

JIDISCHE FOLKSCHTIME (Sic)

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Stockholm

Vladimir Jabotinsky's visit to Sweden and Denmark in 1915 had other repercussions, almost as painful as the meetings and "secret resolution" described in my article in "Jewish Social Studies" Vol XLVI No 1 Winter 1984. His influence on Meir Grossman, an important journalist in Copenhagen was enormous. It was also permanent, as Meir Grossman's future would indicate. Jabotinsky's visit to Scandinavia led Grossman to clash with the Copenhagen Bureau, a break which soon involved the Stockholm Zionists. Angered by harsh criticism, Grossman withdrew from the daily newspaper, "Yiddische Folkzeitung" and founded his own bi-weekly "Di Tribune". Jabotinsky had inspired Grossman and in breaking with the establishment Meir Grossman's act of courage intensified what would be a life-long cooperation between these two men of letters and action. That Grossman's departure would lead to articles, open-letters, secret resolutions, public lectures and finally to the establishment of a short-lived Yiddish language newspaper in Stockholm, *Jidische Folkschtime*, has been completely forgotten.

I have found in the public speeches and articles by Moritz Tarschis not a single reference, whatsoever, to this publication. Of course Tarschis, in his later writings, never did delve into the background of any major Zionist undertaking during the wartime years of his leadership. He had no reason to make an exception of the newspaper and its demise. Like Iwriah it was a painful failure. It was also an expensive failure. Tarschis wanted to forget it but the background can be pieced together from letters and telegrams in the Jewish Agency Archives, which contain every number of the newspaper (1). With this information we can overcome Tarschis' silence.

Grossman initiated his "Di Tribune" in October 1915. To combat Grossman's opinions,

the Copenhagen Bureau began publishing a paper of its own, "Judische Volksstimme" (2). I have not seen any copies of this publication but a circular 1 (3) dated February 1916, distributed in Stockholm, describes it as a newspaper appearing twice weekly in the name of the Scandinavian Zionist Union. This fact is indirectly confirmed by a letter of 14 June 1916 which refers to a report about several resolutions appearing in numbers 70, 71 and 72 of this paper. Apparently "Judische Volkstimme" was having major difficulties and Dr Simon Bernstein of the Copenhagen Bureau was forced to devote a great deal of time and energy to keeping the publication alive. The Zionists in Copenhagen were already overworked and understaffed. That they assigned Bernstein this extra task indicates that they deeply feared Grossman's and Jabotinsky's propaganda in favor of a Jewish Legion and their demand that the Zionist Central Office be transferred from Berlin to a neutral country.

During the first months of the war a significant number of young Russian Jewish immigrants had come to Scandinavia. These would, of course, be candidates for service in a Jewish legion. Grossman's arguments had to be countered by a permanent publication even if the paper had to be transferred to Stockholm. As we shall shortly see the *Jidische Folkschtime* explained in its final number that the young Russian Jewish potential readers had given rise to the publication (4). This argument — that these immigrant readers made the newspaper possible — stands alone there, without any reference to the "legion controversy". The editor, as we shall see, claimed that the war had interrupted the publication of most of the major Yiddish language newspapers and magazines in Eastern Europe and that the *Jidische Folkschtime* was established to substitute for these quality

publications. This claim is a half truth. Stockholm could not rival the great Eastern European cultural centers and the Copenhagen Bureau only wanted a small Scandinavian paper. The Russian revolution attracted many Jewish youths back to the homeland. The Yiddish newspapers closed by the tsar were now permitted to resume publication. Of equal significance this revolution in Russia, which led to the demise of the Jidische Folkschtime (5), gave Jabotinsky in London the possibility of establishing his legion. The Russian Jews would no longer be helping the tsar by joining the British forces.

The Jidische Folkschtime in Stockholm like its predecessor, Jüdische Volkstimme in Copenhagen, was a limited inter-Scandinavian publication. As noted above I have not as yet located a complete issue of Jüdische Volkstimme. I did, however, receive from Mr F B Tarschis, presently of Tel Aviv, a single page of what must have been a complete paper. It is undated and refers to the annual meeting of the Swedish Zionists on 13 February at which M Tarschis was again elected president. The brief article is an enlightening document since it gives a report of the "past year's activities". It refers obviously to 1915. The report begins with the news that Tarschis at the annual meeting had attempted to explain why the previous year's work had been quite weak. The situation was rather bleak. The club had done some fund raising for Jews suffering from the war, had held elections and appointed volunteers to the various committee posts, but the Scandinavian Zionist Union, founded in 1913, was still inactive. This loose page relates that several days later, on 15 February, the board, previously elected on 13 February, met and decided that Stockholm would take the initiative and responsibility for "Inter-Scandinavian service". Stockholm would work to 1) "broaden and widen the knowledge of Zionism within Scandinavian Jewry 2) inform Scandinavian Jewry about the international activities of political Zionism 3) and organize a conference of Scandinavian Zionists". A committee consisting of M Tarschis, F Grüngard and Dr I Lourié would act on behalf of the Scandinavian Zionist Union. The report by M Tarschis concludes "It is to be hoped that the new executive and the new appointees will produce energetic, successful Zionist work".

These three are the same people who signed the circular #1 mentioned above. It seems that the circular was their initial effort to concretize their task, because it was in fact sent to the entire

Scandinavian Zionist Union and not only to the Stockholm club.

Note that neither the circular #1 nor the article from the Jüdische Volkstimme mentions plans to take over a newspaper. Although there must have been a great deal said at the annual meeting on 13 February about the "Iwriah" school project which had failed, this complaint is not specifically mentioned in either. This omission would be psychologically wise were a new major project being contemplated. The newspaper article does indeed contain a hint that something is about to happen. I see this indication in the plan to reactivate the Scandinavian Zionist Union, even without physically assembling the national representatives. The copies of correspondence in the Jewish Agency Archives make clear that the Yidische Folkschtime in Stockholm is to be the organ of the *Scandinavian Zionist Union* and not that of a club or even of the Central Office. At least that is what is written in the Jüdische Volkstimme. The truth is, of course, that no loyal Stockholm Zionist was prepared to oppose the Copenhagen Bureau or the Head Office in Berlin. The owner and the editorial board might, in name, be the Scandinavian Zionist Union but the real leadership would be the Zionist establishment.

The chronicle of events leading to the founding and eventually to the closing of the Jidische Folkschtime in Stockholm begins with the reply to an unsolicited letter from Tarschis, who wants the Copenhagen Bureau to inform Grossman that he has successfully interested some perspective subscribers for the "Jüdische Volkzeitung". Tarschis, a good Zionist, writes that while on several "business trips" he had publicized the newspaper. The reply, dated 26 August 1915 (6), curtly declares that Herr Grossman is no longer working for the organization, which has also severed all contact with the Jüdische Volkzeitung. Tarschis is informed that Grossman did not obey the decision of the Greater Actions Committee of 10 June and had published a "sensational, amazing interview" with Jabotinsky. Further co-operation is now impossible and the Copenhagen Bureau will not even contact Grossman to inform him of Tarschis' efforts on behalf of the newspaper.

A letter of 5 March 1916 (7) tells what happened during the nine months following this communication. To Tarschis' inquiry about Jüdische Volkstimme, the writer (likely Bernstein) replies: "Concerning your question about the ownership of the paper, there is only one poss-

ible reply: the newspaper belongs to the Scandinavian Zionist Union (Verband der Skandinavischen Zionisten). I began the paper in October this (sic) year when the daily Jüdische Volkzeitung could no longer be published. It has absolutely no connection with that paper's stockholders nor is it bound in any way to the Jüdische Volkzeitung, Inc. publishers. I have on my own initiative transferred direction over the paper to the Scandinavian Zionist Union. Thus the editors will be selected and approved by the Union and they must, naturally, send complete reports about the paper's debits and credits. The Union has, naturally, right of veto over the content and direction of the paper.

"I want, therefore, to make the following statements:

- 1) At the end of the month you will get a report about the newspaper's economic condition... (not legible)... 1.10.15-31.3.1916.
- 2) I am prepared to remain in charge of the editing and request that you confirm this for me and my colleague, Mr. Mark.

For the sake of clarity I would like to mention that I am certainly prepared to consider all of the Union's wishes and intentions, but hold that I must, as editor, be completely free and unrestricted. I represent the position which entirely supports the Actions Committee's neutral policy and am an energetic opponent of that so called "activism" for which Mr. Jabotinsky stands.

"The financial committee here consists of Mr Josef Nachemson, Mr Mark and myself.

"With hope of future cooperation, I sign

With outstanding respect and Zion's greetings"

This letter permits us to draw several conclusions: Jabotinsky, internationally, and Grossman, locally in Copenhagen, have been spreading "activism" and demanding Zionist political neutrality. This is the very question that Stockholm's Zionists discussed with Jabotinsky in the spring and fall of 1915. Bernstein feared that Grossman might just begin enlisting volunteers for a Jewish legion to fight on the British side. This may also be the reason for suggesting that the paper remain in Copenhagen. As we shall see, it was nevertheless transferred after the summer to Stockholm.

This letter also suggests that the Jüdische Volkzeitung did not belong to the Zionist movement. Separating the future Jüdische Volkstimme from the Jüdische Volkzeitung AB and its publishing house indicated that these were

owned by Grossman and that the Zionist movement had merely contributed money and materials to the owner. When Grossman refused to be tamed, each went his own way and the newspaper collapsed. They both reappeared: Grossman with his "Di Tribune" in October 1916 — in which the feature article in the initial number is an open letter by Jabotinsky originally sent to the Jüdische Volkzeitung which never appeared there. The Zionists' paper "Jüdische Volkstimme" also came out in the same month. I noted that the letter-writer dates his own newspaper from "October this (sic) year". He obviously means last year, ie 1915. (Were he writing in Yiddish and not German there would have been no error=5676)

By early summer (8) plans existed for Stockholm to take over the publication. This news was published in No 72 of Jüdische Volkstimme. In another letter, slightly after the first, the writer after making a pun that the "little Grossman" is competing with us by publishing a weekly — Die (sic) Tribune für Skandinavien — mentions that a set (Sache) of Hebrew letters has been located for Stockholm and will be forwarded. He also assures Tarschis — the addressee of the letter — that the Stockholm Club can take over the publishing of the Volkstimme in the name of the Scandinavian Zionist Union without first assembling the Central Committee of this Union. Obviously the use of "Weiterherausgeber" indicates that the paper is still appearing in Copenhagen. A similar conclusion can be drawn from the fact that "the little Bigman is still competing".

The transfer of the type proved to be much more complicated than initially expected. Weeks passed. Letters and even telegrams (9) indicate frustration. A new owner has come with complaints. Despite all the problems the Volkstimme has, nevertheless, been appearing in Copenhagen, which would not have been the case had the newspaper been transferred to Stockholm before solving these technical difficulties.

An important letter of 9 July suggests that Editor Finkelstein — who according to a telegram of 29 June from Tarschis has been elected to this position — could move to Copenhagen to take over the paper. The writer (Bernstein?) and Herr Mark promise to help him. They would like Finkelstein to come as soon as possible:

This letter is actually sent neither to Tarschis nor to the Stockholm Zionist Club, but to the Scandinavian Zionist Union. As its second suggestion — following the above about Mr

Finkelstein — the writer in the name of the Copenhagen Bureau suggests that the Central Committee of the Scandinavian Zionist Union assume responsibility for the publication, which would enable the leadership to keep in touch with the member clubs. "It takes only a little work and is not difficult even when considered from a material viewpoint. We request that you take over and will send you an appropriate number of each edition for you to distribute. We seek your opinion in this matter."

The third and final point of this letter is a document of the times. The small daily publication is having financial trouble and the Copenhagen Bureau wants the assistance of the people in whose name they are publishing: "We sincerely beg you to give Volkstimme your economic support. It makes a poor impression that this small paper, which is supposed to be the organ of the Scandinavian Zionist Union, is dependent on "Schnorr" funds and doesn't receive an "öre" from the leadership. People here have already refused to donate, arguing that Stockholm, itself, doesn't pay. We ask you to allocate at least 75 (Kronor) monthly for Jüdische Volkstimme. Our present monthly budget is 225 — with publication once weekly. We assume that you will not reject our appeal and that you will send 225 kronor already for this quarter. In addition we ask that you send us (for publication MHN) continual correspondence about Zionist and general Jewish life in Stockholm."

Nothing much happened over the summer. The sources do not indicate whether or not the monies were forthcoming. But in the early fall something quite significant did occur: — "With the liquidation of the Jüdische Volkzeitung's Publishing House on September 4, 1916, the entire inventory was sold for the price of 2,500 Kronor. The writer has bought it. Mr Nachumsohn took over the debt for 2,000 Kronor so that the writer could pay 500 and the little extra needed to settle an additional minor outstanding debt. The matter is not completed, however. The purchase must be settled by 12 September and should this remainder not be paid, the sale will be revoked. The purchaser intends to donate the entire inventory to the Scandinavian Zionist Union and would like the Union to pay his 500 Kronor as a contribution. This is a relatively modest sum considering that the value of the purchase is certainly 3,500–4,000 Kronor. As soon as he gets the machinery in his possession, he will forward it all to Stockholm.

This news must have excited the Stockholm

leadership. Editor Finkelstein wrote in Hebrew to Dr Sh Bernstein — which leads me to assume that Bernstein is the author of all the unsigned German language correspondence about the newspaper — requesting the names and addresses of the present subscribers to Jüdische Volkstimme. Letters were sent to the head of the Bureau, Victor Jacobson (10), requesting his aid in contacting internationally known writers who could contribute articles to the paper. Finkelstein is obviously "thinking big". He envisions a huge successor to the little weekly.

In this interim Stockholm's first Yiddish language product was printed — a flyer dated Marcheshvan 5677 (Oct.–Nov. 1916). This information sheet was repeatedly used in somewhat modified form in every but the last edition of the paper (11). I, therefore, translate it in its entirety. It was published by Merkantil Publishing House, Stockholm, 1916.

"In a few days the Jidische Folkschttime, the organ of the Scandinavian Zionist Union, will begin publishing a weekly newspaper. Its major task will be to participate in the deepening and the spreading of the national-renewal concept among the Jews in Scandinavia and neighboring lands. The Jidische Folkschttime will not merely be a party organ. The Zionist movement has always remained in close contact with the various expressions of folk-life and even more now than ever, when one observes the Zionists in the fore-front, everywhere — whenever any type of folk-work is taking place. As befitting a Zionist organ, the Jidische Folkschttime will, naturally, be a general Jewish newspaper. In it all contemporary problems of Jewish public life will seriously and carefully receive the thoughtful consideration that the present hour demands. The Jidische Folkschttime's "Information Department" will receive special attention so that the reader will be informed about everything happening in the Jewish world.

"The Jidische Folkschttime will have the following sections: a) articles about general developments in Jewish politics, economy and culture; b) brief reports from all significant Jewish centers; c) survey of the Jewish press; d) survey of the general press; e) a Jewish review of the week from all countries; f) life in Palestine (Erets Yisrael); g) special information about Jewish life in Scandinavia; h) book reviews.

"The most respected Jewish literary personalities will contribute articles to the Jidische Folkschttime.

"Every number of Jidische Folkschttime will

contain 16 pages and each will cost 25 öre. Subscription price for one year — 10 Kronor; a half year 5 Kronor; a quarter year 2.50 Kronor; one month 90 öre.

"The address of the editors and office:

"Jidische Folkschtime" Post Box 121, Stockholm.

The "flyer" and the correspondence with Finkelstein began to worry Bernstein and the Copenhagen leadership. On 28 November 1916 they wrote to the Scandinavian Zionist Union in Stockholm expressing concern and requesting the editors to answer the following questions —

- 1) Do you have sufficient type to publish a 16 page edition?
- 2) Have you tested to see if you possess enough material to fill up such an edition?
- 3) Do you have enough people to assist with the project?
- 4) Do you have that which the project requires (Vermögen — money and strength)?

The writer knows that publishing a major weekly will be difficult for an inexperienced group. The Stockholm editors can count on his help but he is worried. The address lists of the initial "Jüdische Volkstimme" are worthless but he can supply a list of the local (Copenhagen) contributors to the rescue work in Eastern Europe. And finally, he asks when the first number will appear so that he can supply them in advance with literary material.

The letter concludes with a very cold "Mit Zionsgruss".

The next letter (of 22 December 1916) concludes with a more friendly — "I greet you heartily, yours..." — but its contents are even more negative, expressing the certainty of failure. "It cannot be other." Instead of a small "Blättchen", the Stockholm Zionists are about to publish a journal like "Die Welt" in Berlin or "Jewreiskaja Jisn" in Moscow. The whole project is not realistic. Just the fact that each number is budgeted to cost 150 Kronor — and that even this amount is an unrealistically low estimate — shows that the whole project must sooner or later "crash". The letter concludes with — "at the final moment I call to you, therefore, be careful."

Before describing the decline and fall of the Jidische Folkschtime, I would like to praise the weekly on its contents and format. The truth is, of course, that it was foredoomed to failure — if only because the population for which it was intended was numerically too limited and on too low a cultural level to support such a fine publi-

cation. The Zionists of Stockholm were mostly lower middle-class immigrant Jews who came to the meetings and programs to socialize. Tarschis in a reminiscence many years later complained that "the membership wanted to play cards." He had dreams of greater things. Finkelstein obviously shared Tarschis' dreams and worked very hard for their fulfillment. But Bernstein was unfortunately correct: they had no chance of succeeding. By my measuringstick, however, they made a "good try".

The first publication appeared on 12 January 1917, a Friday, likely with the thought that the paper would be good reading for the Sabbath. The price had been lowered from the 10 Kronor yearly announced in the initial flyer of November 1916 and now (Jan. 1917) cost 8 Kronor for a year; 4 for 1/2 year; 2 for a quarter year. Outside Scandinavia the magazine cost 9 Kronor. Individual numbers were available for 20 öre. The paper could be purchased at several major distribution locations. In Stockholm, "Dagens Nyheter" and in Copenhagen, "Berlingske Tidende", assisted with the distribution of the publication.

Judging from the table of contents of the 12 January number, the editors succeeded in keeping most of their promises. The editor-in-chief, Zev Finkelstein, wrote two articles on a) The Eve of Poland's Independence and b) Autoemancipation. The latter was a review of Leon Pinsker's book, 25 years after his death. Moritz Tarschis wrote an article that carried over into the next number. Having been educated in Swedish schools, he was fairly well qualified to write about "The First Jewish Immigration into Sweden". An article on this subject had appeared in Dagens Nyheter 30 December 1916 and served as a source for Tarschis' interesting comments about the immigrants and their problems. I Lourié also wrote about the Jewish community in Poland and its self-rule. Unsigned articles took up "The Jewish Congress in America", "The Jewish Question in the Duma", "In the Jewish Press", "News from Yisrael", "Jewish News", and finally, "From the Jewish Life in Scandinavia". In all, the text filled 17 pages. Several pages of ads followed, most of which remained with the paper throughout its brief life. I have no information about what each of these advertisements cost. Most noteworthy is a full page by Mr Emanuel Kenen of Toronto, director of the Russo-Canada Agency AB, an important-export firm, whose major advertisement appears in every number without fail.

יודישע פאלקסשטימע

וואכענשריפט.

19 Jan. 1917. שטאקהאלם. פרייטאג כ"ה טבת תר"עז. № 2.

אינהאלט:

1. פאלקס-הילף. ז. ס.
2. צו דער קאנסערווענץ-פראגע. י. לוריא.
3. אייטאקאנדיטאציע. ז. ס.
4. די יודען אין רוסלאנד אונטער דעם העלט-קריגע.
5. דער יודישער נאציאנאליסאנד און די "קריענס-לאנד-שפענדע".
6. די ערשטע יודישע איינוואונדערונג אין שוועדען. ב. ת.
7. יודישע נייעס.
8. פונם יודישען לעבען אין סאנד-באוויצען.

ארויסגעגעבען פונם סאנד-באווישען ציוניסטען-פערבאנד
שטאקהאלם.

Copy of the cover page to No 2 of
January 1917.

No. 8.

יודישע פאלקסשטימע.

Av. _____

hava vi denna dag emottagit _____

Kronor _____ (_____)

utgörande likvid för annons — _____ abonnemang

som härmed erkännes.

Stockholm den _____ 191_____

Expeditionen av Jiddische Folkschtime

gm. _____

A sample of a receipt for
a subscription of Jidische
Folkschtime.

The news of the world is of interest. Thus the several paragraphs on America tell about a "Chair in Yiddish" at the University of Wisconsin, which is the first to be established in the USA. Professor Wolfsohn has been appointed to it. Thereafter follows news about Dr Magnus' return from Europe and his report to the American-Jewish Help Committee. The third paragraph relates that of the 66,182 soldiers in the US army, 3281 are Jews. This makes 6% of the army, while only 3% of the population is Jewish.

As is to be expected the Scandinavian Jewish news is the most valuable to this historian. It is taken from relatively direct sources and is reliable since the editors were in a position to check its accuracy. The paper relates that the 2nd conference of the Scandinavian Help Organization will be held in Stockholm on 21, 22 and 23 January. The first took place in Copenhagen in May 1916. The Central Board of the "Organization to assist Jews suffering because of the war" decided to send 9000 Kronor to Eastern Europe and 1000 Kronor to Erets Yisrael. The news from Stockholm told about a recent Chanukka celebration. Of utmost interest is the "Letter from Kristiania". The latter is the former name of Oslo, the capital of Norway. A major problem has arisen: Jewish transients from England on the way to America, are in desperate economic need. About 20-25 arrive daily. Unlike the other news items, which are relatively brief, this letter fills about a column and a half over the signature of Aharon Grudz, dated Kristiania, December 1916. This section, "Jewish Life in Scandinavia", concludes with a financial statement by the Keren Kayemet l'Yisrael relating that the various donations, i.e. Pushke collections, golden book, tree donations, others have added up to 409.87 Kronor.

The ads that follow are from clothing stores, antique shops, import-export firms and even a kosher restaurant. The printer, Tryckeriet Progress, took a 1/6 page announcement as did a concert by Mr Chacham, to be held on 18 January. He will be joined by the Yiddish and English artist, Herr Max Zuckerman, who will declaim for the first time in Stockholm — "Thoughts after a Pogrom" or "A stone from the Heart" by Abraham Goldfaden. Considering the small Jewish population in Stockholm, it is amazing to note that advance tickets can be purchased at a second Jewish restaurant, not the one which advertised in the paper.

This format continued with few changes

throughout the months of the newspaper's existence. It is hard to evaluate the competence of the editors and authors and whether or not the paper was too hard for the proposed readers. Was it boring for those of the time? I do not even know how many subscriptions or loose numbers were sold. These were obviously too few to keep the paper going.

Whatever its value to the reader, *Jidische Folkschtime* is an excellent source of information about Jewish life in 1917 inside and outside of Scandinavia. It provides figures and information about fund-raising on behalf of the Jews in Eastern Europe and, to a lesser degree, Palestine. From Tarschis' article in No 2 (19 January 1917, pg 9) we discover that *Dagens Nyheter* refers to a population of 6,000 Jews presently living in Sweden. The following letter to the editors in No 2, pg 14 and 15, illustrates the kind of historical information that can be culled from its pages:

"Very respected editor, I request that you please provide me with a small amount of space in your important paper for the following letter" It is common knowledge that the Central Committee of the Scandinavian Help Organizations wants to publish a Russian language newspaper. The Conference (refers to the above mentioned meeting scheduled to begin the following week in Stockholm — MHN) will deal with this project. It has already allocated the necessary funds.

"But who is the public which needs this Russian language paper? Among the Russian Jews in Scandinavia there are, maybe, 20-30 people who do not understand Yiddish. For a couple of "Minyans" of people do we have to devote so much time, energy and Jewish money? We now have two Yiddish newspapers in Scandinavia, one of these "Die Folks Helf" has even assumed the task of explaining the situation of our brothers in the occupied areas and making publicity for help actions? Why, then, is the newspaper needed?

"The Central Committee is contemplating initiating expanded national effort, not limited to the regular help-actions. Should the establishing of a Russian language paper be the first step in the expansion of the national efforts?

"A member of the Central Committee came to Stockholm for this purpose and collected for the Russian paper about 3000 Kronor. Considering our collection possibilities, this is a significant amount. In truth the money was given by the members of the committee and a few wealthy donors, but the Jewish public has, even

so, the right to express its opinion about all funds collected for Jewish social purposes.

We need a Russian paper — some claim — for Russia, to inform the Russian newspapers about the situation of the Jews in the occupied areas.

"It appears as though we still have such naive people who have no idea about the workings of the Russian censor, who think that the Russian censor has respect and regard for the published word. Why should the Russian censor not permit a simple letter from the Central Committee to get through but then grant entry to a newspaper with the same content? I contend that this proposed Russian language paper does not reflect well on the forthcoming national-work of the Central Committee. I do believe, however, that at the conference, the entire "initiatory" project will be cancelled. Most respectfully, Dr M Hirshman."

The news about Zionist activities in Stockholm relates that Mr Isaac Feuerring delivered a lecture about Zionism in Germany on 14 January to the membership. After the lecture Mr Hirshman and Dr Riwkin made several comments about the subject. Apparently this is the same Hirshman who wrote the "Letter to the editor". The above is followed by the complete program for the conference to be held on 21-23 January for the benefit of Eastern European Jewry. A complete report of what occurred was published in No 3, 26 January 1917, pg 9-12. This report was likely tedious for the general reader but is a wonderful source for the historian.

By No 4 the editors were able to begin inserting materials supplied from outside sources. Max Nordau's — "The Jewish People and the War" appeared on 9 February. More interesting, at least for me, is the brief paragraph about Kristiania on pg 13 under the heading — "From the Jewish Life in Scandinavia". Mr Sh Mazes writes to us from Kristiania that the situation of the Jewish immigrants is not critical as was indicated in the letter published in the first edition of the *Jidische Folkschtime*. The immigrants who have arrived in Kristiania during the past 3 months are mainly young people. These have either been able to adjust to Kristiania or have departed for other Scandinavian countries or for America. Helpless women and children have not appeared. The truth is that some private Jews have assisted the new-comers while the Jewish community has not helped at all."

The same department relates on pg 14 about

the visit to Stockholm of Dr Bodenheimer, a founder of the Keren Kayemet and one of the initiators of help projects for Eastern European Jews. The next number tells of the opening of the Zionist club room at Stora Nygatan 36, which was to be of great importance for the Blau-Weiss youth organization. No 6 of 23 February tells about the founding and work of the Club itself.

Two weeks passed before a double number 7 and 8 appeared on 8 March, 1917. The first page contained a Purim article by Chief Rabbi Marcus Ehrenpreis. Another outside author was N London from Copenhagen who in this edition and in No 9 wrote about "The War and Zionism in Germany". From the editor's hand was an article about Judaism and Capitalism and several unsigned articles took up the Russian Jews in England, an interview with the French minister Thon and Jewish parties in Poland. A small blurb announced that since the conference in January, the Stockholm Help Committee has forwarded 20,000 Kronor to needy Jews in Eastern Europe and 1000 Kronor to Erets Yisrael.

The delay in publishing No 7 and 8 and the final page of No 9 hint that *Jidische Folkschtime* may be experiencing difficulties. Next to a notice that Dr Simon Bernstein will be coming to Stockholm to address the Stockholm Zionist Organization on the 25th of March is the following statement: "From the editors and publisher of the *Jidische Folkschtime*: We request our subscribers who have not regularly been receiving our publication to inform us either in writing or by phone about this matter." In Copenhagen Mr N Landau is available between 5 and 6 o'clock daily to discuss anything pertaining to our paper. Contact the Zionist Bureau, Hyskensstaede 10.

No 10 came out on Wednesday 25 March, 10 days after No 9. Its main subject was the Russian Revolution but included an article by Haim Fegin (of Copenhagen) on the Jews of Bagdad as well as information about the Jewish World Congress in America and Canada. I translate two important paragraphs from this paper (pg 14):

Jewish Political Emigrants

Many of the Jewish political emigrants who have been living in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Kristiania and other Scandinavian cities have, following the recent declaration of amnesty in Russia, returned to that country. Quite a few are in the process of preparing to travel in the next few weeks.

The Number of Jewish temporary residents in Stockholm

According to the most recent official Swedish statistics, there are now over 2,000 foreign Jews temporarily residing in Stockholm.

No 11 and 12 was a double number published on 6 April (with a Passover greeting by Dr Ehrenpreis on the first page): The text filled only 13 pages. No 13 of 27 April 1917 was the paper's final number and the entire first page was a major announcement: "To our Readers".

Most of the remainder of the paper was devoted to news and opinions about how the Russian Revolution would affect the Jews. On pg 5 — in very dark and emphatic print — is the following declaration of Jewish equality: "On the 3rd of April the Russian provisional government passed an act eliminating all national and religious restrictions. By this act the political equality of the Jews in Russia is finally and completely established."

The next five pages of the final number are devoted to this decree. Pg 10 is about Russian Zionism and the Revolution. Pg 11–15 describes the first days after the revolution. The news items on pg 18 and 19 about the activities of the Scandinavian Zionists appear very petty when contrasted to the major events discussed in the rest of the paper.

All of the above seems to verify the editor's explanation of why the *Jidische Folkschtime* will cease publication. In translation, his "To our readers" declares:

To our readers

Several months ago when we started publishing *The Jidische Folkschtime* in Stockholm, we were aware of the extraordinary difficulties that would confront us. When we, therefore, decided to do so we did not merely reckon with the needs and resources of the various Jewish Scandinavian populations, which were obviously insufficient to support such a project, but did count on the special conditions here because of the war: we had before us, first of all, a major Jewish population in Scandinavia because our neighbors were at war. These people needed a serious Jewish tribune; secondly, we were obligated to exploit the possibility of providing a free Jewish word in favour of the Jewish national idea at the very time when the entire Jewish press was forbidden in the major Jewish settle-

ments (Russia/MHN) where the authorities have removed the tongue from millions of our people.

"Already, with our very first step, it was clear that the difficulties which we predicted could not be overcome: The lack of elementary technical resources could not be removed by our present conditions; receipt of literary materials from outside our area became even more difficult. We have, however, once begun, continued energetically. We now see that our task is not realizable. Yet we conscientiously observe that all our efforts have not gone to waste.

"The greatest happening has taken place — the restoration of Russian Jewry — a joyful awakening which has lifted up the feet of all Jewry and has excited even this little corner of Scandinavia. It has also resulted in an immediate and intensive attraction back to the places abandoned. As this current of return intensifies daily, so does the population decline of those for whom our paper was created and directed. At this very same time the free Jewish word has once again, with new force, been reborn on the rich, productive soil of Russian Jewry. The fruits of this blossoming reach far beyond the borders of Russia. They already reach to the Jewish population of Scandinavia.

"Because of the new conditions, our major task is now completed. The demanding efforts to continue the *Jidische Folkschtime* are no longer justified: — we have decided to cease the publication of our weekly.

"With extraordinary spiritual satisfaction we see about us the understanding and cooperation which the *Jidische Folkschtime* has evoked during the brief period of its existence. We close it now with a heavy heart. It is the rare case when the closure of a Jewish magazine is not tied up with new worries and decrees. A great shout rings forth higher and cheerfully: the Jewish word still lives, the Jewish hope, the beautiful bright Jewish future."

On pg 19, the final page of text in this last edition of *Jidische Folkschtime*, this sad notice appeared under a very black, thick line: From the editors and publishers: "Due to technical difficulties, No 13 could not be published in the right order (*rechtzeitig*)". And under this: "We ask our subscribers who have paid for a longer period and who now wish to be reimbursed for the remainder of their subscription money, to notify us of this request."

Space and time had run out. Concerning space, the final list of contributors (immediately above

the thick black line previously mentioned) explains "because of the shortage of space the remainder of this list could not be included in this number."

The paper ceased and Bernstein's prophecy was fulfilled. I really need not call this a "crash", as he did, but rather the unavoidable conclusion of a process. In the Jewish Agency archives there are several letters which indicate that efforts were made to save the paper. As in much that occurred in Swedish Jewry after his appearance on the scene, Isaac Feuerring (1889-1937) was a key figure in the rescue attempts.

Initially Feuerring came periodically to Stockholm for business reasons. Later he settled temporarily in the Swedish capital but left to return to his native Germany several years after the war. During the years in Stockholm he became an important go-between for Zionist matters; enabling the immigrant Zionists to work with community, acting as a contact person for the Zionist head office in major financial transactions with the Swedish National Bank and working together with the Poale Zion World Headquarters when this was transferred in 1917 from Den Haag to Stockholm. Because of his wealth, learning, culture, intelligence and international contacts, Feuerring was able to enter circles closed to all other Zionists in Stockholm. With his arrival, new and major projects became possible. Several of these will be considered in later articles but for now, the major point is that even Feuerring's intercession could not save the *Jidische Folkschtime*.

The first contact between Feuerring and the local Zionists took place in June 1916 when Feuerring was temporarily staying at the Grand Hotel. On the suggestion of the Copenhagen Bureau, Tarschis approached him and requested that he lecture to the Zionist Club. This led to Feuerring's involvement in Zionist activities in Stockholm and also to his becoming an advisor behind the scenes. In March 1917, as the situation with the newspaper worsened, the Copenhagen Bureau wrote to him requesting that he find out what was happening. For example, 100 addresses were sent from Copenhagen to Stockholm with the request that a copy of *Jidische Folkschtime* be sent to each.

Not one of these people had received a paper.

Actually this was an old issue. The Copenhagen office had written in February 1917 to Dr Lourié, who, when things became confused took over responsibility for bookkeeping for the newspaper, that a list of 500 addresses had been

sent with the request that these receive a paper regularly. It had been suggested that 30 copies be sent every week for sale at the outlet of the *Berlingske Tidende*, Copenhagen's major newspaper. "If nothing happens, all these letters will simply be a waste of postage and time."

But the fault was really mutual. Finkelstein and Tarschis had requested articles and contributions by international writers. As we can see from reviewing the contents of the published editions, these were not forthcoming. Even Nordau's contribution was far from a significant entry. He was now an old man, on the fringe of the movement, and the article was certainly no "scoop". The *Jidische Folkschtime* had also been promised newspapers and magazines from the Jewish world, which they eventually received but only after much complaining and letter-writing. The same was true of the promised subsidies. Victor Jacobson had promised that the Actions Committee would support the *Jidische Folkschtime*. In his long letter of 30 January 1917, Tarschis asks outright for 100 Kronor each month for this purpose (14). And finally, the question of advertisements was a very sore point. The Copenhagen Bureau had not found advertizing and apparently not even tried very hard to find subscribers. They had suggested, after all, that the paper be the voice of the Scandinavian Zionist Union, which meant Stockholm and Copenhagen plus the others. The whole project had fallen on Stockholm's shoulders alone. Obviously there were bad feelings. One readily understands why Tarschis, in another letter dated the very same day (30 January 1917), tells Bernstein that if he wants to be a member of the editorial board, he can write directly to Zev Finkelstein. Tarschis wants to stay out of the entire undertaking.

Naturally the reply of 2 February 1917 was to the effect that the Actions Committee had never promised a subsidy. Tarschis, apparently more in sadness than in anger, replied that they had asked Lourié to look over the bookkeeping and that this was improving, but that not a single subscription had been received from Copenhagen despite all their promises. "Here, despite little effort on my part, we already have over 200 subscribers. We hope to get 500 in Stockholm and hope for many from Copenhagen."

Feuerring's reply on 7 March 1917 was honest and supported the efforts made in Stockholm. He approved the steps that Lourié had taken to improve the office work. A very competent woman had been engaged. "The next number

will be a double number (must have been 7 and 8, MHN) and will go out without problem." Feuerring even permitted himself to raise the question of subscriptions for Copenhagen: "Gothenburg and Trondheim have more than Copenhagen." He also wonders about the lack of support for the project. Feuerring concludes by promising that the addresses sent by the Copenhagen office would regularly receive the paper.

Shortly after this, as a result of two articles in this number — "The National Question in Turkey" and "In Erets Yisrael" (which dealt with the bombardment of Jaffa), the Copenhagen Bureau gave vent to all its inner frustrations. The sources of information were challenged and even the audacity of raising "the question of Palestine and Turkey". Finkelstein's reply was that the material about Turkey came from Dr Ehrenpreis, who claimed that he had been informed by diplomatic sources. Finkelstein suggested that Dr Jacobson speak directly to the Chief Rabbi should he want more information.

"The Bombardment of Jaffa" was taken from the Swedish press. The Copenhagen Bureau had obviously acted stupidly by challenging the articles.

On 12 March 1917 the editors of *Jidische Folkschtime* and the Committee for the Scandinavian Zionist Union wrote to all the Zionists in the area (with a copy to the Copenhagen Bureau). They sent out a Swedish language report about all their activities and asked for aid in getting subscribers for *Jidische Folkschtime*.

By this time the paper was already doomed. The facts mentioned in "To the Readers" were soon obvious to all and there was no reason to keep fighting. It was, however, still necessary to continue collecting money, clothing and political support for needy Jews in Eastern Europe for the settlers in Erets Yisrael under the thumb of the Turks. Zionism was obviously more than the *Jidische Folkschtime*. Poale Zion would move its headquarters to Stockholm within a few months.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Royal Library (Kungliga Biblioteket) of Stockholm had only two numbers of the paper (No 2 and 5) and I arranged for them to obtain the others. YIVO in New York possesses only No 5 and the combined No 7 and 8.
2. JAA-L6/33/II. In a letter dated 5 March 1916 addressed to the Scandinavian Zionist Organization, Götgatan 35, Stockholm (Moritz Tarchis' home address) the undersigned writer — who must have been Dr Simon Bernstein — makes the following statement: "I started the paper in October last year when the daily "Jüdische Volkszeitung" was no longer being published". The writer is replying to a question in a previous letter from Tarschis asking about the "Jüdische Volksstimme" (sic).
3. The circular is also in JAA-L6/33/II. It is signed by M Tarchis, F Grüngard and I Lourié and was likely one of the first steps taken by this committee to revitalize the Scandinavian Zionist Union.
4. This was indeed the case. In the *Encyclopedia Judaica* article on *press* (vol 13) the section dealing with "in Russia" (1047) states: "The outbreak of World War I caused a crisis in the Jewish press: the price of paper and printing rose sharply and military censorship restricted freedom of expression. The advance of the central powers into Poland and Lithuania also separated the masses of readers from the sources of their newspapers. In July 1915 a government decree ordered all Hebrew and Yiddish journals to cease publication. Jewish papers

- in the Russian language, especially the Zionist oriented *Razsvet*, did their best to fill the void. The ban was lifted with the outbreak of the February 1917 revolution." I hope that this paragraph is to be trusted more than the entry "In Scandinavia" (1048) where *Jidische Folkschtime* is not mentioned at all. *Zionisten* is also unknown and I fear that it has been confused with *Israeliten*, the SJUF-paper of 1919. It would seem to me that these errors are to be explained by the ignorance of EJ's informant in Stockholm. Mortiz Tarschis's silence about the *Jidische Folkschtime* and his wrong information about *Zionisten* explains some of these serious errors. Explaining the errors does not, however, excuse the author from the more humble and acceptable admissions that the writer really doesn't know the truth about the publications. The wrong information in EJ will certainly appear in most future research on this subject.
5. *Jidische Folkschtime* (JF) No 13, 27 April 1917, pg 1.
6. JAA-L6/33/I.
7. JAA-L6/33/II.
8. Letter dated 14 June 1916 and letter dated 21 June 1916, both in L6/33/II. The letter of 14 June 1916 is the one mentioned in the text.
9. JAA, reference is made to a telegram sent 1 July in the letter of 4 July, which is basically hopeful of solving the "type" difficulty quickly and smoothly. See L6/33/II.
10. JAA L6/33/III. The letter to Bernstein is dated 27 Mar-

cheshvan 677 which corresponds to 23 November, 1916. The stationary heading is in Yiddish and in misspelled Swedish. This appears as "Jiddisch Folkschtime". Finkelstein also requests Bernstein to contribute articles for the future weekly and for assurance that he will not withdraw his support. He would like to receive unpublished materials belonging to the paper in Copenhagen before its demise so that he can print them. The first of the two letters asking Victor Jacobson, the head of the Copenhagen Bureau, to participate in the initial number of the new Jidische Folkschtime, was sent 3 Kislev

677=28 November 1916. The second repeats this request and emphasizes the need for Jacobson's aid in contacting famous authors living in other countries to provide articles for the future paper. It is dated 12 Kislev=7 December.

11. Jidische Folkschtime (JF) No 1 — 12 January 1916, pg 2 and for example No 3, 26 January 1917, pg 15, etc.
12. JAA-L6/33/III.
13. Ibid. The letter to Fuerring is dated 4 March 1917 and his reply 7 March 1917.
14. Ibid.