

Rule of the Jewish Kehillah Grips New York

Are the Jews organized? Do they consciously pursue a program which on one side is pro-Semitic and on the other anti-Gentile? How can a group so numerically inferior wield so large an influence upon the majority of the world?

These are questions which have been asked and which can be answered. The clan solidarity of the Jew, the ramifications of his organizations, the specific purpose which he has in view, are themes upon which there is any amount of "say so," but very little authoritative statement. It may therefore be useful and informing to study one or two of the more important Jewish organizations in the United States.

There are Jewish lodges, unions and societies whose names are well known to the public, and which seem to be the counterpart of similar groups among the non-Jewish population, but those are not the groups upon which to focus attention. Within and behind them is the central group, the inner government, whose ruling is law, and whose act is the official expression of Jewish purpose.

Two organizations, both of which are as notable for their concealment as for their power, are the New York Kehillah and the American Jewish Committee. By concealment is meant the fact that they exist in such important numbers and touch vitally so many points of American life, without their presence being suspected.

If a vote of New York could be taken today it is doubtful if one per cent of the non-Jewish population could say that it had ever heard of the New York Kehillah, yet the Kehillah is the most potent factor in the political life of New York today. It has managed to exist and mold and remold the life of New York, and very few people are the wiser. If the Kehillah is mentioned in the press, it is most vaguely, and the impression is, when there is any impression at all, that it is a Jewish social organization like all the rest.

The Kehillah of New York is of importance to Americans everywhere because of two facts: it not only offers a real and complete instance of a government within a government in the midst of America's largest city, but it also constitutes through its executive committee District XII of the American Jewish Committee, through which pro-Jewish and anti-Gentile propaganda is operated and Jewish pressure brought to bear against certain American ideas. That is to say, the Jewish government of New York constitutes the essential part of the Jewish government of the United States.

Both of these societies began at about the same time. The records of the Kehillah state that the immediate occasion of its organization was to make a protest against the statement by General Bingham, then police commissioner of the City of New York, that 50 per cent of the crime of the metropolis was committed by Jews. There had been a government investigation into the "White Slave Traffic," the result of which was a direct set of public opinion into channels uncomplimentary to the Jewish name, and a defensive movement was begun. There is no intention to rake up past scandals, unless it shall become necessary; it is enough to say here that, very soon afterward, General Bingham disappeared from public life, and a national magazine of

power and influence which had embarked on a series of articles setting forth the government's findings in the White Slave investigation was forced to discontinue after the printing of the first article. This was in the year 1908. The American Jewish Committee, to whose influence the Kehillah really owes its existence, came into being in 1906.

The word "Kehillah" has the same meaning as "Kahal," which signifies "community," "assembly" or government. It represents the Jewish form of government in the dispersion. That is to say, since destiny has made the Jews wanderers of the earth, they have organized their own government so that it might function regardless of the governments which the so-called "Gentiles" have set up. In the Babylonian captivity, in Eastern Europe today, the Kahal is the power and protectorate to which the faithful Jew looks for government and justice. The Peace Conference established the Kahal in Poland and Rumania. The Kahal itself is establishing its courts in the city of New York. The Kahal issues laws, judges legal cases, issues divorces—the Jews who appeal thereto preferring Jewish justice to the justice of the courts of the land. It is, of course, an agreement among themselves to be so governed; just as citizenship in the United States assumes an agreement to be governed by institutions provided for that purpose.

The New York Kehillah is the largest and most powerful union of Jews in the world. The center of Jewish world power has been transferred to that city. That is the meaning of the heavy migration of Jews all over the world toward New York. It is to them what Rome is to the devout Catholic and what Mecca is to the Mohammedan. And by that same token, immigrant Jews are more freely admitted to the United States than they are to Palestine.

The Kehillah is a perfect answer to the statement that the Jews are so divided among themselves as to render a concert of action impossible. That is one of the statements made for Gentile consumption, that the Jews are hopelessly divided among themselves. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have had opportunity during recent weeks to see and hear for themselves that when an anti-Gentile purpose is in view, Jews of all classes make the same threats and the same boasts. They are either going to "get" somebody, or they have "got" somebody.

A recent Jewish writer attempted to raise a laugh about the very idea of the members of the Jewish needle-workers' unions of New York having anything in common with the needle-work bosses. He made his attempt in confidence that the public knew little or nothing about the Kehillah. But the public can find all groups and all interests in that body, for there they meet as Jews. The capitalist and the Bolshevik, the rabbi and the union leader, the strikers and the employers struck against, are all united under the flag of Judah. Touch the conservative capitalist who is a Jew, and the red anarchist who is also a Jew will spring to his defense. It may be that sometimes they love each other less, but altogether they hate the non-Jew more, and that is their common bond.

The Kehillah is an alliance, more offensive than defensive, against the "Gentiles." The majority of the membership of the New York Kehillah is of an extremely radical character, those seething hundreds of thousands who carefully organized on the East Side the government which was to take over the Russian Empire, even choosing in the Jewish Quarter of New York the Jew who was to succeed the Czar—and yet, in spite of this character of membership, it is officered by Jews whose names stand high in government, judiciary, the law and banking.

It is a strange and really magnificent spectacle which the Kehillah presents, of a people of one racial origin, with a vivid belief in itself and its future, disregarding its open differences, to combine privately in a powerful organization for the racial, material and religious advancement of its own race to the exclusion of all others.

The Kehillah has mapped New York just as the American Jewish Committee has mapped the United States. The city of New York is divided into 18 Kehillah districts which comprise a total of 100 Kehillah neighborhoods, in accordance with the population. The Kehillah District Boards administer Kehillah affairs in their respective districts in accordance with the policy and rules laid down by the central governing body.

Practically every Jew in New York belongs to one or more lodges, secret societies, unions, orders, committees or federations. The list is a prodigious one. The purposes interlace and the methods dovetail in such a manner as to bring every phase of New York life not only under the watchful eye, but under the swift and powerful action of experienced compulsion upon public affairs.

At the meeting which organized the Kehillah a number of sentiments were expressed which are worthy of consideration today. Judah L. Magnes, then rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, chairman of the meeting, set forth the plan.

“ A central organization like that of the Jewish Community of New York City is necessary to create a Jewish public opinion,” he said.

Rabbi Asher was loudly applauded when he said:

“ American interests are one, Jewish interests are another thing.”

The delegates at this meeting represented 222 Jewish societies, as follows: 74 synagogues, 18 charitable societies, 42 mutual benefit societies, 40 lodges, 12 educational societies, 9 communal federations, 9 literary and musical societies, 9 Zionist societies and 9 religious societies.

At a meeting somewhat more than a year later the number of organizations under the jurisdiction of the Kehillah aggregated 688. These included 238 constituent organizations, 133 congregations, 58 lodges, 44 educational and benevolent societies, and 3 federations. These three federations were made up of 450 societies.

The affiliation now numbers more than 1,000 organizations.

The Kehillah has produced a map of New York City on which the varying densities of the Jewish population are represented by varying densities of shade. In order to comprehend the power of the Kehillah, the Jewish population of New York must be considered. Three years ago, according to Jewish figures (there are no others) there were 1,500,000 Jews in the city alone. Since that time the number has considerably increased—even the Government of the United States cannot say how much.

In 1917-18 the Jews resident in the five boroughs of New York City were estimated—again by Jewish officials—as follows:

Manhattan, 696,000; Brooklyn, 568,000; Bronx, 211,000; Queens, 23,000; Richmond, 5,000; making a total of 1,503,000.

The Kehillah districts form distinct and segregated parts of the City’ s population, and are 18 in number. These 18 in turn comprise 100 neighborhoods, or little ghettos. The districts, with the number of neighborhoods in each, are represented in the following table:

		Neighborhoods
No. 1.	North Bronx District	7
No. 2.	South Bronx District	7
No. 3.	West Side and Harlem District	7
No. 4.	East Harlem District	7
No. 5.	Yorkville District	5
No. 6.	Central Manhattan District	4
No. 7.	Tompkins Square District	6
No. 8.	Delancey District	8
No. 9.	East Broadway District	8
No. 10.	Williamsburg District	7
No. 11.	Bushwick District	6
No. 12.	Central Brooklyn District	6
No. 13.	Brownsville District	6
No. 14.	East New York District	7
No. 15.	Borough Park District	6
No. 16.	West Queens District	1
No. 17.	East Queens District	1
No. 18.	Richmond District	1

Districts such as the Delancey Street and East Broadway sections cover the Great Ghetto of the East Side, while the West Side and Harlem Districts represent the neighborhoods which are the residential goals of the prosperous Jews of New York.

It has been stated that there are districts in which the density of Jewish population is more than 300,000 per square mile, which is more than 2,150 to the usual square city block. There are 19 neighborhoods in which the density is more than 200,000 to the square mile (1,430 to the square block); and 36 neighborhoods in which the density is more than 100,000 to the square mile (715 to the square block).

The average density of the general population for New York City both Jewish and non-Jewish, in 1915, was about 16,000 to the square mile, or 107 to the square block. More than one-third of the Jews, about 38 per cent, that is, 570,000 Jews, live on one per cent of the area of New York. If

all New York' s population were as dense as is the Jewish population of the congested districts, the City would have almost as many inhabitants as the whole United States, or about 95,000,000.

These figures dimly portray the overcrowding which has resulted from the terrific influx of Russian-Polish Jews of the ghetto type, who have settled in the Metropolis and steadfastly refused to go any farther, resulting in problems which are probably unparalleled in the history of civilization.

Yet it is out of such conditions that the far-reaching power of the Kehillah is derived.

When the aggressive program of the Kehillah to make New York a Jewish city, and through New York the United States a Jewish country, was announced, some of the more conservative Jews of New York were timorous. They did not expect that the American people would stand for it. They thought the American people would immediately understand what was afoot and oppose it. There were others who doubted whether the same Kehillah authority could here be wielded over the Jews as was wielded in the old country ghettos. As an official of the Kehillah wrote:

“ There were those who doubted the ultimate success of this new venture in Jewish organization. They based their lack of belief on the fact that no governmental authority could possibly be secured; in other words, that the Kehillah of New York could not hope to wield the same power, based on governmental coercion, as the Kehillahs of the Old World.”

There is much in that paragraph to indicate the status of the Kehillah in Jewish life. Add to this the fact that the vast majority of adult Jews in New York lived under the Kehillahs of the Old World, whose power was based on coercion, and you have an interesting situation.

What the doubt consisted in, however, is not as stated there. No doubt existed as to what it would be possible to do with the Jews. The entire doubt consisted in how far the Americans would let the thing go on. The program of the Kehillah was ostensibly “ to assert Jewish rights.” No Jewish rights have ever been interfered with in America. The expression is a euphemism for a campaign to interfere with non-Jewish rights.

Just how the free exercise of American rights by an American may be construed and is construed by the Jew to be an interference with his rights, will be shown in a separate article.

The doubters felt that when the Jews began to make such demands as that Christmas carols should be suppressed in the schools, as “ offensive to the Jews” ; and that Christmas trees should be banished from police stations in poor neighborhoods as “ offensive to the Jews” ; and that the Easter holidays should be abolished as “ offensive to the Jews” ; and that the phrase, “ a Christian gentleman” should be protested everywhere, as “ offensive to the Jews” ;—the business class of Jews felt that the American would not stand for it.

The American has never interfered with any man' s religious observances; would he stand to have his own prohibited in his own institutions and in his own country?

However, the Jews' misgivings were not justified. The Americans made no protest. The Kehillah went ahead with its campaign and the native population submitted. New York is Jewish. From the City Hall to the Bowery, from Fifth Avenue to Hester street, in board of education, newspaper row, and courts of justice, New York is Jewish. It is actually an offense, an offense speedily though unofficially punished, to intimate in any public way that New York may possibly be other than Jewish. New York is the answer to those who ask, "How can a numerically inferior group dictate the terms of life for all the rest?" Go into a New York school, and see. Go into a New York court, and see. Go into a New York newspaper office, and see. Stand anywhere in New York, and see.

But with it all one gets a sense of the insecurity of this usurpation of power. It doesn't belong to those who have seized it; it doesn't belong either by right of numbers, or by right of superior ability, or yet by right of a better use made of the power thus taken. They have taken it by audacity; they have taken it in such a way as to make resentment of it seem like an anti-racial movement—and that is why they have held it as long as they have.

That is the only way to explain the meekness of the American in this matter, and it also accounts for the sense of insecurity which even the Jews feel in the position they hold. The American is the slowest person in the world to act on any line that savors of racial or religious prejudice. Even when his justifiable act is taken without the slightest prejudice, he is extremely sensitive even to the charge that he is prejudiced. This makes for a seeming aloofness from matters like the Jewish Question. This also leads men to sign protests against "anti-Semitism" which are really designed to be protests against the publication of Jewish facts.

But it would be a serious mistake to believe that the Americans have accepted within their minds the fact of Jewish supremacy in any field, for they have not. And the Jews know that they have not. Present Jewish importance in American affairs threatens to become as precarious as Bolshevik rule in Russia; it may fall at any time. The Jews have overplayed their hand. They have threatened too wildly and boasted too loudly. The very weight of the importance of the Kehillah and the American Jewish Committee is to be one of the factors in the fall. The Jews may live among us, but they may not live upon us.

These things are better known to the Jew than to the non-Jew, for the Jew knows the Jewish Question better than anyone else, and he knows better than any Gentile when a statement hits the bull's-eye of the truth. The American Jews are not now protesting against lies; they would welcome lies against themselves; they are roused to protest by the power of the truth, and they are the best judges of the truth with reference to themselves.

The situation is not one that calls for expulsion, or resistance, but simply exposure to the light—for to vanquish darkness, what is better than light?

The Jews had a great opportunity in the New York Kehillah. They had an opportunity to say to the world, "This is what the Jew can do for a city when he is given freedom to work." They have the city government, the police department, the health department, the school board, the newspapers, the judiciary, financiers—every element of power.

And what have they to show for all this? The answer is,—New York.

New York is an object lesson set in the sight of the whole world, as to what the Jew can do and will do when he exalts himself to the seat of rule. It is inconceivable that even the Jewish spokesmen will defend Jewish New York.

Lest the New York Kehillah—in view of statements yet to be made concerning it—should be disregarded, or its importance minimized, by the feeling that, after all, it only represents the more radical elements, “the apostate Jews” which seems to be a recent favorite designation for them, a partial view is here given of its leaders.

Present at the 1918 convention were Jacob H. Schiff, banker; Louis Marshall, lawyer, president of the American Jewish Committee and frequent visitor to Washington; Otto A. Rosalsky, judge of the General Sessions Court, who has taken part in several affairs of interest both to Jews and Gentiles; Adolph S. Ochs, proprietor of the New York *Times*; Otto H. Kahn, of the banking firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Company—AND—Benjamin Schlesinger, who is lately returned from Moscow where he had a conference with Lenin; Joseph Schlossberg, general secretary of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, with 177,000 members; Max Pine, also recently a consultant with the Bolshevik rulers of Russia; David Pinski; Joseph Barondess, labor leader.

The high and the low are here; Judge Mack, who headed the War Risk Insurance Bureau of the United States Government, and the little leader of the reddest group in the East End—they all meet in the Kehillah, as Jews.

As to the Kehillah being officially representative, it may be added that the Kehillah has in it representatives of the Central Conference of American rabbis, Eastern Council of Reform rabbis, Independent Order of B' nai B' rith, Independent Order of B' rith Sholom, Independent Order Free Sons of Israel, Independent Order B' rith Abraham, Federation of American Zionists—orthodox Jews, reform Jews, “apostate Jews,” Zionist Jews, Americanized Jews, rich Jews, poor Jews, law-abiding Jews and red revolutionary Jews—Adolph Ochs of the great New York *Times*, together with the most feverish scribbler on a Yiddish weekly that calls for blood and violence—Jacob Schiff who was a devoutly religious Jew of strong faith and obedience, and Otto H. Kahn, of the same banking house, who professes another religion—all of them, of all classes, bound together in that solidarity which has been achieved by no other people so perfectly as by Judah.

And these are banded together for the purpose of “protecting Jewish rights.” From what? If Americans were not large in their liberal-mindedness the very statement of purpose would be an offense. Who in this country is interfering with anyone's rights? The American wants to know, for that is the kind of thing he wants to put down, and always has put down, and will put down again wherever or from whatever quarter it arises. Therefore it will occur to him sooner or later to demand particulars of these rights that need protection, and from what they need to be protected.

What rights have Americans that Jews in America do not possess? Against whom are the Jews organized, and against what?

What basis is there for the cry of “ persecution” ? None whatever, except the Jews’ own consciousness that the course they are pursuing is due for a check. The Jews always know that. They are not in the stream of the world, and every little while the world finds out what Judah always knows.

Rabbi Elias L. Solomon has been quoted as saying:

“ There is no thinking Jew outside of America whose eyes are not turned toward this country. The freedom enjoyed by the Jews in America is not the outcome of emancipation purchased at the cost of national suicide, but the natural product of American civilization.”

Of course. Then where is the “ protection” needed? What are the “ rights” which the Kehillahs of this country are organized to “ defend” ? What are the meanings of these committees in every city and town of the land, spying upon American activities and bringing protests to bear to keep those activities within well-defined channels acceptable to the Jews?

These questions have never been answered by the Jewish spokesmen. Let them prepare a Bill of Rights, as they conceive their rights to be. Let them name every right they desire and claim. They have never done so. Why? Because the rights they dare name in public are such as they already possess in abundance, and further, because the rights that in their hearts they most desire are such that they cannot state to the American public.

A Jewish Bill of Rights, such as could be published, would be met by the American people thus: “ Why, you have all these things already. What more do you want?” And that is the question which lies at the core of the entire Jewish Problem—What more do they want?

A further penetration of Kehillah activities may help to answer that question.

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