

Cultural Union of German Jews

(*Kulturbund Deutscher Juden*), organization that promoted culture and the arts among the Jews of Germany from 1933 to 1941. The *Kulturbund* was founded in Berlin as a response to the exclusion of Jews from German cultural life after the Nazis rose to power; its goals were to allow German Jews to maintain the level of culture they were used to, and provide work for the thousands of Jewish musicians and theater artists who had lost their jobs as a result of the Nazis' anti-Jewish legislation.

In October 1933 the *Kulturbund* in Berlin opened a theater company, a symphony orchestra, an opera, a cabaret group, and a lecture program. Jewish communities all over Germany followed Berlin's lead and established their own cultural societies. In April 1935 all of Germany's Jewish cultural societies united into one umbrella organization, called the Reich Association of Jewish Cultural Societies (*Reichsverband der Juedischen Kulturbuende*). After the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of 1938, the German authorities ordered the organization to take charge of all Jewish cultural activities, including the remaining publishing houses and the one remaining Jewish newspaper. In September 1941 the *Kulturbund* was abolished. During its eight years of existence, the society provided German Jewry with spiritual support, and served as a form of moral resistance in the face of persecution and humiliation.