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Propaganda and Methods of Persuasion of Post-war Bund Circles on the Example of “The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin”

Propaganda i metody perswazji powojennych środowisk bundowskich na przykładzie „The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin”

Abstract

The main aim of the paper is to discuss the propaganda and persuasion techniques of the post-war Bund circles on the example of their English-language ‘The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin’. It was published in 1947–1953 by the New York based World Coordinating Committee of Bundist. The analysis of the periodical’s content will show that it was extremely difficult for its activists to come to terms with the loss of influence in the political world. Therefore, despite the implementation of activities aimed mainly at preserving the Bundists’ subconscious sense of their own identity, the bulletin was still dominated by political issues. In principle, it was not until 1950 that, in the face of the triumph of the Zionist ideas and the liquidation of the Bund’s structures in Poland, that the Committee’s message was marked by significant changes, which redefined the essence of the movement and gradually made it more of a social rather than a political organisation.

Streszczenie

Głównym celem artykułu jest omówienie technik propagandy i perswazji powojennych środowisk bundowskich na przykładzie ich anglojęzycznego biuletynu „The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin”. Wydawany był on w latach 1947-1953 przez funkcjonujący w Nowym Jorku Światowy Komitet Organizacyjny Bundu. Analiza treści czasopisma pozwoli wykazać, iż jego działaczom niezwykle

ciężko było pogodzić się z utratą przez ruch wpływów w świecie politycznym. Dlatego też, pomimo realizacji działań zmierzających głównie do zachowania w podświadomości bundowców poczucia ich własnej tożsamości, na łamach biuletynu wciąż przeważały treści dotyczące kwestii politycznych. Zasadniczo dopiero od roku 1950, w obliczu triumfu idei syjonistycznych oraz likwidacji struktur Bundu w Polsce, w przekazie Komitetu dostrzec można istotne zmiany, które na nowo zdefiniowały istotę ruchu i sprawiły, iż stopniowo stawał się on bardziej organizacją o charakterze społecznym, aniżeli politycznym.

Keywords: Bund, propaganda, persuasion, 'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin', political press

Słowa kluczowe: Bund, propaganda, perswazja, „The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin”, prasa polityczna

One of the Polish researchers of the history of the press, Jerzy Myśliński, wrote that 'the reconstruction of historical events takes place in the research process by means of numerous groups of sources, among which the press has a prominent place'¹. Although these words were formulated as far back as in the 1970s, they still seem to be applicable in practice. This also applies to the political press, most often associated or sympathetic to certain circles or groups. Its analysis allows us to learn not only about their programs or positions towards specific problems, but also about the propaganda efforts that the editors of these periodicals used to convince the widest possible circles of society that they were right. Sometimes, however, their announcements were addressed to quite a small group of readers. A perfect example of this is the Bund, i.e. Jewish socialist organization, which after World War II was no longer able to function as a separate political entity. Therefore, the bulletins published by the Bundists' circles served primarily the purpose of maintaining a sense of distinctiveness among the members of the organisation, as well as the tradition of these circles itself.

It should be noted that the functioning of the Bund press after World War II is directly related to the process of shaping the memory of the history of the organization. As Frank Wolff pointed out, thanks to the existence of the Bundist publishing house and the journal 'Unzer Tsayt', prominent authors and historians associated with the Bund could publish 'detailed descriptions of

¹J. Myśliński, *Uwagi o prasie polskiej przelomu XIX i XX w. jako źródle historycznym*, „Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego” 1974, v. 14, p.11.

Bundist history' at that time². However, the beginnings of a more serious academic reflection on the history and development of the Bund can be dated only to the 1970s. At that time, researchers focused in particular on the beginnings of the Bund in Poland and the Russian Empire³. In the following decades, the research became more and more detailed and, apart from the political perspective, it also began to take into account cultural factors, as exemplified, e.g., by the book by Gertrud Pickhan. It was published in 2001 and was devoted to the history of the Bund in Poland in the interwar period⁴. In turn, in recent years many works on the post-war history of the organization and the Bundists have also been published. It is worth mentioning that the authors of these publications often refer to the Bund press, making it one of the basic sources of their research. This tendency can be noticed in both English⁵ and Polish-language works⁶.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the content of the periodical, 'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin', published in the post-war period by the then structures of the Bund, which was a kind of a phenomenon in relation to both the Bund press and periodicals of other political and social organisations of that period. This has already been proven by the fact that over five years of its existence only 29 volumes of the bulletin were probably published⁷. This analysis will allow to identify the main methods of political agitation and persuasion, which were

² Cf. F. Wolff, *Historiography on the General Jewish Labor Bund: Traditions, Tendencies and Expectations*, „Medaon” 2009, v. 4, p. 4. These authors included figures such as Emanuel Nowogrodski, former secretary of the Bund Central Committee in Warsaw, or Jacob Sholem Hertz, considered one of the most important historians of the organization.

³ Cf., e.g., H.J. Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia from Its Origins to 1905*, Stanford 1972; J. Bunzl, *Klassenkampf in der Diaspora: Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Arbeiterbewegung*, Wien 1975; N. Levin, *While Messiah Tarried: Jewish Socialist Movements, 1871-1917*, New York 1977.

⁴ G. Pickhan, *'Gegen den Strom': Der Allgemeine Jüdische Arbeiterbund 'Bund' in Polen 1918-1939*, Stuttgart-München 2001.

⁵ Cf., e.g., D. Slucki, *The International Jewish Labor Bund After 1945. Toward a Global History*, New Brunswick-New Jersey-London 2012.

⁶ Cf., e.g., M. Rusiniak-Karwat, *Nowe życie na zgliszczach. Bund w Polsce w latach 1944-1949*, Warszawa 2016.

⁷ In practice, one bulletin volume was often published as a double or triple issue, which would mean that a total of 60 issues of 'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin' were published. It was a deliberate effort by publishers who wanted to preserve the illusion of regular distribution of the magazine. The use of such numbering, however, did not translate to size of the periodical, thus, in this paper, only volumes have been taken as a measure, and the term 'issues' is used only for single-numbered volumes.

then used by the Bundists against other members of the Jewish Diaspora. It will also make it possible to answer questions about the causes of their defeat in this sphere, as well as about the extent to which it was determined by external factors, such as the growing popularity of Zionist ideas, and the extent to which the mistakes made by the Bundists in their propaganda activities.

Circumstances of Establishment and Characteristics of the Bulletin

With the end of the World War II, members of the Bund circles were forced to confront the new political situation. The Representation, acting in the US, and until 1945 was the main body controlling the interests of the Bund in the West, which was expressed especially through its contact with the Government of the Republic of Poland in exile in London, lost its importance. The reason for this state of affairs was, in particular, the gradual revival of the old party structures on Polish soil. The possible cooperation with a collegiate body functioning in the West may have attracted additional repressions from the communist regime that was strengthening its power. Meanwhile, a significant part of the Bund's emigration circles, in turn, expressed strong scepticism about the possibility of free party activity under communist rule. This group was headed by Emanuel Szerer, Emanuel Nowogrodzki and Shloime Mendelsohn⁸. Thanks to their efforts, in May 1947, the first World Conference of the Bund took place in Brussels. It resulted in the decision of the Bundists to focus their activities within social and cultural spheres.

In order to implement this concept effectively, it was necessary to create appropriate tools to popularise the activity of the members of the organisation, and, at the same time, to create a space for discussion on the shape of the contemporary Bund and a common viewpoint on current events in international politics. The Yiddish emigration press published so far could not, of course and among others, fulfil such functions due to the limited knowledge of Yiddish in the circles of American Jews. The English language bulletin, published by the World Coordinating Committee of Bundist in New York between October 1947 and early 1953, was to be the solution to this problem. Due to the publication language, as seen by the founders, it was supposed to be a compliment to other periodicals published by the post-war Bundists' circles in Yiddish, such as 'Unzer Tsayt' or 'Unzer Shtime'⁹.

⁸ D. Blatman, *For our freedom and yours. The Jewish Labour Bund in Poland 1939-1949*, trans. into English by N. Greenwood, London-Portland 2003, p. 196.

⁹ D. Slucki, op. cit., p. 35.

Initially, 'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin' was supposed to be published as a monthly, but in fact it remained so only in the periods from February to July 1948 and from October 1948 to March 1949. This means that for the major period of its existence the periodical was published irregularly, e.g. in the form of double or triple volumes, and, at times, volumes that covered much longer periods¹⁰. It should be noted, however, that this did not translate into the size of the periodical. From the very beginning it consisted of eight pages. The only exceptions to this rule were two volumes from 1950 and 1951. The first one¹¹ was covered in twelve pages, and in vast majority dedicated to the First Conference of Bund Organizations and Groups in the United States and Canada, while the second one¹² was a twenty-four-page special edition focusing on the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the murder of two prominent Bund activists, Victor Alter and Henryk Erlich. The introduction of similar restrictions could probably have been largely due to quite considerable costs, which were further increased by the fact that the bulletin was free. This made its appearance entirely dependent on voluntary material support from the readers. The difficult financial situation of the bulletin, as well as of the Bundists themselves, is evidenced by the fact that on three occasions — twice in 1949 and once in 1951 — the bulletin published requests to the supporters of the movement for additional material support for the periodical in order to 'ensure its continued existence'¹³.

Interestingly, although the last volume of the bulletin was probably published in 1953, many years later members of the World Coordinating Committee assured of its continued distribution. On the one hand, this is evidenced by the mention of this subject in the 1958 Bund memorial book¹⁴ and, on the other hand, the assurances of the Bundists themselves, e.g. from 1960, when they stated that the bulletin was regularly published in a circulation of about six thousand copies¹⁵. This information was also referred to in David Slucki's

¹⁰ The latter include two 1950-51 volumes, covering, respectively, six- and five-month periods (cf. "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. III, nos. 7-12, July-December 1950; v. IV, nos. 6-10, June-October 1951).

¹¹ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. III, nos. 7-12, July-December 1950.

¹² "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. IV, nos. 11-12, November-December 1951.

¹³ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. II, nos. 18-19, June-July 1949, p. 2; v. II, nos. 20-21, August-September 1949, p. 4; v. IV, nos. 6-10, June-October 1951, p. 8.

¹⁴ Cf. *Jewish Labor Bund 1897-1957*, New York 1958.

¹⁵ *Yearbook of the International Socialist Labour Movement*, ed. by J. Braunthal, v. 2, London 1960, p. 267.

book, rightly considering it unlikely. Moreover, even if we consider the data provided by the Bund activists to be true, we cannot fail to notice how marginal the bulletin may have played a role in the lives of American Jewish communities. Given that the announcements were addressed, as was clearly indicated by the editors in the first issue of the periodical, to more than five million Jews in the United States, a circulation of six thousand copies may be considered far from sufficient. In such a case, this would mean that the Committee's message reached, at best, about 0.12% of the target audience. Therefore, by taking a critical approach to the statements of the Bundists of the time, it may be stated with certainty that the actual circle of readers of the bulletin was much smaller even in the initial phase of its publication.

The above facts make the already superficial analysis of one of the press organs of the post-war Bund, which undoubtedly was 'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin', how difficult a position it had been that this environment found itself in after 1945. The change of direction of the activities carried out so far, financial problems, as well as a small group of target audience, forced the leaders of the organisation to adopt appropriate agitation tactics, which would, in fact, allow its members not to start a more serious fight against political opponents, but to survive in new conditions and maintain the continuity of pre-war Bund traditions. This situation had inevitably influenced the shape of the propaganda created by the members of the World Coordinating Committee, which, as further considerations will show, underwent further transformations over the years.

Aims of Post-War Bund Propaganda

Although the main challenges faced by the post-war Bund propaganda have already been signalled in this article, it seems worthwhile to take a closer look at this issue. Without answering the question about the broadcaster's objectives, it is not possible to assess the effectiveness of the persuasive techniques used by the broadcaster. The issues related to the continuity of tradition have already been mentioned. In the meantime, Daniel Blatman decided that one of the most important goals of the members of the post-war Bund was to reconcile its activities with the formation of a new Jewish identity after the experience of the Holocaust¹⁶. Slucki, in turn, stated that the main task of the organization's activists was to rebuild the post-war party structures, but in a manner adapted

¹⁶ Cf. D. Blatman, *op. cit.*

to the conditions of emigration¹⁷. All of these opinions seem to be correct and have their justification in the actions that the Bundists had taken over the years. This proves that the goals of their environment after 1945 were constantly being reviewed.

The change in tactics adopted by the World Coordinating Committee is also demonstrated by the analysis of individual volumes of 'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin'. It is impossible not to notice that, despite the decision of the activists in 1947 to focus on socio-cultural activities, the Bundists at the time still perceived themselves as an organization that was still able to play a function of political importance to the Jewish population. This is evidenced by the text of the Committee's resolution published in the first issue of the bulletin. Its excerpts clearly indicate a sense of mission that had been established in its members' consciousness.

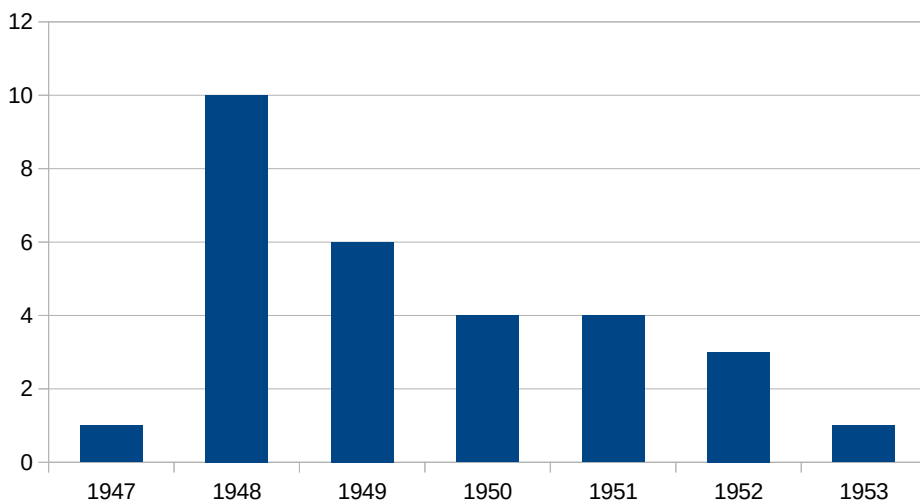
*Moreover, it must be taken into account that the BUND represents a distinct trend within the Jewish community—one which links up the future of the Jewish people with that of Democracy and Socialism in the countries of Jewish residence. This trend must not be kept out from the International Socialist bodies if one-sided Jewish representation is to be avoided. [...]*¹⁸

The quoted excerpt proves that as late as at the end of 1947, the future of the Bund was identified not only with local activities, but also with activities within international socialist organisations. For this to be fully possible, the Bundists had to work with them on a regular basis, forcing them to engage in issues directly related to politics. This also naturally influenced the shape of the bulletin. The then political situation and related events clearly had an impact on the frequency of the subsequent issues at least as much as, for example, financial factors. This may be illustrated by means of an appropriate chart.

¹⁷ D. Slucki, op. cit.

¹⁸ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. I, no. 1, October 1947, p. 8.

Chart 1
Number of 'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin' volumes
in subsequent years of the periodical's existence



Source: own elaboration

As evidenced by the above data, individual issues of the bulletin were published with the highest frequency in 1948-1949. It is not difficult to guess that the main reason for this was the proclamation of Israel's independence on 14 May 1948 and the outbreak of the First Arab-Israeli War, which took place in 1948-1949. These events provided an excellent opportunity for representatives of the Bundists' communities to manifest their own position on the Jewish question, and at the same time to criticize the actions of their main political opponents, the Zionists. In the following years, however, there was a sharp decline in the number of volumes, which had certainly been due to the recognition of the independence of the State of Israel by the major powers on the international scene. This meant a huge victory for the Zionist movement, and also a defeat for the Jewish communities standing in opposition to them. Moreover, this decline may also be explained by the situation of the Bundists in Poland, especially by the actions of the communist authorities, which ultimately led to the liquidation of their structures in early 1949. Although the divisions between Polish and emigration activists were already very deep at that time, the fall of the Bund in Poland was presented in the bulletin as the end of a certain epoch and an unimaginable loss for the entire Bund community. When mentioning

the post-war activity of the Bundists on Polish soil, it is worth mentioning that they also showed a clear interest in political issues, trying to continue their pre-war cooperation with the Polish Socialist Party or to cooperate with the Polish Workers' Party¹⁹.

After 1949 a change in the Committee's rhetoric can be observed. Political threads continued to occupy an important place in the message of the Bundists, which seems natural given their history and strong attachment to socialist ideology. However, they did not determine the organization's activities as much as before. This can be demonstrated by analysing the cover articles of the bulletin.

Table 1.
Topics of cover articles of "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin"

Thematic scope	Number of cover articles on given topics in each time period					
	1947–1949 (n=17)		1950–1953 (n=12)		Total (n=29)	
	Absolute value	Percentage	Absolute value	Percentage	Absolute value	Percentage
The State of Israel	6	35%	1	8%	7	24%
US policy	1	6%	3 ¹	25%	4	14%
Activities of communists	1	6%	2	17%	3	10%
Anniversary celebrations	4	23.5%	2	17%	6	21%
Obituaries and memorial articles	1	6%	1	8%	2	7%
Other	4	23.5%	3	25%	7	24%

Source: own elaboration

¹⁹ M. Rusiniak-Karwat, op. cit.

As it can be seen from the data presented in the table, anti-Zionist motifs, related primarily to the question of the Jewish state creation, had been displayed on the covers of the bulletin, especially until 1949. In subsequent years, this happened only once. This illustrates the change that was then taking place in the agitation strategy implemented by the Bund. In addition to the question of official recognition of Israel in the international arena, this was also due to the clear Zionist sympathies that the American Jewish community at the time was manifesting. This was undoubtedly the result of the intensive work of the Zionists and the lobby they led, and at the same time it was also the result of the compassionate public opinion towards Jews after the Holocaust²⁰ (Podemska 2018). According to Elmo Roper's research from 1945, only one in ten American citizens of Jewish origin expressed their opposition to the existence of Israel²¹. Therefore, the excessive exposure of anti-Zionist criticism in the message used could have been extremely risky for the Bundists in the United States and even led to their ostracism within the local Jewish community.

However, this does not mean, of course, that the Bund activists gave up criticism of the State of Israel and its politicians. On the contrary. It continued to appear on the following pages of the magazine. Nevertheless, it was no longer so intensified, and its application was rather indicative of the need to emphasise the difference between the Bund activists and the Zionists. As a result, the previously mentioned willingness to survive in the new conditions can be considered as the main objective of the propaganda carried out by the World Coordinating Committee. However, one has to pay attention to the time of this change. As it has already been signalled, the changes in the strategy of the post-war Bund were decided during the conference in Brussels. In the meantime, the Bundists used an intensified political message as late as in 1949. This may have been, on the one hand, the result of the world political events of the time and the need to take a common position towards them, but on the other hand, it may have been a sign of a kind of indecision and doubts about the strategy adopted.

There have been significant changes in this field in the second phase of the bulletin's existence. Particularly noteworthy is the increase in the exhibition of articles on American politics and communist expansion. For example, the bul-

²⁰ J. Podemska, *Amerykańska krucjata. USA wobec powstania Państwa Izrael*, Warszawa 2018.

²¹ *A Survey of American Jewish Opinion on a Jewish State in Palestine*, ed. by E. Roper, New York 1945, pp. 1-10.

letin's comments on the Korean War²², as well as articles on the 1952 election campaign and the 1952 US presidential election.

Because of the leading role of the United States in world affairs, because of America's vast potential for good or evil in the contemporary political scene around the globe, our presidential elections are no longer only a domestic matter. The eyes of the world will watch the presidential nominations, will follow with intense concern the platforms and pledges of both parties and their candidates, and they will focus on the people of America as they enter the voting booths²³.

Similar publications showed that, over time, the Bund activists began to show a growing interest in problems that were close to the citizens of the countries they inhabited. Particularly noteworthy is the use in texts of possessive pronouns such as 'our', which merely underlined the identification of the Bundists with the countries they lived in, as well as their authorities. This would confirm Slucki's thesis that emigration structures of activists living in Western countries gradually integrated into the local communities and became part of them.

The publications informing about cultural events organised by these circles are also an additional argument confirming the validity of this assessment. Many of them were related to the activities of the Institute for Jewish Research (or YIVO — Yiddish Scientific Institute), that has been located in New York since 1940. Research held by its scientific employees on Yiddish speech was an excellent opportunity for the Bundists to promote this language, which was also an integral part of their identity. They have signalled this on numerous occasions in the bulletin, as exemplified by the extensive accounts of the 1948 World Congress for Yiddish Culture²⁴. Moreover, the 'From our movement' section was certainly extremely useful in promoting the cultural events of the Bund. Initially, it appeared quite sporadically and did not become an integral part of the bulletin until mid-1949. It was usually located in the last pages of the periodical and contained information on the activities undertaken by the organisation's activists in various countries of the world, ranging from Western Europe and the United States to South American countries such as Brazil and Argentina. Most often this section consisted of short, several-sentence reports from meetings, building local structures or publishing activities. From

²² "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. III, nos. 7-12, July-December 1950, pp. 1-2.

²³ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. V, nos. 15-17, March-April-May 1952, pp.1,7.

²⁴ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. I, no. 10, October 1948, pp. 2-3.

the perspective of the members of the Committee, they could — contrary to appearances — be important, because this was the way making it possible to sustain the morale of the other activists by showing them the activity of the movement in other countries. This made the Bund a fully functioning organization in their eyes.

Bund Propaganda Mechanisms

Taking into account the facts presented so far, especially the question of two separate periods in the history of the post-war Bund, it should be pointed out that they clearly influenced the means of persuasion used by these circles. In this case, these measures are understood to mean all the actions taken in order to help the Bundists, on the one hand, to create an image that is appropriate in the eyes of potential image recipients and, on the other hand, to try to convince them to their reasons. Many of them were based on strategies adopted by this environment before World War II. It was only later, in the face of changing political and social conditions, that gradual changes were sought to the message created by Committee members.

In addressing the question of the self-image created by the Bund activists, it may be noted right from the start that since the beginning of their post-war activities they had tried to present the environment they represented as well organized. This is evidenced by an editorial note in the first issue of the bulletin. Describing the circumstances of the periodical's creation, its editors aimed to create a peculiar atmosphere of sublimity, writing that this is also the first time that Bund and its structures 'appear before the English-speaking world'²⁵. This hyperbolisation of one's own actions is one of the most characteristic elements of Bund's propaganda and can be seen in almost all the periodicals published by Bundists in the post-war period. An example of this can be found in statements regarding the Korean War published in 'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin'. They were adopted during the First Conference of Bund Organizations and Groups in the United States and Canada, held in New York from 29 September to 1 October 1950. In their appeals published at that time, activists demanded that Western democracies give all possible support to 'Asian nations' in their fight for freedom.

²⁵ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. I, no. 1, October 1947, p. 1.

The Conference is convinced that in order to discourage acts of brutal aggression in the future, acts which may lead to the greatest catastrophe in the history of mankind—a third world war—it is not only necessary to reinforce the democratic camp in general and to strengthen the authority of the United Nations [...]²⁶.

Similar phrases and calls were repeatedly published in bulletin pages and – although they seemed inadequate to the political position of the Bund at the time – they were completely natural. It should be remembered that in an attempt to create an alternative to the Zionist organizations that were very popular after the war, the Bundists were forced to create their image among the local Jewish community based on the appearance of organizational efficiency and at least partially preserved influence in the political and social spheres. In order to maintain them, they repeatedly used the support of foreign and often local socialist activists.

All information about cooperation with other environments appeared in ‘The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin’ in different contexts. Of course, every time they reported on the events, the editors of the periodical tried to emphasize the initiatives of their co-workers, which, according to the content of the publication, particularly concerned aspects close to Jewish circles, such as the problem of anti-Semitism or compensation for war victims. These activities were most often presented in articles on international meetings among socialist activists, joint conferences, as well as initiatives taken together.

Table 2.

Number of articles on the cooperation of the Bund with other environments

Form of cooperation	Number of articles (n=41)	Percentage
Activities within the structures of international socialist organisations	14	34%
Cooperation with US organizations and political parties	12	29%
Relations with socialist and social democratic organisations in the world	15	37%

Source: own elaboration

²⁶“The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin”, v. III, nos. 7-12, July-December 1950, pp. 5-6.

The data in the table show that all forms of cooperation with other organisations and environments were almost equally exposed in the message of the Bund. This means that each of them had its own application in terms of the Committee's propaganda. In the case of the activities of the Bundists in international structures, the narrative was practically limited to two organisms, which were the Committee of International Socialist Conferences, the COMISCO for short, in 1947–1951, and the Socialist International, which was reborn after 1951²⁷. Membership in similar organisations created a limited platform for the Bund activists to present their programme on the international forum, which in turn could be seen by their supporters as a substitute for the activities they carried out as a pre-war political party. What is more, after the war, the Bundists also tried to maintain friendly relations with individual groups. These included, in particular, the British Labour Party, as evidenced by correspondence between activists, which was also published several times in the bulletin²⁸. In addition to establishing foreign contacts, the Committee also took care to attract allies in the United States, which enabled it to take action on the ground. Cooperation with, among others, the Socialist Party of America or trade unions, such as the Knitgoods Workers' Union, resulted in numerous joint activities, which were then widely commented on by the editors of the bulletin. A perfect example of this can be, for example, the Labour Day in 1948, which was celebrated jointly by all these circles²⁹.

In addition to interacting with other organisms and promoting their current activities, the Bundists also attempted to create their own expert group. They were to be created both by people who could unite existing members and sympathizers around them, as well as those who could inspire potential new activists with their activities and examples. Robert Cialdini wrote about this technique, described in literature as the 'principle of authority', who placed it, in his opinion, among the six most important means of persuasion. It boils down, as the name suggests, to the assumption that people are much more obedient to people they consider to be experts in a given field³⁰. In the case of the post-war Bund, one can distinguish both educated people, enjoying widespread respect

²⁷ Cf. E. Costa, *The Labour Party, Denis Healey and the International Socialist Movement. Rebuilding the Socialist International During the Cold War, 1945–1951*, Cham 2018.

²⁸ Cf., e.g., "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. V, no. 13-14, January-February 1952, p. 7.

²⁹ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. I, no. 6, June 1948, pp. 7-8.

³⁰ R. B. Cialdini, *Influence. The Psychology of Persuasion*, Pymble-Toronto-Auckland 2009, pp. 157-204.

for their activities to date, and the heroes of the movement, whose myth was constantly being built or maintained in the Bund environment.

Among the former, apart from the official leaders of Bund circles, such as Szerer, also appearing in the bulletin as 'Scherer', or Nowogrodzki, most frequently appearing in the texts as 'Nowogrudski', one can mention Liebmann Hersch. He was a professor of demography at the University of Geneva, who was associated with the Bund already as a high school student. However, he gained real recognition during the mid-war period, when he published a number of works on the issue of migration of European Jews and their social situation³¹. The bulletin included translations of his Yiddish papers on Israel and the situation in the Middle East³². Another example of the use of authority in post-war Bund agitation is the person of Ben-Zion Hoffman (Zivion). He became particularly famous as a respected journalist of Jewish left-wing circles, who during his career has been associated with such periodicals as, for example, 'The Forward'. Importantly, in the transmission of both the Bulletin and other journals published by the Committee, an important role was played by the scientific titles held by these activists, which were sought at all costs to be highlighted in the headline texts as well as the articles themselves.

The authority of deceased activists was equally often invoked. Their death, or the anniversaries of their death, provided an excellent opportunity to remind them of their activities, their contribution to the movement or publications that still raise issues of importance to the Bund activists. However, it seems that the presence of the mentioned characters in the message and their selection was quite subjective and reflected not only the propaganda value of their actions but also the personal sympathies of the Committee members.

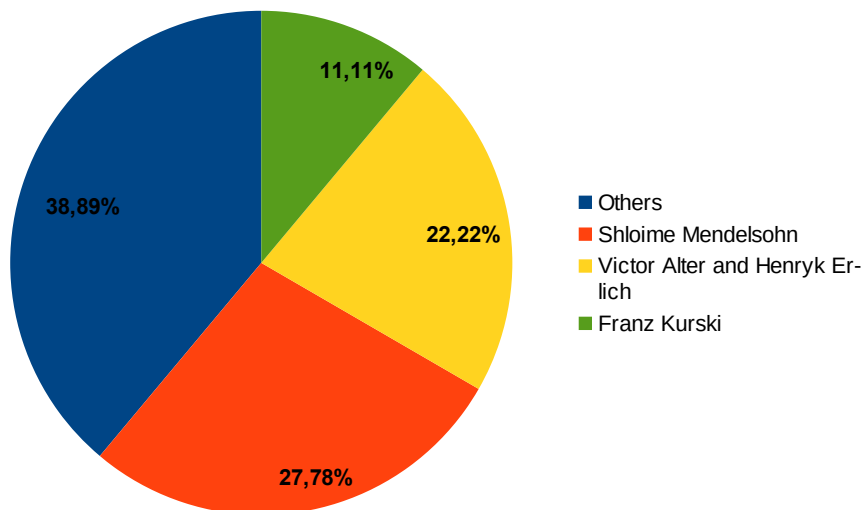
The diagram (see Chart 2) clearly shows that the profiles of only four deceased Bund activists appeared on the pages of the bulletin more than once. These were Shloime Mendelsohn, Victor Alter, Henryk Erlich, and Franz Kurski. In the case of Kurski, who was mentioned on the pages of the magazine twice, this was in fact decided by a coincidence, since the information about his death on 17 January 1950 reached the editorial office just before the closure of the next issue. Therefore, readers were then given only a brief mention of the subject, and its full form was only mentioned in the next double volume³³. However, it was completely different with Mendelsohn and Alter and Erlich, whom the

³¹ Cf., e.g., L. Hersch, *Syjonizm i tragedia palestyńska*, Kraków 1930.

³² Cf., e.g., "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. III, no. 7-12, July-December 1950, pp. 2-3.

³³ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. III, no. 3-4, March-April 1950, pp. 3-4.

Chart 2.
Frequency of obituaries and articles devoted to the deceased Bundists in
'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin' (n=18)



Source: own elaboration

Committee created as the heroes of the Bund during the war period. The former, as a close associate of the other Bundist activists in exile, was actively involved in building the organization's structures in the United States. However, another reason why he was to serve as a model for the next generation of Bundists was his dedication to socialist ideology. This is particularly indicated by a personal profile published after his death in the bulletin under the suggestive title 'Life and Death of a Socialist'³⁴. In it, the author referred to the words spoken by Mendelsohn himself: 'The moment I realized that the Jews could not be made free but freeing the world, I became a Socialist'. This was perfectly connected with the slogans proclaimed by the Bund activists, according to which only the victory of socialism can bring true freedom to the Jewish people. Alter and Erlich also played a similar role in the message of the Bundists. As leading representatives of the pre-war Bund community, they were murdered by the Soviets during the war on charges of spying for Germany³⁵. This way, they be-

³⁴ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. I, no. 3, March 1948, pp. 3-5.

³⁵ H. Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania. Chronicles from the Vilna*, ed. by B. Harshav, trans. into English by B. Harshav, New Haven-London 2002, p. 43.

came – in the narrative of the Committee and other activists – peculiar martyrs in the struggle for ideals and their own vision of the future of the Jewish people.

In the light of the above considerations, it can therefore be noted that the personal profile, being a form of press article, had acquired a special significance in the press of the post-war Bund. With its help, the Bundists tried to create their own canon of heroes who were able to fight against the Nazi occupier during the war and at the same time did not yield to Zionist propaganda. Their cult was inevitably connected with regular celebrations of the anniversaries of, among others, the murder of Erlich and Alter or the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943³⁶. It seems, however, that the process was not free from personal prejudice of Committee members. This is indicated by the example of Szmul Zygielbojm, who committed suicide in 1943 in protest against the Allies' passivity to German crimes against Jews. Although this story seems to have great propaganda potential, in 'The Jewish Bund Bulletin' his personal profile was not actually exposed. If the sacrifice he had made was mentioned at all, it was most often done on the occasion of articles on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, limiting these references to a maximum of two sentences³⁷. Most probably, this marginalisation of Zygielbojm may have resulted from the conflict that arose during the war between him and the Bund authorities. After he got to the West, he started talks with the Government of the Republic of Poland in exile in London, without having been authorised to do so by other party activists. Eventually, in 1942, he became a member of the National Council, which was an advisory body to the London government, although the Bund communities initially hoped that Szerer would become a member. It is possible that this dispute translated into a later attitude of the organisation's activists towards Zygielbojm and thus led to his merits being deliberately ignored in the bulletin.

Another strategy pursued by the post-war Bund activists was to make regular attempts to discredit the actions of Zionists and Israeli politicians. Essentially, it can be regarded as a continuation of the Bund rhetoric to date, in which they presented the methods of Jewish underground organizations, often based on terror, as characteristic of all Zionists. In the initial phase of the bulletin's operation, they were the ones that the attention of bulletin's editors was focused. The periodical featured, among other things, an extensive account of the situation in Israel after the assassination of a UN mediator, Folke Bernadotte, by

³⁶ Cf., e.g., "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. IV, nos. 1-2, January-February 1951; v. VI, nos. 25-27, January-March 1953.

³⁷ Cf., e.g., "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. VI, nos. 25-27, January-March 1953, pp. 1, 3.

Lehi fighters in September 1948. What is important, the name of the perpetrators' organization was not mentioned. Instead, the pejorative term 'Stern Gang' was used to refer to them, which came from the name of the group's founder³⁸. It is impossible not to notice that the recall of similar events, which was not concealed by the Bundists themselves, proved a lack of willingness for dialogue on the part of the Zionists, and at the same time their efforts to deepen the conflict with the Arabs.

However, in 'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin' there were also allegations against specific Israeli politicians. One of them was Menachem Begin, who in 1944–1948 headed another Jewish armed organization, Irgun. His activity was presented by the editorial team of the bulletin as follows:

*Menachem Begin is the chieftain of Irgun Zvai Leumi, the fascist Jewish terrorist organization in Palestine responsible for many atrocities and murders committed before the establishment of the State of Israel on May 15, 1948. [...] Menachem Begin is responsible for the demolition of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem and the casualties caused by this terrorist act*³⁹.

As it can be seen, the publication does not lack references to acts of violence that took place with Begin's knowledge and consent, such as the above-mentioned attack on the King David Hotel in July 1946 or the massacre of the Arab village of Deir Yassin in April 1948, cited later in the text. This way, attempts were made to use the recent activities of representatives of the then elite of Israel in Zionist underground organizations to show them as criminals with fascist sympathies, which, especially in the post-war period, could be a very serious charge in Jewish circles. Moreover, evidence of the history of the Arab refugees who were forced to leave their former places of residence as a result of the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War was presented in support of the project. The attitude of the government of the State of Israel was attempted by the Bund to even compare to the deportation of the Jewish population from the war period⁴⁰. Such a radical presentation of the image of the young Jewish state was probably due to the need to provoke a discussion among American Jews, and thus to draw attention to the Bund itself and its rhetoric. However, for the reasons already set out in this paper, this was possible only to a limited extent.

³⁸ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. I, no. 10, October 1948, pp. 1-2.

³⁹ "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. I, no. 12, December 1948, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰ Cf., e.g., "The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin", v. I, nos. 8-9, August-September 1948, p. 4.

Final Remarks

As a result of World War II and the progressive marginalisation of the movement as an active political organisation, Bund activists were forced to change their previous message, which is perfectly illustrated by the articles published in 'The Jewish Labor Bund Bulletin'. As the analysis of the bulletin's content shows, in the face of the defeat in competition with the Zionists, over the years, the Bundists began to focus more and more on their own local communities. Any polemics, comments on current political events and criticism of traditional opponents of the Bund circles served rather the purpose of keeping alive the memory of the activists' past achievements. In the post-war conditions, the main objective of the World Coordinating Committee of the Bund became the 'upbringing' of a new generation of the organization's members who would ensure its survival. Therefore, it turned out to be extremely important for the message of the Bund to emphasize the achievements of the movement's heroes, or even, as in the case of Alter and Erlich, the sacrifice they had to make in the struggle for the ideals of the Bund and socialist ideology. However, the Committee's and the other Bund activists' propaganda could not have produced too big results. This was due to both the political trends of the time and the financial possibilities of the movement. Personal conflicts between members of the organization were also significant. As a result, Bund managed to survive, but never again was a real political alternative to Zionist movements.

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