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Historiography on the General Jewish Labor Bund. Traditions, Tendencies and Expectations

Research on the Jewish Labor Bund¹ was determined for a long time by historiographical designs that first stem from the grand project of rewriting history from a Marxist and activist perspective and the secondly from the steadily sharpening contrast between the Bund and its opponents. These two guiding forms of interpretation appear to have had a strong influence both on academic and public historical discourses. As a result the history of the Bund and Bundist thought remained as an highly marginalized theme in non-Bundist texts. Related to that, Bundist history entered independent academic debate relatively late as a distinct subject. But on the other hand, maybe as a counter-reaction there grew a strong tendency of Bundist self-historization, often combined with self-justification and heroization by internal speakers and authors.

Only in the last years a rather modernized and distanced historiography increased – but by no means always without political ambitions. But, apart from some topical introductions of certain monographs, no generalizing overview on the historiography on the Jewish Labor Bund is available. Because recently a new impetus in the research on the Jewish Labor Bund can be detected, the need for a localization of older and newer tendencies is more urgent than before.² This article can only fulfill this partially.

Whereas in some fields research has provided deep insights into important questions about Bundism, this overview rather aims at linking scientific output to some traditions and sketching out gaps and perspectives than evaluating all efforts made. It aims at redrawing main tendencies and traditions of the relevant historiography, linking them to contextual developments and finally raising continuative questions. These conclusive remarks, based on my personal research and considerations, might of course be altered and extended into various directions.

The tradition of self-historization already has its roots in the very first decade of the Bund's existence. From the very beginning Bundist periodicals used to deem history as a history of class-struggle. Just like in other Marxist publications of that time, Bundists took the opportunity to raise their voice against traditionalism by their own means and in their own words – reinterpreting the past in order to actuate and explain the present fight for a better future. Whereas in the first publications topics like anterior revolutions or great figures of the early labor movement were in the focus, Jewish socialist interest in general, and Bundist in particular, only gradually became a subject of deeper consideration. Merely a

very small number of short obituaries and (later on) commemorative words about the pioneers of the Jewish labor movement found their way into the illegally printed or smuggled journals. A first hint of future developments is connected to the official programmatic adoption of the concept of national-cultural autonomy in 1901.³ Now the Bund developed a political vision distinct from other closely related parties.⁴ The inception of fulltext self-historization might be seen in the famous 25th issue of the *Arbeyter shtime* that was published in that particular year and context.⁵ Being proud of its existence and persistence despite harsh persecution of the illegal print-shops directly after the first wave of imprisonment in the last years of the nineteenth century – also seen as the first generational break in the Bundist leadership – this issue, printed in Yiddish *and* Russian as an exception, did not only devote much space to the Bund's own history. Furthermore this issue included a long list of congratulations from worldwide leading Social Democrats and so showed the periodical's and the Bund's representation in the international movement.⁶ A next step was the 14th edition of *Di hofnung*, published in 1907, another important Bundist periodical of that time.⁷ It thematized the Bund's history for example through an overview of published journals and through some first reminiscences on the foundation of the Bund then in its 10th year. This content was already shaped by the experience of the first generational break among the activist masses: The First Russian Revolution 1905 – and its decline.

This formulating of generational experiences by mediating distant „early times” became important during the first "decline" of the Bund 1907-1910/12 and turned into a widely spread phenomenon after 1917. After having dealt with the split into a social-democratic and a communist wing, the Bund at least from 1921 onwards could return to consider working on progressive politics in Interwar Poland. As stated, writing of history was of the highest relevance for revolutionary movements and therefore an important part in that larger cultural cluster the Bund set up. This grew dominantly in Interwar Poland where the Bund could in large operate in (at least widely tolerated) legality.⁸ Consequently then the first bigger historical works were written, and for some Bundist the writing of Bundist history turned out to become a major form of activism. Furthermore, this was a form of activism that could also be carried on by members who migrated to the United States. Vladimir Medem's autobiography is for sure the best known among these publications.⁹ In these books history and memory tend to merge into one, aiming at handing down a pre-interpreted history of a past in Russian times, when fighting was heroic and dangerous – but also at remaining militant.

This turn towards a more and more commemorative movement did not emerge independently. The Bund, to its left, had to defend its interpretation of the workers' movement against the strong impetus of the "proletarianization" in Soviet-styled history, especially by the likewise Yiddish acting Jewish section of the Communist Party, the *Yidseksye*, that largely consisted of former Bundists. To its right, Zionist conceptions of history and politics became slightly more popular. Once again the Bund had to define its standpoint by looking at its past.

One of these tendencies of dealing with (and later erasing the) Jewish Labor Bund can be called a collectivization of the rather specific form of socialism the Bund stood for. In the early Soviet Union there were several works written on Bundist issues by former Bundists.¹⁰ In histories of the revolution the Bund was critically mentioned as one of the most important players in anti-tsarist circles. But from the late 1920s the dealing with the former associate became more and more difficult and by the turn to the third decade of the 20th century the Bund, first by name, then in general, vanished from Soviet history books or popular media. Under these pens, anticommunist Bundists were either condemned, concealed or collectively transformed into revolutionary proletarians, parts of the large revolutionary masses in the prehistory of the glorious „people's revolution“. On the other hand, Bundists also tended to use a form of collective interpretation. They largely saw their movement as the „Jewish Labor Movement.“ Bundist history and the history of popular Jewish resistance against tsarism appeared to be synonymous. Likewise this inclusive generalization could be used by other political writers in order to anonymize the Bund.

Obviously any cultural work was interrupted due to the German invasion into Poland, when the Bund, often together with other resisting forces, turned into a fighting unit. Especially the Warsaw ghetto uprising in 1943 became a myth in the Bundist past¹¹ and is commemorated by former activists and sympathizers until the recent day.¹² These and many other then contemporary issues were discussed in the Bund's longest-living periodical "Unzer tsayt". The Bund left Poland - practically from 1941, when this new Bundist mouthpiece first appeared in New York and officially from 1947 when the Jewish Labor Bund left Poland and reshaped itself into the *International Labor Bund*, the *World Bund*, with the *Coordinating Committee of Bundist and Affiliated Jewish Socialist Organization in various Countries* in central position.¹³ It steadily had to deal with the global decrease of Bundism as a influential primary political force and the absence of revolutionary perspectives.¹⁴ But it could rely on previously established networks of social and cultural work¹⁵ and in my eyes therefore – and of course also following larger tendencies in Jewish history – practically focused on memory as one of its major political actions. This defensive act of insisting on the relevance of personal and collective perceptions aside political mainstreams were in large influenced by the experienced generational shifts due to historical breaks, the institutionalizing of the Bund-Archives and of course the new rise of the Yiddish language and the related rising activities of the YIVO in the New World. Historiography now played a major role in the creation of a practical space in order to establish a Bundist identity outside of Poland. Now numerous historically inspired texts, be it in dailies, journals or books, were published. Writing and reading Bundist history as much as joining commemorative acts became a mode of belonging to or at least signifying ones support for the Bund and the general relevance of secular Jewish forces. History of the Bund and history written by Bundists was therefore for a longer time almost one and the same.¹⁶

On the other hand and largely outside the Yiddish-speaking Bundist milieu, the persuasiveness of the Bund in history and politics became gradually questioned. This might be seen as a secondary effect of the close relation between Bundist history and Bundist practice. Now that Bundism challenged the ascending Zionism more than ever, the other side did not hesitate to use its force and influence.¹⁷ As a result, even concerning times and spheres of greatest relevance, the Bund was "unwritten" from history, and either silenced or ignored and therefore retrospectively marginalized. The question whether this took place by intent or as a matter of reception cannot be answered here – but it would be an interesting point in order to critically examine Jewish history and the personal choice of subject. Altogether the tendencies of either overemphasizing or ignoring socialist history in large and Bundist history in detail is salient – but yet a blank spot in historiographical considerations.

Another way of dealing with Bundism was asking for its "success" – often by using concepts or terms, the Bundists never used or raised since they stood against their own philosophy.¹⁸ Sometimes this led to antagonisms and perceptions that appeared much stronger from the historians' ex-post perspective than they actually were in the time they referred to. Especially the forcefully used figures of "convincing power" and "success" are not questioned with relation to the socio-historical practices and historical settings, but apparently rather used following the historians' personal presumptions. "Success" becomes a seemingly eternally valid measuring unit without asking for the relevance of "success in certain periods".¹⁹ For instance, Bernhard K. Johnpoll decidedly judged Bundist politics as a failure, as "politics of futility" because it failed to seek state power. But the Bund as a democratic Marxist revolutionary and internationalist movement simply could never ask for state power alone, it asked for a socialist AND democratic world order, for personal liberty and cultural autonomy. These studies are measuring the power of a movement by its will in order to seize (Johnpoll) or create (Gorny) a nation-state, although the movement itself considered the formation of nation states (and the preceding philosophies) as a tragic failure. It seems that rather expectations and only to a lesser account observations are guiding those historians' pens.

Yet, as already mentioned, the post-war denial of the Bund was thwarted by a wave of Yiddish historical publications on the Bund in Poland issued by the Bund in America and the world. This modernized self-historization had, roughly speaking, four main tendencies which sometimes merged. One was the description of the general Bundist work in Eastern Europe.²⁰ Secondly especially under the roof of the Bundist publishing house "Unzer Tsayt" (be it in books or the journal) authors like the main Bundist historian Jacob Sh. Hertz came to publish detailed descriptions of Bundist history.²¹ Attached to certain branches or committees of the mighty *Arbeter ring* history could be written in that sense, either by editing collections of earlier works, by historical research or the publishing of personal experience. The third huge practice started as the commemoration of leading Bundists²² and later turned into massive collective biographical works.²³ This form of exploring the Bundist past through personal fates spread in

the 1920s and '30s when the Bundist Press extensively started reporting on leading personalities in life and death. Anniversaries received an attention like never before.

After the Shoa personalized commemoration developed into a major factor on the overall rising Yiddish book market and the publishing of (auto)biographies rose to a previously unknown extend. Now also workers and not only leading Bundists found motivation to write – and sometimes even a publisher afterwards. In the search of preserving memory of a world lost, Bundists from all social strata and writing skills started telling their life stories as a whole or in episodes.²⁴ Fourth, huge personal, often literary interpretations of Bundist history in the context of the Eastern European experience were published. This whole and very productive stream of combining memory and history was closely bound to the use of the Yiddish language and therefore underlay and co-shaped the developments of this language after the Second World War.²⁵ Until now only very few of these books were translated into other languages.²⁶ Generally speaking these four streams prepared the ground for all following studies on Bundism. It is one of the main desiderata in the research on Bundism, that this internal historiography, this form of Bundist activity never stood in the focus of critical exploration.

This Yiddish historiography found its zenith in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Afterwards historiography on the Jewish Labor Bund changed dramatically and became an academic issue of minor rank in overall Jewish historiography. Maybe in the first academic exploration of Bundism the same thought of passing on an endangered history played an important role. Concerning method and research interest, Henry J. Tobias book on the Russian Bund until 1905 is the cornerstone in this development.²⁷ This saturated study is an inevitable resource until the recent days. In this sense it pioneered later studies: many issues risen in this book were to be discussed in the next years as central issues of Bundism. Especially Tobias' detailed focus on organizational matters as much as ideological shifts opened the path for a longer discussion on the national conceptions of the Bund.²⁸ Many studies from now on were examining the development from the loose cooperation of Jewish unions to the founding of the Bund and finally the development of a new secular and revolutionary force. The concentration on the concepts of nationalism and on conceptual matters led to specialized results, but also to a narrowing in the considerations of the broad Bundist activities.²⁹ Yoav Peled's essay on the Bundist ethno-class consciousness can be read as a climax of the tendency of reading the Bund through national- and class-analysis.³⁰

What unifies these studies is a concentration on conceptional matters or the development of Bundist ideas, but the question of how they were put into practice remains largely unanswered. Nevertheless studies with other focuses were always published but they never became that central in reading Bundism.³¹ Especially Moshe Mishinsky's vision of reading the Bund through spatial categories might be worth a reconsideration by recent researchers.³² A field recently receiving far more consideration is the cultural and everyday practice of the Bund. In the early academic period only the classical book by

Ezra Mendelsohn considered this to a larger extent. In this fluent essay he focused on the practical consequences of living under the conditions of daily class struggle in the Jewish Pale of settlement in Russian times. There he considered the Bund to have offered "new way of life, a new framework of conventions within which to live and work"³³ – not only in a distant future but rather through the practice of fighting for exactly that future. But, from a contemporary point of view, the book derives its convincing power rather from its narration than its method. Concerning the broad masses, the book remains as vague as the others – the thoughts, perspectives and practices of the members aside the leading circles remained (and still remain) unresearched. Nevertheless Mendelsohn's study might be seen as a motivation for writers, who, from the the early 1990's onwards, in a great measure followed the turn of historiography towards the New Cultural History and the consequent change of focuses.

The centenary of the Bund in 1997 was accompanied by the yet last conference on the history of the Jewish Labor Bund. The consequent publication of papers presented³⁴ reveals tendencies that are influential until now:³⁵ First of all, Bundism is a historical phenomenon that needs to be approached from several perspectives, especially in order to overcome the contrasting history of Bundism and Zionism that seems to be dictating large parts of the public and academic debates. Secondly, the interest in the Bund was expanded from the earlier Russian times especially towards Interwar Poland. Because the Bund could act as a legal party there, it established a huge network of political, cultural and social institutions.

Along with this thematic shift in 1997 came a generational one. For instance, Gertrud Pickhans voluminous study on the Bund in Poland stepped towards exploring that time from a new cultural perspective.³⁶ It, of course, kept asking questions on thought and organization but it focused on the societal work of the Bund that resulted from its political framework and on the transition the Bund had to undergo while transforming itself and its structures from the Russian to the Polish period. After Pickhan's re-evaluation if the Polish Bund other projects seem to continue the discussion on the Polish Bund. Jack Jacob's book on "Bundist Counter Culture" will be published this spring.³⁷ This and Roni Gechtman's recently elaborated study on „National-Cultural Autonomy in the Making"³⁸ seem to promise the necessary widening of reading Bundism through its practice. Another recently only marginally studied temporal field is that of the Bund during the Second World War. Mainly Daniel Blatmans study on the resistance of Bundists against the Nazi-occupation must be mentioned here.³⁹ But concerning the contextualization of Bundist resistance in militancy, cultural work and individual action, this period needs far more consideration than is has received until now.

Like in overall history the cultural shift also brought a lot of new perspectives. Among the specialized focuses is Rick Kuhn's consideration of the *Jewish Social Democratic Party of Galicia*, in short the *Galizian Bund*.⁴⁰ It was founded after the prototype of the Bund and later united with the Bund in order to become the Bund in Poland. The special value of his consideration from the perspective of Bundist

historiography is the enlarging of the Bundist sphere of influence over the borders of the Jewish pale of settlement. This might influence researchers in order to look upon Bundism apart from its traditional territories. Another yet even more specific work (by theme and method) was done by Susanne Marten-Finnis on the use of language in the pre-revolutionary Bundist press.⁴¹ Because of the great relevance of printed matters for Bundism, her studies gave first insight to possible reading tendencies of some mouthpieces. Scrutinizing her cognitions by looking at the far more spread leaflets, local publications and later important books and combining her rather linguistic approach with that of social relations could lead future research to important insights on the connection of language and behavior – especially because the construction and use of modern Yiddish was of highest relevance for Bundism. A third, yet again growing field is locating the Bund in broader contexts – either by relating the Bund to surrounding parties or groups⁴² or by integrating Bundist history into the examinations of certain periods.⁴³ This could be a field for further investigation and cooperation between historians from various specifications. Especially looking at the many reminiscences written by Bundist activists, an approach emphasizing rather cooperation (sometimes in concurrency) than isolation, promises to reveal far more adequate visions of how Bundism was put into practice. In the end only this broader contextualization aside party-shaped borders can put Bundism back into its place in history where it emerged as a historical movement for – and very often also by the Jewish masses.

These perspectives may have the ability to link certain branches of historiography, but they also reveal a problematic aspect of historiography on the Bund. In how far can we talk about THE Bund if it underwent these kind of dramatic changes, internally and externally? How can periods and practices be linked? Generally speaking, whenever the Bund played a role as a collective protagonist it was researched as a party and attention was drawn mainly at the institutional centerpieces in several periods. But if the Bund was a basis for personal political action, like authors from all generations repeatedly state – who were the persons that constituted the Bund? How were (locally or thematically defined) subgroups related to the activists and these again to the central Bundist institutions? Research widely agrees that the Bund's broader influence on Jewish life in general is one of the most remarkable features in its history – but keeps researching the Bund in a rather centralized way. Isn't there a researchable difference between the Bund as a public protagonist in certain periods and the Bundists as carriers of the movement and mediators of meaning? Whereas this secondary effect is widely assumed and researchers theoretically agree on the relative weak significance of the membership in contrast to the broader influence profound research on that field crossing time and space needs to be done. Furthermore Bundists might even have changed party, groups and interests – and returned, like those Bundists who first participated in the communist movement after 1917 but, from the late 20s on, rejoined the Bund in significant numbers. Here a personalized approach could reveal insights in the urgent questions: Who were the Bundists and what made a Bundist a Bundist? How about differences

like social strata inside the Bund? And: How did workers deal with Bundism as a political theory? It indeed is an intriguing question whether, polemically, Bundist became Bundists because of being attracted by Vladimir Medem's theoretical works – or because of having a Bundist club next door. To a large extent these questions remain unanswered. The first writers about the Bund never rose them – maybe because they shared experiences and therefore the answers were far too obvious to them. But now, from a further perspective, the term Bundist loses its unifying character and inclusive potential. It is revealing that workers' participation, aside generalizing and idealizing statements, is a blank spot in the history of a workers' movement.

In that light also the possibilities and limits of women's roles in the Bund deserve far more consideration. But, unlike of the untouched workers' issue, the often stated equality between men and women is recently under question. Whereas this topic found first scientific consideration only a few years past already new perspectives are exposed.⁴⁴ They reveal an indeed challenging character by asking whether this equality, if in participation, representation or commemoration was a self-repetitive myth in Bundist history.⁴⁵ Dealing with this point (or myth?) will become a field for productive debates in the next years as it touches Bundism at its bones by questioning the relation of perception and reality in that issue of everyday equality.

But more assumptions stemming from the traditional Bundist historiography should be challenged. The linear and well segmented conception of Bundist history is bound to generational constructions that Bundist writers used to create by and for themselves in order to explain personal devotion or institutional change. The segmentation of Bundist history into four phases of course has its explanatory potential and reasons considering the legal situation.⁴⁶ But nevertheless the often referred watersheds are invented ordering points aiming at bargaining applicable models of explaining the Bund in relation to master narratives on overall twentieth century history. But, for instance, were shifts in the space of generational experience, models of militancy and modes of social practice really coinciding? How about personal, institutional and theoretical persistence – especially the last one paradoxically is another fix-point of Bundism that Bundists steadily kept referring to. In my eyes, the strict temporal sectioning, from Bundist ex-post self-perception to the recent book market, rather functions as a viable way of aligning the history of the Bund to applicable quarts than as an evaluation of persistent ideological or social factors that constituted the Bund in important matters. The Bund undeniably went through certain periods. But for instance by using commemorative links and the herein described Bundist history previously made experiences were constantly reconstructed as relevant contemporary factors. Very often these reconstructions retrospectively sharpened breaks and borders in the light of contemporary conflicts. Research therefore should include these crosstemporal visions of group-formation and segmentation to a much larger extent as the invention of tradition broke ground for the political and cultural work of the Bund as much as it was part of them.

So if time is suspicious of limiting research due to traditional constraints, how about spatial concepts? The history of the Bund has always been researched as East European history. This of course has its reason. But be it through internal migration, political refuge to Western European cities or far distance migration - migration has always co-shaped Bundism. Wherever a larger group of Bundists gathered, they tended to create variously named Bundist-styled networks and tried to connect them to local socialist groups as much as to the Bund and its institutions in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the Bund itself always tried to maintain its influence by setting up Bundist clubs in foreign countries. Foreign Bundist groups supported the Bund "back home" by various means, from intellectual input to material and money. It is, for instance, undisputed that a large number of the activists made their passage over the Atlantic ocean and that these immigrants had an enormous impact on the history of American Jewry. Lately Tony Michels⁴⁷ focused on this issue in great detail until the outbreak of the First World War – but what about the other way around? American Jewish Socialists constantly complained about the perspective of Bundists, who were said to be standing in America only with their feet – but facing Poland. But these Bundists did not only stand and stare motionless. What was Bundist action overseas and how was it related to the Bund in Poland? Remembering the later relocation of the Bund's headquarters to New York, this question is of highest relevance.

Furthermore, research concerning later times and other areas of Bundist practice far from the Polish soil is vague and scattered, but looking at recently ongoing projects, this might be a new point of major interest in the research on Bundism.⁴⁸ In my eyes the key to new results will be the interpretation of these migrational processes as a transnational history of exchange and persisting transfer rather than a classical history of immigration.

Recently a large number of research projects are devoted to the Bund as a primary or secondary subject. Obviously the history of the Bund will be widened, transformed and reinterpreted. But there also is a need of a new summarizing interpretation. Whereas the classical constant and linear visions of the Bund in its history were widely justified by personal ties of the historiographers and conceptual frames they worked in, today a new critical and generalizing thesis on the basic patterns of Bundism needs to be written – indeed not an easy venture in times of micro studies and fragmented research. But this fragmentation should not only be read as a problem, it might pioneer new explanatory models. The first step in this direction might be leaving behind the still persistent vision of researching on a party. One might start exploring the Bund as a loose network with party-like institutions at its core. This could enable us to approach the Bund and its broad sphere of influence through the methods of network analysis instead of repeatedly rereading programmatic issues. Yet the frequent exploration of subjacent models of participation and action might guide the way for such an embracing (in time an space) global reconsideration of the protagonists of interest. This in the end enables us to leave old, internally unifying, externally segregating conceptions of a homogenizing Bundist history aside and turn

this history into one of three sometimes separate and sometimes overlapping protagonist, which are situated one to another in a triangular model: The Bund, the Bundists and Bundism.

Notes to the author:

M.A. in East European History, History and English Literature. Co-founder of www.bundism.net - a network devoted to research on the Jewish Labor Bund. Recently working on his PhD thesis, located at the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology, BGHS, Bielefeld University. Working title: *Neue Welten in der Neuen Welt? Der Allgemeine Jüdische Arbeiterbund im Migrationsprozess, 1905-1950.* [engl.: *New Worlds in the New World? The General Jewish Labor Bund in the Process of Migration, 1905-1950.*]

¹ The 1897 founded General Jewish Labor Bund (*Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeter Bund fun Rusland, Poyln un Lite*) quickly developed from a conspiratorial group into a mass movement. In its actions the Bund presented a mixture of political criticism, revolutionary force, secular Jewish culture and – depending on the time – militant resistance. It was not only a protagonist of the First Russian Revolution 1905, it also played a dominant role in the overall leftist movement under the last tsar, in Interwar Poland and under German occupation. After the Shoah (from 1947) the Bund persisted as a transnational network with its headquarters in New York and bases all over the globe.

² For ongoing projects on the Bund, see: www.bundism.net.

³ A program inspired by Austro-Marxists, demanding nonterritorial cultural rights in order to enable equal-righted life in a multiethnic society, see: Gechtman, Roni: *Conceptualizing National-Cultural Autonomy - From the Austro-Marxists to the Jewish Labor Bund*, in: *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook*, 4 (2005), pp. 17-49; in general: Nimni, Ephraim: *National-Cultural Autonomy and its Contemporary Critics*, London 2005.

⁴ This led to certain ideological and practical conflicts, see for instance: Hertz, Jacob. S.: *The Bund's Nationality Program and Its Critics in the Russian, Polish and Austrian Socialist Movements*, in: *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, 14 (1969), pp. 53-67; Keßler, Mario: *Parteiorganisation und nationale Frage – Lenin und der jüdische Arbeiterbund 1903-1914*, in: Bergmann, Theodor (ed.): *Lenin. Theorie und Praxis in historischer Perspektive*, Mainz 1994, pp. 219-231.

⁵ The 1899 founded voicepiece of the Central Committee later became a spot for commemoration itself, for instance: Litvak, A./Salutski, J. B.: *Der ershter numer "arbeter shtime"*, in: *Dos revolutionere rusland, Yidishe sotsyalistische federatsye in Amerike*: New York 1917, pp. 113-116; *Der ershter numer "arbeter-shtime". Zikhroynes fun die onteylnehmer*, in: *Arbeter luakh*, Warsaw 1922, pp. 101-109; *Memoir on creation of Arbeter Shtime (around 1939)*, YIVO, New York - Bund Archives - RG 1401 - Box 32, Folder 337.

⁶ Among them: August Bebel, Paul Singer, Karl Kautsky and many local and international Bundist groups. The edition of this oversized special issue was previously resolved at the 4th conference of the Bund. *Di Arbeter Shtime*, 5, 25 (October 1901).

⁷ *Di hofnung*, Vilna, Nr. 14 (1907).

⁸ Examples, out of the many: *Arbeter luakh* (1922); *Royter Pinkes*, 2 vols., Warsaw 1921, 1924; Litvak, A.: *Vos iz geven: Etidudn un zikhroynes*, Vilna 1925; *Mikhalevtish, Beynish: Zikhroynes fun a yidishen sotsyalist*, 3 Bd., Warsaw 1921-1929; *Rozental, Anna: Bletlekh fun a lebens-geshikhte*, YIVO historishe shriftn: Vilna 1939; *Tsherikover, A./Menes, A./Kurski, F./Rozin (Ben-Adir), A. (eds.): Di yidishe sotsyalistsishe bavegung biz der grindung fun "bund"*. *Forshungen, zikhroynes, materialn, Historishe sektsye fun YIVO. Historishe shriftn*, Vilna, Paris 1939 and many anniversary's issues.

⁹ *Medem, Vladimir: Fun mayn lebn*, 2 vols., New York 1923 (previously published in "Der forverts", afterwards translated into several languages).

¹⁰ Most prominent: *Rafes, M.: Očerki po istorii "Bunda"*, Moscow 1923.

¹¹ Alone the autobiographical output about this event is enormous. Very early: *Amerikanisher representatsye fun "bund" in Poyln* (eds.): *Geto in flamen*. *Zamlbukh*, New York 1944.

¹² For instance by the post-Bundist activist group "khavershaft" in Buenos Aires, see: *Archivo de la Fundación IWO, Buenos Aires - Fondo Bund - Caja 1114*.

¹³ There it also published the short but punchy Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin, first in Yiddish, but soon in English. The whole activity of this fourth great temporal section in Bundist history needs to be explored. See David Slucki's ongoing project: Here-ness, there-ness, and everywhere-ness: Doikeit and the dispersion of the Bund after the Holocaust, <http://www.bundism.net/slucki-research-project>, [11.02.2008].

¹⁴ Exemplary: Zelmanowicz, Mott: A Bundist Comments on History As It Was Being Made, The Post-Cold War Era, Philadelphia 2009.

¹⁵ Wolff, Frank: Singular Islands or a Transnational Sphere? Bundist Revolutionary Culture in the Process of Migration, Paper presented at: Working Men of All Countries, Unite! Crisis and Revolution in Today's World. Analysis and Perspectives, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 30.10.-1.11.2008.

¹⁶ Except for: Patkin, A. L.: The Origins of the Russian-Jewish Labour Movement, Melbourne/London/New York 1947, and previously: Paretzki, Elie: Die Entstehung der jüdischen Arbeiterbewegung in Russland, Riga 1932.

¹⁷ This even inflicted the Bund's position in the Socialist International, one of the last refuges left in the 70's, see: Miller, Susanne: German Social Democrats and the Bund in Exile in London, 1939-1945: Memories, in: Jacobs, Jack (ed.): Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe: The Bund at 100, Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire 2001 pp. 181-2.

¹⁸ As main protagonists: Johnpoll, Bernhard K.: The Politics of Futility. The General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917-1943, Ithaca/New York 1967; Gorny, Yosef: Converging Alternatives. The Bund and the Zionist Labor-Movement, Albany 2006.

¹⁹ For a longer critique on Gorny, see: Frank Wolff, Review: Gorny, Yosef: Converging Alternatives, in: The International Newsletter of Communist Studies Online, XIV (2008), 21, pp. 108-110, http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/incs/home/data/pdf/INCS_21_ONLINE.pdf [26.04.2009].

²⁰ As a master narrative: Aronson, G. [et al.] (red.): Di geshikhte fun bund, 5 vols., New York 1960-1972.

²¹ For instance: Hertz, J. Sh.: Di geshikhte fun a yugnt : der kleyner Bund-Yugnt-Bund Tsukunft in Poyln, New York 1946; Ibd.: Der bund in bilder, 1897-1957, New York [1957?]; Ibd.: Di geshikhte fun Bund in Lodzsh, New York 1958.

²² Medem, Fun mayn lebn, 1923; Mikhalevitsh, Zikhroynes fun a yidishen sotsyalist, 1921-1929; Mill, Dzshon: Pionern un boyern. Memuarn, 2 vols., New York 1946-49; Goldstein, Bernhard: 20 yor in varshever 'Bund' 1919-1939, New York 1960.

²³ Basically: Hertz, J. Sh. (ed.): Doyres Bundistn, 3 vols., New York 1956-1968; Kh. Sh. Kazdan [Komite tsu fareyvikn dem ondenk fun di umgekumene lerer fun di TsiShO shuln in Poyln] (eds.): Lerer-Yizkher-Bukh, Komite tsu fareyvikn dem ondenk fun di umgekumene lerer fun di TsiShO shuln in Poyln, New York 1952-1954.

²⁴ Published workers' autobiographies, for instance: Solomon, Simon: Derinerungen fun der yidisher arbeter bavegung, New York 1952; Novikov, Yoel: Zikhroynes fun a Yidishn Arbeter, Tel Aviv 1967; Unpublished reminiscences are spread all over the Bund-Archives in New York and to a special account collected due to the YIVO's autobiographical contests. YIVO; New York, RG 102. Publication out this collection found the former Bundist: Pressman, Israel: Der durkhgegangener veg, Aroysgegebn durkh a grupe fraynd: New York 1950, more in: Cohen, Jocely/Soyer, Daniel (eds.): My Future is in America. Autobiographies of Eastern European Jewish Immigrants, New York 2006.

²⁵ This covered the whole span from poems to multivolumed books and mainly saw Bundism as an integral part of the broader Eastern European experience, for instance: Waiter, A./Einhorn, Dovid/Onoichi, Z. I.: Fun dor tsu dor. Fragmentn fun forsharbetn tsu der kharakteristik un zikhroynes [Musterverk fun der yidisher literatur, 59], Buenos Aires 1974; Trunk, Yehiel Y.: Poyln : Zikhroynes un bilder, 7 vols. , New York 1944-1953.

²⁶ Lately the translation of the first Yiddish volume of Poyln: Trunk, Yehiel Y.: My life within Jewish life in Poland, Sketches and Images, Toronto 2007.

²⁷ Tobias, Henry J.: Jewish Bund in Russia from Its Origins to 1905, Palo Alto, CA, 1972.

²⁸ See for instance: Bunzl, John: Klassenkampf in der Diaspora. Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Arbeiterbewegung, Wien 1975; Yago-Jung, Ilse E.: Die nationale Frage in der jüdischen Arbeiterbewegung in Rußland, Polen und Palästina bis 1929, Univ. Diss., Frankfurt am Main 1976; Minczeles, Henri: Histoire générale du BUND un mouvement révolutionnaire juif, Paris 1995; Laubstein, Israel: Bund. Historia del Movimiento Obrero Judío, Buenos Aires 1997 and countless articles.

²⁹ For a broader contextualization but with the same focus, see the classical studies: Levin, Nora: While Messiah Tarried. Jewish Socialist Movements, 1871 – 1917, New York 1977; Frankel, Jonathan: Prophecy and Politics. Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862 – 1917, Cambridge [et al.] 1981.

³⁰ Peled, Yoav: Class and Ethnicity in the Pale. The Political Economy of Jewish Workers' Nationalism in Late Imperial Russia, New York 1989.

³¹ For instance: Gelbard, Arye: Der jüdische Arbeiter-Bund Russlands im Revolutionsjahr 1917, Wien 1982; Lambroza, Shlomo: Jewish Self-Defense during the Russian Pogroms of 1903-1906, in: The Jewish Journal of Sociology, 22, 2 (1981), pp. 123-33.

³² Mishinsky, Moshe: Regional Factors in the Formation of the Jewish Labor Movement in Czarist Russia, in: YIVO Annual, 14 (1969), pp. 27-52.

³³ Initiating: Mendelsohn, Ezra: Class Struggle in the Pale. The Formative Years of the Jewish Workers' Movement in Tsarist Russia, Cambridge 1970, here p. 153.

³⁴ Jacobs, Jewish Politics, 2001, and Hensl, Jurgen/Tych, Feliks: Bund. 100 lat historii 1897-1998, Warsaw 2000.

³⁵ For a steadily updated list of publications from 1997 onwards, see: <http://www.bundism.net/bibliography>.

³⁶ Pickhan, Gertrud: "Gegen den Strom". Der Allgemeine Jüdische Arbeiterbund "Bund" in Polen 1918-1939, Stuttgart/München 2001.

³⁷ Jacobs, Jack: Bundist Counterculture in Interwar Poland, Syracuse 2009.

³⁸ Previously: Gechtman, Roni: "Yidisher Sotsialism": The Origin and Context of the Jewish Labor Bund's National Program, Univ. Diss., New York 2005.

³⁹ Blatman, Daniel: For Our Freedom And Yours. The Jewish Labour Bund in Poland 1939-1949, London/Portland, Or. 2003.

⁴⁰ Kuhn, Rick: The Jewish Social Democratic Party of Galicia and the Bund, in: Jacobs, Jewish Politics, 2001, pp. 133-154; Ibd.: Organising Yiddish speaking workers in pre World War I Galicia: the Jewish Social Democratic Party, in: Greenspoon, Leonard (ed.): Yiddish language & culture: then & now, Omaha 1998 pp. 37-63.

⁴¹ For instance: Marten-Finnis, Susanne: Translation as a Weapon for the Truth: The Bund's Policy of Multilingualism, 1902-1906, in: POLIN, 18 (2005), pp. 337-351; Ibd.: Outrage in Many Tongues. The Bund's Response to the Kishinev Pogrom, in: East European Jewish Affairs, 33, 1 (2003), pp. 60-66; Ibd.: Bundist journalism, 1897-1907 - instruction, exclusion, polemic. The relationship between leaders and followers in the light of Bundist literary activities, in: East European Jewish Affairs, 30, 1 (2000), pp. 39-59; Ibd.: The Bundist Press: A Study of Political Change and the Persistence of Anachronistic Language during the Russian Period, in: Jacobs, Jewish Politics, 2001, pp. 16-31.

⁴² Recently: Gorny, Converging Alternatives, 2006; Zimmerman, Joshua D.: Poles, Jews, and the Politics of Nationality. The Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Tsarist Russia, 1892-1914, Madison, Wisconsin 2004. But in many cases this remains an open field.

⁴³ For instance: Shtakser, Inna: Structure of feeling and radical identity among working-class Jewish youth during the 1905 revolution, Univ. Diss., University of Texas at Austin, August 2007; Levin, Vladimir: The Jewish Socialist Parties in Russia in the Period of Reaction, in: Hoffman, Stefani/Mendelsohn, Ezra (eds.): The Revolution of 1905 and Russia's Jews, Philadelphia 2008, pp. 111-127; Hickey, Michael C.: 'People with Pure Souls'. Jewish Youth Radicalism in Smolensk. 1900-14, in: Revolutionary Russia 20 (2007), 1, pp. 51-73; Budnickij, Oleg V.: Rossijskie evrei meždu krasnymi i belymi. 1917-1920, Moskva 2006.

⁴⁴ See: Blatman, Daniel: Women in the Jewish Labor Bund in Interwar Poland, in: Ofer, Dalia/Weitzman, Leonore J. (eds.): Women in the Holocaust, New Haven, London 1998, pp. 68-84; Pickhan, Gertrud: "Wo sind die Frauen?". Zur Diskussion um Weiblichkeit, Männlichkeit und Jüdischkeit im Allgemeinen Jüdischen Arbeiterbund ("Bund") in Polen, in: Gehmacher, Johanna/Harvey, Elisabeth/Kemlein, Sophia (eds.): Zwischen den Kriegen. Nationen, Nationalismen und Geschlechterverhältnisse in Mittel- und Osteuropa, 1918-1939, Osnabrück 2004, pp. 187-199; and: Jacobs, Jack: The Role of Women in the Bund, in: Hyman, Paula E. (ed): Jewish Women. A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia (CD-ROM), Philadelphia, PA 2006.

⁴⁵ Recently the ongoing doctoral projects by Silvia Hansman and Rebekka Denz are reappraising this important issue, see: Denz, Rebekka: Der "Froyenvinkl". Die Frauenrubrik in der bundischen Tageszeitung "Naye Folkstsaytung", in: PaRDeS. Zeitschrift der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien e.V., 14, (2008), pp. 96-124; and: Ibd.: Bundistinnen. Frauen im Allgemeinen Jüdischen Arbeiterbund ("Bund"): Dargestellt anhand der jiddischsprachigen Biographiensammlung "Doires Bundistn", [Pri h-Pardes, 5] Potsdam 2009; including an English summary: pp.124-136.

⁴⁶ A widely adapted model is the sectioning into four periods: The Russian period (1897-1917), the Polish (until 1939), the Bund during the Shoa and afterwards. This is closely bound to the legal status of the party's core institutions. By looking at other factors, like for instance modes of militancy, class-structures, external party-relations, inner-Jewish relations, generationality or Bundism abroad one could easily detect different lines and construct periods out of this.

⁴⁷ Michels, Tony: A fire in their hearts : Yiddish socialists in New York, Cambridge, MA 2005.

⁴⁸ For instance: Slucki, David: 'Theorizing doikeit: towards a history of the Melbourne Bund', in: Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal, 19, 2, (2008) pp. 259-268. On further projects, see the listed ongoing projects at <http://www.bundism.net/members>.

Historiography, the writing of history, especially the writing of history based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particular details from the authentic materials in those sources, and the synthesis of those details into a narrative that stands the test of critical examination. The term historiography also refers to the theory and history of historical writing. Modern historians aim to reconstruct a record of human activities and to achieve a more profound understanding of them. This conception of their task is quite recent, dating from the development in the late 18th an For a general survey, see Wolff, Frank, "Historiography on the General Jewish Labor Bund: Traditions, Tendencies and Expectations", Medaon, 4 (2009), http://www.medaon.de/pdf/M_Wolff-4-2009.pdf, p. (accessed 19 February 2010). 18. Bund Archives, New York, RG 1400, ME-18, #4; Cahan, Ab., "Kremer in amerike," in Arkadi. 54. Cited in Isaiah Trunk, "The Cultural Dimension of the American Jewish Labor Movement", YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Sciences, 16 (1976), p. 364. 55. The strike involved about 50,000 workers of nine locals officially affiliated with the New York Cloak, Suit and Skirt Makers' Joint Board. The ILGWU soon numbered over 50,000 members, more than 90 per cent of the trade.

Historiography on the General Jewish Labor Bund: Traditions, Tendencies and Expectations. May 2009. Wolff. Frank. Wolff, Frank. 2009. " Historiography on the General Jewish Labor Bund: Traditions, Tendencies and Expectations. " Medaon 4. www.medaon.de/pdf/M_Wolff-4-2009.pdf (accessed April 2012). The Jewish Labor Bund in Poland was destroyed during the Holocaust, and efforts to resurrect the shattered party on Polish soil were thwarted with the advent of communism in 1949. With several thousand bundists now dispersed to all corners of the globe, the International Jewish Labor Bund was established in 1947, the first time in the Bund's 50-year history that it had organized across geographic borders.