewish East Side. On its cover was portrayed a young woman clad in classical style, holding in her left hand a flaming torch, and in her right, two tablets with Hebrew lettering. They did not spell out the ancient commandments of the ancient faith, but rather the new single command of the prophet of scientific Socialism; "Workers of all lands, unite!". Her torch was dispelling darkness, and by its light could be seen the motto "labor omnia vincit" over her head, instruments of the arts and sciences at her feet, and before her the following lines:

The
ZUKUNFT*

a scientific socialist monthly
published
by the
Yiddish speaking sections, S.L.P.
of
America.

The Socialist Labor Party was following up its successful weekly venture, by publishing a Yiddish language monthly.

Its statement of purpose, appearing on page one and facing a portrait of a benign Karl Marx, is deserving of some attention.

Our program may actually be expressed in three words: we are Social-Democrats.

What this implies, . . . we shall explain more

* "Zukunft" means "future".

thoroughly and explicitly in the "Zukunft", if the loyalty and activity of our comrades and sympathizers enable us to have a "zukunft". [Note the play on the word "zukunft", meaning both the name of the magazine, and "future".]

We say quite frankly, and we do not wish to conceal the fact from anyone, that we are beginning to publish a scientific magazine in Jargon [sic! i.e. Yiddish] -- something new in the meager literature of Jargon -- but still an experiment. The Jewish labor movement is growing very rapidly, and is developing such workers who want to study the social question of our time thoroughly, and especially, to educate themselves; unfortunately, they have been unable to accomplish this, since until recently, only buffonery and old-wives' tales were being written in Jargon, and they are not at all acquainted with other languages, or only so slightly that they are unable to understand a book or a serious article. It is for these serious workers who desire knowledge and want to become educated that we publish the "Zukunft".

The "Zukunft" is not merely a Socialist organ in the narrow sense of the word, but a journal of general education. . . . We also want [the workman] to understand well how humanity arrived at its present level, how it lived formerly, and how it has developed. . . . In addition to scientific articles in pure mother-tongue concerning various important questions, we will also publish stories, poems, and reviews on the arts; for we hold that the arts educate and ennoble the person, and it is our wish to combine, so to say, "business with pleasure". . . . Inasmuch as pure knowledge is not a partisan matter, the "Zukunft" cordially invites the co-operation of everyone who is in a position to write something from which the readers may learn something, or derive aesthetic pleasure. (1)

This opening statement of purpose is quite clear and explicit. Yet it is not in this formal program that we find its *raison d'être* best described in the first number of the "Zukunft". Because of even greater moment than the question,

"Why should Jewish Socialists publish such a magazine?", is the question, "Why should there be Jewish Socialists?". In describing the conditions which existed among the Jewish immigrants, the important role occupied by the radical elements, both Anarchist and Socialist, ~~should not only be noted,~~ but explained. That these radical elements were to be found in an immigrant group is not unusual: other groups -- the Polish, Italian, German, Russian, et. al. -- also included these expatriates, either forced or voluntary. It was in the Jewish group that this small nucleus seems to have exerted an influence far greater than its numerical proportion might warrant, an influence which was strong in its own and in the following generation.

The "Zukunft" in its opening issue does not give a formal presentation of the "why" of the movement. This is to be found, not in a scholarly, scientific article, but in the literary selection which they included, Jacob Gordin's "The Floating Coffin". (2) This is a sketch -- a "fantasy" as Gordin calls it -- of an immigrant ship, one of those crowded freighters converted for the lucrative immigrant trade. One of its passengers, a Jew, is on the point of death -- a young man, respected and beloved by his fellow passengers. He dies, and amidst mourning and weeping, his coffin is cast into the ocean. And as the ship continues on its way, the coffin can be seen, bobbing and dipping in the waves, floating. . . .

The author tells of the the young man's history:

He was still quite young when he devoted himself with all his soul, to the sciences which explain the meaning of society, of wealth and capital, and what true justice demands. He lived only for the bright ideals of the future, and for this future he sacrificed everything for which the average person strives in everyday life. He was a Jew, yet his god was the Russian people, and upon the altar of this god he was prepared at every moment to place his head as an offering. Russia was his beloved, at her feet he threw his noble and loving heart, to her he swore to be eternally true....

And what happened with him was exactly the same as that which all his comrades encountered: he went to the people...he spoke of love, and experienced the brutality of police and jail-keepers; he campaigned for his "little brother", for the Russian peasant, and it was his "little brother" who himself bound his hands and turned him over to the authorities.... Frosty Siberia, gloomy cells, heavy chains, humiliation, beatings, torture, none could tear him away from his ideals,... "beloved Russia" was his fatherland, and he lived only to serve her....

Years passed, and he was brought back to the Russian town where he was born and raised.... Everything was strange to him; he stood far removed from the Jewish people...his fellow-Jews could not understand him, nor could he understand them.... He wanted to become a teacher and to share his knowledge with his blind people; but he was not permitted this, because he was regarded as an unruly and dangerous person, who would tell the common folk more than the government allows.... He tried to serve the Russian people with his pen...but the censor persecuted him....

Then the most terrible time began in his dear fatherland. Alexander the Third raised his despotic hand, and his vile slaves began to extinguish every light... On all sides there were voices: Back! Back! Extinguish the fire! We want to remain in darkness!...

Suddenly they began to tell him something new. "Russia", they told him, "is not your fatherland at all; the Russian people is none of your concern; you are a dirty Jew and you may clear out!... This was told to him by the representatives of the Russian people, and they declared it starkly and brutally.... Every day he was beaten as a man, as a citizen, as a Jew... he who had fought for humanity.... he who had held

aloft the principles of the free citizen....he who had been ready to die for justice....In vain he waited for someone to speak on his behalf, for even one person to be found who would raise his voice and speak a true word -- the scholars, the writers, the universities, the academies, all remained silent, or even worse, they also shouted, together with all of the vile crowd: hep! hep!...

Embittered, sick with a broken heart, torn nerves, and exhausted energy, he left his beloved Russia, bade farewell to his dear fatherland, parted from the people from whom he had suffered so much, whose language was his mother tongue, whose thoughts were his own thoughts, whom he had formerly treasured, whom he had loved, who had been his pride and joy, everything that he had borne and endured, all was snatched from him at once....

The plight of the Russian Jews was indeed a miserable one. Their tragic roles of scapegoat and whipping-boy in the period of Russian feudal decline, were made even more unbearable by the completely opposite state of the emancipated Jews of Western Europe. The civil, economic and political freedoms which his Western brethren enjoyed, were the envy and hope of every Russian Jew -- of all, that is, except those Jews who were irrevocably bound up with the Jewish religious institution, and to whose power in the Jewish community, emancipation constituted a mortal threat.

Russian Jewry saw what had happened to Western Jewry under emancipation, the acquisition of their neighbours' language and manner of dress, the acceptance of secular education, participation in the letters, arts and sciences, religious reform, ----and Russian Jewry proceeded to reverse the law of cause and effect. Failing to recognize Jewish

emancipation as the outcome of the bourgeois revolution, and all of these traits that they admired as the outcome of that emancipation, **the** leaders of the Russian Jews had urged their people to emulate these traits, and thereby win emancipation for themselves. In this they were abetted by the government, who continually insisted that the vicious discriminations and persecutions which it visited upon the Jews was only because they refused to improve themselves and become Russified.

During the middle of the nineteenth century the Russian government did indeed set up a system of "Crown schools" for its Jews, two rabbinical seminaries in Vilna and Zhitomir, and teachers' institutes. Dr. Max Lilienthal, a German Reform rabbi then in Riga, was commissioned by the government to organize these projects, and to go about Russia enlisting Jewish support and compliance. Lilienthal, after expending much energy, became disillusioned with the benevolent intentions of the government, resigned, and eventually ended up as rabbi of Bene Israel Congregation, Cincinnati.

The leaders of Russian Jewry chose to retain their illusions, and agitated constantly for widespread Russification. There were even champions for religious reform. Moses Leib Lilienblum, later to become an exponent, first,

of Chibas Zion, and then of political Zionism, came out, in the 1860's, with the idea of an evolving Judaism, reformed to meet the needs of the time. As late as 1881 there was founded in Yelisavetgrad a group called "The Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood", whose members "denied all religious dogmas and ceremonies, and acknowledged only the moral doctrines of the Bible, they condemned all mercantile pursuits, and endeavoured to live by physical labor, primarily by agriculture".⁽³⁾ Two weeks later a pogrom broke out in that community. The founder of the "Brotherhood" was Jacob Gordin, who was to make a name for himself later in America as a dramatist and author.*

The attempt of the Russian Jews to achieve emancipation by adapting their clothing, speech, education, livelihoods and religion was foredoomed to failure, and the sign of this failure was the Odessa pogrom of 1871. Even in the "Society for the Diffusion of Enlightenment amongst the Jews" they spoke of "losing heart and becoming rather doubtful as to whether the goal pursued by them is in reality a good one, seeing that all the endeavours of our brethren to draw nearer to the Russians are of no avail so long as the Russian masses remain in their present unenlightened condition and harbor hostile sentiments towards the Jews".⁽⁴⁾

* It is Jacob Gordin who wrote the literary sketch "The Floating Coffin" referred to on pages 3ff.

It was a thinly concealed secret that pogroms were now a part of official Czarist policy, to be used as a means of distracting the attention of Russian intellectuals and masses alike from pressing for civil and political reforms. The onset of the pogroms of the 1870's and '80's meant that those Russian Jews, who had hoped and worked for a Jewish emancipation in the Western style, had now reached a dead end.

For those Jews who still yearned to achieve a life in which they could enjoy full civil and religious freedom, two possible lines of action emerged: to stay in Russia and continue to fight, or to give up the unequal struggle and leave the country. Emigration, almost entirely to the United States, was the salvation conceived of and attained by two millions ultimately. Also conceived at this time as the answer to Russian nationalism, was Jewish nationalism --- Zionism. At this time, in the pogrom years, Zionism was almost entirely a matter of sentiment and emotion, except for those very few who, like the "Bilu" group, founded in 1882, actually went to Palestine to colonize. Accused by their attackers of being a "foreign nation", many finally accepted the accusation, as was mentioned in the case of Lilienblum.

This new trend did not go unchallenged:

Our zealous progressives, who were burning on behalf of education, flaming on behalf of assimilation, and of integrating with the non-Jews --- who had rejected and spurned fanaticism, who on the contrary, had cleansed minds of vile chauvinism, --- who had preached and propagandized humanistic ideas, these burning, zealous progressives, gradually vanished from the scene, gradually became fearsome reactionaries.....A new creature has been born, and it has been given the name of "nationalism"....

The reaction...began with the pogroms. In the camp of the "onward-ers" (onward! forward! was the motto of the progressives) there was considerable confusion. Fancy! So much energy expended in propaganda on behalf of Brotherhood, so much heartache in order to arouse feelings of love in the peasant, and after all was said and done, what came of it? The same peasant comes and knocks out all my teeth! The pain was too great, the shame too intense, to permit an objective examination of how this came about. After some slight thinking, they put the blame on education.... Immediately there began an attack on Haskalah, on enlightenment.(5)

This attack on the nationalist deviation which some of the enlightened were beginning to follow, is typical of the attitude of those who insisted on continuing the struggle for equality, albeit with new ideological weapons. The new generation of graduates from the Czar's rabbinical and teachers' institutes joined in the "Populist" movement then current, which involved carrying the message of revolution directly to the Russian peasants and workmen. Their participation in this utopian Socialist movement was more academic than actual, and was an expression of their own cosmopolitan weltanschauung, despite the strong^{Russian} nationalist tendency of this "Populism".

More Jewishly Socialist was an attempt made in Vilna in the early '70's to form a Jewish revolutionary society. Its leader was Arthur Lieberman, and its membership consisted largely of students of the rabbinical seminary and teachers' institute. Although the police dispersed this group in 1875, causing Lieberman to flee, some influence of this attempt at coupling Socialism with Judaism remained. Among those influenced by this Jewishly oriented Socialism was Morris Winchevsky of Koenigsberg.

Vilna also saw the beginnings of a Jewish Socialist labor movement in the late '80's, which spread into the growing cities of Bialystock, Smorgon, Warsaw and Lodz during the '90's. This movement which was primarily concerned with achieving ^{rights} for these organized Jewish workers, bore from its origin a more distinctly Jewish aspect than did the political and revolutionary Jewish Socialism which antedated it. As Dubnow remarks:

In Russia itself the Jewish revolutionaries were heart and soul devoted to the cause. The children of the ghetto displayed considerable heroism and self-sacrifice in the revolutionary upheaval of the seventies. Jews figured in all important political trials and public manifestations; they languished in the jails, and suffered as exiles in Siberia. But this idealistic fight for general freedom lacked a Jewish note. (6)

This second deviation followed by disillusioned would-be emancipators, the way of revolution, made admirable sense to its adherents. As noted previously (page 7), it was generally accepted that the old way of seeking Jewish rights through auto-Russification and appeals to the Czar's generosity, was "of no avail so long as the Russian masses remain in their present unenlightened condition and harbor hostile sentiments towards the Jews". The attitude of both emigrants and Zionists was that this "condition" of the Russian masses displayed every symptom of permanence, or at least of a sufficiently drawn out temporary nature, to make departure advisable. Socialist-Zionists felt that if they were to spend forty years in the desert, then it might at least be their own. The revolutionaries still held out for the redemption of Russia. The days of fraternization with their Russian peers were still too near, the anguish and effort already exerted too dear to be easily repudiated. Whether Anarchist or Socialist, the Jew of this variety attributed -- and correctly so -- the long years of Jewish woes, and also the recent outrages, to the Czarist regime. If the government were to be replaced, and no longer did parliamentary means seem capable of achieving this, then no longer need

anti-semitism be a part of the scheme of things. Simple bourgeois, philosophical or violent Anarchist, utopian or scientific Socialist, each variety of revolutionist was in agreement with the prime goal of uprooting the present system of autocracy and persecution.

Thus did it come about that there were Jewish Socialists. And in the normal functioning of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary plots and intrigues, it also came about that there were Jewish Socialist exiles and fugitives in New York City.

2: A Survey of American Jewish Socialism, 1880 - 1905.

The onset of pogroms in 1871 marked the beginning also of heavy immigration by Russian Jews ^{into} the United States.--- or more precisely, to New York City's East Side. Technology had played an important role in their coming to America, in that cheap steamship transportation had just come about, and technology continued to influence their lives on their arrival. Waiting for them as they disembarked was a new invention -- the sewing machine, and soon the majority of these immigrants were to be found in the "needle trade".

Very few of these Jews were radicals. Those who were ^{radicals} were generally fugitives from the Czar's police, and at first must have felt completely at a loss to know what to do with their imported isms. The environment which had served as the mold in which their political ideologies had been shaped was no longer theirs. They had become revolutionaries, not as the result of abstract philosophizing, but through confronting a very real situation. Now that they were removed from that situation, what could they do with the ideologies that they had assumed?

They readily located two areas in which they could operate --- politics and unionism. Just as their non-political

fellow immigrants were forming societies of individuals who came from the same locality, the "landsmanshaften", so did these intellectuals form Jewish radical clubs. As a replacement for their former goal of redeeming Russia through revolution, they seized upon that of redeeming their exploited Jewish brethren through unionization. The 1870's were years of acclimatization, and root-formation, and nothing visible was accomplished, beyond sporadic strikes and constantly increasing propagandizing and agitation.

In 1881 the old American Socialist Party split. It had been a rather broad grouping of Anarchists, Syndicalists, and Socialists, and a crisis was finally reached with the question of political activity. The Anarchists and Syndicalists refused to participate in the workings of the capitalist political system, and insisted on focussing all energy upon preparing for the social revolution. The Socialists emerged as the moderate faction, and organized the Socialist Labor Party (SLP).

Meanwhile the Jewish Socialists had been going their own way, by and large, and by 1885 had done much to assist in the formation of the "Yiddisher Arbeiter Farein" * ("Jewish Workmen's Union"). Workers of various trades were represented, and high in their program stood the proposal of founding a radical Yiddish newspaper. The union campaigned

* Yiddish names and titles will appear in transliteration, and will generally follow English rather than German practice in the pronunciation of letters.

vigorously for Henry George in the New York municipal elections of 1886, and this effort must have taxed its energies, for it shortly after disintegrated.

These events must have convinced the Jewish Socialists that they were in no position to undertake political, union, or journalistic action on their own. In 1887 there were formed two Jewish branches in the SLP --- one Yiddish-speaking, and one Russian-speaking, for those Russian Jewish Socialists who either could not, or preferred not to speak Yiddish. In 1888 with the assistance of the SLP, and using the United German Trades union for a model, these branches succeeded in organizing the United Hebrew Trades (UHT). The leaders in this undertaking were Abraham Cahan and Morris Hilkovitz -- soon to become more widely known as Morris Hillquit.

In 1889 a second schism occurred in the Socialist ranks, this time on the question of unions. The New York section, under Daniel DeLeon, held out for working within existing unions, since the old guild-like Knights of Labor was quickly declining, and the newly formed (1886) American Federation of Labor seemed to be a convenient agency in which to demonstrate the doctrine of "boring from within". The SLP nationally under such leaders as Eugene Debs favored the founding of new militant unions. DeLeon retained the SLP name, and it was to this more moderate faction that the Jewish

Socialists adhered.

DeLeon soon gave up hope of capturing the "pure and simple" unions of the AFofL, which its founder, Samuel Gompers, insisted on keeping clean of any and all political party intrigues. He therefore organized the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance, and the UHT was made a part of this. (1895). DeLeon's increasingly autocratic and doctrinaire policies did not sit well with those moderates who had chosen to go his way rather than Debs' in the schism of '89 on just such a matter^{of} practicality. Many believed that a strong union movement, albeit non-Socialist, in the present was more important than some future Socialist-dominated union movement. Dissatisfaction grew, and finally in 1900, Hillquit and Cahan left the SLP, and brought the UHT into the AFofL. A year later Hillquit was instrumental in bringing the large group of SLP dissidents together with Debs' and Victor Berger's Social Democratic Party. From this fusion emerged the new Socialist Party.

This then, was the environment in^{to} which the immigrant Russian Jew arrived, and into whose political and union activity he found himself plunged. He was the target of several factions who laid claim to his loyalty, and ^{it} is in this campaign that Yiddish Socialist journalism was brought into being, both to proselytize and to educate.

3: The Origins of the Yiddish Socialist Press

Foremost in the projects of Jewish radicals of various varieties was the formation of a Yiddish press. Their motivation was twofold, at the same time selfish and altruistic. Having a Yiddish language organ was a distinct advantage in winning over converts from the constant influx of immigrants. Furthermore there was the non-partisan hope of publishing informational and educational material attractively, so as to win readers away from the apolitical Yiddish papers, who were patterning their style of journalism after the lurid English-language daily papers of the day. The policy of bringing about an enlightened and emancipated Jewry was one which the émigré radicals had always held as a duty and responsibility, and now there was emerging the possibility of fulfilling this responsibility through the medium of journalism.

As we have seen, there had been hopes during the short existence of the "Yiddisher Arbeiter Farein" to publish a Yiddish labor newspaper, in 1885. It was not until 1889 that such a paper finally appeared. This was a weekly published by an Anarchist group, entitled "Die Varheit" ("Truth").

This endeavour lasted from February until July. The failure of "Die Varheit" at this time prompted the Anarchists to propose to the Socialists that together, in partnership, the two factions should undertake the publication of a labor journal. After many conferences, the Socialists succeeded in narrowly defeating this proposal, since Anarchism was at its peak of esteem, and if they were to participate in such a mutual effort, they, the Socialists, knew that they would be hindering the elimination of their ideological competitor.

So it was that 1890 saw the appearance of two weeklies : the Socialists' "Arbeiter Zeitung" ("Workmen's Newspaper"), and the Anarchists' "Die Freie Arbeiter Shtimme" ("The Workmen's Free Voice"). (Even with the steady decline of Anarchism from that time on, this journal continued to survive, and is still being published.) The Socialist movement continued to grow, and ⁱⁿ 1894 it felt itself strong enough to venture into the field of the daily newspaper, with the publication of "Dos Abend-Blatt" ("The Evening Journal").

The growing conflict within the SLP concerning DeLeon's policies began to manifest itself also in the Jewish press. Both the "Arbeiter Zeitung" and the "Abend-Blatt" were operated by "Arbeiter Zeitung Publishing

Association", a strongly DeLeonist group, whose opponents accused it of being a closed corporation. Finally in 1897 this opposition formally split from the SLP, and began the publication^{of} "Der Forverts" ("Forward"), which immediately started to play a significant role in American Jewish life. (This significance is attested to by the fact that the "Forverts" is still in existence as a daily publication.)

At this point it would be well to take a closer, more personal look, at the individuals who were the motivating forces behind the various currents and counter-currents already described. Political movements, labor organizations, publications, no matter how much of an abstract institutional existence they may have, are still made up of men. And it is these men whose ideals and ambitions found expression in the tumultuous movements and conflicts of those decades.

Philip Krantz (real name Jacob Rombro) was the first editor of the "Arbeiter Zeitung". He had received his early education at the Zhitomir Yeshiva, one of the two "reformed" rabbinical institutes which the Russian government had opened during one of its more enlightened moments, for the purpose of training Russianized rabbis and teachers, in the ultimate hope of eliminating the traditional "rovs" and "melameds". Following high school, yeshivas and their "Crown schools" as implements in

* Morris Winchevsky was his tutor.

Krantz attended the St. Petersburg Institute of Technology, where he came to excel in an area not in the curriculum -- radicalism. He spent 1877 in prison, and following the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 by a terrorist group with which he had been associated, he fled to Paris, where he wrote for Russian émigré publications, and took part in political propaganda among Jewish workers. Krantz went to London in 1883, where, after mastering Yiddish,* he became the editor (1885) of the world's first Yiddish Socialist newspaper, "Der Arbeiter Freind" ("The Workmen's Friend"). When it was decided to publish the "Arbeiter Zeitung" in 1890, Krantz was invited to come to New York to be its editor.

Philip Krantz represented, at this time, the extremely radical Russified Jew. Judaism meant nothing more to him than the orthodoxy which he held only ⁱⁿ contempt, and which he attacked both in word and in deed -- as in blatant participation in Yom Kippur balls. He was candidly an assimilationist, and was interested in Jews only as an oppressed class.

Abraham Cahan's early career resembles Krantz's. He attended and graduated from the Teachers' Institute of Vilna, one of two such schools retained by the Russian government after their disenchantment with their two yeshivas and their "Crown schools" as implements in

* Morris Winchevsky was his tutor.

Russifying the Jews. His teaching career lasted ~~one~~ year, for in 1882 his revolutionary avocation brought him to the attention of the police, and he escaped to New York. By training and inclination he was much closer to the Jewish immigrants than was Krantz, and it was empathy as much as political conviction that moved him to work with them to improve their lot through unionization. Using Yiddish as his means of communication and propaganda, he soon became an outstanding publicist. He took a prominent part in the "Arbeiter Zeitung" and "Abend-Blatt", and as one of the leaders of the anti-DeLeon moderates, organized and became the first editor of the "Forverts" in 1897.

Cahan's heart and soul were always with his Jewish brothers, and he identified equally as a Jew and as a Socialist. It was he who at the International Socialist Congress at Brussels in 1893 raised the question of the movement's attitude towards the Jewish question. In addition to his journalism, Cahan also wrote novels and serious works, both in Yiddish and in English.

Associated with Cahan in the organization of the "Arbeiter Zeitung" was Louis Bāndes, whose pen name was Louis Miller. Born in Vilna, he too was forced to emigrate because of revolutionary activities, and arrived in New York in 1886 by way of Switzerland. Working in a

factory by day and studying law by night, Bandes was still able to rise to a position of leadership in the labor movement of his day, and in the founding of its newspapers. In the ensuing cleavage in the SLP, he sided with the moderates. He was in Berlin, studying medicine in the mid-1890's, and was recalled to attempt to effect a truce between the warring factions. Following the schism, he joined with Cahan in organizing the "Forverts". However he balked at Cahan's appointment as editor, and withdrew from this undertaking. From that time on his role in central party affairs dwindled.

The third member of the triumvirate which organized the "Arbeiter Zeitung" was Morris Hillquit (nee Hilkovitz). Born in Riga to a German speaking family, and receiving a Russian Gymnasium education, he was poorly equipped to fit into the Jewish life of New York City, to which his family emigrated in 1887 when he was seventeen. He was quickly converted to Socialism in the tenement roof-top academies, and was a charter member of the Russian-speaking Jewish branch of the SLP. He describes these days in his autobiography⁽¹⁾:

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"We resolved to undertake the task of bettering the lives of our laboring countrymen, of educating them to a realization of their human rights, of organizing them for resistance to their exploiters, and of securing for them tolerable conditions of labor and life. It was a task beset with baffling difficulties,.... .

Worst of all we did not speak their language, both figuratively and literally. Our language was Russian. The workers spoke Yiddish, a corrupted German dialect with several provincial variations. Few of us knew Yiddish well enough to embark on a campaign of propaganda. The only one among us who could speak Yiddish and did it fluently, lovingly, and artistically was Abraham Cahan. . . . We all began perfecting our Yiddish."

He and Cahan worked together in 1888 to form the UHT, and both with Louis Miller to found the "Arbeiter Zeitung" in 1890. Hillquit was with the moderates in the SLP schism, and played an important role in the founding of the SP in 1901. He was called to the bar in 1893, and from that time on his career became the means whereby he became increasingly more active in Socialist affairs at large, while his Jewish activities lessened.

One of the outstanding contributors to the infant Socialist press was Benjamin Feigenbaum. He left his native Poland at the age of twenty, in 1880 or thereabouts, and participated in Socialist journalism in Belgium, and then England. Here he propagandized and organized the Jewish immigrant workers of the provincial cities, and also contributed to the New York "Arbeiter Zeitung". In 1891 Feigenbaum came to New York, and was active in the various Socialist publications. After the "Forverts" was founded, he joined its staff, and remained with that paper until he retired.

Basic to Feigenbaum's Socialist propaganda among the Jews was his anti-religious agitation. He was very well versed in traditional Judaism, and was able to cite imposingly in stating his case against the Jewish religion. He was instrumental in founding the Socialist fraternal organization, "Der Arbeiter Ring" --"The Workmen's Circle"--, which was to play an important role in the evolving life of Jewry, not only in New York City, but in every community of Jewish workers throughout the continent.

In 1894, Morris Winchevsky arrived in the United States to continue in his career as publicist and poet. While yet in his early twenties, in 1878, he had published in Koenigsberg a Hebrew Socialist magazine, "Asefat Chachamim"---"The Assembly of Wise Men". After being expelled from the Czar's territories, he went to England where he became editor of "Der Poylishe Idl" ("The Polish Jew"). In 1894 he came over from London to take an active role in Yiddish Socialist journalism, with those papers to whom he had been sending articles while yet in England. He became the editor of a new SLP organ, the Boston "Emes" ("Truth"), in 1895.

His arrival in New York was almost co-incident with that storm which had broken in Jewish SLP circles over the control of "Arbeiter Zeitung" and "Abend-Blatt" policy. Winchevsky sided with the Cahan faction, and was

elected to the position of co-editor of the "Zeitung" by a dissident meeting of Jewish SLP organizations. The SLP executive refused to recognize his "election", and in fact discontinued the publication of the "Emes". Winchevsky's chief contribution to Jewish life lay in his literary and poetic ability. While still considering himself to be purely a Socialist who used the Yiddish language for conveying his message to Yiddish speaking people, he gradually became a "diaspora-nationalist".

These, then, are but a very few of the individuals to whom the recurring crises in the Socialist parties and press were their prime concern. These were some of the creators of the Yiddish press in America.

4: The Origins of the General Yiddish Press

Still another digression is necessary before we may return to the "Zukunft", that magazine whose cover attracted us on page one, and whose contents beneath that cover constitute the principal field of investigation of this work. This digression is necessary because, having established the reasons for the existence of Jewish Socialists in New York City, and of their founding a Yiddish press, it is now apropos to examine the general Yiddish press of New York, of which the Socialist publications became a part, and the general Jewish milieu which called it into being.

Considerable Jewish emigration from Russia, and Rumania and Galicia as well, began in the early 1870's. This early flow filtered gradually into the United States, because very many of these Jews would have to stop over in England for a while, in order to earn enough money to enable them to continue their westward exodus. Thus it is that in the decade from 1870 to 1880, the effect of this new wave of immigration upon the size of the Jewish population of New York City was relatively small, compared to what was to follow in the next two decades. Accurate figures do not exist, and various

sources differ considerably in proffering their educated guesses. We may take the figures 60,000 and 100,000 to represent, for our purposes, the numbers of the Jewish population at the beginning and end of the 1870's.

1870 saw the first attempts at a Yiddish press, with the publication of "Die Yiddishe Zeitung" and "Die Post". Both were weeklies -- after a fashion, and were written in a very Germanized Yiddish. The "Zeitung" dragged on until 1876, but the "Post"'s publisher ended that paper's career in 1871 to join in a new venture, the publication of a quadrilingual (Yiddish, Hebrew, English, German) weekly, "Die Hebrew News". This venture only lasted through twelve issues, up to the defeat of the other partner's municipal candidature.

Such a connection between the Yiddish press and politics was by no means to remain unique. For the next thirty years and more the political machines were to use these Yiddish newspapers in order to get at the increasingly important Jewish vote, and the papers themselves were to look upon revenue accruing from political advertising as indispensable to their existence and operation. This state of affairs is described below:

American political degeneracy...was related to the emergence and development of the Yiddish press in America. It was the sad fate of Yiddish

journalism that it came about that the first patrons of a Yiddish press should be, not the wealthy established Jews, setting up a new cultural structure for their poor immigrant brethren, but corruptive strangers, helping indirectly to lay the foundations of our press. (1)

Interest in European events, such as the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, and the Russo-Turkish War in 1877, coupled with the steady increase in immigration, resulted in continued attempts at founding newspapers. Kasriel Zevi Sarasohn in 1872 published the short-lived "New Yorker Yiddisher Zeitung", and in 1874, profiting from his experience, started the well-financed and well-partnered "Die Yiddishe Gazetten". This weekly absorbed one competitor in 1875, the "New Yorker Israelit", and eliminated another, "Die Israelitische Presse", which was begun in Chicago in 1877, then brought to New York where it foundered in 1884 because of competition and lack of political patronage. Another competing weekly, "Die Yiddishe Folks Zeitung", began in 1878, and although it gave good explanations of news and events, presented in good style and written in a Yiddish closer to the spoken variety than the Germanized version that the "Gazetten" preferred, it too failed.

The outbreak of pogroms in 1881 produced deep concern in the Jewish district, and news from home became a precious commodity to the immigrants. Sarasohn took the plunge, and offered the Jewish public the world's first paper

Yiddish daily newspaper. During the peak of the pogroms it featured the reports from the Alliance Israelite, but within two months the "Tegleche Gazetten" had to return to its old weekly status. The time was not yet ripe for this more ambitious endeavour. Even the weekly had its difficulties, what with no organized system of distribution, with the enlightened Maskilim disdaining the language which they chose to call "Zhargon" -- jargon, and with the religious pietists insisting that the Sabbath should be devoted to reading the Scriptures and studying religious writings.

New economic restrictions had been clamped onto the ^{Russian} Jews with the advent of the '80's, and the fresh wave of pogroms combined with this to impel tens of thousands to forsake Eastern Europe and come to America. Between 1880 and 1890 the Jewish population of New York City more than doubled, numbering over a quarter of a million by the end of the decade. Among the first to arrive as a direct result of the pogroms were some two to three hundred members of the "Am Olam" ("Eternal People") organization. These were youthful idealists who, like the "Bilu" group, urged a Jewish return to the soil as the means of redeeming and regenerating the Jewish spirit. Unlike the "Bilu", these people were cosmopolitan in philosophy, and repudiated

Zionism, regarding it as a nationalistic regression. Its members were very socially conscious, and were almost all Socialists or Anarchists. They made three futile attempts at founding communal farms in the wilderness, and nearly all returned to New York where they constituted a leaven, far more effective in influence than their numbers would indicate. In one of these "Am Olam" groups which arrived in 1882 was Abraham Cahan, who was with them, if not of them.

As the population increased, Sarasohn again ventured to publish the "Tegleche Gazetten" in 1883, but once again it failed. Finally in 1885, perhaps because he tried a new name, Sarasohn succeeded in publishing another "first" --- the world's first successful Yiddish daily newspaper, the "Yiddishe Tageblatt", retaining the "Gazetten" as a weekly supplement. (The "Tageblatt" existed until 1928, when it was merged with the "Morgen-Zhournal", which is still in existence.) The same year also saw the first skirmish in Cahan's war on the German-Yiddish of the press. He and Charles Rayevsky pioneered a "Yiddish Yiddish" in their weekly, "Die Naie Zeit", which lasted for only three issues.

1885 saw another addition to the ranks of the Yiddish press. This was the weekly "Die New Yorker Yiddishe Folks Zeitung", undertaken by two other "Am Olam"niks

Abraham Braslovsky and Moses Mintz. Mintz had gone to Israel as a pioneer, become disillusioned, and come over to America. He remained a Jewish nationalist, albeit no longer Zionist, which set him apart from the "Am Olam" which he joined in 1885, inasmuch as its members were overwhelmingly cosmopolitan. His personal persuasion did not enter into the columns of the "Folks Zeitung". This weekly, was oriented towards the increasing numbers of immigrants who were progressive in outlook. Besides news, it featured articles on general culture, and good literature, both original and translated. The Yiddish language employed was in the style set by its immediate predecessor, Cahan's "Naie Zeit". Its attitude was frankly Socialist, but when the first conflicts erupted between the Socialists and Anarchists, the "Folks Zeitung" hoped to remain above the struggle. As a result it was accused by both factions of showing favoritism to the other, and lost the support of both parties. New competitors arose who diverted much crucial advertising away from the paper, and in 1888 it conceded defeat.

Moses Mintz's brother Michael, who had accompanied him to both Palestine and America, followed him into Journalism as well. The "Chicago Courier" which he began in 1887, and sold to Sarasohn in 1888, existed until 1944. He came to New York in 1888 and began to publish a liberal weekly,

"Der Folks Advokat". It adopted a middle-of-the-road position, between Sarasohn's pietistic press on the right, and the waning "Folks Zeitung" on the left. Its approach was bourgeois and nationalist, but yet it could attract to its staff Anarchists like Moshe Katz, and Socialists like Cahan. The success of this weekly venture encouraged Michael Mintz to publish a daily. "Der Teglecher Yiddisher Herald" appeared in 1891, to which the "Advokat" became a Sunday supplement.

Between 1885 and 1889 a Moses Wexler, printer by vocation, published two weeklies, the ultra-orthodox "New Yorker-Yiddishe-Zeitung" and "Die Naie Post". He also merited the distinction of publishing the world's first Yiddish newspaper for women -- "Vaibershe Zeitung". Another journalistic failure during this period was one suffered by a figure much better known than Wexler, Abraham Goldfaden, dramatist and creator of Jewish folk-opera, While on a visit to America, ^{he} ventured to publish a new type of weekly, "Yiddishe Illustirte Zeitung" in 1887, but it ceased publication after the first few issues.

Generally, the decade 1880-1890 was one of transition. The positive features of the new environment quickly won over the majority of immigrants. Economically, America was for them a "goldene medina" -- a veritable Eldorado. For even with the "sweat shop" system and all its drawbacks,

such as poor wages, long hours, and miserable working conditions, the immigrant was still better off than he had been in the old country. Not only was he able to live well -- for him -- and save enough to bring over his family and other relatives, but he could even afford such luxuries as the theater. In 1880 the Oriental Theater was already playing to packed houses, and European troupes made the long crossing to play ^{to} the appreciative and remunerative American audiences. By the end of the '80's domestic talent began to flower. The success of the Yiddish press went hand in hand with these other developments, and as flourishing bourgeois enterprises, drawing much of their income from bourgeois advertising, it is not difficult to understand their attitudes towards the radical trouble-makers and union agitators who were beginning more and more to be heard in the Jewish quarter.

The publishers of the successful bourgeois Yiddish newspapers in America were among the first to benefit from this country's abundance, nevertheless they remained among the immigrant masses whom they served. Therefore they themselves continually lauded and extolled the new homeland, with its freedoms and its vast economic opportunities. It was partly for this reason that they campaigned against the pioneers of the Jewish trade-union movement for American Jews. From within the confines of their outlook, they considered that the Socialist and Anarchist labor-organizers were committing an act of injustice in encouraging strikes for higher wages and improved working conditions, instead of permitting the Jewish

workers to peacefully toil away until they saved up the first couple of hundred dollars towards their own business and then proceed to "work their way up" in America....A number of other Yiddish papers, controlled by people with a broader view of the universe than that possessed by the small-town rabbi's son Sarasohn and his ideological colleagues, already appreciated that the process of "working themselves up" would in no way be hindered if, while proceeding towards his own business, the immigrant worker was to undertake some action which would keep his lifespan from being cut short through tuberculosis or the many other diseases which flourished in the "sweat shops"....In any event, the "Am Olam" crowd was already beginning to monopolize not only the agitation for unions among the Jewish workers, but they were already making experiments at setting up newspapers to serve the pioneering labor organizations. (2)

New York may have scooped the world of Jewish journalism by publishing the first Yiddish daily, but in terms of labor and radical publications of an enduring nature, it was a laggard. In London, labor and Socialist papers were already in existence under the guidance of such outstanding men ^{as} Lieberman, Winchevsky and Krantz. As was mentioned earlier*, this vacuum did not long go unfilled. The Anarchist's effort of 1889, "Die Varheit", was short-lived. The next year saw another failure, the pro-Anarchist weekly "Der Morgen Shtern", and the two successes -- the Socialists' "Arbeiter Zeitung", and the Anarchists' "Freie Arbeiter Shtimme". Yiddish radical journalism was coming into its own.

* pages 17f

5: The Tendenz of the "Zukunft", 1892 - 1897.

Abraham Cahan has provided us a glance into a typical "cloak shop" during a lull in the "slack season" of one of the mid-nineties:

A rabbinical-looking man of thirty, who sat with the back of his chair tilted against his sewing machine, was intent upon an English newspaper. Every little while he would remove it from his eyes -- showing a dyspeptic face fringed with a thin growth of dark beard -- to consult the cumbrous dictionary on his knees. Two young lads, one seated on the frame of the next machine and the other standing, were boasting to one another of their respective intimacies with the leading actors of the Jewish stage. The board of a third machine, in a corner of the same wall, supported an open copy of a socialist magazine in Yiddish, over which a cadaverous young man absordedly swayed to and fro droning in the Talmudical intonation.⁽¹⁾

This "socialist magazine in Yiddish" could only have been the "Zukunft", since there was at this time no other such magazine anywhere in the world. It is the magazine whose cover and program we have already encountered on the first pages of our introductory chapter.

The appearance of the "Arbeiter Zeitung" weekly in 1890 meant that the SLP was now able to convey news and current events to the immigrant workers. In this way they were able to meet the specific needs of those Jews who were beginning to acquire some social consciousness through the increased activity and importance

of trade unionism. To these Jewish workers, the unions were not a concrete manifestation of a theoretical principle, an implementation of a Marxist abstraction. Trade unions meant quite simply shorter hours, better wages, and improved working conditions. Aside from the smattering of intellectuals among them, the world of the arts and sciences was completely foreign to them. A weekly newspaper could do no more than ^{to} make them vaguely aware that there was such a world, to create and whet within them an appetite for something more profound. It was to satisfy this taste that the SLP decided to publish a magazine, hopefully a monthly, which should convey such items of general and Socialist interest to the public which existed for it.

It is in the contents of that first issue of January, 1892, that we see the role of the "Zukunft" emerge clearly, the role which the SLP envisioned for it. The contents were as follows:

| | | |
|-------------|--|------------------|
| facing p.1: | Photograph of Karl Marx | |
| p.1 : | Our "Zukunft" | Philip Krantz |
| p.2 : | Biography of Karl Marx | Morris Hilkevitz |
| p.7 : | God, Religion and Morality | P. Krantz |
| p.14 : | The Evolution of a Proletariat in America | Prof. DeLeon |
| p.17 : | Did They Accomplish Anything for Socialism in Germany with the Reichstag's Elections? | H. Schlueter |
| p.21 : | Short quotations from Victor Hugo, A. de Labouisse, La Boetie, G. Ler- mina, Louis Michel and Boucher de Perthes. | |

| | | |
|--------|--|--------------|
| p.22 : | Darwinism | Ab. Cahan |
| p.38 : | Malthusianism and Capitalism | P. Krantz |
| p.44 : | The Floating Coffin | Jacob Gordin |
| p.48 : | From the Moon (Satirical comments on current events.) | |

The next seven issues to come forth during the two years 1892 and 1893 carried similar material. There were biographies of Frederick Engels, Nikolai Tchernischevsky, Jules Guesde, Francois Babeuf, Robert Owen, and Charles Fourier. The Paris Commune was ^{the} theme of an article by Krantz which ran to seven instalments, and the hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution was noted in print. Social Democracy, capitalism, and revolution were all discussed, either explicitly and formally, or in the poems of Winchevsky and Morris Rosenfeld. Popular scientific articles dealt with both the physical and biological sciences. In the field of religion were to be found, besides the series on "God, Religion and Morality" already alluded to, a reworking of Ludwig Büchner's "The God-Concept" prepared by Feigenbaum, and a critical study of the Flood story by Hilkovitz. Further expressions of anti-religious views are to be found in some poems by Peretz, under his signature of "אֶזְרָא". Peretz also contributed a short story, the only other formal literary item occurring during these two years being a translation of de Maupassant's "The Child", and one of Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon". Gordin, Winchevsky and J. Finn contributed some belle-lettristic materials.

This rather cumbersome ^{general} presentation of the contents of the first eight numbers of the "Zukunft" was made for several reasons. First and foremost it enables us to understand clearly and precisely what its publishers meant with their statement on the cover -- "a scientific socialist monthly published by the Yiddish speaking sections, S.L.P. of America". This magazine was not conceived of as a Jewish magazine, but rather as a ^{Socialist} magazine for Jews to read --- somewhat like Christian missionary tracts which are printed in a wide variety of languages. Except for the random contributions of Winchevsky, Peretz and Rosenfeld, there is very little of a Jewish nature to be found, and even these occur largely in the last three of these eight issues.

Besides displaying the tendenz of the SLP, this presentation also gives us an insight into the journalistic philosophy of Philip Krantz, who edited the "Zukunft" during this period which we are examining. We observe his name appended to articles on "God, Religion and Morality"; "Malthusianism and Capitalism"; "the Paris Commune"; "the Possibility of Establishing Socialism"; and we contrast this with the products of Cahan's pen, such as "Darwinism"; "the Difference between Animals and Plants"; "Instinct and its Development"; "Evolution via Love between Male and female";

"Property among Animals". The contrast between these two journalists extends deeper than their choice of field of subject matter. Their style of writing, the very titles which they gave their articles, display two different approaches to Yiddish journalism -- one held by the recently arrived Krantz, and the other by the well-Americanized Cahan.

Krantz...took the general European press as his example rather than the American:...[he] be- took himself to publish Yiddish newspapers in New York which, according to his opinion, the public ought to read, unlike the American press which was primarily concerned with industriously giving the public what it wanted to read. Ab. Cahan was already repudiating this approach. (2)

Whether or not these first eight issues clearly present this difference in outlook, they nevertheless clearly present Krantz's own outlook.

Yet another reason for devoting so much space to the "Zukunft"'s first two years is the contrast they afford to the following four years, 1894 through 1897, and the reasons that we find for this contrast, reasons both open and deduced. During the first two years, the magazine was published in January, February, March, April and December of '92 and January, March and June of '93. Beginning with February of 1894, however, the magazine appeared regularly each month until September of 1897, for a total of forty-three issues. These uninspiring statistics are however more than simple numbers. They are indicative of strong currents and trends within the ranks of Jewish Socialists.

For one thing, there is the fact that during the first two years, Krantz was editor, and during the latter four, that position was occupied by Cahan. A superficial explanation of this would be that in 1894 the "Abend-Blatt" was begun, and the task of turning out a daily and a weekly made it necessary for Krantz to relinquish the monthly editorship to his capable assistant. This glib explanation does not take into account Cahan's personal ambitions, and his strongly held journalistic and political opinions, which ultimately led, as will be seen, to a rupture between these two men.

Beginning with Cahan's editorship, a distinct difference may be observed in the style and contents of the "Zukunft". Even the cover format of the older issues was eliminated in 1895, and no longer was the woman with the torch to grace the magazine's public face. Hers is not the only absence we note. During the three and a half years of Cahan's editorship we search in vain for a single article bearing the signature of Philip Krantz. It is difficult to believe that this doughty old Socialist had nothing to contribute to the monthly which he had brought into the world, no matter how demanding his regular duties were.

Setting aside for the while Cahan's differences with Krantz, let us look into the positive changes which he introduced into the "Zukunft" as a result of his personal attitudes. That some changes were necessary was accepted by the SLP on purely practical grounds: the circulation of the magazine was very poor, and it was steadily losing money for the party whose coffers were never particularly overflowing. As Cahan reported to his readers in January of 1896:

Naturally, all beginnings are difficult. For the first couple of years, the publication of the "Zukunft" was beset with difficulties, and the magazine did not appear regularly. The possibility of its firm existence and regular monthly appearance were clear to us even then, however, and since our Party-Day of two years ago in Newark, when our comrades undertook to publicize the magazine energetically and to support it regularly, it has in fact appeared regularly on the first of each month, ...Our present circulation is one that has been steady for some time now, although even this circulation is not yet large enough to cover all expenses. Yet the deficit is so small and the loyalty of the SLP members and our readers in general is so great, that the "Zukunft" is as much a certainty as are the 32 numbers of its past. (3)

It was more than the loyalty of its readers that pulled the magazine out of its doldrums. Cahan was a journalist of the American school with all that this implied in those golden -- or at least yellow -- days of the American press. Hearst entered the New York newspaper arena, already well occupied by the "World", "Sun" and "Herald", with his own "Journal" and "American" in 1885, and the rivalry between these competing papers soon reached a nadir in terms of

sensationalism and even fabrication which is still looked back upon with awe and shuddering. As usual, the general Yiddish press quickly adopted the ways of the Gentiles even in this regard. Furthermore this was the heyday of the cheap novel, which had also become immensely popular in the Jewish quarter since 1892. Cahan was at this time working as a reporter on the "Sun", and was quite familiar with all of the tricks of the trade which he later put into effect so masterfully in the "Forverts". Although the "Zukunft" was a publication in a class by itself, and ^a higher class at that, Cahan knew full well that just because his magazine was educational and intellectual did not mean that it had to be dry and dull.

The "Zukunft" in Cahan's hands remained the SLP's vehicle for conveying the Socialist message to the Jewish workers. What he accomplished was to add ~~to that vehicle~~ ^a goodly amount of ~~charge~~ ^{of} universal interest so that any self-respecting Jewish intellectual, Socialist or not, had to follow the "Zukunft". If we compare the contents of Krantz's last issue with Cahan's first, the difference is striking and obvious:

Krantz
 Charles Fourier: his life
 and theories
 Serenade (Russian poem in
 translation)
 Can Socialism be Estab-
 lished?
 100 Years Ago: The French
 Revolution

Cahan
 August Bebel
 100 Years Ago: The French
 Revolution (cont'd.)
 The World (Scientific)
 The Paris Commune (cont'd.)
 Jewish Kingdoms in Russia
 and Arabia: About the
 Origins of Present-Day Jews.

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A Happy Life for All. | Languages and How to Learn Them. |
| The Paris Commune. | Three Curses: (Poem by Heine, |
| Science Lectures. | translated) |
| Why Socialism is Stronger | The Graveyard: (Poem by Uhland, |
| in Germany than Else- | translated) |
| where. | The Madwoman of Ostend: (trans.) |
| No Dowry is Worse than | |
| having Smallpox: Peretz | |

There is retention of the former material --- the biographies of world radicals, the articles on the theory and practice of Socialism, the scientific article --- but in addition we observe a Jewish historical study and a practical article on learning a language. Already Cahan was providing the SLP Yiddish organ with a more generalized appeal. So it was that almost from its very inception, the "Zukunft" came to acquire what was to be its permanent characteristic -- Socialism blended with items of Jewish interest.

Through the "Zukunft" we may obtain a glimpse of the world in which the Jewish Socialists moved. This glimpse is incomplete in that ^{the} periodical generally avoided discussing current topics, and so it is necessary to fill in the lacunae by referring to outside sources. Sometimes even these lacunae can be eloquent, when we find out from elsewhere what it is that is not being mentioned. In the next pages our attention will be directed to the "Zukunft", 1892-1897, to see what we may learn of the Jewish Socialist movement, and its attitudes with respect to Yiddish, unions, and other Jews.

6: The Use of the Yiddish Language.

It was not modesty that made Krantz call the infant "Zukunft" an "experiment" in his program statement. Such a thing as serious writing in Yiddish -- or "Zhargon" as even its friends called it then -- was still a brand new phenomenon, struggling to achieve a level which both its foes and sympathizers could accept. Until the mid-1880's there was nothing, even in Russia, that deserved the name of literature. A flood of cheap romance and adventure novels exhibiting poor taste and poorer writing, such as those emanating from Nachum Meir Sheikevitch under his pen name of Shamar (שמר), had discredited Yiddish writing in general.

Seeing that the literature contained so much trash, the few talented Jargon writers such as Abromovitz, Dinessohn, Shatzkes and the like, turned their backs to it and became silent. The Jewish intellectuals who took an occasional interest in what the people were reading, derived their opinion of all works in Jargon from Shamar's novels, and turned away from Jargon literature with a good deal of disgust and hatred. Thus the very name "Jargonist" came to be a joke and a title of shame. (1)

Mordecai Spector, a possessor of some fair talent of his own, began at this time to provide a medium of literary expression for others in his annual publication "The House Friend". Among the contributors to this were

Abromovitz, Gordon, Dinessohn, Dr. Süssmanovitz, Dr. Charney, Frug, Frishman, Sholem Aleichem, and others. It can truly be said that Spector initiated a new movement of belles lettres and scientific and publicistic articles in Yiddish, in convincingly demonstrating that Yiddish was as capable of being a vehicle of expression as any other language.

Sholem Aleichem attempted to follow his example by publishing a similar journal "Die Yiddishe Folks Bibliotek" ("The Jewish People's Library"), also as a personal venture. He was wealthy and therefore able to pay his contributors well, but he exercised weak editorial judgment, so that the "Bibliotek" never achieved the circulation that Spector's journal did. In any event, both magazines foundered shortly after their initial issues, and ceased publication.

Two years lapsed until another attempt was made, this time by J. L. Peretz, in his journal "Yiddishe Bibliotek". He described his purpose as follows:

Our program is education; we wish to educate the people, to make wise men out of ignoramuses, educated men out of fanatics; we wish to transform indolent and useless people into workers--into useful and honest individuals, who will be able to work on their own behalf, and thereby bring benefit to the community. (2)

In this publication, appearing at the end of the '80's, Peretz set a high standard, both in his own writings, and in those of other writers which he included. With this

journal, good Yiddish writing can really be said to begin in Eastern Europe.

From this we see clearly that the founding fathers of the "Zukunft" had set themselves no small task. In attempting to publish a magazine with the standards they had announced, they could draw upon nothing but their own talents and resources. There was nothing in the Jewish field that they could use as a model, and if Krantz's issues appear stiff, it is because his own experience was entirely in the area of Socialist publicistics. His very knowledge of the Yiddish language was an acquired one, and his use of it was undertaken, as we have seen also in the case of Hillquit, as a concession to the reality that Yiddish was the language of the Jewish masses.

Krantz was not the only reluctant one in his turning to this "jargon". Peretz himself laments in his poem "Monish", which he wrote in the late '80's that he must "sing his songs to the Jews in Yiddish", for in other languages "it would have had quite a different ring" --- presumably a better one. (3)

If such outstanding users of Yiddish were reluctant to make use of it, then there were others who were by no means reluctant to criticize the literary use of the despised tongue. In Russia --

Our Hebraists looked upon the new Jargon literature with hatred because it was drawing the best writers away from Hebrew. (4)

And in the United States --

The German "Yahudim" in America poured fire and brimstone upon the "revolting jargon" with which the new immigrants dared to found their own press. (5)

Having committed themselves to the use of Yiddish, the creators of the radical press had to face a more severe challenge than the arguments of the several anti-Yiddish factions which could simply be ignored. Not to be ignored was the very simple fact that Yiddish, the spoken language of the living people, had failed to develop in the confines of the shtetl and the Pale. It lacked words for those cultural and scientific words which were current in European vocabularies, words which were indispensable for the communication of new concepts and ideas. How could the Jewish people be educated, if the words of education did not exist?

The solution was simple and obvious. If such words did not exist in the Yiddish language, then they must be created afresh for it, or at least borrowed from some other language. What should that language be? Russian seemed to be a logical source, particularly since Yiddish had already absorbed many Slavic words into its daily vocabulary. Still when it came down to formal borrowing, the innovating stylists balked. As early as 1885, in the program

article of his "Folks Zeitung", Moses Mintz declared:

The Jewish Jargon is made up of words from various languages. It has neither rules nor grammar. We see no advantage in using only one variety of Jargon in our periodical. Therefore our worthy readers should not be puzzled at finding different articles written in different Jargons. The only prerogative which we retain is that of eliminating all Russian words from our periodical. [*Italics my own.*] (6)

Finally free of the oppressing hand of the despised "Fonye", the immigrants refused to carry even some fragments of his language with them.

Two other languages were proposed as sources of the needed words; Hebrew and German. Hebrew was rejected for three reasons: first, it smacked too much of religion; second, it had overtones of Zionist nationalism; and third, and most important, Hebrew itself lacked these modern terms. The Germans had already done to their language what Eliezer ben Yehudah was in the process of doing with Hebrew, deriving the new words from older words and roots. Both as a sister tongue, linguistically, and as the academic language of science and scholarship, German came to be the source used by the Yiddishists to modernize their "jargon".

This Germanizing process is by no means to be confused with the hap-hazardly concocted Yiddish-German which was affected by journalists through the seventies and eighties, and even later. This written Yiddish -- if it merits the name -- was a deliberate attempt to imitate the spelling, grammar and vocabulary of German, using the Hebrew alphabet

as the only concession to its Jewish reading public. The reason for this was simply, that the early Yiddish journalists were by and large intellectuals who looked down on the language of the herd. By so extravagantly Germanizing, they were hoping to "civilize" this barbaric tongue. The process of Germanizing which concerns us, however, had nothing at all to do with this. Those who were employing it fully regarded Yiddish as a bona fide language, whose borrowings from the German to create new terms was in the same category as the use of Greek and Latin to make up new words in English.

Modernizing the Yiddish language was bound up with another goal -- that of writing the language in the same mode that it was spoken. One obstacle in the way of the earlier Yiddish press had been an actual language barrier which confronted the reader. A speaking knowledge of Yiddish was of little value when confronted with the concoctions of the Germanophiles. It was only as the printed word came to follow the spoken word, under Cahan's constant agitation for a "Yiddish Yiddish", that reading a Yiddish newspaper became feasible for the average immigrant. The regularization of Yiddish as it came to be printed around the world, is largely the accomplishment of the radical Yiddish press of New York.

7: The Jewish Labor Movement up to 1893.

That they were creating the standard for the written Yiddish language is something that the radical journalists, both Socialists and Anarchists (the "Freie Arbeiter Shtimme" was also highly instrumental in this) were to become aware -- and proud -- of only gradually. What was the chief source of pride to the Yiddish-speaking SLP'ers was their accomplishment in producing the "Zukunft".

In Russia...an extraordinary impression was made by the several copies which somehow managed to arrive there....The "Maskilim" there could not believe their eyes when they saw the pure scholarly magazine, in which physics, astronomy, Marxism, etc., were popularly explained in simple mother-tongue.... Most interesting of all is the fact that it is plain Socialists who are publishing such a journal of general education for the Jews....We should have expected to see such an undertaking coming from such Jews as the "Chovevei Zion", for example, -- or from those who cry only "Jew", "Shma Yisroel!" -- and yet all of these "Chovevei Zion" crowd, Jewish patriots, and professional grandchildren of Abraham, come forth with their declarations of love for the Jewish people, with a sigh and a groan over its bitter fate, with a pious glance in the direction of the Wailing Wall, -- and as for such work as providing nourishment for the empty spiritual stomachs of the ordinary Jews, -- this work was left to those who do not glance towards the Wailing Wall, who sigh not over the Jews, but over the Jewish and non-Jewish proletariat,...the Socialists.....

What is the matter with the "patriots", the so-called idealistic, non-Socialist "Maskilim" -- why are they not concerned with the educational and spiritual development of their "beloved people"?

The reason is that there is no class of humanity today that is more capable, earnest and successful to labor at a purely idealistic task than the working-class! (1)

Much in the same vein were these remarks a year later:

Only the labor movement could have created this.It was the struggle of the latter-day wage-slaves against modern Capital which aroused in the common Jewish worker the thirst for understanding, for knowing, for learning, and it was to quench this thirst that the fountain of the "Zukunft" was prepared. (2)

In coming to the United States, the Russian Jewish revolutionary expatriates found themselves badly in need of a cause. The overthrow of the government was no longer a practical issue, as even the violent Anarchists discovered. They, the Anarchists, remaining true to their philosophy, refused to participate in the machinery of political activity or of unionism, and settled back upon a program which consisted mainly of attacking everything. The Marxists, deprived of the weapon of revolution, simply took a second item from their ideological arsenal, and went forth to arm the proletariat.

The Jewish Socialists however encountered a problem which Marx had not prepared them for. Where was the Jewish proletariat? Certainly there were a great many workers among the Jewish immigrants, but there is a considerable distinction between a large number of people occupied in work, and a working-class in the technical sense.

The Jewish immigrants were made up overwhelmingly of people whose occupations had been determined both by government restriction and the nature of the ^{Russian} commercial capitalist economy. There were to be found shopkeepers, peddlers, artisans and craftsmen. Such a thing as a group of factory workers was only at this time beginning to be seen in such Polish centres of burgeoning industry as Lodz, Warsaw and Bialistock, and was not to be found among the immigrant masses.

In founding the United Hebrew Trades in 1888, the SLP's Jewish branches were following the example of the German section of the SLP. Unfortunately for them, the Jewish immigrant wage-slave lacked the considerable familiarity with unionism and Socialism that the German immigrant wage-slaves had had while still in the old country. Louis Miller wrote of this in 1892, and unlike many of the others, he spoke out of experience as a worker:

Every land's working class has a past.... It is quite a different situation with the Jewish working class, which, from a historical standpoint, can scarcely be called a working class. Its experience in campaigning is insignificant, and its very campaigners -- still undeveloped. There is a considerable difference between the elements which constitute this class, and the constituent elements of the working classes of other nations: by and large in these latter, the workers were born workers, were brought up as workers, and very few of them expect to die as anything except workers. However among our workers, very few, proportionately, were born as such. College students,

high school students, purchasers, clerks, merchants, agents, draymen, shammashes, t'fillin writers, unemployed youths, soldiers, both who had served out their time and who had only partly done so,...these make up the majority in our unions.. Having come to the American Jerusalem where, instead of the expected milk and honey they found a crust...it is not to be wondered at that they all become radical. Here they become sensitive to socialism, communism, anarchism and any other kind of "ism" from which they may derive solace in their disappointment and dissatisfaction. It is this which explains our first easy successes in organizing the Jewish workers.

But this quick, even sudden sprouting of this Jewish movement could not endure long. The material for this purpose was not quite suitable....The most important constituents were lacking, namely: conviction and consciousness. Our Jews believed that it was sufficient to set up a union...and the workers' Messiah would arrive. But it soon became evident that many unions had been set up...and Messiah had not yet arrived...They thought that all that was necessary was to assemble all the Jews of the sweat-shop district, and that this would cast such a fear into the whole system that it would fall never more to rise. When they saw, however, that a few policemen and detectives and judges were all that were necessary to stoutly defend the sanctity of capitalism,...then the reaction set in....In brief, it led to our present situation.

In addition to the general ignorance concerning the terrible class-struggle...there were other causes that assisted greatly in creating these circumstances. ...A large proportion of union members consider their woes as temporary. Each hopes to become a storekeeper, a clerk, a boss, and the like.... It is therefore quite natural that the closer he comes to this goal, the more this type of worker will thrust aside his former zealously-held "ism", until it vanishes entirely. (3)

As Miller described conditions in 1892, the union movement, that is to say the Jewish Socialist union movement, was in a crisis situation. Times were relatively

good, employment was high, and the unsophisticated and pragmatic Jewish immigrants saw no purpose in retaining either membership or interest in the unions. They had achieved their happy status as the result of a general strike which they had won in 1890. This had broken out spontaneously, but as time passed, the UHT was asked to take over its conduct in a more disciplined and organized manner. After eight bitter weeks the strike was won, good benefits gained, and the union dropped.

A further reason for disinterest in union affairs was the considerable conflict which was going on in the union arena.. Ideological battles were waged constantly within the UHT by Socialists and Anarchists, battles in which the personal element was not absent. Furthermore there was the situation of rival unions in the field, because the AF of L and the Knights of Labor were still fighting their battle throughout the trades. The SLP came to play a role in this conflict, which therefore involved the UHT as well. The New York SLP, because of its interest in the workers, requested permission from the AFL to participate in its New York central committee. The AFL, cognizant of the SLP's national plans for hegemony in the labor movement, refused to allow the Socialist camel to place his head inside the tent of the "pure and simple" unions. This brought about conflict between the SLP and the AFL.

This conflict was to have far reaching effects on the Jewish union movement. Between 1890 and 1892 the UHT found the SLP urging its sympathizers to join the Knights of Labor unions as part of its battle with the AFL. Thereupon the Anarchists in the Jewish labor movement began to press for support of the AFL! Is it to be wondered that the workers, urged to join several conflicting unions at once, confused by the claims and accusations, and seeing no immediate benefit from unionization, should shy clear of any such entanglements? So it was that Prof. John Commons, in a report prepared for the Industrial Commission, on "Immigration and its Economic Effects" stated:

The Jew's conception of a labor organization is that of a tradesman rather than that of a workman.... Once the strike is settled...that usually ends the union, since they do not see any practical use for a union when there is no cause to fight for. Consequently the membership of a Jewish union is wholly uncertain. The secretary's books will show 60,000 members in one month and not 5,000 within three months later. If, perchance, a local branch has a steady thousand members, and if they are indeed paying members, it is likely that they are not the same members as in the year before. (4)

In 1892 the SLP intensified its activity in the ~~union field~~ union field, as DeLeon undertook to seize control of the Knights of Labor. The UHT meanwhile had its own problems, already suffering from the effects of too many generals with too few privates. The winter of 1892 was to usher in an economic crisis, and with it, a sudden loss of the benefits

won with so much difficulty in 1890. Another spontaneous strike broke out, this time against organized employer resistance. Again the UHT entered the scene, and again the strikers were victorious. This time the UHT was able to win a more permanent place in the hearts of the workers through the efforts, indirect and unintentional, of the employers. In addition to gaining increased wages for the men, the union also forced the employers to pay them an indemnity for losses incurred during the strike. The secretary of the union, Joseph Barondess, was subsequently charged by the employers' association with criminal extortion. The trial court found him guilty, the New York Supreme Court reversed this decision, and the Court of Appeals reaffirmed the trial court's conviction. All the publicity centered around the judicial martyrdom of the UHT official could not help but popularize the union among the immigrants.

It should be noted that for the details of events in the union movement, we must look elsewhere than the "Zukunft". This periodical was not regarded as the fit medium for discussing current events of the New York Jewish scene, and except for Miller's article, there is no further mention of the tumultuous affairs of the day.

8: The Attitude Towards the Americanized Jews.

There is an additional aspect of the employment situation in which the immigrant workers found themselves, that captures our attention. The relationship that existed between them and their employers was more frequently than not coloured by something apart from their roles as labor and management, exploited and exploiter. Because too often the relationship assumed the aspect of immigrant Eastern European Jew over against the assimilated German Jew. Antagonism between these two groups developed early. In fact the German Jews had brought with them to America a strong bias against their Eastern co-religionists, which still retained its strength, despite the interval of a generation between the two immigrations. This work cannot delve into the origins and manifestations of this mutual antagonism. However, two aspects of the encounter between these two groups do enter our scope: first, that of religion, which will be examined in a later section; and second, that of employment, which we will look into now as supplementary to the labor scene which we scanned in the last section.

The attitude of the already well-integrated German Jewish community was, by and large, that traditionally displayed towards the poor relative by his more affluent cousin.

Everything done for the immigrants came under the category of generosity and benevolence, and any negative reaction from the objects of their magnanimity was regarded as ingratitude, or worse. The employment of immigrants as workmen was also included in the category of benevolence, so that it is easy to imagine the reaction produced among their employers by their union activity, particularly when it came to strikes.

That means of economic integration which was adopted by the Russian Jews, joining unions and strikes, met consistent opposition from the Anglo-Jewish press. The Jewish Messenger was not a workman's newspaper. It mirrored the social snobishness, the middle-class stirrings, the conservative politics of an employer class. It was also the organ of those who considered themselves the benefactors of the Russian Jewish masses.

What perhaps irked The Jewish Messenger more than anything else was that the immigrants who had arrived but a year or so before, poor and pleading for help, were now showing their ungratefulness by engaging in strikes.

Labeling such activity "moral hydrophobia", The Jewish Messenger cautioned Jews not to affiliate themselves with the "Russian Protective Union". (1)

The attitudes expressed above stem from the mid-eighties, when the labor movement was taking its first semi-confident steps. By the time it was hitting its stride in the next decade, the employers had come to adopt the completely hostile attitude which was characteristic of management-labor relations during that stormy period, a hostility rendered even more lamentable because it took on the aspect of a civil war.

The harsh measures customarily taken against strikers were felt even more keenly by the immigrants when those who were afflicting them were their co-religionists. The general strike of 1890 was won after eight long weeks of suffering. In the strike during the winter of 1892-3, the economic depression had already forced many to accept charity from their wealthy cousins, and the added misery created by the prolonged strike against these same cousins produced bitter hostility.

The unemployment assumed such grave dimensions in the clothing industry of New York and other cities with a Jewish population, that Jewish philanthropists were forced to open free kitchens and to dole out food parcels to hungry families. The "Achte Street", as the New York Jewish charity center was called since its office was on Eighth Street, was keenly criticized in the radical press and in the workers' meetings, for its meager help, and for the unfriendly demeanor of the charity-bureaucrats towards the immigrant recipients.

The...general strike of the Jewish cloak-makers ...[was] a rebellion of Jewish immigrant workers against their Americanized German-Jewish bosses. This protest against employers who were taking advantage of the shortage of work to beat down the poor wages of the workmen was, properly speaking, an act of desperation by the hunger-afflicted masses. (2)

Although the above criticism is rather harsh, in that the Jewish manufacturers were doing nothing more than following the trend in industry, which they had to do in order to compete, nevertheless, there were occasions when they fought the unions and the strikes with undue severity. Strikebreaking by calling in scabs was difficult in the

New York clothing industry, because the workers were mostly Jewish immigrants, and a strike became a kind of community affair, with members of other locals and even unemployed workers participating in the picketing and demonstrations. However in industries which did not recruit their workers solely from this one immigrant group, this solidarity was not to be found. Employers would play off one minority against another to gain financial advantage, and if the industry was located in a small community with no available pool of unemployed, then scabs would be imported. When the employer in such an instance was a German Jew, and the striking employees flooded by imported strikebreakers were immigrant Jews, it is easy to imagine the emotions which the strikers would feel.

Between these employers and the Jewish Socialists the battle lines were clearly drawn: it was another instance of the exploited proletariat versus the exploiting capitalists. The fact that both parties in the conflict were Jewish meant nothing to the Jewish SLP'ers, who merely utilized this type of situation to point out that Marx was right in his theory of economic determinism, and that class loyalty took precedence over religious or ethnic bonds. Z. Libin, a writer who drew his themes from immigrant life, described such a strike in the "Zukunft", in which he expresses the general attitude of the publishers and sympathizers.

A large group of Jewish workers are leaving their wives and children behind in the grip of hunger, and are going forth to seek bread in this great and free country ---- It was not a decree from some king or despot nor an expression of antisemitism that produced this emigration, but hunger, troubles and sheer necessity, which had emanated from the kosher hands of wealthy Jewish-American bosses.

K---- is a workers' colony, two days distance from New York. It is a small, pleasant town.... [which] belongs to a few rich Jewish shoe-manufacturers, and nearly all the inhabitants of this little town are workers in this company's shops.

.....
[The writer describes how the workers were going through the last forlorn stages of a hopeless strike.]

The cruel struggle for existence...had drawn a large number of scabs to K----, and the bosses, who had been as cold and as strong as iron whips at the very beginning, were becoming increasingly powerful and arrogant. (3)

There is one feature of the relationship between the Jewish Socialists and the Americanized German Jews that should be pointed out, a feature which beclouded the issue for the Socialists so that they could not see the immigrants' plight purely in terms of class conflict. The Socialists were almost entirely men of cosmopolitan views, who were champions of enlightenment and the foes of religion. It would not be unfair to characterize them as Assimilationists. In weltanschauung they were much closer to the American Jew (except politically) than they were to the majority of the immigrants. Had the Russian Jewish intellectuals come to America before the Czarist policies had driven them into the radical camp, it is not impossible that they would have blended into the emerging pattern of

American Jewish life which the German Jews were creating. (In 1902 when Louis Marshall founded "Die Yiddishe Velt" to convey the attitudes of the German Jews to the Yiddish-reading public, Philip Krantz and other Socialists and Anarchists seemed to find no contradiction involved in their working for this paper. (4))

Such speculation is, however, meaningless. Whatever might have been has no bearing on what did occur. The Russian-Jewish intellectuals came, and they were radicals. Those who were more cosmopolitan were all the more doctrinaire in their radicalism. Those who wore their politics more lightly, regarded their bond with the Jewish people more strongly, and espoused the cause of Yiddish culture. On both counts they were held in anathema by the politically conservative and Yiddishophobic Americanized Jews. The Jewish Socialists in turn came to despise them, not only on political and social grounds, but intellectually as well. They took particular pains to point out the lack of Jewish education and knowledge among the "Reformers", which term they used as a synonym for the Americanized German-Jew, and dealt mercilessly with the Reform rabbinate. Further comments on their attitude towards Reform Judaism will be discussed in the section dealing with religion. One example will be sufficient for the present to display the typical attitude of the "Zukunft" towards the German Jew and his

spiritual leader. In the satirical series "From the Moon" we encounter the following glimpse of earth:

There, in a secluded corner, goes a well-stuffed individual with a pious face. Two others accompany him; they call him "Rabbi". They pause near a house. Through the window I can see naked girls dancing with fine gentlemen....The rabbi enters. (5)

although as Herzl's, the Jewish S.P.'s were obliged, in theory, to carry on anti-religious agitation as part of their propaganda; in practice they compromised with the realities of their situation. The overwhelming majority of the Jewish immigrants were still freshly come from an environment in which Orthodoxy was dominant, and whose dominance was accepted as a permanent feature of the status quo. Synagogue attendance, observing

* See page 7. In any event Herzl was not of a fellow-traveller than a leader in the Jewish Socialist movement in America, assuming the cognomen of the S.P.

9: The Attitude Towards Religion.

Having made some mention of the "Zukunft"'s attitude towards the religion of the Americanized Jews, it might be well to examine their attitude toward religion in general, and toward the Jewish religion in particular. As far as these Russian-Jewish émigrés were concerned, they agreed with Marx's dictum that "religion is the opiate of the masses". In Russia they had seen the dominant Greek Orthodox Church play a completely submissive role in the state structure of the Czarist autocracy, and their own Jewish Orthodoxy continued to defend its mediaeval outlook and prerogatives as it bitterly fought enlightenment. Except for Jacob Gordin, whose attempt at Jewish religious reform was so ill-timed*, none of the leaders of the Jewish Socialist movement in America had anything positive to say about Judaism, or about any other religion.

Although as Marxists, the Jewish SLP'ers were obliged, in theory, to carry on anti-religious agitation as part of their propaganda, in practice they compromised with the realities of their situation. The overwhelming majority of the Jewish immigrants were still freshly come from an environment in which Orthodoxy was dominant, and whose dominance was accepted as a permanent feature of the status quo. Synagogue attendance, observing

* See page 7. In any event Gordin was more of a fellow-traveller than a leader in the Jewish Socialist movement in America, shunning the dogmatism of the SLP.

Shunning the dogmatism of the SLP.

kashrus, and the like, were a matter of conforming to the communal pattern, and had nothing to do with personal religious conviction. An all-out attack by the Socialists on Orthodoxy would have meant that the social order of the immigrant community was being attacked as well as the religious. In order to concentrate their energies on immediate goals, and to obviate unnecessary antagonism on the part of the Eastern European Jews, it became official party policy to designate religion and family as areas of private concern into which the SLP would not intrude. The Socialists focussed all their attention on the social and political area, in order to obtain immediate objectives. This broad approach accounts for the greater degree of popular success which they achieved, in contrast to the Anarchists, who declined to take the path of least resistance.

This does not mean, however, that religion was completely by-passed. In the "Zukunft" the official policy was interpreted as a damper on pure polemics, but still permitting scholarly and scientific studies on different aspects of Judaism. Furthermore the "Zukunft" was a periodical catering to a more enlightened reading public than the SLP's weekly or daily which were for the average worker. An excellent example of this conciliatory approach is to be found in an article by Hilkovitz, which was a critical study of "The Flood":

No book in the world has had as remarkable a destiny as the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch is still a sacred work to the majority of civilized humanity, both Jewish and Christian, which may not be criticized, which may not be doubted, which must be accepted word for word as the will and command of God. The Orthodox believe blindly in the acts of creation, and are unconcerned whether these narrations conform with the teachings of modern science or not; they diligently follow all of the laws of Exodus, and never ask themselves whether such laws, written several thousand years ago for a half-savage people under conditions very different from the present, are still good for us with our modern education and our modern circumstances. The Freethinkers on the other hand, who do not believe in the Pentateuch, seldom take the trouble to study this book as cool and non-partisan critics. They see that the events described in the "sacred scriptures" are impossible, that they contradict science and healthy reason; they see that it would be foolish to obey its ancient barbaric laws, and they regard the Pentateuch with contempt and anger, as that book has implanted mankind with the most dangerous prejudices, and has obstructed the dissemination of knowledge for centuries.

And yet both parties are wrong, the one in its blind faith, the other in its blind unbelief. The Pentateuch is undoubtedly nonsense as a sacred book; but it possesses great value as one of the oldest historical works which have remained hidden until our time. [*Italics my own.*] If we disregard its [religious] importance, the Pentateuch nevertheless remains significant to us, since it shows us how our half-savage ancestors lived, how they thought, and in what they believed. (1)

Although Orthodoxy is quite pointedly hit on several points, the weapons employed were those of logic and reasons, weapons which were impartially brought to bear on doctrinaire Freethinkers as well. Furthermore Hil-kovitz went into the realm of archaeology to show parallels, and also discussed the Atlantis legend, all of which were areas of popular interest by virtue of current discoveries.

Another example of this purely rationalist approach to the question of religion, but with less concession to a popularizing style than Hillquit's, is Krantz's series on "God, Religion and Morality".⁽²⁾ He attempts to demolish institutional religion by proving that there is no intrinsic connection between God, religion, and morality -- or as he piquantly phrased it in the Yiddish idiom, they are "a trinity which adheres together as peas adhere to a wall".⁽³⁾ Essentially, his argument against the existence of God is in the classical atheist tradition. That he is ^aJewish atheist is displayed in his accusing the "Talmudists" of introducing the concepts of an afterlife, paradise, gehinnom and Messiah into Judaism de novo, to enable them to control the Jews through fear. That he is a dialectical Jewish atheist shows in his attack on free will:

Natural science proves to us that there is as much basis for talking about a free will in man, as there is, for example, for saying that water possesses the free will to boil when it is heated. ⁽⁴⁾

And finally, that he is a true Marxist, a dialectical materialist, emerges in his conception of morality. Morality in its true sense is not simply abstaining from doing wrong. Not stealing is still not the same as striving for such a society in which stealing will cease.

We must not be content with ourselves because we keep from doing wrong, but rather, we must do good; we must fight for social justice, because this constitutes man's true task.

And such a morality will reign over the world when the present capitalistic society, which is based upon warfare, upon the oppression of the weak and poor by the strong and wealthy -- shall vanish, and the truly humanistic doctrine of Socialism will become an actuality. (5)

In the two years of Krantz's editorship, these relatively placid rationalistic attacks are all that we find in the "Zukunft" of an anti-religious nature. When Cahan took over in 1894, even ~~in~~ here ~~do~~ we observe a change. A more concentrated campaign appears, attacking Judaism not as previously, through comparative mythology and through philosophy, but with additional weapons taken from the arsenal of Judaism itself. It is Benjamin Feigenbaum who produced nearly all of these articles, and he uses his considerable Jewish background to attack the Jewish religion by skilfully selecting Biblical and Rabbinic citations, and by drawing upon events and personalities in Jewish history.

Before examining this more polemic variety of writing, it is interesting to speculate on why this should suddenly flourish under Cahan's editorship. The reason is, most likely, Cahan's program of livening up the staid periodical. In the newspapers, daily and weekly, Krantz's patrician tastes held sway. Both the English and Yiddish general press were by now wallowing in sensationalism, but he continued printing information, enlightening materials and explanations of current events. The other papers were combatting the menace of the cheap novel by running serials, and he ran translations of French literature. Amidst all this luxury, the average reader

began to look forward to reading the articles which issued under Feigenbaum's byline. This popularity was caused by the natural dramatic flair of his writing. It was in his anti-religious polemics that he really shone, and although Krantz disapproved of this variety of writing, he chose to ignore it because of its apparent popularity. In his anti-Orthodox attacks Feigenbaum vented much of his venom on the Sarasohns, but finally went too far when he accused them of financial dishonesty. He was sued for libel and found guilty, with the "Abend-Blatt" forced to take the financial responsibility. Feigenbaum later joined the opposition to the "Abend-Blatt", which makes the fact of the "Blatt"'s ultimate closing-down through inability to pay the damages which the court had imposed on it, particularly ironical. *Style*

In the pre-libel-suit days it is easy to see why Cahan would be happy to feature the writings of this popular polemicist*. And Feigenbaum responded by producing a whole series of articles which attacked various concepts and practices by subjecting them both to ridicule and to critical examination. In March, 1894, he began with an article entitled "The True Character of the Old Jewish God", which matches the quality of some of Voltaire's polemics, (which may indeed have been Feigenbaum's source). This was followed

* There may be something beyond coincidence also in the fact that Feigenbaum became the secretary of the "Zukunft" when Cahan became editor in February 1894.

by a series of articles entitled "The Jewish Inquisition", which went into well-selected detail on the severity of Biblical and Rabbinic law, the methods of meting out capital punishment, excommunication, and the like. He next presented some "Biographies of Jewish Freethinkers", which included Elisha ben Abuyah, Chivi haBalki, and, for five issues, Maimonides. A further article of his on "Who Instituted Yom Kippur? Whence the Torah?" evoked some reader response, from two directions -- both the pro- and anti-religionists. His comments on the criticism he received from the latter are worthy of attention:

The second variety of fanaticism . . . is, so to say, materialistic fanaticism. The materialistic philosophy of history . . . tells us . . . that neither the will, the impulse, nor the imagination of any individuals . . . directed the history of mankind and shaped its events, but rather, everything that has come to pass with humanity came about through the material and economic conditions. . . . Now this doctrine has certain followers who, in this regard, are just as fanatical as religious people are with their religions. . . . Sometimes they are even more "pious" in their materialism than the other in his faith. . . . When I said that Ezra and the priests introduced Yom Kippur, and did not indicate (?) how this could stem from the material and economic conditions, then this constituted sinning against the holy belief in the individual providence of materialism. . . . Perhaps I will still have the opportunity to write an article on "The Limitations of the Materialistic Interpretation of History". (6)*

* Equally interesting is Cahan's comment after the article: That, which Comrade Feigenbaum has said . . . can also serve as a reply to certain remarks which have been directed to us by several comrades, concerning other articles in this periodical. We are in complete agreement with Comrade Feigenbaum's opinion. [Italics my own.]

From the rather impious way that he approaches doctrinaire Marxism, one might suppose that Feigenbaum was not quite the firebrand that ^{he} made himself out to be. Nevertheless he has no hesitation in attacking other Jewish atheists, even Socialists, who display a non-materialistic sentimental attitude towards Judaism. In a series entitled "Materialism in Judaism" ⁽⁷⁾ he flails out at an assorted group of targets. First, he attacks the Maskilim-Zionists who, although they are atheists, still regard "Yiddishkeit" as the source of values for Jews, and who maintain that these values can only be implemented by Jews in Palestine. Then he attacks the Socialist-Zionists who "will demonstrate to you beyond the shadow of a doubt that Socialism is to be found as an intrinsic part of the Jewish Torah". ⁽⁸⁾ He finds a third enemy to train his sights on:

An even stronger expression of the influence of the "spirit of Judaism over all humanity" fantasy in the ideas of another variety of "enlightened" Jews, who want to know nothing at all about Jewish "nationalism", who say that Jews have not been a separate nation for a very long time, that they are Frenchmen in France, Germans in Germany, Americans in America, and that this is fitting and proper. We refer to the bourgeois Jewish adherents of a "Reformed" Jewish religion.

Among these "Reformers" who have quite abolished the hope for a Jewish redemption and a recreation of a Jewish state . . . there also emerges the idea that Jews are the guiding light of humanity. . . . This, say the Jewish religious reformers, is the Jewish "Mission" And the Judaism that they consider as the "light of the world" is not the Judaism of kugel and ear-locks, of tzitzis and long beards, but also the "spirit", the fundamental philosophy in the Jewish teachings about morality, humanity and pure religiosity.

According to the ideas of these "Reformers", it would appear that we could do no greater favor for humanity than to preach the Jewish doctrine of morality, equality, and brotherhood (although all of these very laudable qualities are seldom found manifested by their pot-bellied . . . adherents), and that this will be the cure for all of mankind's ailments. (9)

Feigenbaum confronts all who would speak of something unique and precious in Judaism with the well-documented counter-claim that the laudable qualities are well outweighed by others, much less laudable, and equally "Jewish". His attitude towards Judaism, towards all religions, is that they are all vehicles of fanaticism and darkness.

All of the fine teachings, concepts, morals, are only historical manifestations of the changes which come about through the supreme-power which leads mankind along the road to progress, namely, the power of economic evolution. And whoever wishes to guide humanity along better ways must see that he makes use of this power. (10)

The continuation of this article and the whole of the other two which make up this series go on to explore Jewish history, to show where and under what circumstances the nobler values arose. His hypothesis, which he sets out convincingly to demonstrate, is that it is not the religious values which wreak an influence on the life situation, but rather the contrary, that it is the life situation which, under favorable circumstances evokes laudable values in religion. Much of his argument smacks strongly of Reform's teaching of "Progressive Revelation", which is rather ironic, in view of his expressed attitude towards the "Reformers".

Although Feigenbaum's articles dominate the "Zukunft"'s anti-religious pages between 1894-1897, they do not exhaust them. Of particular interest is a contest which the periodical ran, in the fall of 1895. Readers were requested to submit articles on the subject "Religion and Science" expressing the materialist viewpoint. The two articles which won the first and second prizes indicate views about religion which allow us to conclude, that neither many others besides Feigenbaum entertained anti-religious sentiments, or that he had succeeded in popularizing his views very quickly and effectively.

In view of the Socialist policy, laxly enforced though it was, of regarding religion as "a private matter", we may be grateful to Feigenbaum whose polemic urges defied stifling, and who therefore was able to give us a considerable insight into the anti-religious views of his group.

10: The Concept of "Jewish".

At this point, one question emerges from all of this material, a question which is basic to our whole understanding of the Jewish Socialist movement, namely: "In what way was this movement Jewish?". We have seen in the preceding section how the Jewish religion was attacked and completely rejected. The only elements of Judaism conceded as being specifically "Jewish", were those depicting the more primitive aspects of the religion. Anything noble and laudable they attributed to the influence of dialectical materialism as it moved through history. Therefore it is almost axiomatic that whatever the adjective "Jewish" meant as they applied it to themselves, it certainly had nothing to do with anything "Jewish" in Judaism.

We have also seen how they reject with equal vigor and vituperation the Zionists' claim that "Jewish" implies nationality. Bourgeois and Socialist Zionists alike are castigated for adhering to this regressive idea of nationalism. There is even an aspect of the apologetic when they attempt to justify their sponsorship of a separate Jewish labor movement. In Louis Miller's article on the contemporary union difficulties already alluded to, we read:

We are not the patriots of a separate "Jewish labor movement"; it is our wish that Jews should be members of the American unions; but we cannot pretend that we

do not know that under the present conditions, Yiddish-speaking labor organizations are a necessity; that without them, Jewish workers will never begin to join American unions as some optimists maintain; on the contrary, they will cease thinking about organizing altogether. (1)

We remarked previously that we are not particularly enthusiastic about a special Jewish movement. However, as long as the anti-Jewish persecutions in the old country are driving 30,000 new Jewish immigrants here per year, then it becomes unconditionally essential that such a movement exist. And once it does exist, then we must see that it is a healthy and a pure movement. (2)

Thus we observe that the single "Jewish" characteristic which they preserved was the use of the Yiddish language, as we observed in their designating the "Zukunft" from its very beginnings as "a monthly published by the Yiddish-speaking branches of the SLP". It is amusing to note how much they had in common ideologically with the "Reformers" whom they held in open contempt, even to the extent of paralleling the "Americans of the Mosaic persuasion" designation of the former with their own "international Socialists of the Yiddish-speaking persuasion".

We observe also the lack of genuine enthusiasm in even this concession to their Jewish origin. Had there been no large mass-immigration of Russian Jews, they would willingly have sloughed off even this last vestige of something "Jewish" to immerse themselves totally in the American movement -- as we find Morris Hillquit did in fact very shortly.

This general statement is true of the Jewish Socialists as a group. It is, however, unfair to certain individuals

in the movement, whom we should designate perhaps as Socialist Jews to distinguish them from the others, to whom "Jewish" was the adjective and not the noun. These men were Socialists out of the conviction that this was the best thing for the Jews. And they used the Yiddish language because they loved it. Morris Winchevsky is the embodiment of this type, and the essential nature of his Jewishly-oriented Socialism is to be found expressed in the powerful and tender phrases of his own writing, where he describes what he could accomplish if only he were a poet:

And when my wish would be fulfilled . . . ah, then with my songs I would comfort the broken hearts and would strengthen the exhausted hands; my voice would raise up the fallen and would straighten those who are bowed down; I would cause the despondent to rejoice, and bring light to those sunken in darkness; I would sweeten the lives of the embittered, and would encourage the dejected.

With my songs I would instil spirit into the oppressed, and into those whose love of life is languishing; I would befriend the lonely and protect the forsaken; I would comfort widows, and would assist orphans to their feet; I would make my song into a peal of liberty and my pen into a mighty sword, and with my song I would break into the fortresses of tyranny, as our ancestors with their rams' horns shattered the walls of Jericho.

. . . I would sing for those fettered in chains of dollars, and the chains would become as cobwebs, as the ropes binding Samson; I would raise my voice for those who had sold or hired themselves, those living in squalor and misery, and they would become free, brave and strong; with my song I would give them all spirit and hope for victory. I would not lull them to sleep as other poets do. I would encourage them on to the freedom struggle with my songs. (3)

11: Criticism of Party and Union Policies up to 1897.

In examining the union scene between 1892-1897, the remark was made that current union affairs were not discussed in the "Zukunft", except for an article by Miller in 1892 which deplored the situation of his time. Louis Miller repeated this service in December, 1896, but this second article belongs here rather than in the section devoted to union activities. This is because now, that we have studied the various aspects of the periodical and the movement during the first six years of the "Zukunft"'s publication, we may begin to consider a second interval, that of 1897-1902. In the introductory survey of the Socialist movement which was given in the early pages of this work in order to set the scene, this turbulent period was only sketchily presented. We may now begin to examine these second six years.

In December, 1896, an article appeared written by Louis Miller entitled "Where Does the Blame Lie?". This article was written after the Presidential Elections in November of 1896, in which the SLP's total vote dropped. This defeat served to increase the rumblings of discontent within the party which had been growing stronger in protest against the policies and tactics of DeLeon. In printing Miller's

anti-DeLeonist indictment of the SLP, Cahan, the editor of this SLP publication protected himself by stating:

We are printing this article without any alterations, just as we received it, as the opening article in a debate over the highly important question with which it deals. (1)

Miller insists that the prime cause for the SLP's decline in popularity is its rigid and doctrinaire approach.

With the exception of Catholic priests, there has been nobody recently as strict in regard to matters of faith as members of our party have become. . . . It may be that the Socialist party as an organization is stronger than it was [ten years ago]. Not so -- under any circumstances -- the Socialist movement. . . .

We are searching for the fault everywhere, but we refuse to look for it in ourselves. We know that we are disliked everywhere, that the labor-organizations have lost their trust in us, that we do not have one-hundredth of the influence on the American workers that we used to have; we comfort ourselves in that these organizations have lost their significance; our party press is beside itself for joy when it can report to its readers that these organizations are gradually perishing. It is out of this comfort, out of this joy that we anticipate our social deliverance. . . .

We destroyed Anarchism, and took over its weltanschauung as a legacy. When they were shown that their tactics were driving away the people, the Anarchists would also reply that one "revolutionary" aware of his purpose, was more important to them than a thousand workers only half aware. Then we would laugh at them; now we are doing exactly what they used to do, but unfortunately, there is no one to laugh at us. . . .

Our platform should not be watered down, but at the same time we should never forget for an instant that not all of those who would dilute Socialism are necessarily fools or clods. We must always keep in mind that what they don't understand today they can begin to understand tomorrow. We must always remember that we must have them for our purposes, that party-members or not, they are historically our class-comrades whom we should not and dare not alienate. . . .

Miller devastatingly reviews those SLP policies that have brought about this alienation:

Having eliminated the old "corrupt" trade-unionism, we were unable to fashion a better one in its place, and in this way we lost the single foundation for our agitation that we possessed. . . . Once we were involved in warfare, we could not come to a stop in the presence of the consequences of our dangerous tactics, and so one fine day we had to combine with the "Federation" to attack the "Knights"; another time, with the "Knights" to fight against the "Federation". Then, when we were driven away by both the "Knights" and the "Federation", we formed an "Alliance" in order to fight both. And so it was in all other areas. With the emergence of each new social movement we sought out, not those aspects whereby we might utilize them for our ends, but rather under what circumstances and in what way we should be able to destroy them; this is how we dealt with the Popularist movement, this is how we dealt with the Nationalist movement; and now we stand amazed and saddened and look for "causes" of why we are disliked everywhere and avoided by everyone. . . .

Once a party loses its sense of balance on one point, it can never retain its balance on others; its moral force dwindles even over its own membership, and voluntary self-sacrifice yields to enforced dogmas. Free criticism begins to disturb it, and it is thus that we may explain the fact that the whole party press is locked and barred to anyone who wishes to express an opinion which is not in accord with the opinions of the leading spirits of our party.* (2)

As Cahan promised, this article of Miller's was the prelude to a debate which lasted through six of the seven subsequent issues. The challenge was taken up by a (then) pro-DeLeonite, the caustic Benjamin Feigenbaum. With the aplomb of the veteran campaigner, Feigenbaum, in a taunting, semi-

* The fact that this criticism appears in an official SLP publication does not weaken his contention. As will be seen presently, Cahan too opposed this dogmatism. For the present we merely note Cahan's introductory comments which protect him with the party.

insulting style, brushes off Miller's contentions in a few words, and then proceeds to answer the original eight page article with a twelve page reply whose contention is that the fault lies in the basic conservatism of Americans. The debate picked up steam with Miller citing the same authorities that Feigenbaum had used, to prove that the Americans are not basically conservative. Following this up without an intervening Feigenbaum response Miller made the following statement, which we shall be referring to further on:

Socialism distinguishes itself from all other theories, including Anarchism, in that it does not build its movement according to various plans and programs, after certain social formulas, but rather all its plans, and blueprints are made, worked out and formulated in such a way, that it will be appropriate to those circumstances under which the movement exists. The tactics of scientific socialism change according to the different levels achieved by the process of the evolving proletariat, and these tactics are correct only when they do not hinder, but rather assist the proletariat to search out naturally all of the necessary levels which lead to Socialism. (3)

And Miller concludes his indictment of SLP policies and Feigenbaum's defence:

We are being punished; punished much more strongly, more harshly than we have deserved, perhaps. In a great many unions no one may mention a word against Socialism, nevertheless they American workingmen think very little of Socialism. And why? Because our fervor blazed too strongly, and as the saying goes, we often poured out the baby with the bathwater.

The Socialist Labor Party dares not interfere with union affairs. Absolute neutrality is the only tactic which the party must observe. Any other will be catastrophic for it. (4)

Feigenbaum's two-issue long response to Miller's two consecutive articles were in the best tradition of the trained polemicist. His attack on the citations which Miller produced to refute his hypothesis of the Americans' innate conservatism, are full of innuendo and insinuations of intellectual dishonesty. (Miller's articles were less vituperative, but this may well be due to his relative lack of experience.) He insists that his original contention still stands, and the only concession he makes to Miller's charges of poor SLP tactics is that this is all very true, but that it is of secondary importance in assessing the guilt for the party's poor showing in the elections. Where they are faulty, the policies of the SLP can be improved. And one of these improvements must be in the field of propaganda, to overcome the true enemy, American natural conservatism. Miller had taunted him by pointing out that the policy of "hammering away" was synonymous with "fighting", and equally meaningless unless Feigenbaum spelled out something specific and concrete.

By "hammering away" I mean propagandizing with the strongest possible unified forces, and the creating of an overwhelming, mighty, Socialist torrent by means of strongly-united energetic party action -- as everybody understands, except Miller. Who says that we have no control over the primary cause, the conservative folk-character of the American? We have a measure of control to the extent that propaganda can be effective. Our basic concern must be to see that we remain firm, united, and disciplined, and through our unified movement, no

matter how small it may be, by acting energetically and making ourselves known, in order to create such a tide, that it will sweep up even the practical Americans, who know only "nothing succeeds like success".

This fear of splintering the SLP would seem to be the burden of Feigenbaum's argument against Miller:

According to my way of thinking, if a party member is upset because he would "reform" the party according to his opinion, whereas other members have another opinion, he should still go along with it patiently, and guard its unity and integrity, because during such times of great difficulty, we are in need of just such unity and integrity. (5)

It is not easy to see why a difference of opinion of this variety should have engendered such rancor as we find expressed in this journalistic debate. The answer is, of course, that it was not the election results which gave rise to this outburst of Miller's. They may have catalyzed his reaction, but the reaction itself had been in existence for some time already, and was not confined to Miller alone by any means. Even before Miller's article, in July of 1896, the "Zukunft"'s policy of refraining from discussing current party affairs was broken by Cahan himself. After apologizing for this breach as "unfortunately not only an appropriate action, but even more, a sad and bitter necessity," Cahan informs us of the issue that precipitated his action:

The proprietors and publishers of the "Zukunft" consist of the collective Yiddish-speaking Socialist organizations of the whole country. The question of the day which we have in mind to broach here, is a question between these Socialist organizations on the one hand, and the one organization which is in possession of the "Arbeiter

"Zeitung" and "Abend-Blatt" -- the "Arbeiter Zeitung Publishing Association" -- on the other hand. The "Arbeiter Zeitung" and "Abend-Blatt" are dealing with the former in a very insulting tone and employing unusually provocative and insinuating language -- to say the least. Except for the members of the "Publishing Association", the whole of the large number of Jewish Socialists, all of the Jewish party-members of America, those self-sacrificing Jewish champions of the ideals of the SLP, those who with their own exertions helped to give birth to the "Arbeiter Zeitung" and the "Abend-Blatt" and to assist their growth; those who have worked and continue to work . . . on behalf of Socialist agitation --- these have no organ in the current controversy, whereas their opponents, our comrades of the "Publishing Association" have two such organs, which have become weapons against them, the members of the Yiddish-speaking organizations.

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 For the past two to three years the Jewish Socialists have been divided over question of the system under which their press should be published and controlled, and this has become the source of contentions which have become increasingly sharper. . . . The "A.Z." and the "A.-B." however make fun of those opposed to the present system, and exert themselves to create the impression that it is only a few who are dissatisfied and the whole matter is not even worth spending time on.

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 Who are the members of the "Publishing Association"? Such members of the SLP in good standing who are admitted. (6)

Cahan points out the the rules of admission; first, a candidate must be proposed by five members of the "Association"; second, he must be propdsed at three meetings; third, at least three of his sponsors must be present at these three meetings; and fourth, he must receive a majority vote. Thus it was almost impossible for anybody opposing the present publication policy to be admitted to the policy-making body. Cahan lashes out at the undemocratic nature of this body, inasmuch as it was responsible for publishing national organs, and yet its membership was made up of one faction of the New York Jewish Socialists.

(His labeling of the "Association" as a "House of Lords" must, ~~in later years, have~~, seemed ironic to those who were watching him operate the "Forverts" in a manner amply described as "Czarist".) He comes out for a more representative "House of Commons" system, as one example of which he presents his own "Zukunft". A board of arbitration, which the SLP had set up to investigate this dispute in its Yiddish-speaking ranks, had brought in a decision which left things much as they were, and this too Cahan points out critically.

Already in June ¹⁸⁹⁶ a general meeting of the New York Yiddish-speaking sections had voted to bring a motion before the national SLP convention proposing that the Yiddish-language press be completely sundered from the SLP and "given over to the Jewish members of the party". (7) The convention of the Yiddish branches of the SLP meeting in August was to vote on this, and its approval was anticipated.

Thus we see that a split between moderates and party regulars was already well under way in 1896, dating almost from the time that DeLeon gained his power in the SLP. Both the post-mortem debate on the elections, and this dispute over the policy to be followed by the Yiddish press are parts of this same controversy. It is the latter dispute which was of major concern to the Jewish movement and to the "Zukunft", and we will now proceed to follow its course.

12: The Party Schism of 1897.

The first major schism in the ranks of the Yiddish-speaking SLP'ers took place in January of 1897. At a meeting of the "Publishing Association", a sizable minority walked out of the meeting, after being defeated 71-52 on the question of the control of press policy. The minority of 52 was headed by none other than Louis Miller, who came out with a blistering attack on the vested interests who were controlling the "Association". This walkout sparked a party-wide split. Nearly all of the Jewish trade unions not affiliated with the UHT joined the dissident Socialists, and together they decided to publish an opposition paper. At the end of January a two-day conference was held by representatives of twenty-three Jewish Socialist organizations from seven cities, and it was decided to publish a daily entitled the "Forverts", Abraham Cahan was decided upon as its editor, which position he accepted.

It is important to remember that these men considered themselves not as rebels, but still as a "loyal opposition". The fiction of "press clubs" was set up so that the Jewish SLP branches would not be put into the position of coming out against an official party organ, which DeLeon proclaimed the "Abend-Blatt" to be. In the "Zukunft", Winchevsky clearly proclaimed that this was a struggle in which the dissidents were acting out of the best interests of the SLP, as they under-

stood them to be, and delivered a telling stroke in accusing the party regulars of being "conservatives".

The opponents of free speech . . . fall into two separate categories: those who understand the issues full well, but act as if they do not, and those of the second class, who are the conservative elements in the movement, and who fear every innovation and every reform, and cosequently also every open opinion. The cleverer among them know, and the more stupid among them sense, that self-criticism, or party-criticism in the press, will force them either to turn aside and follow a new path, or else to get out of the way entirely so as not to obstruct our general progress. Knowing this, or sensing this, they are fighting on behalf of the pay-your-dues-and-shut-up system in the party with all of the means, which conservatism has directed against the revolutionary spirit everywhere and at all times.

In presenting the standpoint of the dissidents, Winchevsky places loyalty to Socialism at the head of the list:

1) Socialism is a theory, based upon scientific and historical facts, and not a religion, handed down from a new Sinai. Socialism is our persuasion, and not our faith, and the more convinced we are of its truth and ultimate triumph, the less fear we need have of discussion.⁽¹⁾

In hoping to remain a part of the SLP while rebelling against the official policy, the Jewish moderates were being unduly optimistic. The "Forverts" appeared on April 22, 1897. In mid-June, the the SLP expelled its Jewish branch in Philadelphia for endorsing the "Forverts". On June 26th, at a time when all its supporters were out of New York City on an excursion sponsored by the newspaper, DeLeon quickly called together a meeting, which railroaded through a motion to reorganize the Jewish sections, which, in effect, excommunicated them from the SLP.

Although this move was aimed ~~only~~ at the New York faction, its effects reverberated throughout the Jewish sections of the movement. A convention was called for the 31st of July in which all of the SLP's Yiddish-speaking branches, and also other ^{Jewish} Socialist organizations and unions participated. Its purpose was to decide what to do. Early in July the "Forverts" had already begun proposing that the Jewish Socialist movement affiliate itself with the newly-formed "Social Democracy of America". This movement, headed by Eugene Debs, originated in the mid-West, and contained many utopian aspects which were distasteful to the Jewish scientific-Socialists. One Jewish branch was in existence in New York, among whose founders were Jacob Gordin, Cahan's one time publishing partner Dr. Charles Rayevsky, and Joseph Barondess. Throughout July it was very active in attempting to convince the excommunicated SLP'ers to join this movement.

The convention was faced with two problems: first, should the expelled sections join the Social Democracy, or should they found a new separate Jewish Socialist party, like the "Bund" in Russia; and second, what should the non-expelled sections do. By convention-time the leadership was already convinced, but it required the support of the delegates to approve of affiliation with Debs' movement. This they did, by a four-to-one majority. Equally overwhelming was the decision of the convention that all non-expelled ^{Jewish} SLP sections

leave the party and join in with this action of affiliation. The Jewish Socialists hurled a last shaft at their old party: "We declare that the SLP has forsaken the grounds of scientific Socialism, and therefore is going under a false title, when it designates itself as "scientifically Socialistic". (2) Some misgivings were stated in approving of the affiliation with the Social Democracy, but they felt that through effective propaganda from within the new party, they could successfully combat and eliminate its utopian and non-scientific policies.

The erstwhile "Yiddish-speaking sections of the SLP" then transferred the "Zukunft" to the "Forverts Association". By this time, the "Zukunft" was in poor financial state. It had never been subsidized by the SLP, and when it began to speak out, even as mildly as it did, against the official policies of the party, the SLP probably went out of its way to affect its circulation and income. The decision was made to suspend its publication, and the following statement was issued to explain the reason for this unhappy necessity:

We have done our duty, and it is upon the heads of our slanderers that the guilt will fall, when after all its exertions, the "Zukunft" will have to cease publication as a result of all the disgraceful means which they sought in order to injure its credit. (3)

Thus it was that the issue of August, 1897, was the last number of the original series of the "Zukunft" to be published. Through its last issues all that appeared in print related to the events which were rocking the party, were the single article of Winchevsky, and the series between Miller

and Feigenbaum, which carried right through into the July issue. The events of July ultimately vindicated Miller, by Feigenbaum's own argument. Early in the debate he had discarded Miller's contention that the SLP's policies constituted its greatest weakness, by arguing that in other countries where the Socialist parties had departed from the true Socialist way, they had been superceded.

Why then has such a thing not come to pass in America during this same time? . . . Opportunities have been many for Socialism to have gone off in another direction. . . . Would all of these Socialistic attempts have failed if the the ground were favorable for a powerful Socialist movement and our party's policies constituted the only obstruction? All of these attempts surely provided sufficient roots from which a Socialist plant could sprout alongside our party, and shoot up better and more perfect than its roots in the same way that scientific Socialism grew out of utopian Socialism? (4)

Feigenbaum's statement proved to be prophetic. Out of the grass roots of the midwest grew up "Social Democracy of America", which itself was shortly destined to produce the Social Democratic Party, and then the Socialist Party, the most successful of the Socialist political parties in the history of the United States.

13: The Schism of 1899, and a Survey of the American Jewish Socialist Movement, 1897 - 1902.

With the departure of the "Forverts" faction (as it was slightly referred to) from the SLP, the radical Jewish movement entered upon sorry days. Splinterization continued like a chain reaction. In September of the same year, 1897, the Socialist union movement also cracked open, with twenty-two of the UHT's twenty-five affiliated unions bolting the SLP's "Alliance", which included the UHT, and organized the Hebrew Federated Trades. Thus the "Forverts" group was reenforced in its anti-SLP campaign.

All was not placid in the Social Democracy either. In June, 1898, one year after its founding, this infant movement split over the question of colonization. In voting on whether to stress political action or founding Socialist colonies, the convention approved of the latter policy, 53 to 37. This minority thereupon walked out of the convention, and immediately organized a new party, dedicated to political and other practical action -- the Social Democratic Party of America. Among those delegates who walked out and who took part in organizing the new party were Winchevsky, Miller and Barondess. Their action was unanimously approved of by their organizations, and in December there was already a convention of the Jewish sections of the SDP.

Meanwhile, the SLP was attempting to repair the damage.

The reorganization of the Yiddish-speaking sections, (that plan which had been the last straw for the "Forverts" group), was carried out, and by the end of 1897 its Jewish convention could number delegates from twenty-eight sections. A new periodical was founded to replace the "Zukunft", entitled "Die Naie Zeit", under the editorship of Feigenbaum and Krantz, but this effort lasted only for one year. The final schism in the SLP was imminent.

Dissatisfaction was strong in the SLP over DeLeon's autocratic dogmatism, and particularly his trade-union policies. What had probably held the party together until then was the fear of ^{the} dissidents that they would find themselves without a party. We have already observed Feigenbaum's obsession in his debate with Miller, over maintaining party unity and solidarity. We have also observed the readiness with which the excommunicated Jewish groups joined forces with the utopian Social Democracy, in order to be a part of some Socialist organization. In 1899 the new SDP under Debs and Berger was both vigorous (in comparison to the SLP), and was committed to practical action. Thus it was that in July, 1899, the SLP split for the last time. The loyalists went their own way, and the "kangaroos" (as DeLeon contemptuously called them), went a-courting after the SDP. This match was not so easily arranged. They sent representatives to the SDP convention in 1900 to request a merger, and received strong support.

However Debs and Berger had suspicions as to ^{the} honorable nature of their intentions, and vetoed the match. Much of the SDP failed to appreciate the feelings which its leaders had on the risk involved in bringing in a solid unit which had its own already-existing leaders, and which owed no allegiance to the SDP. This misunderstanding of the role of a structure's leadership by the unsophisticated membership, almost split the SDP. So it came about that in 1901, the "kangaroos" and the heads of the SDP came to an agreement, and the new Socialist Party (SP) was formed.

Such a reconciliation did not take place quite so easily within the Jewish Socialist group. It was simpler in the case of the Jewish unions, because, we observed earlier, the events of 1897 had left the UHT with three of its twenty-five unions. This emaciated UHT combined with the Federated Hebrew Trades to form, at the end of 1899, the United Jewish Trades. In 1900 this became affiliated with the AFofL. In the party and press, however, a rift remained between the "Forverts" faction and the "kangaroos". Even though such SLP stalwarts as Krantz and Feigenbaum had also left in 1899, the memory of hostility and personal invective was still too fresh. Besides the excommunicates of 1897 were entrenched, albeit precariously, in their own newspaper, while the "kangaroos" were now those who lacked an organ of expression. From the national aspect, they were all SP'ers. But in the Jewish

world, they continued to fight their former feuds.

Krantz and Feigenbaum undertook to publish a "kangaroo" weekly --in fact two weeklies were attempted in that period of 1899-1900, "Die Folks Zeitung" and "Der Sozial Demokrat"-- but met with no success. The "Abend-Blatt" had, of course, remained with the SLP, but found the going difficult, partly as the result of the financial obligation imposed on the paper when the Sarasohns had won their libel suit.*

Meanwhile the "Forverts" had been having its difficulties. In 1897 when publication was begun, almost from the beginning new controversy developed. Although the SLP spoke of the dissidents as the "Forverts" faction, this group had no unity or community of purpose. It was made up of people who were disgruntled with the SLP for a variety of reasons, so that when it came to publishing a newspaper, disputes cropped up over what it should contain, and how it should be edited. As the duly elected editor, Cahan saw this as his opportunity to produce a newspaper which would have wide appeal. However he was confronted with a sizable group whose concept of a Socialist paper was merely the "Abend-Blatt", but published by them. One feature which Cahan approved of, which was found in both the American press and the "Blatt", was that of giving opposition opinions no space, even to the extent of eliminating polemical debates, even such as he had himself permitted between

* See page 69.

Miller and Feigenbaum in the "Zukunft". At least this was the occasion which he used as an excuse to resign. At this time Cahan still visualized a literary career for himself in the English language, so that when Lincoln Steffans offered him a position on the staff of college graduates that he was getting together for the reorganized "Commercial Advertiser", Cahan gladly accepted. This was certainly an occasion when the distant field was as green as it looked, at least in comparison to that of the Yiddish Socialist press. He still contributed occasional articles to the "Forverts", however, even during these years in the English press.

After Cahan's resignation in 1898, the "Forverts" carried on a hand-to-mouth existence. The "Forverts" Association, which had been founded on a basis of giving representation to all sympathetic organizations and groups, soon became the responsibility of a few interested individuals. These were young intellectuals for the most part who were simultaneously pursuing their professional educations, so that their working hours on the paper would be determined by the hours that they were free of classes. Louis Miller was more interested in getting his law career off to a good start than in working on the "Forverts", but he managed to be of assistance, particularly at times when it looked as if the paper would have to suspend publication. This situation was made even more chaotic by factional disputes among the

"Zukunft" personnel along doctrinal lines.

Despite the decline in the activity of the Socialist press, the general Yiddish press saw continued growth during this period, and even the emergence of new newspapers. In 1901 Jacob Saperstein began to publish the "Morgen Zhournal", a daily which featured the religious and anti-labor attitudes. In addition it was hostile to political Zionism, preferring some degree of assimilation in preference to this irreligious movement. This paper, merged with the "Tag", is still published.

Another, less successful, daily was begun in June of 1902 by some of the Americanized Jewish interests as represented by Louis Marshall. A need was felt for a newspaper for the immigrants which would wean the immigrants away from the unions, Tammany Hall, orthodoxy, and all of the other features which were regarded by the publishers as undesirable. "Die Yiddishe Velt" was provided with a rather heterodox staff. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, a widely popular lecturer, was at its head, and the bulk of its membership was made up of such Socialist and Anarchist journalists as Krantz, Frumkin, Gorin and Morris Rosenfeld. Both its subject matter and style were not to the taste of the Yiddish-reading public, and after a short career, which featured a strike of its radical staff, the "Velt" folded.

This period of decline in the Socialist movement is clearly depicted in a retrospective article of Abraham

Liesin:

The former "Zukunft" perished because of moral consumption. The fire of dissent which had at that time just broken out in the movement, had destroyed any possibility that our comrades might do that slow, patient work demanded in a monthly publication. They lost their patience and began to chase after immediate results, which could be achieved right at the moment, and with which the enemy could be confronted. They could not expect this of a periodical, and so their whole attention, energy and brain-power came to be swallowed up by the daily press.

Not only at every election, but also at every commonplace meeting was it deemed necessary to blare it out in the daily press, in order to display their full power and glory. . . . Every faction used up its last ounce of strength in capturing adherents -- not for Socialism, but for itself -- not permanently, but for the time being -- not from among the huge public, but from among fellow-Socialists. . . . And after all this, we would be surprised when we would complete one terrible election campaign after another! (1)

Nothing more need be said about this period of 1897-1902, to describe its impact on the Jewish Socialist scene.

There were Socialists who were not so easily led astray. They were the ones who were still able to live life with a certain amount of reality, and the ones who were still able to grasp the living differences of opinion, and to keep sharp and disagreeable. This we have seen to be necessary in certain European countries. The spirit of criticism, reflection, and introspection is to be found hovering about everywhere in the Socialist world at present, everywhere that we direct our eyes. It is not only in the daily press, but also in many secret principles. (2)

We had observed that the events in the Jewish Socialist area were paralleling what was going on in American Socialist circles. The phenomena of conspiracy and schism were not

14: The Revisionist Heresy Appears in America.

Having ended the preceding section with some remarks by Abraham Liesin, the rising young poet and journalist, we may well begin this present section with his observations as to what happened to cause the Jewish Socialists to be in this sad state of affairs.

Great numbers of Socialists were jostled out of the old pale of the party, and pushed into the ranks of the Liberals, whereas those remaining became even more fiercely fixed in rigid partisan schism. . . . Fragment after fragment of the former faith was cast off, and the one faction sank into the hellish abyss of the opportunistic heresy, the other -- into the deepest depth of Marxist orthodoxy. It did not take long until a third faction emerged. The golden mean did not permit many to go to either extreme, and so they began to return. This took place on the part of both sides simultaneously. Those returning encountered their opposite numbers on the way, they exchanged greetings peacefully, and betook themselves to the task of putting together a new, third group.

Thus it came about that we achieved a heterogeneous Social Democracy. Under other and better conditions, these events would not have appeared so deadly. The more that Socialism ceases being only a fine-sounding phrase, the more it works itself into real life situations, then the more it must come to grips with living reality, and the more it will find place for endless differences of opinion, more or less sharp and disagreeable. This we have come to see recently in certain European countries: the spirit of criticism, reflection, and introspection is to be found hovering about everywhere in the Socialist world at present, everywhere they are airing not only many sacrosanct words, not only many sacrosanct tactical methods, but also many sacrosanct principles. (1)

We had observed that the events in the Jewish Socialist area were paralleling what was going on in American Socialist circles. The phenomena of controversy and schism were not

unique to the Yiddish-speaking sections, nor were they, as Liesin points out significantly, confined to the American movement. Something was happening to scientific Socialism throughout the world, and this 'something' had its roots in the very fact that Socialist parties were beginning, here and there, to achieve some degree of success, some beginnings of popularity. It was in the most successful, the most popular of all Socialist parties, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, that this movement-within-a-movement acquired a name -- or rather, two names: one, descriptive -- "revisionism"; the other, after its founder -- "Bernsteinism".

In Germany after 1890, the Social-Democratic Party was permitted to operate openly and to take an active part in elections and government. Thus for the first time, the dogmas of Karl Marx were exposed to the rough and tumble of real life. Furthermore the economic prosperity was breaking down the class barriers upon which Marx had based so much of his theory, making the application of the master's words to the contemporary situation hazardous. The Party was now trying to gain votes and win elections, and it began to find that hewing exactly to the line of orthodox Socialism was a different thing in practice than it had been in the more peaceful days of simple discussion and argumentation.

Confronted by a society which was not evolving in the way that Marx had predicted, involved in a parliamentary system where the SDP had to win votes and seats, one of the Party's leading spokesmen proposed a revision of classical Marxism. -

In the late 1890's, Edward Bernstein began to publically recommend policies which were repudiations of Marx. Instead of policies based on a theory of deteriorating social conditions, which were in fact not taking place, he proposed others founded upon the situation which they were facing. The SDP could only achieve success if it based its policies on "the growth of social wealth and of the social productive forces, in conjunction with general social progress, and, particularly, in conjunction with the intellectual and moral advance of the working classes themselves."⁽²⁾ He forsook the concept of unremitting class-conflict, and recommended collaboration with all "progressive" forces in society. Although he never rejected Marx's ultimate goals, Bernstein stressed the day-to-day experiences of the Socialist movement as the more important. It was the evolutionary rather than the revolutionary aspect of Socialism that required the greatest attention, in his opinion.

It can be seen how this approach could cause a furor in the staid doctrinaire inner circles of the German SDP. This furor was reflected throughout the Socialist world, for which Germany was a kind of Mecca at that time. As the U.S.S.R. was to the Communists of the world during the 1920's and '30's, so too was the German SDP to the world's Marxists at the turn of the century. And so if Bebel and Kautsky expressed disapproval of Bernsteinism, the Socialist parties of the world

joined in. The following appeared in the "Zukunft":

In recent years we have heard so much and read so much about the "crisis" in Marxism and the "revision" of Socialism, that it would be interesting to take stock . . . of what has emerged from all of this talk, of the extent to which the old theories of "obsolescent" Marxism have shown themselves to be wrong, of how many of them have survived untouched by this criticism, and of what new theories have been erected on the sites of the old theories, which have been destroyed by the criticism of the Revisionists.

And here we must immediately comment that the whole Revisionist movement has accomplished nothing in the nature of a positive theory; we may even say nothing in the nature of a single new thought has been produced by it. . . . All . . . Revisionists find their pleasure in destroying, leaving the reconstruction to other hands. Their sole labor consists in criticizing that which the Marxists have accomplished with their work to the present. (3)

We have the greatest respect for Edward Bernstein as a noble and learned man, but we must say that his ways are beyond comprehension!

Here is a sample of his intelligence: over 3,000,000 voters cast their votes for Socialist candidates in Germany in an election campaign one of whose chief aspects was to administer a real slap to the Kaiser's face. With the whole weight of his authority, the Kaiser . . . called upon the workers to repudiate . . . the Socialists. The workers responded to this with over 3,000,000 Socialist votes. . . . So along comes Bernstein and desires that, as a result of this, elected Socialists should, you should pardon the expression, go to pay homage to the Kaiser and his court, in order to . . . be able to obtain the post of vice-president of the Reichstag! (According to their strength, the Socialists now have the right to demand this position. Except that a vice-president of the Reichstag must go to the court of the Kaiser and there pay him homage.)

Would this not be an act of treachery in view of the express anti-monarchical commission which the voters handed to the Socialists? Bernstein believes that going to the Kaiser is nothing more than a ceremony, which can do no harm. (4)

That Revisionism was to be disapproved of elsewhere than in Germany is indicated by references to France, where Juarez had shocked the orthodox Socialists of the republic and the world by allowing one of his party leaders, Alexandre Millerand, to take a cabinet post in a coalition government; (5) and to Italy, where Turatti, "a kind of Bernsteinite", resigned his seat because he disagreed with the party. (6) Even in the United States was "opportunism" to appear and be scolded, particularly when its perpetrator was none else than Victor Berger himself. During a municipal campaign in Milwaukee, then "the reddest" city of the United States, the local SP had not run candidates for the posts of city judges. Berger advised the Socialists to vote for one of the capitalist candidates in preference to the other. Thus was born "the Berger Incident". And thus ran the criticism: Berger was wrong for advising; the Milwaukee Socialists were wrong for going along with Berger; they were furthermore faulty in that they failed to run candidates for city judge, which fact precipitated the sad affair. The "Zukunft" rejoices that the heresy of "opportunism" is a localized affair:

Comrade Berger committed a grave error, and it is very pleasing to note that outside the borders of Wisconsin, the "opportunistic epidemic" found very scant support, and that the first "practical" opportunistic experiment evoked such a sweeping protest and condemnation. (7)

By the whole of the Socialist movement, is one of what appears to be deliberate self-delusion. This self-delusion is applied

In approaching the problem of Revisionism, the "Zukunft" asks the question "why". It notes how frequently in the history of Marxism we find instances of parties, which after a period of rapid growth and development, will enter into a period of internal criticism and conflict, which in turn gives way to a renewed period of growth and further development. The quite "natural" reason which is given is, that in the initial popularity, there is a large influx of vigorous but imperfectly educated freshmen Socialists.

Furthermore there are also non-proletarian elements, members of the ruling classes -- not to mention bourgeois intellectuals, former liberals, radicals, philanthropists, and ordinary humanists, -- whose old ideological edifices, built upon a capitalist foundation, have been destroyed, (who) often rescue the ship of their ideals in the secure haven of Socialism.

This is followed by the rather astonishingly accurate prediction:

It is self-evident, that the larger a party is, and the quicker the rate of its growth, the greater the number of proselytes whom it admits. The young Russian-German (Jewish) author, Blank, has recently demonstrated . . . that the German Social-Democracy has already acquired a large percentage of such converts, and will continue to admit this variety of member. Even though his conclusions, that because of this the party is departing more and more from the proletarian way and is becoming increasingly a general party of the people, are false . . . we must nevertheless admit that all of these converts do have a certain influence . . . on the party. (8)

The whole attitude displayed towards the question of Revisionism in the "Zukunft", an attitude presumably shared by the whole of the Socialist movement, is one of what appears to be deliberate self-delusion. This self-delusion is applied

to the German situation in the following steps: 1) Marx was right; 2) Anybody who doubts Marx's perfection is wrong; 3) Therefore Bernstein -- and Revisionism -- are wrong; 4) Revisionism is a natural phenomenon, explainable by the party's success; 5) Revisionism will ultimate reform into pristine Marxism. Evidence of this last hope was seen in the fact that the Revisionists remained within the German SDP, accepted party discipline, and displayed absolute unity and solidarity at the party congresses.⁽⁹⁾ That this "unity" was indicative, not of the weakness of the Revisionist minority, but of its increasing strength, is clearly seen by the fact that it was not expelled from the party by the orthodox leadership. The Bernsteinites understood that time was working for them, although it was not until the first World War that this faction clearly became dominant.

In examining the Socialist Party of America we can see why this illusion was maintained. The great advantage which the SP claimed for its interpretation of Socialism, over that of the utopian variety of the Social Democracy group, was that it was scientific Socialism, Marx's Socialism, based on the inexorable laws of history, nature and the universe, and that its ultimate triumph was predestined by the very nature of things. To admit that Marx was imperfect meant, in fact, to destroy the whole foundation of scientific Socialism's special claim. Thus the taint of Revisionism in the

Socialist party which was the example for the whole world's Socialists, must -- like the nonexistence of the Emperor's new clothes -- be denied. Also by constantly and vociferously attacking Bernsteinism, it made it easier to overlook the fact that the Socialist Party of America was itself, in fact, Revisionist.

The Socialist Party of America was quite different from the Socialist Labor Party in several significant respects. Most obvious were its origin and make-up. The SLP was largely a foreign importation, made up as it was of immigrant Socialist groupings, for the most part. In contrast to this, the SP was, by virtue of its Social-Democratic segment, an indigenous American movement. It had strong roots in the remnants of such parties as the Populist and Greenbacks, and the veneer of Marxism which it acquired was never a thick one. It had been the SLP which had stood for, and continued to stand for orthodox Marxism. Both its political and labor policies had failed to stand up in practice, and in selecting their own methods, the new SP adapted the pragmatic -- or you may call it opportunistic -- approach, which came to be called Revisionism.

And how did the Jewish members of the SP react to all of these stirrings in the Socialist world? Here are some excerpts from a report on the Amsterdam Congress in 1904:

So-called 'Revisionism' is not the product of a few thinkers who have turned heretic against so-called 'orthodox Marxism', but it is the product of life itself, of the greater and broader struggle which the Socialist parties have to conduct under present-day circumstances. . . . They are stressing a new trend in Social-Democracy, a trend with which we shall have to reckon increasingly, the stronger and more numerous the Socialist host becomes.

.
 If the Jauresists and 'Revisionists' are truly going a little too far along the new road for the present day Social-Democracy, then it is just as bad as holding fast to the old road, paying no attention to the demands which our time is making, to take part in the reforming of capitalist society, to the extent that this is possible. (10)

And when we see the name signed to the end of this article, we are more than slightly surprised to find the name of -- Philip Krantz!

It should not be surprising at this point to think of the Jewish Socialists as Revisionists. It was the "Forverts" faction that had been represented at the Social Democracy convention, which joined in the formation of the SDP in 1898. What Jews remained in the SLP, were among the "kangaroos" of 1899. But it was not in bolting from the SLP that the Jewish Socialists revealed their breach with orthodox Marxism. In the very fact of retaining -- of insisting on retaining -- a distinct Jewish identity, these men had irrevocably turned their faces away from pure Marxism, and towards that form of Revisionism which was to become dominant in the Socialist world, national Socialism.

15: The Emergence of Jewish Nationalism in Russia.

Just as in the case of Jewish Socialism, the origins of Jewish Revisionism must be sought in Russia. The tracing of its geneology is to be found in an article in which there is nothing at all mentioned of this heresy, an article giving the history of the Russian Jewish Workers' Federation, the "Yiddisher Arbeiter Bund" --- universally known as simply, the "Bund".

The Jewish participants in the Polish insurrection of 1831, were undoubtedly fiery revolutionaries, but the majority of them -- quite removed from Socialism, and even farther removed from being Jews. Those were the Jews whom we now call Moses' Poles*. . . . They were "revolutionaries" but not "Socialists", and not at all "Jews".

The Jews of the insurrection of 1863 were all fiery revolutionaries and nearly all true Socialists . . . but very poor Jews. They were not concerned with the Jewish masses. . . . We may generally say . . . that the Jewish '63ers were "revolutionaries" and "Socialists", but not at all Jews. (1)

This was the point to which we traced the origin of the Jewish Socialist immigrants of the 1870's and '80's, although an editorial footnote points out correctly that Morris Winchevsky was an exception to this attitude of disinterest. It is really from here that something new enters the picture. The writer of the article continues grandly -- (and his very grandiosity is significant):

Every social movement has its immanent . . . , its

* The Yiddish phrase, "Moishe Rabbenu's Poliaken", loses something in the translation. It would seem to be a derogatory derivative of a phrase like "Poles of the Mosaic persuasion".

intrinsic laws, according to which it grows and evolves. . . . These immanent laws have their roots sunk deep in the social organism, in the living and working together of a particular society. (Footnote by editor: The living and working together in a society themselves, i.e. its customs, culture, art, laws, etc., furthermore have their roots in the economic conditions of the society. . . .) These particular laws give every social movement a certain direction, a certain configuration, a certain character, and a certain form. Individuals, . . . the very leaders of the movement, cannot lead it along the way which they, the leaders, hold to be the proper one, if the way leads in a different direction from that which its immanent laws have fore-ordained for it. . . . Thus the "good intentions" of the leadership plays quite a trivial role.

This is however true only when the movement is, in fact, a "social movement", . . . a "mass-movement", i.e., when it embraces large and broad social strata. In the beginning, however, at the time that the movement is being born, while it still involves only small groups, then the leaders play an important role, then they are able to . . . impart to it a particular configuration, according to their "good intentions". . . . However this alien configuration of the newly-born movement is destined to be short-lived. The more that the movement grows in breadth and in depth, the broader the social strata that it captures, the more adherents it can count, in a word, the closer it comes to being a "mass-movement", the more it loses its former individual character, the more it alters that alien configuration that its first leaders gave to it . . . until it loses it entirely and takes on its own gestalt, its own character, in accordance with its own immanent laws.

. . . . The truth of the above ideas can be clearly seen in the Jewish labor movement in Russia. "The Jewish labor movement has from its very inception assumed a particular character", so writes . . . the central organ of the "Bund". . . . The "particular character" . . . is nothing else but its specifically-Jewish -- or more briefly, its "national character". . . . "The Jewish nation has specific needs and requirements, and only with its own forces can it achieve to a level that its voice be listened to."

The "specific needs" which the "Jewish nation" has, it has had not only since Dr. Herzl rendered the world fortunate with his little book "Der Judenstaat" -- as the political Zionists believe -- or since the fourth congress of the "Bund" which adopted the "national point" into

its program . . . the Jewish nation has these "special needs", not as a pre-Creation endowment, but they have interwoven with it and they have become an intrinsic part of it. . . . And inasmuch as "the strength of the Jewish nation rests in the Jewish proletariat", therefore from its very inception, the Jewish labor movement had to assume a separate national character.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels took it into consideration that "in its form, the campaign of every proletariat is primarily a national one". But inasmuch as in its early days the make-up of the Jewish labor movement was very meager, (it consisted only of small groups of select, gifted and more developed workers in Vilna), then naturally its form was insignificant, and therefore neither the workers, the leadership nor the intellectuals noticed it. On the contrary! The leaders, the Russian-Jewish Social-Democrats, intellectuals, who were themselves more Russian than Jewish -- (at any rate, so they believed, as did all assimilated Jews of all lands and all times.....) -- strove to give the young movement their own 'Russian' gestalt, their own 'Russian' form. . . .

The propaganda was then conducted, thanks to the "good intentions" of the leaders, only in Russian, the demands simply duplicates of the genuine Russian labor organizations. There was not even a mention of special Jewish demands, not even for example, "equal civil rights for Jews". (2)

In these words does the writer of the above-cited article approvingly describe the change that was taking place in the Russian Jewish Marxist scene as it acquired many new adherents at the end of the nineteenth century. Elsewhere we have observed that as popular support was being gained by Socialist parties from Germany to Milwaukee, these parties also acquired the goals and aims of these new adherents, many of which were not only non-Marxist, but even anti-Marxist -- as Marxism was then understood to be. Thus we saw in the previous chapter that the theoretical ideal of unremitting class warfare was thrown up against the desire and need for

immediate social and union gains, and in the resultant compromise, the ideal was almost completely submerged. Similarly was the case with the theoretical ideal of internationalism. The rampant European nationalism of the nineteenth century was translated into Socialist terms, and from the original clarion call, "Arbeiter aller Länder, vereinigt euch!" was derived the nuance of "workers of every nationality, unite!", rather than "workers of the world". That Marx and Engels had favored a national basis for Socialist organization is indisputable. There was, however, a considerable difference between what they meant by "national", and what their heirs took it to mean (although the later development had its roots in the earlier).

Marx and Engels do not use the word 'nation' in the sense in which we commonly use it in our time, i.e., as a group of people who stem from one stock, who have common customs, common traditions, one religion, one culture, and one language, even though they do not have their own land. By the word 'nation', Marx and Engels understand a people living upon its land, a single people from a single territory. (3)

It was the former meaning of 'nation' which nationalism had made popular, and which had spread among every minority group throughout Europe. And among these minority groups were the Jews.

It is more than coincidence which resulted in the first secret convention of the "Bund" taking place in September of 1897, just one month after the first Zionist Congress at Basle. (4) Despite the apparent differences between these two

movements, they shared much in common, including *raison d'être*, and nationalist philosophy. It was the Jewish masses who made Jewish national cultural autonomy a main point of the "Bund"'s program, because by this time nationalism was becoming a part of the Jewish scene -- both as a reflection of the nationalist trends within the Czar's Empire, and as a reaction against their oppressed state. This "national point", as it came to be called, was adopted at the fifth annual congress of the "Bund" in 1902, and was embodied in the following resolutions:

The convention resolves that the concept of nationality must also be applied to the Jewish people.
The convention resolves that Russia, which consists of many different nations, shall in the future have to become a federation of nations, in which each of them will be entirely autonomous in whatever region it inhabits. (5)

We may infer the role played by the old leadership in this revolutionary -- or rather, "reactionary" -- turn of events, not only from the article cited earlier in this chapter, but from the response which that article elicited from some of these leaders.

We have received a letter from the "Jewish Workers' Bund" 'foreign committee' in London, signed and sealed with the seal of that committee, in which they ask us to announce that with his articles, K. Frumkin is in no way expressing the official standpoint of the "Bund". . . Their explanation that "nationalism", such as K. Frumkin explains it, is not the official standpoint of the "Bund", is quite significant and important to know. (6)

This statement, coming as it does a year after the adoption of the "national point" by the "Bund", clearly indicates how the old pure-Marxist leadership viewed this nationalist heresy.

Within three years of its founding, there was already much activity organized by the "Bund" among the New York immigrants to create funds and sympathy for the Russian organization. Many of these immigrants were themselves "Bundists", arriving between 1900 and 1905 for the usual variety of reasons. These new arrivals constituted a vital and fresh element within the Jewish community, and the new nationalistic views which they had infused into Jewish Socialism in Russia were now introduced into the American scene. As in Russia, the leadership was ideologically opposed to this concept of Jewish nationalism, and we find this attitude expressed in a comment of the Zukunft's editor on the ideas expressed in the article on the "Bund" we referred to a few pages back.

We must state that we cannot fully agree with his secondary contention. . . . The so-called "immanent laws" of a mass movement can on occasion be very harmful. . . . The intelligence of a mass (which is concentrated at its head. . .) may direct the "immanent law" of its movement away from a damaging direction onto a useful one. And this is absolutely not contrary to Marxist thinking. . . . It is quite possible that that the "immanent nature" of the mass-movement of the Jewish workers would be to flow in an injurious channel, and it would then be the duty of the "pillars of fire", the leaders, to build a dam in order to restrain the stream from overrunning where it should not go, and to divert it onto the better way. (7)

Thus we see the leadership of Jewish Socialism insisting that in their particular role, they were the guides, rather than the most prominent representatives of the Jewish Socialists. As far as such an iniquitous doctrine as nationalism was concerned, it had no place in true cosmopolitan Socialism.

Officially, Jewish nationalism was something to be spurned and repudiated, as inimical to true internationalism, and no opportunity was lost to make this very clear. In reporting the fiftieth birthday of the Jewish Austrian Socialist leader, Victor Adler, the "Zukunft" had this to say:

We, Jewish Socialists, are naturally proud that Victor Adler . . . is, as are many others, a man who comes from our race, a Jew, whom the proletarian class struggle has brought out from Jewry's four cubit confine, in order to bring him into the foremost ranks of international socialism. . . . Just as the class struggle removes the Jewish intellectual from Jewry, so too it takes the humanitarian Frenchman out of the restricted realm of France, out of French nationalism. And just as the Jew forgets the Wailing Wall as he proceeds towards the Temple of Freedom, so too the latter forgets Sedan and Metz. (8)

Even stronger in tone are these words, written about Hirsch Leckert, a young Jewish worker of Vilna, who attempted to assassinate the local Russian governor:

Herschel Leckert, we should observe, was a Jew, but his deed has nothing to do with Jewry -- a body without a soul -- but rather with the world-delivering, revolutionary social-democracy. Remember that. (9)

In speaking in this manner, these Jewish spokesmen for Socialism were simply expressing their loyalty to the new Marxist faith which they had espoused. The Jewish religion was merely one variety of the people's opiate, and needed no further condemnation than this. Judaism as a nationality was still a fresh and easily disputable fallacy, not yet rendered into fact by sheer repetition. Rejecting both of these concepts, the pure-Marxian Jews could come to only one logical conclusion -- namely, the Jews were destined to vanish as a distinct group. And so we find the following statement in

an essay submitted in a contest, on the topic "What Caused the Survival of the Jewish People?":

It would be a mistake to assume that only the Jew is ground up in the mighty mill of economic change. No, the same fate awaits all other nationalities. All other religious and national boundaries must also vanish. . . . And the Jew, having survived, not having gone under until now, will now in our relatively free time, certainly not be the only one to decline. That is, he will have the honor now of remaining independant, as a separate kind of person, so long as all other nationalities will remain -- that is, until the arrival of the new time to which all the proletariat of all nations and all lands are drawing near -- the time after the great social-revolution! (10)

Another clear statement of this is the following:

If the result [of the advent of Socialism] will be the disappearance of the Jewish people, then it will come about in a natural, evolutionary way, which no human force will be able to stay. (11)

This view, traditionally Marxian, was that held by the leaders of American Jewish Socialism through the 1880's and '90's. Quite opposed to it was the concept of Jewish nationalism being introduced by immigrant "Bundists". A clash between the two views was inevitable, and the outcome of that clash was to determine the future form and content of American Jewish Socialism.

16: Jewish Nationalism Appears in American Jewish Socialism.

In examining the question of Jewish nationalism as it was encountered by and in the Jewish Socialist movement, we have seen how the leaders of the American movement continued to express, right through 1904, the familiar Marxist formulas. On the surface, the problem appeared to be quite simple and distinct -- true Jewish Marxists were to regard Jewish nationalism as a movement opposed to the social revolution, as were all other nationalisms. In this, the American Jewish leaders were simply continuing along the way they had been going since the '80's, a way they had begun to tread in Russia, and they continued to be faithful to the Russian pattern when they came to America. However a change had occurred in the Russian prototype. In 1898 the Social-Democratic Party of Russia came into existence, as a union of the formerly existing labor societies. The "Bund", whose birth a year previously, had stimulated its organization, remained as a separate autonomous group within that party. Thus there were two varieties of Jewish Socialists active in Russia -- the "Bundists", and those individuals whose personal attitudes of assimilation or cosmopolitanism moved them to remain and to work within the general Russian party. Confronted with this changed Russian situation, the American leadership was in a genuine dilemma. In the American Socialist scene they had just gone through the reverse procedure, in which the SLP, organized largely on the basis of

autonomous national groupings of immigrants, had given way to the all-including native Socialist Party. Their activity in the "Yiddish speaking branches" of the SLP had come about because the Jewish immigrant masses provided the best opportunity for deriving a following. Such a system of national groupings did not fit well into the new SP structure -- and besides they had always denied that the Yiddish-speaking groups were a national sector, equivalent to the genuine national sectors, such as the German. And now in Russia, in that arena which still took precedence on the Jewish street when it came to politics, things had changed drastically, and the pattern of national organization, discarded by the American Socialists, had become the order of the day. Not only that, but the Jewish Socialists were themselves succumbing to the bitterly-contested concept of Jewish nationality. How could the American Jewish Socialists take on the Russian model, when the American movement had turned away from it so decidedly? Yet how could they work into the American movement, when the immigrant Jews insisted on paying more attention to the Russian, and preferred to keep to a system of political organization with which they had become familiar in the old country?

Two choices were open to the American Jewish Socialist leaders. They could either move on into the general American area, or they could remain in the Jewish. It was an either/or situation which involved complete involvement in the area of

one's choice, and complete abandonment of the rejected area. The Jewish Socialists would still be expected to deliver their vote to the SP, but aside from this they conducted their affairs almost wholly along Russian-oriented lines. Thus we see individuals like Morris Hillquit leaving the Jewish world, and moving almost exclusively in the general American movement. Ab Cahan almost deserted the Jewish field, turning to general American journalism during the years of Socialist decline between 1898 and 1903. His return to the Jewish fold was the result of a combination of factors, foremost of which were his own conviction that his literary ability in the English language was insufficient to carry him to the heights which he sought, and his being offered the editorship of the *Forverts* on his own terms. By and large, the former Jewish leaders decided to stay in the Jewish movement, where they could operate freely without the competition which existed in the general movement, a competition in which they were severely handicapped by their own language difficulty, as well as by not having a sizable interest group to represent.

Choosing to remain in the Jewish area, the American leadership had to face the same problem which had confronted their Russian Jewish counterparts -- namely, the growing feeling of the Jewish masses for the concept of Jewish nationalism. As we have seen, some continued to voice the old purist cosmopolitan line. But at the same time a change was

taking place. Among the early issues of the revived "Zukunft" there is already detectable a new voice. In September, 1902, we encounter an article by B. Hofman (later to become famous under his pen name of Zivion), entitled "Nationalism and Zionism", in which he ventures to demonstrate that one may be a nationalist, without falling into the deplorable heresy of Zionism.

Nobody denies the fact that various nations exist, which differ from each other in certain specific characteristics, and display specific, individual traits, - and that among the members of each nation there exists more or less strongly developed, instinctively or consciously, a sense of nationality. . . . "Nationalism" means to exert oneself to keep and to develop the specific individual traits which go to make up the nation. Each nation has its specific individual traits, which reflect themselves in its life, in its history and in its literature. Among us Jews, for example, we find a strongly developed individualism-- "a stiff-necked people". This characteristic reflects itself in our history and in our daily life, everybody is well acquainted with this characteristic, and we need bring no examples. . . .

In most instances, every nation has its own language. I say "in most instances", because there are nations which do not speak one language, as for example, the Swiss, who speak German, French, Italian, and Latin. Even in Germany we cannot say that all speak one language, or even that all speak German. . . . Germany has however a single literature which is read by all Germans. In general, however, each nation has its own language, and only one. Each nation tries to develop its language, to enrich its expressions, so that the expression of its thoughts should be exact and correct. Each nation has its own skill, in which is reflected a specific national character, as for example music, etc. Each nation tries to develop and refine its skill, and to take care that it retain the specific national character. In addition, each nation tries to absorb all of the fine traits which it observes among other nations, and to rework them in its own fashion. . . .

True nationalism is far removed from the Jewish "Chosen People" concept, and from the German "Deutschland über Alles". The true nationalist . . . does not

say that his nation is better than others, he says only that his nation is no worse than others, and is the equal of other nations.

Very often we interchange terms here as well: we interchange nationalism and chauvinism, which are not at all equivalent. Chauvinism means . . . that we are the Chosen People, better than all others. The chauvinist wishes to separate his nation from all other nations, he wants to learn nothing from another nation, since everything that other nations possess is worthless -- only what his nation has is good.

"Nationalism" is to be found in two varieties: nationalism as it is found among ruling peoples, and as it is found among oppressed peoples. When we speak of nationalism, we must never forget the distinction between them.

"Nationalism" as I have presented it to you is not at all harmful, often very useful, but only -- when it remains in its pristine purity, and does not covertly sneak across the dividing boundary. Although they are two separate concepts, the distance between nationalism and chauvinism is not very great, and among ruling peoples it is in fact quite narrow. When we observe a strongly developed nationalism in a ruling nation, with its press clamoring like a claxon for nationalism, for the national feeling, it should be known that there is a reaction taking place in that nation; the nation is going over to chauvinism, since a ruling nation has no cause to evoke national feelings in its members: they are to be found in every individual without their having to be aroused. Whoever belongs to a ruling nation has no reason for wanting to deny his nation. He is proud of his nation. Therefore as soon as we see national feelings being aroused in such a people, we should recognize that this is a device used by the ruling classes to divert the masses whom they are constantly exploiting. As we see, we must be very careful with the nationalism of ruling nations, as for example Germany and France. It is quite another matter with the nationalism of oppressed peoples.

Every oppressed nation tends towards assimilation, it tends to lose itself within the ruling nation. Normally this inclination is to be seen among the bourgeoisie, which holds nothing sacred except money. An oppressed nation's bourgeoisie feels very uncomfortable. It is not as free to exploit as is the bourgeoisie of the ruling nation, which is supported by the government. . .

The bourgeoisie lacks the courage to fight for its liberation. It finds its salvation in assimilation, an innocent means which requires no courage, no sacrifice. All that it needs is a goodly amount of slavishness and a lowly soul.

The proletariat of an oppressed nation also suffers. First, it is more exploited. . . . Secondly, it lacks recourse to the cultural materials to which the proletariat of the ruling nation does have access. . . . The proletariat of a subject nation endures many other things as well, but it does not seek its cure in assimilation; its weapon is to fight. It fights to liberate itself and its nation. When we observe a nationalist movement within an oppressed people, we should call it a progressive step, a revolutionary spirit in the masses. . . . It indicates that this nation possesses a clear consciousness, and holds itself to be the equal of all.

The Jewish nation . . . is exactly like other oppressed nations. The Jewish bourgeoisie finds its panacea in assimilation, and we may regard as the discoverers of this cure, the German Jews, who are almost exclusively middle-class. Both the German and the French Jews are so enslaved, that they cannot convince themselves that Jews may have equal rights with other nations. . . . Only the ruling nation may have rights, and to acquire these rights, the abovementioned Jews renounced their nation and became . . . Germans and Frenchmen of the Mosaic religion.

This could only have come about in lands where Jews were few, and where there were no Jewish masses. In Russia this panacea was introduced unsuccessfully, although the Russian Jewish middle-class latched onto it avidly. During the reign of Alexander II, the Jewish Maskilim and bourgeoisie hoped fervently that Alexander II would, in his loving-kindness, grant Jews equal rights, and there suddenly emerged "Russians of the Mosaic persuasion". But this time the Jewish middle-class missed the target: in Russia there is an unusually large Jewish population which conducts a national life and cannot so readily become Russianized. The propaganda of the Jewish bourgeoisie met strong resistance. The nationalists came out strongly against assimilation, and a national movement began, [but] the bearers of this nationalism were the "Choveve Zion", and so it was utterly worthless. . . . Instead of speaking to the point, that Jews are a nation equally with other nations and must therefore demand rights equally with other nations, they began to sing the old refrain "Going Home", home to Palestine. As if Palestine were the Jewish home, and not Russia, in which they have lived for over a thousand years. But this is understandable: it is dangerous to demand equal rights in Russia. . . . whereas Palestine is a harmless means. . . . Such a nationalism could not satisfy us. It did not and could not revolutionize the masses. It only taught the masses indifference, to keep them attached to that political life in an exile from

which we must flee as quickly as feasible. Such a nationalism brings only harm: it renders the masses indifferent to politics. . . . Against this nationalism of the "Choveve Zion", we may pose revolutionary nationalism, which has many adherents in Russia. . . . They repudiate the whole philosophy of diaspora. There is no question at all of our own or foreign territory. The territory of Russia belongs equally to Jews and Russians, and the territory of Poland belongs equally to Jews and Poles, from which it emerges that Jews as a nation, must demand to be recognized as a nation equally with other nations. The Jewish proletariat in its campaign, must also fight for national rights -- i.e., it must fight for all human rights. The revolutionary nationalists do not consider that they are awakening a consciousness of nationality in the masses, for they maintain that this consciousness already exists in the masses. We only need formulate this consciousness of nationality . . . give it a specific direction. . . . Such a nationalism is progressive; it revolutionizes the masses and calls the dissatisfied elements forth to the struggle. From this we see that one can be an orthodox social-democrat, and also be a nationalist in certain situations. (1)

These very extensive portions were quoted at length because they contain concepts and ideas which we are more than surprised to find broached in the stolidly Marxist "Zukunft". That these ideas were current in Russia, we know from the "Bund" article. Indeed the same year which saw the "Bund"'s adoption of its "national point", 1902, was the year in which this article appeared in the American Jewish Socialist periodical. The "Bund" and its sympathizers were beginning to make their impact felt in the New World.

It is worth while at this point to cite the various ideas which occur in the material quoted, because it is these ideas which shall be encountered increasingly in one form or another in the following pages:

- 1) Nationalism can be either beneficial or harmful.
- 2) In the Jewish world, Zionism represents harmful

nationalism, Socialism the beneficial.

3) Assimilation is the false solution sought by the middle class. The true solution, which is the goal of the proletariat, is the achievement of equal national rights for the Jewish people.

4) Jewish nationalism differs from others in that the demand is for cultural, and not territorial autonomy. The prime expression and vehicle of this national culture is the Yiddish language, so that the chief national task becomes the development and refinement of the Yiddish language.

17: The Arbeiter Ring.

In the previous four chapters we have been able to get an idea of what was going on in the official Jewish Socialist movement in America, such as it was, during the period 1897-1902. It is equally incumbent upon us to examine what was happening in the Socialist periphery, among those groups whose existence was also a part of the broad Jewish Socialist movement, because during those years of decline in the official party movement, it was these emerging groups that made it possible for Socialism to again raise its head beginning in 1892.

Most prominent among these groups were the branches of the fraternal organization "Der Arbeiter Ring" -- "The Workmen's Circle". Its first branch was founded April 4, 1892, during the turbulent period of struggle between the Anarchists and Socialists. Its founders visualized an organization for the more socially conscious workingmen, which could provide for their spiritual as well as their physical needs, the latter through a system of mutual benefit. These men found that the *landmanschaften*, the mutual benefit societies organized by people from the same home town, with their playing up of organizational ceremonials in imitation of the non-Jewish lodges, their adherence to traditional Jewish ^{religious} observance, and their disinterest in education, were little suited to themselves. As freethinkers and as political radicals they sought

to form an organization which would meet their own particular needs.

In its early days, the "Arbeiter Ring" attempted to tread a wary way through the political and union crossfire. In fact the organization was looked upon by its members as a haven, and it deliberately refused to become involved on behalf of any faction or party. The conflicting political parties were then very much out of touch with the realities of Jewish immigrant life, and the "Arbeiter Ring"'s strong interest in mutual benefit earned it indifference, and indeed contempt from the idealistic radicals. Both Socialists and Anarchists were too much taken up with hastening the social revolution, and they saw a concern with mutual benefit as a mundane undertaking unworthy of true social revolutionaries.

At first the "Arbeiter Ring" was tolerated, as were all sympathetic "Fareins", "Chevras" and lodges whose support was needed by the parties. But toleration was to become opposition. In the clash between the Socialist "Arbeiter Zeitung" and the Anarchist "Freie Arbeiter Shtimme", the "Arbeiter Ring" abandoned its policy of neutralism, when a large majority of its membership openly came out in support of the Socialists. This support proved to be somewhat remote, so that the outcome was that they incurred the hostility of the Anarchists without winning the approval of the Socialists. This failure to obtain some support from the political parties doomed an important part of the "Arbeiter Ring"'s program to failure. The organi-

zation looked upon its policy of mutual benefit not only as a worthy activity in itself, but also as a means to an end -- in order to draw away workers from the conservative "Chevras", and acquaint them with their radical social and political ideas. They wanted to set up co-operatives which would similarly benefit the membership and attract new members, and did indeed make some trial ventures -- e.g., a co-operative barber shop. Their own membership was insufficient to guarantee the success of these undertakings, and lacking the support of the radical parties, this laudable attempt at setting up co-operatives for the Jewish immigrants failed.

During the period of schism and decline in the Socialist movement, official party hostility intensified. Many sympathizers had withdrawn from the political and union arena, disgusted and disillusioned by the internecine warfare between the opposing factions. To them, the "Arbeiter Ring" provided an opportunity to retain their interest in progressive matters, and they were saved the aggravation which belonging to a party or union involved. So it was that as party and union support dwindled, the strength of the "Arbeiter Ring" increased. Preferring to fix the cause of their decline elsewhere, Socialist and union leaders alike blamed the "Arbeiter Ring" for producing their low state by luring away supporters into a purely social and fraternal organization. The unions particularly attacked the organization because it allowed non-union members to join. The "Arbeiter Ring"'s realistic rejoinder to this was that by taking in such

members and educating them, they were creating new supporters for the unions.

The breach between the "Arbeiter Ring" and the official Socialist movement was one which could not, by the very nature of the situation, endure for long. For one thing, its leadership was close to that of the Socialists, and its general-secretary and most prominent theorist was none other than Benjamin Feigenbaum. Furthermore as the organization gained strength, it moved into a position where the party had to come to terms with it, in order to gain its increasingly valuable support. So it was that when the "Forverts" group split with the SLP, it played up to the "Arbeiter Ring" to gain its support, and the situation came about that Louis Miller and Benjamin Feigenbaum, who had conducted ^{such} a vituperative debate on the "Zukunft's" pages, were now wooing each other.

Its winning of official recognition from one of the party factions coincided with increased growth in the "Arbeiter Ring". The "mother" branch in the East Side, was followed by an "uptown" and a Brooklyn branch, and then itself split into three branches. In 1901 the organization won a state charter, which permitted it to carry out a fuller program of fraternal benefits. By 1903 it had twenty-four branches, and a year later, seventy, including some for women.

A good measure of this increase is attributable to the immigration of the "Bundists", from 1900 on. These individuals brought with them the ardour and energy which characterized the Russian movement, and on their arrival soon formed their own

landsmanschaften, "Bund" clubs, Socialist Party branches, and "Arbeiter Ring" branches. Thus we find a comment in the "Zukunft":

Among the newly-arrived immigrants are found many who campaigned and suffered in Russia. Their very faces, their simple and unassuming appearances, should make us "Americanized" Jews blush with shame, when we consider how deeply we have sunk, despite the fact that here we enjoy practically all of that freedom for which they have bled.⁽¹⁾

The popularity which the "Bund" enjoyed among the earlier Russian Jewish immigrants was transferred onto its newly arrived adherents and their activities. As their numbers increased, so too did the importance of their support, and so we find such individuals as Cahan, Winchevsky, Liesin and Gordin speaking out on their behalf in most favorable terms. Similarly, as the "Bund"'s sympathizers and ideas became more numerous in the "Arbeiter Ring", that organization benefitted from the popular esteem lavished upon that movement.

Previously mentioned was the attempt of the "Forverts" to enlist the "Arbeiter Ring"'s support, when it first appeared. Even more significant was that organization's contribution to the revival of the "Zukunft" in 1902. This is in itself indicative of its growing strength, for although the "Zukunft" was supposed to be an independent Socialist periodical, it became increasingly a spokesman for the "Arbeiter Ring" and its views. The "Zukunft" resumed publication in January of 1902, under the editorship of Dr. A. Caspe and Morris Winchevsky. Caspe soon dropped out, and Winchevsky served as editor until April, 1903, when Feigenbaum took over this post following a reorganization of the periodical. He was up until this time the general sec-

retary of the "Arbeiter Ring". Although Philip Krantz resumed the editorship in 1904 and 1905, the "Zukunft" could in all safety be considered as representing the views of the "Arbeiter Ring". The far reaching influence of this fraternal organization is well described in the following report of May, 1904:

The "Zukunft", which the branches revived a couple of years ago, is more than ever being supported by them. Branch 5 was the first to move renewal of publication, of the "Zukunft", and the rest of the branches seconded this. They provided a large part of the \$1000 fund. Since then, the "Zukunft" is being supported almost entirely by the branches. In the branches they also agitate on behalf of the "Forverts", and distribute it in sundry cities.

The Russian "Bund" has been supported by the branches in the finest way. The sacrifice which they have evidenced in this instance is amazing. They are equally unstinting in their support of the Socialist Party, every union, every progressive farein. (2).

Even this early in its career the "Arbeiter Ring" was well on its way towards filling the remarkably accurate prediction voiced by its ardent champion, Benjamin Feigenbaum, in May of 1903:

The "Arbeiter Ring" will be the only permanent socialist organization of Jewish workers in America. It is already this in many cities. Following the deluge in the Jewish socialist movement, there remained no vestige of a movement in the smaller cities. No matter how much effort was made to found all kinds of organizations -- either nothing could be accomplished, or what was done quickly fell apart. And the "Arbeiter Ring" appeared as a veritable angel of deliverance on behalf of the movement for socialism among the Jewish workers. . . . I have now come to the firm conclusion that the future of an organized socialist movement among the Jewish workers of America lies in the "Arbeiter Ring"! (3)

18: The Yiddish Press after 1902.

In Chapter 13, the condition of the Jewish Socialist press was described, and it was seen how its sad state mirrored the general decline in the Socialist movement. With the turn of the century, the new currents within Jewish Socialism already alluded to began to improve the prospects of its press. The "Forverts" which had been floundering since its founding in 1897, once again invited Abe Cahan, who had been working on the "Commercial Advertiser", to be its editor. By this time the paper was no longer operated by the old "Forverts Press Federation", which had been intended to give the various Socialist groups a voice in its publication, but by the newly-instituted (1902) "Forverts Association", which consisted of those interested individuals who had stood by the paper with their money and work during the lean years. Cahan agreed to return to the editorship, but soon after resigned again, because of the constant friction which sprang up between himself and the "Association" and the staff of the "Forverts". The newspaper stood in such need of the editorial talent which Cahan so abundently possessed, however, that in 1903 Cahan was once again asked to take over its editorship, and on his own terms. This meant that Cahan was to be the sole and absolute formulator of the policies of the "Forverts", and the publishing "Association" was to be no more than a rubber stamp, to approve of his actions unquestioningly. Naturally there was to be no question as to the absolute obedience of the paper's staff. And so it was that Ab

Cahan, lifelong Social Democrat and champion for justice and equality, assumed his lifetime position as the absolute and autocratic master of the "Jewish Daily Forverts".

With Cahan at its head, the "Forverts" quickly became a "success". His ambition was to publish a genuinely American Jewish newspaper, and not a pallid imitation of the European press. To accomplish this he hoped to build up a staff of Americanized college boys, whom he would train in the arts of journalism, and who would loyally and obediently follow his instructions. The type of young man whom he was counting upon however preferred to make a career for itself in the more promising English language press, and Cahan had to make do with the existing established writers whom he tried constantly to reshape according to his concepts of the ideal newspaperman. Soon the formerly staid pages of the "Forverts" began to blossom forth with light serials, popularized science, advice to the lovelorn, and other regular columns in which the general and personal problems of the readers were met. Whatever might be said about the good taste of much of the material, it nevertheless remains true that through the agency of Cahan's "Forverts", a generation of immigrant Jews were Americanized and taught good manners.

Cahan was much criticized by Socialists for abandoning Socialist principles, and for being more than willing to substitute success, for Socialism as the goal of the "Forverts". His preoccupation with popularity and circulation at the expense

of Socialist principles are attested to by his compromise on the question of religion, when he came out with the statement that there was no inconsistency involved in Socialists observing religious traditions. Such a position was manifestly counter to the relatively strict Socialism of his day, and is simply another example of his already alluded to opportunistic revisionism. An even more vivid example of this can be cited in Cahan's relationship with the "Bund", and Jewish nationalism. As one of the old line cosmopolitans, he had short shrift for the concept of Jewish nationalism, until the "Bund" began to gain in popularity in America, at which point Cahan overlooked his internationalist creed, and became quite friendly with the "Bund". This did not prevent him from publicizing the visit made in 1904 to the United States by Chaim Zhitlovsky, as representative of the Social Revolutionary Party of Russia. Since the "Bund" was associated with the Russian Social Democrats, who were the bitter opponents of the Social Revolutionaries, Cahan's support of Zhitlovsky alienated the "Bund" from him. Consequently Cahan entered into debate with the visitor, hostility developed between them, and the "Bund" swung back to him.

In 1905 an event occurred which shocked the Jewish Socialist world, and which the "Zukunft" described in the following terms:

The readers of the "Zukunft" doubtless know of the type-setters' strike which took place in the daily Socialist newspaper "Forverts". When such an extraordinary thing can occur, when it can come about that workers go out on strike against a Socialist newspaper, then, as Hamlet expresses it, "there is something rotten in the state of Denmark". Then it is either one or the other: either the union misunderstands its role, or the Socialist newspaper is misinterpreting its principles.

The "Forverts" has committed a crime against the whole Socialist movement. Its handling of the strike tends to undermine the whole foundation of the Jewish Socialist movement. . . . The "Forverts" says that the union should have conceded everything for the time being, and afterwards fight out its contention. . . . In the case of the union, the matter concerned a significant union principle. . . . There was no question of principle in the case of the "Forverts", and it was its duty to concede unconditionally, for the time being. . . . The "Forverts" should not have allowed the affair to develop into a strike. . . . [But] more reprehensible, more dangerous, is the position which the "Forverts" adopted to combat the strike. . . . the theoretical arguments of the "Forverts" against the union, and its desire, based on these arguments, to smash the union. . . .

The Type-Setters Union raised the cry of "open shop", and the "Forverts" replied: "It is not a question of an open shop, but of a closed union". . . . The capitalists also complain continually against the "closed union". (1)

This extraordinary state of affairs came about through the "Forverts" -- that is Cahan -- insisting on the dismissal of one of their type-setters because his work was unsatisfactory. The union local insisted that the fact that he belonged to the union attested to his being a skilled craftsman, and in addition he had worked on other newspapers without receiving any complaints. That he worked more slowly was admitted, but the local refused to consider this as valid grounds for dismissal, and went out on strike against the "Forverts", the workers' own newspaper! Cahan fought the strike on two fronts -- first he applied pressure upon the UHT itself to censure the union for perpetrating this affront; and secondly, he tried to break the strike by hiring non-union labor, i.e., "scabs". After he succeeded in breaking the strike, and the striking workers returned to the job, a new issue arose. The "Forverts" local of the Type Setters Union refused to accept the "scabs" into the union, and insisted on

a "closed-shop" -- i.e., that only union labor be employed. At this point Cahan began to attack the union, accused it of being a trust, and came out for the lofty democratic ideal of the worker's "right to work" and the "open shop".

The "Forverts" proclaimed that the union is a trust, and therefore it should be rooted out, that it [the "Forverts"] was not motivated by its own interest, that if only its own damage were entailed it would readily have paid out money for nothing, that it wanted only to save the labor movement by seeing to it that trusts should not masquerade as unions, etc., etc. . . . As soon as the "Forverts" won its point, as soon as it was able, with the aid of the trade unions, to force the union to accept those who had "scabbed" against it, then it suddenly fell silent. (2)

In yet another instance during this period did the "Forverts" appear in a role strangely inconsistent with its avowed policy of being the champion of Jewish culture and enlightenment. In 1903, Jacob Gordin was accused by the commercial Yiddish press of undermining traditional Jewish family purity by means of his plays. Gordin, who had been induced to become a dramatist by Philip Krantz, had indeed succeeded, and was making a name for himself through his Ibsen-like plays in which he depicted family life and some of its social problems. Like Ibsen, he too was castigated by the conservative newspapers, which until now had had no harsh word to say against much of the crudity and vulgarity which made up much of what was passing as Jewish theater. Needless to say, the Socialist press was completely in accord with Gordin; as witness the words with which the "Zukunft" observed his fiftieth birthday:

Long may he live and have the energy to labor and to elevate Yiddish drama and literature, ever higher and higher, and along with them, the spirit of the Yiddish-speaking public, just as he has already so commendably done! (3)

The "Zukunft" was not the only Socialist organ to support Gordin, and to defend him in the campaign of vilification which the general Jewish press had unleashed against him. In commenting upon their previous silence with regard to the extant Yiddish stage, we find:

However these hateful excesses were most seriously sulliyng the Jewish stage some time before modern Jewish theater came into being from the best writers. And the present champions of "family purity" have never found it necessary to say a word against this! And who was it who undertook a vigorous campaign against this cynicism in the theater? Actually an editor of the "Forverts"! For months on end comrade Ab. Cahan thundered forth against the actual immorality of the theater, and in fact purified it to a large extent. (4)

The outcome of the controversy was that Gordin emerged as a popular hero. He appeared to the public as a martyr who had been willing to sacrifice himself for his artistic principles, and so his figure dominated his Jewish world. Not for long was he to be allowed to occupy the pedestal of popular esteem uncontestedly. Once again he came under attack, and this time from a most unexpected direction. Cahan turned against him, and employed his whole considerable journalistic talent and resources to the task of toppling the newly-made hero.

And so Cahan betook himself to shatter Gordin's reputation by means of theatrical criticism. He began to demonstrate on every occasion that a new play of Gordin's was produced, that the playwright's work was neither artistic nor original. . . . In review after review Cahan kept hammering away that . . . Gordin was not doing anything at all with his ready-made material. . . . In order to intensify his attacks on Gordin so that they should be able to harm even those plays of Gordin's which were in theatrical repertoires, Cahan began to shower praises upon the raw melodramas which certain of the "Forverts" favorites had written. (5)

Gordin's many friends tried to defend him, but they lacked

the organ of expression which Cahan enjoyed and used so effectively. The "Tageblatt", which had taken part in the earlier anti-Gordin campaign, observed this civil-war among its ideological foes with amusement, and peppered both sides throughout the long, drawn-out affair, which went on into 1905. The "Freie Arbeiter Shtimme" allowed itself to be used by the pro-Gordin faction, but compared to the circulation of the "Forverts", its own was so small as to make this assistance of little practical value. Because of its nature, the "Zukunft" could not become embroiled in a dispute of this type, but indirectly it revealed itself as pro-Gordin. Throughout 1904 it published a series which Gordin wrote entitled "The Great World Dramas", and in addition it featured a favorable review of his new play "True Strength" (6), and printed the prologue of another, "The Stranger" (7).

To better defend himself in the unequal battle, Gordin and his distinguished supporters, among whom he could count Winchevsky and Miller, undertook to publish a magazine, "Die Dramatishe Welt" -- "The World of the Theater" -- to publicize his viewpoint. This became a monthly, and was used not only as a platform, but also to improve the theatrical taste of the Jewish public. Besides dealing with contemporary Yiddish drama, Gordin also wrote articles on the history of the theater, from its beginnings until the present. Neither the circulation nor the quality of this periodical were able to reach the general Jewish public, but still it provided Cahan with another area to conquer.

The final phase of the Cahan-Gordin controversy saw

the editor accusing the dramatist of plagiarism. Gordin had written an article on the Greek drama in "Die Dramatische Welt", which Cahan claimed was stolen from an English text. Nothing more serious was involved than two writers using the same limited material and arriving at the same widely-held conclusions, but the mere fact of the accusation, presented in Cahan's flamboyant manner, was enough to titillate the public whom Cahan was intent upon swaying. That the Jewish intellectuals supported Gordin had no effect upon the outcome. The public was content that a popular idol had been shown to have feet of clay, and Gordin's reputation was permanently impaired. His authority in Jewish theatrical circles was shattered, and a new era was inaugurated, or rather, a return to the old era, whose vulgarity and tastelessness Gordin had done so much to thrust aside. From this time on the Yiddish theater declined steadily, a fact for which Cahan and the power of his newspaper must shoulder a good measure of the blame.

Another outcome of this controversy was the appearance of a new Yiddish daily. During the height of the struggle, Louis Miller had requested of Cahan, his friend and colleague of more than two decades, that he be allowed space in the newspaper whose existence owed so much to his sacrifices, in order to reply to the anti-Gordin criticisms. Cahan absolutely refused to grant him such space in the "Forverts", and this, combined with Cahan's subsequent accusation of plagiarism, succeeded in sundering these two men.. This was not a sudden breach, but had been building up over the years, as Cahan's control of the "Forverts" increased,

and Miller's, correspondingly, decreased. Finally, in the summer of 1905, Miller founded his new daily, "Der Varheit" -- "The Truth", and his first issue appeared on November 11th, 1905.

The time was a fortuitous one for such an undertaking, what with the constant increase in the Jewish immigration, and the growing interest in local and foreign Jewish affairs. The Russian situation particularly stimulated the sale of newspapers, and with his own experience, and with the assistance of many supporters, Miller's new venture flourished. Many of the writers and supporters of the "Forverts" had deserted Cahan to work with Miller, and he was able to include among his co-workers such individuals as Gordin, Farnberg, Entin, Slonim, and also Winchevsky, who aided him financially as well. The "Varheit"'s program was one of full support for the Socialist-labor-progressive sector of Jewry, and was written in an even more Hearstian manner than the "Forverts" and the "Tageblatt". Miller's own personal popularity as a dynamic speaker did much to make the "Varheit" an immediate success. Its emergence as a competitor to the "Forverts" opened a new phase in the Miller-Cahan feud, which was to continue for some years, and consequently lies beyond the scope of this present study.

During the period 1902-1905, the unions themselves began to enter the field of journalism. The United Hebrew Trades, in an attempt to popularize the principle of "buying only articles which have a union label", decided to publish a weekly, under the editorship of Philip Krantz. The "Arbeiter Velt" -- "Workmen's World" -- began to appear on March 12th, 1904, and

its appearance was greeted by the "Zukunft" with the following words:

It is with heartfelt joy that the "Zukunft Press Federation" greets the new fighter in the ranks of the Jewish proletariat, the honorable and courageous organ of the United Hebrew Trades -- "Die Arbeiter Velt", which in fact reminds one of the former "Arbeiter Zeitung". We wish the UHT complete success in their noble undertaking. Such a journal as the "Arbeiter Velt" is an encouraging manifestation, and deserves the moral and financial support of all Socialists and enlightened workers. We are certain that the readers of the "Zukunft" will also be happy to welcome this publication, which is striving to organize and educate the Jewish workers. Let us hope that this newspaper will revive the Jewish labor movement, and bring harmony among those forces which are divided and have become hostile through various causes in the past. (8)

Such optimistic hopes were all in vain, and the "Arbeiter Velt" soon resembled the "Arbeiter Zeitung" in yet another way -- after publishing twenty-two issues, the weekly was discontinued.

Other short-lived union publications appeared during this period. "Der Kopenmacher" -- "The Capmaker" -- was a monthly, printed in both Yiddish and English, and published by the Capmakers Union. It first appeared in May, 1903, and was in existence for about three years. Less successful was "Der Cloakmacher" -- "The Cloakmaker" -- which appeared on August 5th, 1905, and which only lasted through the autumn. It was published by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union as the result of a split between that union and Cahan over the question of the ampleness of the publicity which the "Forverts" was supposed to give them. The ILGWU also published "Der Vecker" -- "The Awakener" -- during the winter of 1906, in which it carried on a keen polemic against the "Forverts" from the point of view of the "pure and simple" unions.

It is necessary to return to Cahan and the "Forverts" for a moment. From what has emerged in the pages of this chapter, it can be seen that in building up the "Forverts", Cahan had readily sacrificed the two main principles which had characterized the earlier Socialist press -- namely, the Socialist ideal, and good literary style. As far as his labor orientation was concerned, he was caught between two fires -- the old line Socialists, and the new generation of "pure and simples". In trying to please both, he failed to satisfy either. We have seen how the ILGWU came out with its own publications, as the result of its dissatisfaction with the propaganda which Cahan was coming out with on their behalf. He fared similarly with the Socialists, despite hiring Benjamin Feigenbaum in 1904 in an attempt to silence those voices who complained that the "Forverts" was insufficiently Socialist. When Miller came out with the "Varheit" a year later, many of the prominent Socialist leaders and writers went over to his rival. In this situation it was only Cahan's firm control of the UHT and the "Arbeiter Ring" that enabled him to weather this serious threat to his stature and very existence.

Cahan was also confronted by many influential individuals who protested against the sensationalism of the "Forverts", and who insisted that the literary standards, formerly held up as the goal and model of Socialist journalism, be adhered to. So it was that in 1905, the "Forverts" began to publish a weekly, "Der Zeit-Geist" -- "The Spirit of the Times". The "Zeit-Geist" was to be a magazine which featured good literature and serious

articles. Its publication in the autumn of 1905 was intended to serve two purposes -- to still the voices of criticism, and to divert into another area certain of the "Forverts"' writers upon whom Cahan was finding it difficult to impose his own ways. In addition to these writers, Cahan was also able to attract other high-ranking journalists, who despite their personal or ideological grievances with him, were unable to overlook the fact that the "Zeit-Geist" was able to pay well for their work. In theory, the "Zeit-Geist" had everything in its favor to be a successful serious Socialistic weekly. However, after the appearance of its first five numbers, the "Zukunft" had this to say about it:

As far as the "Zeit-Geist" is concerned, it is from its inception in a far better financial situation than are other Yiddish Socialist periodicals, and we may therefore demand far more from it than from its poorer colleagues. Unfortunately it is much worse than some Socialist weekly which might be published with much less material means, but with a serious desire to create "an organ of science, literature, and Socialism". One has to don powerful spectacles in order to make out the Socialist spirit in the "Forverts" "Zeit-Geist". Even though it is published by Socialists with the prime purpose of spreading Socialism among the Jewish public, yet Socialism takes third place in it. (9)

The "Zukunft"'s critic, none other than Krantz himself, goes on to point out that the "Zeit-Geist" has set itself a program so broad in scope, so all-inclusive, that it is meaningless to say that its prime purpose is "to serve the movement, and to educate the Jewish public". What meager scientific and Socialist articles there are, are overshadowed by the disproportionate literary contributions of Peretz, Raizin, Pinski, Kobrin, Libin, and other popular writers. Krantz points out that it is true that Marx's "Das Kapital" does appear in the "Zeit-Geist"

in a freely-translated serial form, but he questions first, whether this constitutes good material for popularizing Socialism; secondly, granting that it is a good project, whether the work can be studied intelligently as a serial; and thirdly, whether the translation, by Cahan as it happens, is adequate to the task, assuming that serialization is agreed on as practical. This, and other criticisms which he makes, must be read with the mental reservation that it is not the "Zeit-Geist" itself, but its originator, Cahan, upon whom Krantz is training his critical eye. It may be that his attack lacked objectivity, because the weekly did succeed in attracting a considerable reading public. Nevertheless its income failed to meet its generous budget, and this fact, combined with Cahan's inability to run both papers, finally resulted in the "Zeit-Geist"'s demise in 1908.

When the "Zukunft" resumed publication in January, 1902, after five years of silence, it was only superficially the same magazine which had appeared in the 1890's. At that time it had been in a certain sense, a semi-official organ of the Socialist Labor Party, being published by its Yiddish-speaking branches. After the schism of 1897 it was taken over by the "Forverts" faction of that time, but had to be discontinued. In its new incarnation, the "Zukunft" no longer appeared as the spokesmen for an official party or faction thereof, but rather of the "Zukunft Press Federation", a voluntary association of Socialistic groups. This very fact in itself indicates how among the Jews, Socialism ceased to involve participation in the affairs of an American political party, and became instead a matter of participation in

a fraternal or educational group, in which discussion, education, and the supporting of Russian Socialist parties made up nearly the whole of Socialist content.

By 1902 the concept of Jewish nationalism had permeated the Socialist movement quite strongly, and its particular stress and manifestation lay in the area referred to in Hofman's article on "good" nationalism -- namely, the Yiddish language, and Yiddish literature. This was not a sudden development. Even in the original "Zukunft" literary articles began to appear more frequently, out of deference to the Jewish public's evolving demand, as time went on. Furthermore it was almost inevitable that the former generation of Jewish Socialists, who had preferred to regard themselves as "Yiddish-speaking" Socialists, should in the changing currents of Jewish life, associate themselves with a Jewish nationalist outlook, who had to find its slim proof of Jewish nationality in the Yiddish language. In the first issue of the revived "Zukunft" we therefore find stories by Peretz and Leon Kobrin, and poems by Yehoash and Liesin. Other well-known literary names are frequently encountered -- Benjamin Rosenbloom, H. Rosenblatt, David Goldstein, Z. Libin, Sholem Ash, Sholem Aleichem, and others.

By and large the "Zukunft" maintained a high standard of writing, and served its role well. It kept its readers well informed of matters of social and political interest in the United States, Russia, and the world at large. They were kept abreast of the latest developments in the world of Socialism, and also that of science. As before there were informative

articles on history, literature, natural and physical science. All of this, well blended with stories and poems, made the "Zukunft" a harmonious and readable periodical.

This does not mean to say that the "Zukunft" had no difficulties when it resumed publication. The general state of Jewish affairs was such, as we have seen, that it was only the fact that the magazine was supported and sponsored by the "Arbeiter Ring" and by a good section of the "Bund", that made its renewed existence possible. In 1904, the "Zukunft" was able to look back upon the two previous years in the following words:

Two years ago . . . we worked feverishly for the "Zukunft" with scant success. We saw no sign of achievement, and we were discouraged. Everybody stood at a distance, nobody helped us to increase the circulation of the "Zukunft". . . . However this year we are encouraged, because we can greet you each month with the happy news that from month to month the "Zukunft"'s circulation is mounting. . . . We have no more copies of our January, February and March issues; even though we had to print 1000 more copies of our March issue, we must print an additional 1000. . . . And what brought about the great success of the "Zukunft"? We can give no credit to any outside people, to any schemes or tricks, but only to our own progressive Jewish organizations, through whom the "Zukunft" has attained a circulation larger than that enjoyed by any other Jewish periodical. . . .

First we extend our thanks to those branches of the immortal progressive order, "Arbeiter Ring", who were the first to answer the call, and adopted resolutions that each branch should take copies of the "Zukunft" each month according to the number of its members. After this, the same thanks are expressed to the progressive independent "fareins", and branches of the "Bund", which have decided and are doing the same. (10)

And so we see how it was that the "Zukunft" was able to revive and to flourish: it was bound up with the "Arbeiter Ring" and the "Bund". As these organizations grew in the period 1902-1905, so too did the "Zukunft".

19: Yiddish Literature Evolves.

A word must be said at this point about the slowly emerging Yiddish literature. We noted in Chapter Six that Yiddish was beginning to become a serious form of expression only in the 1880's and '90's, and that the original "Zukunft" was one of the pioneers in this area. By 1902, the time when the "Zukunft" reappeared, some great strides had been taken, in the literary use of Yiddish. This progress was quantitative rather than qualitative, as we find the "Zukunft" decrying:

It is difficult to believe how poor our Yiddish literature in America actually is; after we see the ten pound, two hundred page novels, it is difficult to believe . . . that Yiddish literature in America scarcely merits the appellation of 'literature'. And I want the reader to understand me; when I say 'poor', I am not referring to quantity, to the number of books being published here --- I mean poor in quality. Quantitywise, no country has published as many Yiddish books as America. There was a time when new works were literally pouring forth; but the poverty becomes apparent when you open these works and leaf through them.

.
We have no Yiddish writers who have developed on the free American strand; with the exception of a few thin booklets, no original Yiddish works have been created here. Whatever we find here is translated, reworked, . . . and reprinted. (1)

At first this translated material was of extremely poor quality, consisting of the trashy romantic and adventure novels which were currently riding a crest of popularity in the English-reading world. Soon, however, a new trend developed, which carried greater promise for the future. Beginning with Tolstoy's "Kreutzer Sonata", a new spate of translated literature ensued, this time drawing upon genuine world literature. The works of Tolstoy, Cervantes, Zola, Swift, Daudet,

de Maupassant, Lessing, and others were seized upon eagerly to be translated for a waiting public.

Those who a year earlier had been translating the worst trash, now undertook to translate the best works, and all of this accomplished in a single breath. (2)

Unfortunately this reading trend, which could have been cultivated and expanded, was instead perverted and exploited. The same Yiddish writers who had been employed to translate the trash, were being called upon to translate the good literature, and they proved unequal to the task. These hacks wrought havoc with the material they were supposed to be translating, and soon the reading public came to sense the wrong that was being done.

When, however, instead of Tolstoy, Zola and Daudet, they began imposing the same trashy writers upon him, who had been inundating the market a few years back with their trash, the better reader caught on that he was being swindled. Understandably, readers began to fall away, and a stage was reached where it became impossible to publish the better works, just as a few years earlier, it had become impossible to publish the trashy novels. (3)

This situation became aggravated when the book publishers formed a trust. In the former competitive period, there was always the hope that good literature might emerge. With the formation of the trust, no drastic experimentation of this nature was possible. And yet the "Zukunft" held out hope for the future:

Yet it is still quite possible that we shall have a pure Yiddish literature in America in the future. That public which demanded good works has not vanished, and when it will find some enterprising individual, or when it will organize a society for the publication of really good works, literature may well revive. . . . True, we have very few original faces, . . . but even these few

have never had the chance to find a publisher for their works -- that is, a publisher who would be willing to pay enough to make it worth while to write. During the whole time that literature in Yiddish was flourishing, not a single original work was published.

Let us look to the future. (4)

This closing statement was not being blindly optimistic. Appearing in 1902, at the end of that period of literary decline which it described, this series of articles found itself in the same volume of the "Zukunft" alongside numerous contributions by Peretz, Winchevsky, Gordin and Yehoash. In 1903, contributions by Sholem Ash and Sholem Aleichem appeared, and by 1905, material by Avram Raizin, Morris Rosenfeld and Sh. Ansky was to be found in its pages. In September, 1905, the situation was so improved, that a series of critical articles could be undertaken -- "The New Yiddish Literature" (5).

The reasons for this upsurge in Yiddish literature are too many and complex to go into in this work. Yet one of them may legitimately be mentioned, since one of the poems of Yehoash points to it directly. In his poem "Olympus and Horeb", Yehoash dwells upon a theme similar to that which we encountered in Gordin's "The Floating Coffin". He speaks of the Jewish poet who sought to escape the difficult world of his people by taking refuge on Mount Olympus. However even in this idyllic haven, the poet is summoned to the service of his suffering people by a voice emanating from another mountain -- Horeb. (6) What makes this poem particularly significant, is its subheading -- "After the Kishiniev Pogrom".

20: The Kishinev Pogrom and the Beginning of the End.

In the June 1903 issue, Philip Krantz interrupted his popular science series with some comments, prefaced by the following remarks:

Let me set aside intellectual progress, and discoveries and inventions in the several branches of science, engineering and technology, to say a few words about another kind of discovery, an ugly discovery, one which casts a bloody shadow over our whole civilization. I am referring to the horrible discovery that in this twentieth century, such a savage outburst of the beast in man is possible, as that which occurred in the Kishinev pogrom. (1)

The Kishinev pogrom which took place April 6 , 1903, had a tremendous impact on the whole civilized world, evoking protest and sympathy from every quarter. In the Jewish world its effect was, understandably, much more drastic.

Jews had come to accept the antipathy and hostility of the Russians as natural phenomenon. Pogroms resulted from the very nature of the Russian peasant. Kishinev however was not merely quantitatively different from all other pogroms, but qualitatively too. For the first time pogroms emerged, clearly and without question, as a feature of the official Russian government policy. Its effects galvanized world Jewry, and set currents in motion whose full effects have yet to be observed.

One effect we have seen in the previous chapter. Jewish intellectuals who had looked upon themselves as cosmopolitans, were shocked. Some, like Yehoash, were forcibly reminded of their Jewish origins and duties. Others chose to interpret the event differently. The Jewish Socialists,

whose views particularly concern us, responded in two distinct ways. The first was the way of the classical Socialist.

A fire has broken out, and we have lost our heads. Instead of doing what we ought to do, we are going about, wringing our hands, weeping and wailing. . . . This is all quite natural. There are however our kinfolk . . . from whom we have a right to demand actions befitting relatives. But they are doing exactly the same as the wailers. . . . And thus these people are committing a moral crime against those whom they would assist. They tell us: "This is no time to philosophize!" But what can we do if we do not philosophize?

He proceeds by referring to the Zionist position of Lilienblum, which maintained that the reason Jews are persecuted is that the Russian peasants hate and envy them for being successful foreigners.

What is the [Zionist] solution? The Jew must return to the land of his origin, where he will no longer be a foreigner. . . . There he will be equally resented by the present inhabitants of the land, but they will not be able to drive him away as a foreigner. . . . Thus Lilienblum philosophized eighteen years ago. . . . During the past eighteen years the world has learned something. It has learned that although it is the peasant who attacks the Jews, it is actually the Russian government which is responsible. The whole world unanimously agrees that it is the government which is the real criminal in the Kishinev pogroms.

Why is the government doing this? Israel Zangwill maintains that the government wants to get rid of the Jews. . . . The Russian government . . . understands full well that it can not rid itself of six or seven million people by these means. It knows well that all of these people cannot flee, nor does it want them to.

The government is motivated to arouse the populace against the Jews by quite different reasons. The people is being oppressed, the people is being robbed daily, and gradually it is beginning to open its eyes. So a scapegoat becomes necessary, we need someone to point to as the guilty one in the misfortune, and the Jews are admirably suited for this purpose. Israel always makes a fine scapegoat. . . . But the government has yet another reason . . . which is not quite so obvious. . . .

Today Jews are being attacked, not because they are aliens . . . and not because they are Jews, but because the government wants Jews to know that they are Jews, and it wants the non-Jews to know that the Jews are Jews.

Why does the Russian government tolerate the existence of the Zionist movement? All nations, all of the various peoples in Russia are suppressed and oppressed; the least stirring of independence is prosecuted and punished; and Jews are allowed to have a movement for "national independence"! They may have their organizations and meetings, they may collect funds, conduct open propaganda, publish literature, even hold congresses. Where does all of this originate? How did the government suddenly become so liberal? It is because it is imperative that the various peoples who inhabit that vast and gloomy land should be divided from each other. "Divide and conquer" If all of the Jews were Zionists, then I am convinced that they would be allowed to travel, to go on toying with sovereignty, travelling to the Sultan, speaking Hebrew, going to shul on Shabbas, throughout their lives, and no one would utter a word against them, and I am certain that there would be no pogroms.

But today there are other kinds of Jews in Russia, revolutionary Jews, . . . Jews who demand rights, human rights, for the needy masses, for all humanity, for Jews and Christians alike; and they demand these rights, not in some distant place, far away, but right here and now, in the place where they were born and raised, where they work and sweat, and where they bleed when they must. . . . These Jews cannot be lulled to sleep with dreams of Zion. . . . They have to be dealt with in such a way that they will cease mingling with Christians, that they should begin to hate Christians; they must come to know that a Gentile is a Gentile and a Jew is a Jew.

Having disproved the Zionist solution, he then proceeds to another matter: "How is it that the American newspapers have made such a fuss about the Kishinev pogrom?" He questions their sudden concern over the shedding of Jewish blood, and points out further that two years earlier, the Russian government had drowned 6,000 Chinese, without eliciting newspaper comment. Nor was American sympathy aroused when more recently, fifty striking workers were shot down in cold blood at an arbitration meeting in Russia. He explains why Kishinev should have provoked such widespread journalistic comment.

They have raised a hue and cry over the Jews of Russia, not because of the Russian Jews, but because of the American Jews. The Jews in America have become a force to be reckoned with. They have votes! Mr. Hearst wants to become president . . . so because of this, he takes the part of the Jews, and sends special correspondents to Russia. And when he takes the part of the Jews, then other papers have to join in too. They also have political interests.

And as for the Yahudim? . . . They are supporting Mayor Low, so how can they remain silent? And so they too bestirred themselves about three weeks later.

What does this demonstrate? This demonstrates that where Jews have political rights, they also have political power, and need fear no pogroms -- at least no government sponsored pogroms. So they may cry aloud when Jews are being attacked in other lands.

He points out that the situation of the Jews in France is a clear demonstration of the fallaciousness of the Zionist contention. Antisemitism exists in France, but there is no pressure to get French Jews to move to Israel.

Why? Because here Jews are not oppressed, here they have freedom. And this is the very point! The trouble with the Jews in Russia is not that they are Jews, or that they are aliens. Their trouble is, on the one hand, that in Russia everybody is oppressed, and the Jews are being made a scapegoat; and on the other hand, Jews have begun to fight for "human rights", and the government wants to segregate them.

Thus the solution to the problem raised by the Kishinev pogrom is not to mourn and lament, for this is precisely what the Russian government wants.

The true way for the Jews is the way of the Russian Revolution, to go along with the movement which seeks to destroy the Russian tyranny, which seeks to educate the peasant and to forcibly forge human rights for him, for him and for the Jews, just as it came about in all lands where Jews now enjoy human rights. . . . This is the only way for the Jews of Russia, and whoever advises him otherwise is either a fool or a traitor. (2)

This, then, remained the answer of the classical Jewish Socialists, and they made their answer as Socialists. In an article on "The Jewish National Question", the "Zukunft" itself chose to categorize them as "Socialist-Internationalists".

The Jewish Socialists of this variety are not assimilationists . . . They do not care whether or not Jews keep their own language and characteristics; they themselves speak and agitate in Yiddish, interest themselves in Jewish affairs and despise those who pretend to be non-Jewish. But they do not believe in a national 'pride', and are indifferent as to whether Jews cover themselves with the cloak of present-day superficial 'civilization', or whether they remain enlightened Jews, openly wearing their Jewish racial [sic] gestalt and speaking their mother tongue. (3)

The article then proceeded to differentiate them from the "Jewish-Socialists".

The "Jewish Socialists" are quite a new species of humanity, which suddenly emerged after the Kishinev massacre. Most of them believe almost everything that the previous ones do, except that after the Kishinev murders they began to evoke an undefined "Jewish feeling", began to praise Jewish characteristics as the best and the finest, and began proclaiming that Jewish Socialists must be "first and foremost, Jews".

What, precisely, do they mean by this? What are we to do, and towards what are we to strive as Jews? This they have never specified. They are therefore not to be seriously reckoned as a separate faction, since they have no positive program in their "Yiddishkeit". It is a temporary emotion. Such cheap phrase-spouting also provides many with an opportunity to gain favor with the common Jewish masses. (4)

To complete the complicated picture we shall also include the viewpoint which we encountered in Chapter Fifteen.

The Anti-Zionist Nationalist-Socialists -- constitute an important portion of the well-known "Jewish Workers Bund of Russia". As far as Socialist doctrine goes, they are identical with the Socialist-Internationalists, but they say that the Jewish people in Russia is a people

with the rights of a people. They demand the rights of a distinct nation for the Jewish people, the right to have its own schools and universities in Yiddish, and the right to exist as Jews. They don't believe in Zionism, regarding it as impractical and impracticable; but they maintain that the Serbs, Bulgars, Americans and many other nations achieved nationhood in lands into which they immigrated, even much later than the Jewish immigration into Russia, so that Jews should be able to achieve this in Russia too. But they believe that they will only achieve this through the Socialist-Revolutionary struggle, Jewish and Russian workers together, but still with a distinct Jewish organization, and with the insistence upon Jewish national independence. (5)

It is the second category, that of the "Jewish-Socialists", which attracts our prime concern. We have already seen how the other two factions emerged in Russia, and were transplanted into the United States of America. It should not be too difficult to predict that this new faction "which suddenly emerged after the Kishinev massacre", should also be found represented in America. We need postulate no immigration of individuals belonging to this "faction". Indeed, it seems difficult for us to accept the "Zukunft"'s designation of it as a faction. There is little to distinguish it from the third group, except that its nationalistic claims are based even more on emotion and feeling than are those of the pure Nationalist-Socialists. The wave of emotions evoked by the Kishinev massacre sought for no rationale. It expressed itself in words of feeling, rather than in clear-cut, well-reasoned scientific and intellectual concepts. We have referred to the reaction of Yehoash, and this was an intellectual. The unsophisticated Jewish masses reacted similarly, and in doing so, paid scant attention to creeds

or political theories. This "nationalist" fervor can well be compared to the "Zionist" fervor which swept through world Jewry when the Nazi brutalities began. The "leaders" were carried along by the flood, protesting more and more feebly, as they compromised with the inevitable.

The full effects of this aftermath of the Kishinev massacre lie beyond the scope of this present work. Yet their beginnings are clear. We find a reader challenging Feigenbaum, that doughty champion of "classical" Socialism, with the following words:

Because I am not a Hottentot or a Chinese, because my family tree includes such fine people who have played such an important role in universal civilization and progress, because I am the son of a people which has suffered persecution ceaselessly for thousands of years and yet ever held aloft the torch of light, which offered the greatest number of martyrs in the combat between light and darkness --- therefore I also must ever be in the vanguard of this struggle, also holding high the torch of light, the flag of freedom, and fight for it, and suffer for it.

Don't you think, Mr. Feigenbaum, that with such an approach, with such an attitude towards Judaism, which is, additionally, the real truth, it would be much easier to attract the Jewish masses to Socialism, to progress, to education, instead of laughing at "Yiddishkeit" at every occasion, and always belittling Jewish culture? (6)

We are surprised to find such ideas on the pages of the "Zukunft". They are certainly a far cry from the concepts of earlier years. Others were surprised and displeased as well:

The "Zukunft Press Federation" hereby expresses its displeasure with the editor of the "Zukunft" for permitting Mr. A. Litwin to use such a tone in his article "About Judaism" directed against Comrade Feigenbaum, against a comrade who has done much for the education of the Jewish reader. (7)

The protest of the "comrades" against the "mister" may have succeeded for the moment, but the current was inexorably against them. Despite a rearguard action, as expressed in several articles through 1904 and 1905, the days of a purely scientific Socialism were drawing to an end. What good could logical intellectual argument do against such a point of view as expressed by Dr. Farnberg in his article on "Nationality and Science"?

If a particular group of people feel themselves to be a nation, if it presents particular national demands, then the state must arrange matters so that its national sentiments are satisfied.
 As soon as the fact exists, as soon as a certain people feel that they are a separate nation, then this is sufficient
 National unity is a purely spiritual unity. Its roots lie in feeling, in consciousness, in the fact that people consider themselves as a nation, wish to remain a nation, and strive to national unity and freedom. (8)

With its Socialist goals vanished, with its Socialist tenets compromised and betrayed, the Jewish Socialist movement of the United States was destined to eke out its remaining years as a movement concerned with nurturing the Yiddish-speaking secular culture which the Eastern European immigrants had brought with them. The party gave way to the fraternal organization -- politics gave way to cultural endeavors. All that remained were the former "leaders" -- old horses in strange harness, pulling a new load in the old vehicle towards a new and undesired future -- a different "Zukunft".

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NOTES

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