
Federation is Active Agent for Socialism:

Presents Party Issues to Jewish-Speaking People Through Own Weekly Publication

by Joshua P. Landon

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In the great struggle for Socialism waged in this country, a small but powerful organization is playing its part and playing it well. The readers of *The Call* have heard a great deal about the seven Foreign Language Federations which had worked against the interests of the Socialist Party and the Socialist movement and had therefore been suspended from membership in the party. I want to tell them about one federation that had remained true to its principles, that is as active now as it ever had been in its work of spreading our gospel for a better day.

It is the Jewish Socialist Federation that I speak of.

When it was first organized it had its opponents, and I was one of them. There was the belief that the Jew, wherever he goes, learns the language of his adopted land, would become Americanized, learn the English language, and become active in the party proper. But this was long before other federations had been formed. When a Finnish, a Russian, a German federation was organized there was no validity any longer in the arguments against a Jewish Socialist Federation. The federation was duly recognized by the National Office, and it set out to do its work. It was not long before the Federation convinced all its opponents that they had been wrong.

Jewish Language is Needed.

There are 3 million Jews in the United States, and hundreds of thousands of them do not know the English language. If they are to

be reached for Socialism they must be reached through the Jewish tongue [Yiddish]; either that or not at all. The Jewish Socialist Federation saw this very clearly and it set out to reach all those thousands of persons.

Through the aid of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, and later through its own weekly, the *Naye Welt* (New World), it carried the message of organization to the Jewish workmen.

There are a great many non-Socialists among the Jewish people, and there are a great many Socialists who are not members of the party.

The federation spread the teachings of Socialism among the non-Socialists, and it waged a campaign of organization among the Socialists who had not been directly affiliated with the party. It organized Jewish branches where men and women who do not know the English language can come, and in their own tongue speak the thing that is so dear to all of us — Socialism.

Majority Delegates are Loyal.

At its last convention, held in Boston about two months ago [May 29-June 1, 1919], the federation had a membership of 11,000, a membership the great bulk of which is well grounded in international Socialism and cannot easily be swayed by a foolish, meaningless phrase. The convention was a center of strife and storm. Though the great majority of the membership knew what they wanted and remained loyal to Socialism and the Socialist Party, there were a few who came to disrupt and destroy. And if they lacked in number they made up for it in the volume of their voices. There was wrangling for two whole days, until finally, when they thought they had made enough propaganda, they put the ultimatum that the federation join the Left Wing.

The convention, by a vote of 74 to 35, decided it would not do this; that it would remain loyal to the party, and 29 delegates left the convention to organize a federation of their own.¹ After the 29 had left, the convention settled down to business and accepted a program and plans of action that are most satisfactory and that will rally around the federation all the intelligent Jewish workmen.

¹ Those bolting the convention, led by Alex Bittelman, established an organization initially called the Jewish Left Wing Federation of the Socialist Party — later the Jewish Communist Federation.

The field of the Jewish Socialist Federation is the Jewish labor movement, the well-organized cloakmakers, tailors, furriers, capmakers, etc. The thousands upon thousands of union men are kept in touch with the Socialist movement, and even those of them who are not members of the party subscribe to our principles, the citizens among them vote our ticket, and almost all of them are ever ready to help the party financially as they have proven again and again.

Federation Presents Issues.

Some issue is raised upon which the Socialist Party has a definite view, and the Federation brings that issue before the Jewish people, pointing out to them the Socialist position. It is in this way that the Socialist spirit is spread among the Jewish people.

The agitation of the Federation is conducted along two lines — the written and spoken word is used. Some of the most prominent Jewish Socialists in America have toured the Federation, and there is never a time when several of these organizers are not in the field.

Among its publications are hundreds of titles of leaflets and booklets, as well as some very large works. There is a book on Eugene Debs, a book on Karl Liebknecht, a volume on Karl Marx, and five volumes of Marx's books.

Officials Known in Party.

And now a word about its officials.

Its secretary is Max E. Lulow, an old-timer in the Socialist movement. The editor of the *Naye Welt* is that able journalist, Joseph [sic.] B. Salutsky. Among its executive members are B. Vladeck, M. Olgin, and Dr. B. Hoffman (Zivion). Its Translator and representative in the National Office is that well-known Russian revolutionist, John Mill.

I believe this brief sketch will suffice to bring home to the comrades the fact that foreign language federations need not necessarily be a hindrance to the party; that they can, on the contrary, be what they should be — a help to the party.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport

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