

# THE JEWISH SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA AND POLAND (1897-1919)

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## I. THE BUND (1897-1906)

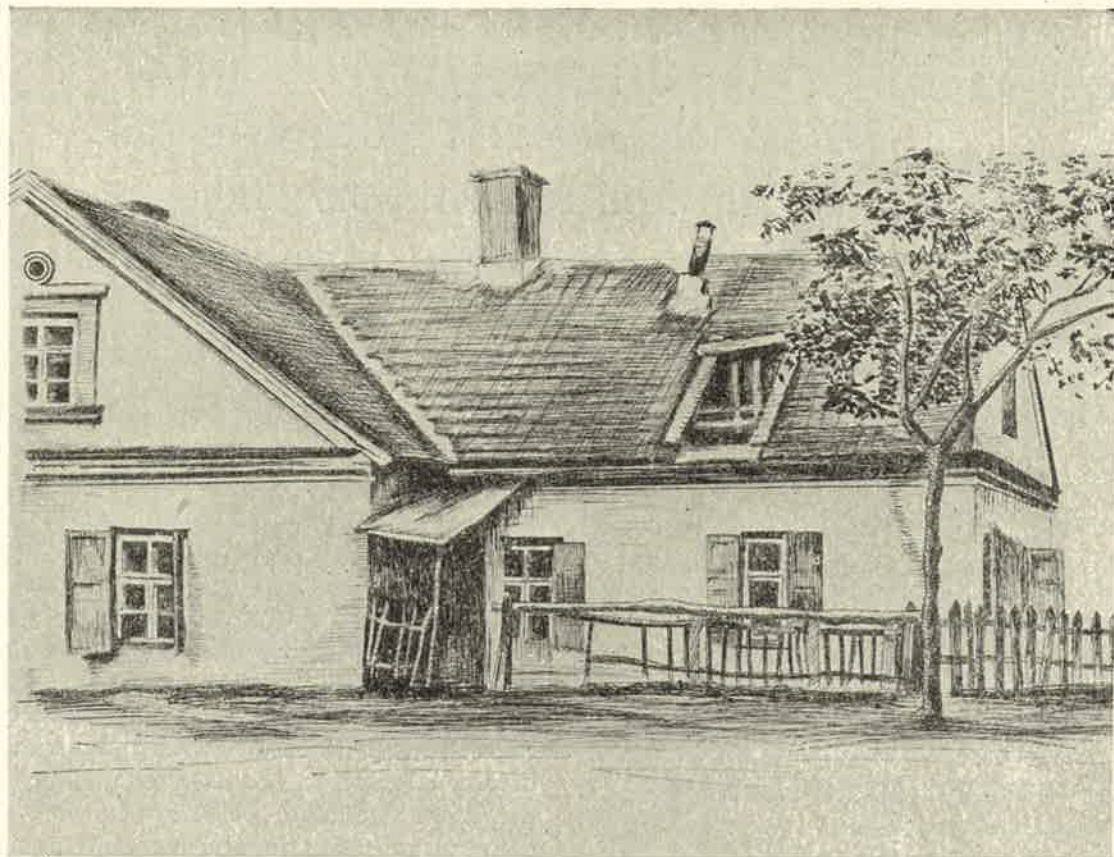
### 1. BIRTH OF THE BUND

The Bund which was to become, for almost half a century, the leading Jewish Socialist party, was founded at a conference in Wilno, in September 1897. Thirteen delegates representing local organizations, trade unions and clandestine periodicals (*Arbeter Shtime* and *Yidisher Arbeter*, cf. above p. 367), assembled in a small wooden suburban house near Wilno. Composed of eleven men and two women—five intellectuals and eight manual workers—they represented the major socialist groups of Warsaw, Wilno, Bialystok, Pinsk and Bobruisk. Many of these men and women were to become leaders of the movement: Aaron Kremer, a student of technology who, under

the name of "Arkady," achieved recognition as the movement's spiritual leader; Nahum Levinson, an intellectual from Kovno who, as "Vladimir" and "Kosovsky," later became a leading Bund theoretician, writer and editor; Joseph Mill ("John") and Abraham Mutnik ("Gleb")—leading members of the "Committee Abroad" of the Bund in Geneva; David Katz ("Taras"), one of the most active and resourceful activists in the 1900's and a friend of Maxim Gorky; Leon Goldman, one of the three Goldman brothers who were to gain prominence in the general Social Democratic movement of Russia.

The "founding fathers" of the Bund were conscious of the tremendous task they had undertaken. They were inspired by the example of Ferdinand Lassalle, the Jewish founder of the German socialist labor party; in fact, it was his "Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterbund" that furnished them with the idea of naming their own organization "Der algemeiner yidisher arbeterbund in Rusland un Poiln" (General Jewish Workers' Union in Russia and Poland), commonly known as the Bund (in later years Lithuania was added to the official name).

The founders of the Bund aimed at the creation of an organization of the Jewish proletariat which would form both an organic part of the general revolutionary movement in Russia and also, at the same time, represent the specific interests and demands of the Jewish workers and population. The ideology and activities of the



THE HOUSE WHERE THE FIRST CONVENTION  
OF THE BUND WAS HELD (WILNO, 1897)

Bund were dedicated to a harmonious synthesis of universal socialist ideals with the specific needs and aspirations of the Jewish people. It did in fact succeed in becoming a mass organization and in mobilizing, on occasion, hundreds of thousands of followers and sympathizers. Thus the founding of the Bund marked a new departure in the history of the Jewish struggle for individual, social and national emancipation.

The founding of the Bund deeply impressed the clandestine circles of Jewish Socialists throughout the Pale. The organization soon began to grow at a remarkable pace and applications for affiliation began to pour in from other cities. The impact of the new organization—the first of its kind in Russia not only among Jews but among non-Jewish Marxian Socialists as well—was inspiring. In March 1898, there was held

the first congress of the All-Russian Social Democratic Labor Party which the Bund helped to found, and three of the delegates to this congress (Kremer, Mutnik and Taras-Katz) represented the Bund, which was admitted to the new party as an "autonomous part."

Unfortunately, the Tsarist government responded to the challenge of the Bund and of the Social Democratic Party with an unparalleled intensification of police repressions. The *Okhrana* (the Tsarist Secret Police), which shortly before had been "modernized" and reorganized under the leadership of Zubatov, a repenting revolutionist, instituted a new shadowing technique, employing imported spies from Moscow who were unknown even to the local police. The climax came in the summer of 1898 with a smashing attack on the



AARON KREMER-ARKADY (1865-1935)

key organizations of the Bund in Minsk, Wilno and Bobruisk. Even the carefully camouflaged printing shop of the *Arbeter Shtime*, equipped with a noiseless hand-press specially designed by Kaplinsky, was discovered and seized together with freshly printed copies of the latest issue. Hundreds of leaders and members of the Bund were arrested. A few selected leaders were taken to Moscow, where Zubatov, the *Okhrana* chief, sought to "convert" them in the course of long personal interviews. This was part of a plan intended to demoralize the forces of the Revolution—a plan which was to backfire.

But hard as this blow was for the Bund, it did not vitally impair the new organization. The few remaining leaders—among them the energetic Taras—succeeded in rebuilding the local organizations. Within several weeks, a new printing shop was set up, and the *Arbeter Shtime* reappeared. Two months after the wave of arrests the second convention of the Bund was held in Kovno (autumn, 1898); it had already

grown too strong to be liquidated by simple police measures. Its strength lay in the support it received from the special trade groups (*kasses*) which the Bundists managed to establish. A *kasse* was the embryo of a union combined with a mutual aid society. The workers of a certain trade would make small weekly or monthly payments into a general fund to be used by the members in the event of strikes, conflicts, or other emergencies. Dues were collected by an elected treasurer and a few trusted comrades. In a way, this small committee was also responsible for the general condition of the trade and maintained contacts with almost every allied shop, however small. (The Jewish workers of the time worked mostly in small shops or even as apprentices of individual artisans.)

This tended to make the Bund more "practical-minded" and brought it into closer touch with the economic needs of the workers. This does not mean that the Bund shared the theoretical concept of the ultra-Marxist "Economism." (*Economism* main-



V. KOSOVSKY (1870-1941)

tained that the class-conscience of the proletariat developed by stages beginning with a purely economic struggle and only later emerged as revolutionary political action.) The problem was frankly dealt with at the fourth party convention in April 1901, where the following resolution was adopted in regard to strikes: (1) the strike movement is to be directed principally at those trades which have not yet been affected or in which obsolete and bad working conditions prevail; (2) in those trades where some improvement of working conditions has been achieved, and where a measure of political and class-consciousness has been awakened, caution is to be observed before calling a strike.

In the period of reaction which followed 1905, it was frequently charged that by its unbridled "terrorist" economic struggle the Bund had ruined the Jewish trades and was indirectly responsible for reducing the Jewish people to a state of economic degradation. On the whole, this accusation was unfounded, though it was true that the Jewish workers were employed exclusively in Jewish-owned enterprises and many small shops that found themselves unable to keep pace with the rising wage-standard endorsed by the Bund. By and large, only a few enterprises were thus eliminated, and the trade as a whole became more efficient. The above resolution and its entire program during this period demonstrate that the Bund clearly saw the limitations of the economic struggle and sought to keep it within the framework of actual possibilities. This is further shown by the resolution concerning economic terrorism (violence, such as window-breaking, sabotage of machinery, physical conflicts with "scabs") adopted at the same fourth convention:

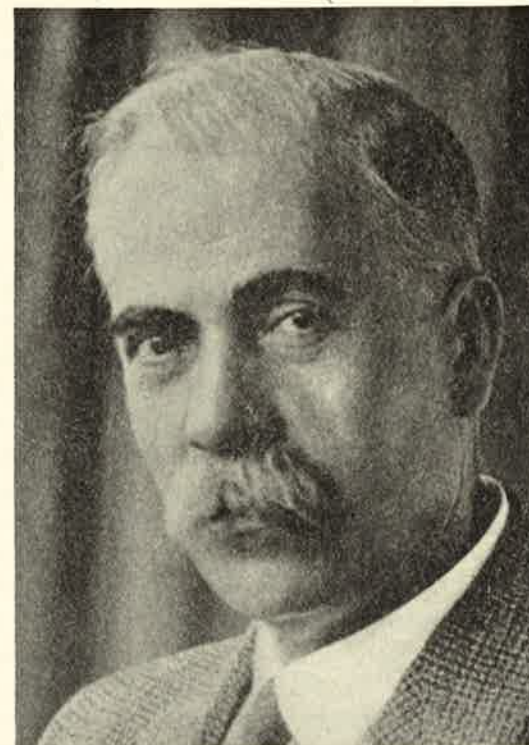
Inasmuch as economic terrorism—whether against employers or strike-breakers—confuses the social democratic consciousness of the workers, lowers their own moral standards and discredits the labor movement, this convention is opposed to economic terrorism.

The more clearly the narrow limits of economic strife in the Jewish world became manifest, the more every new conflict between workers and employers tended to result in a stalemate and, consequently, in the intervention of the police. Unions and strikes being prohibited in Russia, the Bund thus increasingly departed from the practical "economism" which had been dominant in the early stages of its activity.

The political struggle now began to claim a more prominent place not only in the practices of the Jewish labor movement but in its theory as well. The fourth convention of the Bund declared that although "the economic struggle is the best means of drawing the broad working masses into the movement, it is not necessary to conduct political agitation merely on the basis of economic demands. The political struggle must be waged as independent action and must occupy a prominent place in the activities of the organization. It should not be considered as a mere outgrowth of economic struggle and must be waged by means of purely political agitation, political demonstrations and May Day strikes with political demands, and so forth."

This new trend was largely in conformance with the general pattern of political development in Russia.

Toward the turn of the century, the Russian revolutionary movement began to make considerable progress. The great strikes in St. Petersburg and other cities aroused widespread public interest. Although the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was not yet a strong mass movement, it had already gained widespread prominence and intellectual prestige. In 1900 its exiled leaders launched the magazine, *Iskra* ("The Spark"), which was printed in Stuttgart and soon began to exert a strong influence on the entire movement. The *Iskra* circle formed a militant faction within the Russian Social Democratic movement, opposed to the adherents of "economism". The *Iskra* policy, conceived and postulated by a group of such brilliant writ-



J. PORTNOY-NOAH (1872-1941)

ers as George Plekhanov, Paul Axelrod, Alexander Potresov, Vladimir Lenin and Julius Martov, soon resounded as the dominant voice of the party and also left its impress on the Bund.

As the Bund grew and developed into a mass movement, new leaders arose, mainly from the ranks of old Bundists who had been imprisoned or deported to Siberia in the first years of the organization's activity. Among them were "Noah" (Portnoy), the "chief" who after 1918 became the leader of the Polish Bund under the name of Józef; "Jonah" (Fishel Koigen); "Yudin" (Issay Aisenstadt); "Rachmiel" (Aaron Weinstein), and many others.

## 2. THE TSARIST GOVERNMENT AND THE BUND

As the most active and best organized section of the revolutionary movement in Russia, the Bund was fated to attract the special attention of the police agencies. In rapid sequence, the government resorted to three measures against it. First, it attempted to demoralize the growing movement polit-

ically by creating antagonism between the masses and the socialist intelligentsia; next, it attempted to intimidate the revolutionary elements by means of brutal punishment; finally, it sought to discourage and paralyze the Jewish forces of the revolutionary movement by intensifying anti-Semitic propaganda and pogroms, endeavoring in this way to mobilize the more conservative and non-political strata of the Jewish population against the "dangerous" Socialists who were ostensibly imperiling the entire Jewish community.

The first technique achieved its ultimate efficacy in the so-called Zubatov movement. This renegade revolutionist, later chief of the secret police, conceived at this point the idea of divorcing from the masses the revolutionary intelligentsia. "We must convince the workers that the labor movement and Social Democracy are not identical." The workers were promised that the Tsar would protect them from exploitation by their employers provided they did not engage in and aid the political struggle.

Zubatov began his "offensive" in 1898-99 by conducting long discussions with imprisoned Jewish Socialists whom he had brought to Moscow for this purpose. By 1901 he had enlisted a number of supporters, and they were permitted to establish a legal organization known as the Independent Jewish Labor Party.

The Zubatov movement had its greatest success in Minsk, where six Jewish trades supported it (bookbinders, locksmiths, carpenters, masons, brushmakers and tin-smiths). In Wilno the new party was incapable of establishing any substantial group and early in 1903 was compelled to announce the cessation of its activities. The Zubatovists succeeded far better in Odessa where the party came to exert some influence also among non-Jewish workers.

But the very success of the Zubatov movement in Odessa proved to be its Achilles' heel. In order to gain and retain the support of the workers, it had to organize strikes and on one occasion a general strike

was called. The very purpose for which the movement had been created was thus defeated. The government, therefore, liquidated the Independent Labor Party subsequently. But such action did not come soon enough to liquidate a similar experiment tried by the *Okhrana* on a much larger scale in St. Petersburg and conducted by its agent, Father Gapon. Gapon's movement culminated in the famous "Red Sunday" of January 9 (22), 1905, which marked the beginning of the Revolution. In the larger cities, the attempt to legalize the trade union movement and to create a kind of "police socialism" in opposition to revolutionary Social Democracy, served only to weaken the regime even further.

When the failure of the Zubatov movement among the Jews became more and more evident, the government began to apply the second technique to combat the Bund—that of exceptionally brutal persecution. The city of Wilno was chosen as a testing-ground. There the governor, von Wahl, ordered the flogging of revolutionists who were arrested during the Bund's May Day demonstration of 1902. The police hoped that the use of such extreme methods, which were unprecedented in the cities, would demoralize and terrorize the revolutionists, particularly the socialist intelligentsia with its strong sense of personal dignity and pride. The Jewish revolutionaries replied in turn to this challenge with an attempt on the life of von Wahl. The attempt, made by the Jewish shoemaker Hirsh Lekert, failed, and the revolutionary would-be assassin was hanged.

The effect, however, of the Wilno tragedy was the opposite of what the government had anticipated: it was instrumental in producing an increased wave of revolutionary fervor throughout the Pale. Lekert became the hero of thousands of Jewish workers, and the urge to retaliate against police terror with acts of "organized vengeance" became even stronger. Revolutionary ardor became so intense that at the fifth conference of the Bund (it became customary in

the Bund to arrange "conferences" between the regular conventions) in the summer of 1902, a resolution was adopted in favor of "organized vengeance," and the authority of the Bund leadership abroad, headed by Vladimir Kosovsky, was needed to check the trend toward terrorism.

After the failure of the von Wahl method, the government decided to crush the "Jewish Revolution" by its third technique: violent outbursts of anti-Semitism. Within the Jewish population itself, the growth of the labor movement had at the outset provoked sharp social and political conflicts. The economic demands of the Bund naturally aroused the opposition and dissatisfaction of Jewish employers and the middle-class in general. In addition, even those not directly involved in the conflict feared the possible repercussions of Jewish revolutionary activity. The age-old tradition that Jews should not interfere in affairs of the state was still sufficiently potent to turn a large section of Russian Jewry against the Bund and against politically-rebellious workers in general.

The Tsarist regime, therefore, did everything possible to fan these hostile feelings toward the Jewish labor movement and to deprive it of that moral and material support which the revolutionaries received from various quarters of the Jewish community. In some sections, propaganda of this sort met with some success. Von Plehve, the powerful Minister of the Interior, attempted to bring community pressure to bear on the Bund and the Jewish revolutionists by means of contact with the leaders of the Jewish bourgeoisie. In order to augment this pressure, the government staged a demonstration which was designed to prove that the revolutionaries were bringing misfortune on the Jewish people. In April 1903, *Okhrana* agents, with the help of local anti-Semitic stalwarts, organized the massacre of Kishinev, in which 47 Jews died and 600 were wounded.

But the Kishinev pogrom, too, produced an unexpected result. Instead of frighten-

ing the Jewish masses into submission, the inhuman brutalities employed by the government served only to intensify indignation among those who were already psychologically prepared for a showdown with the regime. In retrospect, one may indeed contend that the Kishinev pogrom served as a potent factor in revolutionizing still more the Jewish intelligentsia and labor and awakening the political consciousness of the until then apolitical sections of the Jewish people. Resistance to the pogroms became part of the revolutionary struggle; armed "self-defense groups" were organized for this purpose. The Jews whom centuries of persecutions had rendered passive and to whom the thought of active resistance had rarely occurred, now, for the first time, regarded the pogroms not as one more episode in the age-old strife between Jews and non-Jews, but as a chapter in the fight of both Jewish and non-Jewish revolutionists against a despotic and barbarous regime. From this concept, there grew the conviction that the answer to pogroms was not, as in the past, passive endurance but armed resistance and joint action of Jewish and non-Jewish socialists and revolutionaries.

So great was the impact of the rising revolutionary movement of Jewish workers on the whole community, so powerfully was the imagination of the Jewish masses stirred by the daring exploits of the mysterious Bundists, who were utterly without fear even of the police and the terror-inspiring *Okhrana*, that legends were woven about the Bund. Its word became law in the small cities and towns of the Pale; its orders were to be obeyed without question. Jewish intellectuals flocked to the Bund. The most famous Yiddish writers (such as Yitzhok Leibush Peretz, Sh. Anski, M. Spektor, J. H. Brenner, Vayter, Abraham Reisin) worked for or with the Bund at different times. An-ski wrote the Bund's anthem, the famous *Shvueh*.

Throughout the country there now appeared "self-defense units," for the most part organized by the revolutionary parties.

The idea of armed self-defense gained popularity even among bourgeois circles which had previously shunned politics.

But if the Kishinev pogrom helped make the Jewish masses more conscious of political and revolutionary ideas, it also heightened national Jewish consciousness within the radical intelligentsia. It provided a strong impetus for their increasing feelings of nationalism—a process that was already well advanced and reached its peak after the 1905 Revolution.

### 3. THE RISING TIDE OF REVOLUTION

The years 1904 and 1905 witnessed a tremendous revolutionary upsurge in Russia. An economic depression added fuel to this smoldering fire; in the cities, growing unemployment kindled the revolutionary mood of the workers; in the villages, the agricultural crisis intensified the unrest among the peasants, who were in many instances openly in revolt against the landlords; the liberal urban intellectuals, who had become increasingly radical at the turn of the century, were growing still more active and aggressive in the general atmosphere of unrest. All these processes were further aggravated with the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war (February, 1904). The war was extremely unpopular at home and the military catastrophes clearly exposed the gaping inefficiencies of the Tsarist regime.

The military defeats and the general mood of the country compelled the government to make concessions to the opposition. In August 1904, the Sviatopolk-Mirsky cabinet proclaimed a sort of "political spring." Repressions were diminished, some concessions were made to the press and partial freedom of assembly was granted. But these minor concessions solved none of the country's fundamental problems. Far from appeasing the opposition and curbing unrest, they provided a base from which a new attack against Tsarism could be launched by the revolutionary movement.

In the Jewish Pale, especially in the tex-

tile regions, such as Lodz and Bialystok, the economic crisis was even more disastrous than in Central Russia. There political unrest was sharply augmented by the effects of the war in the Far East and by the official pogrom policy, which never slackened, not even during the "political spring." Together with the entire revolutionary movement, the Jewish sections assumed a "defeatist" attitude and frankly hoped for a Japanese victory over the Tsarist government. The anti-war leaflets of the Bund and its propaganda encouraging civil disobedience among the young men called to arms, found a lively response among the Jews who viewed the Russian defeats in the Far East as an act of divine retribution for the Kishinev pogrom. During this period, the revolutionary activity of the Bund was in harmony and aligned with the political mood of the broad Jewish masses, and the Bund, in spite of its pronounced proletarian character, was rapidly becoming the spokesman and vanguard of the entire Jewish population. Its leaflets were distributed by the hundreds of thousands; its mass meetings and street demonstrations attracted tens of thousands, in spite of the brutal interference of the police and the Cossacks, who were used as a mounted police auxiliary. Open street demonstrations challenging the regime replaced the earlier clandestine gatherings; in time synagogues were more and more often used as halls for mass rallies.

The Bund's influence in the revolutionary movement, as said, reached its peak after "Red Sunday," when the St. Petersburg police killed hundreds of unarmed workers who were peacefully demonstrating with patriotic banners and portraits of the Tsar before the Imperial Winter Palace. On that historic day of January 9, 1905, the Romanov dynasty received the most crushing blow of its three hundred years' existence; the government itself, in effect, destroyed the legend that the Tsar was always kindly and responsive to the needs of his "children," and that only his evil

subordinates oppressed the "common people." The massacre of hundreds of devoted and patriotic Russians, parading under the leadership of a priest to ask the "little father" for additional consideration and generosity, took place under the very eyes of the Tsar, who did nothing to protect the innocent or punish the guilty.

The traditional faith in the Tsar was thus badly shattered on that winter day, even among the orthodox Russians. A furious storm of indignation swept the country; millions were stunned and shocked. One can easily imagine the effect in the Jewish Pale, where the population was without the traditional devotion to the Tsar.

Within a few days after "Red Sunday," the Central Committee of the Bund, which then had its secret headquarters at Dvinsk, printed 115,000 copies of a leaflet entitled *To Arms!*: "The great day has come. The Revolution is here . . . Now we must conquer or die . . . Break into the arsenals! Seize rifles, revolvers . . . To arms!"



V. MEDEM (1879-1923)

This spirit of insurgence swept the entire region in which the Bund operated. Everywhere people called for arms: "The time for leaflets is past." A wave of general strikes and demonstrations spread throughout the Pale, and hundreds of Bund followers were injured and killed.

The period of mass activity and especially the years of semi-legality and semi-parliamentarism that followed, produced a generation of new leaders: mass orators such as "Maxim" (Klebansky), "Sergei" (Abram Braun), Max Goldfarb (David Lipetz), "Vladek" (B. Charney); writers and publicists such as A. Litvak (Chaim J. Helfand), Moisei Olgin (Novomysski), "Homunculus" (David Zaslavsky), "Zivyon" (B. Hofman), "Esther" (Maria Frumkin); theoreticians and lecturers like Vladimir Medem, a fully-assimilated and baptized Jew, who returned to the Jewish cause through the Bund, Mark Liber, "Slavek" (Bronislav Grosser), R. Abramovitch (Raphael Rein), Henryk Erlich, Moshe Rafes.

The revolutionary tide was rising, and even the most extreme repressive measures of the government could not arrest it. Between the summers of 1903 and 1904 some 4,500 Bundists were arrested, but others replaced them. The Bund's bulletin, *Posledniya Izvestiya* (Latest News), published in Russian in Geneva, summed up the situation in its 226th issue as follows:

The Jewish working masses are scattered throughout cities and small towns. They work in small shops and only a few larger enterprises. But this dispersion does not prevent these thousands upon thousands from living one common life. They have rallied around a single organization which has its roots and branches everywhere, and which everywhere works according to one uniform plan. Even the remotest, tiniest place feels the pressure of its arms; it can stop all activity, provoke a storm of indignation, terrorize the agents of the government, and shake its entire machinery . . . Visualize all this,



MARK LIBER (1879-1937)

and there will arise before you the majestic picture of a *revolutionary Vendée*.

#### 4. THE YEAR OF REVOLUTION: 1905

In a number of cities the strike wave began as early as January 11, two days after the "Red Sunday." In the large cities there were clashes with the police and the army, resulting in heavy casualties. In Warsaw the protest strike lasted four days. In Riga there was a joint demonstration of Latvian and Jewish workers, in which sixty to seventy thousand participated; shots fired by the troops into the crowd killed more than thirty, and over seventy were seriously wounded. In Wilno the general strike was called on January 11 and lasted several days; a similar strike was called in Kovno. In the small industrial cities of Smorgon and Krinky the general strike was called with such extraordinary solidarity that in the space of a few days both cities were completely in the hands of the workers. Strikes, demonstrations, and mass meetings were

also organized in all localities where the Bund was active.

The events of January were overshadowed by an even more intense wave of industrial strikes and economic conflicts stimulated by the general political unrest that swept over the Jewish working masses in February and March: in Wilno, Dvinsk (where the general strike began on February 17), Minsk (where 1,800 struck), and a number of other large and small towns. In March additional work stoppages and demonstrations broke out in a number of localities; on March 6 there was a general strike in Bobruisk, and on March 20, 30,000 Jewish workers rallied before the prison in Warsaw; four were killed and twenty wounded in a police attack.

By May 1 (April 18 by the old Russian calendar), the movement had resumed its political character. The preparations for May Day were conducted under exceptionally difficult conditions; the police engaged in intense anti-Jewish agitation throughout the Pale and organized units of so-called "Black Hundreds." The government informed the Jewish population that any attempt at a revolutionary May Day celebration would serve as a signal for a pogrom. Although it was clear, in the light of the Zhitomir and Homel pogroms, that this was no idle threat, the preparations for May Day were carried out much more intensively and comprehensively than ever before. To meet the threat of pogroms, well-armed defense squads were organized in the Pale in accordance with the directives of the Central Committee of the Bund. At the same time, the Central Committee directed local groups to observe May Day with a peaceful general strike and without street demonstrations. The general strikes were carried out in an extremely impressive manner enlisting successfully the broadest participation of the Jewish workers.

In spite of the caution exercised by the Bund leadership, violent clashes with the police occurred in Warsaw, Lodz and Kalisz. In Warsaw, sixty men were killed, and

approximately 200 wounded; in Lodz, seven demonstrators and five policemen lost their lives.

In June, the revolutionary demonstrations in the Pale reached their peak in Lodz and Odessa. They were not limited to Jewish participants, but in them the Bund achieved a role of unprecedented prominence. On June 18, a clash between workers—both Jewish and Polish—and Cossacks in Lodz developed into a huge demonstration in which over 50,000 participated. On June 21, a second demonstration took place with twice as many participants, and again the police fired on the demonstrators. This time, too, there were numerous victims. On June 22-23, the crisis reached its climax in a full-fledged uprising of the Lodz proletariat; street fighting, barricades, and a considerable number of casualties ensued.

The battle of Lodz found its echo in Warsaw, where the Bund and the Polish Social Democrats (P.S.D.) declared a general strike on June 26. It was carried out in full force, however, only in the Jewish sections, where barricades were erected in the streets.

The events in Odessa in June 1905, were linked to the mutiny aboard the battleship *Potemkin*. When the mutinous *Potemkin* entered Odessa harbor, the revolutionary groups of Odessa, with the Bund in most active participation, called a general strike. For several days the entire city was actually under the control of the revolutionaries. At street meetings in the port, where speakers of all parties harangued the masses endlessly, one of the most popular speakers was the Bundist leader, Anna Lipshitz.

July, August and September were relatively quiet in comparison with the stormy first six months of the year. But this was merely the lull before the storm. On October 12, a general strike of the Russian railroad workers broke out; even many of the revolutionary leaders had not expected so speedy a development.

This strike did not originate with the Jewish workers. It came in the wake of the

general Russian unrest, but found a very strong response among the Jewish workers. Enthusiastically they joined in the strike, helping to bring the entire life of the country to a standstill; and this time, the non-Jewish workers also engaged actively.

By the middle of October, the strike had reached its peak; the Tsar then issued the historic "Manifesto" of October 17 (30), which marked the partial capitulation of Tsarist absolutism. So complete was the general strike that even the bakeries stopped work, and the revolutionary organizations had to devise special emergency means to prevent a shortage of bread. So intense was the urge for political action, especially after the victory of October 17 when Tsar Nicholas II proclaimed an amnesty for political prisoners and promised the granting of a constitution and a parliament, that even the wave of pogroms, organized in scores of cities in reply to the October uprisings, could not extinguish the revolutionary enthusiasm. In the Pale, the October days were in effect a period of revolutionary dictatorship that was identical with the "dictatorship of the Bund." In Wilno, Minsk, Riga, and many other centers, the Bund, often jointly with the "federative committee" of all the revolutionary parties, wielded power. Government agencies partly surrendered and partly stood aside while these cities were administered by the revolutionary committees.

But the victory of the Revolution was only temporary and fragmentary. The government had not been defeated decisively, and in a number of places it promptly proceeded to launch a counter-offensive. The counter-revolution possessed tremendous power particularly in Southern Russia; in many localities in this area anti-Jewish pogroms broke out. The pogrom wave had far-reaching psychological and political repercussions, but they did not crystallize until later. During the first weeks following the October strike, the entire nation continued to be geared to the momentum produced by the explosive potency of the revolution.

It was still surging forward powerfully. The pogrom movement, however, was revealing its own impotence wherever the Revolution was strong enough to oppose it with armed resistance. This was clearly demonstrated by the fact that in the region where the Bund was strongest, no pogroms whatever took place in October.

The turning point in the political evolution of Russian Jewry came only after the collapse of the Moscow uprising of December 1905, when it became clear that the revolution had spent itself and would not succeed in overthrowing the regime.

##### 5. END OF REVOLUTIONARY HEGEMONY

In 1906 for the first time in Russian history, there occurred the establishment of a semi-constitutional regime with a parliament (the so-called *Gosudarstvennaya Duma*) and the grant of guarantees of personal and political liberty; and yet the power of the throne remained practically intact. The Duma was elected on the basis of a very complex and undemocratic electoral law and had neither the legal authority nor the actual power to neutralize the Tsar's arbitrary bureaucracy. At the same time, although within narrow limits, the existence of political parties, trade unions, societies, uncensored publications, and free speech became possible. Thus the legal basis for the existence of various cultural, economic, and political organizations was provided.

This new political situation gradually led to a political divorce between the liberal-democrats and their revolutionary partners with whom they had formed an informal but close coalition under the leadership of the socialists in the stormy years of 1904-5. For, although the bourgeois-liberal classes were dissatisfied with the results achieved, they maintained that the Duma and the modest political rights introduced by the new order offered an adequate basis for gradual evolution in the direction of constitutional government. Therefore, they intended in the future to conduct their polit-

ical action on the basis of the newly-won legality and no longer by revolutionary means.

This split in the revolutionary-progressive camp was amply exploited by the government and by all the conservative and reactionary elements in the cities and among the landed gentry who feared the growing peasant unrest and agrarian rebelliousness. The more the revolutionary parties tried to push ahead with the direct struggle for power (sailors' mutinies in Sveaborg, Kronstadt and Reval; soldiers' insurrections; strikes and workers' demonstrations), the sharper became the repressive measures of the government.

After a brief interlude of Duma-parliamentarism in 1906 and the early months of 1907, the electoral laws were altered by an arbitrary and unconstitutional *ukase* of the Tsar, who also sanctioned a system of brutal repression, with martial law, death sentences, and mass executions of revolutionists. Punitive expeditions were sent into the villages, and Cossack detachments filed into the cities. The prisons were once again filled with tens of thousands of political prisoners. The "Stolypin Era" had begun.

These developments had, of course, an impact on Russian Jewry. Until the beginning of 1906, the Bund was not only the dominant but the sole Jewish political party; a party not merely by dint of its organizational forms but also in political purpose and historical effect. This made the Bund a leading power in the struggle of the Jewish masses for civil and political rights, and endowed it with an informal but actual hegemony in the community: e.g., the Bundist "dictatorship" during the October days of 1905. The Bund's dominant role ended with the change in the general political situation.

Moderate liberals, conservatives, and even reactionaries now began to squeeze the revolutionaries out of the cities and the villages (cf. the agrarian reform of Stolypin). In the Jewish world, there emerged various non-socialist political groups that were

in contact with corresponding non-Jewish liberal and conservative circles and thus gradually won prestige and influence in the Jewish communities. The "Association for the Achievement of Full Rights for the Jewish People in Russia" was founded as early as April 1905, but not until the elections to the first Duma in 1906 did this group become a factor of political importance, despite the fact that it included in its ranks many prominent leaders of moderate persuasion, such as Maxim Winaver and Heinrich Sliosberg. Other groups arose, too: the Jewish Democrats (Alexander Braudo, Gregory Landau and others); the Jewish People's Party (headed by the noted Jewish historian, Simon Dubnow); and the Russian Zionists, who, at the convention of Helsinki in 1906, constituted themselves as a political party.

The defeat of the 1905 Revolution engendered the widespread feeling among large sections of the Jewish population that the sacrifices of the Jewish revolutionary movement had all been in vain. True enough, the Jews had gained the franchise in the elections to the Duma; nor could it be denied that the gains were due to the role the Bund had played in the Revolution. But mounting pogroms had shattered hopes of the possibilities of eradicating anti-Semitism. The fact that the revolutionary movement had not succeeded in winning equal rights for Jews (even though it had brought some reforms and improvements for Russia in general), led to widespread criticism of revolutionary methods.

Jewish nationalist trends became stronger, and the socialist intelligentsia felt once again the urge "to come back to their people." The prestige and political influence of the Jewish labor movement was still further weakened by the new electoral system, unilaterally decreed by the Tsar on June 3, 1907, which subdivided the electoral college into segregated "curias," the Jewish voters forming a "curia" of their own in each category, and tying the franchise to property qualifications. While the

propertied classes, including the petty bourgeoisie, possessed the right to vote, the Jewish workers were in effect disenfranchised. There was, of course, the so-called "workers' curia," but it embraced only large enterprises in several of the greater industrial centers so that Jewish workers were virtually excluded from representation. In spite of these difficulties it might have been possible, at least in the first Duma, to elect several Bundist deputies, but the Bund, together with the majority of the other revolutionary parties, had decided to boycott the elections. When the Socialist parties subsequently abandoned the boycott, the political situation had become such that the Bund was unable to overcome the legal and administrative barriers. Thus it came about that, although Jewish deputies were elected to the various Dumas, the Jewish working class had no deputies of its own.

The bourgeois Jewish deputies pretended to represent Russian Jewry as a whole, and during the election campaigns they made extensive use of their connections with the local Jewish *Kehillot*. In the conservative Jewish press, which had achieved a remarkable growth, there began a systematic campaign against the Bund and the social gains of Jewish workers. The Bund was accused of "ruining the Jewish middle class," of destroying the Jewish organism with "stubborn, blind fanaticism, and with insane passion" (*Kadimah*, no. 9, 1906).

This struggle over political ideas was extended to the economic field. Political reaction in Russia came at the time of severe economic crisis, which, as has been indicated, began in 1901. From year to year the effect of the depression was felt more and more severely both in villages and towns. In addition, the population of Russia was increasing at the rapid rate of about two million a year (including about 80,000 Jews). A substantial industrial revival in the cities, such as had taken place in the nineties, could have absorbed economically the enormous population influx from the villages. But this was impossible during

a serious depression, which was in turn intensified by the bitter struggle and the disturbances which the long and acute political crisis had engendered.

The more serious the economic crisis and unemployment, the weaker grew the economic position of the Jewish workers. At the time when the reactionaries were concentrating their line against the achievements of the revolutionary period, the employers, who had now detached themselves completely from the revolutionary coalition, utilized this opportunity to launch an attack on the economic and social position of the Jewish workers. Beginning with 1906, a series of lockouts took place in the Pale, leading to sharp and protracted conflicts. In contrast to the successes of previous years, these struggles in most cases now resulted in the defeat of the workers. As a consequence of the Russo-Japanese war, of counter-revolution, pogroms, economic depression, and acute social conflict, there began a huge wave of Jewish emigration from Russia and Poland. This exodus, affecting Jewish life in general, was, in particular, bound to influence the activities and ideology of the Jewish labor movement.

#### 6. NATIONALISM IN THE BUND

The founding of the Bund in itself was an expression of strong national consciousness. Significant in this connection is the speech of Julius Martov in 1895 (see p. 367). Influenced by the prevalent emotions and tendencies of the socialist Wilno of his days, Martov advocated a Jewish labor organization not merely for the technical purpose of proselytizing in the Yiddish language but for more significant purposes: he pointed out that the principles of revolutionary struggle required that the Jews themselves fight for civil and political rights rather than have them rely on the expectation that these rights would be automatically granted them in the wake of the victory of the general revolutionary movement. The Jewish workers, he declared, must not depend on the revolutionary exer-

tions of others. Others would be concerned with general demands and with the interests of the working class as a whole and could not be expected to solve the specific problems of the Jewish masses. For these special activities, he maintained, there had to be a special organization of the Jewish workers.

In the early years of the Bund's activity, the "specific Jewish interests" were understood to indicate the demand for equal civil and political rights. But the rapidly growing Jewish labor movement, which was then concentrated exclusively in the Bund, underwent an internal development which kept growing stronger as Bundist practice (and theory) advanced from group propaganda to mass agitation. The more the Jewish working masses were drawn into the strike movement and the political struggles, the more "Jewish" the movement became. It proved essential to use Yiddish when the broad masses had to be reached, and the language, as the primary instrument of propaganda, had to be developed. Therefore the propagandists and agitators of the Bund, together with the demands of practical revolutionary work, had to concentrate on the kind of activity that may have seemed more appropriate for a cultural society than for a political party. While remaining a revolutionary party and without a relevant ideological motive, the Bund thus began to devote itself to the development, advancement, and propagation of Jewish culture or, more properly speaking, of general culture in Yiddish.

To this empirical development, which was the product of pragmatic considerations, there was soon added ever-increasing ideological pressure which operated in the same "nationalizing" direction. These influences came from two sources: from the Jewish and from the general socialist stream. The period of the eighties and early nineties had seen the revival of Jewish nationalism. The pogroms of the eighties had dealt a powerful blow to the naive idea of assimilation through the *Has-kalah*, and had put the Jewish question in

the forefront of Jewish thought not only as a problem of Jewry but also as the problem of Jewishness, of Judaism. The birth of modern Zionism—the first Zionist Congress took place in 1897, a few weeks before the founding convention of the Bund—aroused lively discussions and awakened national consciousness. The ideas of Ahad Haam and Simon Dubnow also influenced the thinking of the Jewish Socialists. As early as 1898 Chaim Zhitlowsky, in the Bund's *Yidisher Arbeter* voiced the demand for "national rights for Jews." A much stronger influence was exerted, however, through the large student groups at the universities and technical institutes of Switzerland, Germany, France, Austria, Belgium. (As the institutions of higher education in Tsarist Russia had a *numerus clausus* for Jews, the Jewish youth was compelled to study abroad.) All the Russian and Jewish revolutionary parties sought to recruit followers among the Jewish students from Russia. The largest groups were those of the Bund, and Bundist students in Berlin and Vienna, Bern and Zurich, Geneva and Brussels devoted a good deal of time to the study and discussions of the Jewish question and of nationality problems in various countries.

One state in particular was the subject of closest study: Austria-Hungary. Until the First World War, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was the classic example of a multi-national state with all its inherent problems. It was, therefore, not accidental that the Austrian Social Democrats produced the most important theoretical contributions to a better understanding of the national question. Karl Renner (who wrote under the names of Synopticus and R. Springer) and Otto Bauer were the most prominent proponents of a new concept of national autonomy, which was first advanced at the Brno Congress of the Austrian Social Democratic Party in 1899. At this congress the delegates of the South-Slavic Federation moved a resolution endorsing the principle of "extra-territorial national autonomy." The draft resolution demanded

"that each nationality living in Austria-Hungary . . . shall constitute an autonomous body which shall be independent of the territory on which its members live and shall provide for and regulate its national requirements in regard to culture and language. The territorial divisions shall be of purely administrative significance and must have no bearing on nationality status. All languages shall have equal rights in the state; there shall be no official language." While the proposed resolution was adopted in somewhat modified form, the mixed principle of territorial and extra-territorial cultural autonomy was endorsed by the congress.

The same concept received systematic attention in Karl Renner's pamphlet: *Staat und Nation* (published in 1899 under the name of Synopticus) and in his book: *Der Kampf der Nation um den Staat* (published in 1902 under the name of R. Springer).

A later study which had a most profound influence on the development of Socialist thought on this issue was Otto Bauer's book, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (1907).

The Russian Empire comprised a still greater number of ethnic groups than Austria-Hungary, and these groups were all involved in the process of becoming "nationalities." It was safe to assume, therefore, that the political framework of the future Russian republic, which would succeed Tsarism, would be that of a multi-national federation, such as the socialist theoreticians envisaged for Austria-Hungary. The Bundists assumed that the future Russian Federation would likewise be composed of autonomous national units, territorial or extra-territorial, depending on the particular character of the individual nationality. They maintained that in Russia the Jewish people must be recognized as a non-territorial nationality entitled to cultural autonomy, with Yiddish as its national language.

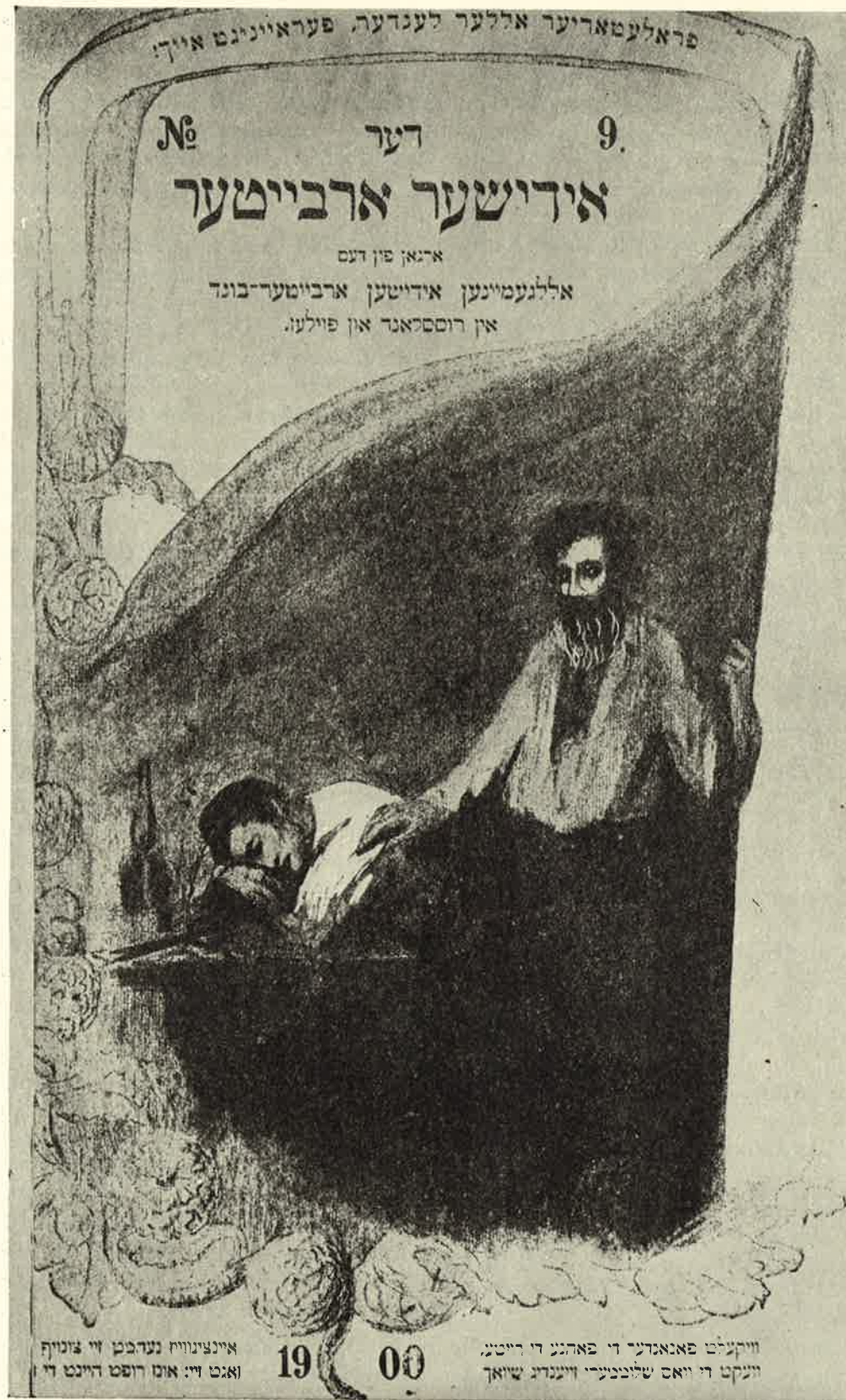
The new nationality concept of the Bund, in which the views of Simon Dub-

now were intertwined with the theories of the Austrian Social Democrats, was first formulated among Russian-Jewish student and intellectual circles in Switzerland and Germany. Only gradually and not without considerable reluctance was it accepted by the Bundist organizations and leaders on the spot.

This indigenous opposition to the new ideas had its roots in the particular conditions in which the Bund had been operating. In the Pale, with its large Jewish population and a relatively advanced Jewish labor movement, the problem of cooperation with the non-Jewish labor movement played an important part. Such cooperation could proceed only on the basis of an internationalist ideology. Consequently both in Bundist circles and in many non-Jewish organizations in the region, the fear existed that nationalism might weaken the class cohesion among the workers of different nationalities. Hence the inclination of the leaders to keep within narrow limits the nationalist feelings which were rapidly gaining ground. At the third convention of the Bund, in Kovno at the end of December 1899, the conflict between the nationalists and their opponents had already flared up. Delegate "A" (John Mill, the representative of the Bund's "Committee Abroad" in Geneva) urged the Jewish proletariat to fight, in addition to equal citizenship rights, for equal national rights as well. Of what use, he insisted, would it be to the Jewish working masses, for instance, to have the freedom of assembly if they were compelled to conduct their meetings in Russian? The speaker cited the example of Germany, where the Poles had no right to use their own language at political gatherings. We must not forget—John Miller declared—that the Bund is not just a temporary association to fight Tsarism; it is possible that in the interests of the Jewish masses the organization will have to exist for a long time to come.

Several speakers at the convention opposed Mill. We, Social Democrats—they



TITLE-PAGE OF THE *Yidisher Arbeter*, ILLEGAL PERIODICAL OF THE BUND

said—must avoid making demands which may divert the attention of the proletariat from its class interests to its nationalist aspirations. For the time being we are faced with a more immediate task, and that is the achievement of political freedom. After a long debate the following resolution was adopted: "The Bund includes in its political demands only equal civil rights but not national rights."

The first attack of the "Bundist nationalists" from abroad had been repelled but the question was by no means settled. The same convention decided to open a discussion on the national question in the theoretical organ of the Bund, *Der Yidisher Arbeter*. At the fourth convention in April 1901, the principal speaker on the national question was Mark Liber. This convention, at which 24 delegates from Warsaw, Lodz, Bialystok, Grodno, Wilno, Kovno, Vitebsk, Dvinsk, Homel, and two unidentified cities of Southern Russia were present, adopted the following resolution, epoch-making in the history of the Bund:

This convention maintains that, in accordance with the Social Democratic program, not only must one class not be permitted to oppress another; not only must the government not oppress citizens; but no nation must oppress another, and no language must take precedence over another. This convention maintains that a country like Russia, which consists of a number of different nations, will in the future have to become a federation of nations, each of them having full autonomy in whatever region it resides. This convention maintains that the concept of nationality also applies to the Jewish people. In view of the fact, however, that under present conditions it is premature to raise a demand for national autonomy for the Jews, this convention resolves that for the time being we must confine ourselves to combating all anti-Jewish legislation and to expose and protest every oppression of the Jewish nationality, but at the same time we must

guard against the inflation of nationalist feelings, for this can serve only to reduce class-consciousness and lead to chauvinism.

This resolution bears the distinct marks of a compromise between the two schools of thought on the national question. On the one hand, it recognized that the Jews were a nationality, with all the implicit consequences; on the other hand, the convention declined to reorient its propaganda accordingly in order not to jeopardize the class-consciousness of the Jewish workers. This compromise was, however, followed by a very concrete and clear-cut decision. The convention decided that the Bund, as the representative of the Jewish workers, must henceforth constitute a "federated section" within the All-Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. By this it meant a reshaping of the Social Democratic Party into a federation of fully autonomous national sections, in harmony with the contemplated future constitution of the Russian Republic.

In the spring of 1903, on the eve of the fifth convention of the Bund, which was to take place in Zurich, the Committee Abroad called a special conference in Geneva in order to discuss the national question and the issue of Bund—Social Democratic relationships. The meeting, in which Vladimir Kosovsky, Arkady Kremer, "Timofei" Kopelson, Zhenya Hourwich, Vladimir Medem, Mark Liber, Raphael Abramovitch, B. Bensky (Levinson) and several others participated, was in full agreement with the Austrian Social Democrats on the basic concept of the nationality question and accordingly formulated its views on Russia's future in general and the Jewish nationality issue in particular. The idea that the Russian Social Democratic Party should be reorganized into a federation of autonomous national sections also received clear expression in the draft resolution. When the fifth convention of the Bund met, however, it divided into two equal factions on the issue of national au-

onomy for the Jewish people. No resolution could be, therefore, adopted. It was only at the sixth convention in October 1905, that the national-minded wing of the Bund won.

As to the relationship between the Bund and the Russian Social Democrats, the 1903 convention adopted a resolution emphatically supporting the federalist viewpoint. The Bundist delegates immediately proceeded to the second Congress of the Social Democratic Party, held in London, with strict instructions to offer this resolution as an ultimatum. The great majority of the Russian Social Democratic Party, however, flatly refused to accept the Bund's demands. They refused even to discuss the national issue. As for the concept of a "Jewish nation," it was strongly objected to by the assimilated Jewish intellectuals and workers who conducted their socialist and revolutionary activities in the ranks of the general, all-Russian, party. The Jewish *Iskrovtzi*, including such prominent men as Paul Axelrod, Julius Martov, who a decade earlier had helped found the Bund, Alexander Martynov, Theodore Dan and Leon Trotsky, opposed the Bund's demands to figure in the party as a national organization that would be the "sole representative" of the entire Jewish proletariat in the movement (which would have meant the non-admission into the party of both the assimilationist groups and the Zionist Socialists). They were ready to accept the Bund as a linguistic unit of Jewish workers who did not understand Russian (or Polish) but they resolutely opposed the nationalist *Weltanschauung* of the Bund in general and its concept of Jews-as-a-nationality in particular. Not even the representatives of other minority groups (Georgians, Armenians, Poles, Ukrainians) supported the Bund; at this time they were all "centralists" opposed to the concept of a federation of autonomous nations.

Obedying the strict instructions given them by the fifth convention, the Bund's delegates (Arkady, Kosovsky, Noah, Yudin,

Medem and Liber) declared that the Bund was leaving the party and left the congress amidst perplexity and expressions of regret.

The second Social Democratic Congress was, incidentally, the same gathering at which Russian Social Democracy first split into "majority" and "minority" factions; in Russian, the partisans of these two groups were called, respectively, "Bolsheviki" and "Mensheviki." This was the split that was to acquire historic importance not only within Russia but far beyond its borders as well.

Not all of the delegates to this fateful congress regretted the withdrawal of the Bund. Lenin and his faction, who received a majority of one vote after the Bundists had left, welcomed the decision of the Bund. The Bundist would most certainly have voted against him on the crucial issue of "party membership," and this vote would have reduced his faction to a minority. At any rate, Lenin and his friends were prominent among those who violently attacked the Bund.\*

The secession of the Bund from the Russian Social Democratic Party, with which the Bund had been affiliated from the very beginning and in whose founding its leaders had played an important role, made a deep impression on the Jewish working class. A period of sharp struggle between the Bund and the *Iskra* faction ensued. The latter organized special committees to work among Jewish workers and to counteract the "nationalism" of the Bund. In countless lectures, symposiums, and party meetings the relations between the Bund and the Russian Socialists were debated. This struggle contributed greatly to the strength-

\* It was only three years later, in May 1906, after the Party Congress at Stockholm, that the Bund decided to return into the Social-Democratic Party. The proposal to rejoin the party, made by the Bund delegates to the Stockholm Congress (Mark Liber, Jonah Koigen and R. Abramovitch) provoked in the Bund a stormy discussion but was finally approved by the Bund's Lemberg convention. According to terms of the new agreement the Bund was given the freedom to propagate its national concept and its program in the ranks of the Party, and full organizational autonomy was guaranteed.

ening of national feelings and attitudes within the Bund.

The Bund had to defend its position not only in the struggle with the assimilationists among the Russian Social Democrats and Polish Socialists but also in incessant battles with the Zionists and other nationalist groups. From the outset there had existed a deep psychological and ideological abyss between the Zionists and the Bund. The Bund was the first modern political party to arise among the Jews. For the first time the Jewish masses had organized and waged a fight both for full equality and for national autonomy. The entire appeal and *raison d'être* of the Bund lay in its insistence that the Jews must not ask for favors but, like all other inhabitants, fight for their rights. This the Bund could do only because it accepted the Diaspora (*Galut*) as the basic premise of its ideology, while Zionism embodied the principled negation of the Diaspora: it advanced the thesis that the Jews were not, and could never be, organically and definitely rooted in any country in the dispersion. According to Zionist philosophy, Jews could become a "normal nation," like other peoples, only after the establishment of their own state in Palestine; the Bund, however, envisioned the road to freedom and equality in the revolutionary socialist struggle in the Diaspora itself. Theoretically a synthesis might have been feasible between these two concepts—and many Zionist Socialists tried to do just that—but in the actualities of political propaganda of that revolutionary epoch the two tendencies clashed. One need scarcely be reminded that the ideal of Zionism was viewed by the Bund as Utopian, and a bourgeois Utopia at that, while in the concrete realities of the national struggle of that period, Zionism offered the Jewish masses no outlet for the militant, revolutionary forces which they had developed. Zionism could be realized, if at all, not through revolutionary class struggle but through diplomatic negotiations with the Turkish Sultan and other bourgeois gov-

ernments, and required, in addition, the permanent assistance of the Jewish capitalists and middle-classes; in other words, it necessarily and inescapably involved cooperation with forces toward which the Jewish working class in Russia bore no friendly feelings, and on which it could have no lasting influence. In the cultural field, the Bund's program favored the development of the Yiddish language, literature, press and art, whereas Zionism looked to the revival of Hebrew as the national language of the entire Jewish people.

From a socio-political viewpoint, the conflict between Zionism and the Bund reflected a class division: Zionism was the movement of the Jewish middle-classes, of bourgeois intellectuals and of a section of the bourgeoisie which opposed the intensification of the political struggle in Russia on national grounds. In practice, if not in principle, Zionism frequently joined hands with apolitical elements that considered it dangerous to have Jews play a leading role in the revolutionary movement. For all practical purposes, the Zionist orientation involved Jewish non-participation in political activities within Russia. The Bund, on the other hand, stood for an even stronger, more radical struggle on the part of the Jewish masses, not only for their own political freedom but also for Socialism.

Beginning with 1901-02, groups arose which sought to find a synthesis between Socialism and Zionism. The Zionist Socialists made their appearance, but the Bund, which remained the unchallenged leader of the Jewish labor movement, did not revise its basic attitude towards Zionism. The constant competition with Zionism and the Zionist Socialists compelled the Bund, however, to accentuate and define more precisely its own attitude toward the national question. As bitterly as the Bund struggled against the Socialist assimilationists of the Polish Socialist Party or the *Iskra* faction in favor of the autonomous existence of a Jewish labor movement, it consistently rejected at the same time every suggestion

of an over-all Jewish policy. In the view of the advocates of cultural autonomy within the Bund, the concept of a Jewish nation applied only to that part of the Jewish people who shared, not only a common historical past, but also a common (Yiddish) language and literature. It was only this "Jewish nation" that the Bund had in mind when it fought for national rights and cultural autonomy. The concept of a Jewish nation as an international phenomenon was still a matter of dispute among Bundist circles of the period.

## II. THE NATIONALIST SOCIALIST PARTIES (1903-1906)

Until 1903, the Bund was in fact the only Jewish Socialist party in Russia, and within the Jewish community its principal antagonist was the Zionist movement. Gradually, and in large measure as a result of the activities of the Bund itself, new socialist groups emerged which were attracted to the Zionist movement. In 1900 and 1901 such Zionist labor groups (Poale Zion) were to be found in Minsk and Ekaterinoslav (founded by B. Borochof and Simon Dobin). During the same period, Zionist Socialist groups were founded in Galicia and by Russian-Jewish students in Vienna and Berlin.

On the basis of orthodox Marxism, these groups maintained that the Jewish problem could be solved only when the Jews became again a "normal nation" living in a separate land of their own. But, in contrast with the Poale Zion, the theoreticians of the Zionist Socialists (commonly known at that time as "Es-Es") such as Dr. Nachman Syrkin, did not insist on Palestine as the future Jewish homeland; they were willing to accept any other territory suited for mass settlement of Jews, e.g., Uganda. (See Ben-Adir, *Modern Currents in Jewish Social and National Life* in this volume). By 1902-03 Zionist Socialist groups had been organized in numerous cities in the Pale, and the fifth convention of the Bund, in the summer of 1903, found itself obliged to call its adherents to combat Zionism in all its forms.



BEN-ADIR (1878-1942)

The year 1903 marked a turning point in the history of the Jewish Socialist movement in Russia. The Kishinev pogrom dealt a severe blow to the political "neutrality" of Zionism. It now became clearer than ever that the Tsarist regime was by no means a matter of indifference to the Jewish population. Zionist circles themselves, shattered as they were by the split on the Uganda issue (1903), began to realize that Zionism offered no immediate answer to the Jewish problem and that some practical political program for immediate action was needed. On the other hand, the pogroms and continuing measures against the Jewish revolutionaries caused a rising flow of emigration from Russia. The number of Jews from Russia who arrived in the United States steadily increased, as is shown by the following figures:

Year	Number
1901	37,660
1902	37,846
1903	47,689
1904	77,544
1905	92,388
1906	125,234

This progressive increase was a result not only of severe economic distress but also of the powerful psychological and emotional anxieties that gripped Russian Jewry. It seemed as if an entire people was preparing to migrate. The political evolution of Zionism and the growth of the emigration movement—in "Es-Es" theory, the basis for a Jewish state—created a favorable climate for the growth of the Zionist Socialist movement.

In the spring of 1903, a conference of Zionist Socialist groups in Russia was held in Rowno. Six months later, the so-called group of Rebirth (*Vozrozhdeniye*) was founded at a conference held in Kiev, and a short time later the first issue of the magazine *Vozrozhdeniye* appeared (with the cooperation of M. Ratner, Ben-Adir, M. Silberfarb and Dr. Ch. Zhitlowsky). Late in 1904 and early in 1905, the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party was founded in Odessa, and its first convention was held in April 1906. By this time, the party had organized a considerable number of local units throughout the Pale and claimed a membership of 27,000. In February 1906, a preliminary conference of the Jewish Social Democratic Labor Party, the Poale Zion, was held at Poltava. By the middle of that year the Poale Zion claimed a membership of about 16,000. At the same time the SERP, or "Seimist," movement arose: the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party, evolving out of the earlier *Vozrozhdeniye* groups. According to its own claims, the SERP numbered about 13,000 members. (All these membership figures refer to the year 1906, when the revolutionary tide was at its peak.)

The Poale Zion and the Zionist Socialists considered themselves Social Democrats and orthodox Marxists, whereas the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party was ideologically close to the Socialist Revolutionary *Narodniki*.

In 1904-1906 Poale Zion groups were established in Galicia, the United States, Palestine, and in some large centers of Western Europe. At the same time, a number of groups with a similar program were

formed in the United States. In 1907 the first world conference of the Poale Zion was held at The Hague, where the World Federation of the Poale Zion was founded.

## III. JEWISH GROUPS IN THE GENERAL SOCIALIST PARTIES OF POLAND AND RUSSIA

The four Jewish Socialist organizations described above did not comprise all the Jewish Socialists in Russia and Poland. There were also Jewish labor groups directly affiliated with the general, All-Russian Socialist parties, and especially with the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.). The May 1893, issue of *Przedsuit*, the party organ published in London, contained an appeal by Józef Pilsudski, "To our comrades, the Jewish Socialists, in the provinces taken from Poland." In 1896 Jewish sympathizers of the party in the United States formed a group under the name of The Jewish Socialist Post From America To Poland, which undertook to supply the Jewish workers in Poland with Socialist literature. The first brochure which this group published was *Gan Eden ha-Tahton* by B. Feigenbaum.

The establishment of an independent party by the Bund, which was at the same time connected with the Russian Social Democrats, aroused great indignation among the leaders of the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.), who attacked the setting up of a separate Jewish Socialist movement. The Bund replied with a pamphlet by V. Kosovsky entitled, "The Fight of the Polish Socialist Party against the Bund" (1898). At the end of 1898, the first issue of the Polish Socialist Party's periodical in Yiddish, *Der Arbeter*, was published in London, and in all about 56 issues subsequently appeared, the last dated August 16, 1907. In 1907 seven issues of the party periodical, *Di Proletarishe Velt*, a popular monthly were published. In October 1905, 21 delegates from 14 organizations attended the fifth conference of the Jewish Polish Socialist Party.

In 1905-1906, there were Jewish sections of the Polish Social Democratic Party (P.S.D.) in a number of the larger cities. During June-September 1906, the organ of the Social Democrats, *Di Roite Fon*, made its appearance, and on July 28-29, 1906, the first conference was held.

After the Bund's secession from the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in 1903, Jewish sections of the R.S.D.L.P. were established in a number of localities. These did not meet with much success. By 1905 the R.S.D.L.P. in Lithuania and White Russia had recruited only 970 worker-members, of whom 575 were Jewish.

In 1904 anarchist groups were formed in Odessa and Bialystok, and during the following year similar bodies were organized in other towns. In 1906, when evidence of the decline of the revolutionary movement began to appear, anarchist sentiment grew. In June 1907, a conference of Anarchist groups in Lithuania and Poland took place.

#### IV. THE PERIOD 1907-1919

##### 1. YEARS OF REACTION

The coup d'état of Premier Stolypin on June 3, 1907, brought about not only an arbitrary change of election laws but also a drastic restriction of the liberties won in 1905. Repressive measures against the revolutionary parties now took the most extreme forms: characteristic were the cruel punitive expeditions, trials by court-martial and hangings. Under the impact of the "white terror" and, to an even greater extent, as a result of the general trend to the "right," the revolutionary movement began to deteriorate. This process, of course, also affected the Jewish labor movement. Even the strongest labor organization, the Bund, which in its official report to the London Congress of the Social Democratic Party in 1907 claimed over 25,000 members, was rapidly being weakened, almost to the point of disappearance. One of the foremost publicists of the Bund, A. Litvak, wrote: "Through the entire summer of 1907 in all our organizations there was talk

of crisis. . . . By 1908 there was nobody left to talk of the crisis. One after another, the units folded up."

Still more acute was the crisis among the Zionist Socialists and Jewish Socialists. The official report to the fourth convention of the Poale Zion stated that "activities are virtually at a standstill. The party has entirely collapsed . . . Only at the end of December 1908, was it possible to establish contact with several cities. The total number of members is about 400." As to the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party, B. Gutman relates in his memoirs that "in comparison with the Bund the disintegration of the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party was much greater . . . Despair overwhelmed the membership and there began a mass flight from the party and its periphery . . . Not only rank and file members abandoned it; a number of prominent leaders likewise left." A. Litvak commented similarly in the article cited above: "The first to leave [the Bund] were the fellow-travelers and sympathizers. Fashions changed; interest shifted elsewhere. . . . A little later, the ranks of active workers began to get thin. . . . Then the veteran workers began to leave, those who had devoted their entire youth to the movement. . . . That was the tragedy."

But the years of political and social reaction and economic depression did not represent a period of decline and collapse entirely. The recently gained and remaining liberties of the semi-parliamentary regime provided the Socialist parties with some means of legal activity. The problem was for the revolutionary parties to make extensive use of these facilities without betraying their revolutionary ideals. It was this problem of adjusting themselves to the new political situation created by the half-won and half-lost Revolution of 1905 that became a major issue in party discussions. One school of thought (the so-called "liquidators") held that the clandestine organizations, which served as nuclei of revolutionary activity prior to 1905, had been outdated by events and that the total energy

of the party should be marshaled for an attempt to utilize in the most effective way the new legally-permitted facilities. Against these views, which were bluntly and fervently stated by one of the *Iskra* founders, Alexander Potresov, the left wing of the movement, represented especially by Lenin's faction, fought fiercely condemning every adjustment to the prevailing legal conditions and demanding the continuation of direct revolutionary action.

The Jewish labor movement, particularly the Bund, assumed a "centrist" position which brought it closer to the Menshevik wing of the Russian Social Democrats. In the Bund, the faction advocating the maximum use of legal means was victorious, but the Bundist protagonists of "legalism," did not advocate the liquidation of illegal party cells any more than the opposing minority faction. Thus the Bund at its eighth conference in 1910 issued directives to the local organizations to proceed with the active pursuit of all kinds of legal associations, from trade unions to dramatic circles, cultural clubs, choirs, historical and educational societies. Interest in cultural activity was genuine and not merely a "front" for illegal political action. This interest was still stronger among the Zionist Socialist groups. The most significant manifestation of the eagerness for Yiddish culture and education was the Czernowitz (Bukovina) Conference of 1908, in which all the factions of the Jewish radical camp took part.

Throughout the Jewish Pale a network of associations was organized for the promotion of Yiddish culture. For the Jewish worker activity of this sort offered a new field, one which had no immediate political significance—even if in many instances it provided a vantage point for political action. In many cases the cultural association developed a mass character. The Yiddish "renaissance" which had begun at the turn of the century in the Jewish labor movement found its continuation in these activities. The legal labor press in Yiddish and Yiddish newspapers in general made great

strides during this period and played a prominent role in this process. The first Jewish Socialist daily in Russia, the Bundist *Folkstsaitung*, appeared in Wilno in December 1905. In addition, a number of periodicals and pamphlets were published. In 1905 the Labor Zionist parties also began to promote literary activities. To some extent the middle class press also helped to maintain the atmosphere and conditions of legality essential to the Jewish labor movement.

##### 2. REVIVAL (1911-1914)

The protracted economic depression ended in 1910 and was followed by a boom that paved the way for a revival of the labor movement in Russia generally and in the Jewish Pale in particular. The initiative was now, however, taken by labor rather than by the employers. Whereas prior to the period of reaction lockouts against workers had been the rule, now strikes and campaigns for better working conditions were the order of the day.

Working class political organization likewise began to show clear signs of recovery. The eighth conference of the Bund was held in 1910 (the seventh having taken place in 1906). In February 1911, the fourth conference of the Zionist Socialists took place in Vienna.

In 1912 the revolutionary movement received a strong impetus as a result of the "Lena Massacre." A sharp clash had taken place in April of that year at the Lena River gold mines in Siberia between the workers and the management. The soldiers that were sent shot at the strikers, killing and injuring many. This evoked widespread protest—reactions of indignation and outrage, which were voiced also by the Jewish workers. The Central Committee of the Bund issued a call summoning the Jewish workers "to fight, to protest!" According to a report in the Warsaw *Lebnsfragn*, in the May Day stoppage (April 18) which was planned as a demonstration against the Lena massacre, 6,000 Jewish workers took part in that city, 3,000 in Wilno (includ-

ing non-Jews); 400, in Minsk, 500, in Bobruisk; etc. In a number of other cities party rallies held that day adopted strongly-worded resolutions.

This was the first mass demonstration of the Jewish working class after the years of reaction, and marked a new beginning along the entire "front." The legal Bundist periodicals reappeared; first, *Lebnsfragn* in Warsaw, in May 1912; then *Di Tsait* in St. Petersburg (a few others had appeared earlier). Between 1912 and 1914, the Poale Zion also published several issues of its magazine. On May 16, 1914, the first issue of the Poale Zion weekly, *Dos Vort*, was published in St. Petersburg; together with all other Socialist magazines, it ceased publication with the outbreak of World War I. The Zionist Socialists issued the *Zukunft*, and the Jewish Socialists *Di Alte Shtime*.

The second mass demonstration of the Jewish proletariat took place in connection with the Beilis trial. Mendel Beilis, a Jewish resident of Kiev, was indicted by the district attorney for the alleged murder of a Christian boy for ritual purposes. The whole story was a flagrant "frame-up" fabricated by the local "Black Hundreds," criminal elements, and the police—which was later exposed at the trial. But the Tsarist government chose to support the charges. Government experts were called in to prove the veracity of the accusations. Thus the Beilis trial was transformed into a purely political demonstration on the part of the reactionary regime.

The liberal and socialist movement of Russia answered the challenge of the reaction by intensified anti-Tsarist propaganda. The Bund and other Jewish radical groups played an important and active part in this campaign. Throughout the nation it organized meetings and mass demonstrations. In September 1913, about 20,000 workers went out on strike in Warsaw; within several days the strike was supported by 50,000 Jewish workers in 70 localities. This represented an important extension of the Jewish protest movement against the government-inspired anti-Semitic propaganda

campaign. But its importance was augmented by the fact that the Duma and the entire liberal press were also media of strong campaigns. In their concerted efforts against the Beilis trial, the organized Jewish workers sought to emerge to some extent from the political isolation in which they had found themselves ever since the failure of the 1905 Revolution. This intent immediately found expression in a new wave of mass sympathy for and the increased prestige of the labor parties in all walks of Jewish life.

The period 1913-1914 brought intensified economic strife, which indicated that the Bund and the trade unions established by it were still regarded by the Jewish workers as the instrument to lead them in their social and political struggle. At the elections to the fourth Duma, in which the Bund participated together with the non-Jewish Socialists, it undertook despite all administrative interference and formal difficulties, to rally around itself substantial sections of the Jewish population. In Warsaw the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund succeeded in electing the Polish worker, Jagiello, as deputy.

The movement was making strides throughout the entire nation as well as in the Jewish labor world. But at precisely the moment when the revolutionary currents began to attract increasingly wider support, the war broke out.

### 3. THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The war, which abruptly altered the entire political situation in Russia, was of special significance to the Jewish labor movement. The war zone comprised the entire Jewish Pale. Congress Poland, Lithuania, and a part of White Russia and the Baltic states were occupied by the Germans early in the war. To the destruction which the war brought were added the persecutions directed by Russian civil and military authorities against the Jewish population.

On the eve of the war, Russia was the only large state in the world where the Jews still did not, even on paper, possess equal

rights, and where a militant anti-Semitism was official government policy. On the other hand, the status of the Jews in Germany, and especially in Austria-Hungary, was rather satisfactory. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Jewish population of the Central European powers proved patriotic and loyal, while the Russian Jews and the Jews in the Polish territories of the Russian Empire were indifferent or even openly hostile to the war waged by the Tsar.

German propaganda did everything possible to deepen the rift between the Jews and the Russian government. Hindenburg and Ludendorff professed their friendship for the oppressed Jews in the German-occupied areas, while the German press played up the liberatory mission of the Germans in the East. Russian counter-propaganda, clumsy and devoid of conviction, replied to the German wooing of the Jews by accusing the entire Jewish population of Western Russia of being "spies" for the German Kaiser, Wilhelm. This myth of "Jewish espionage" on behalf of the Germans was utilized by the Tsarist government to drive hundreds of thousands of Jews from their homes in the border region. A number of towns and villages in the combat zone were completely "cleared" of Jewish inhabitants, who were forcibly evacuated to the rear. Special welfare organizations had to be set up to provide shelter and relief for these involuntary refugees. Communal kitchens, children's homes, employment bureaus and loan co-operatives had to be founded. The leaders of the Jewish Socialist parties took an active part in this relief work which became a national issue. Gradually, political organizations began to re-emerge. In 1915 and 1916, the Poale Zion, the Bund and the Zionist Socialists held conferences. There were two principal problems on the agenda: the attitude towards the war, and the Jewish question.

The Russian Socialist parties were themselves divided on the war issue. Some of the Social Democrats held that the workers must take an active part in the defense

of the fatherland (these were the so-called *oborontsy*). A second group, led by Lenin and other Bolsheviki, adopted a policy of defeatism. The majority of the Mensheviks, supported by most of the Bund, espoused the "internationalist" attitude, and the Social Democratic deputies to the fourth Duma voted against military appropriations, as did Karl Liebknecht in the German Reichstag and the Socialists in the Serbian parliament. While it changed greatly after the Revolution of March 1917, this was the prevalent position in the Jewish labor movement during the first war years.

The war had, moreover, placed the Jewish problem in a new light. All Jewish circles in Europe and America were concerned with the question of equal rights for the Jews at the coming peace conference, with the problem of a World Jewish Congress, and so on. At a Bund conference, held in Kharkov in May 1916, the following resolution on the Jewish question was adopted:

Whereas under present war conditions the Jewish question to some extent assumes international significance . . . this conference deems it necessary to draw the attention of the workers of the world to this circumstance, so that the demands for equal civil, political, and national rights for Jews be incorporated in the peace program of the Socialist International.

At a conference of the Poale Zion in April 1916, Jewish demands were formulated in the following terms:

Upon termination of the present world war, the International must endeavor with all its power to secure the incorporation into the peace treaty of a provision for equal rights in those countries where discriminatory laws prevail for Jewish national-political autonomy, especially in Russia, Poland, Galicia, Palestine and Romania; and for freedom of immigration and colonization for Jews in Palestine.

By the autumn of 1915 the entire territory of Congress Poland, Lithuania, White Russia, and a part of Latvia were occupied by the Germans. These were the regions where the vast majority of the Jewish workers and approximately half of the Jewish population of the Russian Empire lived. The occupied areas, which were economically tied to Russia proper, were thus deprived of the major market for their industrial products. Relief work for the unemployed and for war refugees became the primary concern of the Jewish community and political organizations. The Jewish labor organizations which had been established and which had resumed activity shortly after the arrival of the Germans who tolerated and even encouraged the labor organizations, devoted themselves chiefly to relief work. A large number of public kitchens, homes for children and co-operatives were established. Under the German occupation, moreover, some possibility of political action did exist. For instance, the Jewish Socialist parties could participate in elections to city councils in Poland in the summer of 1916. February 4, 1916, saw the publication of the renewed *Lebnsfragn* as a Bundist weekly edited by Vladimir Medem, who was released from the Tsarist prison by the Germans. Cultural activities received considerable attention. The struggle for a Jewish school system and for the official recognition of Yiddish as the national language claimed an increasingly important role in the efforts of the Jewish Socialist parties.

The German military government permitted the Bundist trade unions to conduct their activities. In 1916 the Poale Zion and the Zionist Socialist Worker's Party organized trade unions of their own. The first (still illegal) convention of the Polish Bund was held in December 1917.

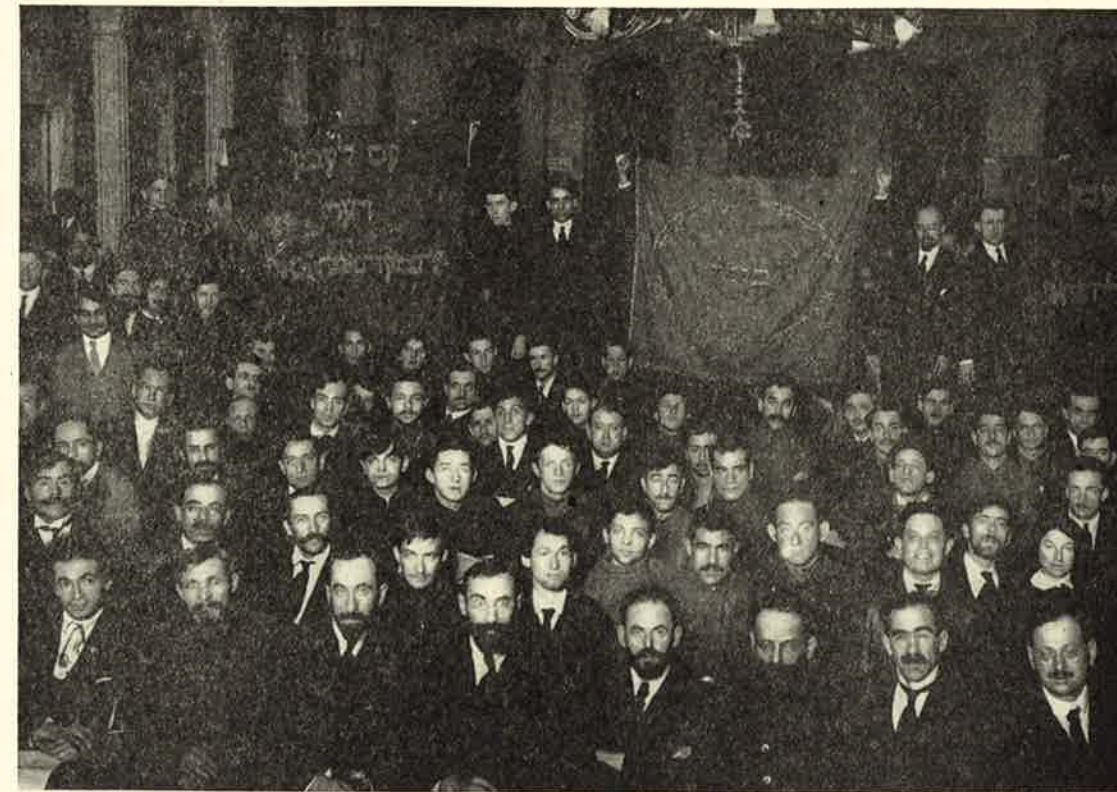
#### 4. THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917

From its outset the March Revolution again raised the question of hegemony of the socialist revolutionary parties. The semi-parliamentary system established in

1906-1907 proved incapable of surviving the hard blows of the war. The partially reformed administration of the Tsarist regime was unable to cope with the new situation created by the international conflict and precipitated by the tensions of war. The collapse of the Tsarist regime put an end to the domination of the class on which it relied. Bourgeois liberalism was likewise socially and politically incapable of undertaking and administering the necessary reconstruction of the entire country. The masses of the population followed the Socialist parties—the so-called “revolutionary democracy.”

The revival of the radical movement in the country was mirrored in the Jewish world also, and all the parties returned to the political scene. The Bund, the Zionist Socialist, the Jewish Socialist Party and the Poale Zion held conferences during the very first days of the Revolution. The radical intelligentsia once again hastened to the Socialist banners. But among the Jews, the non-Socialist elements were much stronger than they were in the general population and, although the Socialist parties took the lead, the liberal-democratic groups retained considerable power, as was demonstrated in elections to both Jewish and general political bodies.

Only a small part of the Jewish proletariat, which had experienced the struggle of 1905-1906, took part in the 1917 revolution. The majority of the Jewish workers were now outside Russia's new boundaries. Ideologically and politically the Jewish labor movement in Russia underwent the same evolution as the general proletariat, but at a different pace and in a different manner. The Revolution had immediately brought to the Jewish masses the realization of their most vital demands. On April 4, 1917, the Provisional Government, through its Minister of Justice, Alexander Kerensky, issued a decree granting full and equal rights to the Jewish population of Russia. For the first time in the history of Jewish emancipation, a Jewish community re-



EIGHTH CONVENTION OF THE BUND HELD IN PETROGRAD, DECEMBER 8-17, 1917

ceived not only civil and political but also national recognition. So badly were the very roots of the Tsarist system shattered that the full and complete equality of the Jews was realized in practice as well as in principle without any opposition.

This was one of the underlying factors in the change of outlook among the Jewish masses, and particularly among the workers. For the first time they felt that they were full-fledged citizens of Russia on a par with all others. The defeatism, which had been the natural response toward a regime typified by the Beilis trial, now gave way to a feeling of patriotism. Moreover, the Jewish working class was more party-conscious and better disciplined than the average Russian or Ukrainian worker; there were large masses of peasants who only a short while ago had moved from the villages to the cities and factories. Thus the Jewish workers resisted the pressure of revolutionary maximalism for a longer time than non-

Jewish labor. The majority of the Bund, as well of the labor Zionists, gave their support after the Revolution to the *oborontsy*, who favored the continuation of the war against Germany and her allies. The “internationalists” were, on the whole, much weaker than the combined forces of the right-wing Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries. As for the Bolsheviks, in the early months of the Revolution, they attracted but a negligible part of the Jewish working class.

Both the tenth conference of the Bund (held in Petrograd in April 1917), the United Jewish Socialist Workers' Party (a merger of the Zionist Socialists and the Jewish Socialists, effected at a joint conference in June 1917), and the Poale Zion (by a resolution passed in April) fully endorsed the “defensivist” viewpoint of the *oborontsy* and supported the policies of the Provisional Government. When the October Revolution took place, the representatives

of all three Jewish Socialist Parties protested and left the second Congress of Soviets, which endorsed Bolshevik seizure of power. For a relatively long time, the Jewish Socialist continued their struggle against the new regime, calling for a coalition government of all the Socialist parties, endorsing the slogan of the Constituent Assembly and issuing determined protests against its dissolution in January 1918. It was only after a series of party splits that a part of the Jewish labor movement was won over by the victorious Communists.

The November 1918, revolutions in Germany and Austria, the civil war in Russia, and the national and social struggle in the Ukraine which was accompanied by terrible pogroms, produced a marked shift to the left in the Jewish Socialist movement. Yet the "bolshevization" of the Jewish labor movement proceeded at a relatively slow pace.

The first to capitulate were some Bund organizations in the pogrom-ravaged Ukraine. At the beginning of 1919, the pro-communist members of the Ukrainian Bund under the leadership of M. Rafes left the Party and established themselves as an independent party under the name of "The Communist Bund" (*Kombund*). The communist wing of the "United Party" seceded a few weeks later and formed The United Communist Party. Both organizations merged at a joint conference on May 22, 1919, and formed the Komfarband, which in turn in August of the same year, joined the general Communist Party of the Ukraine.

In March, 1919, an all-Russian conference (the eleventh conference) of the Bund was held at Minsk. After heated and passionate debates the conference adopted by majority vote a resolution stating that the Bund had decided to accept the "platform of a soviet government." At the same time, however, the conference condemned the terrorist practices of the Communist party and called for democratization of the Soviets and for freedom of speech and press. After the interlude of a special con-

ference in Homel, in October 1919, the twelfth conference of the Bund was assembled in Moscow in April 1920.

At this conference to which some of the delegates were unable to arrive in time because of transportation difficulties—the majority adopted an outspoken communist platform; the minority, however, remained faithful to the Bund's traditional Social Democratic orientation and beliefs. The minority withdrew from the conference in a dramatic exit and consequently formed the "Social Democratic Bund." The Communist wing, led by Aaron Weinstein (Rachmiel), Esther Frumkin, Yankel Levin and others, decided to join the All-Russian Communist Party; they wanted to affiliate as an autonomous organization, however, and were therefore rejected by the Bolshevik party. They appealed to the Communist International and in February 1921 had to accept the verdict of a special committee of the Comintern that the Bund was to be liquidated as an autonomous party. Accordingly, its members joined the "Yev-sektsia," the Yiddish language section of the All-Union Communist Party.

The Social Democratic Bund, about which many of the old leaders, such as Issay Yudin (Aisenstadt), A. Litvak, Mark Liber, R. Abramovitch, Rosa Levit, Bensky, G. Aronson, rallied, attempted to maintain its existence as a legal political party. But in several months, especially after Lenin's proclamation of the "New Economic Policy" (NEP) with simultaneous liquidation of all Socialist parties in the Soviet Union, the organization became a victim of police persecution and eventually was destroyed. Thus ended the eventful existence of the Bund in Russia. The center of the Jewish labor movement shifted to Poland which in 1919 became an independent Republic.

The other Jewish Socialist parties followed, in general, the pattern established by the Bund: split in the party,—with the majority joining the Bolsheviks, and the minority gradually liquidated by Communist terrorism.

#### 5. WAR, REVOLUTION, AND THE JEWISH QUESTION

The war and the Russian Revolution radically changed the entire situation of the nearly six million Jews previously found within the boundaries of the Russian Empire. For a time, large areas of the Jewish Pale were occupied by the German army.

In 1917 it seemed as if the two most important movements in Jewish life, Zionism and the Bund, had reached the threshold of realizing their programs. The Balfour Declaration gave the Jewish people the solemn assurance of a national home in Palestine, whereas the Russian Revolution seemed to foreshadow almost ideal conditions for the attainment not only of full civil rights but also of cultural autonomy. The tenth conference of the Bund, held shortly before the March Revolution of 1917, adopted the following resolution: "In full agreement with the program regarding the national question, adopted at the sixth convention of the Bund, the tenth conference proposes as a timely slogan the immediate realization of the demand for national-cultural autonomy." The same gathering also voted to take part in the Jewish Assembly scheduled for December. The principal task of that conference, as formulated by the Bund's Central Committee, was "to give serious and public expression to the desire of all the Jews in Russia for national self-determination." It is important to note that the Bund (at the Kharkov conference of 1916 as well as later) took the position that the Jewish question "must be considered as an international question" and must be solved "not in one country, but in all countries in which Jews live."

The Poale Zion and the United Party went beyond a demand for cultural autonomy and formulated a program including political autonomy as well: such matters as emigration, labor mediation, social security, colonization of Palestine, and the like, were to be included within the jurisdiction of

the autonomous Jewish organs. The Poale Zion also waged a strong campaign in the Socialist International for its demands regarding Palestine, and was able to achieve some success. The proposals of the Poale Zion were incorporated in the "Peace Manifesto" of the so-called "Scandinavian Committee" of October 1917. The British Labour Party likewise endorsed Zionism, in agreement with the official British policy of that time.

In 1917 the national question in Russia had become a good deal more pressing and real than in the prewar period. The war had intensified the national aspirations of the central and Eastern European nationalities. The principle of national self-determination was beginning to be generally recognized. Separatist tendencies among the Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Georgians and Armenians were constantly growing stronger. At the very beginning of the revolution, Poland was declared independent, and Finland, too, was to regain full freedom. The groups that played a leading role in the first stage of the Russian Revolution, the Social Democrats and the Socialist Revolutionaries, sought to save the unity of the Russian State through concessions designed to satisfy the national aspirations of the non-Russian minorities without endangering the maintenance of a common state. For this reason the Bund's program of cultural autonomy now acquired greater popularity in non-Jewish Socialist circles. At the first Congress of Soviets, in June 1917, Mark Liber and Raphael Abramovitch were the official spokesmen on the national question. The Bundist principle of territorial self-determination and extra-territorial cultural autonomy was incorporated in the platform of the Social Democratic Party in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. The first attempt to translate the demand for national autonomy into practice was made in the Ukraine, largely through the efforts of the Jewish Socialist parties. On January 9, 1918, the Ukrainian National Rada adopted a law on minority rights giving "each of the na-

tions living in the Ukraine . . . within the boundaries of the Ukrainian People's Republic, the right of national personal autonomy." According to this law, each nationality was to constitute a community with appropriate representative bodies. M. Silberfarb, the representative of the United Party, became the first Minister for Jewish affairs. But Jewish autonomy in the Ukraine was not destined to become reality. The political developments of 1918-1919 made the formal functioning of Jewish national organs practically impossible. Nonetheless, in the midst of the catastrophe, considerable accomplishments were made in the field of Jewish culture. The many-sided and admirable work of the Cul-

ture League, carried on principally by the Jewish Socialist parties, deserves specific mention in this connection.

At the elections of the Jewish National Assembly in the Ukraine, held in November 1918, 209,128 votes were cast. The Bund received 37,704; the United Party, 19,689; Poale Zion, 18,416. All three Socialist parties together received approximately 37 per cent of the votes cast. The middle class bloc and the Socialists differed mostly on the language question (Hebrew versus Yiddish) and on the concrete forms of self-government (religious or secular communities). The Socialists, being in the minority, were not included in the executive body elected at this Assembly.

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