

## Zygelbojm, Samuel Artur

(1895--1943), A leader of the Polish Bund (Jewish-Socialist) Party who tried to tell the world about the mass murder of Jews in Europe during the Holocaust.

When World War II broke out in September 1939, Zygelbojm was one of 12 Poles taken hostage by the Germans in Warsaw. After he was released, Zygelbojm helped organize a *Bund* resistance cell. He was also chosen to represent his party in the city's Judenrat. However, fearing arrest due to his underground activities, Zygelbojm fled to Western Europe, where he told a Socialist International meeting about the persecution of Polish Jewry. In September 1940 Zygelbojm left France for New York. In 1942 he returned to Western Europe when he was made a member of the National Council of the London-based Polish Government-In-Exile.

When Zygelbojm received early reports of the Germans' murder crusade in Poland, he took responsibility for telling the world. As a member of the Polish government-in-exile, he begged the governments of the free world to launch rescue operations. In May 1942 Zygelbojm received a new report from the *Bund* in Warsaw about the mass extermination of Polish Jewry. This was one of the first official reports to define the scope of the killing and provide names and sites of Extermination Camps. Zygelbojm went on a BBC broadcast on June 2, 1942 to spread the horrific news and appeal for public support to stop the annihilation.

In October of that same year, Zygelbojm met with a Polish underground representative, who brought him a message from two Jewish underground members living on the Polish side of Warsaw. The message begged Zygelbojm to take immediate steps to save his fellow Jews. Zygelbojm, growing more and more desperate, appealed to anyone and everyone for help, including Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt. However, no one heeded his anguished call.

In May 1943 Zygelbojm was told that the last Jews of Warsaw---including his wife and sixteen-year-old son---had been murdered. This was the last straw: Zygelbojm committed suicide in despair and protest of the world's apathy to the fate of the Jews.