Arbeter Fraint had been first set up in the late 1870's in Berners St by Jewish socialists  and was very important in the development of an organised labour movement within this group, both through its meetings and its publication of the same name.   The club had an educational programme including English classes and lectures in history, literature, and sociology. Throughout his life Rocker insisted on the need for education in the workers movement. Workers who could think for themselves could evaluate the claims of political parties, which in Rocker’s view exploited the ignorance and apathy of the masses. In the following years the Workers’ Friend Club, along with the Yiddish anarchist papers, achieved popularity well beyond the Jewish anarchist scene.

By the end of 1892 the Berner Street premises were abandoned, while Der Arbeter Fraint was suspended from July 1894 until April 1895.

Such was the situation when Rudolf Rocker joined the Arbeter Fraint group in 1895. He quickly became a regular speaker at the group’s meetings, where he met his lifelong companion Milly Witkop. Milly was a Ukrainian Jew who had come to London a year earlier. By 1896 Rocker was writing regularly for Der Arbeter Fraint and once it found a pernmanent home again, in Jubilee St, it established an educational programme including English classes and lectures in history, literature, and sociology. Throughout his life Rocker insisted on the need for education in the workers movement. Workers who could think for themselves could evaluate the claims of political parties, which in Rocker’s view exploited the ignorance and apathy of the masses. In the following years the Workers’ Friend Club, along with the Yiddish anarchist papers, achieved popularity well beyond the Jewish anarchist scene.

The period between 1910 and 1914 saw an upsurge in the class struggle throughout Britain, which is often referred to as the ‘Syndicalist Revolt’. Many strikes were unofficial and marked by civil unrest.

In May 1912 between 7 and 8,000 West End tailors, more skilled and better paid than those in the East End, came out on strike. Since much of their work was being transferred to the East End the Tailors’ Union there, under the influence of the Arbeter Fraint group, decided to support the strike. Although more than 70% of East End tailors were not engaged in work linked to the West End strike, nevertheless 13,000 East End immigrant garment workers went on strike following a May 8th assembly at which Rocker spoke. On the strike committee Rocker was responsible for collecting money and other necessities for the striking workers. He also published Der Arbeter Fraint on a daily basis to spread news about the strike and spoke at the workers’ assemblies and demonstrations. On May 24th a mass meeting was held to discuss whether to settle on a compromise proposed by the employers. A speech by Rocker convinced the workers to continue the strike and by the next morning all of the workers’ demands were met.

Meanwhile, a dock strike was dragging on in east London with the dockers’ families facing starvation. Der Arbeter Fraint called on the Jewish tailors to rally to their aid and a committee was set up and offers of accommodation and gifts poured in from Jewish workers who very often struggled to feed themselves. Rudolf and Milly personally collected children from the docks, and in all over 300 were taken into Jewish homes and fed and cared for.

During his years in London Rocker devoted himself to the Jewish anarchist movement becoming a much loved and deeply respected figure in the wider Jewish community. Besides his involvement with the Workers’ Friend Club, he was instrumental in forming other clubs where the East End working class could meet, discuss, borrow books and buy cheap food.