From the Old Bund to the Polish Bund

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In the Bund’s more than one hundred years of existence (including its formative period), its various names have reflected the cycles, way-stations and stages of its development. The Bund was born in tsarist Russia; the term ‘old Bund’ will be used to describe the party at this stage in its history. The term ‘Polish Bund’ will be used to refer to the Bund in the interwar period of the Second Polish Republic.

Bundist historiography, like anti-Bundist historiography, often interprets the movement’s history along two ideological lines, with one school aiming to idealize the Bund, and the other to negate and de-legitimize it. Both schools of history tend to explain the Bund’s development as linear—indeed, as almost stereotypical. These tendencies are made explicit in studies dealing with fundamental questions like Jewish nationalism, Jewish emigration, assimilation, the future of Jewish existence, nationality and class, and nationalism and internationalism. The same tendencies are also evident in writings on the relationship of the Bund to the all-Russian social-democratic movement and to Polish socialism, as well as on the uniqueness of the Jewish proletariat, on the Bund as a national or international organization, and on the Bund and communism.

In this article, the approach used in dealing with these issues is a generic critical one, entailing an examination of continuity and change. Only through investigation of these two areas is it possible to arrive at a general understanding of the historical processes that existed. On the one hand, there is truth to the claim that the end of social-political movements like the Bund is unlike their beginning. On the other, it is impossible to understand the changes that occurred within the Bund without first investigating its roots, in the broadest sense of that word.

The word ‘roots’ is associated with territory and in its historical context is organically linked to the social-national groups living in an area. Eastern Europe (including east-central Europe and the southeast) can be seen to have followed three main courses to development during the nineteenth century, and continuing until World War I. The first course is national, and refers to the path of development of ethnic or ethnic-religious groups that lived separately from one another, as well as interspersed with each other. Crystallization of the group bond, a stage in the development of national self-consciousness, and the group bond’s embodiment in well-defined political claims, varies from group to group.

The second course is concerned with territorial units, the majority of which belonged to the great empires. Some groups in this category had a tradition of self-rule, and some were divided by new borders, with varying degrees of connection between them—differing with time and place. Some demanded territorial restitution or hegemony on the basis of historical rights that were not always adequately defined. These demands frequently conflicted with the claims of other ethnic groups, which relied on their own interpretation of history. In the process of crystallization, these national desires were expressed in demands for independence, federations, and autonomy, and often a mixture of all three.

The third course deals with regional units within larger administrative frameworks. The first two courses are integrated in the third. Nationalities, even when subjugated, often fought amongst themselves. These conflicts concerned practical matters
as well as the political future of the region, and were frequently based on claims and conceptions of a historical nature. Differences in orientation regarding the ruling powers also developed among these nationalities, and all these antagonisms influenced the national policies of the ruling power.

Another factor that affected these three courses of development was the multi-national, multi-religious nature of the region. After World War I, there were changes in the national administrative framework, but the contradictions and differences that stemmed from national pluralism formed anew in the nineteenth century and were among the most important influences in the legacy of the past as well as in contemporary life. All this was expressed in the ideological development, programmes, tactics, and organizational frameworks of the workers’ and socialist movements in eastern Europe. In partitioned Poland, these differences were sharper than in other countries because the movements had great symbolic weight for the new Poland—especially in its struggle for national freedom and the establishment of the Polish state.

National pluralism is particularly relevant in discussing the Jewish communities. Jews were scattered throughout eastern Europe in large and small groups, and were involved in all the burning issues of the times. The Jews constituted an urban or semi-urban population, and the experience of the Diaspora gave rise to connections between Jewish communities. Antisemitism was also an important determining factor. The nations within which Jews lived experienced the essence of Jewish separateness in two ways: in non-Jewish society as a whole there were those who saw the Jews as an exclusively religious community; liberal groups who opposed antisemitism and favoured Jewish assimilation and integration. On the political right there was a tendency to recognize the national uniqueness of the Jews, which worked to separate and exclude the Jews from participation in the ruling national administrative framework. There were also socialists who accepted the version of history that identified Jews with the exploiting class; other socialists, however, refused to recognize the Jews as a national group with a unique position among the nationalities in an area. At the same time there were those socialists who emphasized the national character of the Jewish communities.

Even the Jews’ own definition of themselves as a nation was problematic. Within the Zionist movement (the principal current of modern Jewish nationalism), there was a growing tendency to view the Jews as a ‘conditional nation’. In other words, the Jews would become a people when they were concentrated in one territory and able to develop their own government. There was a continuing internal tension between the ‘negators of the Diaspora’ and those who desired to gather together the exiled, and there was as well a recognition of the genuinely diverse experiences of the Jews in their countries of residence, the complexity of their current needs, and their struggles for their rights.

The history of this period is characterized by capitalist development and its resulting proletarianization, urbanization, and demographic mobility, as well as the attendant broadening of educational opportunities and the growth of the intelligentsia—all of which also significantly affected the Jews. While these developments took place within the dynamics of a complex national framework, they had their own momentum, and were capable of both influencing and being influenced. Concrete analysis of the interrelationships between modernization and the national framework, and judgement as to how both would emerge, is very problematic. Nevertheless, this is the first area to examine in researching the history of the Bund.

The decisive step in the establishment of the Polish Bund was the union of the Bund with the Jewish Socialist Party of Galicia (Żydowska Partia Socjal-
Demokratyczna— ŻPSD) in 1920. This union was of special significance, as the Galician party was established and developed in the Hapsburg Empire under different historical conditions from those in which the Bund developed in Tsarist Russia. It is possible to compare the Polish Bund with the PPS (Polish Socialist Party). There is no doubt, however, that the mark left by the old PPSD (Polish Socialist Party of Galicia and Silesia) on the PPS in the Second Republic was greater than the influence of the ŻPSD on the Bund after their union. Nevertheless, Galicia deserves special attention.

The process of the organizational separation of the Bund in Poland from the old Bund started at the beginning of World War I, when large territories were cut off from the Russian Empire and occupied by the German and Austrian armies. In the area of German occupation, which was given a certain amount of autonomy, conditions were more favourable for political activity than they had been under Russian rule; in the Austrian area, this was even more true. By November 1914 the central committee of the old Bund had already established a special committee for the Polish branches, paving the way for their organizational independence. This process was renewed after the war, but some years passed before the final organizational framework and its ideological-political orientation were crystallized. At the time of the declaration of Polish independence in November 1918, the country’s borders were not yet established, and the fate of the provinces and cities that had been major Bundist centres before—Vilna, Minsk, Białystok, and others—was unclear. Moreover, during the Polish-Soviet war, the fate of Kiev and Warsaw still hung in the balance. It was symptomatic that the social-democratic Bund organization in Vilna joined the national party only after a number of years.

The old Bund, the Union of Jewish Workers in Poland, was founded in 1897. At the first Bund Congress (autumn 1897), both Poland and Russia were included in the official name. In contrast, Ukraine was not mentioned, nor was it added when Lithuania was added at the fourth Congress in 1901. Including Poland in the name acknowledged that Poland was a separate territorial-national unit, even though this unit was still under tsarist rule. During the 1890s there was an active connection between groups of workers and Jewish intelligentsia in Lithuania and their counterparts in Warsaw, and movement representatives from Lithuania played an important role in the growth of the movement in both Warsaw and Łódź.

There is a tendency among historians to ignore the first ten years in the history of the old Bund (1887–97). This period was of particular significance because it was during this time that, with many complications, advances, and retreats, the fundamental goals of the movement in all areas were formulated. This process should be seen first of all against the background of changes within Jewish society. The internal relationships and connections with non-Jewish society became more complex and full of contradictions. Modernization and pluralism in all areas of life, and, of course, social differences increased the confrontations between centrifugal and centripetal tendencies, and left their mark on the new Jewish politics that was emerging.

It is difficult to understand the positions of the Polish Bund without an appreciation of the early, formative period and the questions that appeared then and continued to exist in the later period. Some of these questions were:

A. Can the stratum of Jewish workers, mainly small craftsmen and labourers, become the object of a class movement of the sort ordinarily composed of industrial workers?
B. What should be the connection between the class content and the general Jewish content of the movement?

C. Do Jewish workers have a special mission or do they only share in the goals and missions of workers from other countries and peoples? In other words, does the Jewish workers’ movement have exclusively class goals, or are there Jewish objectives as well, such as the revolutionary struggle for equal rights and national equality and the struggle against antisemitism in all its manifestations, even among the non-Jewish working class?

D. How is it possible to differentiate between national specificity and national chauvinism?

E. Is it possible or necessary to cooperate with other Jewish social groups—groups beyond the working classes and the social democratic intelligentsia—in the struggle against antisemitism?

F. How should Jewish individuality be connected with proletarian socialist and international solidarity and unity?

G. Is it enough to make demands relating to communal Jewish existence in the present, or should these demands also take into account the future role of Jews? The Bund’s position on this issue would determine in part its connections with other movements and organizations—for example, the Zionists, the Territorialists, the Autonomists, and the Po’alei Zion.

Several hypotheses, based on relevant sources, may serve to clarify these points.

In the early days—in the period of change from propaganda (general education and theoretical explanation of socialist subjects) to mass agitation in the struggle for improvement in the living and working conditions of the workers through professional organization and declaration of strikes (1893–4)—the need to develop a political consciousness and a critical relationship to the repressive government was discussed, especially in connection with work and employment. In this discussion, the subject of the ‘national-Jewish political struggle’ for civil rights was raised. The Jewish bourgeoisie was not able to participate because the struggle was a revolutionary one involving only the proletariat. This approach was based on the principle of self-help and independent national and class activity by the Jewish proletariat. To accomplish the revolutionary goal, the Jewish proletariat would have to unite and establish itself as an identifiable power in the general political struggle.

By 1895 there were widespread calls for a special organization for the Jewish proletariat. Such an organization would demonstrate a specific understanding of the connection between the universal and the particular and would represent a significant departure from the automatic identification (especially for Jews) of internationalism with cosmopolitanism. It would cause national differences within the working class and the socialist movement to become insignificant. Socialist internationalism and proletarian solidarity were not viewed metaphysically, as permanent and accepted a priori, but realistically, as longed-for goals. The solidarity and the common international goals were to be achieved among workers of different peoples not by ignoring differences, but through joint efforts to overcome the obstacles created by these differences. The faith of the Jewish proletariat that the working class in general, and the general workers’ movement in particular, would be able to fulfill its needs and special desires as a social stratum with a national character, was bound up with its belief in itself and in the development of its independent strength. These would enable the working class to support internationalism based on a cooperation that would preserve the equality of
individual elements within the general movement. Such cooperation was also understood as a necessary condition for achieving the special goals of the Jewish workers’ movement. This claim was at the heart of the accusations of separatism levelled at the Bund by elements of the Polish Socialist movement and the Social-Democratic movement in Russia.

The Bund was not the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat, but it was the most energetic of the Jewish workers’ movements and was its official representative. The theoretical bases described above formed an official and relatively flexible framework for continued development of the old Bund, and even of the Polish Bund. The history of the Bund within the Jewish community of the tsarist Empire is illuminating in this regard. Here, where the Jewish workers’ movement was most active, the dialectical contradictions of the double historical framework emerge clearly.

More than any other, the term ‘auto-emancipation’ described new processes in the life of the Jewish people beginning in the 1880s. Auto-emancipation grew out of a disappointment over the failure to solve what was called the ‘Jewish question’ through emancipation. The accepted view that emancipation and auto-emancipation were completely contradictory is mistaken; without the movement for emancipation, which was linked to modernization, secularization, pluralism and the attempt to integrate in Polish society, the desire for auto-emancipation would not have been born. Auto-emancipation could not deny a strong connection with the surrounding environment. The slogan of auto-emancipation emerged in a period of crisis in the 1880s, and it emphasized a territorial solution as the ultimate goal. More specifically, the solution was to be the Zionist one. The reality of the situation quickly demonstrated that realization of this ultimate goal was a long way off, while emancipation in that part of the world which the largest concentration of Jews knew as home remained a possible, more immediate solution. Thus, concern with the ultimate goal did not postpone worries about the day-to-day issues of life. There was a gradual development in the Zionist movement (which began in Galicia and extended to Russia) in the direction of ‘work in the present’, which came to include ‘synthetic Zionism’. In the auto-emancipation movement this tendency was expressed in an explosion of energy among those who wanted to take control of their own fate.  

To the extent that Jewish participation occurred collectively in the revolutionary movement, it was also an expression of this auto-emancipatory change in Jewish life. The need to establish an independent and identifiable force among Jewish workers in order to be able to work efficiently with workers of other nations is a similar manifestation of this change. Zionist influence was felt at the fourth Bund conference in 1901 in the fundamental approval of the plan for national and cultural autonomy, although the Bund continued to oppose Zionism itself. The establishment of the Bund was an important factor influencing the rise of special workers’ movements within Zionism. The independence of the Jewish workers’ movement and the struggle for its realization were bequeathed by the old Bund to the Polish Bund. At the time of its establishment, the Polish Bund faced a fundamental challenge: communism. The Komubund (Communist Bund), which had split off from the mother organization, was negotiating with the Comintern (Third Communist International) and its branch in Poland on the principle of organizational autonomy within the communist framework.

The relationships among the old Bund in its formative stage, the workers’ movements and the Polish socialist movement and its approach to questions of Polish nationalism, politics, economy, and culture are also illuminating. In a number of areas,
the relationships with the Polish movements were often more important for the development of the Bund than the connection with the All-Russian Social Democrats. In speaking of the very early, pre-Bund period it is important to note that a workers’ movement appeared in the Polish kingdom even before it did in Russia. Similarly, Poland was ahead of Russia in the organization of socialist parties. It was the Polish movement that first considered the place of national interests, including the Jewish question, within the socialist movement. This was true not only with respect to the Russian regime’s repression of national groups, but also to the conflicts between the oppressed peoples themselves. In this connection fundamental changes in the Polish socialist movement at the end of the 1880s and the beginning of the 1890s had an important influence on the early Bund. The revolutionary movement in Russia, Polish independence, and the organizational controversy in Lithuania–Belarus that was the origin of the Jewish workers’ movement, were equally significant in moulding the direction the Bund would take.

Two factors demonstrated the Polish influence on the development of the early Bund. First was the emergence of agitation for economic struggle and the use of strikes (another, less important one, was the decision to use Yiddish in internal and external activities, as the Poles used Polish in theirs). In the area of economic struggle, the Union of Polish Workers was an important model for the Bund. Secondly, there was the use of circles or cells by Polish socialists. Polish socialism played an important role in how the Bund would be organized and in the formation of its national platform.

The principle of Bund organization—the definition of the Bund’s right to exist as a separate Jewish organization within the general movement—became the ideological foundation of the old Bund and was later imparted to the Polish Bund. This principle was the source of the organizational loyalty that characterized the members of both the old and the Polish Bund. As the functions of the organization broadened, this principle was strengthened. Its opponents jealously recognized this fact. Raising the organizational principle above all others fulfilled another function as well: it made possible a certain ideological-programmatic polyvalence, especially on national problems in which the Bund struggled with both non-Jewish and Jewish publics.

This polyvalence helped preserve the organization’s unity in times of internal controversy, such as the debate over the issue of whether the Bund should remain neutral on the future of a national Jewish existence. It was also evident in conflicts over whether the Bund should return to the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party after it was forced to leave in 1903. The struggle between Menshevik and Bolshevik tendencies in the period of reaction after the 1905 revolution, as well as differences about World War I, were factors creating internal disagreement. The internal unity that came about afterwards was expressed more forcefully in the preservation of the organizational unity of the two different factions in the Polish Bund in the 1920s despite their significant differences on the existence of the third international. This unity was in contrast to the situation in the Po’alei Zion movement, which split into a left wing and a right wing.

The first opposition to the idea of a separate Jewish workers’ movement came from within the ranks of the PPS at the beginning of its existence. It was during this time of struggle in the pre-Bund period that the party came to the conclusion that the Jewish movement should not be included in the Polish and Russian movements, but rather remain an independent element. The attempt to unite the circles of the pre-Bund in Warsaw with Jewish groups in the PPS was one of the primary factors hastening the
founders of the old Bund. The historical significance of this PPS position was
greater, however, in that it involved an unwillingness to accept a national understanding
of Jewish identity and the Jewish right to independent political activity. The PPS
presented the choice of Russification or Polonization. What emerged was neither: the
Bund chose auto-emancipation, an inward orientation, and nationalization of the
organization. This had a profound influence throughout the old Bund’s existence, and
continued to operate up to the creation of the Polish Bund.

The old Bund tended to take a neutral position on the question of Polish
independence—a demand that was central to the PPS platform. It was not by chance that
at the first Bund congresses arguments broke out on the question of placing the primary
emphasis on national equality for the Jews rather than on equal civil rights. The success
of the democratic revolution in Russia was, in the eyes of the Bund, a preliminary step
toward resolving national questions. Since the Bund regarded itself as an organization of
Jewish workers in all areas, it did not favour a future breakup of the empire; rather, it
favoured destruction of the autocratic regime and the establishment of an integrated
autonomous federal regime. The Bund officially held to the idea of self-definition for
each nation within the tsarist monarchy that had been approved at the London congress of
the Socialist International (1896) and accepted by the PSDR. Afterwards the phrase ‘until
[the] dissolution [of the Empire] was added. Thus, Polish independence remained a
possibility for the Bund; it was not to be dismissed out of hand, even if there were
changes in the Bund’s position (at the third Bund congress in 1899).

Though the old Bund and the PPS were clearly at odds over the question of Polish
independence, their relationship should not be understood only as a struggle between
rivals. At the end of the 1890s there were attempts to cooperate—for example in
Bialystok, a city that played an important role in the history of the Jewish workers’
movement in the period of its formation. The PPS was forced to recognize the Bund in a
general sense as a public political force and as a socialist movement. Józef Piłsudski, the
oldest and most stubborn enemy of the Bund since the early 1890s in Vilna, explicitly
recognized this with relation to Lithuania–Belarus at the beginning of the century. At
least indirectly, he recognized it as true for the Polish kingdom as well. Assimilationist
trends in the PPS were weakened, there were again attempts to strengthen its Jewish
section, and efforts to conduct propaganda in Yiddish continued. Moreover, there were
voices calling for recognition of Jewish nationhood and for abandoning the patronizing
attitude towards the Jews that had been a legacy of the szlachta (Polish nobility). The
respected PPS theoretician Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz participated in these discussions.
This trend became even more pronounced among members of the PPS–Lewica (PPS-
Left) after its split from the mother party. In contrast, in the second splinter group, the
PPS-Revolutionary Faction, varying shades of antisemitism became apparent. The
revolutionary faction was the group that later gave rise to many leaders of the Sanacja,
the ruling party in independent Poland from 1926.

Also crucial to the historical context is the relationship between the Bund and the
Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego (Social Democracy of the Congress Kingdom of
Poland—SDKP). The main battle the Bund had with the Russian Social Democratic
Labour Party at the beginning of this century was over the question of the party’s federal
framework, which was based on national allegiances. The first, relatively limited
attempt at a federal framework between the Bund and the SDKP was in the area of trade
unions (specifically, the union of leather workers). Important in this connection was the
renewal of the SDKP in 1901. Its leadership, headed by Stanisław Trusiewicz, recognized the importance of national-cultural autonomy as a solution to national questions even before the Bund did. Trusiewicz was favourably disposed towards the Bund, and it is reasonable to assume that his attitude influenced the Bund as well. The SDKP’s attempt to implement various organizational frameworks within the Jewish communities in the period of the first revolution was doubtless influenced by the Bund’s activities. Mutual respect between the Bund and the SDKP was demonstrated at the fifth congress of the SDKP with the return of the Bund to the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1906.

Although the joint activity of the PPS-Left and the Bund should not be overlooked, a fundamental ambivalence appeared in the heated arguments between Polish and Jewish workers on the eve of World War I. These differences involved the unwillingness of factory owners (even those who were Jewish industrialists) to absorb Jewish craftsmen who were unable to work at more skilled types of production. In the political realm, however, there was cooperation among the Bund and the parties of the Polish socialist left. With the outbreak of World War I, for example, an anti-war pamphlet was published jointly by SDKP leadership (which had already split into two camps), the PPS-Left, and the Bund central committee.

The Polish Bund also supported the establishment of an independent Poland as well as the radical reform of the socialist workers’ movements following the formation of the KPP (Polish Communist Party). These goals went hand in hand with the victory of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the formation of the Comintern.

These developments propelled the Polish Bund towards an organizational split and an explicit recognition of Polish statehood. There is historical irony in the fact that Józef Piłsudski, one of its most important opponents during the pre-Bund period, invited the Bund to a discussion on the formation of the government on 12 December 1918. He did so in recognition of Bund support for the new Polish state. Despite the importance of Warsaw and Łódź, the centre of Bundist activity before World War I was in the northwest (Lithuania and Belarus); afterwards it shifted to central Poland. A number of activists from the old Lithuanian–Belarusian Bund (V. Kosovski, Y. Portnoy (Noah), B. Michaelewicz and others) continued to be involved in the leadership of the Polish Bund. Increasingly, however, native Poles like Henryk Alter and Viktor Erlich emerged to become symbols of the Polish Bund, even before their murder in a Soviet prison in 1941. Alter and Erlich had had public political experience before this in Russia.

Bronisław Grosser, a second-generation leader of the old Bund who had been assimilated into Polish culture since his youth, felt that joining the Bund would be a return to Judaism. He believed that Polish-Jewish relations should be based not on assimilation and Polonization but on recognition of the existence of two national groups, including recognition of the national civic and cultural rights of Jews. The Polish Bund continued to demand national cultural autonomy, but this claim soon became less significant. In contrast, there was no doubt in the ranks of the Polish Bund that it was important to develop Yiddish cultural and educational activities. This direction, which was further crystallized after the revolution of 1905, now became dominant. The main principles preserved from the tradition of the old Bund into the period of independent Poland were those relating to its attitude to its competitors. The PPS was no longer the main enemy; its place was taken by the Communist Workers’ Party of Poland (KPRP).
The KPRP claimed to be the party of the workers of all national groups within Poland. It was not by chance that the question of a special Jewish organization within this party became the most controversial one in the union negotiations that were led by the KPRP and Comintern institutions. This issue was the basis for the differences of opinion at the beginning of Polish independence; it centred on the need to found special organizational frameworks for Jewish workers in *Moetzet hapoalim*, which did not last long.

After the stabilization of Poland in the early 1920s, the Polish Bund remained deeply divided about joining the Second (Socialist) Workers’ International or the Third (Communist) International. At the same time the party wanted to avoid a split, and so joined the Vienna International. Only in 1930 did the Bund finally decide to join the Second International.  

In historiography, the Polish Bund has often been seen as a party tending to single-mindedness, although there has been some perception of the Bund as a movement whose activities covered a variety of areas: politics, professional trade unions, cooperatives, cultural work, Yiddish, school networks, self defense, sports, women’s organizations, *Tsukunft* (youth organizations), and even *Skif* (children’s groups). In many of these areas it is possible to find continuity with the old Bund despite the many changes.

The old Bund stubbornly held to a position of class consciousness as opposed to an ‘all Israel’ view that was above class. It saw the workers as opposed to other classes. The first breach in this conception came just before World War I within the framework of the old Bund. As a result of the deportations and various activities during the war, Bund participation in Jewish social organizations increased. Among these organizations were committees to aid refugees and to foster health and technical education (ORT). Moreover, in this period there was also support within the Bund for alliances with general world Jewish organizations. For example, its attitude towards a world Jewish congress in the spring of 1916 was favourable. Another example was the Polish Bund’s attempt to found the Union of Socialist Craftsmen, which would include independent craftsmen and *khalupnikes* (home workers). Even more significant, however, was the question of the Bund’s participation in the Jewish communal elections; after lengthy deliberations, participation was approved, with the demand for secular Jewish communities with limited authority. In this area, under the special conditions at the end of the 1930s, the Bund’s influence went beyond the context of class issues. The old Bund regarded the other Jewish socialist parties, both Zionist and non-Zionist, as representative of the bourgeoisie and the petit-bourgeoisie, and rejected cooperation with them. (Only a few instances of joint activity are known.)

Thus a change within the Polish Bund had begun, though it did not receive any theoretical justification. The Polish Bund cooperated with the two Po’alei Zion parties, Right (ZS) and Left, in the area of Yiddish schools and Tsisho, the schools’ central organization. It also cooperated with a non-proletarian and non-socialist party, the Folkists, and in the elections to the Sejm in 1930, the Bund cooperated with Po’alei Zion Right.

The old Bund consistently denied there was any political significance attached to the concept of *Klal yisrael*; it also denied the international character of the Jewish workers’ movement and the need for a special representative in the International. The old
Bund did not forge an international alliance with neighbouring parties in Galicia or Romania, nor did it develop a joint organizational framework for groups identifying with or supporting it in other countries—although it had influence in the Jewish socialist movement in many countries: Bulgaria, Slovakia, the United States, Canada, and Argentina. In a certain sense the Foreign Committee of the old Bund was a link to these other groups.

An important change in the Bund’s approach took place in the first decade of the twentieth century, with its recognition of the need to take a stance on Jewish emigration and to influence the attitude of the Socialist International on this matter. The Polish Bund later founded a special organization to deal with this: the Emigratsya Buro, or Emigration Bureau. This activity was in contradiction to the principle of duikeit (from the word do meaning ‘here’), which had been a basic tenet of the old Bund and was based on the idea that the Jews were attached to the places in which they lived. This principle stressed the importance of developing a platform, tactics, and organization only in the area of the Russian Empire. In this context the old controversy surrounding world-wide organization reemerged. Nonetheless, it is important to note that both in the general leadership and among the different national organizations (including the Bund in Israel), members originating in the Polish Bund ultimately had the deciding voice.

Even this cursory examination supports the conclusion that the relationship between the old Bund and the Polish Bund was marked by continuity and change. Development over time was not linear. Moreover, the creation of the Second Polish Republic should not be the point of departure for examining the history of the connections between the Bund and Polish matters. Rather, it is necessary to return to the pre-Bund period to see the larger context. The importance of these matters in the development of the old Bund is greater than previously believed.

Notes

1. The name of the Bund at the time of its founding (1897) was: Algemeyner yidisher arbeter bund in rusland un poylin (The General Jewish Workers’ Union in Russian and Poland). At the fourth Bund congress (1901) the name was changed to Algemeyner yidisher arbeter bund in lite, poyn, un rusland (The General Jewish Workers’ Union in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia). The abbreviated versions Yidisher arbeter bund (Jewish Workers’ Union), or simply Bund, were used frequently. For additional information regarding the issues discussed in this article, see M. Mishkinsky, Reshit tnuat hapolaim hayehudit verusya—megamot yesod (Tel Aviv, 1981); J. Frankel, Nevuah ufoltitika (Tel Aviv, 1989); and Y. Peled, Class and Ethnicity in the Pale (London, 1989). The most comprehensive work on the history of the Bund is Di geshikhte fun Bund, 5 vols. (New York, 1960–81); the majority of the editors and authors were involved in the Polish Bund.
2. I prefer the term ‘old Bund’ to the term ‘Russian Bund’. The use of the term ‘Russian’ can be misleading since it has two meanings in Hebrew and also in English: one relating to the nation and the other to the state. In other words, for our purposes it is important to emphasize that in Yiddish and Russian, two separate adjectives are used. Compare with note 17 on social democracy. The same can be said for the adjective ‘Polish’, as is evident in the different interpretations of the word ‘Polish’ in the term ‘Polish Socialist Party’ (PPS). (See note 4.)
3. The ŻPSD (Żydowska Partia Socjal-Demokratyczna Galicji) was the Bundist organization in the area of Poland’s eastern borders; it joined the national Bund only in 1924.

4. The PPS (Pol ska Partja Socjalistyczna) was founded at the beginning of the 1890s, and over time split into a number of parties with different names; however, all of them included the phrase ‘the Polish Socialist Party.’

5. The Polska Partja Socj alo-Demokratyczna Galicji i Śląska Cieszynskiego was founded in 1890 with a shorter name.

6. The different histories of the occupied territories left their marks on the development of the Zionist movement in its different aspects throughout the existence of the Second Polish Republic.


9. The term ‘erev Bund’ is also used.

10. See the writings by Shmuel Gozanski, ‘Mihtav el haagitatorim’ (Vilna, 1893–4); Yuli Martov, ‘Nikudat hamifneh bitoldot tnua t hapoalim hayehudit’ (Vilna, 1 May 1895). These two were published in Hebrew (the second in Russian as well) in Hebrew University’s series Medorot umehkarim, in M. Mishkinsky (ed.), Hamifal leheker tnuat hapaolim hayehudit, (Jerusalem, 1968–9).


12. M. Mishkinsky, ‘The Communist Party of Poland and the Jews’, in Y. Gutman et al. (eds.), The Jews of Poland between Two World Wars, (Hanover, NH, 1989), 56–74. The subject of this article will be covered in a monograph to be published in Hebrew. The Bund, like other socialist parties—including Jewish ones—was not exempt from internal splits; in this way the Komubund was formed after the second Bund Congress (of the Polish Bund) in Gdansk, although it did not last long.


16. These were the primary cells of the movement during its first period of growth. In Yiddish they were called kreizlekh.

17. ‘The socialist workers’ party of Russia’. At the end of the 1890s, ‘The Russian Social Democratic Party’. It existed for a short time.

18. The Socialist International (Second), the Communist International (Third), and between them ‘the Vienna’ or the Second-and-a-half, as it was called, which didn’t last long.


20. In 1906 the PPS split in two: PPS-Lewica and PPS Frakcja Rewolucyjna, whose most outstanding leader was Piłsudski.

21. Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego was founded in 1892–3 and was active until 1896. It did not support the separation of Poland from Russia. At the beginning of the century it renewed its activities and added Lithuania to its name.
22. The all-Russian social-democratic party was to function as an umbrella organization, and the political organizations of the workers of various nationalities were to join it while preserving a large measure of independence.
23. This phenomenon began at the end of the nineteenth century.
24. The Bund rejected this suggestion because of class considerations. In this connection it would be worthwhile to compare the legal and administrative conditions in which the old and Polish Bunds were active.
26. KPRP: Komunistyczna Partja Robotnicza Polski, founded at the end of 1918. In 1925 the term ‘workers’ was deleted from its name and it became the Komunistyczna Partja Polski (KPP); see note 12. The Bund, in opposition to the KPRP, decided to participate in the elections to the Sejm in January 1919, although the Warsaw branch decided to boycott them. The public announcement of the central committee of the Bund on ‘the sad fact of a significant breach’—the first, it claimed, in the history of the party—was characteristic. See Di Geshichte fun bund, iv (1972), 30–2; cf. ibid., 69–70.
27. See note 18.
29. A subject that deserves special examination is the attitude of the old Bund and the Polish Bund towards antisemitism, its causes and subjects, and the position of the PPS on the subject. With regard to the end of the 1930s, see A. Brumberg, ‘The Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in the Late 1930s’, The Jews of Poland between Two World Wars, 75–94.
31. On this problem, see E. Meltzer, Maavak medini bemalkodet—Yehudei Polin 1935–1939 (Tel Aviv, 1982), 120–3.
32. Tsisho: Tsentrale yiddishe shul organizatsya, central organization of Yiddish schools, founded at a meeting held in June 1921 in Warsaw. In addition to the Bund, Po’alei Zion, the Folkists (see note 33 below), and some unaffiliated people participated. The Bund made up the majority in this organization and had the most influence.
33. Folkists, from ‘folk’ in Yiddish, meaning people. They were also called The People’s Party. The party, led by Noah Frilucki, was founded in Poland during World War I as a continuation of the autonomist current in Russian Jewry.
34. The two sides, including historians and memoirists, tended to forget this afterwards.
35. This refers to the International Congress in Stuttgart in 1907; on this problem, see U. D. Herschler and S. F. Chyet, (trans. and eds.), On Jews, America and Immigration—a Socialist Perspective (Cincinnati, 1980). The Bundist students who studied outside of Russia also participated in the general Jewish student organizations that developed during World War I.
36. See Y. Gorni, Hahipus ahar hazehut haleumit (Tel Aviv, 1990), 46–50.