

Anarchism, Jews, relief—and photography?

Behind the lens and behind the scenes, 1892-1946

Anarchism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Bill Fishman demonstrated, must be taken seriously as a secular movement noteworthy for its embrace of the Jewish working class.¹ Immediately before the outbreak of the Great War, Fishman argued, "the Anarchists were the most dynamic element in [London's] East End political life. By the 1920s they were already an anachronism, shadowy ghosts of another era."² Individual anarchists and anarchism as a general outlook have long been shunned for obliviousness to practicalities, a willingness to use violent means, and disrespect of social conventions, especially against private property, bourgeois respectability, and organized religion. I will argue that Jewish anarchist sympathies were not dormant while the movement was increasingly marginalized and under siege—despite being judged a "failure" in London's East End³ in the interwar years and elsewhere up through the 1950s.

The largest share of scholarly attention to anarchism, following the Russian Revolution, is in the context of the Spanish Civil War (1936-9), which ended in disaster for anarchists and anti-fascists overall.⁴ In addition to anarchist fervor for that much-mythologized conflict, the attraction of, and mutual support afforded to anarchists by Jews from 1918 to 1946 can partly be attributed to the veneration of their leaders of the past as well as the movement's remaining stalwarts. In certain respects this chapter is consistent with the recent history of Jewish involvement in the Spanish Civil War by Gerben Zaagsma, which "analyses the symbolic meaning of the participation of Jewish volunteers and the Botwin Company both during and after the civil war." Zaagsma situates this "in the broader context of Jewish involvement in the left and Jewish/non-Jewish relations in the communist movement and beyond." He explores "representations of Jewish volunteers in the Parisian Yiddish press (both communist and non-communist)" and "the various ways in which Jewish volunteers and the Botwin Company have been commemorated after WWII, tracing how discourses about Jewish volunteers became decisively shaped by post-Holocaust debates on Jewish

responses to fascism and Nazism, and discusses claims that Jewish volunteers can be seen as 'the first Jews to resist Hitler with arms.'⁵ This chapter may be read as a complement to Zaagsma's excellent study.

Almost invariably seen as more ethical and less prone to egotism than other politicians, anarchist luminaries, among their faithful, were important for the substance of their speech and actions as well as their symbolic value. The figures to be considered here are include Peter Kropotkin, Erich Mühsam, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and in a supporting role, the lesser known Modest Stein. The community of anarchists, world-wide, rallied around images of their leaders celebrated in photographic portraits. In this regard they were similar to many other movements, across the political spectrum, which availed themselves of the most recent technologies to reproduce and disseminate texts and images. Among the key publications that comprised a common visual core for Jewish anarchists were Kropotkin's autobiography, in Yiddish, *Kopotkins lebens-behsraybung* (1904);⁶ Alexander Berkman's *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*;⁷ a volume documenting the persecution of anarchists in the Soviet Union from 1919 to 1939, *The Guillotine at Work: Twenty Years of Terror in Russia (Data and Documents)* by G.P. Maximoff (1940);⁸ and a glossy pamphlet, the *Alexander Berkman Aid Fund, 25th Anniversary: Campaign for Political Refugees* (1946).⁹ Although it is crucial to talk about abstract ideas in relation to anarchism,¹⁰ historians may wish, following Zaagsma, to revisit the myths and symbols of anarchism that were inextricably tied to its functions. In this study I also will look beyond anarchist thought and public endeavors and discuss how essential funds for the cause were raised, which enabled the production of a stream of diverse, creative publications—even after anarchism was presumed moribund.

In this latter respect Bill Fishman was a pioneer.¹¹ He was interested in what made political movements tick. "It is curious", he wrote in *East End Jewish Radicals*, that selected members of the *Arbeter FrainTERS* Libertarians "could reconcile their anarchism with entrepreneurship." These were, after all, the good souls who facilitated the staffing of offices and the production of publications. "(Rudolf) Rocker's most devoted comrade Lief owned one of the fine Victorian houses in Bancroft Road, and later made a fortune by patenting a gyroscopic toy."¹² Although we

are left to question their degree of "devotion" compared to that of Lief, Fishman also mentions "Silberman", "a handbag manufacturer", and Freedman, "a successful bespoke tailor who chose to live in a more affluent area in Bow"¹³ First names are not supplied for these men, and they are not listed in the book's index. Fishman insinuates, however, that Lief substantially helped Rocker, financially. Of course in order to wrest control over publishing in the East End, as the anarchists so famously did in the early twentieth century, it was crucial to have funds at their disposal. One of the objectives in this chapter is to show that photography and photographers played an out-sized role in this regard. Although it remains difficult to prove conclusively, it seems that photographers gave disproportionately, compared to other vocational groups, toward anarchist causes. I would like to think that Bill Fishman would not have objected to this approach, as he also was ahead of his time in thoughtfully incorporating photography, beyond simple illustrative purposes, into the study of history.

The composition of my contribution to this volume, reflecting on the fate of anarchists under the Soviet and Nazi regimes and their relationships with fellow travellers in the western democracies, has (at least) four distinct points of origin. In the spirit of those I wish to recall, who frequently defied convention, I shall break with usual style of academic presentations and provide a hefty foreground of this study, illuminating connections to the late Bill Fishman and his work.

The first station is Madison, in the early 1980s, when I originally applied for funding to conduct research, in Jerusalem, for my PhD at the University of Wisconsin. At that time, as a student of George L. Mosse, I was writing about the early Zionist movement in Central Europe as a manifestation of what later would be termed "diaspora nationalism." The Graduate School adviser for external scholarships was Fran Rothstein, wife of Mort Rothstein, a professor of the history of agriculture. In one of my initial meetings with Fran, she noticed that I had written my final-year undergraduate essay on the relationship between Judaism and Marxism. She asked if I knew the historian Bill Fishman, and told me that she and her husband were friendly with him when he was a visiting professor in Madison some years previously. Mort had been the history department chair

"during those tumultuous years" in the late 1960s and early 70s.¹⁴ She strongly encouraged me, if I ever had the opportunity, to meet Bill Fishman.

In a feat of repeated, stunning stupidity, I missed every chance to meet him, despite having moved to London permanently in 1997. I never had the good fortune, to my knowledge, to be in the same place at the same time. On two occasions, my beloved friend and colleague John Klier had arranged walking tours of the East End to be led by Bill, which either did not materialize, or else I was unable to attend.

The second launch pad for this piece is my ongoing exploration of the life and politics of Emma Goldman, the firebrand American anarchist and feminist whose own stay in London's East End was relatively brief.¹⁵ My route from having written on Zionism, and then more broadly, representations of Jews in politics¹⁶—to anarchism—was a bit convoluted. After the demise of the USSR, when the universities in Lithuania were beginning a process of redefinition and regeneration, the University of Kaunas inaugurated an institute dedicated to the emigration of Lithuanians—which self-consciously sought to include Jews and non-Jews. The members of my department were graciously invited to its founding conference in 2001.

For Kaunas I prepared a paper about the formative stages of Emma Goldman's life and career.¹⁷ Goldman moved, as did my own family, from Kovno (Kaunas) to Rochester, New York, in large part because it was believed that the modernized clothing factories in upstate New York might provide a better alternative to the sweating system that predominated in eastern Europe, as well as in New York's Lower East Side and London's East End. I argued then (and later published) that Goldman's trajectory from Kovno to Rochester was an atypical immigrant pathway—and far more important than the scholars of Goldman had surmised—in fashioning her into the kind of radical she was to become.¹⁸

Another project related to my hometown origins of Rochester feeds into the current project. After completing a book about the myth of "Jewish criminality" in Nazi Germany,¹⁹ which also has connections to perceptions of Jewish radicals, I began writing about the Jewish engagement with photography. This is a field in which I have first-hand knowledge. My father had worked at Kodak

Park in Rochester, from 1945 to 1983, as a metal fabricator. During the summers of my college years, in the late 1970s, I was a 'melter's helper' in Kodak's main factory, in the round-the-clock operation producing the base for photographic film.

Some years after my father's death in 1995 I learned that my family's connection to photography stretched back further than a single generation. Through the initiative of a long-lost relative, Lilia Titova, I was informed that the Jasvoins, a branch of my family in Lithuania and Russia, had also been active in photography. I started, therefore, to research relationships between Jews and photography in Eastern Europe.

The book I recently completed, *Jews and Photography in Britain* (2015) was supposed to be a footnote, or a few sentences in the book I thought I had been writing about Jews and photography in Europe and America.²⁰ *Jews and Photography in Britain* examines how Jews revolutionized visual culture in Britain yet almost nobody noticed. One of the epiphanies that led me to look at Jews and photography in Britain as deserving its own monograph was my encounter with the historical figure Nahum Luboschez. According to none other than George Eastman, the founder of Eastman Kodak Company—who was not terribly friendly to Jews - and Kenneth Mees, who was plucked from the Wratten & Wainwright firm in London to be the first director of Kodak's research laboratory in Rochester, Nahum Luboschez was one of the most talented of the hundreds of portrait photographers in London. Luboschez, also working as a “demonstrator” for Kodak throughout Europe (based at Kodak's branch in Harrow), was a catalytic agent in the spread and improvement of amateur and professional photography, and x-ray technologies throughout Britain and continental Europe. But his name and exploits are almost nowhere to be found in the history of photography. I likewise discovered that there is barely any credit given, or research conducted, about three other seminal figures in British photography: H. A. Barnett, who had prestigious and precedent-setting London studios; Stefan Lorant, a cutting-edge photo editor, best known for *Picture Post*; and Helmut Gernsheim, a foundational collector and historian of photography, who helped create the basis for the study of photography as an academic field, as well establishing the basis for the “art

market” for photography. With few exceptions, Jews in photography were overwhelmingly progressive and occasionally, revolutionary. One of the prominent family firms that mainly served London's Jewish community, Perkoff's, was headed by Isaac Perkoff, who was a known anarchist sympathizer, as was Isidor Yog in New York, who was most famous for photographing stars of the Yiddish stage.

I came to the conclusion that the obscurity of Nahum Luboshez, who should have been illustrious, may have been partially self-imposed. His family, making their living as photographers, had run into trouble in the United States through their anarchist activity, with one relative serving time in Leavenworth prison. Although Luboshez claimed that he came to Europe in order to study art, he also may have crossed the Atlantic to escape the law. The remnants of his photographic archive in the George Eastman House Archives and the Harry Ransom Center of the University of Texas show ties to anarchism, as Luboshez produced the frequently-reproduced (typically unattributed) portrait of Prince Kropotkin as well as that of the Georgian anarchist, Valdam Tscherekoff. **{figure 1: Luboshez, Kropotkin}** He also has left a stunning portrait of his niece, Natasha, who was murdered by the Bolsheviks.²¹ Although the caption supplied by Luboshez's descendants does not elaborate the circumstances of her death, she most likely was killed as an anarchist, as opposed to being a 'White' opponent of the revolutionaries. In the first decade of the twentieth century Luboshez also captured political protests and the famine-ravaged landscape, including starving children, which helped precipitate the Russian Revolution.²²

I suspect that Luboshez supported anarchism throughout his life but I have thus far found no evidence beyond his photographs and the police (and prison) record from the United States. Documents detailing his activity also might have been destroyed or censored because one of his sons rose to the rank of admiral in the United States Navy. My original idea for this volume was to write about what we know, and what we still do not know about anarchism, with Luboshez as a central figure. But Nahum Luboshez, who was truly brilliant and endlessly imaginative in applications of photography, was possibly clever enough to evade authorities. If he did write in the

anarchist press, or engaged in any political activity, he did so under an assumed name I have not yet detected. If he contributed to the cause, financially, he also did this under cover.

Compounding my own stupendous error in not making an effort to contact Bill Fishman was the realization that he might have known something about Luboshez. Both of them lived in Harrow. Kropotkin also lived in Harrow when he came to London. Perhaps the reason why there is no paper trail connecting, say, Luboshez and Kropotkin, is because they encountered each other mainly in person.

My interest in, and connection to anarchism received another fillip through an effort to create, by means of an initiative of my university's computer science department, an app devoted to the history of London's Jewish East End. As part of this process, I took the team of three MS students assigned to me, Xianjun Xiang, Linda Wang, and Yining Shen, to Angel Alley—home of the Freedom Press and bookshop. As is well known to East End mavens, there is an outdoor wall display of metallic portraits of anarchists—including Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, about whom much of the rest of this chapter will be concerned. As I was starting to regale them with stories about Goldman and Berkman, the students loudly exclaimed, almost in unison: "Ba Jin! Ba Jin! Ba Jin!" They were thrilled that one of their favorite poets, Ba Jin—also known known as Li Feigan—was prominent on the anarchist display, next to Alexander Berkman. **{figure 2: Berkman and Ba Jin}** I had never paid attention to Ba Jin in my dozens of earlier visits. As I was to learn, the placement of Ba Jin near Berkman and Goldman was no fluke. Ba Jin and Goldman had substantial correspondence.²³ The Goldman/Ba Jin relationship encouraged me to look more closely at anarchist networks, sometimes maintained over long time spans and vast distances. There is no room for anarchism as such in communist China, but Ba Jin still has a place in its canon, as he and other anarchists were folded into the literature of communism after their own demise—and they ceased to be a threat.

The penultimate fuel for this article is an excellent book I recently reviewed by Kim Wüschmann on the history of Jewish prisoners in Nazi concentration camps before the Holocaust.²⁴ It is crucial to recall that "[m]ost Jewish prisoners of the prewar concentration camps eventually

were set free; generally, release was still the rule rather than the exception"—but under the condition that they were to leave the country and never return,²⁵ which became increasingly difficult in the 30s, and nearly impossible once the war broke out. In addition to her discussion of the transformation of 'protective justice' into an assault on Germany's Jews, Wünschmann's study delves deeply into what actually happened to Jews in the camps' earliest incarnations, which included "abuse, isolation, and murder" to a shocking degree. "Once captured after Hitler's seizure of power, [Werner] Scholem, [Werner] Hirsch, [Erich] Mühsam, and [Hans] Litten were trophies whose maltreatment satisfied a long-held lust for vengeance on the part of the Nazi movement's paramilitary units, first and foremost the SA."²⁶ Reports of the gentle Mühsam's gruesome torture was horrifying to Berkman and Goldman. Berkman wrote to Michael Cohn: " He was beaten, compelled to submit to every indignity and his hair was pulled out by the handful and swastika cut on his scalp with a knife. Surely we are again in the Dark Ages. First the Bolsheviks, now the Fascists and the Nazis."²⁷

Feelings for Mühsam were not just due to his reputation. Mühsam had written a personal, touching poem in honor of Berkman's 60th birthday.

Alexander Berkman was forced to leave his native Russia because he loved Liberty;

...

His home is in the hearts of all the peoples everywhere, although he is not persona grata with the rulers and governors of the states.

Every human who loves Liberty loves him.

We celebrate Alexander Berkman's sixtieth birthday because we are comrades of his ideology and the admirers of his work and his great soul.

There will come a time when humanity will celebrate this brave man,

Alexander Berkman, as the pioneer and great champion of its happiness;

A time in which all mankind will come to admire and to love him.

That time will be when Liberty has become Truth, the time of Anarchy.²⁸

While Wünschmann's discussion of the often-neglected Mühsam is an important addition and correction to the historiography on modern Jewry, Nazism, and the Holocaust, it prompted my own thinking about the fate of anarchists during the interwar years and the Holocaust. I discovered that there was little written on the subject beyond anarchist devotees. Despite earnest attempts at inclusiveness, neither Yad Vashem (Jerusalem) nor the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC) has yet devoted attention to the persecution of anarchists in the midst of the Shoah.

When I was still on the hunt for Nahum Luboshez's anarchist history, I was struck by the fact that despite their intensive hounding by both the Nazis and the Soviets, and their decided unpopularity in the United States and Britain, anarchists managed to maintain institutional support structures. Besides being interested in material and visual culture, as a historian I also have been concerned with the financial support that enables political, social, and even artistic movements to arise in the first place--and then to survive. How can one understand any movement or party without learning how it is financed? This is where I found a tie between many of my concerns: photographers were apparently important in providing funding for anarchism. The largest single provider for the maintenance and work of Alexander Berkman, after his release from prison, was Modest Stein.²⁹ Stein made his living as an artist whose work was based largely on photography. But perhaps a more important source of income was Stein's wife, Marcia Mishkin, a successful fashion photographer. Her career was abetted by that of her brother, Herman Mishkin, the official photographer of New York's Metropolitan Opera and one of the better known 'stills' photographers in the silent motion picture era.³⁰ I found, as well, that photographers including Senya Fleshin also offered their services to anarchists—such as did Luboshez—by providing them, most likely free of charge, with unusually good portraits.³¹

The final thread I wish to relate is a vicarious connection between Bill Fishman and myself, beyond the Madison overlap. One of the few non-academic and loyal supporters of my work, in

providing necessary assistance to help defray expenses at key moments, is Mark Astaire, the husband of my wife's cousin, Liz. I've dedicated two books to Mark and Liz. An inspiration for Mark's generosity toward my scholarly work was the example of Barney Shine, a friend of his late father, Edgar, and uncle, Jarvis. Barney Shine was the leading patron of Bill Fishman, establishing the held by Dr Anne Kershen from 1990 to 2011. *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875-1914* is dedicated "For Barney Shine without whom this would not have been possible". I do not wish to infer that I would have been left high and dry with the Shine/Fishman bond. But the support for some of my projects may have been less imaginable, to Mark, without Barney Shine's enabling of Bill Fishman's historical research.

Although I have failed to uncover a relationship between Luboshez and Prince Peter Kropotkin beyond the fact that Luboshez took a portrait of Kropotkin and other anarchists, I wish nevertheless to begin the expressly historical portion of this essay with Kropotkin. His name is not often recalled in Jewish history. But he served as an important intellectual leader and symbolic rallying point for Jewish anarchists, to a greater degree, and for a longer period, than has typically been assumed. Although he did not have the kind of instrumental role forged by Rudolf Rocker, Kropotkin was integrated and warmly embraced among Jews. Kropotkin's version of an overwhelmingly humanistic and universal anarchism found its greatest champion in Alexander Berkman, who—until quite recently—has been undervalued as political actor in United States and Europe. Berkman, similar to Kropotkin, can be comprehended as kind of messianic figure—but not in a literal sense. Both of them provided inspiration and solace to their followers through the transmission of their portraits along with their writings. On the one hand the anarchist cause was complemented by relatively good-quality photography, and on the other, the movement itself counted a few individuals, connected to photography, and to Berkman and Kropotkin personally, as their most ardent adherents.

In discussions of Jewish politics up to the mid-twentieth century, anarchism persistently resurfaces because the movement maintained a highly visible identification with Jews and Jewish interests. The infamous instances of Jewish anarchists' blatant displays of contempt for Jewish

tradition, in New York and London, with cigar-smoking, *trayfe* (unkosher) banquets and marching bands on Yom Kippur, have perhaps been exaggerated due to the well-known history of Elias Tsherikover.³² At the time of his reflections Tsherikover had rejected anarchism and turned to increasingly insular thinking about Jewish politics coupled with religious orthodoxy.³³ There was some amount of disaffection from Judaism evident in nearly every other non-Jewishly-specific political stream, and the Jews were bitterly divided among themselves concerning the explicitly Jewish parties. One factor, though, that binds Jews to anarchism is messianism³⁴—a concept not taken up directly by Bill Fishman. Here, however, I wish to apply messianism in the way it functioned, in a more practical way, for the Jewish masses and self-styled revolutionaries.

Since the upheavals of the 1880s, Jews who were keen to radically improve Jewish prospects were on the lookout for someone beyond the norm, an extraordinary leader who perceived things in a different way and could propel the masses in a new direction. This modification of an expressly religious and eschatological notion of messianism might be helpful in understanding the ardent following of diverse figures such as Theodor Herzl, Alfred Stieglitz, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and Walter Benjamin. It is not messianism, as in end-of-days stuff—but an articulation of discipleship for a charismatic figure who offers a bold, transcendent vision.³⁵ Since the seventeenth century, as Gershom Scholem showed in the case of Shabbatai Zevi, it was important both to talk about and to visualize this person who seemed cut from a different cloth.³⁶

One of the reasons why Berkman fits so well is because he saw himself as part of a messianic tradition: a “Jewish Anarchist”³⁷ whose belief in a “Revolutionary Messiah” was tied to his Kovno childhood. Berkman's prison memoirs include the following vivid reflection, which is quoted here at length—because this and other religiously-inflected statements are not often reproduced in the standard works of Paul Avrich or expressly anarchist movement publications:

Involuntarily I am reminded of the old rabbinical lore: only one instant of righteousness, and the Messiah would come upon earth. The beautiful promise had strongly appealed to me in the days of childhood. The merciful God requires so little of us, I had often pondered. Why will we not abstain from sin and evil, for just 'the twinkling of an eye-lash'? For weeks I went about weighted down with the grief of impenitent Israel refusing to be saved, my eager brain

pregnant with the project of hastening the deliverance. Like a divine inspiration came the solution: at the stroke of the noon hour, on a preconcerted day, all the men and women of the Jewry throughout the world should bow in prayer. For a single stroke of time, all at once behold the Messiah come! In agonizing perplexity I gazed at my Hebrew tutor shaking his head. How his kindly smile quivered dismay into my thrilling heart! The children of Israel could not be saved thus - he spoke sadly. Nay, not even in the most circumspect manner, affording our people in the farthest corners of the earth time to prepare for the solemn moment. The Messiah will come, the good tutor kindly consoled me. It had been promised. 'But the hour hath not arrived', he quoted; 'no man hath the power to hasten the steps of the Deliverer'. With a sense of sobering sadness, I think of the new hope, the revolutionary Messiah. Truly the old rabbi was wise beyond his ken: it hath been given to no man to hasten the march of delivery. Out of the People's need, from the womb of their suffering, must be born the hour of redemption. Necessity, Necessity alone, with its iron heel, will spur numb Misery to effort, and waken the living dead. The process is tortuously slow, but the gestation of new humanity cannot be hurried by impatience. We must bide our time, meanwhile preparing the workers for the great upheaval. The errors of the past are to be guarded against: always has apparent victory been divested of its fruits, and paralyzed into defeat, because the people were fettered by their respect for property, by the superstitious awe of authority, and by reliance upon leaders. These ghosts must be cast out, and the torch of reason lighted in the darkness of men's minds, where blind rebellion can rend the midway clouds of defeat, and sight the glory of the Social Revolution, and the beyond.³⁸

Despite this unambiguous self-image of Berkman, few scholars of Jewish Studies have taken an interest in him, and the extent to which Emma Goldman belonged to an explicitly Jewish tradition has been little noticed, as well. Physically, Berkman was unremarkable. But his frequently copied image was a potent element of anarchism's arsenal, conveying an exemplary image of moral dignity. **{figure 3: Berkman from Capps studio, Pittsburgh}**

Kropotkin (1842-1921), although not Jewish, clearly filled a messianic void for the mainly Yiddish-speaking faithful. In 1904 his *Lebens-beshraybung (Autobiography)* was published in a beautifully produced yet low-priced edition, with a special forward from Kropotkin to his Yiddish readers whom he mainly identified with the *Frayhayt* ("Freedom") group. Kropotkin expressed his profound, heart-felt gratitude for the translation and publication of his book in an accessible volume—which was somewhat ironic because the book was unusually artistic. He was enthusiastic at the prospect of his work reaching an expansive circle of readers, especially the mass of Jewish workers in Europe and the United States. While anarchism found a warm reception among the youth, he said that the appeal of the movement also extended to many other parts of the Jewish

world. Such a book articulating the anarchist perspective, in Yiddish, was an important and even essential part of the anarchist struggle. The goal of the movement was to bring Jewry into a greater brotherhood of freedom and happiness for all. While statements such as these might be dismissed as platitudes, to many Jews at this time it helped make them feel part of a great cause.³⁹

The volume features finely-drawn graphics and good photographs of those who inspired anarchism, such as Alexander Herzen (127), and the women and men who were willing to sacrifice themselves for the cause, sometimes from throwing bombs or writing what was considered to be incendiary literature (Jean Grave, Élisée Reclus), including Peter Kropotkin's brother, Alexander (65), and Errico Malatesta. As a continued sign of loyalty to Kropotkin, several anarchist groups would be named after him during the Second World War. Nine editions of his collected works were published between 1892 and 1932,⁴⁰ along with at least four translations of his study of trade unionism which were issued in London beginning in 1889;⁴¹ and a memorial book was dedicated to him on his 25th *yortseyt* (anniversary of his death).⁴² The Kropotkin literary societies also produced Yiddish translations that were understood as complementary to his vision, such as Sidney Webb's *History of Trade Unionism* (1920-21), and Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* produced in 1950 in association with the Workmen's Circle and Rocker Publications Committee.

The swift disillusion and disappointment of leading anarchists with the Soviet Union is well-known. Explicit ethical statements of Emma Goldman, Valliant,⁴³ Kropotkin, Tsherkessoff,⁴⁴ and others stood in stark contrast with emerging shape of the 'worker's paradise.' Although there had been polemics against the Bolsheviks by their enemies from the right in the west, the intellectual challenge against communism from its left is much less known. The fact that individual anarchist and Bolsheviks joined forces, especially on the battlefields of Spain, did not prevent the inordinate persecution of anarchists under the Soviets.

While Berkman and other anarchists presented themselves as champions of humanity writ large, and their visions, including the liberation of women and the oppressed throughout the earth of different nationalities and races made them among the most egalitarian of their time, ties to the Jewish world were explicit. Jean Grave, who was not Jewish, was fond of quoting Heine. In his

Defence of Anarchism he asserted:

It is Heinrich Heine who cries: 'This old society has long since been judged and condemned. Let justice be done! Let this old world be broken in pieces . . . where innocence has perished, where egoism has prospered, where man is exploited by man! Let these whited sepulchres, full of lying and iniquity, be utterly destroyed.⁴⁵ . . . Ideas! these are the eternal enemy of the men in possession. The possessors want to stay where they are: Ideas must go forward. A dagger struck down the Duke de Berry: immediately the Restoration mounts the tribune and says to a weeping country: 'The canner which struck the Duke de Berry is a Liberal idea!' A bomb explodes: immediately the third Republic ascends the same tribune and cries to a weeping country: 'The bomb which has just exploded is an Anarchist idea!' Then in the midst of the smoke of the bomb, which in our times take the place of the lightnings from Mount Sinai, M. David Raynal passes a frightful law, which is nothing else but the resurrection of the old crime of *inciting* to the hatred and contempt of the government. Only the formula is slightly modified: it is the crime of inciting to the hatred and contempt of *thebourgeoisie!*⁴⁶

Jews are supposedly people of the book who privilege text over images. But their messianic movements have always been highly visual, such as Christianity, Sabbateanism, and Lubavicher Hasidism. Each of them creatively and vividly pictured their messiahs and widely disseminated their images.

The volume, *The Guillotine at Work: Twenty Year of Terror in Russia (Data and Documents)* by G. P. Maximoff, produced by the Chicago Section of the Alexander Berkman Fund (1940), may now be seen as a harbinger of history that would appear decades later, excoriating both Communism and Fascism for ideologically-driven slaughter. Yet along with reasonably accurate accounts and analyses, accusing the Bolsheviks of sacrificing its ideals in the interest of consolidating power and subduing its supposed enemies, it further enshrined the figures of Kropotkin and Berkman as the movement's leaders. With a portrait of Berkman by Fleshin as its lead illustration, it includes an unattributed, brilliantly composed image of the Kropotkin funeral committee, with Berkman at its centre, which exudes the solemnity, dignity, and mournfulness of expressly religious icons.⁴⁷ **{figure 4: Kropotkin funeral}** A number of shorter publications, often in the form of glossy pamphlets, repeated the themes of the Maximoff volume and provided updated information. In 1946 the pamphlet of the Alexander Berman Aid Fund had on its cover a

portrait of Berkman by Marcia Stein **{figure 5: Berkman cover}**, and at the end, a scene understood as the persecution of anarchists that would later be described as a classic "Holocaust" photograph. **{figure 6: Holocaust image}** This publication testified not only to the maintenance of interest in, and loyalty to, anarchism until the end of World War II, but also the extent to which Jewish groups, in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Detroit were mainstays of the organization.

Although there was no shortage of leaders and edifying stories for their loyalists, Berkman's proved to be one of the most compelling. The late historian Paul Avrich is part of a chain of admirers of Berkman. Along with his one-time lover and life-long friend and confidant, Emma Goldman, Berkman is the subject of a recent substantial biography by the late Avrich his daughter, Karen. In the preface, Karen Avrich writes that when her father died in 2006 after a long illness he left behind an unfinished manuscript about the passionate half-century friendship between legendary activist Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, a Russian-born anarchist who achieved notoriety when he attempted to assassinate the industrialist Henry Clay Frick in 1892.

My father published a number of books on Russian history and anarchism, yet he was endlessly fascinated by the magnetic Goldman, a leading figure in early twentieth-century America, and Berkman, who served fourteen years for the attack on Frick, and was rigidly, fervently devoted to the anarchist creed. It was the story of Berkman and Goldman's intense connection and intertwined lives that my father planned to write, and he spent decades gathering material for the book.⁴⁸

The work of the father and daughter is indeed monumental and will serve historians splendidly. The Avriches are unusual in their intellectual ardor for Berkman, because the attempted assassination has led most commentators and even historians to regard Berkman as abnormal, and not important enough to merit intensive treatment. And both Berkman and Goldman were seen beyond the pale of respectability from engaging in aberrant sexual relations, at one point with Berkman and his cousin, Modest Stein, "sharing" Goldman.

Stein, who was known to his friends as Modska, is important to the lives of Berkman and Goldman, as well as to anarchism, for other reasons. Stein was one of the most critical financial backers of anarchism, even long after he continued to live a relatively normal life, and occasionally

expressed support for the Soviet Union, until his death in 1958. The money came from both himself and the photographic practice of his wife, Marcia, about whom little is written. It appears that she too was supportive of the cause. A closer examination of the time around the attempted assassination of Frick, in 1892, possibly shows a previously unexamined but intriguing tie to photography, which will conclude this chapter.

Immediately after the attempt on Frick's life, Stein, who was then living in Worcester, Massachusetts, left for New York. A few months previously he had been operating a photography studio in Springfield with Goldman which did not fare well. Stein and Goldman left Springfield to open a luncheonette in Worcester, which also failed to take off. Stein later claimed that upon boarding the train his pockets were filled with dynamite sticks that Berkman had given him. Killing Frick in an explosion, at his home, was the back-up plan, should Berkman have failed in his mission. Stein, not yet knowing whether or not Berkman was successful, reached Frick's estate and found it well-guarded. He then took a trolley downtown into Pittsburgh, getting off at the Liberty Street station. "There," his daughter remarked, "oddly enough, he has his picture taken in Dabbs studio, where Sasha had been photographed the previous day."⁴⁹ Berkman had been taken there the day after his arrest, by the police, in order to have a photograph not simply for identification purposes, but for a photo suitable for the press. It is indeed a fine portrait. But we do not know who the individual photographer was who took it.

The police and federal investigators, and several generations of historians, have perceived no connection between Modest Stein's mission and his visit to the studio. Dabbs' was a substantial enterprise. But perhaps there also was an anarchist connection. It also fits all too conveniently with the extraordinarily friendly relations between a great number of photographers with anarchists, and Stein was well-ensconced. It could be that even decades after the fact he would not have revealed full details of any transactions, or even information exchanged at Dabbs. As a well-established business that was respected for its traffic with the hoi-polloi, it would have been a perfect cover for clandestine politics.

What is better remembered, though, is what transpired after Stein left the studio. As Stein tells

it, when walking back to the trolley stop, he passed a newspaper stand. He was shocked by the headline: "WAS NOT ALONE. BERKMAN HAD ACCOMPLICES IN HIS MISSION OF MURDER. IS AARON STAMM HERE?" Avrich states that "Modska was startled." He quickly took the dynamite sticks from his pockets and deposited them in a nearby outhouse (wc). He got on the next train to Rochester, where he had family. There he met with Emma Goldman, who gave him enough money to get back to New York. One of Modska's grandsons recalled, years later, his grandfather warned him that 'should he ever visit Pittsburgh' he had to watch out where he took a shit, "because somewhere out there was twenty pounds of dynamite under a toilet."⁵⁰

The story is indeed amusing but there is a good chance it is incomplete. If Modska had stuffed the dynamite in his pockets, it is unlikely that there would have been twenty pounds of it. He was looking to blow up a substantial house, or at least a good portion of one. I would guess that when Stein had his portrait taken, he probably left a small suitcase, filled with dynamite, with an accomplice. Perhaps it was the same man, or possibly woman, who snapped the photo of Berkman the day before. We probably will never know for certain. We are left with a tale of Jews, photographers, anarchists, and loose ends. In the end, there is little doubt that photographers, well out of proportion to their numbers, helped keep the anarchist movement going. They also have left historians with an unusually large cache of anarchists' portraits, which Bill Fishman might have found remarkable. Photographs of anarchists of extraordinary quality and quantity, and the men and women behind them who contributed in diverse ways to the cause, are part of the anarchist legacy that is thus far under-explored.

¹ On the ground in Eastern Europe, around the time of the Russian Revolution, anarchists were accused of anti-Jewish violence—but this was a point of long-standing debate. Compared to almost any other party, however, anti-Jewish acts were considered out-of-character. See Peter Kenez, "Pogroms and White ideology," in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, eds. John Klier and Shlomo Lombroza (Cambridge, 1992), 294-6; Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge, 1981), 101-2.

² William J. Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals 1875-1914* (London, 1995) (originally published 1975), 302.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ See George R. Esenwein, *The Spanish Civil War: A Modern Tragedy* (New York and London, 2005).

⁵ Gerben Zaagsma, *Jewish Volunteers, the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War* (London, 2016).

⁶ *Kropotkin's lebens-beshraybung/geschreiben fun ihm alweyn; iberzetzst fun M. Kohn* (London, 1904).

⁷ Alexander Berkman, *Die Tat. Gefängnis-erinnerungen einer Anarchisten*, trans. Gerda Weyl (Berlin, 1927); the German edition supplies this list of major editions: American, September 1912; Yiddish, 1914; Norwegian, June 1925; English, September 1926; German, February 1927.

⁸ Girgoru Petrovich Maximoff, *The guillotine at work: twenty years of terror in Russia (Data and documents)* (Chicago, 1940).

⁹ *Alexander Berkman Aid Fund: 25th anniversary, 1921-1946: campaign for funds for political refugees* (Chicago, 1946).

¹⁰ See Matthew S. Adams, *Kropotkin, Read, and the Intellectual History of British*

Anarchism: Between Reason and Romanticism (Houndsmills, Basingstoke and New York, 2015);

Caroline Cahm, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism, 1872-1886* (Cambridge:

Cambirdge University Press, 2002); Ruth Kinna, *Kropotkin: Revising the Classical Anarchist*

Tradition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹¹ See the chapter by Wayne Parsons in this volume.

¹² Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals*, p. 303-4.

¹³ Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals*, p. 304.

¹⁴ Obituary for "Rothstein, Morton" at

http://host.madison.com/news/local/obituaries/rothstein-morton/article_118ae0c6-8cc9-11e2-bf65-0019bb2963f4.html, accessed 17 April 2016.

¹⁵ Paul and Karen Avrich, *Sasha and Emma: The Anarchist Odyssey of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2012), pp. 325-31, 393-4.

¹⁶ Michael Berkowitz, *The Jewish Self-Image: American and British Perspectives, 1881-1939*

(London, 2000); *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project, 1914-1933* (Cambridge, 1997); *Zionist*

Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War (Cambridge, 1993).

¹⁷ Michael Berkowitz, "New York but not New York: The Jewish Immigrant Experience in Upstate New York" [unpublished paper], conference on "Beginnings and Ends of Emigration: Life without Borders in the Contemporary World," Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania, November 23, 2001.

¹⁸ Michael Berkowitz, "Emma Goldman's radical trajectory: A resilient 'Litvak' legacy?" in

Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, 11, 2 (July 2012): 247-267.

¹⁹ Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2007).

²⁰ Michael Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography in Britain* (Austin, 2015).

²¹ See description at collections.estman.org/objects/86520/natasha-luboshez?ctx=7b8ad6d8-960f-4253-8359-bd9d8a43b4b8&idx=0

- ²² Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography in Britain*, .
- ²³ "Prominent Chinese Writer Inspired by Emma Goldman," in Emma Goldman and Free Speech [website], The Emma Goldman Papers, available at <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/goldman/MeetEmmaGoldman/emmagoldmanandfreespeech.html> [accessed 17 April 2016].
- ²⁴ Kim Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz: Jewish Prisoners in the Prewar Concentration Camps* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2015), reviewed in the *British Journal of Criminology*, 56, 4 (2016).
- ²⁵ Wünschmann, pp. 122, 124.
- ²⁶ Ibid., p. 29.
- ²⁷ Quote in Paul and Karen Avrich, p. 376.
- ²⁸ Quote in Paul and Karen Avrich, pp. 357-8.
- ²⁹ Paul and Karen Avrich, pp. 362-3.
- ³⁰ David S. Shields, *Still: American silent motion picture photography* (Chicago, 2013), pp. 242, 107, 201.
- ³¹ Paul and Karen Avrich, p. 495, n. 188.
- ³² YIVO [Yidishn Visinshaftlekhen Institut], *Geschichte fun der yidisher arbeter-bavegung in di fareinyunkte statn*, ed. A Tscherkover (Nu York, 1943).
- ³³ See Joshua Karlip, *The tragedy of a generation: the rise and fall of Jewish nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2013).
- ³⁴ Michel Löwy, *Redemption and utopia: Jewish libertarian thought in Central Europe*, trans. Hope Heaney (Stanford, 1992).
- ³⁵ See Michael Powers, "Wolkenwandelbarkeit: Benjamin, Stieglitz, and the Medium of Photography" in *German Quarterly*, volume 88, no. 3 (Summer 2015): 271-290; Waldo Frank, Lewis Mumford, Dorothy Norman, Paul Rosenfeld, and Harold Rugg, eds, *America and Alfred Stieglitz: A Collective Portrait* (New York, 1934).
- ³⁶ See Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, 1626-76*, trans. R. J. Zvi Werblowsky (Princeton, 1975).
- ³⁷ Alexander Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* (London and New York, 1999) (originally published 1920), pp. 83, 206-7.
- ³⁸ Ibid., pp. 227-8.
- ³⁹ Petr Alekseevich Kropotkin, *Kropotkin's lebens-beshraybung*, unpaginated preface to the Yiddish translation.
- ⁴⁰ Petr Alekseevich Kropotkin, *Felder, fabriken un verksheper: oder industrie ferbunden mit agrikultur* (Nu York, 1914).
- ⁴¹ *Di entviklung fun'm treydyunionizmus fun Peter Kropotkin* (London, 19??).
- ⁴² *Kropotkin-zamlbukh: gividmet dem 25ten yortsayt zint dem toyt fun P. A. Krapotkin* (Buenos Ayres, 1947).
- ⁴³ *Why Vaillant Threw the Bomb!* (London, 1888).
- ⁴⁴ W. Therkesoff, . . . *Pages . . . of Socialist History: Teachings and Acts of Social Democracy* (New York, 1902).
- ⁴⁵ *Anarchy on Trial. Being the speeches of George Etievant (sentenced to five years imprisonment on a charge of stealing dynamite cartidges), JEAN GRAVE (sentenced for two and a half years for publishing his famous book, Societe Mourant et l'Anarchie), and CASERIO (who killed President Carnot), in 1894* (London, 1901), 5.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, 6.
- ⁴⁷ G. P. Maximoff, p. 341.
- ⁴⁸ Paul Avrich and Karen Avrich, *Sasha and Emma: The Anarchist Odyssey of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2012), p. ix.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Recommended Reading

Paul Avrich and Karen Avrich, *Sasha and Emma: The Anarchist Odyssey of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2012)

Michael Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography in Britain* (Austin, TX, 2015)

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