

Bund

(*Yidisher Arbeter-Bund in Russland, Lite un Poiln*; League of Jewish Workers in Russia, Lithuania, and Poland), Jewish Socialist party founded in Vilna in 1897.

Originally, the *Bund* aimed to organize Jewish workers and encourage their involvement in the Russian Socialist movement. However, after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the *Bund* disintegrated in the Soviet Union when most of its members joined the Communist party. The *Bund* flourished in Poland after World War I and became an important force among Poland's Jews. Small branches were also active in Lithuania, Romania, Belgium, France, and the United States.

The *Bund* completely opposed Zionism and Hebrew culture and language; it viewed Yiddish as the national language of Eastern European Jewry. It called for equal rights for Jews within a Socialist framework in which Jews would be given cultural freedom.

Prior to World War II, the *Bund* fought Antisemitism in Poland, and even empowered its self-defense units to respond aggressively against attacks on Jews. *Bund* members also extended their influence by joining Polish city councils.

When World War II broke out most of the *Bund's* leaders fled Poland. Many members were arrested, exiled, or murdered. In Warsaw, the party elders refused to join forces with any Zionist parties or movements in creating a united Jewish fighting alliance, claiming they had ties with the underground outside the Ghetto. Younger leaders did support an umbrella organization. However, only after the major deportations from Warsaw in October 1942 did the young members join the Jewish Fighting Organization. A similar thing happened in Vilna, when the younger members defied the party elders by joining the United Partisan Organization. Four *Bund* squads also joined the fighting in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 1943.

Samuel Zygelbojm, a *Bund* leader who had fled to the US, was appointed to the Polish National Committee in London in 1942. After receiving reports of the mass murder of Polish Jewry, Zygelbojm desperately tried to enlist the

help of international and Jewish organizations. After failing to garner support, however, Zygelbojm committed suicide in 1943. (see also Jewish Fighting Organization, Warsaw and United Partisan Organization, Vilna.)