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“Any Minute Now the World’s Overflowing Its Border”: Anarchist Modernism and Yiddish Literature

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“Any Minute Now the World’s Overflowing Its Border”: Anarchist Modernism and Yiddish Literature

by

Anna Elena Torres

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of Joint Doctor of Philosophy

with the Graduate Theological Union

in

Jewish Studies

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Women, Gender and Sexuality

in the Graduate Division of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Abstract

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"Any Minute Now the World's Overflowing Its Border": Anarchist Modernism and Yiddish Literature examines the intertwined worlds of Yiddish modernist writing and anarchist politics and culture. Bringing together original historical research on the radical press and close readings of Yiddish avant-garde poetry by Moyshe-Leyb Halpern, Peretz Markish, Yankev Glatshteyn, and others, I show that the development of anarchist modernism was both a transnational literary trend and a complex worldview. My research draws from hitherto unread material in international archives to document the world of the Yiddish anarchist press and assess the scope of its literary influence. The dissertation's theoretical framework is informed by diaspora studies, gender studies, and translation theory, to which I introduce anarchist diasporism as a new term. Originating in ancient Greek, *anarchism* refers to a constellation of anti-statist and anti-capitalist aspirations: imagining and working towards a world without borders, an ethics of consensus, bodily autonomy, and escape from the temporal strictures of wage labor. *Anarchist diasporism* describes the anti-statism of stateless peoples based upon their specific relationship to time

and territory, and links the theoretical insights of diaspora studies with the historical study of anarchism. Rather than producing an aspiration to statehood, immigration and deportation often informed a rejection of nationalism and a reconsideration of the meaning of diaspora. The scope of this dissertation includes writers who personally identified as anarchists, such as Anna Margolin, Yosef Luden, and Alexander Harkavy; and those like Soviet anti-Fascist poet Peretz Markish, who absorbed anarchist thought and aesthetics and were celebrated by anarchist readerships.

Chapter One, "Genealogies of Stateless Anti-Statism," documents how Yiddish anarchists claimed Jewish genealogies and interpreted diaspora. Historicizing this anti-teleological worldview provides a foundation for studying anarchist diasporism in Yiddish poetry, through such literary practices as bending time and imagining history before, after and beyond the state—imaginative gestures already present in Jewish anarchist theory. I translate and examine histories by Saul Yanovsky, Rabbi Yankev Meir Zalkind, Yosef Luden, and Yosef Cohen—each of whom edited a Yiddish anarchist newspaper—and the anarcha-feminism of Dr. Katherina Yevzerov and Emma Goldman. Zalkind and Luden most deeply engage with Torah and Talmud (Zalkind's translations made talmudic labor law accessible for workers); Yanovsky and Cohen draw from the vagaries of Jewish history; and Yevzerov and Goldman confront patriarchal power.

The second chapter, "'Language is Migrant': The Multilingual Language Politics of Alexander Harkavy, Emma Goldman, and the Anarchist Press," examines a few case studies of language politics in Jewish anarchism—a movement which, unlike Bundism and Zionism, did not articulate a single ideology of language. Renowned for his contributions to the field of linguistics, Alexander Harkavy also developed a philosophy of language evolution informed by his anarchist worldview. I discuss language politics in two legal cases: Emma Goldman's trial for lecturing on birth control, and the Supreme Court free speech case *Jacob Abrams vs United States,* which deported the editors of *Frayhayt* for their seditious bilingual broadsides*.* The chapter closes with an analysis of the close relationship between two English-language journals, Berkman and Goldman's *Mother Earth* and Margaret Anderson's *Little Review*.

Chapter Three, "The Anarchism of Time: Comparative Temporalities in Yiddish and English Sacco-Vanzetti Poems," examines the presence and persistence of anarcho-syndicalism in Yiddish poetry. Beginning with the Proletarian (*Svetshop*) poets Morris Rosenfeld and Yosef Bovshover, I discuss the role of the anarchist press in the development of immigrant social worlds. Through close readings of a selection of *Svetshop* poems, I examine the poetics and political valences of temporality, particularly their utopian futurities and critique of capitalist time. Two archetypal elements of Proletarian poetry—alternative temporality and imagery of garment workers' tools—were reinvented by Modernist poets in their responses to the Sacco-Vanzetti trial. Through repetition and kaleidoscopic montage, the poetic structures of Moyshe-Leyb Halpern and Yankev Glatshteyn embody alternative temporalities beyond the linear and punitive temporality of the state.

Chapter Four, "With An Undone Shirt (*Mit a tseshpilyet hemd*): Anarchist Temporality and Embodiment in Peretz Markish's Poema *Der fertsikyeriker man*," analyzes Markish's brash early work and selections from his hitherto-untranslated masterpiece *Der fertsikyeriker man* (The Man of Forty), a book-length poema that was rescued hours before his arrest by the Soviet Secret Police and smuggled out of Russia. I examine how anarchist themes circulated through his work, including revolutionary temporality, antimilitarism, visions of nature without borders, and representations of the autonomous body. Despite the Soviet Union's brutal surveillance and persecution of Yiddish writers, Markish defiantly used the Jewishly-marked vocabulary which Soviet language reform campaigns had attempted to purge. I consider anarchist responses to Markish's poetry in the contemporaneous newspaper *Arbeter Fraynd* (Worker's Friend), which claimed him "as much our comrade as our poet."

The Coda points to possible future dialogues with other fields, such as postcolonial and decolonial thought, Diaspora Studies, and Comparative Literature. Yiddish anarchist thought also speaks to questions also posed by contemporary stateless anti-statist movements, such as Sápmi (Laplander) and Kurdish movements.

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the multiplicities of Jewish diasporic thought and expands the body of world Modernist literature available in translation.

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— Introduction —

This dissertation examines the intertwined worlds of Yiddish modernist literature and anarchist politics and culture. Bringing together original historical research on the role of the radical press and close readings of Yiddish avant-garde poetry, I frame the development of *anarchist modernism* as both a transnational literary trend and as a complex worldview. My research draws from hitherto unread material in international archives to document the world of the Yiddish anarchist press and assess the scope of its literary impact. I offer close readings of texts including Moyshe-Leyb Halpern and Yankev Glatshteyn's Sacco-Vanzetti poetry and Peretz Markish's epic Futurist poema *Der fertsikyeriker man* (The Forty-Year-Old Man). The dissertation's theoretical framework is informed by diaspora studies, gender studies and translation theory. This work contributes to our understanding of the multiplicities of Jewish diasporic thought and expands the body of world Modernist literature available in translation.

Rather than producing an aspiration to statehood, experiences of immigration and deportation informed a rejection of nationalism and a reconsideration of the meaning of diaspora by many Ashkenazi writers.[1] The scope of this dissertation includes writers who personally identified as anarchists, such as Anna Margolin, Yosef Luden, Alexander Harkavy, and others. This study also considers how poets with varying political affiliations, such as Moyshe-Leyb Halpern and Yankev Glatshteyn, engaged with anarchist thought or reinvented anarchist imagery. Some writers—particularly Peretz Markish, the Soviet anti-Fascist who chose to return to the USSR—absorbed anarchist worldviews and were celebrated by anarchist readerships, without participating in those movements. In each case, the focus is on their complex engagement with and thematization of anarchism through their work.

Defining Anarchism

Anarchism refers to a constellation of anti-statist and anti-capitalist aspirations: imagining and working towards a world without borders, an ethics of consensus, bodily

[1] For a nuanced study of citizenship as a spectrum of legal identities in Sephardi experience, see: Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews and the Ottoman Twentieth Century* (University of Chicago Press, 2016).

autonomy, and escape from the temporal strictures of wage labor.[2] The term originates from ancient Greek, and as this chapter will discuss, its etymology has been taken up by feminist scholars, anti-colonial writers, and philosophers such as Emmanuel Levinas. Mollie Steimer offered a plainspoken definition of anarchism, declaimed in court during the 1918 Supreme Court trial *Abrams vs United States* for distributing seditious material in Yiddish and English:[3]

> By anarchism I understand a new social order, where no group of people shall be in power, no group of people shall be governed by another group of people. Individual freedom shall prevail in the full sense of the word. Private ownership shall be abolished. Every person shall have an equal opportunity to develop himself well, both mentally and physically. We shall not have to struggle for our daily existence as we do now. No one shall live on the product of others. Every person shall produce as much as he can, and enjoy as much as he needs—receive according to his need. Instead of striving to get money, we shall strive towards education, towards knowledge. While at present the people of the world are divided into various groups, calling themselves nations, while one nation defies another—in most cases considers the others as competitive—we, the workers of the world, shall stretch out our hands towards each other with brotherly love. To the fulfillment of this idea I shall devote all my energy, and, if necessary, render my life for it.[4]

In this definition, we see elements of classical communism such as the phrase "receive according to [one's] need." However, Steimer also emphasizes anti-nationalism, anti-statism, and the importance of cultural production. Finally, she views "brotherly love" as a goal achievable through mutual aid and the transformation of social relations. Anarchist discourse hails comradeship as an everyday practice, rather than a utilitarian means to an end. Here, Judith Butler shares Steimer's definition, naming anarchism as "an ethos of sociability."[5]

Anarchism was an international mass movement, rejecting both capitalism and statism. During the 1880s, there were more anarchists than Marxists in North America, comprising a significant percentage of the Left. By 1902, the anarchist movement's global adherents were estimated at one million.[6] Anarchist communities in the United States

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[2] See also Peter Kropotkin's definition in *Encyclopedia Brittanica*: "The name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government—harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being."

[3] The language politics of this trial are examined in Chapter Two.

[4] Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton: Princeton University, New Jersey, 1988).

[5] May 5 2011 conference, "The Anarchist Turn," at the New School.
http://www.newschoolphilosophy.com/arendtschurmann-symposium/anarchist-

[6] Kenyon Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State: Yiddish and Italian Immigrants in America* (University of Illinois Press, 2015), 14.

developed in the late 1880s, largely radicalized by the Chicago Haymarket affair of 1886. The majority of anarchists were immigrants, and Yiddish anarchists were among the largest and most prolific of the immigrant groups: they published more than twenty newspapers, twelve of them founded in the first two decades of the twentieth century. These newspapers generally grew out of radical social groups and mutual aid societies. The grandest of the Yiddish newspapers was *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* (FAS). It was founded in 1890—seven years before the socialist *Forverts*—and ran until 1977. At eighty-seven years of circulation, FAS was the longest-running anarchist newspaper in the world. FAS was as much a literary journal as a radical broadside and helped to launch the careers of many Yiddish poets, including Mani Leyb, Yankev Glatshteyn, Dovid Edelshtat, and Anna Margolin. Its most influential editor was Saul Yanovsky, renowned for his ability to recognize young literary talent. Another prominent editor was Joseph Cohen, who founded the short-lived Sunrise Co-operative Farming Community in Michigan in 1933. Although this experiment in utopian country living was doomed by members' incompetence as farmers, it had many illustrious visitors in its heyday, including Albert Einstein. The Sunrise newspaper unsurprisingly contained many pastoral reveries written by its members.

The strong mutual influence between anarchists and Modernist writers in the United States spanned both Yiddish and English-language print cultures. Indeed, the most important North American Modernist journal—Margaret Anderson's *Little Review*—was for its first three years "largely an anarchist publication."[7] Chapter Two further examines the relationship between Yiddish and English-language literary anarchist newspapers. Yet the relationship between Modernism and anarchism runs deeper than this practical collaboration. Their profound interweaving ranges from literary responses to the assassination of Petliura by the poet-assassin Sholem Shvartsbard to the poetic thematization of anarchist temporal schemas.

In a 1986 Yiddish-language essay, the poet, editor, and novelist Yosef Luden describes the "deep bond between anarchism and literature."[8] He begins, "The difference between anarchism and both branches of Marxist socialism is that [Marxists] mainly assail economic facts and concern themselves with the material side of the state-regime; whereas anarchism is not content with that, and occupies itself passionately with intellectual production. […] Anarchism has never been an established policy, but a movement in process."[9] Luden does not pit Leftists against each other, expressing his hope that anarchism will "bring about solidarity on which to base the future commune." In defining an anarchist literary canon, Luden casts a wide net. He points to Kropotkin's history of Russian literature, Rudolf Rocker's *Six Figures of World Literature*, and Emma Goldman's many critical essays.[10] He catalogues "true anarchists" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who "published their affinity with anarchism as a compassionate philosophy,"

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[7] Modernist Journals Project, "Modernism Began in the Magazines." http://library.brown.edu/cds/mjp/render.php?view=mjp_object&id=LittleReviewCollection

[8] Yosef Luden, *"Anarkhizm un literatur." Shturem-glokn: eseyen* (Tel Aviv: *Problemen* Farlag, 1986), p229-232.

[9] Luden, 229.

[10] Luden refers to Rocker's rare book *The Six* (Los Angeles: Rocker Publications Committee, 1938).

including Leo Tolstoy, Henrik Ibsen, Franz Kafka, George Orwell, Albert Camus, Herbert Read, Ferdinand Freiligrath, Ernst Toller, Erich Mühsam ("the German-Jewish anarchist poet, assassinated by Hitler-bandits"), B. Traven, Dovid Edelshtat, Yosef Bovshover, A. Almi, and the "prince of poetry," Percy Bysshe Shelley—"which of course does not exhaust the list of anarchist writers."[11] He also notes "deep anarchist philosophers" like Multatuli, Emile Zola, and Octave Mirbeau, and those with "anarchist sympathies," like Romain Rolland and Sholem Asch in his *East River*. In addition to these groups, Luden gives special mention to "those who witnessed economic injustice": Anatole France, H. L. Mencken, Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, M. A. Nexø, H. G. Wells, and others. Luden's essay concludes expansively: "Every critique, every heresy, and even every honest person cries out *(vert farshrign)* like an anarchist."[12]

Emma Goldman similarly links the aesthetic realm and nonviolence as anarchist formations. In a 1901 article, she responds to the assassination of President McKinley by the non-Jewish Polish-American Leon Czolgosz (whose affiliation with anarchism was unproven):

> Having shown that violence is not the result of personal influence, or one particular ideal, I deem it unnecessary to go into a lengthy theoretical discussion as to whether Anarchism contains the element of force or not. The question has been discussed time and again, and it is proven that Anarchism and violence are as far apart from each other as liberty and tyranny. I care not what the rabble says; but to those who are still capable of understanding I would say that Anarchism, being, a philosophy of life, aims to establish a state of society in which man's inner make-up and the conditions around him, can blend harmoniously, so that he will be able to utilize all the forces to enlarge and beautify the life about him. To those I would also say that I do not advocate violence; government does this, and force begets force. It is a fact which cannot be done away with through the prosecution of a few men and women, or by more stringent laws—this only tends to increase it. Violence will die a natural death when man will learn to understand that each unit has its place in the universe, and while being closely linked together, it must remain free to grow and expand.[13]

Goldman places anarchism, a "philosophy of life," at the heart of the search for personal harmony with society. Luden, Goldman, and many others define artistic production as a politics of daily life, necessary for the flourishing of individuals as well as a force for enlarging and beautifying life.

Anarchists understand nations as "imagined communities," decoupled from the political form of the nation-state. Anarchism centers the refugee, not the citizen, as political subject, and the anarchist movement in North America was organized and theorized predominantly by immigrants. A person may be stateless, but not nationless; many immigrants organized in new lands with members of their ethnic groups, while rejecting

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[11] Luden, 230.

[12] Luden, 232.

[13] Goldman, "The Tragedy at Buffalo," *Free Society,* October 1901.

citizenship or statist identities. They critiqued the model according to which civil and human rights are only attainable through citizenship. The anarchist movement in the United States included several immigrant subcultures, each operating in their own language. The Yiddish anarchist press supported the development of Modernism and was as remarkable for its literary achievements as for its political agitation. Yiddish, as a vernacular tongue, was for centuries constructed as 'the language of translation,' into which sacred Hebrew texts were translated. FAS continued this tradition by publishing Yiddish translations of Tolstoy, Chekhov, Longfellow, Mark Twain, Verlaine, and many others, including a serialized version of Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. Editors' commitment to freedom of speech led to a tremendous support for artists' rights of self-expression. In this, they diverged from some socialists and communists such as Aaron Glantz-Leyeles, who maintained that poetry must be a "helping tool (not to mention maidservant) of the [labor] movements" and that even labor leaders with no literary background considered it "part of socialist duty to compose poems."[14]

In an attempt to transmit anarchism to the generation of immigrants' children, both *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* and *Road to Freedom* published a special "youth page" in English, but these were not well-received. As an elderly anarchist, discussing why their children did not also become radicals, remarks in the documentary *Free Voice of Labor*: "We couldn't force [the children]. We weren't Communists."[15] On the day FAS closed its offices in 1977, its last editor Ahrne Thorne—a Łódź-born, formerly Hasidic comrade of Goldman's—told the *New York Times*, "We kept on crying wolf for 87 1/2 years, and people didn't believe. Since the first day the paper couldn't support itself. People came forward with their wedding rings, their golden watches."[16] Thorne supported himself as a lithographer with the socialist Yiddish *Forverts* while working as unpaid editor of FAS. In 1982, Thorne wrote to one of the founders of the *Yidishe Ratsyonalistishe Gezelshaft* (Jewish Rationalist Association) of Argentina, reflecting on the experience:

> Dear comrade, I am only too well aware of the bitter taste of winding up a movement, a movement one has helped to build up and which one has loved and held in high regard, into which one has put so much effort and invested so many hopes. What you must have gone through with the recent liquidation of the Jewish Rationalist Association, I too have gone through, with the closure of *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*. Yet I reckon we should console ourselves with the thought that our work goes on through our comrades from *Problemen* in Israel. Besides, you know, as I do, that the good our movement has done will go down forever as a positive contribution to Jewish history and to the history of the anarchist movement.[17]

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[14] Merle Bachman, *Recovering "Yiddishland": Threshold Moments in American Literature* (New York: Syracuse University Press: 2008), p180.

[15] Steve Fischler and Joel Sucher, *The Free Voice of Labor: The Jewish Anarchists,* Documentary film. Pacific Street Films, 1980.

[16] *New York Times*, November 29 1977.

[17] Antonio López and Gregorio Rawin, "The Jewish Rationalist Association of Argentina: Anarchism and Judaism." Translated by Paul Sharkey. *L'Anarchico e L'Ebreo* (Milan 2001), pp. 179-186.

FIGURE 1. Combined Circulations of American Anarchist Periodicals, 1880–1940

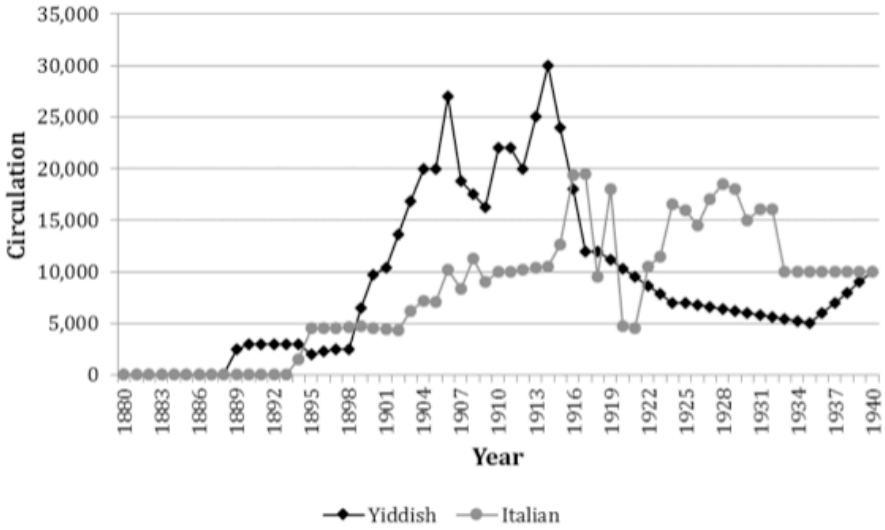

FIGURE 2. Combined Circulations of American Yiddish- and Italian-Language Anarchist Periodicals, 1880–1940

Graphs courtesy of Kenyon Zimmer[18]

The Yiddish anarchist press continued in Israel after FAS closed and transferred its subscribers to *Problemen/Problemot*. This bilingual Yiddish/Hebrew journal had a philosophical and literary emphasis; it was edited first by the prolific Abba Gordin, then Yosef Luden, elder brother of Yitskhak Luden, who edited the Bundist *Lebnsfragn*. Yosef Luden (1907-2002) was described in his *Problemen* obituary as "the last of the Orthodox Anarchists, in the tradition of Bakunin." *Problemen* continued FAS' work, and its impact is

[18] Zimmer, 5-6.

clear: FAS' emphasis on literature and philosophy is evident everywhere in *Problemen*. Luden published lyric tributes to Walt Whitman and Dovid Edelshtat, both characterized as beacons of the ideal of comradeship. His *Brief History of Anarchism* begins with the Essenes and ends with Martin Buber, whom he claimed as an important part of Jewish anarchist genealogy. Chapter One discusses this and other Jewish genealogies in detail.

תל-אביב, מרץ—אפריל 1978 . נומ. 100 פרייז: 10.00 ל״י

פראבלעמען

ציישריפט פאַר געזעלשאַפט און קולטור-פראַגן

רעד.: יוסף לודען, ש. האמבורג

אבא גורדין ז״ל, ש. אברבנאל ז״ל

נומער 100

אינהאַלט

35 יאר געטא־אויפשטאנד — 30 יאר אומאפהענגיקייט	רעדאקציע
דער הונדערטסטער נומער „פראבלעמען"	שמחה
א ביסל אש (ליד)	יהושע ריווין
צו עריך מיזהאמס הונדערטסטן געבוירנטאג	אהרן טהארן
פאריז־ער קאמונע און אין ירושה	פאול אווריטש
אנארכיסטן אין קריניק	ישראל סטאלארסקי
דער מענטש פון כולו רוחניות	מרדכי שטיינבערג
יאנוש קארטשאק	שמואל לענט
זיי זענען דארט ניט געווען	לייבל שיפער
ירושלים אין בלוט און פייער	אברהם לוסטיגמאן
וועגן אוטאפיע און פאנטאזיע	יוסף לודען
וועגן וואס מען שרייבט ניט	בן־ציון עפשטיין
ב. שלעווין	א. שטיינברעכער

ליטעראטור

צווישן אייגענע חברים אין שפאניע	סעם דאלאף
בלומען פון ניו יארק	שיע טענענבוים
צוריקגאנג	לוי פאפיערניקאוו
טריאלעטן	איש יאיר
די מאלערין האלינא	
דיקטאטאר	מרים קראנט

פארשידנס: וועגן נייע פילאזאפיע. וועגן עקסטרעמען. מעשטארבן טשארל טשאפלין. וועגן לענאלן טעראר. שטאטישע קיבוצים. אנארכיסטישער קיבוץ סמר אין דער טעלעוויזיע.

באגריסונגען: יואל נאוויקאוו, משה נודלמאן, וועלוול שונאר, מרדכי קראשניץ, יחזקאל האכהויזער, אסתר ערליכמאן, מאני מארקאוויטש און אנדערע.

Cover of 'Problemen,' March-April 1976

The anarchist movement has long been ignored or minimized by American social historians, especially in contrast to other elements in North American labor. Likewise, anarchism has been mystified by utopian writers who appropriate it solely as a spiritual ideal, rather than a movement with a documented history. The historical work accomplished by Cohen, Yanovsky, and Luden, then, might be seen as *genealogical* in the restricted Foucauldian sense of "a historically self-conscious philosophy… which

contributes to the refiguring of political space."[19] Such genealogies serve to undermine the seeming inevitability of the present. Foucault's model of genealogy is not a search for origins, but a technique for studying those elements which "we tend to feel [are] without history."[20] Foucault's work critiqued the idea that sexuality cannot be historicized, my study aims to show that anarchism has persistently been located in a spiritualized, primordial plane, arising spontaneously and impossibly from moments of repression. Akin to Foucault's project, Yiddish genealogies critique "metaphysical" anarchism, about which Wendy Brown writes:

> [Foucault's book] 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' is an account of contemporary values—in particular, progressive history and metaphysical critique—as problematic fictions; it is an alternative story of our commonplaces that aims to reveal their fictive and hence fragile character… For Foucault, genealogy emerges in opposition to progressive history on one side and to metaphysics on the other. Yet it also tenders a genealogical critique of what it opposes insofar as it reveals how each of these practices is implicated in the other: the emergence of genealogy exposes the metaphysics in progressive historiography and the unselfconscious historical framing of any metaphysics.[21]

Yiddish anarchist patterns of establishing genealogy mirror the values and conventions of Jewish familial lineage or *yikhes*, where collective memory deeply shapes identity, than to Foucault's model of genealogy as a critique of metaphysics. ChaeRan Freeze writes, "In Eastern Europe, the concept of *yikhes* evolved from a narrow biological meaning of lineage or genealogy to a prestigious trait that could be acquired through marriage based on scholarly merit, wealth, or political status."[22] Freeze follows the evolution of the concept of y*ikhes* from the Polish Middle Ages, when Hasidic pietists "sought to create 'pure family units' in protest" against the merely rich, rather than the spiritually meritorious. Anarchist *yikhes,* then, establishes radical thought as the continuation of a tradition of critiquing power, bolstered by the lineage of both scriptural texts and the familial prestige of particular figures within the movement.

In *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory,* Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi writes of the tension between the Jewish commandment of remembrance and the more recent development of Jewish historiography. Yerushalmi writes of "those Jews who are still within the enchanted circle of tradition, or those who have returned to it"; these Jews, he continues, "find the work of the historian irrelevant, they seek, not the historicity of the past, but its internal contemporaneity. Addressed directly by the text, the question of how it

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[19] Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 100.

[20] Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 139.

[21] Brown, 100.

[22] ChaeRan Freeze, "Yikhes" entry, *YIVO Encyclopedia*. http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Yikhes

evolved must seem to them subsidiary, if not meaningless."[23] This affective identification with biblical figures occurs cyclically, such as on Passover, when Jews follow the imperative to regard oneself as having personally left Egypt. Thus, Yerushalmi argues, "the historical events of the biblical period remain unique and irreversible," while psychologically "those events are experienced cyclically, repetitively, and to that extent at least, atemporally."[24] The cyclical, affective experience of memory, rather than history, is read by Zohar Weiman-Kelman as suggestive of queer temporality: "Rather than an atemporal repetition compulsion, I want to offer a queer understanding of how the past and the present interact, whereby that which Yerushalmi terms as irreversible atemporality might instead be thought of as *noncontemporaneous contemporaneity,* a concept which opens up a new, more nuanced version of historicity itself, while widening the scope of 'the enchanted circle of tradition.''[25]

The temporality theorized by Yerushalmi and queered by Weiman-Kelman also describes a Jewish anarchist view of history that emphasizes genealogy, *yikhes,* and cultural transmission over rupture and discontinuity. One might be surprised to find in many Yiddish anarchist histories not a refutation or rejection of Jewish memory, but a profound return to foundational texts, mobilizing lineage for legitimacy. The Russian historian and archivist Moshe Goncharuk employs traditional Jewish structures of genealogy throughout the biographical sketches in his history of the Yiddish anarchist press. Goncharuk emphasizes anarchists' families and learned lineages, noting, for example, that the translator Dr. Yakov-Ahrne Merison "originated from a famous rabbinical family, whose *yikhes* descended from the medieval commentator Rashi. Studied in the Slobodker Yeshiva under the tutelage of Hirsh Khayes, one of the most important developers of Musar Hasidism."[26] Merison's wife Katherina Yevzerov-Merison, whose "personality served as Bashevis Singer's heroic prototype for the story 'Yentl the Yeshiva Boy,'" hailed from "an Orthodox *svive*, mastered the Hebrew language through twelve years' study, independently familiar with the Talmud and with Hasidism." Abba Gordin, Goncharuk notes, derived "anarchist convictions from the Prophets." Goncharuk continues, "A characteristic phenomenon of anarchist monthly newspapers was that on the first page, under a subheading, was written Hillel's famous saying from the Pirkei Avot, in Hebrew *im eyn ani li, mi li?* (If I am not for myself, who [is/will be] for me? And if I am for myself, what am I?)" Goncharuk's brief biographies of Jewish anarchists emphasize their prestigious *yikhes* and connections to Jewish religiosity, staying well within the "enchanted circle" of Jewish memory and genealogy. As I argue in Chapter One, this is a very different move from the utopian genres of Zionist literature of the same period. Rather than imagining what was then an unlikely future, the Yiddish anarchists claimed a presence throughout the Jewish past.

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[23] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory,* The Samuel and Althea Stroum Lectures in Jewish Studies (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), p96.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Zohar Weiman-Kelman, "*So the Kids Won't Understand": Inherited Futures of Jewish Women Writers"* (UC Berkeley dissertation, 2012), p11.

[26] Goncharuk, *Tsu der geshikte fun der anarkhistisher prese oyf yidish.* ("On The History Of The Yiddish Anarchist Press," Jerusalem: Problemen, 1997).

Despite its scope and significance, Jewish anarchist thought has been largely unstudied. It has been placed outside of time by the French Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, who posited “an-archy” not as a political ethics but as a primordial moment of possibility.[27] Levinas uses the terms "anarchy" and "the an-archic" in nearly all of his post-war writings. In his 1968 essay "Substitution,” the centerpiece of *Otherwise Than Being*, and "Humanism and An-archy" especially, he exposits the Greek root *arch*, meaning both "to begin" and "to rule." Thus, *an-arch* signifies both a time before politics and the condition of being without political authority. Levinas wields this concept of "an-archy" as a counterpoint to the linear and comprehensible histories of Hegel and Heidegger. Mitchell Verter writes, "Levinas uses anarchy to point towards an ethical responsibility that arises before the political time of history."[28] In Levinas’ thought, then, anarchy occupies a similar place to Torah: always-already abiding, calling from outside of time, an eternally relevant reminder of absolute ethical responsibility. The essay "Substitution" was adapted from a speech Levinas delivered in August 1968. Among its adaptations is his addition of endnotes: "Certain developments have been formulated in a more severe manner for the reader, who can go further than the listener."[29] It is there, buried in endnotes, that Levinas more fully explicates his ideas about anarchism—a shadow text to what Levinas said aloud.[30] In the third footnote, Levinas writes:

> The notion of anarchy we are introducing here has a meaning prior to the political (or antipolitical) meaning currently attributed to it. It would be self-contradictory to set it up as a principle (in the sense that anarchists understand it). Anarchy cannot be sovereign, like an arche. It can only disturb the State -- but in a radical way, making possible moments of negation without any affirmation. The State then cannot set itself up as a Whole. But on the other hand, anarchy can be stated. Yet disorder has an irreducible meaning, as refusal of synthesis.[31]

Levinas asserts that "it would be self-contradictory to set [anarchy] up as a principle (in the sense that anarchists understand it)." He constructs 'anarchy' as a primordial anti-principle, a riptide running through history. For Levinas, anarchy can be understood as a term of refusal, resistance, or critique, “making possible moments of negation without any affirmation.” His model of the State disrupted by anarchy mirrors Foucault’s idea of genealogy, a series of fractures and fissures without agents. This move mystifies anarchism, perhaps even obscuring its material struggles and individual actors. At the same time, Levinas contributes to philosophical understandings of anarchy as occupying a place outside of time, thus imbuing it with ethical weight. Levinas’ reading of the etymology of

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[27] Levinas, 194.

[28] Verter, 67.

[29] Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being,* 194.

[30] In a recent Adornian study, C. D. Blanton uses the term “shadow text” to mean a negative form of intertextuality. *Epic Negation: The Dialectical Poetics of Late Modernism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 2015).

[31] Levinas, 194.

anarchy links authority and temporality, a theme further examined in relation to literature in Chapters Three and Four.

A Theory of Anarchist Diasporism

I have coined the term "anarchist diasporism" to describe the anti-statism of stateless peoples, based upon their specific relationship to time and territory. Anarchist diasporism encompasses both a literary approach and a political worldview written from the position of the non-citizen, ethnic minority, immigrant, or refugee, whose inheritance of diaspora and experience of border-crossing informs their striving for a stateless, non-hierarchical world. This term links the theoretical insights of diaspora studies with the history of anarchism, and suggests that modeling anarchism as primarily a refutation of nineteenth century European nationalism cannot fully describe the Yiddish radical context. Nor does this history of anarchism account for the genealogies constructed by Yiddish anarchists themselves, which were developed from the particularities of Jewish identity and invoked Torah more frequently than Tolstoy. These writers often used Jewish diaspora as a central metonymy for global refugeeism, as in Emma Goldman's essay "A Woman Without a Country": "Every government now arrogates to itself the power to determine what person may or may not continue to live within its boundaries, with the result that thousands, even hundreds of thousands, are literally expatriated… Veritable Wandering Jews, these unfortunates, victims of a strange perversion of human reason that dares question any person's right to exist."[32] Hannah Arendt referred to refugees as "the avant-garde of their people," a term most fitting here if interpreted literally: *avant-garde* was adopted by art critics from military vocabulary, describing the advance guard who expose themselves to the greatest danger, sacrifice themselves at the front lines, and receive the greatest glory if they survive. Arendt links the condition of statelessness with the potential for artistic and intellectual production, which accurately described the process of radicalization among many newcomers post-immigration to the United States.

Anarchist diasporism differs from the "diasporic modernism" discussed by Allison Schachter, which maintains a dichotomy between the status of "national minority" and "stateless peoplehood."[33] Rather than producing a neutral "non-nationalism" or an aspiration to statehood, dislocation and exile informed a rejection of nationalism and a reconsideration of the meaning of diaspora by many Yiddish writers, writing from the position of refugeehood. As Giorgio Agamben writes in his essay on Hannah Arendt's *We Refugees*:

> The paradox here is that precisely the figure that should have incarnated the rights of man par excellence, the refugee, constitutes instead the radical crisis of this concept. [...] That there is no autonomous space within the political order of the nation-state for something like the pure man in himself is evident at least in the fact that, even in the best of cases, the status of the

[32] Goldman, reprinted in *Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader,* 81.

[33] Allison Schachter, *Diasporic Modernisms: Hebrew and Yiddish Literature in the Twentieth Century (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p93.

> refugee is always considered a temporary condition that should lead either to naturalization or to repatriation. A permanent status of man in himself is inconceivable for the law of the nation-state.[34]

Agamben describes the political impossibility of a person maintaining full subjecthood without citizenship. Agamben's concept of the *homo sacer* — the subject too abject to merit sacrificing, and so rendered disposable by the state — echoes Goldman's characterization of the state's "rule by deportation."[35]

The process of immigration was a radicalizing phenomenon. Few East Europeans had heard the word "anarchism" before immigrating to England or the United States. Indeed, the majority of the anarchist movements' members in the United States were Yiddish- and Italian-speaking immigrants, many of whom rejected citizenship.[36] These anarchist refugees reinvented the meaning of diaspora, transforming statelessness into anti-statism without rejecting culture; their attentiveness to the historical and mythic past led them to reinterpret scripture and literary tradition.

Anarchism is frequently posited as a utopian project, deferring realization of "the Idea" to the future. Western and Romance-language literatures have a long tradition of anarcho-utopian novels: Louis-Sébastien Mercier depicts a slave revolution overturning all colonial relations in *L'An 2440, rêve s'il en fut jamais* ("The Year 2440: A Dream If Ever There Was One," published in 1770), and Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974) remains a science fiction classic, to name just two. Most recently, editors of the activist science fiction anthology *Octavia's Brood* have posited: "Whenever we try to envision a world without war, without violence, without prisons, without capitalism, we are engaging in speculative fiction. All organizing is science fiction."[37] Yet utopian Jewish writing is a more strongly-developed Zionist tradition, from Edmund Eysler's *Ein Zukunftsbild* (1885) to Theodore Herzl's *Altneuland* (1902). Sholem Aleichem also began writing a utopian novel, serialized in the Zionist paper *Die Welt* in 1901.[38] The Yiddish anarchists, in contrast, were more committed to the construction of genealogy and a reinterpretation of history, rather than to writing speculatively.

Genealogies need not reify a single moment or place of origin. They do not necessarily presume a homeland or primordial place or moment of origin; in this sense, genealogy is an inherently diasporic genre. A primary tactic of anarchist diasporism is the construction of Jewish genealogies across deep time, dissolving the nationalist consciousness of "before and after" which pivots on the establishment of a state. The claim that revolution or the subsequent birth of a nation can reset time and erase notions of "before" is a powerful way that nationalism regulates people's sense of history. As in

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[34] Agamben, Giorgio. "We Refugees." *Symposium* (1995, No. 49(2), Summer, Pages: 114-119), p116.

[35] Goldman, "A Woman Without a Country," 83.

[36] Zimmer, *The Whole World is Our Country: Immigration and Anarchism in the United States, 1885-1940,* p5.

[37] Walidah Imarisha, introduction, *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements,* 3.

[38] Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, *Booking Passage: Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination,* 270.

Agamben's model, the refugee's statelessness must end in order for his identity to become legible to the state; so must revolution be a liminal and finite period. Anarchist modernism articulated a diasporism of time, rather than territory.[39] Literary *do'ikayt* — literally "hereness," the aesthetic and political philosophy of the Bund[40] — was rooted in the particularities of place, such as botanical detail, cosmopolitan imagery, and urban architecture. Anarchist diasporism differs from *do'ikayt* in its primary exploration of alternative temporalities rather than territories, although the sense of *do'ikayt* is neither mutually exclusive with nor antithetical to anarchist modernism.

Anarchist thought, diasporism, and (projected) indigeneity are profoundly interwoven. The first documented modern usage of the word "anarchy" to designate something positive and other than chaos was in 1777, when Louis-Armand, Baron de Lahontan, described Quapaw Natives of Louisiana as anarchistic in *Nouveaux voyages dans l'Amerique septentionale (New Adventures in North America).*[41] Anarchists drew great political inspiration by imagining time before the nation-state. Peter Kropotkin's classic *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (1902) was based in large part on his anthropological expeditions to study the Sami (Laplanders), described in his third chapter titled "Mutual Aid Among Savages." Their turn towards indigenous and matriarchal societies at once reflected the Orientalism of anthropology in that period—seeking in the exotic Other something they could not find within their own society—and an attempt to mine the past for their own political imaginations. The links between anarchist philosophy and anthropology continue to the present, as with David Graeber's *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (2004), drawn from his field work in Madagascar. Overall, Yiddish anarchists turned towards their own history, rather than imagining the worlds of pre-state Native peoples. There are notable exceptions, however, such as the feminist writing of Dr. Katherina Yevzerov Merison, which draws from anthropological writings on matriarchal societies.

Comradeship and Nurturance: Social Practices of Anarchism

If anarchism is an "ethos of sociality," what does that sociality look like? What forms of community and relationships were idealized, and what practices did anarchists develop to cultivate comradeship? As Jacques Rancière writes, "Human beings are tied together by a certain sensory fabric, a certain distribution of the sensible, which defines their way of being together; and politics is about the transformation of the sensory fabric of 'being

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[39] There are many other territorial anarchist projects, such as autonomous peasants' regions in Ukraine and Zapatistas' villages in Mexico. This project, however, is focused on diasporic anarchism, rather than free land movements.

[40] See Madeleine Cohen's forthcoming dissertation, *Here and Now: The Modernist Poetics of Do'ikayt*. UC Berkeley, 2016.

[41] Louis-Armand, Baron de Lahontan, *Nouveaux voyages dans l'Amerique septentionale* (Amsterdam, 1777). Collection of Oxford University.

together.'"[42] What practices did their movement develop towards the transformation of "being together"?

For the Yiddish anarchists, the ideal human relationship was one of comradeship, a principle at times endowed with near-spiritual intensity. As Emma Goldman described her meeting with the famous French Communard:

> The afternoon with Louise [Michel] was an experience unlike anything that had happened till then in my life. Her hand in mine, its tender pressure on my head, her words of endearment and close comradeship, made my soul expand, reach out towards the spheres of beauty where she dwelt.[43]

For some, such "comradely affection" was the root of a new currency, as people would learn to behave with natural generosity towards each other, unmediated by money.[44] The anarchist commitment to friendship went beyond a utilitarian understanding of alternative kinship as the basis of movement-building. For example, they might view the bonds forged through military service suspiciously, as a utilitarian relation serving "unit cohesion." The anarchist ideal of comradeship was a radical re-ordering of social relations along egalitarian lines. A key aspect of comradeship is the transformation of social relations beyond patriarchal kinship. They strove for this ideal through a variety of models, from collective farming to open love relationships (with attendant ecstasies and heartbreak, as amply expressed in their correspondence).

These anarchist conceptions adapted Romantic views, particularly the comradeship extolled in Walt Whitman's poetry—itself a great inspiration to Yiddish poets.[45] American Romantic discourse upheld comradeship as an extension of spiritualized brotherhood, imbued with intimacy with nature and nation, as Whitman wrote:

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of America,
and along the shores of the great lakes, and all over the prairies;
I will make inseparable cities, with their arms about each other's necks
By the love of comrades,
By the manly love of comrades.[46]

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[42] Jacques Rancière, "Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art." From an edited transcript of a plenary lecture delivered on 20 June 2006 to the symposium, *Aesthetics and Politics: With and Around Jacques Rancière* co-organised by Sophie Berrebi and Marie-Aude Baronian at the University of Amsterdam on 20-21 June 2006.

[43] Goldman, p168.

[44] Recollection by Gustav Landauer's daughter, Brigitte Hausberger, in Paul Avrich's oral history *Anarchist Voices,* p33.

[45] Prager, Leonard. "Walt Whitman in Yiddish." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 1 (1983), 22-35. See also poems by Morris Rosenfeld, Avram Reyzn, and others at the Walt Whitman Archive: http://whitmanarchive.org/about/index.html

[46] Whitman, "A Song." *Leaves of Grass,* 1900.

This "manly love of comrades" anticipated what today might be theorized as queer kinship. Whitman's social vision intermingled the erotic and the patriotic, but his American comradeship looked towards a spiritual plane:

> It is to the development, identification, and general prevalence of that fervid comradeship... that I look for the counterbalance and offset of our materialistic and vulgar American democracy, and for the spiritualization thereof. Many will say it is a dream, and will not follow my inferences: but I confidently expect a time when there will be seen, running like a half-hid warp through all the myriad audible and visible worldly interests of America, threads of manly friendship, fond and loving, pure and sweet, strong and life-long, carried to degrees hitherto unknown..."[47]

At times, comradely love was constructed over and against romantic love: the Yiddish poet Dovid Edelshtat, for example, publicly espoused "free love" as a human right while personally rejecting romance. Saul Yanovsky, literary editor of *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, wrote:

> Were Edelshtat and [the Yiddish poet Yosef] Bovshover ever in love? I don't know. In all probability yes. But I am sure they suppressed it with all their strength as something sinful, as a sort of betrayal against their only love, freedom. Therefore, you would be wasting your time looking for a love poem by Edelshtat.[48]

These Yiddish poets upheld radical love and mutual aid as the highest ideals of anarchism. Some poets such as Moyshe-Leyb Halpern critiqued the Socialist and Communist utilitarian discourses of comradeship, which I further examine in Chapter Three.

Yiddish anarchist social customs were closely linked to cultural production. Their practice of prolific, often florid letter-writing was a social performance of their ideals, filled with effusive declarations of comradeship. Considering the realities of censorship, it was also a demonstration of free speech. Emma Goldman was famous for her prolific letter-writing, producing upwards of ten letters a day. The anarchist historian Max Nettlau, her close friend, wrote to her: "In letters happily, though tip top up to date otherwise, you are eighteenth century, doing honor to the good old art of letter writing, which the wire and telephone have strangled, and this is a good thing, as a thoughtful way of communication by letters is an intellectual act of value of its own, which rapid talk cannot replace."[49] A trove of more than one thousand Yiddish letters was discovered by a woman named Debbie Rose in Toronto. Her great-great-uncle was Leon Malmed, a lover of Emma Goldman's; he kept all of her letters, along with those of his comrades.

Emma Goldman was far from alone in her habits. The Yiddish anarchists as a group left a prolific paper trail. One collection of Yiddish anarchist material is held in the Zionist Archives in Jerusalem: two hundred and seventy-seven documents, mostly correspondence

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[47] Footnote from Walt Whitman's "Democratic Vistas," 1871. Cited in Juan A. Hererro Brasas, *Walt Whitman's Mystical Ethics of Comradeship: Homosexuality and the Marginality of Friendship at the Crossroads of Modernity (*New York: SUNY Press, 2010), p105.

[48] Ori Kritz. *The Poetics of Anarchy: David Edelshtat's Revolutionary Poetry* (Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 1997).

[49] C. Falk, xvi.

between Yosef Luden and Ahrne Thorne, donated and maintained by Moshe Goncharok, the Russian historian and archivist. In August 2012, I spent a few futile days in the National Archives in Jerusalem. The card catalogue promised dozens of volumes of Yiddish anarchist newspapers—but all the copies were lost, and we could find no librarians proficient in Yiddish to help us search. I finally found a large trove of the Israeli anarchists' material history in Israel in the self-storage unit of a young vegan anarchist, David Massey. In plastic binders, he had carefully filed nearly all the issues of *Problemen/Problemot*, the last Yiddish anarchist newspaper published in Israel. He had even saved the wooden-handled stamp of Agudath Shochray Chofesh ("Association of Freedom-Seekers," whose Hebrew name forms the acronym AShUACh, "fir/Christmas tree"), ink still on the rubber. As Alexis Pauline Gumbs writes of her research on Black lesbian poets, "The materials that make this study possible are literally barely salvaged from trashcans, archived by herculean efforts that almost didn't happen. The materialism of this project is intimate with death […]."[50] In her project, as in mine, the material survival of documents outside of national or academic archives testifies to the comradeship of those who preserved it.

The Yiddish anarchists' idealized forms of comradeship mimicked the reproductive and emotional labor performed by women inside and outside of politicized communities. That which was named "mutual aid" and lifted up as a social ideal was in practice often the labor of nurturance already performed by women within and outside of the movement. Mitchell Verter interprets the ancient genealogy/etymology of the word as containing feminist resistance-labor through its original figure, Antigone:

> At its roots, anarchism is already deeply feminist. When we consult Greek literature, we learn that the term 'anarchy' was first used in the active, anti-political sense to describe the behavior of Antigone, a re/sister who rose up against her uncle Creon to rebel against the military logic of fraternity and fratricide, a logic which divides humanity into friends who are loyal to the state and enemies who betray it. Denounced as an anarchist in both Aeschylus' and Sophocles' accounts of her tragedy, Antigone opposes this antagonistic logic in the name of a more ethical mode of human interconnection, one that affirms that we must unconditionally nurture each other, even beyond the moment of death.[51]

The "nurturance" which Verter places at the center of anarchist practice was systematically performed by many anarchist women. Their labor was linked to the beginning of sexology and the reproductive rights movement.[52] This reproductive (and anti-reproductive) labor included Emma Goldman's nursing and midwifery, at one point helping Hilda Adel arrange an abortion.[53] Goldman mentored Margaret Sanger, whose "little magazine" *The Woman*

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[50] Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *We Can Learn to Mother Ourselves: The Queer Survival of Black Feminism 1968-1996 (*Dissertation, Duke University: 2010), p31-32.

[51] Mitchell Verter, "Undoing Patriarchy, Subverting Politics: Anarchism as a Practice of Care," ebook location 1886.

[52] Terence Kissack, *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States, 1895-1917* (Oakland: AK Press, 2008).

[53] Avrich, *Anarchist Voices,* p51.

Rebel adopted (and pluralized) the anarchist slogan "No Gods No Masters."[54] Ben Reitman was a gynecologist primarily serving sex workers in Chicago, and Chaim Weinberg notes the strong presence of Jewish female sex workers at anarchist meetings in Pittsburgh.[55]

Although forms of feminized labor were uplifted rhetorically, and despite the accomplishments of women like Sanger, Goldman, and Yevzerov, the world of the radical *inteligentn* remained a primarily male domain. Norma Fain Pratt notes that "not one woman was permanently employed on a [Yiddish] radical paper as part of the editorial staff."[56] While women's administrative labor was often made invisible, Anna Margolin was an editor or treasurer at *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*[57], and the paper *Der Tog* was remarkable for its women's pages. Under the editorship of Saul Yanovsky, *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* published Anna Margolin, Celia Dropkin, Fraydl Shtok, and short story writer Yente Serdatzky.

Despite calling for the equality and freedom of all people as sovereign individuals, many male radicals' views of female writers remained essentialist. In a florid, Yiddish-language review of her memoir Living My Life, Yosef Cohen characterized Goldman's anarchism as primarily driven by her "passionate nature," rather than a "scientific" anarchism. Though he commends her bravery and energetic writing style, Cohen also complains that Goldman is hyper-sexual, remarks on her blonde hair and amorous "pet names," and seems to register shame at her rise to prominence in the United States. In short, respectability politics are strongly expressed throughout his extensive review of her memoirs. Yet, in a note written in pencil on the copy held at the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam, Goldman's partner Sasha Berkman remarked: "On the whole, very good. S."[58] In a 1915 article also published in *FAS,* Aaron Glants Leyeles emphasized the biological materiality of women's bodies:

> By nature women are not egotistical… By nature women are bound organically to other lives. Out of her body new life comes. Another kind of knowing exists for her. She has a second dimension and understands nature. She is a mother in the deepest sense of the word.[59]

Both Leyeles and Cohen maintain that women's labor is in fact a kind of involuntary by-product of their passionate or compassionate bodies. Despite women's contributions as writers, organizers, nurses, doctors, nurturers, and partners, this attitude remained prominent amongst left-wing male Yiddish intellectuals of the period, who did not seem to reflect similarly on the nature of men.

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[54] Jean H. Baker, *Margaret Sanger: A Life of Passion* (Hill and Wang: 2012), p76.

[55] Weinberg, *Forty Years in the Struggle,* 120.

[56] Norma Fain Pratt, "Culture and Radical Politics: Yiddish Women Writers, 1890-1940," *American Jewish History* 70 (September 1980), 81.

[57] Her exact position remains unclear in Reuben Iceland's memoir *Fun undzer friling: literarishe zikhronot un portretn* (New York: Inzel, 1954).

[58] Yosef Cohen, "*Emma Goldman vi zi zet zikh aleyn* (Emma Goldman as She Sees Herself"). Review of Goldman's two-volume memoirs. *Fraye Arbeter Shtime,* 1931.

[59] A. Glants, "*Kultur un di froy," Fraye Arbayter Shtime,* October 30, 1915. Translation by Kenyon Zimmer, 115.

Etymologies of Diaspora

My project seeks to contribute new understandings of anarchist views of diaspora.[60] Having defined *anarchism* in its philosophical and practical aspects, the following section surveys the history of diasporist discourse, etymology, and language politics. Following chapters illustrate how anarchist diasporism differs from other Jewish views of diaspora. I point to further questions beyond the scope of this introduction, such as the relationship between cultural diaspora and globalized labor in the present.

The term 'diaspora' is often used to signify movement from a place of origin to a place of current location, with the implication that the 'homeland' is continually re-inscribed into the landscape of present dwelling. "Filipino diaspora," "Puerto Rican diaspora," etc: these phrases, in common usage, refer to a twentieth-century narrative of migration or displacement from a specified territory, rather than a cosmology or political worldview that is inherently diasporic or assumes statelessness as the substratum of being. While 'diaspora' signified a dangerous lack of origin in the nineteenth century, and rootless cosmopolitanism in the twentieth century, it is now used mostly to refer to territorial origins or emphasize ethnic commonality. Despite this common usage, the term has a far greater cultural complexity and theological significance.

Diaspora was a major organizing concept throughout Jewish political discourse in the modern era, from Bundism to Zionism. The concept remains central to Jewish political discourse to the present day; however, the word *diaspora* was not used in poetical discourse in Jewish languages. Indeed "*diaspora*," with its ancient etymology, retains a mystique while functioning as a descriptor of hyper-modernity. There has been a strong recent turn towards diasporism across several disciplines: in Queer Studies, Jafari Allen and David Eng use the term to describe alternative kinships and transnational communities. In Black womanist thought, Alexis Pauline Gumbs and M. Jacqui Alexander model diaspora as both spiritualized and politicized experience. In Jewish Studies, diaspora is increasingly framed not as traumatic, but as a positive and generative category: Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin describes it as "the axis that determined Jewish rituals and communal existence itself as meaningful,"[61] and Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin locate diaspora as the "generation and ground of Jewish identity." Throughout much of this discourse, Native identity is invoked as the inherent inverse of diasporism—though indigenous voices remain absent and uncited, and many Native cultures are diasporic today. I argue that diasporic anarchist and indigenous worldviews (such as critiques of statism) can be productively read alongside each other, despite the history of a discursive binary between those schools of thought.

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[60] I am grateful to the organizers and presenters of the conference "Yiddish/Hebrew Literary Diasporas" at Inalco and Medem, Paris, June 2016. Participating in this event helped to clarify the place and possibilities of anarchist diasporic thought in Jewish Studies.

[61] Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile, History, and the Nationalization of Jewish Memory: Some Reflections on the Zionist Notion of History and Return." *Journal of Levantine Studies,* Vol. 3, No. 2, Winter 2013, p40.

The first historic "Diaspora" began in the eighth century BCE, when the northern Israelite kingdom of Samaria was conquered by Assyrians and many deportees were absorbed into the general Assyrian population. The diaspora population grew in the third and fourth centuries BCE; during this period, scripture began to be canonized and a class of scribes emerged. The Temple in Jerusalem for the Israelite God became the site of festival pilgrimage, binding together Israelites in the diaspora and Jerusalem.[62] Sacrifice at any site other than the temple in Jerusalem was prohibited by rabbinic interpretations of Deuteronomy.[63] The ideology of the Temple as religious center also served as a uniting force representing monism, as the historian and priest Josephus wrote: "One temple for the one God."[64] Shaye J. D. Cohen notes that while pre-exilic Israel was a tribal society living on ancestral land, Second Temple Judaism emerged as primarily a religion; the institution of conversion, for example, allowed foreigners to gain "citizenship," whereas pre-exilic Judaism had no prohibition on intermarriage.[65] The shift from tribal society to religion was a function of the diaspora, and prayer and ritual developed which could be practiced without the Temple.

From its premodern linguistic origins, the concept of diaspora is intertwined with politics and theology—which each have quite different valences in Jewish and non-Jewish languages. The Greek word *diaspora* (from *dia*, thoroughly and *speirein*, to sow) specifically designates the Jewish "scattering" and is related to the modern English words *sperm* and *dispersal*. In antiquity, however, there was no such connotation with male seed.[66] It is a passive, agentless term, mystifying the calculated Greek politics. In contrast, the Latin word *exile* emphasizes not passive absence, but forced removal from one's country. The word *exodus*—going out of a place, *ex + hodos*—is the Latin translation (via Greek) for the second book of the Hebrew Bible, *Sefer Shemot*. *Exodus* implies agency on the part of those who leave, whereas the Hebrew word explicitly means a collective of people who are sent away. The Hebrew word *galut* (גלות) is found in post-biblical Aramaic and in the non-canonical Book of Maccabees, written during the Greek Seleucid Empire of the second century BCE. One of the first occurrences of the term appears in the Yerushalmi Talmud: "Whithersoever Israel went as *exiles*, the Divine Majesty went with them."[67] This passage creates a diasporic theology, claiming that God accompanies migration and joins in the condition of displacement.

The Yiddish word *goles* reflects the Ashkenazi pronunciation of the Hebrew noun ותגל. Its political usage from the nineteenth century on often has a more positive cast in the

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[62] See Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

[63] Deuteronomy 12:1-32.

[64] Cohen, p101.

[65] Cohen, p9.

[66] Daniel Boyarin, *A Traveling Homeland,* p7.

[67] For cross-references to all biblical usages of the word *galut,* see *Jastrow's Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature:* 1. to be uncovered. (Tosefta Mikvah) open, revealed. ("it is open and known to me," Sabb. 55) 2. to become bare of inhabitants (Jer. I) 3. to leave home, to go into exile (Y. Taan., "whithersoever Israel went as exiles, the Divine Majesty went with them," שגלו מ'כך...) 5. (Macc. II) to flee to the City of Refuge 7. to banish, carry into captivity (Macc. 12).

Yiddish secular world: a *golesnik* is a diasporist who seeks to make a home in the country of their birth, especially in Europe. Its attendant term is do'ikayt or hereness, the political stance taken by the Bund and other pre-war Ashkenazi liberation movements that sought Jewish political representation in their native countries, rather than advocating immigration to Erets Yisroel, the Land of Israel.[68] Arguments between Jewish nationalists and transnationalists in the late nineteenth century lent greater political charge to these terminologies: a famous exchange of letters between diaspora nationalist Simon Dubnov and the spiritual Zionist Ahad Ha'am (literally "one of the people," a reference to Genesis 26:10; pen name of Asher Ginzburg) concerned *Shelilat ha-galut*, "Negation of the Diaspora."[69] In search of a more neutral term, the Hebrew scholar Simon Rawidowicz preferred to use *tfutsot* (dispersion) to describe "Jewish existence outside the land of Israel as a historic empirical fact, free of an attitude of curse or blessing." His attempt to separate politics from language was itself a political act, responding to those who devalued Jewish diasporic life with denigrating usage of galut.[70] Today, *tfutsot* is used commonly in modern Israeli Hebrew, a change dating to the late 1950s, when the Israeli Education Ministry chose the phrase *Yehudey ha-tfutsot* to use in its literature, rather than *Yehudey ha-gola.*[71]

Twentieth-century North American Zionism in particular narrated a continuity between Jewish political nationalism and Jewish historically religious redemptive aspirations. An example of this may be found in the Federation of American Zionists' 1903 journal, which linked pre-war political Zionism with pietistic lamentations:

> 'Beloved are Israel,' say the Rabbis, 'for whithersoever they are exiled the Shechinah [Divine Presence] is exiled with them.' Thus the Jewish nation, even when enshrouded in the intense darkness of the night of exile, never felt itself an outcast from the presence of its God. And to many learned and pious Jews it was and still is the exile of the Shechinah which constituted 'sorrows's crown of sorrow.' One may read even now with deep emotion those sublime pathetic outpourings of the heart; pietists praying and yearning for the triumphant restoration not of themselves, not even of collective Israel, but of the Shechinah. For do not the divine splendor and the might and the majesty suffer a continual eclipse as long as Israel suffers and moans in a land not his? The exile of the Shechinah is the divine sorrow over-brooding the tragedy of the Jew, merely hinted at in the Talmud, but fully developed and given almost the definiteness and seriousness of dogma by the pietists and mystic dreamers of latter ages.[72]

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[68] The term *do'ikayt* was not used by the earliest Bundist writers, and its provenance remains debated.

This is distinct from religious anti-Zionist movements (most famously Neturei Karta) that oppose the State of Israel because they believe that all government is a form of spiritual hubris, and insist Jews must dwell in diaspora until Messiah/Moshiakh arrives.

[69] See Ahad Ha'am, "The Negation of the Diaspora," in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader,* ed. Arthur Hertzberg (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959), 270-77.

[70] Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism,* xx.

[71] Ibid.

[72] *The Maccabean,* publication of the Federation of American Zionists, March 1903, p172.

The cover illustration of this publication portrays grief for the Jewish expulsion as a solitary man in modern Orthodox garb comforted by a hellenistically-styled Shekhinah, as a sunrise illuminates a man and ox plowing on the horizon:

Depictions of diaspora became naturalized through popular artifacts such as greeting cards. One postcard for Rosh Hashone (Jewish New Year) in 1904 was illustrated with the painting *Goles,* by the Łódź painter Szmul Hirszenberg (1865-1908):[73]

[73] Mirjam Rajner, "Szmul Hirszenberg" entry, *YIVO Encyclopedia*: http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Hirszenberg_Szmul

Hirszenberg's original painting memorialized the Kishinev massacre of 1903, but it portrayed people trudging through a timeless, snowy backdrop, and is known only through black and white reproductions. This tinted color version produced for popular circulation visually reinscribes recent experience within the "enchanted circle of tradition," as Yerushalmi termed it.[74] The use of Hirszenberg's atemporal image on a New Year greeting card heightens the identification with stateless time in daily life. Hirszenberg's painting of communal dispossession and the *Maccabean*'s cover image of solitary grief both contributed to the popular visual vocabulary of Zionism. Early twentieth century images foregrounded the tragedies of displacement in Europe, connecting biblical themes with contemporary dress and postures of grief. Only later did Zionist art develop travel-poster images of abundant, fertile landscapes.[75]

To this study of diaspora, redemption, and temporality, Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin adds another layer. In "Exile, History, and the Nationalization of Jewish Memory: Some Reflections on the Zionist Notion of History and Return," Raz-Krakotzkin argues that the Zionist narrative of return is dependent upon an assumption that Jews had existed outside of history until the establishment of the State of Israel, while other peoples "apparently possessed a putatively continuous history."[76] He traces that model of history to Christian polemics foreign to Judaism:

> …Christian authors developed a notion of a type of historical progress, from the Old to the New Testament, with a consequent distinction between those who were under grace and those who were outside it. In this connection the concept of exile involved a definite rejection of "history" as the context of salvation, as an essential manifestation of "truth." The Jews were perceived as an anachronism, a relic of the past that existed in the present. The perception embodied in the phrase "return to history" follows, therefore, from the basic Christian attitude concerning the Jews and their destiny… It assumed the existence of a significant history from which the

[74] Yerushalmi, 96.
[75] See, for example, the iconic 1936 "Visit Palestine" poster by Franz Kraus.
[76] Raz-Krakotzkin, 40.

> Jews alone were excluded. In the Christian view the Jewish exile was indeed a retreat from history defined as the unfolding of grace. Christianity saw the exile of the Jews as evidence of and punishment for their rejection of the Gospel, which consequently led to their exit from history. The Jews, in their stubbornness, had taken themselves out of history when they refused to accept the Gospel. Christian authors also claimed that history would reach its fulfillment only when the Jews returned to it—that is, when they accepted Christianity and the truth of the Gospel. This is evidence of the Christian desire for the Jews to return to history—in other words, that they convert to Christianity.[77]

Raz-Krakotzkin positions the Zionist narrative of return not as an extension of Jewish exilic theology, but as an appropriation. A key point in Raz-Krakotzkin's analysis is the definition of exile as substratum of the world, not an experience of (Jewish) difference:

> On the most basic level, the term "exile" indeed referred to the dispersal of the Jews as well as to their politically and socially inferior status. Yet this inferior status is only one aspect of the concept, and in most cases the understanding of the term was not reduced to the lack of sovereignty and existence outside the land of Israel— although these were certainly important aspects in the images of redemption. It was regarded as evidence of the condition of the entire world. Exile refers to a state of absence, points to the imperfection of the world, and conserves the desire for its replacement. According to several authorities (mainly kabbalists), it describes the state of the deity—that is to say, God's exile from history. According to this Jewish viewpoint, the exilic existence was not outside history; rather, it embodied the very condition of history. The Jews manifested the condition of history; they were not outside history! They certainly did not wish to return to "history" as such. The concept of exile engendered a historical perception that permeated Talmudic literature—both in halacha and Midrash, two genres that defined and expressed Jewish communal institutions and Jewish self-image. Exile served as the axis that determined Jewish rituals and communal existence itself as meaningful.[78]

Like the Boyarins, Raz-Krakotzkin considers diaspora as the determining aspect of Jewish experience. Later chapters show how, following this view, Yiddish anarchists (most explicitly, Yosef Luden and Emma Goldman) advanced the same idea, that nationalism is antithetical to traditional Judaism. Raz-Krakotzkin contrasts Jewish and Christian historiographical temporalities in his argument:

> It is important to emphasize that from the Jewish point of view, the adoption of this concept of history expressed a renunciation, even an abnegation, of

[77] Raz-Krakotzkin, 42.
[78] Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, 40.

> the Jewish position in the Jewish-Christian polemic—the belief that the world is in exile—and an acceptance of the Christian view according to which the world was in an era of grace, though in a secularized form, a new kind of "rational" grace.[79]

Of course, there were differing views on Jews as outside history: the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig, for example, championed Jewish diasporic outsideness from Christian and national history, which was linked to his anti-Zionism. Yet in positioning diaspora as a positive, generative, and meaningful alternative to Christian models of the perfected world, Raz-Krakotzkin reclaims the term in resonance with other contemporary theological diasporisms, such as M. Jacqui Alexander's Afro-Caribbean spiritual ecology.[80]

Political discourse has long constructed Jewish diasporism as the inversion of Native North American indigeneity. Yet Judaism has aspects of religious indigeneity, such as the spiritualization of particular geographic sites (Mt. Sinai, the Tomb of the Patriarchs), and Native peoples have experienced diaspora through the Trail of Tears and other governmental displacements. The binary of Jew/Native is interrogated in Jonathan Boyarin's book *The Unconverted Self: Jews, Indians, and the Identity of Christian Europe* (1998), which underscores the connections between the Inquisition in Europe and colonial expansion in the New World. Comparing the image of Jews as "the Others within" against New World Natives as "the Others without," Boyarin documents the presence and image of Jews in Europe before 1492. In nineteenth-century European diaspora discourse, Jewish stateless ethnic minorities were seen as simultaneously indigenous to Europe and without origin.

The figure of "the other within/without" echoes through the work of Giorgio Agamben, who describes the Nazi concentration camps as an absolute biopolitical space of exception, a space inside the nation born of martial law whose inhabitants are stripped to 'bare life': "Whoever entered the camp moved in a zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit, in which the very concepts of subjective right and juridical protection no longer made any sense."[81] Inside the camp, Jewish inhabitants are rendered stateless within the nation. Mark Rifkin's article "Indigenizing Agamben" critiques "the persistent inside/outside tropology [Agamben] uses to address the exception, specifically the ways it serves as a metaphor divorced from territoriality." Rifkin writes that "the production of national space depends on coding Native peoples and lands as an exception,"[82] replacing the European Jew as figure of political instability, "[Natives] managed as residents—as a kind of racialized, endangered, or enculturated body—on land that self-evidently constitutes part of the nation."[83] Rifkin adapts Agamben's theory to the North American context, describing the unfulfilled sovereignty of Natives as a permanent "exception." In contrasting the concentration camp with the Native American reservation system as "nomos of the modern" (a kind of hidden matrix at the heart of a system), Rifkin

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[79] Raz-Krakotzkin, 43.

[80] See, for example, *Pedagogies of Crossing* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

[81] Agamben, *Homo Sacer,* 97.

[82] Rifkin, 95.

[83] Rifkin, 99.

maintains the discursive opposition between Natives as "others within" and Jews as "others without" which Boyarin historicized.

As contemporary philosophers of statelessness, Rifkin and Agamben are important theoretical interlocutors for diasporic anarchists. Agamben and Rifkin's writing on Jewish and Native subjects living in "states of exception" resonate with Arendt's description of her fellow German Jewish exiles in 1943: "Apparently nobody wants to know that contemporary history has created a new kind of human being—the kind that are put in concentration camps by their foes and in internment camps by their friends."[84] Agamben, Arendt, and Rifkin each theorize statelessness in ways quite resonant with anarchist critiques of power, borders, and nations as spaces of exclusion and violence. Although they do not take up the vocabulary or history of anarchism—and they take up questions of space rather than time—there are strong conceptual and philosophical resonances between their approaches.

Like Jews, European Romani peoples are constructed as "Others within." The process of discerning their "origins" was linguistic deduction, primarily through the work of philologists. In the case of Romani — in many ways Yiddish's "proximate Other"— the Sanskrit components of the language were discursively used to reify India as homeland.[85] In the contemporary period, about 12,000 Roma migrated to France from Bulgaria and Romania after those nations were admitted to the EU. France has deported about 20,000 Roma to Bulgaria and Romania between 2008-2010,[86] confounding the European Union's rhetoric of citizenship and mobility rights.[87] As the situation of French Roma and Rifkin's readings of Agamben show, the discourse of diaspora and indigeneity as internal exile remains unsettled.

The use of "diaspora" in contemporary queer theory parallels nineteenth century usage in its refusal to reify territorial origins. Queer theorist David Eng suggests "what might be gained politically by reconceptualizing diaspora not in conventional terms of ethnic dispersion, filiation, and biological traceability, but rather in terms of queerness, affiliation, and social contingency." He further queers the category of diaspora as "providing new ways of contesting traditional family and kinship structures—of reorganizing national and transnational communities based not on origin, filiation, and genetics but on destination, affiliation, and the assumption of a common set of social practices or political commitments."[88] This model of diaspora as a generative political affiliation, rather than the passive result of catastrophe, might also describe the communities of readers created through poetry in a minor language.

In Jafari Allen's introduction to the *GLQ* issue "Black/Queer/Diaspora," he discusses diaspora as variously "a genealogical matrix of the present moment" and "dynamic, unsettled," emphasizing human networks of connection rather than territorial space or

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[84] Arendt, *We Refugees,* p70.

[85] See, for example, Alaina Lemon's *Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Post-Socialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000). Lemon describes how European and Russian philologists emphasized the Sanskrit components of the language, often over more common words, in the preparation of dictionaries and syllabi, altering core vocabularies.

[86] "France Begins Controversial Roma Deportations." *Der Spiegel,* August 19, 2010.

[87] See, for example, the work of Pam Alldred and Alexandra Oprea.

[88] Eng, 4.

"origins."[89] In this usage, "diaspora" describes a non-essentialist identity that remains connected with the transnational movement of oneself and one's ancestors. Allen casts the social, even erotic, aspect of diaspora as resistance: its members are "stretching toward a loving global embrace," asking "how many friends can we wrap ourselves around... how many dunes to cross, our bodies aching with desire?"[90] Allen's queer diaspora is neither the same as the earlier European paradigm of statelessness, nor is it theologically saturated, as with *goles* discourse. However, Allen engages and contributes to a genealogy valorizing diaspora as a radical alternative to nationalism—perhaps even suggesting, to update Arendt, that queers are "the avant-garde of their people."

The term "globalization" first appeared in print in 1959 — a modern word to describe a phenomenon perceived as new. Not an expulsion accompanied by the weeping Divine, nor referring to historical trade and slavery routes, *globalization* describes the transnational outsourcing of labor, rather than the import of slaves or servants, among other phenomena. The globalization of customer service is facilitated by electronic communications, paradigmatically in call centers, with their intimacy of conversation. Dale Hudson terms their workers "nonimmigrant immigrants":[91]

> Call centers mask locations and synchronize temporalities... Indian customer service operators [...] "neutralize" their accents into "global English," work night shifts that correspond with business days elsewhere, perform affective labor of customer service, including business etiquette and chitchat about everyday issues on the other side of the world, and adopt alias names after intensive business and cultural training. Unlike physical migrations to the Silicon Valleys of the territorial United States, migrations of [customer service operators] are digitally mediated. Call centers expand the implications of the legal category of "nonimmigrant immigrant," producing complexities and contradictions, evident in terms such as "virtual migrations" and "immobile mobility."[92]

Globalization is a desacralized diaspora: the new diasporist is attended not by the Sacred as a sign of the far homeland, but by the currency of a home state; rather than paying homage to ancestors through symbols and offerings, that currency is deposited back into national banks. The globalized worker often performs economic labor *for* the homeland without physically immigrating, rather than performing the spiritual work of *remembering* a homeland after displacement, migration or expulsion. Whereas diaspora-time is bound up in memory -- ancestral time, indebtedness to the place of "origin," remaining bound to cycles of ancient time through the practice of memorialization—globalization is constructed without temporal memory, but based upon economic projections. Globalization may aspire to transform workers into "world citizens," without

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[89] Allen, 215.

[90] Allen, 237.

[91] Dale Hudson, "Undesirable Bodies and Desirable Labor: Documenting the Globalization and Digitization of Transnational American Dreams in Indian Call Centers," *Cinema Journal* 49 (2009), pp. 82-102.

[92] Hudson, p83.

requiring physical immigration. However, it may also create economic "internal displacement": workers remaining in India are paid in Indian currency while acting as North American employees, yet their employers remain exempt from North American labor laws and minimum wage requirements.

In "Diaspora: Generation and Ground of Jewish Identity," Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin call for "a notion of Jewish identity that recuperates its genealogical moment — family, history, memory, and practice — while it problematizes claims to autochthony and indigenousness as the material base of Jewish identity."[93] Boyarin and Boyarin argue against Jewish claims to Middle Eastern autochthony, a word which stems from the ancient Greek αύτός *autos,* or self, and χθών *khthon,* soil — thus, "people sprung from earth itself." It describes the belief that a people are the original inhabitants of a country, as opposed to settlers who entered the territory from elsewhere. In Greek mythology, autochthones are mortals believed to have sprung from the earth, stones, and trees, and remain rooted in that particular earth. Boyarin and Boyarin's diasporism polemicizes against a Zionism established upon ideas of Jewish indigeneity to Jerusalem/Israel. Yet a discussion of diaspora and movement need not create a binary opposition between diasporic and indigenous religions, and the Boyarins do not cite any Native writers for alternative understandings of indigenous identity and thought. Many peoples are simultaneously indigenous (born from and bound to the sacred particularity of their landscape) and diasporic (their cultures live in multiple communities), through political processes of dispossession such as the Trail of Tears, the forced removal of Natives from the southeastern United States to west of the Mississippi that began in 1830.

Gestures of diaspora orient the individual's body in space, for example, Jews' praying in the direction of Jerusalem and Muslims' prostrations towards Mecca. As Juana Maria Rodriguez writes, "Gestures reveal the inscription of social and cultural laws, transforming our individual movements into an archive of received social behaviors and norms that reveal how memory and feeling are enacted and transformed through bodily practices. As we produce these affective and deeply political forms of corporeality, we are likewise subjugated through the relations of power that they also expose."[94] Gestures of prayer are an embodiment of diaspora, locating the individual within political space (oriented beyond one's immediate national position), while spiritualizing the geography of the world. The spiritual imperative to align the movements of the individual body with the movements of the cosmos is not inherent to explicitly diasporic theologies. Mescalero Apaches pattern the trajectory of their motions after the direction of the sun: from spinning wheels to the gesture of salting food, everything moves "sunwise."[95] By following celestial paths in the movements of their daily lives, they unite their own work with the cycles of the universe, becoming co-creators of nature. In this worldview, no movement is mundane; human paths are all linked to the movements of the cosmos, from the smallest domestic act to the grandest ritual ceremony. As Jacqui Alexander writes, "It is this dailiness that instigates the

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[93] Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin. "Diaspora: Generation and Ground of Jewish Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 19:4 (1993), p714.

[94] Juana María Rodríguez., *Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), p5.

[95] Claire R. Farrer, *Living Life's Circle: Mescalero Apache Cosmovision.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press), 1991.

necessary shifts in consciousness, which are produced because each act, and each moment of reflection of that act, brings a new and deepened meaning of self in intimate concert with the Sacred."[96]

Such attention to directionality of one's movements is widespread among North American indigenous peoples. The Arapaho similarly connect their movements to the landscape, placing navel cord bundles in the earth and orienting their living spaces towards this central point. For a person to lose his or her navel bundle is disastrous, causing her to wander without direction. Some Arapahos theorized that European colonizers roamed west, wreaking destruction, because their movements are not centered in the world: because they have not placed their umbilical cords, they cannot "generate the right movement." A great insult in Arapaho culture is to call someone *3iik* or *3iikonehii*, or *ghost skeleton*—a "false person" who wanders with undirected movements, sowing trouble.[97] Diaspora, then, may be embodied in daily gestures of worship; it may demand a compass for orientation towards sacred space, or the memorializing of loss through ritual, but it is not the exclusive providence of diasporic religion.

Unnuanced use of the word "diaspora" can risk both glamorizing it and rendering it synonymous with trauma. In his travelogue-novel, Yiddish poet Yankev Glatshteyn writes sardonically, after speaking with a man who waxed romantic about "a diapason[98] in a Jewish mode, summoning Jews home from the far-flung diaspora": "Diaspora! Diapason! Lovely musical words. But wouldn't the words of Jeremiah, if only he had known them, better have expressed his sentiment? 'A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel is weeping for her children.[99]'" Likewise, Black feminist poet Alexis Pauline Gumbs urges us to remember the dispossessions described by the word 'diaspora':

> Diaspora, rising into political and academic vogue as a heritage-specific way to describe the globalization that we scholars, we activists, we who rush to say something brilliant, something total, something true, has become a hot commodity and has turned those of us who sell this theory into commodities as well. Thus the relevance, thus the treachery of the particularity called Black or African, diaspora. Diaspora, a name to describe the manner in which people have been scattered such that they become ownable, killable, and unmournable; diaspora, a state of absolute dispossession has, in our desperation for political and academic coherence, become property. Diaspora has become a way to assign naturalized properties to displaced people, indeed to own people, containing trauma in a portable transnationalized package.[100]

In his recent book *A Traveling Homeland: The Babylonian Talmud as Diaspora*, Daniel Boyarin defines diaspora in cultural terms, not the abject "state of absolute dispossession."

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[96] Alexander, p307.

[97] Jeffrey D. Anderson, *The Four Hills of Life: Northern Arapaho Knowledge and Life Movement,* p84.

[98] Glatshteyn is punning on "diapason," which is a just octave in Pythagorean tuning for a musical instrument.

[99] Glatshteyn, *The Glatstein Chronicles*, 34.

[100] Gumbs, "Black Feminine Domestic," 116.

Boyarin writes, "I am proposing a very different approach to the question of diaspora: namely, diaspora as a particular kind of cultural hybridity and as a mode of analysis rather than as an essential thing. […D]iaspora is most usefully mobilized as a synchronic condition by which human groups are related to one another in space; they may, and frequently do, have an origin in an actually shared past but need not and, moreover, need not even have a story of such a shared—traumatic—past."[101] Boyarin's definition here contains elements of the other diasporisms surveyed, such as Jafari Allen's emphasis on non-traumatic and generative connection. However, in defining the Talmud as primary producer of diasporic culture, other elements are excluded: women's intellectual and domestic labor, foodways, song traditions, vernacular prayer, nonterritorial languages, etc. In centering the intellectual production of male elites, questions of gender and class may be elided.

The migrations, displacements, and diasporic politics theorized in Yiddish anarchists' writing and poetry speak directly to contemporary experience. This year, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 65.3 million people were displaced due to war, migration, and environmental disasters. That figure rose from 59.5 million in 2014 and doubled from five years ago. This means that 1 in every 113 people is now a refugee, seeking asylum, or internally displaced.[102] As aiding refugees becomes criminalized in the United States and elsewhere, many anarchist groups have organized to practice mutual aid in border zones.[103] In examining and documenting *anarchist diasporism* of the past century, I suggest that recovering a multiplicity of interpretations of diaspora is itself a generative position.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter One, "Genealogies of Stateless Anti-Statism," identifies and documents anarchist diasporism as a trend in Jewish political thought. It establishes how Yiddish anarchism differs from non-Jewish iterations in Europe and North America, particularly the ways Yiddish writers theorize historical Jewish statelessness and anti-statism. Understanding and historicizing this anti-teleological worldview provide a foundation for subsequent chapters' study of anarchist diasporism in Yiddish poetry, through such literary practices as bending time and imagining history before, after and beyond the state—imaginative gestures already present in Jewish anarchist theory. I offer close readings of the genealogies constructed by Saul Yanovsky, Rabbi Yankev Meir Zalkind, Yosef Luden, and Yosef Cohen—each of whom edited a Yiddish anarchist newspaper—and the anarcha-feminism of Dr. Katherina Yevzerov and Emma Goldman. This research attends to the interweaving of anarchism with varied aspects of Jewish thought: Zalkind and Luden most

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[101] Daniel Boyarin, *A Traveling Homeland: The Babylonian Talmud as Diaspora* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 4.

[102] "Record 65.3 Million People Were Displaced Last Year: UNHCR," June 20 2016. *The World Post/Huffington Post.*

[103] Volunteers are ticketed for providing water jugs at the U.S.-Mexico border. Marc Lacey, "Water Drops for Migrants: Kindess, or Offense?" *New York Times,* September 26, 2010.
Patrick Strickland, "Greek Anarchists Organise for Refugees as 'State Fails,'" *Al Jazeera,* January 19 2016.

deeply engage with Torah and Talmud (Zalkind's translations made talmudic labor law accessible for workers); Yanovsky and Cohen draw from the vagaries of Jewish history; while Yevzerov and Goldman confront Jewish patriarchal power.

Chapter Two, "Language is Migrant": Anarchist Language Politics, examines Jewish anarchist language politics through a few case studies and through discourse analysis. Was there an anarchist discourse of linguistic nationalism as in other Jewish movements, like Reform liturgical usage of German and Bundist construction of Yiddish as an international workers' language? How did Yiddish editors strategize minor language usage in an era of surveillance and censorship? What forms of social relations were cultivated in this minority language communities, and what was the vocabulary of comradeship? To approach these questions, I first look at the linguistic theories of Alexander Harkavy, the author of best-selling dictionaries and letter-writing templates (*brivnshteler).* Renowned for his linguistic contributions, Harkavy was also a prolific translator of anarchist texts and developed a philosophy of language evolution strongly informed by his anarchist worldview. In considering the strategic usages of Yiddish, I examine the language politics in the key 1918 Supreme Court free speech case *Abrams vs. United States,* which prosecuted the editors of *Frayhayt* for producing a bilingual broadside against military intervention. Comparing what was written in English versus in Yiddish, the pamphlet is a case study in what could and could not be said in each context. I also discuss the backlash against Yiddish from other "universalist" Jewish radicals such as Emma Goldman, who denied her knowledge of Yiddish while also speaking it. Finally, I survey the differences and overlap in how anarchist Modernist journals utilized minor language aesthetics, particularly code-switching between English and Yiddish in personal correspondence, letters to the editor, and editorial statements. Together, these case studies provide a textured view of anarchist language politics, practical usage, and personal identification.

Chapter Three, "The Anarchism of Time: Comparative Temporalities in Yiddish and English Sacco-Vanzetti Poems," examines the presence and persistence of anarcho-syndicalism in Yiddish poetry from the Proletarian poets to modernist responses to the Sacco-Vanzetti trial. Beginning with the Labor poets, also known as the *Svetshop* or Proletarian poets, I discuss the role of the anarchist press in the development of immigrant social worlds. Through close readings of a selection of *Svetshop* poems, I examine the poetics and political valences of temporality, particularly their utopian futurities and critique of capitalist time. Despite their lack of anthologization in comparison to other Yiddish literary movements, I argue that the Proletarian poets informed the work of later, more "experimental" writers. Two archetypal elements of Proletarian poetry—alternative temporality and imagery of garment workers' needles—were reinvented in Yiddish Modernist poems. The sheer volume of literature on the theme of the Sacco-Vanzetti case demonstrates the ongoing engagement with anarchist history and thought among writers across the Left after the *svetshop* period. The second half of this chapter considers how archetypal Proletarian images and rhetoric were reinvented by modernists: Halpern deconstructs the idealized brotherhood of workers, and Glatshteyn's longer verse weaves surreal and mythic imagery around documentary presentation of events in Sacco and Vanvetti's case. The poetic structures of their work, through repetition and kaleidoscopic montage, embody alternative temporalities beyond the linear and punitive temporality of the state. Following Chana Kronfeld's metaphor for the transmission of literary history as a

rope with multiple overlapping threads, this chapter rethinks the relationship between Labor Romanticism and Yiddish Modernism.[104]

Chapter Four is titled "With An Undone Shirt (*Mit a tseshpilyet hemd*): Peretz Markish's Poemas." This chapter analyzes Markish's brash early work and selections from his masterpiece *Der fertsikyeriker man* (The Man of Forty), a book-length poema that was rescued hours before his arrest by the Soviet Secret Police and smuggled out of Russia. Markish's life intersected significantly with Russian anarchist movements, from living in the city of Ekaterinaslov during its occupation by the Black Army to his family's interactions with Nestor Makhno, the Ukrainian "Cossack of Anarchy." I examine how anarchist themes circulated through his work, including revolutionary temporality; his vision of nature without borders; and his representations of the autonomous body. Despite the Soviet Union's brutal surveillance and persecution of Yiddish writers, Markish defiantly used the Jewishly-marked vocabulary which Soviet language reform campaigns had attempted to purge. As Yiddish anarchists claimed genealogies originating in talmudic and biblical texts, Markish's *loshn-koydesh* etymology claims a proudly Jewish genealogy. As David Shneer and Robert Adler Peckerar write, "[Markish] made the Revolution a modern Jewish event."[105]

The Conclusion points to possible future dialogues with other fields, such as postcolonial and decolonial thought, diaspora studies, and comparative literature. Yiddish anarchism speaks to questions also asked by contemporary stateless anti-statist movements, such as Sápmi (Laplander) and the Kurdish movement in Rojava. By understanding Yiddish Modernism as not only a transnational but an often *anti-nationalist* literary movement, this project opens up space for new perspectives on diasporism.

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[104] Chana Kronfeld, *On the Margins of Modernism: Decentering Literary Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 63.

[105] David Shneer and Robert Adler Peckerar. "Peretz Markish (1895-1952)." Forthcoming in *Makers of Jewish Modernity: Thinkers, Artists, Leaders, and the World They Made.* Edited by Jacques Picard, Jacques Revel, Michael P. Steinberg & Idith Zertal. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), p5.

— Chapter One —

Yiddish Anarchist Diasporism: Genealogies of Stateless Anti-Statism

How did Jewish anarchists view the history of their people's statelessness? Did experiencing immigration and deportation inform their theories, in comparison to European Christian anarchists with citizenship? What is the moment of origin for Jewish histories of anarchism?

Three editors of major Yiddish anarchist newspapers — Yosef Cohen, Saul Yanovsky, and Yosef Luden — wrote histories of anarchism in their later years. None of these have been published in English, although Yosef Cohen's massive *Di yidish anarkhistishe-bavegung in amerike* (1945) was translated by Esther Dolgoff, wife of the Yiddish anarchist writer Sam Dolgoff.[106] Saul Yanovsky's *Ershte yorn fun yidishn frayhaytlekhn sotsializm: oytobiografishe zikhroynes fun a pyoner un boyer fun der yidisher anarkhistisher bavegung in England un Amerike* ("The Early Years of Jewish Liberationist Socialism: Autobiographical Memoirs by a Pioneer and Builder of the Jewish Anarchist Movement in England and America," New York City, 1948) is divided between personal reminiscences and a history of the Yiddish anarchist press. Yosef Luden's *Kurtse geshikhte fun anarkhistishe gedank* ("A Short History of Anarchist Thought," Tel Aviv, 1984) traces a lineage of anarchist philosophy from the Bible to Martin Buber. Katherina Yevzerov, wife of translator Y. A. Merison, compiled her articles written for *Fraye Gezelshaft* (Free Society) into the book *Di Froy un Gezelshaft* (Woman and Society). Tracing women's history from "the wild and primitive" through Ancient Greece and Rome, Yevzerov was no less invested in the construction of genealogy than her male colleagues, complete with pre-historic origin tales.

Anarchist Anti-Semitism: Bakunin in Yiddish

Yiddish anarchist diasporism begins from the subject-position of the minority who speaks a non-territorial language, rather than that of the European ethnic-majority who renounce their citizenship or status.[107] A further consideration in the differentiation of

[106] Her unpublished, handwritten 808-page manuscript is held in the Kate Sharpley Library. I thank Kenyon Zimmer for drawing my attention to it.

[107] Prince Kropotkin and Count Tolstoy, for example, both renounced their aristocratic status.

Jewish anarchism is the prevalence of anti-semitism among European anarchists, who articulated their atheism through anti-semitic language. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), the French "father of anarchism," harbored a paranoid hatred towards Jews, advocating for their expulsion from France or, failing that, extermination.[108] The Russian social anarchist Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) invoked the range of anti-Semitic canards, from parasitism to vampirism, in *God and the State*:[109]

> This whole Jewish world, comprising a single exploiting sect, a kind of blood sucking people, a kind of organic destructive collective parasite, going beyond not only the frontiers of states, but of political opinion, this world is now, at least for the most part, at the disposal of Marx on the one hand, and of Rothschild on the other… This may seem strange. What can there be in common between socialism and a leading bank? The point is that authoritarian socialism, Marxist communism, demands a strong centralisation of the state. And where there is centralisation of the state, there must necessarily be a central bank, and where such a bank exists, the parasitic Jewish nation, speculating with the Labour of the people, will be found.

Bakunin does not celebrate the revolutionary potential of transnationalism, but excoriates Jews for "going beyond the frontiers of states." Contradictory stereotypes do not cancel each other out but compound each other, as illustrated by his linking of capitalism, socialism and Jewishness. Inflammatory anti-Semitic imagery appears throughout *God and the State,* as Bakunin sets the foundation of anarchism upon rejection of Jewishness.

Saul Yanovsky (1864-1939), influential editor of *Fraye Arbeter Shtime,* translated *God and the State* into Yiddish in 1901. His introduction explains his goal of making Bakunin accessible to the (Jewish) reader: "[I hope] to have made it a little easier for the reader to grasp the entire philosophical riches of Bakunin's *God and the State.*"[110] Yanovsky does not censor the most problematic of Bakunin's passages, such as Bakunin's parable of origins, which reads Satan as a kind of anarchist patriarch:

> The Bible, which is a very interesting and here and there very profound book when considered as one of the oldest surviving manifestations of human wisdom and fancy, expresses this truth very naively in its myth of original sin. Jehovah, who of all the good gods adored by men was certainly the most jealous, the most vain, the most ferocious, the most unjust, the most bloodthirsty, the most despotic, and the most hostile to human dignity and liberty — Jehovah had just created Adam and Eve, to satisfy we know not what caprice; no doubt to while away his time, which must weigh heavy on

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[108] *Carnets de P.J. Proudhon*, (Paris, M. Rivière, 1960), translated by Mitchell Abido.

[109] *God and the State* was written in 1871 and translated to French by Carlo Cafiero and Elisee Reclus in 1882. It was intended to be the second volume of a longer work on European resistance to imperialism, but the manuscript was fragmented and ends abruptly. A corrected English translation was issued in 1910. Yanovsky translated from the earlier version.

[110] Yanovsky, 3.

> his hands in his eternal egoistic solitude, or that he might have some new slaves. He generously placed at their disposal the whole earth, with all its fruits and animals, and set but a single limit to this complete enjoyment. He expressly forbade them from touching the fruit of the tree of knowledge. He wished, therefore, that man, destitute of all understanding of himself, should remain an eternal beast, ever on all fours before the eternal God, his creator and his master. But here steps in Satan, the eternal rebel, the first freethinker and the emancipator of worlds. He makes man ashamed of his bestial ignorance and obedience: he emancipates him, stamps upon his brow the seal of liberty and humanity, in urging him to disobey and eat of the fruit of knowledge.[111]

Although Yanovsky's translation hews closely to the original (via French translation), it also inherently domesticates Bakunin's hostility towards Jewishness, accomplished by using *loshn-koydesh* (the Hebrew and Aramaic component of Yiddish) to describe the very aspects of the Bible mocked by the original text. Yanovsky translates "the Bible" as *Toyres-Moshe,* the Law of Moses; "original sin," a Christian theological concept, can be translated only as *di ershte zind,* a phrase for which there is no hebraic equivalent.[112] Yanovsky uses the hebraic term for the tree of life, *eyts-hada'as,* then internally translates it into the germanic component of the language, *boym fun visn.* Yanovsky adds vernacular touches, such as rendering "God's generosity" as *nit vi keyn karger,* no miser he. Inverting Adam and Eve's shame for their nakedness after eating the fruit, Satan "makes man ashamed of his bestial ignorance." As *der oybiger revolutsyoner, der ershter fraydeynker* (freethinker) *un veltn bafrayer,* Satan begins to sound like a harbinger of the Haskole! This Yiddish translation of an anti-semitic text does not alter or censor Bakunin's vitriol; Yanovsky's choices transform it into something at least resembling a Jewish self-critique, perhaps resonating with cultural bias against the uneducated ("bestial ignorance".[113] Bakunin continues: "Our (Catholic and Protestant theologians look upon that [Adam's curse] as very profound and very just, precisely because it is monstrously iniquitous and absurd."[114] Yanovsky translates: *"Unzere katoylishe, protestantishe un yidishe* [Jewish] *teologen haltn dize beshtrofung far a zeyer tifzinige un a zeyer gerekhte shtrafe eben derfar, veyl zi iz azoy groyzam un umzinik."*[115] Yanovksy adds "Jewish theologians" to Bakunin's list of foolish sectarian interpreters, making clear his agreement with Bakunin's critique of religion. As Naomi Seidman notes in *Faithful Renderings: Jewish-Christian Difference and the Politics of Translation,* the convert-translator has a long history as exposer and informant of Jewish secrets.[116] Yanovsky inverts that trope, bringing anti-semitic work to a Yiddish readership and reinventing it as Jewish self-critique.

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[111] Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, *God and the State (*New York: Dover Publications, 1970), 3.

[112] Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, *Got un der shtot.* Translated by Sh. Yanovsky (New York: Drukeray fun der Lidzer Anarkhistishe Grupe, 1901), 9.

[113] Yanovsky uses the non-standardized germanic phrase: אונוויסנהייט טהירישע

[114] Bakunin, 11.

[115] Yanovsky translation, 10.

[116] See Seidman, "Introduction: The Translator as Double Agent."

The Jewish experience of transnationalism, which radicalized so many twentieth-century Ashkenazim, was viewed as suspect "internationalism" by Bakunin:

> But the Jews, in spite of that exclusive national spirit which distinguishes them even today, had become in fact, long before the birth of Christ, the most international people of the world. Some of them carried away as captives, but many more urged on by that mercantile passion which constitutes one of the principal traits of their character, they had spread through all countries, carrying everywhere the worship of their Jehovah, to whom they remained all the more faithful the more he abandoned them.[117]

Bakunin reads Jewish diasporism as motivated by near-atavistic capitalist impulses ("Driven by their passion for commerce" /*"Ongetribn fun zeyer laydenshaft tsum handel").*[118] The prevalence of anti-Jewish genealogies and biblical readings within European anarchism suggest the need for emic Yiddish readings and genealogies, such as those by Cohen, Luden, and others. Yanovsky's addition of "Jewish theologians" to Bakunin's polemic moreover suggests an attempt to read himself into European texts — even critical ones — from which Jews had been excluded.

Yosef Luden's *Kurtse geshikhte fun anarkhistishn gedank (Brief History of Anarchist Thought)*

Yosef Luden (1907-2002) was the final editor of *Problemen,* the last Yiddish anarchist newspaper published anywhere in the world.[119] Founded by Abba Gordin in 1958 as the bilingual Yiddish-Hebrew *Problemen/Problemot,* it was published solely in Yiddish when Luden became editor in 1971, continuing for 21 years. At the time of its closing, it was being published in Tel Aviv bimonthly and had a circulation of 300. Its subscribers were primarily in Canada, Argentina, and Paris, with smaller numbers in Israel, Denmark, and Sweden. A prolific poet and novelist, Luden was affiliated with Agudat Shokhrey Khofesh "Association of Advocates of Freedom" (AShUAKh, an acronym which cheekily spells "fir tree" or Christmas tree in Hebrew), the Jerusalem-based anarchist group. He wrote *A kurtse geshikhte fun anarkhistishe gedank* (A Short History of Anarchist Thought) in 1984, published by *Problemen* Farlag in Yiddish and also in Hebrew translation. In addition to this work, he wrote more than ten novels and poetry collections. He came to Israel in the Second Aliyah, briefly lived on a kibbutz "Kedma" before moving to Tel Aviv, where he became a poet. He became a dear friend of Ahrne Thorne, last editor of FAS, and their

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[117] Bakunin, 74.

[118] *"Di yidn ober, trots dem oysshlislekhn natsyonaln gayst, vos untersheydet zey fun andere natsyonen zogar in unzere tsaytn, zeynen gevorn in der virklikhkeyt nokh fil frier, vi kristus iz geborn gevorn dos internatsyonalste folk fun der velt. Aynige fun zey als gefangene, ober fil meh ongetribn fun zeyer laydenshaft tsum handel, vos iz a hoyft-tsug fu zeyer kharakter, hobn zey zikh tsushprayt in ale lender, iberal mitbrengendik mit zikh di fargeterung fun zeyer IHVH, tsu vemen zey zeynen gevorn alts treyer, vos mer er hot zey farlozn."* Bakunin, Yanovsky translation, 89.

[119] A new Yiddish anarchist newspaper titled *Der Dibek* is being organized by a Jewish collective in Portland, OR, but has not yet been published.

correspondence reveals that they were close readers of each others' work—to the extent of correcting the typographical errors in each other's writing. His poetry reveals an affiliation with the *svetshop* poets, as expressed in rhyming odes to Dovid Edelshtat and others. Among his verses are tributes to Tel Aviv and reflections on the intifadas. Luden's own life was adventurous, from smuggling Jewish children into pre-State Palestine to operating an anarchist press from his home. Photographs of Luden show a man in dapper three-piece suits, rejecting the Socialist sartorial convention of dressing in casual workers' clothing.

Photograph of Luden.
Courtesy of Moshe Goncharuk, Zionist Archive, Jerusalem.

In 1984, Luden published *Kurtse geshikhte fun anarkhistishn gedank (Brief History of Anarchist Thought).* Luden's genealogy of anarchism begins with the Bible and ends with Buber. Although he also discusses anarchist elements among non-Jewish classical thinkers and claims that "we find strong anarchist tendencies in the philosophies of ancient Persia and China[120]," these are framed within a lineage that begins and ends within Jewish milestones. Luden believed that there were anarchistic elements within many religions, and opens his section on the origins of anarchism in world religion by discussing Lao Tzu, whom he claims as the "Chinese Stirner."[121] However, he begins with the Hebrew Bible and ancient Semitic history—a typical move in Jewish genealogies. Luden emphasizes the communitarian aspects of early Jewish society and thought:

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[120] For more on Taoism and anarchism, see Peter Marshall's *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012).

[121] The person whom Luden refers to as "Alexander David" was actually the French-Belgian anarchist Alexandra David Néel, who published *The Theory Of The Individual In Chinese Philosophy: Yang-Chou* after traveling to Lhasa in 1924. She was the first European woman to visit Tibet's capital. In 1899, she wrote an anarchist treatise, with a preface by Elisée Reclus. Luden has (accidentally?) changed her gender, and the subject of her book compared to Stirner was not Lao Tsu but Yang-Chou. Perhaps these errors were the result of enthusiasm or autodidacticism.

> In ancient times the idea of freedom and justice, in opposition to force, was drawn from religion. For the oppressed, God became the symbol of justice. The Tanakh describes how Gideon rejected the people's demands for him to be their ruler, with the words: 'Not I but God will rule over you.'[122] In the times of the Judges, the Jews lived without the framework of government, and they safeguarded social justice. The twelve wandering Hebrew tribes likewise settled in Canaan without any knowledge of private property: the earth was their inheritance, the entire tribe's possession. At that time, the Hebrew word *ba'al* [master] meant "husband," before the wars fought by the tribes to defend their existence. These wars troubled their contented lives, when 'each sat below under his grapevine and fig-tree in peace and forgiveness.'[123] From these tribal wars was born the notion of a centralized regime and a king, which would organize the people both to defend themselves and to conquer. Force and private property introduced class binaries between rich and poor, ruler and ruled. Thus were corruption, greed and private quarrels introduced. The government created limitlesslaws over humanity, and man was no longer as happy as before. Their primary hope became a return to the earlier society of living together with equality and mutual aid — back to the old tribal order, to the lost "golden age." This also became the call of the Prophets. The Prophets were men of great spirit who clearly saw that world governments compete between themselves, fight against each other and struggle for might and mastery; they saw, too, that the strong were broken, and they foretold a coming reign of righteousness and justice. The Prophets became protectors of the oppressed… They warned the rich and mighty: "You plowed evil and harvested rage, you ate the fruit of falsehood."[124] The Prophets held up the ideal of righteousness, bound up with the vision of eternal peace and brotherhood of the people, 'when wolves will live together with lambs.' And not by might nor by glory but through spirit will the kingdom of God be built.[125]

For Luden, Gideon's rejection of monarchism comprises what Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin call "the internal critique within the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) itself, the dissident

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[122] Judges 8:23. This phrase continues to circulate in Jewish anarchist circles, and was emblazoned on a T-shirt by Daniel Sieradski, writer of the Orthodox Anarchist blog, beside a logo combining the Star of David with the anarchist circle-A.

[123] Micah 4:4, "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make *them* afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken *it*." (King James Bible)

[124] Hosea 10:13, "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies." (King James Bible)

[125] Luden references Zechariah 4:6, using two of the loshn-koydesh words from the Hebrew verse: צְבָאוֹת יְהוָה אָמַר, בְּרוּחִי-אִם כִּי--בְכֹחַ וְלֹא בְחַיִל. Luden has turned the passive Hebrew verse into an active phrasing: "'This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying: Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, said the Lord of hosts." There is no possessive in the Yiddish, although he refers to building the kingdom of God, which now has more contemporary Christian echoes.

voice that is nearly always present."[126] Luden's anarchist reading of the Prophets is akin to the Boyarins' claim that "the dialectical struggle between antiroyalism and royalism persists throughout the course and formative career of the Old Testament as its structuring force."[127] Like Luden, the Boyarins identify (and identify with) a lineage of Jewish textual tradition recast in the twentieth century vocabulary of radicalism. Luden's linguistic utopian-nostalgia towards a time when *ba'al* meant "man" without connotations of dominance or possession is found also in Abraham Joshua Heschel's writing.[128]

While Luden cites the Prophets as proto-anarchists, he casts the Essenes as first practitioners of anarchistic mutual aid as a society:

> The first anarchists among the Jews were the Essenes (the Righteous Ones), the sect that appeared in the second century of Christ, near the Dead Sea. In their time, they had aroused great admiration among the learned, such as Philo and Josephus Flavius. They numbered around four thousand men and were occupied with agriculture; their kingdom did not collect gold nor silver nor territory, but just enough to provide necessities for the needy. They did not own any property, nor aspire to riches, and they lived in communities with collective ownership. They designed no weapons to murder or enslave through war. They esteemed freedom highly. They did not possess any slaves and lived in equality, like blood-brothers. They were bound by three principles: love for God, for human beings and for morality. They lived unmarried lives, but were not forbidden to marry. They had a strong revulsion to any powerful military organization. According to them, domination was a sin. The Jews' negative attitude in that era towards militarism is best illustrated by the talmudic aphorism: "No one is pious down here [on earth] if he is going to be branded an evil-doer (*menuvl*) in the next world."[129] Faith was a purely individual matter, when the call of the Prophets abolished the difference between brothers…[130] "Hear this word upon the mountain of Samaria: Those that rob the poor oppress the pauper."[131] With these words, the Prophets' rage warned against the oppressor. The Prophets stood up for social justice and integrity [*sotsyaln yoysher*]. According to the Torah, the worker is of foremost importance… The

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[126] Boyarin and Boyarin, "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity." *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Summer, 1993), 718.

[127] Boyarin and Boyarin, 717.

[128] Heschel recalls (or constructs) a period when the Hebrew word *davar* meant 'word,' without the additional meaning of a material thing. See Susan A. Handelman, *The Slayer of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory*, (Albany: State University of New York Press), 3-5. In Yiddish, however, *man* means both husband and man; in Hebrew, *ba'al* means both husband and the Canaanite god.

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> ווערן געשטעמפלט נישט אויבן זאל ער שומר קיין אונטן דא ניט ווערט קיינער ווי א מנוול

[130] Luden, 12.

[131] Reference to Amos 4:1.

> soil of *Erets-Yisroel* ought not to be bought, because it is God's land, which he gave to all types of people. 'And the land was given to Adam…'[132]

Luden continues, contrasting the Essenes' egalitarian brotherhood with the Roman idea of the godly king. He favorably describes the Essenes' "anti-consumerism" against Spartan commerce, militarism, and devaluation of the sick.[133] The "war-spirit" of Sparta defined its society, and he criticizes Athens' class system and use of slavery and the "continual war between the patricians and plebians in Rome." Luden's strategy of de-centering Athens and Rome from the western genealogy of democracy is also used in David Graeber's *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology.*[134] While Graeber's counter-history of democracy emphasizes non-Western egalitarian societies such as the Malagasy, Luden and the Boyarins' reading specifically subverts imperialistic interpretations of scripture.

Luden's *yikhes*-discourse includes early Christians, or "Jewish-Christians," among the first anarchists:

> The characteristics of the development of the communes by the Dead Sea were the negation of an earthly king and the hope of a heavenly king. To the Essenes, domination was a sin. According to the first Christians, in the Book of Corinthians (Book of the Apostles) chapter one, line 24 says: "He (the messiah) will negate the government, each domination of might. He (the messiah) will alone be king." The new social order of the first Jewish-Christians was a collective. In the history of the apostles, it says: "All believers lived in a Hebrew society and distributed their property between all, others sold their possessions and distributed gold, each according only to his necessity" (Apostles, Chapter 2:45-6).[135]

Luden reads the Essenes' holding of land in common as anti-capitalist practice, whereas the Boyarins' anti-Zionist reading emphasizes not the ownerlessness of land, but the diasporism or "unsettlement of the very notion of authochthony." The Boyarins locate diasporism and anti-militarism within the biblical narrative:

> [T]he biblical story is not one of autochthony but one of always already coming from somewhere else. […T]he concept of a divine promise to give this land that is the land of Others to His People Israel is the sign of a bad conscience for having deprived the Others of their Land… Thus at the same time that one vitally important strain of expression within biblical religion promotes a sense of organic, "natural" connectedness between this People and this Land—a settlement in the Land—in another sense or in a counterstrain, Israelite and Jewish religion is perpetually an unsettlement of the very notion of autochthony. Traditional Jewish attachment to the Land,

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[132] Luden, 13.
[133] Luden, 14.
[134] Graeber, 87-89.
[135] Luden, 16.

> whether biblical or post-biblical, thus provides a self-critique as well as a critique of identities based on notions of autochthony.[136]

While the Boyarins read the biblical land promise as a parable of "bad conscience," Luden read that same story as an ethical guard against land ownership in general ("The soil of *Erets-Yisroyl* ought not to be bought, because it is God's land, which he gave to all types of people. 'And the land was given to Adam…'[137]). The Boyarins conclude their discussion of scriptural diasporism with a statement against both the universalism of Paul and imperialistic biblical interpretation:

> Diaspora can teach us that it is possible for a people to maintain its distinctive culture, its difference, without controlling land, a fortiori without controlling other people or developing a need to dispossess them of their lands… [T]he renunciation of sovereignty (justified by discourses of autochthony, indigenousness, and territorial self-determination), combined with a fierce tenacity in holding onto cultural identity, might well have something to offer to a world in which these two forces, together, kill thousands daily.[138]

The Boyarins argue forthrightly for a "privileging of Diaspora" as a gift to the world, a sharing of knowledge quite similar to the themes of S. Y. Abramovich's short story "*Shem un yefes in a vagon*" (Hebrew published in 1890, self-translated Yiddish in 1910) in which a Jewish tailor teaches a now-abject Polish cobbler and erstwhile anti-Semite the art of wandering: "Exile is a precious gift that no-one else can bear," he says, prescribing Judaism as the sole "remedy" for diaspora. Once the Pole adapts to the transient lifestyle, his mentor in diaspora claims that through exile "he has become a real Jew, and is now fully adapted to exile, trained to welcome its afflictions." He calls for mutual aid between the two workers — the Jew will tailor his trousers, if the Pole cobbles his shoes. He concludes: "Life in exile belongs to the Jews, His chosen people. Since you have won a share in this gift, there is no remedy for you but Judaism; not to convert, but to learn the Jewish ways, to preserve yourself in the yoke of exile." Here it is not Judaism as monotheism, but the experience of diaspora: "It is exile that has given them special marks, difference taught them charity. Rejoice, for we have lived to see Yofos in the tents of Shem!"— "He became a real Jew, trained and learned in the ways of poverty." The final paragraph: "Give us a few more such *talmidim* (students) of exile, and we shall all be brothers!" Ironically, lauding the gentile students of (Jewish) diaspora reifies the Jewish characters as "poverty scholars" and exile scholars.[139]

Luden's genealogy of anarchism concludes with a discussion of Martin Buber (1878-1965), the Jewish German religious philosopher. Buber's religious anarchism emphasized dialogue between God and human beings, and between people. In 1949, Buber published

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[136] Boyarin and Boyarin, 715.

[137] Luden, 13.

[138] Boyarin and Boyarin, 723.

[139] The term "poverty skolar" was coined by the Bay Area group POOR, to describe people learned in survival.

Paths in Utopia, an "extended discussion of radical theory and the community with chapters on Proudhon, Kropotkin and Landauer. It concludes with the positive view that the Jewish Village Commune, the kibbutz, has been a successful experiment in communal living."[140] Firmly bookended between Martin Buber and the Essenes, Luden's history frames anarchism as the generation and ground of Jewish radical political imagination.

Yosef Cohen's Genealogy of Anarchism

Yosef Cohen (1878-1953) was a leader of the Modern School movement in the United States, the author of four books on anarchism and atheism, and the editor of the newspaper *Fraye Arbeter Shtime (Free Voice of Labor)* from 1923 to 1932. Born into a Jewish family in the Russian province of Minsk, Cohen was seized by revolutionary fervor and abandoned rabbinical school education. He emigrated to Philadelphia in 1905 and was tutored in English by the Catholic poet-anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre while working as a cigar maker. De Cleyre greatly influenced the development of his anarchist ideas, as did Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, after whom he named his daughter. Cohen helped found the Philadelphia Radical Library, where he also lectured and served as librarian. In 1906, Cohen became the editor of the weekly Yiddish anarchist newspaper *Broyt un Frayhayt (Bread and Freedom)*. By 1910, he had become a leader of the Ferrer Modern School of Philadelphia, founded on Francisco Ferrer's radical pedagogy. Cohen attempted to unite his educational philosophy with his aspirations to communal life by founding a farming commune in Stelton, New Jersey in 1914, an outgrowth of the New York school.[141] When World War I began, Cohen signed an International Manifesto Against the War with several other anarchists; the manifesto disputed Kropotkin's pro-war stance and named militarism as an extension of the violence of capitalism. In 1932, Cohen founded a second communal colony, this time in Sunrise, Michigan. Albert Einstein signed its guestbook, and among the documents held at YIVO are the pastoral musings of its residents, compiled in the commune's newspaper.

In 1945, Cohen published the massive *Di yidish-anarkhistishe bavegung in Amerike: historisher iberblik un perzenlekhe iberlebungen (The Jewish Anarchist Movement in the United States: A Historical Overview and Personal Experiences)*[142] through the Radical Library of the Workmen's Circle in Philadelphia. In the foreword, Cohen invokes imagery of diaspora and claims that "even those Jews who did not remain long in the ranks of the proletariat and somehow gained professional and middle class status — even those who became outright American bourgeois — could hardly have escaped in their youth or their first years as immigrants in this country being touched and influenced by the broad network of cultural and social activities of our movement."[143] Cohen adds:

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[140] *Anarchist Thinkers and Thought: An Annotated Bibliography,* 22.

[141] From Barry Pateman's entry, Emma Goldman Papers, 2010.

[142] Translation adapted from an unpublished, handwritten manuscript prepared by Esther Dolgoff and held by the Kate Sharpley Library.

[143] Dolgoff manuscript, 13 (adapted).

> Our movement played a preeminent role in the development of the Jewish labor movement and the cultural, educational and social life of the Jewish immigrant communities, not only in this country but in also in the wide world wherever circumstances had cast our Jewish wanderers… We have sent our newspapers, our journals, our books, our pamphlets, the inspired songs of struggle by Edelshtat and Bovshover[144] everywhere. Where have the crystal-clear words of Peter Kropotkin translated into our own mother tongue not reached![145]

Cohen, like Luden and Goncharuk, was concerned with the absence of written histories of anarchism: "Our comrades did not write history, they *made* history. They left the systematic recording of events to others. Often these 'others' were fiendish and ignored the anarchist contributions; sometimes, they maliciously misrepresented the facts. They tried to give the impression that we disrupted the work, that like Don Quixote we fought windmills, that we made no constructive contributions! The history of the Jewish immigrants in this country is as yet virgin territory."[146] Cohen uses the phrase *nit keyn ba'arbet feld,* an uncultivated field—a metaphor whose talmudic overtones (laws regarding untilled fields) return in Zalkind and Luden's histories. Cohen appeals at length to readers, especially older comrades, to donate historical materials or oral histories to the librarian Agnes Inglis of the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan, begun by the individualist anarchist Joseph Labadie (1850-1933) as a "history from below" project. He laments the fact that there is no true anarchist archive of the movement, and they must therefore rely on other collectors to care for their historical material.

Cohen locates "The Development of the Anarchist Philosophy and the Anarchist Movement" in pre-history: "Dissatisfaction with conditions as they are and the desire to change them, to improve the quality of life are the attributes which lifted primitive man out of his animal state in which he found himself when he first came on the earth… No human institution is free of this law. Dissatisfaction with the procedure of the institution — its establishment — forces man to change or do away with it." Cohen shared the belief with Bakunin that humans possess an inherent desire to rebel: "Yes, our first ancestors, our own Adams and our Eves, were, if not gorillas, very near relatives of gorillas, omnivorous, intelligent and ferocious beasts, endowed in a higher degree than the animals of another species with two precious faculties — the power to think and the desire to rebel."[147] Cohen's emphasis on evolution may certainly draw from Kropotkin's own work on "the mutual aid of savages": "The mutual-aid tendency in man has so remote an origin, and is so deeply interwoven with all the past evolution of the human race, that it has been maintained by mankind up to the present time, notwithstanding all vicissitudes of history."[148]

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[144] Dovid Edelshtat and his close comrade Yosef Bovshover were famous Yiddish anarchist poets, both involved with the circle of *Fraye Arbeter Shtime.*

[145] Dolgoff manuscript, 13.

[146] Dolgoff translation, 14.

[147] *God and the State,* 2.

[148] Kropotkin, 180.

Like Luden, Cohen cites the Hebrew Bible as containing seeds of radicalism: "Anarchism has a proud and long history. In the Bible and in other writings of other anarchist peoples, we find clear evidence against the evils of sovereignty, injustice and exploitation. The prophets continually exhorted the oppressors of the people and foretold of a time when violence and injustice will disappear from the world." Cohen's genealogy resembles Luden's in laying claim to religious history and non-Western philosophies: "For thousands of years, these ideas were attained by only a few gifted persons, or by preachers of morals. Only in the 15th and 16th Centuries did these ideas become gradually accepted by the average person," developed, he argues, through peasants' struggles with the Catholic Church: "Individuals and nations chose their religion the state, and the institutions of private property suppressed every revolt with iron and blood. With the help of the newly established Protestant Church, the oppressors and the exploiters have strengthened their rule over the population to this very day. [...] The Anarchist ideas of statelessness, of equality, of justice again vanished from the conscious ideas of the broad populations."[149] Cohen dates the re-emergence of anarchism in the modern period at the founding of the United States.[150]

Cohen locates the first articulation of anarchism as formal political philosophy within William Godwin's work. Cohen traces the spirit, not the etymology, of the term from William Godwin's "An Inquiry Into Political Justice" to French writers, such as Charles Fourier. Like Yanovsky, Cohen does not mention Proudhon's anti-semitism in his praise of the "period of modern socialism and anarchism [that began] in the 1840s": "Proudhon was able to take abstract utopian ideas which floated as we can say up to his time in rarefied air but were precious to the people and put them on a substantial and viable base. He was able to show them by what practical means these ideas could become a social force and influence the direction of society."

Cohen's emphasis on the Jewish contributions to anarchism resumes after his discussion of its European origins. In the mid-to-late 1800s, for example, "all the histories and memoirs of this period describe, with nostalgia and longing, this wonderful era when socialism was young and full of life on the Jewish streets."[151] When writing on European anarchist history, his tone is quite different from the playfulness and idiomatic Yiddish that describes North American radicalism: the membership of the Knights of Labor, for example, "grew as it if were a yeast pudding." Cohen separates the Yiddish-speaking anarchists from the German-speaking anarchists, although in both cases he heavily emphasizes their culture: "For many years [after the immigration boom of the 1850s], their spiritual development was under the influence of their old home country. They brought with them every tendency, every direction which had developed through the years in Germany." Cohen describes the Yiddish anarchists as having come into their own from under the direction of earlier German anarchists around 1886-1887: "The period in which the Jewish worker went to school to the Germans and followed them in detail every little instruction was now ended. The Jewish movement now follows its own path and writes its own history.

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[149] Dolgoff, 30.

[150] "Government should interfere as little as is commensurate with social living and that should be by the consent of the governed. This was an anarchist approach to the rationale of government…" Dolgoff manuscript, 30.

[151] Dolgoff manuscript, 43.

But from its former teachers it inherited their ideas of the forms of organization, the ideological terminology, their different philosophies and their conflicts…"

Cohen's discussion of the Yiddish anarchists is filled with culturally-determined vocabulary. He suggests that religious social forms such as the Friday-night shabbat dinner were neatly refilled with anarchist content, parallel to the Yiddish Soviet cultural rituals so richly documented by Anna Shternshis.[152] Cohen further uses messianic vocabulary in the chapter "The Most Flourishing Period of the Jewish Socialist Movement in America":

> The first Jewish anarchist group took the high-sounding German name *Pyonirn der frayhayt (Pioneers of Freedom).* It was composed of a number of highly intellectual working men who energetically carried on an important work for a number of years. The Jewish workers brought to the movement a world of enthusiasm and hope. They literally believed every word of their new theology, so recently adopted. At any moment they were ready to sacrifice everything in order to bring about the redemption, the millennium, which according to our prophets was around the corner. Their poverty-stricken lives, their lifeblood drained in sweatshops, their existence in pest-ridden, narrow tenement homes, drove them to seek solace in the movement, in the fellowship experienced at the many lectures and meetings. The New York City's East Side was full of life and activity. This same vitality was found in the Jewish ghettos of the larger cities all over the country. The socialist idea[153] encouraged and awakened these downtrodden and exploited people to fight for their rights and for a better life. All tendencies of the socialist movement served the working people in this respect. All this time, the anarchists gave more devotion, more enthusiasm and showed more ingenuity and were more successful.[154]

Throughout his massive work of anarchist history, Yosef Cohen foregrounds Jewish contributions, cites Yiddish cultural and social practices, and uses a particularly Jewish vocabulary. Unlike the *yikhes*-discourse of Goldman and Luden, Cohen claims a genealogy in which non-Jewish anarchism is formative for the origins—but not the fulfillment and flourishing—of Yiddish radicalism.

Emma Goldman's Genealogy of Anarchism

In an article published in 1935, the journalist and literary critic Reuben Brainin (1862-1939) recounts his meeting with Emma Goldman in Amsterdam in 1907. Writing in both Hebrew and Yiddish, Brainin had previously published sketches and interviews with

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[152] See chapters on the "Red Hagode" in *Soviet and Kosher: Jewish Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939 (*Indiana University Press, 2006).

[153] Here as elsewhere, Cohen does not use "socialism" as a denigrating term, nor in opposition to anarchism, a usage common in the period.

[154] Dolgoff manuscript, 90.

many Jewish notables, including S. Abramovitsh (Mendele Mokher Sforim), Y. L. Perets, Max Nordau, and Albert Einstein. Written in a noir style, filled with atmospheric details, Brainin dramatizes their political exchanges: he, a delegate to the Eighth Zionist Congress at the Hague, and she, a speaker at the anarchist conference held simultaneously. Brainin wrote elsewhere about meeting Chaim Nachman Bialik at that same Zionist conference in Amsterdam, and visiting Rembrandt's portrait at the Amsterdam museum.[155] I include a substantial excerpt from my translation of Brainin's article below. It is greatly revealing of how Goldman's discourse in Yiddish (mediated by Brainin's reportage) differed greatly from the universalism expressed in her English writing:

> After the eighth Zionist Congress that convened at Hague, I traveled to the city of Amsterdam, accompanied by Professor Slushtz, Chaim Nachman Bialik, and A. L. Levinsky. For the couple of days that I stayed in Amsterdam, I enjoyed myself at the art museum, the Hebrew Library of the Sephardic Jews, and their other public institutions.
>
> Late in the evening, I wandered through the streets of Amsterdam. The dozing streets were blessed by Baruch Spinoza and also by the life of the brilliant painter Rembrandt. The Jewish Quarter where I walked around was, in the late hours, as full of life and movement as an ants' nest. At every step, the filth and squalor leaps out at one. I watched the shadows of past life, the aged, musty tradition of this old city, where many men have moved. I passed through the quiet side streets, where canal water cuts the city into its length and width.
>
> I entered a coffee house from one of these streets; its window looked out on one of the canals, inhabited by gondolas rocking to sleep. The waiter dozed in a corner. A considerable bit of time passed until he arose from his nap and served some tea… Sitting with my steaming cup of tea and gazing into empty space, I noticed not far from my seat a lady by a table, engrossed in a heap of manuscripts and brochures laying willy-nilly around her. The woman was ruminating over the newspapers and various journals with feverish movement, taking notes in a small notebook. The lady's face was hidden in her notes. I did not know her, but the scene itself had caught my interest: at midnight, in a coffee-house in Holland, sits a woman alone but for her parcel of printed brochures and newspaper clippings. In her hand was a long pencil, with which she made notes unusually quickly.
>
> Suddenly, the woman raised her head and observed me with her nearsighted eyes. In a calm tone she asked me her question:
>
> — "Are you, sir, a Zionist?"
>
> She had probably noticed my lapel symbol from the Zionist delegation.
>
> "Yes!"
>
> I briefly answered, anticipating a new question. I sensed in my blood that a second question would soon come, and I was right.

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[155] *Tsum Hundertstn Geborntog fun Reuben Brainin: Zamlbukh,* 125-126.

> "My gentleman was perhaps a delegate of the Zionist Congress in Hague?"
>
> Now for the first time I glimpsed the face of the lady, who was not young and was not graceful. Her round face still had hidden in it the traces of past beauty. Her Jewish eyes expressed her energetic being and a distinct *chutzpah*; spiritual–intellectual daring was engraved on her full face. The lady would not abandon me with her questions, as though she were a cross-examining judge:
>
> "Zionism is already dead, so what did you do in the Hague? You assembled there to bring Zionism to the gravedigger?"
>
> When the lady reckoned the Zionist movement dead, she denied a vital movement amongst the Jews. No, as long as the Jewish people have not returned to the land of their *oves* (forefathers), and as long as the world has not recognized our right to independence in the promised land, the Zionist movement cannot die.
>
> The lady picked herself up from her place and sat down near my table. Her calm gaze had suddenly ignited, as though she had found in my person a hostile enemy. With an energetic voice and with sharp emphasis on every word, she asked me:
>
> — You truly plan, Zionists, to establish a Jewish country in the Land of Israel…?
>
> — All of us certainly think so.
>
> — Yet the nation, the state, is the main source from which come all people's trouble and misery!
>
> The woman accompanied her last remark with an energetic bang on the table, awakening the waiter from his doze. His eyes popped open. The lady continued:
>
> We people have enough trouble from the state, without establishing another one and becoming like the old bandits. You want to come up with a new, Jewish country. No, I think that the task of the Jews and their assignment in the world is to demolish and make a furnace of the states… And you, Zionist, try to create a new state... No, we will not permit that!

The article continues with Brainin suggesting that anarcho-Zionism would be the best compromise, which Goldman roundly rejects:

> — Dear sir, your Excellency, Jesus of Nazareth was the first anarchist: not just the first, but the greatest and the most extreme. And also the first Zionist, Moshe Hess, was earlier an anarchist. The construction of states and their perfection is an art far away from and alien to the Jewish spirit. […] Also in Hasidism, if I remember correctly, there are also here anarchist elements…

This remarkable passage represents an attempt to claim a Jewish genealogy of anarchism. Goldman—as mediated by Brainin—specifically employs a rhetoric of the inherent *Jewishness* of anarchism to argue against her Zionist interlocutor, claiming that there is something profoundly un-Jewish about nationalism. In response to that mode of attack,

Brainin concedes that perhaps Jewish anarchists should work to create a Jewish state in Asia, and then once they have established it, they should destroy it to bring about world anarchist revolution. This argument aligns with the tenets of anarcho-Zionism.[156] While he presents her as totally opposed to any form of Zionism, he presents himself as open to at least the Zionist form of anarchism.

> — That is, sir, only pilpul.[157] One does not call a people to struggle, that they should establish their own country, so that they will destroy it with their own hands. We anarchists have already long recognized that every government—whether an aristocracy or a democracy—robs people of freedom, subjugates wills, and protects the powerful. The state is an obsolete and rusted institution that stands while collapsing. We see with our own eyes that the so-called "promised" land will bring us closer to our end, while you, Zionist, fantasize about a Jewish state in Asia.

The exchange between Brainin and Goldman reveals a historical moment when 'multiple and partial affiliations' were possible politically, as well as artistically. Goldman mobilizes Hess, Jesus, and Hasidic practice to create a genealogy of anarchism located firmly *within* Jewish history, and indeed claims that nationalism is antithetical to the Jewish spirit. Although this exchange is narrated by Brainin several years after its occurrence, and must therefore be read as filtered through both his temporal and his writerly mediation, it is a rare document showing how Goldman was wont to frame anarchism as an intra-Jewish debate. Goldman's complex relationship to Yiddish is discussed further in Chapter Two.

Katherina Yevzerov's Genealogy of Anarcha-Feminism

Katherina Yevzerov Merison (1870-**?**) was one of few women who contributed writing prolifically to the Yiddish anarchist press.[158] Born in Nevel, Vitebsk, she mastered Hebrew by age ten and encountered nihilism through her own reading. She and her family emigrated to the United States in 1888, and she earned a medical degree at New York University in 1893 or 1895. It has been claimed that Isaac Bashevis Singer's classic character Yentl is based upon her life. Raised in an Orthodox Jewish community, she studied Hebrew, Aramaic, and Hasidic thought. After arriving in the United States, she published articles in a wide array of leftist newspapers including *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, *Tsukunft, Der Tog, Forverts,* and *Zherminal* under the pseudonyms Rosa Ziserman and Ezra Sofer.[159] Her articles frequently covered children's health, child labor in U.S. factories, and

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[156] See Mina Grauer, "Anarcho-Nationalism: Anarchist Attitudes towards Jewish Nationalism and Zionism." *Modern Judaism,* Vol. 14, No. 1 (Feb., 1994), pp. 1-19.

[157] In this context, *pilpul* means a Talmudic term for making an extremely subtle distinction. It also refers to a method of learning that was developed in Eastern European yeshivas, especially in Lithuania.

[158] Her name is spelled קאטהערינע in Yiddish, which would be Katherina. She appears in in other English works as Katarina. The original Russian was probably Yekaterina.

[159] According to Ezra 7-10 and Nehemiah 8 in the Hebrew Bible, Ezra ha-Sofer was a scribe and priest who returned from the Babylonian exile and reintroduced the Torah in Jerusalem.

women's rights. Yevzerov closely befriended Emma Goldman, married the prolific Yaakov-Ahrne Merison, and participated as an honored member in anarchist and socialist circles.[160] Yaakov-Ahrne Merison translated widely, from Charles Darwin to Wilde, Malatesta, Marx, and Stirner; he also wrote several books on anarchist theory, as well as women's health guides and physiology textbooks. The couple was dedicated both to medicine and to anarchist thought, though their politics were considered more moderate by their radical contemporaries.

Dr. Katherina Yezverov — frontispiece from "Di froy in der gezelshaft"

In 1900, Yevzerov compiled her series of articles about women's issues for the anarchist newspaper *Fraye Gezelshaft* into the book *Di froy in der gezelshaft* (The Woman in Society). In doing so, Yevzerov entered a tradition of female writers who carved out space

[160] Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts,* 152.

within male-dominated newspapers by developing women's sections.[161] Among others, the poet Anna Margolin—whose first work appeared in *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*—also had a weekly column in *Der Tog* called *"In der froyen velt"* (In the women's world), in which she frequently advocated for women's suffrage and wrote from Europe as a foreign correspondent.[162] Yevzerov's work was published as part of a series on world history by *Fraye Gezelshaft* and their "*genosn oysgebers,"* comrade-publishers. The introduction notes that while these volumes are risky "from a business standpoint," they are necessary for "general progress" and "the enlightenment of the Jewish masses" — a discourse of enlightenment through classical or historical study also used in Zalkind's introduction.[163]

Yevzerov's *Di froy in der gezelshaft* (Woman in Society) spans several genres, from polemic to history lesson to gender and racial analysis. She references many anthropological texts, including Lewis Henry Morgan's kinship study *Ancient Society* (1877), to emphasize the differences in gender roles across cultures.[164] She also drew from the work of Finnish sociologist Edward Westermarck and Russian populist Petr Lavrov.[165] Using similar rhetorical tactics as Cohen, Luden, and others who turned to pre-state societies as models for political inspiration, Yevzerov constructed genealogies of women's history to disprove the claim of women's biological and cultural inferiority. *Di froy in der gezelshaft* opens with a chapter on "The Woman of Wild and Primitive Peoples," continuing on to "The Woman in Ancient Greece," "The Woman in Ancient Rome," "The Medieval Woman," and "The Woman of the New Age." She includes engravings done in the style of anthropological studies, such as one in which a naked woman is surrounded by men with spears grabbing her head and limbs, labeled "A Marriage Ceremony of the Ancient Australians." Another illustration portrays a Turk grabbing "his so-called fleeing bride" (*kloymersht antloyfener kale*).[166] Yevzerov attributes her information on the Turkish marriages to Elisee Reclus, the French anarchist writer translated into Yiddish by the linguist Alexander Harkavy. Although describing "exotic" marriage rites, Yevzerov uses terminology familiar to a Jewish readership, such as *badekt zikh di kale mit langn shlayer, "*the bride covers herself with a long veil.[167]" In the midst of this passage, Yevzerov describes the wife as "truly a slave to her husband" because of the dowry (*nadn*) convention.[168] Thus, although she is ostensibly describing non-Jewish Turkish traditions, her usage of familiar *loshn-koydesh* ritual terms amidst a heavily *daytschmerish* text voices an internal critique of Jewish marriage rites. Less focused on Jewish history than any of the other genealogies cited here—although just as classically educated as their authors—she nonetheless articulates a subtle critique.

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[161] See also Norma Fain Pratt's chapter "Culture and Radical Politics: Yiddish Women Writers in America, 1890-1940" in *Women of the Word: Jewish Women and Jewish Writing* (1994).

[162] Sarah Silberstein Swartz, "Anna Margolin." *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*. 1 March 2009. Jewish Women's Archive. <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/margolin-anna>.

[163] Yevzerov, 8.

[164] Zimmer, 44.

[165] Cassedy, 194.

[166] Yevzerov, 28.

[167] *Badekn* is a key component of the traditional Jewish marriage ceremony, when the groom veils the bride.

[168] Yevzerov, 28.

Like Cohen's history of anarchism, Yevzerov narrates progression from "the primitive" towards the "civilized." Yevzerov critiques polygamy as "unfavorable for the woman"[169], whereas "polyandry (one woman has many men) brought about the celebrated period of mothers' rights (matriarchy) and a golden age for women's status in society. In Greece, the *heterizmus*[170] ("friendly" houses of women, who were devoted to beauty and love) [advanced] the status of women, eliciting respect through their education and boldness..."[171] Yevzerov asserts, "In brief, the woman is no pest to man; she is no better and no worse than him."[172]

Yevzerov's portrayal of ancient Greece does not glory in the early days of democracy, but critiques Plato and portrays women's struggle for freedom within a patriarchal system. Proto-feminist triumphs are attributed to women alone, but with emphasis on solidarity:

> The women of Greece fought for freedom and equality, and as we have seen, they triumphed through mass unity. A change occurred in the idea of womanhood: instead of before, when people maintained that the soul of a woman is inferior to a man's soul, Plato taught in the *Republic* that women's character is equal to the character of men, and that women are thus capable of spiritual and civic activity comparable to men. One must also not exclude them from the creation of knowledge, nor from taking part in state matters. Naturally, since Plato was a child of his time, he likewise taught that the individual must submit oneself to the state. Even today, many teach that one must be submissive to the state or to the family or to some higher Being. Not only did the women of ancient Greece suffer through this, but men and women of today and always have suffered on account of these ideas, in all parts of the globe (*erd-kugl*).[173]

Yevzerov attributes Plato's belief in the equality of male and female souls (though not bodies) to the voices of unnamed women of his time. She frames Plato's valorization of the state above the autonomy of the individual as a universal flaw in human philosophy. As in David Graeber's *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (2004), Yevzerov's genealogy de-centers ancient Greek and Rome as the primary influences of democracy, highlighting instead the contributions of those who lived at the margins of the ancient world and taking to task its most central philosophers. The genealogies of Luden, Cohen, et. al. center on a "universal" anarchism while largely ignoring women's history and gender issues; Yevzerov foregrounds women's history and barely mentions anarchism.

Yevzerov's discussion of the struggle for women's education is wide-ranging, and introduces her readers to historical figures such as Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910), the first woman to earn a medical degree in both the United States and United Kingdom.

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[169] Yevzerov, 10.

[170] Yevzerov refers to the *hetaerae,* or freeborn courtesans, who worked in more upscale and independent houses of prostitution often run by women.

[171] Yevzerov, 10.

[172] Discussed by Zimmer, 44.

[173] Yevzerov, 45.

Yevzerov explicitly critiques segregation as an obstacle to women's education, analyzing the confluence of racism and sexism that forbid women's full participation in schools and universities. She notes that in 1832, when the Quaker educator Prudence Crandall admitted an African-American girl, hers became the United States' first integrated school—until white students dropped out in protest, and Crandall was twice arrested. Crandall soon reopened the school exclusively for African-American girls, refusing to educate white students. Yevzerov understood segregation as a gender issue — an analysis that was ahead of her time, and certainly rare for a non-Black feminist in the early days of the twentieth century. The chapter concludes with a positive assessment of women's educational and international progress "thanks solely to energetic women," which includes the right to own property, make a will, and speak publicly. Yevzerov reserves special praise for "extraordinary" Finland, where nineteen women were elected to Parliament.[174]

Yevzerov supported women's suffrage, a controversial position amongst anti-statists who ideologically opposed voting in state elections. She admiringly described the work of the suffragist and abolitionist Ernestine Rose, a *firerke* (female leader) who circulated a petition in 1836 for married women's right to own property—and succeeded in gathering only five signatures. Nonetheless, Rose presented her petition to the legislature, and in 1848 she and her comrades Paulina Davis and Elizabeth Cady Stanton succeeded in amending the law. Yevzerov remarks on the reasons that some women opposed their own suffrage:

Some women responded that they fear men would laugh at them; other women said that they have enough rights, and many men complain that women already have too many rights. But these women leaders were not intimidated by such foolish obstinacy (*akshones*), and Ernestine delivered a public speech about women's rights and the legislature in Michigan. Now we must understand how much strength it took for a woman to give a public speech: the 'oratoress' was likely to wind up [covered] with rotten onions, spoiled eggs, etc. Learned [or white] communities often still chased down in the streets and wagged a finger at women who possessed character strong enough to stand against public opinion, and they endured all kinds of persecutions.[175]

Ernestine Rose endured tremendous censure for her free thinking, such as that of one Reverend G. B. Little in 1855: "We know of no object more deserving of contempt, loathing, and abhorrence than a female atheist. We hold the vilest strumpet from the stews to be by comparison respectable."[176] The anxiety he expressed, linking atheism with women's suffrage and sex work, was widespread; indeed, after women's suffrage was achieved in four western states, sex workers' voting did succeed in unseating many of the police officials who had intimidated them.[177] Yevzerov does not mention that Ernestine Rose, the trailblazing suffragist, atheist, and abolitionist was also the Russian-born daughter of a rabbi. Yevzerov's sole nod to the particular pressures facing suffragists from

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[174] Yevzerov, 78.

[175] Yevzerov, 74.

[176] Carol A. Kolmerten. *The American Life of Ernestine L. Rose*. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), p179.

[177] See Janet Beer, *American Feminism: Key Source Documents 1848-1920,* 244.

within the Jewish community might be found in her sudden and ironic use of *loshn-koydesh* in *veyse khevre*— "learned community," determining a reference to fellow Jews.[178]

Yevzerov advocated for women's suffrage in other newspapers, including the socialist *Tsukunft.* One such article, "The American Women's Movement and the Victory for Women in the Last Elections," responded to the *New York Times'* opposition to the amendment that granted New York women the vote in 1917. *Times* editors had claimed that "in a time of national peril strong men must make the decision that control policies," and that "judging the feminine suffragists by their leaders, they have been, as a class, pacifists and enemies of preparedness."[179] As in her book, Yevzerov provides a combination of history lessons, reflections on personal experience (here, being barred from applying to Columbia University's medical school in 1890), and analysis of the intersections of abolition, militarism, and class in the struggle for women's rights: "Since the terrible war began in 1914, women in all countries have become active in all areas: taking up collections, attending to the wounded, entering all the occupations and industries. They are taking the place of men who are away on the battlefield: they are employees in banks and offices, they drive trolleys, make ammunitions, and, in many cases, are under fire… All this has certainly had an impact on men, and the old claims against voting rights have fallen like a cause with no substance. Woman suffrage is a fruit of the war that the diplomats of Wilhelmstrasse and Guildhall did not foresee in their plans."[180] Both Yevzerov and the *New York Times* invoke the war as justification for and against their arguments for women's suffrage. Yevzerov opposes militancy in protest tactics: "The participants are no doubt convinced they are carrying out a sacred task, but this seems to me a useless expense of energy." She characterizes the British suffragists' struggles ("they stole into Parliament through the roof, they tied themselves to the railing of the gallery, they beseiged the House of Commons") as well as government repression as each "overstep[ping] the bounds of reason and justice."[181] Whether the more moderate approach she took in *Tsukunft* was due to an evolution in her thinking or the discretion of her editors, however, we cannot say.

Yevzerov's goal of full citizenship and property rights for women was condemned by other writers at *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, who called her ideas (and those of her moderate husband) "revisionist."[182] Emma Goldman, Yevzerov's close friend, also spoke against women's suffrage in an English-language essay from 1917:

> Needless to say, I am not opposed to woman suffrage on the conventional ground that she is not equal to it. I see neither physical, psychological, nor mental reasons why woman should not have the equal right to vote with man. But that can not possibly blind me to the absurd notion that woman

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[178] "Veyse khevre" could possibly mean "white communities," a potential reference to the KKK.

[179] "Suffrage's High Cost, Effect on Elections Nil," *New York Times,* November 4 1917. Cited by Cassedy, 177.

[180] Translation by Cassedy, 197. Yevzerov is referring to the streets where the German Reichstag and British Westminster Hall are located.

[181] Cassedy, 200.

[182] See also: Katerina Yevzerov-Merison, "The American Women's Movement and the Victory for Women in the Last Elections (1917)," 194-203.

> will accomplish that wherein man has failed. If she would not make things worse, she certainly could not make them better. To assume, therefore, that she would succeed in purifying something which is not susceptible of purification, is to credit her with supernatural powers. Since woman's greatest misfortune has been that she was looked upon as either angel or devil, her true salvation lies in being placed on earth; namely, in being considered human, and therefore subject to all human follies and mistakes… As a matter of fact, the most advanced students of universal suffrage have come to realize that all existing systems of political power are absurd, and are completely inadequate to meet the pressing issues of life.[183]

Goldman was not the only female anarchist who opposed voting. In a letter to Joseph Cohen dated Feb 27 1911, the Yiddish-speaking Catholic writer Voltairine de Cleyre writes:

I read your letter in the 'Free Word.' I also read Yanovsky's comment on the articles therein. And while I did not read the articles (for want of time) it seems to me from Livshis's account of them that Yanovsky was rather justified in his observation that the articles would have been in place in the Forwards. 'The Anarchistic Party!' — After a while we shall have 'Votes for Women' in the 'platform.' Your suggestion that we find out what anarchism is, and what activity is consistent with it, is all right. But it's a bad thing to exhibit all our perplexities to the enemy.[184]

Despite her involvement with anti-suffrage anarchist circles, Yevzerov took another tack, writing, "If one cannot introduce socialism in its entirety all at once, one should introduce as many pieces of it as possible."[185] Historian Steven Cassedy notes that for those familiar with the women's movement of the later 20th Century, Yevzerov's contributions "are likely to appear rather tame. There are no calls for militant action and no comprehensive program for a women's rights movement."[186] Although her advocacy was considered mild by both anarchists of her day and later feminists, Yevzerov consistently addressed issues largely ignored by the male writers of the Yiddish anarchist press and brought a strong historical perspective to her work. *Woman in Society* rousingly concludes with a feminist recasting of that anarchist ur-figure, the sovereign individual: "One must take notice that women are capable of producing and contributing to all branches of human endeavor, if they merely have the inclination and strong will. One must expose the false idea lying at the root of women's enslavement, and say to women themselves: Think independently, rely on yourself alone, be free!"[187]

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[183] Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays,* 106.

[184] De Cleyre files, YIVO.

[185] Zimmer, 35.

[186] Cassedy, 177.

[187] Yevzerov, 82. Yevzerov uses very thick *daytshmerish* vocabulary, such as *unabhängig* (independently).

The Anarchist Talmud of Rabbi Yankev Meir Zalkind

Yankev-Meyer Zalkind was a British Orthodox rabbi, philologist, anarcho-communist, close friend of Rudolf Rocker, and active anti-militarist. He was also a prolific Hebrew and Yiddish writer and a prominent Torah scholar, who wrote volumes of commentary on the Talmud and translated four tractates into Yiddish, printed in pamphlet-style editions, and published more than one thousand articles in several languages.[188] He knew more than 30 languages, ancient and modern, leading to his being nicknamed *gaon anarchist* (anarchist sage) by his comrades. Zalkind believed that the ethics of the Talmud, if properly understood, are closely related to anarchism. His earliest literary writing was published in *Ha-Ts'fira* in 1900, and his Hebrew plays for children (1903–22) were frequently staged in Jewish schools.[189] He moved in diverse circles, befriending such varied historical figures as the Hebrew poet Chaim Nachman Bialik and the Yiddish poet-assassin Sholem Shvartsbard.[190]

Zalkind (later Salkind) was born August 16, 1875 in Kobrin (Grodno Province, White Russia). His father was a *maskil* who traced his lineage to the Baal Shem Tov, and his mother's *yikhes* also included many eminent rabbis. As a child, Zalkind was gifted in both religious and secular subjects. Following his bar mitzvah, he studied for two years at the legendary Volozhin yeshiva and continued Talmudic study in several other yeshivas. Zalkind received permission to attend the Russian gymnasium in Kiev and then German and Swiss universities. After the 1903 pogroms in Kishinev, Zalkind organized a Jewish self-defense group in Bern. About one year later, he received his doctorate from the University of Bern, with a dissertation written on linguistic textual criticism of rabbinic texts and the Song of Songs. Around 1904, he moved to London with his and there organized a Zionist group, *Aḥuzah* (Estate). On behalf of *Aḥuzah's* poor members, he visited Palestine in 1913 and obtained land at Karkur, on the coast near Haifa. He served as rabbi for the community in Cardiff, Wales, then moved to Glasgow to study agronomy in 1915.

Zalkind became radicalized during World War I, lead anti-militarist organizations, and particularly opposed Revisionist Zionist leader Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky's efforts to form a Jewish Legion. In 1916 he organized a "Defense Committee" to prevent the draft of Jews into the army and established a daily newspaper, *Yidishe shtime* (Jewish Voice). He became close to with Rudolf Rocker's circle of Yiddish-speaking anarchists, and co-organized a group called "The Foreign Jews' Protection Committee against Conscription, Deportation to Russia and Compulsory Military Service." This was one of several Jewish immigrant organizations that agitated against enlistment, in the period leading up to 1918. Secret reports submitted by the Special Branch of Scotland Yard's Criminal Investigation Department document how members of these immigrants' groups were strongly anarchist; the existence of these reports suggest the level of surveillance immigrants experienced. Co-edited by Zalkind and A. Bezalel, *Yidishe shtime* was the official newspaper of that group. Its

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[188] Goncharuk,"The Fate of Jewish Anarchists" (Судьбы еврейских анархистов), http://www.jewniverse.ru/biher/goncharok/anarchie/8.html

[189] Tolkes, Jerucham, and Leonard Prager. "Salkind, Jacob Meir." *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. 2nd ed. Vol. 17. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. 691. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 2 Oct. 2014.

[190] Goncharuk, *Lives of Yiddish Anarchists.*

membership grew "by leaps and bounds" after 1916, according to confidential Scotland Yard memoranda discussed by Stuart Cohen.[191] In the years following the war, Zalkind revived the Yiddish anarchist paper *Arbeter fraynd* (Worker's Friend), which had been suppressed during the war as Rudolf Rocker was deported to Holland. Zalkind ran the paper for four years, first as a weekly, then as a daily, from 1920 until 1923. From their back pages and ads, we learn that *Arbeter Fraynd's* London readers favored masquerade balls, "soirees," and tea parties, where their New York counterparts perhaps organized more cafe meetings. *Arbeter fraynd* also ran columns from Sholem Shvartsbard, the poet-assassin with whom Zalkind corresponded.[192] After it closed, he dedicated himself to writing on Rabbinics and translating the Talmud. Zalkind advocated for an anarchist foundation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. In 1933, he settled in Haifa and continued political and scholarly work there until his death in December 1937. In 1921, he and his family returned to Haifa and settled there on the land he had purchased.[193]


5 סענט. THE WORKERS' FRIEND 2 פענס.

דער

ארבייטער פריינד

אנארכיסטיש־קאמוניסטישער ארגאן.

ערשיינט צווי וועכענטליך. LONDON, July 29, 1922. No. 17. VOL. XXXIII. 33סטער יאהרגאנג, נומער 17

דער זיג פון מאסקווע און אביסעל מוסר השכל.

Heading for Arbeter Fraynd: Anarkhistish-Komunistisher Organ, *London, July 1922. The headline reads: "Der zig fun moskve un abisl muser haskl," "The victory in Moscow and an object lesson." Such loshn-koydesh was frequently used during Rabbi Dr. Yankev-Meir Zalkind's editorship*.

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191 Confidential memorandum, dated 23 October 1916, in Public Records Office (London), Home Office Files, CID Reports 1916-17, HO 45/10819, file 318095/132. See Stuart A. Cohen, "How Shall We Sing of Zion in a Strange Land?" p121.

192 See his letters to Zalkind from the Prison de la Santé, Paris. YIVO, RG 85, folder 883.

193 Jerucham Tolkes and Leonard Prager. "Salkind, Jacob Meir." *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. 2nd ed. Vol. 17. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. 691. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 2 Oct. 2014.


א לעקטשור
פון גנ. ד"ר. י. מ. זאלקינד
פרייטאג, 4טען פעבואר,
מענטעל מייקערס האל,
די עטיק פון אנארכיזם.
די
פרייע ארבייטער שטימע

"A lecture by Comrade (Genose) Dr. Y. M. Zalkind" on "The Ethics of Anarchism." (Image polarized from microfilm.) Below that, an ad for the Fraye Arbeter Shtime.

Zalkind translated four tractates of the Talmud into Yiddish between 1922 and 1932: *Berakhot* ("Blessings") from the Babylonian Talmud; *Pe'ah* ("Corner [of a Field]"), *Demai* ("Doubtfully Tithed Crops") and *Kil'ayim* ("Hybrid") from the Jerusalem Talmud. *Pe'ah* ("Corner") discusses ethics in agriculture, including hospitality towards travelers, redistribution of crops to the poor, and the commandment not to reap the corners of one's fields. Zalkind, as an anarchist and organizer, believed that his community needed a Yiddish translation of this tractate: certainly the laws governing the treatment of the poor and the sharing of property would be an important link in a Jewish genealogy of anarchism. The desire to make *halakhah* more accessible drove many aspects of Hasidic and pious culture, from the genre of *tkhines* (Yiddish women's prayers) to the popularized pamphlets of today. Zalkind did not use the rhetoric of piety, but of scholarship and enlightenment. Concern about gendered access to scripture is here related to class, especially that texts on workers' rights be accessible to workers themselves. In the introduction, Zalkind emphasizes the high quality of his scholarship and his textual criticism, well-established by his German training as a philologist. In other words, Zalkind employed a scientific, Western methodology (*wissenschaft des Judentum*) and not a rabbinic *targum* (commentary-translation) to appeal to the post-yeshiva London and Tel Aviv generation of the 1920s.

Pe'ah represents the immediate redistribution of wealth. It limits the amount that one can harvest; lists natural phenomena that mark land borders, such as rivers and paths; trees that are subject to Pe-ah include sumach, carob, nut trees, vines, pomegranate, olive, and date palm trees:

> The following serve as boundaries for a field, in all that concerns *Peah:* A river, a pond, a private road, a public road, and a public path. Also a private

> path that is used during the summer and during the rainy-season, uncultivated soil, fallow-land, and a different variety of crop. If one cuts the produce of one field for fodder, he makes thereby a boundary, this is according to Rabbi Meir, but the Sages say: It does not act as a boundary unless he ploughed it up.[194]

These laws also figure in the Book of Ruth, in which Ruth and Naomi glean in the fields of Boaz, a wealthy and kind man. A key concept in Pe'ah is that of *hefker*, surplus or abandoned property which may be gathered up by the poor. This concept is interwoven throughout Yiddish radical thought and anarchist modernism, appearing from the earliest to the latest of Peretz Markish's work, as discussed further in Chapter Four. Chana Kronfeld explicates *hefker* as a key term for Markish: "*Hefker* is a complex notion implying lawlessness and recklessness on the one hand, and neglect and abandonment on the other… Moreover, it is a central marker of the young modernist's early engagement with the echo-chamber of traditional Jewish intertextuality.[195]" Both Moshe Goncharuk and Yosef Luden's histories of anarchism open with a comparison of anarchism and *hefker felder,* an abandoned field open for everyone to harvest.

The anarchist rabbi positions himself specifically as an enlightener through scientific clarity, rather than a pious guide. Zalkind's title and subtitle reads "Talmud in Yiddish, Second Chapter: Translated and Enlightened." The word *erklert* (from German *erklären*) suggests enlightenment in the sense of the Haskalah, though Yiddish readers would have understood it from the fused word *derklert*. Zalkind signs his work *Der iberzetser un erklerer: "*The translator and enlightener, Zalkind." *Erklert* is used in the subtitle to *Brokhes* as well. This is a departure from the subtitle often placed below translations of classics in the humanities, most famously the poster for a production of Jacob Gordin's "Shakespeare's Hamlet — Translated and Improved *(fartaytsht un farbesert)*—present by Boris Tomashevsky." This discourse of scientific study was common throughout anarchist writing of the time.[196]

In 1905, Zalkind wrote his dissertation for the University of Bern, *Die Peschitta Zu Schir-Haschirim: Textkritisch und irhem Verhaltnisse zu Mt. Und LXX Untersucht (The Peshita* [Syriac translation] *of the Song of Songs: Text Criticism Examined).* The dissertation dedication uses a combination of German, Yiddish and Hebraic conventions and formulas: "*Dem ewigen andenken meines lieben unvergesslichen Vaters, M. J. L. Salkind ע"נ gest. Am 17 Ellul 5658, in kindlicher Liebe un Dankbarkeit, Gewidmet vom Verfasser*" — "In eternal

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[194] Translation from Leo Auerbach, *The Babylonian Talmud in Selection* (1944), p51.

[195] Kronfeld, "Murdered Modernisms," *A Captive of the Dawn: The Life and Work of Peretz Markish (1895-1952).* Oxford: Legenda Studies in Yiddish. 2011, 198-199.

[196] For example, in the German Jewish law professor Paul Eltzbacher's 1908 book *Anarchism,* published by Benjamin Tucker: "We learn, first, that the teachings of certain particular men are recognized as Anarchistic teachings by the greater part of those who at present are scientifically concerned with Anarchism. […] Among the recognized Anarchistic teachings seven are particularly prominent: to wit, the teachings of Godwin, Proudhon, Stirner, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Tucker, and Tolstoi. They all manifest themselves to be Anarchistic teachings according to the greater part of the definition of Anarchism, and of other scientific utterances about it." Eltzbacher, *Anarchism,* 12-13.

memory, my beloved unforgettable father…" As Naomi Seidman notes in reference to Levinas, a Jewish text's dedication is a significant site of establishing genealogy and transmission: "Such formulas, absolutely familiar—although no less poignant for that—to the Hebrew reader, signify entirely differently in another language."[197] It is also a site of bilingualism, speaking to multiple audiences: his professors at the University of Bern, Hebrew readers, and family. He recognizes the original name (Salkind) of his father, which he was still using at that time. Zalkind wrote in German on Peschitta, which he considered *schwestern* (sisters) to the Septuagint and Vulgate, "and even the Targum."[198] This suggests that his concerns with accessibility "for the people" began with Peshita, meaning "simple."

Although other Yiddish anarchists had highly learned backgrounds, Zalkind was unique in his lifelong dedication to the philological study of Talmud and his meticulous observance of *mitsvot*. Drawing from his education—from his youngest days at the Volozhin yeshiva to his doctorate at the University of Bern—Zalkind remained in conversation with the world of the Rabbis, even while under surveillance by Scotland Yard as an anarchist leader in London. After settling in Haifa, his rabbinic opinions were sought after by other great rabbis. He maintained a lifelong belief that the social ideals of anarchism were closely tied to talmudic ethics. The most similar figure was Russian anarchist Abba Gordin, who also searched for the origins of anarchism within Jewish religiosity.[199]

Anti-Clericalism and Atheism in Yiddish Anarchist History

The previous sections have documented the complexities of Yiddish anarchist engagement with Jewish religiosity. Less ambivalent, however, were the strains of anti-clericalism and atheism in other areas of the movement. The phenomenon of Yiddish anarchist anti-religiosity was most famous and visible for its Yom Kippur balls, mockeries of the High Holiday which in fact originated as a Socialist action in London in 1888 and were adopted by New York anarchists the following year. Yom Kippur balls were held in the 1890s and 1900s in Newark, Philadelphia, Providence, St. Louis, Paris, Montreal, and Havana. Kenyon Zimmer describes the Balls thus:

> On the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, while religious Jews fasted and prayed for atonement, anarchists and socialists paraded in the streets and then retired to meeting halls or parks to hear radical speakers, feast, and dance. Marcus Ravage recalled that the Lower East Side's radicals "ostentatiously went about with big cigars in our mouths and bags of food in our pockets," and one report of the inaugural 1889 ball claimed each

[197] Seidman, *Faithful Renderings,* 30.

[198] Salkind, 1.

[199] Gordin wrote two historical novels, both published in Tel Aviv in 1960: *ha-Maharal mi-Prag* (Rabi Yehudah Liṿa ben R. Betsalel), in Hebrew, and *Shloyme ha-meylekh: historisher roman* (King Solomon: A Historical Novel), published in Yiddish. *Di froy un di bibl* (New York, 1939), begins with the chapter "*Gotikhe un Got*" (God and Goddess, with humorous connotations).

> participant paraded with "a piece of pork in his hand, growling the Marseillaise and other street songs in Russian and in jargon [i.e. Yiddish]." Fistfights with enraged observant Jews were common. …On Passover, radicals also staged balls where, according to Ravage, "we consumed more forbidden food and drink than was good for us," and published satirical versions of the Passover Haggadah. Some groups held a secularized Passover Seder where revolutionary songs, echoing the holiday's theme of emancipation, were sung.[200] Radicalism also replaced religiosity on the Jewish Sabbath; Yiddish anarchist groups often held their weekly public lectures on Friday evenings (and their English-language lectures on Sundays), and anarchists would privately host shabes dinners where traditional *gefulte* fish was served but the songs of David Edelstadt replaced religious liturgy. In September 1904 the general secretary of the Workmen's Circle, Leo Rozentsvayg, sparked weeks of debate in the Yiddish anarchist and socialist press with a letter to the *Fraye Arbayter Shtime* condemning Circle members who attended Rosh Hashanah prayer services as "three-day-a-year Jews" and "traitors." Orthodoxy and radicalism were framed in sharply antagonistic terms, although as Rozentsvayg's letter revealed, some Jews tried to juggle commitments to both.[201]

The first Yom Kippur Ball in New York City drew a crowd of 2,000 people— 1% of the city's estimated Jewish population. Yosef Cohen called Yom Kippur Balls "a very popular institution among the people," bringing visibility to the anarchist cause.[202] Cohen includes in his history of anarchism a long and detailed description of the planning of the "Kol Nidre" balls (and their subsequent fall-out), detailing the varied arguments over how to relate to religious Judaism.[203] By 1905, however, the once-riotous Yom Kippur balls had mellowed to Yom Kippur picnics on Long Island, far from the Lower East Side.[204]

Although the Balls were the most visible aspect of anarchist and socialist protest against religious tradition, there was no consensus about their usage. In an oral history, Fermin Rocker reflects on his father Rudolf Rocker's views about the Balls:

> I doubt that my father would have gone in for such infantile diversions [as eating a ham sandwich on Yom Kippur to annoy the Orthodox]. But you have to remember that there was very strong anti-clerical[ism] in all the movements of the Left. You see what happened in Spain, too… Now, among the Jews, this manifested itself in this very strong opposition against the

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[200] Also in Palestine in this period, there were often Yom Kippur feasts and *kumzitim* (picnics with bonfires) held on kibbutzes. This remains the norm to this day, since the 1920s, according to Chana Kronfeld. For a detailed and lively account of Soviet Communist Passover texts and traditions, see Anna Shternshis' *Soviet and Kosher.*

[201] Zimmer, 89.

[202] Zimmer, 75.

[203] Yosef Cohen, 90.

[204] Rebecca Margolis, "A Tempest in Three Teapots: Yom Kippur Balls in London, New York, and Montreal." *The Canadian Jewish Studies Reader,* ed. Richard Menkis. 52.

> Jewish establishment. And I fancy, in those days, that establishment was even more conservative than it is today […]. And I think they—the religious lot—had their strong-arm gangs too, it wasn't all a one-sided affair, but all these things can sometimes become a bit infantile. There's nothing achieved by simply outraging the feelings of one's opponents. On the other hand, you could argue that if someone's eating a ham sandwich outside a synagogue, that's his perfect right—as long as he doesn't go inside and eat it there! [Laughter][205]

As in Soviet Russia, where the Yiddish press produced parodies of the Passover *hagode* with Communist songs and texts carefully adapted into liturgical structures, anarchists also created religious parodical texts.[206] From 1890 to 1893 the Pioneers of Freedom also annually produced thousands of copies of a paper on *erev* Yom Kippur with the Hebrew title *Tefila zaka la-yamim ha-nora'im, le-shabatot, le-mo'adim, u-lekhol yemot ha-shana* (A Pure Prayer for the Days of Awe, for Sabbaths, Holidays and for All Days of the Year),[207] which contained satirical prayers and revolutionary poetry.

Cultural opposition to Yiddish anarchism was fiercest from other Jews, who felt that the anarchists hindered their attempts at assimilation. This intra-Jewish community tension is also illustrated in Emma Goldman's memoir, where she recalls a Jewish policeman who, after arresting her, takes her to a diner to try and talk sense into her. He addresses her paternally, compliments her on her brilliance and the promise of her youth, and tries to offer career advice: "He felt for me, because he was a *Yehude* himself."[208] Although pleased by the dinner paid for by the City of New York, Goldman calls him "a Judas," punning on *yehudi* (Jew). The exchange illustrates how, even across the division of anarchist and cop, the two interact with each other with the dynamics of community members, if not family.

Although there were strong anti-clerical dimensions of the movement, Lilian Türk and Jesse Cohn chart a shift among writers who sought to "modulate the strong critique of religious and educational institutions derived from the East European Jewish Enlightenment."[209] Türk and Cohn conclude:

> [R]ejection of religion was no longer a *sine qua non* of Jewish anarchism. Identifications emerged that referred to a particularistic and specifically Jewish tradition, connecting anarchist ethics to higher meaning. Instead domination was unacceptable to anarchism, not only with regard to religion and spirituality. Thus, the rejection of domination came to characterise anarchism more specifically than its rejection of religion, even if the antireligious stance remained widespread. […] Religious anarchists put stronger emphasis on individual responsibility in religious and educational

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[205] Oral history conducted by Andrew Whitehead, British Library.

[206] See Anna Shternshis' *Soviet and Kosher: Jewish Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939.*

[207] Located at the IISH archive, Amsterdam.

[208] Goldman, *Living My Life,* 88.

[209] Türk and Cohn, 10.

> matters. High esteem for science was prevalent and equally valued, although its compatibility with ethics was disputed.[210]

Türk and Cohn's research indicates a new curiosity about the evolution of Yiddish radicalism by those in the field of anarchist studies more broadly.

Conclusion

This chapter mapped several Jewish anarchist, from the religious reclamations of Zalkind and Luden to the anti-patriarchalism of Goldman and Yevzerov. These writers all shared an investment in articulating a culturally-specific lineage of anti-statist thought—an alternative to universalizing, intermittently anti-Semitic European anarchism. This research contributes to our greater understanding of literary and political interpretations of Jewish diaspora, beyond the two well-documented movements for Jewish nationalism and Bundism. Understanding their model of history provides a foundation for close reading of temporal experimentalism in Yiddish modernist poetry: rather than rejecting the past (such as in Italian Futurism) or denying cultural difference (as in Bakunin), Yiddish historians and poets both drew from Jewish history as inspiration for their political imaginations.

The following chapter links these reclaimed genealogies with their strategic usage of minority language. I ask: What were the language politics of the Yiddish anarchist movement? How did their ideology of language reflect the diasporism of Yiddish itself?

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[210] Article forthcoming (unnumbered pages), via email correspondence. "Radicalism and Religion: Yiddish Anarchists' Controversies in *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, 1937-1945."

— Chapter Two —

"Language is Migrant": The Multilingual Language Politics of Alexander Harkavy, Emma Goldman, and the Anarchist Press

This chapter examines the language politics of Jewish anarchism—a movement which, unlike Bundism, Zionism, and Reform Judaism, did not articulate a single ideology of language. To more accurately represent a non-centralized movement, I offer several case studies, beginning with a discussion of two prominent figures: the groundbreaking linguist Alexander Harkavy, who edited and contributed to anarchist newspapers, and Emma Goldman, who used Yiddish as a primary language for lectures on taboo subjects. The second part of the chapter considers anarchist multilingual practices in organizing spaces and in print. In two legal cases, Yiddish-English bilingualism played a central role: Emma Goldman's sentence for delivering birth control lectures, and the Supreme Court free speech case *Jacob Abrams vs United States.* Finally, I discuss the close relationship between two English-language literary journals, Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth* and Margaret Anderson's *Little Review.* While the strong mutual influence between anarchists and Modernist writers in the United States spanned both Yiddish and English-language print cultures, I argue that the English-language *Mother Earth* bore the strong influence of the Yiddish radical press and its taste for labor Romanticism. Taken together, these case studies represent the complexity of Jewish anarchist language politics in the United States, diverging from the model of language politics as primarily a debate about the Jewish national language.

Introduction

For most Jewish movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, linguistic choice was intimately tied to political ideology. Zionists advocated for the "revival" of Hebrew, inspired by Litvak lexicographer Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and organized by formal language councils.[211] Chaim Zhitlovsky and like-minded Socialist representatives to the 1908 Czernovitz conference debated whether Yiddish ought to be designated "*a* language of the Jewish nation" or *"the* language of the Jewish nation."[212] Soviet Yiddishists altered their

[211] For documentation of the Language Council, Literature Council, Pure Language Society, and other institutions supporting the Hebrew "revival," see Scott B. Saulson, *Institutionalized Language Planning: Documents and Analysis of Revival of Hebrew* (Walter de Gruyter, 1979).

[212] Joshua A. Fogel and Keith Weiser, eds., *Czernovitz at 100: The First Yiddish Language Conference in Historical Perspective* (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2010).

orthography to diminish its *loshn-koydesh* component, among other ideological changes[213]. Der Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeter Bund (the General Jewish Workers' Union, known simply as the Bund) cast Yiddish as the workers' international language, organizing in that language across Russia, Lithuania, and Poland.[214] Jewish language choice remains ideologically charged into the 21st Century: the Satmar sect of Hasidim, for example, speak Yiddish as a language of separation within Israel as they eschew voting for the Knesset.[215]

The politicization of language choice was not unique to Jewish movements of that era. Soviet language reformers, avowedly motivated by a desire for pedagogical simplicity, changed Arabic, Latin, Georgian, and other alphabets to Cyrillic.[216] During the same period, Turkish reformers abandoned the Arabic alphabet and purged the language of words derived from Persian and Arabic.[217] To what extent, then, did Yiddish anarchists participate in the linguistic debates of their fellow Jews or in international language reform movements? Were Jewish anti-nationalists concerned with the question of a Jewish national language? Considering that anarchism was an international immigrant movement, how did multilingualism function in newspapers and organizing spaces? And what marks anarchist multilingualism as distinct amongst Jewish multilingualisms?

Jewish anarchist linguists in Russia and Europe had a utopian bent. In Russia, Vol'f Lvovich Gordin pioneered a brand of linguistic theory at once fantastical and mathematical. V. L. Gordin (brother of Yiddish writer and editor Abba Gordin) invented the language AO, for which he provided "sophisticated" grammar books and extensive bilingual dictionaries. AO "eventually became the world's first language for interplanetary travel among Moscow's anarcho-cosmists of the later 1920s. […] AO offered a compact circle of logical meanings that its adepts believed would make perfect sense in outer space."[218] Michael G. Smith notes, "True to the anarchist ethic, V. L.'s new language altogether dispensed with gender (signifying male oppression), as well as possessive cases and possessive pronouns and the genitive case (signifying property relations)."[219] Gordin's linguistic search "echoed the poetic experiments" of *Zaum,* the experiments in sound symbolism and language creation carried out by Russian Futurist poets.[220]

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[213] For a detailed survey of the waves of Yiddish language reform, see Gennady Estraikh, *Soviet Yiddish: Language Planning and Linguistic Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[214] Ron Kuzar, *Hebrew and Zionism: A Discourse Analytic Cultural Study* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyte, 2001).

[215] See speech in Yiddish by their rebbe, Zalman Leib Teitelbaum, exhorting a mass gathering not to vote. Mea She'arim, January 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nkb8_E8aVLA

[216] Ivan G. Iliev, "Short History of the Cyrillic Alphabet." *International Journal of Russian Studies,* Issue No. 2 (2013/14).

[217] See Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[218] Smith, Michael G. *Rockets and Revolution: A Cultural History of Early Spaceflight.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press) 2014.

[219] Smith,

[220] *Psychiatry in Communist Europe,* eds. Sarah Marks and Mat Savelli (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), footnote 48.

More famous than Gordin's utopian language is Esperanto, created by Białystok-born Ludovik Lazarus Zamenhof (1859-1917), who termed his project *Hilelismo* and envisioned it uniting humankind.[221] Before inventing Esperanto, Zamenhof first attempted to "modernize" Yiddish with Latin characters to develop a "new Jewish language"—predating Soviet orthography and YIVO standardization by decades.[222] The USSR invested in the Soviet Esperanto Union, which "promoted Russian proletarian internationalism by way of labor unions and pen pals." In France, a faction of the Anarcho-Esperantists called the Non-Nationalist Association (*Sennacieco Asocio Tutmondo)* dedicated themselves to a borderless world. Another French anarcho-syndicalist, Victor Coissac, proposed "an interplanetary language of mathematics and geometry for future space travel," and organized a commune from 1911-1935. Widespread repression of Esperanto across Western Europe began in 1922, when France banned its being taught in schools; in 1936, Germany and Portugal banned Esperanto itself. The rise of Stalinism led to the arrests and executions of many Esperantists in 1937, and it was forbidden as the "product of bourgeois internationalism and cosmopolitanism."[223] How, then, did anarchists conceptualize Yiddish, a language always-already "internationalist" and diasporic?

Yiddish anarchist views on language choice were complex and heterogeneous. They were dissimilar to earlier *maskilim's* utilitarian views of language and their debates about national language and linguistic reform.[224] Rather than developing a unified ideology or practice of the Yiddish language, Yiddish anarchist language politics varied by individual and community, often as the result of region and immigration status. Yiddish anarchists in the United States employed varying tactics to evade censorship and celebrate culture, largely without attaching any articulated ideology to language itself, unlike their Russian utopian counterparts. Indeed, when I asked Emma Goldman's confidante Audrey Goodfriend[225] whether a sense of "Yiddish nationalism" or loyalty to their native language prevailed among *Fraye Arbeter Shtime's* editors, she snapped, "We published in Yiddish simply because that was the language we spoke best. What are you, an academic?"[226] Goodfriend's reply demonstrates her pragmatism as it echoes the ideology of the Introspectivist (*In-zikhistn)* manifesto of 1919: *Mir shraybn yidish vayl mir zaynen yidish!* "We write Yiddish as long are we are Yiddish."[227] However, there was great variety in anarchists' perception and use of Yiddish, particularly in the period before the Palmer Raids.

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[221] Esther Schor, "Esperanto—A Jewish Story." *Pakn-treger,* Winter 2009.

[222] Ibid.

[223] Will Firth, "Esperanto and Anarchism." *Lexikon der Anarchie* (Verlag Schwarzer Nachtschatten, 1998). Translated and expanded for the Anarchist Library, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/will-firth-esperanto-and-anarchism

[224] *Maskilim* were proponents of the Jewish Enlightenment, or *Haskalah/Haskole.*

[225] Audrey Goodfriend (1920-2013) was a Bronx-born "red-and-black diaper baby." In addition to her connection with Goldman, she co-founded the Walden School in Berkeley. The first time we met in person and she discovered my ethnicity, she happily exclaimed, "How internationalist!"

[226] Telephone interview, summer 2007, Oakland.

[227] Harshav and Harshav, *American Yiddish Poetry,* 774-784.

Anita Norich describes Yiddish language politics as "the very definition of current discussions of multiculturalism and transnationalism."[228] The Yiddish anarchist writers were inherently multicultural and transnational, although they viewed themselves as internationalist and anti-nationalist; they likewise resisted the linguistic nationalisms of Socialist, Bundist, Communist, and Zionist movements. This chapter analyzes varied aspects of Yiddish anarchist language politics unique to the Ashkenazi context, which is distinguished by internal bilingualism.[229] Rather than a single ideology, the movement adopted a variety of pragmatic approaches to language choice, negotiating issues of censorship, surveillance, cultural production, and socialization or acculturation in new cities. This conforms to a larger pattern of anarchists' resistance to articulating and enforcing a single ideology.

The first half of this chapter examines this heterogeneity through two central figures: Emma Goldman and the groundbreaking linguist, essayist, and translator Alexander Harkavy. In addition to helping establish the field of Yiddish philology, Harkavy also wrote bestselling scholarly works addressing immigrant populations, such as his trilingual Yiddish-Hebrew-English dictionaries used to this day and *brivnshteler* (book of letter-writing templates). Like Rabbi Yankev Meir Zalkind, who translated talmudic labor tractates into Yiddish, Harkavy was a highly-trained linguist and translator who used his advanced skills to serve the ideal of accessibility. Harkavy was also a prolific translator of anarchist texts and maintained a view of language development informed by his anarchist worldview. I propose that we take anarchist thought seriously as a formative aspect on Harkavy's linguistic approach, which, as Dovid Katz notes, "defies labels."[230]

While Harkavy balanced his research among Hebrew, Yiddish, English, and other languages, Emma Goldman had a fraught relationship with language choice. An autodidact with idiosyncratic spelling, Goldman advocated for American radicals to speak and write in English. She claimed that she stopped speaking Yiddish so that the detectives surveilling her would know *exactly* what she was saying. Yet Goldman also vacillated between lecturing in Yiddish to mass assemblies and denying all knowledge of "zhargon."[231] Her literary aesthetic was often interpreted, by English-language critics, as a backwards-looking Romanticism that compared unfavorably to the avant-garde. Despite Goldman's often negative views of Yiddish, her English-language lectures and editorials on art were strongly informed by the *svetshop* poets—a connection to Yiddish culture that was erased by translation.

The second part of this chapter studies the language politics of anarchist social spaces and newspapers, surveying *Frayhayt* (Freedom), *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* (Free Voice of Labor), *Der Nayer Gayst* (The New Spirit), and others, and the English journals *Little Review*

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[228] Norich, "Writing on the Edge," *Choosing YIddish: New Frontiers of Language and Culture,* 11.

[229] Among European Jewry, literacy was highly gendered: communities generally spoke Yiddish together, with higher fluency among women in the language of non-Jewish neighbors and higher male literacy in Hebrew and Aramaic. See Naomi Seidman, *A Marriage Made in Heaven: The Sexual Politics of Hebrew and Yiddish* (University of California Press, Berkeley: 1993).

[230] Katz, xv.

[231] *Zhargon* is a derogatory term for Yiddish, suggesting that it is a jargon, not an actual language.

and *Mother Earth.* While Yiddish and German were often found spoken in the same spaces and demonstrations, Yiddish and English tended to be proximate as *literary* languages. Movement multilingualism included Johann Most's fiery German oratory and letters by Voltairine de Cleyre, a prominent Catholic anarchist poet who learned Yiddish to work in Jewish radical communities.[232] I also discuss the texture of their Yiddish: how it was informed by other languages, fashions, and *daytshmerish* (germanized orthography and vocabulary). Case studies considered here include the relationship between two papers—Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth* and Margaret Anderson's *Little Review*—and the bilingual edition of *Frayhayt,* for which its editors were deported in the 1918 landmark free speech case *Abrams vs US Supreme Court*.

Did the Yiddish language *itself* inspire or inform anarchist diasporism? Certainly, as a diasporic language, its formal characteristics happily lend themselves to poetic innovation. The poet and literary historian Benjamin Harshav (Hrushovski) writes, "Yiddish always was an *open language*, moving in and out of its component languages and absorbing more or less of their vocabularies, depending on the group of speakers, genre of discourse, and circumstances."[233] Harshav refers to the linguist Max Weinreich's term *komponentn-visikeyt,* or "component-consciousness," which is an awareness among Yiddish speakers and writers of the linguistic origins (predominantly Romance, Germanic, Hebraic/Aramaic, Slavic, and "international") of the words they choose.[234] A poet can play off readers' *komponentn-visikeyt* by juxtaposing words of different etymologies, signaling a great deal of information. As Harshav writes, "Yiddish literature developed a profound grasp of this interaction and play of components and used it as a major source of semantic and stylistic variation and impact."[235]

The multiple linguistic components of Yiddish testify to Jewish contact and engagement with others. Weinreich emphasizes the reciprocal impact of Yiddish on co-territorial languages, looking at words adopted into non-Jewish languages and surviving post-expulsions.[236] This linguistic emphasis is akin to Daniel Boyarin's emphasis on diaspora as cultural hybridity. Weinreich underlines the reciprocity of Yiddish diasporism, which resonates with queer theorist David Eng's model, discussed in the Introduction. Reading a minor language also fostered a sense of immigrant being-together, a textual equivalent to those enclosed spaces—such as East Side cafés and sweatshops—that allowed Jewish oppositional culture to flourish. What Yankev Glatshteyn termed *altsetsungte shprakheray*, the "multitongued languaging"[237] of Yiddish, uniquely inspired a *poetics* of diaspora. But did it inspire a politics of diaspora as well? Did this "openness"—whether inherent or potential, projected or constructed—affect how Yiddish anarchists conceptualized their primary language?

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[232] For discussions of Yiddish and Italian in the anarchist movements, see Kenyon Zimmer's *Anarchists Against the State* (2015) and Paul Avrich's *Anarchist Voices* (2005).

[233] Benjamin Harshav, *The Meaning of Yiddish* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 28.

[234] Max Weinreich, *Geshikhte fun der yidisher shprakh* (New York, 1973), 2: 318. Weinreich, *History of the Yiddish Language*, trans. Sh. Noble (Chicago, 1980), 656.

[235] Harshav, *Meaning of Yiddish*, 40.

[236] Weinreich, A-660.

[237] Glatshteyn, "Zing Ladino," *Yidishteytshn,* 291.

A counterpart to this linguistic "openness" is its body of vocabulary termed *lehavdl-loshn*—the language of differentiation or separation.[238] Max Weinreich writes in *History of the Yiddish Language,* "There are words applied to Jews (or even neutrally, when no differentiation is intended), and these have parallel series that has to begin with a derogatory connotation or one of disgust."[239] The word *lehavdl* is also used as an exclamation or placed as a barrier between two items that should not be spoken of in the same breath. This separatist component of the language rubbed against the universalist ideals of some speakers. Weinreich tracks, for example, how a poem was rewritten by Communist publishers to erase (and thus, incidentally reify) *lehavdl-loshn*:

> When Mani Leyb, in his *Yingl-tsingl khvat* (New York, 1920?), wrote, *"Un di goyim un di yidn / hobn zikh gelebt tsufridn"* 'and the gentiles and the Jews / lived happily,' he surely used a mere linguistic fact, without putting any emotions into the use of the word *goyim.* But the Soviet reprinters of the poem reintroduced the full negative meaning into the contrast and deemed it their duty to introduce a negation of a negation; so they changed the text: *"Un di yidn un nit-yidn* ['non-Jews'] */ hobn zikh gelebt tsufridn."*[240]

When the Soviet publishers removed any traces of a derogatory shadow-meaning, they sought to resolve the tension between their internationalism and *lehavdl-loshn.* Within several years, however, the Communist regime sought to "resolve" that tension not only with internal erasure of the language of difference, but by banning Yiddish and Hebrew, as during World War I.[241] That Russian opposition to language heterogeneity was also present at the Czernovits conference of 1908, when the most stringent bid for Yiddish exclusivity was proposed by Bundist leader Esther Frumkina, who was to become a high-ranking member of the Soviet intelligentsia.[242]

Yiddish itself functioned as *lehavdl-loshn,* a barrier between Jewish communities and co-territorial majority culture. How anarchists interpreted these two aspects of Yiddish—its "openness" and its *lehavdl-loshn*—defined their language politics. Some operated under cover of *lehavdl-loshn* to persist outside the surveilled mainstream, evading censorship and decency laws (for example, sending information on reproductive health through the mail). Goldman rejected Yiddish at many points, viewing *lehavdl-loshn* as provincial. The editors of *Frayhayt* negotiated the difference between Yiddish and English through their non-equivalent translations. Harkavy uplifted Yiddish, interpreting its "openness" and balancing American acculturation with veneration of Yiddish. These case studies offer, in their heterogeneity, a textured portrait of key aspects of Yiddish anarchism, reframing our understanding of what constitutes "language politics" beyond both the models of social utilitarianism and linguistic nationalism.

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[238] Harshav identifies another aspect, *fusion,* as counterpart to *linguistic openness.*

[239] Max Weinreich, *The History of the Yiddish Language,* trans. Shlomo Noble (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 185.

[240] Weinreich, A228.

[241] David Shneer, *Yiddish and the Creation of Soviet Jewish Culture: 1918-1930,* p39.

[242] Ibid.

"For This Language I Live": Alexander Harkavy

If one were to trace a line of Jewish anarchist linguists from Rabbi Zalkind to Noam Chomsky, it would run through Alexander Harkavy.[243] While his work was foundational in establishing modern Yiddish philology, Harkavy's contributions to the anarchist movement have rarely been studied. This dimension is not discussed by Dovid Katz, for example, in his detailed survey of Harkavy's work, and was wholly unknown by several other Yiddish linguists whom I consulted.[244] One of the most renowned Yiddish linguists, Alexander Harkavy was also an anarchist editor, essayist, and translator. Harkavy's work was bestselling: his trilingual Yiddish-Hebrew-English dictionary addressed settlers in Palestine and American audiences, and his book of letter-writing templates, *Amerikaner Brifnshteler,* was a key text for Jewish acculturation and socialization.

Harkavy (1863-1939) was born in Navaredok, White Russia, to an intellectual family with learned lineages and connections to the influential Romm printing press in Vilna.[245] According to his Hebrew memoirs of 1935, as a very young boy he "felt a powerful love for the language of our people."[246] Family lore claims that their name is derived from the Polish term for "pronouncing a guttural *r"*—an excellent patronymic etymology for a linguist![247] His early linguistic research focused on the first documentary evidence of Jewish presence in Poland: hundreds of coins inscribed in Hebrew and Slavic, completely in Hebrew characters, found near Gniezno in the twelfth or thirteenth century, and medieval Hebrew manuscripts bearing Slavic glosses. Harkavy tended to ascribe even recognizably Czech glosses to Russian, "cementing the ancient association of Jews with early Slavic, or Russian, language and culture."[248] Around 1882, Harkavy met with anarchist poet Dovid Edelshtat in Liverpool, England, while en route to the United States. Harkavy had studied languages in Minsk before immigrating to New York City in 1882 with the Am Olam movement, which advocated for spiritual and cultural Jewish nationalism.

Dovid Katz locates Harkavy as central architect of the field of modern Yiddish linguistics: "To understand the full impact of Harkavy as a founder of Yiddishism, it is important to bear in mind that his 1886 Yiddishist pamphlet appeared at a time (preceding Y. L. Peretz's literary debut) and in a place (America) where a pamphlet on behalf of the Yiddish language was both intellectually revolutionary and journalistically sensational."[249] Locating Harkavy as a central figure is all the more remarkable, considering his complete exclusion from Barry Trachtenberg's *Revolutionary Roots of Modern Yiddish, 1903-1917* (2008). Trachtenberg's book places Shmuel Niger, Nokhem Shtif, and the Marxist Zionist

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[243] Chomsky wrote the preface to Rudolf Rocker's *Anarcho-Syndicalism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2004). Unlike Harkavy, Chomsky considers his anarchist convictions and his linguistic research to be separate.

[244] Katz, "Alexander Harkavy and His Trilingual Dictionary." Introduction to the *Yiddish-English-Hebrew Dictionary* (New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and Schocken Books, 1988).

[245] The Romm press was set up in 1799 and published continuously in Vilna until World War II, supporting the development of modern Yiddish literature.

[246] Katz, ix.

[247] Katz, vii.

[248] *Handbook of Jewish Languages,* 600.

[249] Katz, ix.

leader Ber Borochov at the center of the development of a "Yiddish science" in Russia, bound up in the discourse of national languages:

> [T]he first practitioners of *Yidishe visnshaft* agreed that their task was to produce scholarly works written in the Yiddish languge, and on the language, literature, and world of its speakers. Following the model set by other nationalist movements that were developing among the empire's minority populations, they were concerned with the standardization of Yiddish grammar, orthography, and word corpus, the establishment of a Yiddish literary tradition, […] and the creation of an institutional structure to support their language's development and hegemony over competing languages. In doing so, they hoped to refashion Russian Jewry as a modern nation with a mature language and culture that deserved the same collective rights and autonomy demanded by other nations in the empire.[250]

Although Harkavy was born in White Russia and studied linguistics there, he did not participate in this discourse of national minority language politics. These stakes shifted rapidly after his immigration to New York, as David Shneer notes: "In Eastern Europe, the language wars were put on hold during World War I, when Hebrew and Yiddish language was banned by the Russian Empire, and communication across large distances became much more difficult. But the tensions between [Hebraists and Yiddishists] and the modern and nationalist pressures toward a single Jewish language exploded once tsarist power imploded."[251] North America afforded Harkavy an environment of expansiveness in which to work, where he was not faced by the risks confronting European Yiddishists.

Harkavy continued studying linguistics in the United States, while contributing to the anarchist newspapers *Fraye Arbeter Shtime, Fraye Gezelshaft,* and others. He translated European anarchist philosophers, including as Élisée Reclus, for *Fraye Gezelshaft*, and founded his own nonpartisan radical newspaper, *Der Nayer Gayst* (The New Spirit). He edited this paper until 1898, when editorship was transferred to B. Gorin (Yitskhok Goyde). *Der Nayer Gayst* featured articles by a variety of Leftists.[252] In a *daytshmerish*-heavy editorial published in October 1897, Harkavy announces his vision: "Our ideal was a free newspaper—free of party structures… it can only educate and uplift the spirit."[253] Harkavy does not indict the political party system, but proposes an alternative to "progressive party organs" even as he politely "recognize[s] their great worth." His journal will combine "belletristic literature," "avant-garde ideas," "various scholarly articles," "polemics on major questions"—all, he emphasizes, in Yiddish. Harkavy's tone is largely diplomatic, except for his references to spirituality as an "amusement." The expansive ideal of a single newspaper as microcosm of the Left, open to submissions from all, contrasts with the "one-sidedness" of other single-party newspapers. This heterogeneity and lack of concern for ideological

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[250] Barry Trachtenberg, *Revolutionary Roots of Modern Yiddish, 1903-1917* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 5.

[251] Shneer, 39.

[252] Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State,* 27.

[253] Harkavy, *"Erklerung fun der redaktsyon"* (Statement from the Editor). *Der Nayer Gayst,* October 1897, Vol I. I thank Kenyon Zimmer for sending me a scan of the document.

purity marked the anarchist press in different regions and periods, from the first joint Socialist-Anarchist effort in 1890 (derided as "*parve lokshn,*" a kosher meal neither dairy nor meat—therefore, politically uncommitted) to the Russian avant-garde *Anarkhiia.*[254]

In another article from the same issue, Harkavy discusses the relationships between words of varying base components and etymologies.[255] With a pedagogical technique still used today, he relates clusters of concepts across Yiddish, German, and Hebrew loanwords. From the word *bavegenen* (to move) he teaches *vandern* (Yiddish for 'to wander, migrate'). He places these words alongside נוד (*nod,* Hebrew for 'nomadic'), which he claims derives from יד (Jew). In this schema, where identity is determined by etymology, the Jew is essentially nomadic or diasporic! Harkavy also relates the connection between *vayb* (wife) and *veber* (weaver) and *vebl* (linen). He notes that German housewives tended to spin wool, and relates this to the English term *spinster.* Russian women were also associated with harvesting corn, from which they earned their own term, he continues, with a feminist aspect: the Russian women walk in the fields unlike the domestic spinning of the English and German.

The most remarkable aspect of this article on loanwords is its denouement. In tracing the vocabulary of possession across several languages—Ladino, Italian, French, German, biblical Hebrew, and Yiddish—Harkavy reveals a complex political pun, resplendent in its multilingualism:

> Another example. We would like to know something about the history of property. Let us contemplate the designation of this concept in languages. In the Romance dialect of Ladino, property is called "rauba."[256] This word comes from the stem "raub." (The Medieval Romance languages were mixed with German root-words.) Its significance is therefore *royb* (robbery)! In Italian, an item of property is *roba* (also from the same root); in French, the word *robe* (garment or dress) derives from the same root [*shoyresh*][257]. (Clothing was considered a main article of property.) And from that word, we have another French term *derober* (rob, plunder). The German word *Vermögen*[258] stems from *megn, makht* (power). That also stinks a bit of robbery; the Hebrew word הון (*fermegn* fortune) descends without doubt , from הונות (*beroybn,* to deceive, cheat), from the language מאחוזתם להונותם

[254] For a detailed discussion of the joint newspapers, see Chapter 1. For discussion of Russian paper *Anarkhiia,* with which Abba Gordin was involved, see Chapter 4.

[255] Harkavy, *Der Nayer Gayst,* 20.

[256] The *Concise Ladino-English/English-Ladino* dictionary gives "rovar" (very similar to Spanish "robar") as "to steal." This dictionary has a largely Turkic component and may not conform to the Romance spelling which Harkavy alludes to.

[257] Harkavy alternates between *loshn-koydesh* grammatical terms.

[258] Also Yiddish for 'riches, fortune.' *Farmegn* is estate or property.

> (defraud the estate/inheritance), Ezekiel 46:18.[259] Not in vain did Proudhon say: *La propriété, c'est le vol* (*Eygntum iz royb)* — property is theft.[260]

In this piece, Harkavy expresses his linguistic view of loanwords using the vocabulary of anarchist thought. This differs from neutral characterizations of diasporic multilingualism and internal *komponentn-visnkayt*, such as that of Benjamin Harshav, who argues that while not every Yiddish writer was a "multilingual walking library, Yiddish poetry as a whole stood at an unusual intersection, attuning its antenna to 'Culture' and open to winds from all sides."[261] Contrast Harshav's description of the "openness" of Yiddish with Harkavy's pointed passage. Kenyon Zimmer aptly interprets this article as "playfully combin[ing] his linguistic research with his political sympathies by invoking the French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon":

> In other words, no language is the exclusive property of a particular people, an argument that echoes Proudhon's view that only the product of one's labor constitutes legitimate private property, while everything else is a collective resource. In an era when language was often the basis for defining 'national' groups, this was a nod to a cosmopolitan conception of identity.[262] […] In his view, Yiddish and Yiddish culture formed the basis of Jews' identity as a people. This was a thoroughly anti-essentialist definition of Jewishness; as Harkavy's article on word borrowing attests, languages and cultures are not isolated, impermeable, or unchanging, and his emphasis on bilingualism highlights the possibility of multiple and elective attachments.[263]

Harkavy's cheeky genealogy of 'property' was not merely bilingual, but Jewishly *multilingual*, including Ladino and Yiddish and flaunting his Torah learning—in the same edition of a newspaper where he refers to religion as "an amusement"! This Jewish multilingualism is evident from his early involvement in Am Olam's hebraic back-to-the-land philosophy to his inclusion of Hebrew in his trilingual dictionary. Harkavy's multilingual punning not only reflects his cosmopolitan identity, but *performs* his multivalent language politics for the reader. This article also echoes the Jewish anarchist genealogies documented in Chapter One, with their close readings of etymology, biblical sources, and creative reinterpretations of canon. As Helene Cixous has said:

> [W]e are cultivated beings: our language is an inheritance; on the one hand, to the extent that it's the result of a history that we study in philology, it is

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[259] Ezekiel 46:18 describes how the prince may not take anything by force from the people, nor displace them: "Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance, to thrust them wrongfully out of their possession; he shall give inheritance to his sons out of his own possession; that My people be not scattered every man from his possession." (JPS Tanakh, 1917)

[260] My translation. Words in quotation marks, italics, or parentheses are preserving the original languages cited by Harkavy.

[261] Harshav, *Meaning of Yiddish,* 165.

[262] Zimmer, 27.

[263] Zimmer, 42.

> itself made up of sediments of a great many languages... We go on unwittingly using a language that speaks much more richly than we ever consciously realize, such that even when we are very primitive in our expression, a well-trained ear can hear in an apparently simple statement layers and layers of resonances, whether or not you can hear the hum of etymology behind it…
>
> An author is all the better for the fact that she has been cultivated like a piece of land, for the fact that her language has been elaborated by a number of other languages since the dawn of time.[264]

With his mapping of loanwords, Harkavy helps his readers learn to listen more deeply for the "hum of etymology." For a diasporic language without an attendant piece of land, Cixous' metaphor describes the cultivation of a "portable homeland."

Harkavy's greatest achievements were his dictionaries, which went through about thirty editions all together. First to appear was his *Folshtendiges English-Yiddish Verterbukh* (Complete English-Yiddish Dictionary, with an added title "English-Jewish Dictionary"), published in New York in 1891. Another, *English-yidish verterbukh* (English-Yiddish Dictionary), was published in 1898, followed by the 1925 trilingual *Yiddish-English-Hebrew Dictionary*. These dictionaries generated much discussion in Russian and Hebrew periodicals.[265] As with any reference work, the author's social location is revealed through their choices of what to include. Harkavy tended to include americanisms, such as the expression A. K. (slang for *alter kaker,* which he euphemistically defines as an "unfit person").[266] In the 1891 dictionary, Harkavy notes that he "introduces some of the technical and scientific terms now common to all Indo-European languages." In a study of scientific Yiddish dictionaries, Stephen M. Cohen writes, "An examination of the English wordlist shows a rich concentration of mathematical, physical, astronomical, and biological terms, but a relative paucity in the chemical area."[267] Still, in the scientific realm, Harkavy's work presaged later specialist Yiddish dictionaries. These works helped shape the development of Yiddish as a spoken, and the dictionary assumed a significant role in readers' lives. In the poem "Gedalye's Dictionary, Leah Zazulyer describes the language struggles of her uncle:

> ...In his old Harkavy dictionary
> that I inherited, every other page
> was illuminated in a fine monk's script—his new language,
> his old language,
> his inner language.[268]

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[264] Cixous, *White Ink: Interviews on Sex, Text and Politics,* Columbia University Press: 2008.

[265] Aaron Rubin and Lily Kahn, eds. *Handbook of Jewish Languages* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 600.

[266] Julius G. Rothenberg, "Some Idioms from the Yiddish," *American Speech,* Vol. 18, No. 1 (Feb., 1943), p45.

[267] Stephen M. Cohen, "Chemical Literature in Yiddish: A Bridge between the Shtetl and the Secular World." *Aleph*, No. 7 (2007), p225.

[268] Rita Falbel (interviewer) and Leah Zazulyer, "The Uses of Language." *Bridges,* Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring 2011), pp. 133-142.

Harkavy's trilingual dictionary comes to represent her uncle's "new language, / his old language, / his inner language."

In addition to publishing multiple dictionaries, Harkavy wrote the best-selling *Harkavy's amerikanisher brivnshteler* (1902), its title attesting to his name recognition. The Yiddish genre of *brivnshteler* (letter-writing manuals) dates to the European Renaissance, and Hebrew-language collections date to the sixteenth century.[269] Harkavy's *brivnshteler* fit with other Yiddish instructional material for new immigrants while following a traditional Jewish genre. Harkavy writes in the introduction that he hopes his book will satisfy a need in individuals' lives and communities, addressing topics of concern for businessmen, family members, and lovers. He was uniquely positioned to speak to new immigrants, as he had also worked from 1904 to 1909 for the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society in Ellis Island, teaching American history and the Constitution in Yiddish.[270] The letter templates include suggestions for such scenarios as "From a lady to a gentleman, complaining of faithlessness" and "From a gentleman to a lady offering to release her from an engagement, on account of heavy business loans." He offers various possibilities for each response: "a kind reply," "a stern reply," etc.[271] In the first case, the lady's jealousy was proven baseless; in the second, she assures the male letter-writer that she does not love him for his fortune, and so its loss does not sway her affections. There is no further option. This suggests that the right answer to the situation is not to marry for money, subtly instilling comradely behaviors amongst his readers. One may be tempted to form a crudely biographical reading of Harkavy's interest in the etiquette of love letters, beyond the desire for balanced and comradely acculturation. Dovid Katz recalls a colorful tale of how Harkavy met his wife, Bella Segalovsky:

> The version of their meeting that I heard as a child in New York from his cousin Gershn Harkavy, as I remember it, has it that Harkavy strolled across the Brooklyn Bridge, saw a young lady jump off, watched her rescue by a passing tugboat, followed her to the hospital, and asked her, when she came to, why she had jumped. It was the old story of the fiance back in Europe writing to say that he was marrying someone else. At which point Harkavy said, *"Nu, vosiz, mayn kind,* Ikh'll *mit dir khasene hobn"*— "So, what's the matter, my child, *I'll* marry you."[272]

Harkavy's letter-templates were one amongst many Yiddish instructional materials for new immigrants, which also included such domestic genres as cookbooks and sexual education pamphlets.[273] Yiddish radio shows on the New York station WEVD (named for Eugene V. Debbs) offered advice to callers, and the *Forverts* newspaper offered an advice column, often taking up writers' questions related to communication. From such media, we

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[269] Alice Nakhimovsky and Roberta Newman, *Brivnshteler* entry, *YIVO Enclyclopdia*. http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Brivnshtelers

[270] Katz, x.

[271] Harkavy, 161-2.

[272] Katz, ix.

[273] Eli Lederhendler, "Guides for the Perplexed: Sex, Manners, and Mores for the Yiddish Reader in America." *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Oct., 1991), pp. 321-41.

see how those speech acts and documents considered sincere and intimate are also careful reiterations of a nearly-fixed form. This format is akin to the *tkhines-bikher*: constructed as women's spontaneous outpourings of prayer, they were in fact printed books, complete with 'stage directions' instructing worshippers on the correct moment to cry. The letters-to-the-editor pages of anarchist newspapers also served as a kind of *brivnshteler*, demonstrating proper modes of public comradeship and discourse. Goldman's memoir similarly offered a grand template of liberation, and many anarchists cited her life as the inspiration for their own paths. From memoirs to radio shows counseling the lovelorn, the genre of Jewish advice was ripe for reinvention to immigrant audiences.

In her work on early modern Yiddish letterwriting, historian Elisheva Carlebach refutes the idea that letters are "the closest thing we have to speech, from which it seems to flow."[274] Carlebach discusses some challenges to reading older Yiddish letters as "pure" historical documents: secrecy was never guaranteed; the forms are influenced by surrounding literary cultures; and even the literacy of reader and writer cannot be assumed. When considering the correspondence of Yiddish anarchists, we should add censorship to Carlebach's list of complications. In a surveillance culture where police regularly transcribed anarchist lectures, speech *became* writing. Emma Goldman's letters were sometimes written in code, especially in the late 1920's, "to escape the gaze of prison and post office censors."[275] Charles von Onselen's article "Jewish Police Informers in the Atlantic World, 1880-1914" details police forces' usage of Yiddish-speaking officers as infiltrators among Jewish radicals, sometimes framing or otherwise falsely implicating them. Conducting a meeting or writing a letter in Yiddish, then, did not guarantee safety or successful subversion; to the contrary, it could intensify their risk, as the case of Mollie Steimer and *Frayhayt* proved.[276] There were many other incidents of police persecution of anarchist publishers, such as police clubbing the audience at a *Mother Earth* presentation.[277]

Carlebach's insights regarding the relation between Jewish letters and newspapers are especially interesting for a study of anarchist letter-writing forms. She writes, "Ranging in subject from the sublime to the mundane, letters sustained relationships during long periods of separation and bound together a people who had no homeland. Letters are the precursors to the world's newspapers, and they carried vital information about communal and personal events, maintaining the bonds of familiarity over great distance."[278] While historically letters were precursors to newspapers (and Carlebach discusses an early period), this insight suggests a more fluid relation between these two media in the case of Yiddish anarchists. In letters between editors Yosef Luden (*Problemen,* Tel Aviv) and Ahrne Thorne *(FAS,* New York City), their subject matter cleaved to the same material as their papers: the possibility of religious anarchism, news of bombings in Israel, perennial discussions of Spinoza. There was more "news" in their letters than in their multi-genre

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[274] Elisheva Carlebach, *Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2011), p114.

[275] *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, p6.

[276] This anarchist publisher was murdered by police for distributing pamphlets in Yiddish, although the policemen could not read it.

[277] *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History*, p39.

[278] Carlebach, p116.

newspapers; the anarchist press pushed the boundaries between literature and journalism, reflected in their letters. As the work of an anarchist and early architect of the genre of Yiddish and English-language correspondence, Harkavy's models of comradeship in print exerted a long influence.

Taken together, Harkavy's trilingual dictionary, bilingual *brivnshteler*, and multilingual article on loanwords maintain a balance between love of Yiddish and Hebrew and the necessity of surviving in English. His career consistently spanned all three languages: he worked in Montreal as a Hebrew teacher and published Canada's first Yiddish newspaper, *Di tsayt.*[279] This expansive, inclusive view of Jewish languages is quite unlike the policy of the Bund, for example, which "vigorously ward[ed] off attempts to cultivate Hebrew culture in Poland at the expense of the original Yiddish culture."[280] We see how Harkavy's anarchist language politics differed from that of the Bundists and Hebraists, who modeled a centralized approach. In his 1897 essay *"Farvos davke yidish?"* (Why Only Yiddish?), Chaim Zhitlovsky calls for "Jewish intellectuals to end their estrangement from the Jewish 'folk,' to build Yiddish culture, and to build socialism in Yiddish."[281] Madeleine Cohen explains the Bund's path towards a single-language ideology:

> Written in the year of the Bund's official founding, it took the Bund several years to come around to this position, which as we have seen eventually did become a major aspect of its national program. The founding generation of Bundists were largely not native Yiddish speakers, but rather Russian speakers. These were organizers whose first agitational projects included teaching Jewish factory workers Russian, so that they could become part of the revolutionary movement. Only with time, and as those Yiddish speaking factory workers became part of the movement, did Bundists realize they should rather be learning Yiddish. And still more time was required for the relationship to develop from a utilitarian one to one that recognized the value of "building Yiddish culture," as Zhitlowsky had suggested in this essay.[282]

Unlike Zhitlovsky's call to "build Yiddish culture" as a goal in and of itself, Harkavy's contributions always placed Yiddish alongside other languages, both traditional (Hebrew) and co-territorial (English). While European practice often narrowed to a single language, Harkavy emphasized that all vocabulary exists within the framework of co-territorial languages. This expansiveness in no way diminished his commitment to Yiddish. Without any apparent chauvinism, Harkavy wrote of Yiddish: "For this language I live."[283]

Considering this genealogy of trilingual anarchist linguists—from Harkavy and Rabbi Zalkind, the talmudic philologist, to Chomsky, son of an early American Zionist

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[279] Katz, x.

[280] Daniel Blatman, "Bund" entry, *YIVO Encyclopedia*. http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Bund

[281] Rabinovich, 82.

[282] Cohen, "The Politics of *Do'ikayt,* The Poetics of *Do'ikayt."* Forthcoming doctoral dissertation *Here and Now: The Modernist Poetics of Do'ikayt,* UC Berkeley, p15.

[283] Katz, vi.

heabraist, and who spent time as a child in the Yiddish-speaking offices of *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*—we might assume that metalinguistics are prototypically anarchist!

Emma Goldman's Mame-loshn

Born in Kovno, Lithuania in 1869, Emma Goldman had a complicated relationship to the Yiddish language. She reportedly spoke it less confidently than Russian, English, and French, and she was also a student of Spanish.[284] Newsreel footage of Goldman betrays no Yiddish or Russian accent; rather, she speaks with the dramatic cadence of a Hollywood actor.[285] Goldman was an autodidact in English, which she spelled phonetically. Goldman praised Rocker's efforts to learn Yiddish, but herself did not view it favorably or conceptualize Yiddish as a "workers' language." Some observers reported that she preferred to speak in a "plain German," which may have meant that she predominantly used the "international" components of Yiddish, rather than Slavic and *loshn-koydesh*. Others recall her speaking passionately in Yiddish to crowds of 800 people, in commemoration of the Haymarket Affair.[286] Chapter One discussed some of the particularities of her Yiddish usage, such as her strategic use of *pilpul* with her Zionist debate partner. While Johann Most successfully addressed Yiddish-speaking audiences in his fiery German, observers—albeit from the Immigration and Naturalization Service—report that Goldman's attempts to do the same were not received with great comprehension:

> The Hall was crowded to the doors by Yiddish speaking people, but owing to the fact that the lecture was given in German, instead of Yiddish, as it was announced, there was a spirit of discontent, and I heard rumors of regret by many people here, saying that they could not follow her. At the end of the lecture Miss Goldman invited the audience to ask her questions and that she would endeavor to answer them. But save for a few very silly questions asked by a couple of young men, who it could be easily perceived could not follow the trend of her lecture, none cared to ask any questions. She scored the women present for the lack of interest displayed by them, by not coming forward and debate with her upon questions paramount to their own welfare, but after waiting a considerable length of time, for answers which failed to come forth, the meeting was closed.[287]

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[284] Ferguson, *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets,* 105.

[285] Footage featured in the documentary *Anarchism in American* (1983), Pacific Street Films. Her pronunciation has even a slightly British quality, as in the word "rather." I did not detect an accent from Eastern Europe, and this pronunciation is consistent with some northeastern US accents of today.

[286] *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Volume Two: Making Speech Free, 1902-1909,* p269.

[287] From a report for the Immigration and Naturalization Service, written by interpreter Louis P. Domas. *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Volume Two: Making Speech Free, 1902-1909,* p272.

Why would Goldman prefer lecturing her audience in perhaps-unintelligible German, rather than Yiddish? In a 1916 letter to a friend who helped arrange her lectures, Goldman even denied knowing Yiddish, despite the fact that she delivered many lectures in the language. At least three of those lectures were sponsored by *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, on the topic of sexuality.

> Of course, I should prefer English meetings. I do not care for Jewish ones, especially since I do not speak Jargon and they will understand English, about as well, as German and also because I want to interest the people all over the Country in our Mag. M. E. [Mother Earth] and therefore want to appeal to an English-speaking public. However, I have no objections to one Jewish meeting. You could therefore, have two English and one Jewish gathering.[288]

Across Ashkenazi communities, suppressing one's knowledge of Yiddish was normalized—but why would a public figure espousing anti-hegemonic beliefs deny speaking "Jargon"? It is possible that her friend was not Jewish, and that Goldman felt some shame at asking her to arrange a Yiddish lecture. In another private letter, Goldman's characterization of Jewish anarchists as "sell[ing] their anarchism in real estate, or in playing dominos in restaurants" verged on anti-Semitic caricatures of mercenary Jews:

> Fr A S always upposed going into the unions, has upposed every strike, every public event. Has acted cowardly, when courage was needed […] True there are not many American Comrades, but the few, know at least, what Anarchism means. They do not sell their Anarchism in real estate, or in playing dominos in restaurants. They live Anarchism and thereby they are having a moral influence, of greater more lasting value, than 10 publications of F Ar S. Did you ever hear the American press or police make a fuss over that paper, or the Jewish propaganda, or Mr Yanovsky? Certainly not. Why do they watch closely, everything, I do? Because I carry our ideas among the Americans, before thousands of people. The fact, that I sold 800 $ literature on my last tour, particularly in cities where there are but few foreigners, shows that there are American interested in Anarchism people who read and that is more, than can be said of the F Arb St gang.[289]

Goldman's writing reveals a native Yiddish speaker translating her thoughts into English, through her usage of punctuation ("they watch closely, everything, that I do") and prepositions ("in playing dominos," "I sold 800$ literature"). Yet in Goldman's eyes, publishing in Yiddish—and thereby evading legal prosecution from the state—was provincial, even cowardly. In her later years, Goldman refused to speak Yiddish in public

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[288] *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Volume Two: Making Speech Free, 1902-1909,* p193.

[289] *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Volume Two: Making Speech Free, 1902-1909* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), p358

whatsoever; she claimed that because detectives followed her at all times, she wanted them to know exactly what she was saying. Her disavowal of knowing Yiddish and her disparagement of Yiddish-publishing anarchists suggests that Goldman harbored some shame at its ethnic particularism.

Of the few transcribed Yiddish lectures by Goldman that survive, half concern sexuality: *Gebirts-kontrol fun sotsialn shtandpunkt* (Birth Control from a Social Perspective) and *Hayrat un fraye libe* (Marriage and Free Love).[290] Goldman used Yiddish strategically for discussions of sexuality, in a period when sending information regarding birth control through the mail was highly prosecutable. Margaret Sanger also wrote for Goldman's paper *Mother Earth,* and she used the anarchist slogan "No Gods! No Masters!" on the masthead of her own publication, *The Woman Rebel.* Both Goldman and Sanger were arrested for protesting the Comstock Laws, which banned the distribution of information on contraceptives. They framed birth control as an issue of labor, not morality: during the period of Sanger and Goldman's writing, there were more than 2,000 brothels in the area between Murray Hill and Gramercy Park in New York City. Sex workers there earned $50 per week, in comparison to female garment workers' wages of between $6-12 per week.[291]

Goldman's second incarceration in New York City resulted from her speeches on birth control, delivered both in English and Yiddish. After her trial on April 20, 1916, the writer Leonard D. Abbott wrote, "This time her offense was that she exposed the evils of indiscriminate and incessant breeding and that she told the poor, in language they could understand, how they might limit their families."[292] In his description of the trial, Abbott notes the discrepancies between how her language use was understood:

> The lecture for which Emma Goldman had been arrested had been delivered at the New Star Casino in New York on February 8th. She had given the same lecture in English and in Jewish half a hundred times in cities throughout the country. Two detectives were put on the stand to testify as to what they had heard. They were so ignorant that they had not known how to spell correctly the words of the indictment they had framed in connection with Emma Goldman's arrest, and their testimony was inaccurate. They declared that Emma Goldman had spoken at the New Star Casino in German, whereas she had actually spoken in Yiddish. She could have made more than she did of this error, but she refused to take advantage of technicalities and preferred to keep to the main issue.
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> … Another dramatic moment came when she said that if it constituted a crime to contend for happier childhood and healthier motherhood, she was glad and proud to be a criminal. The crowd in the courtroom burst into applause. Excited attendants strove to quell the clamor. This spontaneous demonstration recalled the cheers and hand-clapping that had heartened William Sanger on his way to jail last September. "I have committed no offense," continued Emma Goldman. "I have simply given to the poorer women in my audiences information that any wealthy woman can obtain

[290] Reizbaum, 477.
[291] Jean H. Baker, *Margaret Sanger: A Life of Passion*, 58.
[292] Abbott, *Mother Earth,* Vol. IX, No. 3, May 1916.

> secretly from her physician, who does not fear prosecution. I have offered them advice as to how to escape the burden of large families without resorting to illegal operations."[293]

The anarchist journalist Abbott's reportage of the trial emphasizes the illiteracy of the detectives, in contrast to Goldman's expertise in multiple languages. It seems that she chose not to shame the prosecutors, consistent with the anti-classism of her original speech. Following her sentence of 15 days in the workhouse of Queen's County Jail, the District Attorney's office told the press: "This office has no fault to find with the expression of any honest opinion given in a decent manner. The gravamen of the charge is not the discussion of birth control, but the indecency of the manner in which the subject was presented to a promiscuous audience, in which children of tender years were permitted to be present."[294] In this formulation, Goldman's Jewish audience is cast as "promiscuous," and her "manner"—not her material—rendered indecent. Goldman delivered a class analysis of the situation: "I have simply given to the poorer women in my audiences information that any wealthy woman can obtain secretly from her physician, who does not fear prosecution." The court maintained that they did not censor sex information, but disciplined its transmission: the offense was located in an immigrant woman speaking "Jewish" to an audience figured as *excessive* in their ethnicity, age distribution, and sexuality. In this trial, the *language itself* of "free speech" was at issue.

In that trial, Goldman took care not to use Yiddish covertly, and she generally disdained those who used Yiddish as a buffer between radical subcultures and the vulnerability of entering the mainstream. In a 1906 letter co-signed with Alexander Berkman, she casts FAS editor Yanovsky's views as shamefully cautious. The letter's subject regards Leon Czolgosz, the Polish-American who assassinated President McKinley in 1901. Although Czolgosz never organized with the anarchist movement, Goldman defended his "propaganda of the deed" in *Free Society* (1901) as the inevitable product of his society, leading to her arrest.[295] Goldman and Berkman write:

> I suppose you have all read in the last Freie Arb. Stimme & the daily papers about the arrest of our comrades, among them Emma Goldman. I do not at all agree with Yanovsky that the original meeting of the Progressive Library was a mistake. We have a perfect right to discuss any questions we wish, and as last month was the 5th anniversary of Czolg's death, it was quite fitting to use

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[293] Ibid.

[294] Ibid.

[295] Goldman cites Oscar Wilde and writes, "Nor am I in a position to say whether or not he is an Anarchist; I did not know the man; no one as far as I am aware seems to have known him, but from his attitude and behavior so far (I hope that no reader of "Free Society" has believed the newspaper lies), I feel that he was a soul in pain, a soul that could find no abode in this cruel world of ours, a soul "impractical," inexpedient, lacking in caution (according to the dictum of the wise); but daring just the same, and I cannot help but bow in reverent silence before the power of such a soul, that has broken the narrow walls of its prison, and has taken a daring leap into the unknown." (See the Introduction for further discussion of this article.) Goldman, "The Tragedy at Buffalo," *Free Society,* October 1901.

> the occasion to discuss the questions involved in the act of Czolgosz. I think Yanovsky & the Fr. A. Stimme are becoming entirely too "respectable", too anxious about "good public opinion". It is this fear of adverse public sentiment that created the principle "Religion is a private affair" [the policy of FAS and Yanovsky]. It is not important whether anybody knew Cz. or not; it is not important whether was an An. or not. But it is important that we should have courage enough to discuss & explain the conditions that produce a Czolgosz. And the meeting was for that very purpose.[296]

Although Czolgosz was not Jewish—and possibly not an anarchist, either—Goldman and Berkman's letter demonstrates other Jews' anxiety about his reflecting poorly on them. Their anxiety may result from the pogroms against Jews in the Russian Empire following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. This letter also reveals that Goldman and Berkman were closely reading *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* and Yiddish media, even if they did not contribute to it. Berkman and Goldman also understated the risks faced by Yiddish-writing anarchists, as despite their "cautiousness," members of *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* were attacked by a mob following the assassination of McKinley.[297]

In the concluding chapter of her memoir *Living My Life* (1931), Goldman describes her return to lecturing about literature in Yiddish at smaller events, probably in the late 1920s: "[These friends were] enthusiastic Judaists, who gathered the Yiddish intelligentsia to attend my lecture on Walt Whitman at their home. They were proud that I was one of their race, they reiterated. It was worth coming back to Montreal to reach their Yiddish hearts by the grace of the *goi* Walt Whitman."[298] Goldman does not say whether *she* was "proud that I was one of their race," and she plays on the ambiguity of *yidish,* which could be either "Jewish" or "Yiddish." She often praised Whitman, especially for his representations of "the beauty and wholesomeness of sex… freed from the rags and tatters of hypocrisy."[299] Perhaps she felt a particular affinity for Whitman because, like Goldman and Modernist editor Margaret Anderson, his publications were banned for obscenity by the U.S. Post Office. She humorously retains the word "goy," that mark of *lehavdl-loshn* abandoned by her Russian Jewish counterparts! No letters in Yiddish from Goldman to her lover Leon Malmed have been found; her correspondence with him included mainly telegrams. Leon Malmed and his wife, however, corresponded entirely in Yiddish.[300] From these accounts, we see how carefully she positioned her Yiddish use in public. Her approach was highly effective, and it follows that Goldman would be the "crossover star" from the Jewish anarchist world.

In contrast to European Yiddishists, for whom the language was a banner of pride and subversion, Goldman largely rejected publishing in Yiddish and used it in private ambivalently. In this she was not an unusual immigrant, despite her unusual visibility. Only later, in the United States, Poland, and Israel, was Yiddish constructed as inherently

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[296] *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Volume Two: Making Speech Free, 1902-1909,* p200.

[297] Ferguson, *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets,* 62.

[298] Goldman, *Living My Life,* Chapter 56.

[299] Goldman (1916), p2.

[300] Debbie Rose's Toronto trove of correspondence.

subversive, so it would be anachronistic to assume that she would automatically view Yiddish that way. The following sections examine the experiences and tactics of other multilingual anarchist immigrants in Jewish circles during the same period as Goldman's trial.

The Margin of *Daytshmerish*: German, Yiddish, and Germanic Yiddish in Practice

In both the United States and England, non-Jews became leaders within Jewish anarchist communities in positions that compelled them to communicate with Yiddish speakers. The most famous of these were Rudolf Rocker (1873-1958) in London and Johann Most (1846-1906) in Chicago. Rocker, dubbed the "anarchist rabbi," learned Yiddish in order to edit *Arbeter Fraynt,* and he published his own translations, essays, and memoirs primarily in Yiddish. His contributions include establishing the Jewish Bakers Union, organizing mass protests of 25,000 people, and organizing the 1912 general strike of 3,000 Jewish tailors, meeting all of their demands and abolishing sweatshops.[301] Many accounts describe practical coalitions between immigrants, whose multiple languages coexisted within the same spaces. Johann Most addressed Yiddish-speaking audiences in German, assisted by his passionate speaking style, which historian Paul Avrich describes as powerful enough to overcome the language gap between them:

> Most's flaming oratory and acidic pen, his fervent advocacy of revolution and of propaganda by the deed, won him a large and devoted following among the Jewish militants, who came to regard him, in the words of Morris Hillquit, as their 'high priest.' […] He could enthrall with his revolutionary passion even those Jews—the vast majority—with only a shaky grasp of the German in which he spoke. His sharp phrases, noted Israel Kopeloff, a member of the Pioneers of Liberty in New York, had 'the impact of the bombs and dynamite' of which he so often spoke; and he had only to give the word, so it seemed, and 'the audience would rush to build barricades and begin the revolution.' 'It is an understatement,' recalled Chaim Weinberg of Philadelphia, 'to say that Most had the ability to inspire an audience. He electrified, all but bewitched, every listener, opponent as well as friend.'[302]

The tension between German speakers and Yiddish speakers who co-existed in the same Jewish anarchist spaces is illustrated in a recollection by the novelist and playwright Leon Kobrin, writing in the New York City *Morgn Frayhayt* in 1942. He recalls a debate between an unnamed social democrat and Chaim Weinberg, the Philadelphia anarchist and confidant of Voltairine de Cleyre:

> The social democrat attempted to show what a good and fine speaker he was, so he spoke a Germanized Yiddish and used the words *niemals* and *sondern*

[301] William J. Fishman, *Jewish Radicals: From Czarist Shtetl to London Ghetto* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), p295-9.

[302] Avrich, *Anarchist Voices, p*4.

> and *abwahl* and *tat*, and other such words that our Yiddish long ago sent back to the Germans. Thereby he got very impassioned and excited, and he shouted until he became so hoarse that no one could hear his closing words. And Weinberg answered him so calmly and with such a clear, wonderful Yiddish for those days, compared with the Germanized language of the other fellow![303]

While Johann Most's oratory transcended linguistic barriers for Yiddish-speakers, Yiddish-speaking lecturers using heavy *daytshmerish* fared worse. Kobrin's dramatic comment about "other such words that our Yiddish long ago sent back to the Germans" is not especially accurate from a historical view, though he recalls James Joyce's saying, "The English can have their language back when I am done with it." Weinberg's rejection of *daytshmerish* in favor of simple oratory, then, was an aesthetic choice for anti-classism: if *daytshmerish* was the dialect of social democrats, then Weinberg intentionally chose *poshete verter* (plain words) to make a bid for accessibility.

The linguistic texture of Yiddish anarchist newspapers was varied, presaging the move of modern linguists away from prescriptive norms, towards descriptive theory.[304] Moshe Goncharuk notes, "Until *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* turned 50, it had a great readership—the greatest part coming from Russia. One could find Russian folk sayings and idioms in the texts and articles, as well as in letters from readers."[305] *FAS* also favored a *daytshmerish* style, which was considered elegant or "international" at the time. This was common among *Svetshop* Poets, as Benjamin Harshav notes:

> [T]he Yiddish 'proletarian' poets in America at the end of the nineteenth century, popular among Jewish workers, used an array of lofty German words to poeticize the language of their verse and to lift the spirits of the sweatshop APREYters ('operators,' from American): the poetic MOND ('moon,' from German), substituted for the everyday Yiddish LEVONE; MEER ("sea," from German) for YAM; ZEL ('soul,' from the German SEELE), for the Yiddish NESHOME; and its unconventional counterpart, VEL (from WELLE, "welle") rather than KHVALYE.[306]

Although he does not remark on it, the words Harshav cites (*neshome, yam, levone*) are mostly from *loshn-koydesh,* since the Proletarians favored "international" (Romance-derived) words over Jewishly-marked ones. One example of anarchist preference for germanic vocabulary is *FAS*'s use of the word *genose*, spelled with an extra *samekh* for the S, rather than the hebraic-derived *khaver,* for "comrade." Unfortunately, *daytshmerish*

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[303] Chaim Leib Weinberg, *Forty Years in the Struggle: The Memoirs of a Jewish Anarchist,* p155.

[304] This relates particularly to the work of Noam Chomsky, whose emphasis on descriptive linguistics has a lot to do with his politics. Similarly, he believes in linguistics as an "innate idea," not allowing for more or less "developed" languages or linguistic ability.

[305] Goncharuk, *Tsu Der geshikte fun der anarkhistisher prese oyf yidish (*Jerusalem: Problemen, 1997).

[306] Harshav, *Meaning of Yiddish,* 62.

orthography was often quite difficult for readers. Tony Michels writes that this new vocabulary of revolution often confused "the uninitiated, who mistook the abbreviated word for comrade, *gen*. (genose), to mean a military general. Many immigrants were surprised: 'Who knew there were so many Jewish war heroes in the United States?'"[307] In both print and speech, then, *daytshmerish* posed challenges for those wanting to telegraph both sophistication and anti-classism. (In other circles, *daytshmerish* was used for the opposite effect—to feign bourgeois affiliation.)

Another prominent non-Jew who learned Yiddish was Voltairine de Cleyre, the poet, polemicist, former Catholic nun, and teacher whom Emma Goldman called "the most gifted and brilliant anarchist woman America ever produced."[308] De Cleyre learned Yiddish not to propagandize on the page, but primarily to teach Jewish immigrants how to speak English. Although the archival record displays her fluent correspondence in Yiddish, she writes in one letter that she finds English easier. In that 1911 English-language letter to *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* editor S. Yanovsky (whom she addresses as "brother"), she writes: "Enclosed, please find report for *F. A. S.* as to the [Mexican Liberal Defense Committee]… I have an article in this month's *Mother Earth,* on the Mex. Revolt. Maybe you will want to translate it. I am too lazy to write two!"[309] De Cleyre rather idealized the Jewish anarchists in her affection for them, describing them as "the most liberal minded and active comrades in the movement as well as the most transcendental dreamers."[310] Despite (or because of) her idealization of them, she felt great anxiety about understanding her Jewish comrades. An English-language letter to an unnamed confidant (most likely Joseph Cohen)[311] expresses that alienation:

> Midnight, Friday.
>
> Dear Comrade: —
> All evening I have been thinking about your words: "You will never understand them, and they will never understand you." Why is it? I have known those people for eighteen years, and I have not understood them!! Why did I not? Is it because I am so different that I have no key at all to understand them? Why, why are we so different?— What makes them see honor in one direction, and I in another? I cannot understand. I think and think, and I cannot get any further. To me certain things are very simple and very plain; there can be no question at all. And to them these things do not appear. Why? Why? Are we really of such different instincts altogether? [. . .]

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[307] Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York,* p112-3.

[308] Goldman, reflecting on the day they met in Philadelphia in 1893. Pamphlet, "Voltairine de Cleyre," New Jersey: Oriole Press, 1932.

[309] Voltairine de Cleyre letter dated August 5, 1911. IISH archive, Yanovsky papers. She was the treasurer of the Mexican Liberal Defense Conference in Chicago.

[310] A. J. Brigati, *Voltairine de Cleyre Reader,* ii.

[311] See Chapter One for an analysis of Cohen's history of anarchism.

Other letters among her papers are primarily written to Joseph Cohen, periodically S. Yanovsky. It is most likely that this one was sent to Cohen, judging by its intimate tone. Historian Robert Helms confirms this likelihood. (Email correspondence with Helms, June 2016.)

> Is it because they [Jews], with a thousand years of Talmudic sophistry behind them, while I am a " גאָוי with the blood of Puritans and fanatics in me"; because you also are a Jew, and you do understand me, I think. Then where is it, where is it? Why do we think so differently? . . .The State and all that it can do, I do not mind; it does not bewilder me; but to find my own people strangers has made things slip around me. And I always come back to the same question: why are we so different? Have I all my life gone on with a fool's dream, and never knowing what people meant when they talked. V. de Cleyre.[312]

De Cleyre suffered from depression, and this letter reveals that this condition perhaps exacerbated social anxiety about her standing with Jewish anarchists. Although accounts of her relationship as a Catholic activist with Jewish communities are uniformly rosy, these letters held at YIVO paint a more ambivalent picture. Her use of the word "sophistry" to describe talmudic reasoning, for example, is not positive; nor is it clear whom she is quoting when she refers to herself as a "goy *[transliterated]* with the blood of Puritans and fanatics in me." Finally, at the end of the letter, she finds herself dismayed that the social reality should diverge so much from her ideal of unity across ethnic difference: "The State and all that it can do, I do not mind; it does not bewilder me; but to find my own people strangers has made things slip around me. And I always come back to the same question: why are we so different?" I have not seen reciprocal or equivalent grappling with difference on the part of her Jewish comrades. These letters suggest additional cultural pressure for non-Jews and non-native Yiddish speakers to learn the language as a step towards not only organizing a movement, but gaining personal social standing in those spaces. That Johann Most became so influential in those spheres without speaking Yiddish suggests both the force of his oratory and the elasticity between *daytshmerish* Yiddish and German.

Rudolf Rocker, a German-born ex-Catholic who integrated into Jewish communities and partnered with a Jewish woman, did not romanticize Jews as a people. He was one of the loudest anti-Nazi anarchists of any ethnicity, writing in his memoirs:

> When the Nazi movement in Germany raised the Jewish question I felt that I must oppose my knowledge and experience of the Jews against that terrible barbarity. […] I never found [Jews] different from other people. I never held that Jews are the salt of the earth. But certainly they are none of the terrible things of which the Nazis, in their search for a scapegoat, accused them. Antisemitism has always been a weapon of the reactionary forces.[313]

Like Johann Most, Rocker first lectured to Jewish audiences by speaking slowly in German, before learning to read and write Yiddish.

Fermin Rocker, an artist and son of Rudolf, recalls growing up in a multilingual milieu, speaking German at their home in London. His father named him in honor of the Spanish anarchist and mayor of Cádiz, Fermín Salvochea y Álvarez (1842-1907)—a further gesture of the elder Rocker's multiculturalism. According to his son, Rudolf Rocker felt

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[312] YIVO, Voltairine de Cleyre files, folder 7.

[313] Rocker, *London Years,* 64.

least comfortable addressing a crowd in English due to his strong German accent, and he did so only after a few years in the United States in the mid-1930s. Fermin Rocker recalls that he communicated in German with some Yiddish elements with his Jewish mother Molly Witcop's parents, who never learned English. Fermin Rocker's own speech in his oral history is elegant British English dotted with Yiddish — such as when he refers to himself and his cousin as "the *mamzerim,*"[314] since his parents opposed marriage and this marked him within his Jewish family.

In his memoir *London Years* (1956), written in a plainspoken Yiddish, Rudolf Rocker describes working with a Yiddish anarchist group formed by Russian-Jewish students in Paris. In its first years, they only spoke Russian at meetings; as the group attracted more Jewish workers, they were compelled to switch to Yiddish, which posed initial difficulties for the older members. Rocker pays remarkable attention to multilingualism in all his descriptions of Jewish communities. Fermin Rocker reflected on the multilingualism of Rocker's circle in an oral history recorded for the British Library, London:

> From reading the *London Years*, one gets the somewhat erroneous impression that it was almost exclusively a Jewish milieu, which it wasn't — because up in that flat, which was 32 Dunston Houses, you heard all kinds of languages: French, Italian, Spanish… Any time there was any kind of injustice, which God knows there were plenty of, Spaniards would come. My father had a working knowledge of Spanish, his French was quite acceptable, and you see there too, he was one of the few in the East End who could converse with these people in their father tongue, so you see he was at least as interested in those people and their goings-on as in the Whitechapel events.[315]

In this oral history, Fermin Rocker emphasized that "to think of him as a spokesperson for the East End Jews is really a bit erroneous," although he "moved away from his own compatriots [the Germans in London]… a breed with whom he never really got along very well… [He] found a much more congenial atmosphere among the Jews of the East End."

Some Jewish anarchists were also compelled to learn Yiddish in order to participate more fully in the movement. Among the most accomplished of these was the native Russian speaker Dovid Edelshtat, whose Yiddish poetry has been set to music and sung at marches and picnics for the last century. Like Rocker, Edelshtat began learning Yiddish in order to edit a newspaper, in his case FAS. Around 1885, when comrades still edited his Yiddish writing, Edelshtat wrote, "I did not think that my Russian muse would transform herself into a Jewess with a red petticoat and awaken Israelites to the struggle. But, evidently, this was destined by the god of poetry, by the blond curled Apollo, who must be, as I realize, a great anti-Semite. Otherwise, he would not have given me a Yiddish muse."[316] This suggests that he had complicated feelings about his switch to Yiddish. The appearance of

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[314] *Mamzerim* are children whose mother was "ritually unpure" at conception or a married woman impregnated by another man, according to rabbinic parlance. (It is not actually equivalent to 'bastards,' but used similarly here.)

[315] Fermin Rocker. Andrew Whitehead oral history interviews with political radicals, 1985.09.27. Audio recording, British Library.

[316] Ori Kritz, *The Poetics of Anarchy: David Edelshtat's Revolutionary Poetry.*

that trickster, the "blond curled Apollo," implies that poetry is not a Jewish form, but a foreign or Greek one. Edelshtat's image of the Yiddish muse as a "Jewess with a red petticoat" leading Jews towards revolution is stereotypically gendered, but also makes one wonder whether he saw Yiddish as a more essentially galvanizing language than Russian. Ori Kritz has argued that Edelshtat's language choice was intended as neither an act of ethnic loyalty nor an ideological statement against assimilation. Rather, she claims that his decision was straightforward and practical, noting simply, "[H]e had taken it upon himself to spread this doctrine among those immigrants who were not yet able to read English"—similar to de Cleyre's (official) rationale. Rarely, however, is language choice *not* a choice based on identity and politics. Even if Edelshtat chose to write in Yiddish primarily as a means to an end, he was probably aware of the language debates in other radical Jewish quarters. Kritz claims, "The only specifically Jewish aspect of these revolutionary poems are [*sic*] the language in which they are written." Yet the language in which Edelshtat writes his poetry determines the identity of the poem, its readership, its sounds and references. Edelshtat's own vision of a saucy Yiddish muse confirms this.

The linguistic experiences of Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre, Rudolf Rocker, Chaim Weinberg, Dovid Edelshtat, and others demonstrate the multilingualism of the Jewish anarchist movement in the period leading up to the literary avant-garde. Even among those who chose to learn and write primarily in Yiddish, there was a range of views and little ideology attached to the language itself. That Edelshtat was Jewish and Rocker was not, for example, does not mark a major difference in their literary production. The difference lies in the impact of their native language upon their Yiddish writing. For example, Benjamin Harshav notes, "[W]hen Dovid Edelshtat, writing in New York, shifted from Russian to Yiddish, he unwittingly transmitted the Russian metrical norms to his new language."[317] In looking at anarchist multilingualism, we must consider the particularities of that relationship between German, Russian, English, etc and its influence upon Yiddish, as well as the writers' own view of their adopted language.

Translation and Sedition: A Case Study in Two Languages

In *Faithful Renderings: Jewish-Christian Difference and the Politics of Translation*, Naomi Seidman examines translation as a process of cultural negotiation. Seidman's book "explores translation as a border zone, a transit station, in which what does not succeed in crossing the border is at least as interesting as what makes it across" and attends to "contingent political situations in which translation and, inevitably, mistranslation arise."[318] In the history of the Yiddish anarchist press, few political situations gave rise to mis/translation so strikingly as the prosecution of the editors of *Frayhayt.*

Fraye Arbeter Shtime circulated for nearly ninety years without harassment by the federal government, a feat made possible by its publication solely in Yiddish. The fate of another Yiddish anarchist newspaper, *Frayhayt* (Freedom), demonstrates the difference in

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[317] Harshav, *Meaning of Yiddish,* p145.

[318] Naomi Seidman, *Faithful Renderings: Jewish-Christian Difference and the Politics of Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p2.

publishing in English and bilingually in the years before the Palmer Raids.[319] Published by the *Frayhayt* group for fewer than five months, its editors were charged with sedition in the 1918 Supreme Court case *Jacob Abrams et al v. United States,* a landmark free speech case. The case centered on Mollie Steimer and Jacob Abrams. Steimer was born in 1897 in a Russian village and immigrated to New York City, where she was radicalized by her experience working in factories and by reading Kropotkin, Bakunin, and Goldman. She quickly became involved with the group of about twenty anarchists who produced the Yiddish journal titled *Der Shturm* (The Storm). After considerable internal disagreement, the group reorganized into *Frayhayt* (Freedom) and published five issues in 1918, using the motto "*Yene regirung iz di beste, velkhe regirt in gantsn nit*," an anarchist reworking and radicalization of H. D. Thoreau's maxim "That government is best which governs least." Her fellow Russian immigrant Jacob Abrams had worked in San Francisco to prevent the extradition of Alexander Berkman, then married a survivor of the Triangle Shirtwaist fire. Steimer, Abrams, and about twenty other comrades edited *Frayhayt* together, and several of them also lived together in an apartment in Harlem.

Frayhayt was soon outlawed for its anti-authoritarian philosophy. Although aware of the anarchists' activities, government officials had been unable to track down the editors, who printed the paper on a small hand-press in their apartment. After months of hand-delivering their Yiddish newspaper to city mailboxes during the night, the *Frayhayt* group was arrested in August 1918. A worker caught their pamphlets, which Steimer had tossed from a factory rooftop on Broadway, and turned them in. The pamphlet in question was a special English-language leaflet condemning Woodrow Wilson's military intervention in the Russian revolution. The Frayhayt group printed two somewhat different editions, five thousand copies each, in English and Yiddish. In *Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, the Supreme Court, and Free Speech* (1987), Richard Polenberg analyzes the differences between each edition. The English pamphlet, under the headline "The Hypocrisy of the United States and Her Allies," denounced Wilson's support of the old Soviet regime, asking, "Do you see now how German militarism combined with allied capitalism to crush the Russian revolution?"[320] It continued, "Will you allow the Russian Revolution to be crushed? YOU; yes, we mean YOU, the people of America! […] The Russian Revolution cries: 'WORKERS OF THE WORLD! AWAKE! RISE! PUT DOWN YOUR ENEMY AND MINE!' Yes, friends, there is only one enemy of the workers of the world and that is CAPITALISM." It ends with a carefully worded postscript, claiming to have "more reasons for denouncing German militarism than has the coward of the White House." The English text was written by the communist-leaning Sam Lipman, for whom—as for all *Frayhayt* writers—English was not a native language.

Frayhayt's English pamphlet stridently denounced Wilson's personal hypocrisy, but did not attack the legitimacy of government itself. When taking him into custody, Yiddish-

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[319] After a bomb damaged the house of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, he and J. Edgar Hoover organized mass raids on leftists and anarchists. Between 1919-1920, about 6,000 people were arrested and several hundred were deported. In December 1920, 249 people were deported to Russia on the so-called "Red Ark," including Goldman. FBI archives, entry on the Palmer Raids, December 2007. https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/stories/2007/december/palmer_122807

[320] Richard Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, the Supreme Court, and Free Speech* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p50.

illiterate police officers asked an implicated anarchist whether the two pamphlet versions said the same thing. Hyman Lachowsky replied, "There are some words a little different, but they are the same."[321] However, the Yiddish version by Jacob Schwartz urged American (Jewish) workers to take concrete action with a mass strike in support of the Russian revolutionaries. After the arrests of all *Frayhayt* members, Schwartz was beaten by police and died shortly afterwards. Several important differences existed between Schwartz's Yiddish and Lipman's English version. Schwartz addressed not the "workers of the world," but "you who have emigrated from Russia"; President Wilson was referred to as "his Majesty, Mr. Wilson, and his comrades: dogs of all colors," rather than by the far milder English epithet of "hypocrite." The Yiddish version ended with a rousing flourish, not a polite postscript:

> Workers, our answer to the barbaric intervention has to be a general strike! A public resistance alone can let the government know that not only the Russian worker fights for freedom but that also here in America lives the spirit of revolution. Let the government not frighten you with its wild penalties of imprisonment, hanging and shooting. […] Three hundred years the Romanovs have taught us how to fight. Let all rulers remember this, from the smallest to the biggest despot, that the hand of the revolutionary will not tremble in the fight. Woe to those who stand in the way of progress! Solidarity lives.
>
> [Signed,] REBELS.[322]

The Yiddish pamphlet was only translated after the anarchists were arrested.[323] That official translation was used in the English press and the courtroom, and it was significantly different. Steimer was sentenced to twenty years in prison and a $500 fine; the three male anarchists received fifteen years and a $1000 fine. Members of *Frayhayt* and their comrades organized a group that succeeded in freeing the four from prison, at the cost of their deportation to Russia. The case radicalized many observers—as the Haymarket affair had done for the previous generation—who were shocked to see citizens sentenced, beaten to death, and deported for passing out a pamphlet. More than fifty years later, *Frayhayt* member Hilda Kovner reminisced, "That was holy work, you know, to distribute our literature, to spread the word."[324]

Frayhayt's bilingual pamphlets represent an important case study in the language politics of Yiddish anarchism. The differences between the two versions are political and cultural: while the English pamphlets were outreach material, the Yiddish version assumes its readers already agree with the authors' agenda and are prepared to take concrete action. In Yiddish, Schwartz indicted the government itself; in English, he curtailed his critique to Wilson as an individual. Ultimately, the question of translation proved irrelevant: the Yiddish anarchists were arrested and beaten before the police had even read their writing. Although bilingualism was used as a strategic propagandistic tool, public and legal

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[321] Polenberg, 51.

[322] Polenberg, 55. Translation by Chana Kronfeld.

[323] The name of the official court translator is not recorded. Polenberg, 51.

[324] Polenberg, 22.

responses were out of their control. As with Goldman's 1916 free speech case, bilingualism increased the liability of prosecution, regardless of the detectives, policemen, and court's own literacy in Yiddish.

"A Feeling of Worlds in the Making": Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth* and Margaret Anderson's *Little Review*

The strong mutual influence between anarchists and Modernist writers in the United States spanned both Yiddish and English-language print cultures. With her monthly newspaper *Mother Earth* (1906-1917), Goldman set out to be in the artistic vanguard, featuring a column called "The Avant Garde." She boasted that her own paper would be "the only good literary radical Magazine."[325] The paper opposed conscription and U.S. involvement in World War I, which led to the deportation of Berkman and Goldman in 1917 under the Espionage Act. A large portion of *Mother Earth's* articles was English translations of essays by Kropotkin, Malatesta, Magón, Tolstoy, and Gorky. In this respect, it mirrored the Yiddish anarchist press, with its high percentage of translated material emphasizing transnational engagement.

Mother Earth was known for its striking cover art by the Jewish surrealist Man Ray (Emmanuel Radnitzky) and the cartoonist Robert Minor, who later became a leading figure in the American Communist Party.[326] Goldman helped cultivate spaces for the avant-garde and make them accessible: the Ashcan School realist painter Robert Henri, for example, was inspired by hearing her speak and reading *Anarchism and Other Essays* (1910).[327] She encouraged him to teach at the Ferrer Center, where he instructed many of the modernists, especially female painters. There, he was joined by many other Modernist artists, including Man Ray, Robert Minor, George Bellows, and Marcel Duchamp. The People's Art Guild was associated with the Ferrer Center, and they organized more than fifty exhibitions in poor neighborhoods between 1915 and 1918 "to build unity between artists and workers."[328] In these anarchist studio spaces, there was room for heterogeneous art practice, as there was room for a multiplicity of languages. Realism and modernism went hand-in-hand.

With *Mother Earth,* Goldman sought to position herself as a leading critic in the avant-garde. She became close friends with the editor of perhaps the most prominent North American literary journal, Margaret Anderson. Initially attracted by Anderson's writing on philosophical anarchism, they became correspondents, then friends and collaborators.[329] Anderson's Chicago-based *Little Review* was for its first three years "largely an anarchist publication.[330]" Wryly admitting Goldman's influence on her,

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[325] *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years,* 49.

[326] Robert Minor published anti-militarism cartoons in a range of anarchist newspapers, including *The Masses*.

[327] Avrich 2006, 157.

[328] Ferguson, 743.

[329] *Mother Earth,* 84.

[330] Modernist Journals Project, "Modernism Began in the Magazines." http://library.brown.edu/cds/mjp/render.php?view=mjp_object&id=LittleReviewCollection

Anderson once quipped, “I heard Emma Goldman lecture and had just enough time to turn anarchist before the presses closed.”[331] However, Anderson was a significant anarchist writer and provocative editor in her own right even before they met, though her collaborations with Goldman and contributions to her *Mother Earth* certainly raised her visibility. The connection between the Yiddish anarchists and the English literary Modernists is documented by their letters. I found that the Yiddish anarchist writer Leon Malmed, a romantic partner of Goldman’s, used the address of the *Little Review* for his correspondence, which suggests a close relationship with its editor, whose name is listed in his datebook. His letter from May 9, 1915 requested that his checks be addressed “% *Little Review*,” which implies there may have also been financial cooperation between the Yiddish speaker and the English magazine. All of Malmed’s letters pertaining to the *Little Review* seem to have been written in 1915. It was in May 1914 that Anderson published her Goldman article, which resulted in a scandal and donors’ withdrawal of funding.

Anderson founded *The Little Review* in Chicago in 1914, then moved it to New York in 1917, briefly to San Francisco, and finally to Paris in 1922. Co-editors included her partner Jane Heap, in 1916; Ezra Pound served as its foreign editor in 1917. *The Little Review* introduced Dadaism and international experimentalism to U.S. audiences and published Djuna Barnes, T. S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, Mina Loy, the French pointillist Francis Picabia, Gertrude Stein, and W. B. Yeats. Most famously, it serialized James Joyce's *Ulysses* in 23 installments, from 1918 to 1920—until the Society for the Suppression of Vice charged the magazine with obscenity, and the U.S. Post Office burned it during four separate incidents. Anderson and Heap lost the court trial and were forced to discontinue the novel amid Joyce's notorious Episode Fourteen (“Oxen of the Sun”), costing them much of their funding.[332]

Margaret Anderson was fond of provocative gestures, such as her September 1916 issue, which “protested the lack of acceptable material by leaving most of its pages blank, [and] the motto subsequently appended to its title, ‘Making No Compromise with the Public Taste.’" Certainly there was a sympathy in the forms of her literary and political provocations: Anderson later commented, "Anarchism, like all good things, is an announcement."[333] *The Little Review* is also remembered for its multiple, cacophonous interests—according to Anderson, the magazine represented twenty-three schools of art from nineteen countries.[334] Goldman and Anderson shared an audience, including Bernard Smith, the 1930s literary critic who admired Goldman’s dramatic criticism and praised Anderson’s journal: “It was the maddest, bravest, and most stimulating experimental magazine America has ever had.”[335] Anderson herself cut a colorful figure. One admirer, the writer Ben Hecht, recalls: “[S]he was as chic as any of the girls who model today for the fashion magazines. […] It was surprising to see a coiffure so neat on a noggin so stormy.[336]”

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[331] Anderson 1930, 54.

[332] Modernist Journals Project, “Modernism Began in the Magazines.” http://library.brown.edu/cds/mjp/render.php?view=mjp_object&id=LittleReviewCollection

[333] Gornick, 73.

[334] Modernist Journals Project, “Modernism Began in the Magazines.” http://library.brown.edu/cds/mjp/render.php?view=mjp_object&id=LittleReviewCollection

[335] Smith 1939, 352.

[336] Hecht, Ben. *A Child of the Century.* Simon & Schuster, 1950. p. 233

Beyond Imagining: Margaret Anderson and the 'Little Review,' which won an Academy Award for documentary filmmaking in 1992, portrays her living openly as a lesbian. Anderson's partners included such celebrated artists as the opera singer Georgette Leblanc, painter and editor Jane Heap, and Dorothy Caruso, widow of Enrico Caruso, all of whom she wrote about in her romantic memoir *Forbidden Fires*. One can only speculate whether Anderson's sexuality informed her political alliance with anarchism, which was known in that time for its support of gays, lesbians, and transgender people.[337]

There were considerable class, educational, and generational differences between Goldman's *Mother Earth* and the *Little Review*. Goldman's staff was composed of working-class immigrants with inconsistent educational backgrounds, "without the sophistication, education, exuberance, or ease of their more affluent counterparts at *The Masses,*" let alone at the *Little Review.*[338] Despite these cultural differences, the *Little Review* ran ads for Emma Goldman's book *Anarchism and Other Essays,* as well as for *Mother Earth,* in 1915, alongside advertisements for concert grand pianos and other expensive items. In December 1914, Anderson contributed an article to *Mother Earth,* reporting on Goldman's three-week lecture tour in Chicago, when Goldman spoke about theater in English at the Fine Arts Building and gave "propaganda" talks "in Jewish on Friday nights and Sunday afternoons at Hodcarrier's and Workman's Hall,"[339] as well as a few additional talks to "newspapermen" and "I.W.W. boys." In the May 1914 issue of the *Little Review*, Anderson published an article on Emma Goldman, which seems to offer another perspective on those Chicago lectures.[340] Anderson delves into greater detail about the audiences' responses and class differences. Anderson seems to have only attended the theater talks, though she nods to the "Jewish" (Yiddish) events. This differentiation between the highbrow lectures in elegant surroundings and "Jewish" talks in workers' halls attests to Goldman's world-straddling code-switching. Though her analysis of the content of Goldman's speeches was not sycophantic, Anderson describes her presence with awe:

> Emma Goldman has just finished her three weeks of lecturing in Chicago, and those of us who went every night to hear her have a feeling that something tremendous has dropped out of life with her going. The exasperating thing about Emma Goldman is that she makes herself so indispensable to her audiences that it is always tragic when she leaves; the amazing thing about her is that her inspiration seems never to falter. Life takes on an intenser quality when she is present: there is something cosmic in the air, a feeling of worlds in the making […].[341]

Anderson describes a specific kind of social formation for members of the radical Left. Goldman's political charisma inspires longing, and her departure leaves melancholy in its

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[337] See Terrence Kissack, *Free Comrades.*

[338] Wexler, 125

[339] Anderson, "Emma Goldman in Chicago," *Mother Earth,* Vol. IX, No. 10, December 1914.

[340] See facsimile at the Brown University Library's Modernist Journals project: http://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1288994623603250.pdf

[341] Anderson, "Emma Goldman in Chicago," *Mother Earth,* Vol. IX, No. 10, December 1914.

wake. This is not egalitarian kinship or comradeship, but collective love directed towards a leader who renounces traditional leadership. Anderson is also quite conscious of the class and cultural gap between Goldman and her various English-speaking audiences, and she carefully observes how her friend navigates that difference:

> Most of these new lectures were devoted to the modern drama and were given in the Assembly Hall of the Fine Arts Building. This is the first time in her life that Miss Goldman has talked in just that kind of hall and before just that kind of people. The thing was in the nature of an experiment and was made possible by the efforts of a few people who became interested in her work last year. Their plan to enlighten a certain type of benighted human being—the type that will go to anything which happens to be featured in the Fine Arts Building but that shudders at the mere thought of Emma Goldman in Labor Hall—had its interesting and its amusing sides. […] But the outstanding event of the whole three weeks was Miss Goldman's appearance at the Chicago Press Club, where she was invited to talk during luncheon. It was one of the most stirring things I have ever sat through. Picture a large club dining room filled with about five hundred hard-faced men ("Oh! Those faces!" Miss Goldman said afterward; "how they seared me!"); imagine their cynical indifference as she began to speak amid all the clattering of dishes and the rushing of waitresses; and then imagine the stillness that gradually descended upon them as she poured out her magnificent denouncement. Her subject was "The Relationship of Anarchism to Literature," and she talked to those men about making their lives and their work free and true and beautiful in a way that would pull the heart out of anything but a veteran newspaper man.[342]

When it comes to Goldman's actual theater and literary criticism, however, Anderson is less glowing. She implies that the lectures were lacking in *political* analysis and overly-reliant on paraphrase, surveying too many plays and only pointing out their social value. Tantalizingly for this project, Anderson mentions that one of the talks was titled "The Czar and My Beloved Jews," without further elaboration. Anderson's sketch in *Mother Earth* attests to the power of Goldman's presence and reveals how she represented herself a Jewish public figure, navigating English high-brow spaces and Yiddish male workers' halls.

Many critics have remarked upon the "conservatism" of Goldman's literary taste. Despite Goldman's strong presence in Modernist circles, biographer Alice Wexler notes that in comparison to *Masses* and the *Little Review*, *Mother Earth* displayed "relatively conservative aesthetic taste" and was indifferent "to experiments in form and style."[343] Anderson herself agreed: "About this matter of form, [Goldman] believes that it is of second importance; I think it is first."[344] Although Margaret Anderson was a political ally of Emma

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[342] Ibid.

[343] Wexler, 125.

[344] Anderson, 435.

Goldman's, each worked within very different "compositional logics."[345] In her preface to the 1987 edition of Goldman's essay collection *The Social Significance of Modern Drama*, Erika Munk notes that Goldman's "taste was surprisingly more conformist than her ideology."[346] Martha Solomon similarly found that Goldman sought "radical ideology in conservative literary form."[347] Kathy E. Ferguson writes:

> *The Little Review*'s unrestrained artistic rebellion made common cause with Goldman's equally unrestrained political rebellion, yet neither Anderson nor Goldman confused alliance and admiration with identity. […] If we define modernism, with Sylvia Yount, as 'more of a cultural attitude than a coherent movement—an effort to turn away from the past and look to the future, to disparage the old and celebrate the new,' then Goldman was quite modern in her political vision but not in her aesthetic practices (Yount 1996, 9). While she often made alliances with modernists, her head and her heart were grounded in romantic realism.[348]

What exactly made her tastes "conservative" in that period, according to so many critics, and how might we understand that characterization in relation to the broader anarchist project of radical art-making? In "Gender and Genre in Emma Goldman," Kathy E. Ferguson speculates on the connection between Goldman's aesthetic preferences, her rejection of cinema, and her embrace of theater—choosing the traditional form over new media. Ferguson argues that unlike Anderson, "Goldman's thinking, speaking, and writing were deeply embedded in realism and romanticism. She sought theatrical performances that could change the very structure of affect, re-situating the audience in relation to the struggles they witness… for Goldman, the stage was to the film as realism and romanticism were to modernism. The stage, realism, and romanticism were reliable vehicles for revolutionary education, while film and modernism were superficial indulgences."[349] I argue that the root of this seeming "conformism" in Goldman's work is, in fact, a mark of Yiddish difference: namely, it shows the extent of her affinity with Yiddish theater, song and poetry on her aesthetics, as well as the Romantic and naturalist poetics of the *Svetshop* poets. Goldman loved the poetry of Bovshover and Edelshtat, saluting them in her memoirs (as discussed at length in Chapter Three). Goldman wrote:

> The Spirit of Unrest which is undermining the citadel of learning is equally strong in literary, dramatic and artistic endeavor. We no longer want a novel to represent the heroine in a fluffy gown, and the hero on his knees before his beloved; nor do we care for the drama as a mere idle amusement. We look to both as the mirror of the struggle for greater human expansion. In other words, literature and the drama today are the most fiery exponents of the

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[345] Seitel, 281.
[346] Munk, iv.
[347] Solomon, 95.
[348] Ferguson, 744.
[349] Ferguson, 11.

> accumulated forces in men and women trying to find themselves and their true contact with their fellow beings.[350]

In this passage, art is rendered both as a mirror and as a mode for cultivating comradeship. This mini-manifesto strikingly recalls the ethos of the *svetshop* poets. Goldman's imagery—undermining citadels, the struggle for greater human expansion, fiery forces—bears the imprint of their passionate lyrics. Like Harkavy, she derides the "idle amusements" of frivolous reading, casting it as a capitalist distraction. This is a critique of an idealized romanticism; she does not call modernism or experimentalism inaccessible or elitist. This is also the modernist argument against popular culture, which goes back to Flaubert's attack on pulp fiction in *Madame Bovary.*

In the introduction to her collection of essays on drama, Goldman explicitly privileges "art as the mirror of life" above "art for art's sake," a fierce debate that drove the differentiation between the expressionist *Di Yunge* (The Young Ones) and the realist Proletarian Poets. She writes, "Art for art's sake presupposes an attitude of aloofness on the part of the artist toward the complex struggle of life: he must rise above the ebb and tide of life. He is to be merely an artistic conjurer of beautiful forms, a creator of pure fancy. That is not the attitude of modern art, which is preeminently the reflex, the mirror of life… The modern artist is, in the words of August Strindberg, 'a lay preacher popularizing the pressing questions of his time.' Not necessarily because his aim is to proselyte, but because he can best express himself by being true to life."[351] Goldman's essays are divided between Scandinavian, German, French, English, Irish, and Russian. Almost all of these authors were widely influential in Yiddish, particularly Tolstoy, Chekhov, Ibsen, and Strindberg. Goldman concludes:

> Perhaps those who learn the great truths of the social travail in the school of life, do not need the message of the drama. But there is another class whose number is legion, for whom that message is indispensable. In countries where political oppression affects all classes, the best intellectual element have made common cause with the people, have become their teachers, comrades, and spokesmen. But in America political pressure has so far affected only the "common" people. It is they who are thrown into prison; they who are persecuted and mobbed, tarred and deported. Therefore another medium is needed to arouse the intellectuals of this country, to make them realize their relation to the people, to the social unrest permeating the atmosphere. […] This is the social significance which differentiates modern dramatic art from art for art's sake. It is the dynamite which undermines superstition, shakes the social pillars, and prepares men and women for the reconstruction.[352]

Dynamite, deportations, unrest, intellectuals as comrades—Goldman's vocabulary of artistic ideals is straight from the Proletarian poets. Their milieu was already combined

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[350] Goldman, "Nation Seethes in Social Unrest," *Denver Post,* 1912.
[351] Goldman, "Foreword," *The Social Significance of Modern Drama,* 1.
[352] Goldman, *The Social Significance of Modern Drama,* 3.

with revolutionary Soviet Yiddish poetry, Futurist, and Expressionism, and Goldman's language is closer to their manifestos. Ferguson, however, places Goldman not with Strindberg and Futurism, but "with the romantics, Goldman advocated the transformative power of art and love. With the realists, she strove to be faithful to the experiences of the oppressed. She told people what they didn't want to hear and what they desperately longed to hear."[353] Ferguson reads Goldman's aesthetics as primarily formed by encounters with English-language romanticism and realism, which she recuperates as radical forms:

> Goldman drew her resistance to modernism's experimentalism from the aesthetic resources of romanticism and realism, resources that appeared conventional and conservative, perhaps old-fashioned, to the avant-garde crowd of her day as well as to readers today. Yet of course romanticism and realism mark not a static status quo but rather a dynamic reservoir of cultural practices. They had come from somewhere, in response to something; they had interrupted and become intertwined with some prior set of conventions. Smith observes that "romanticism *is*, in essence—revolt—in American letters as in English, French, and German—revolt against the traditions and circumstances which bind, limit, or repress the individual. It is an assertion of the right to dream, the right to conceive ideals and satisfactions beyond those afforded by the immediate environment" (1939, 131)… According to Smith, romanticism rebelled against the prior preoccupation in American letters with bourgeois morality.[354]

Ferguson insightfully frames romanticism not in relation to modernism, but as an interruption to the 'bourgeois morality' of earlier forms. However, this passage neglects to mention the influence of Yiddish and Russian literatures, which were primary for Goldman.

"Romanticism *is*, in essence—revolt." Let us look more closely at one of the pieces published under Goldman's editorship at *Mother Earth.* Titled "Between the Living and the Dead," it appeared in *Mother Earth* in 1906.[355] In 2013, anarchist historian Robert Helms identified this "lost gem" as the work of Voltairine de Cleyre, "hidden in plain sight for over a century."[356] Helms, a specialist in de Cleyre's work, dates the piece to eighteen months after she was committed to Medico-Chirurgical Hospital in Philadelphia. Her grimly lyrical prose describes "three—a man, a child, and I who am a woman." The narrator experiences abortion, a woman suffering from syphilis, suicidal impulses—one taboo after another. She writes:

> Oh Life, Life, where will you make it up to her? Why was the dream of justice ever born in the human mind, if it must stand dumb before this terrible child? And far away there stretched before my eyes the limitless procession of little lives that had come forth in waste and blight, to die in their smitten youth, bearing through all their pain in the unnameable grace of babyhood, the

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353 Ferguson, 754.

354 Ferguson, "Gender and Genre in Emma Goldman," 745.

355 *Mother Earth, Vol. 1, No. 8 (October 1906).*

356 Personal correspondence. Helms' analysis was also featured in *Truth Seeker,* April 2016.

> aroma of green tendrils, the gloss of the down of childhood shining and floating still among the dust and death. […] GOD? Did men ever believe a God could so order life? Did anyone ever believe it?

De Cleyre's image of humanity as "limitless procession of little lives" echoes both the children of Blake's London and the despondency of Rosenfeld's laborers. But here, all life is composed of a sweatshop; there is no 'outside' to the factory. De Cleyre's short story ends dramatically and despairingly: "Locked within the fatal narrowing circle, her soul is freezing while her body rots. Powerless in its martyrdom it waits the final expiation, hidden and dark, like an eye seen dull blue under a lid that has never unclosed. Powerless, non-understanding—'For the sin… of the father… has been visited… upon the child…' And there is no Justice anywhere, NOT ANYWHERE."[357] Stylistically, this also contains the only modernist passage ("like an eye seen dull blue under a lid that has never unclosed"). De Cleyre shocks with her vivid exploration of a woman's suicidality (the author attempted suicide at least twice) and alienation from motherhood. As an editor, Goldman leaned towards realist literature, which represented the same issues found in her pamphlets on reproductive rights and working-class motherhood. "Between the Living and the Dead" is remarkable not only for its frank portrait of a woman's oppression, but also for its unapologetic melodrama and death-wish, which would have been at home on the Yiddish stage. De Cleyre, too, combined pre-modernist realism with avant-garde metaphoric sensibilities (such as the description of the eye). It is this *mixture* which distinguishes this period of anarchist poetics.

Certainly Goldman's love of beauty and joy contradicted the impulse towards austerity among many of her comrades. It makes sense to contextualize her taste within the Yiddish workers' ballad tradition, and I underscore the strong similarities between *cultures* of the Jewish radical press in English and Yiddish. In their literary taste, we see the persistent influence of the *svetshop* poets, beyond the period of their heyday. And we must recognize the intertwining of Yiddish and English anarchist modernism in the *Little Review,* including the appearance of Goldman's essays, Anderson's writing on Goldman, their mutual support during free speech trials, and Leon Malmed's notable presence at the offices of the *Little Review*. Despite the many differences between Anderson and Goldman, their common devotion to the avant-garde shaped the world of anarchist modernism and made each other's contributions more possible. As Anderson said of Goldman: "Life takes on an intenser quality when she is there, something cosmic in the air, a feeling of worlds in the making."[358]

Conclusion: The Legacy of Jewish Language Politics

This chapter examined the particularities of Yiddish anarchist language politics in the lives and writings of movement members. I argued for the uniqueness of its heterogeneity in the context of Jewish language politics: overall, I found little linguistic nationalism of the kind espoused in Bundism, Zionism, and the contemporaneous mass

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[357] Helms, p11.

[358] Gornick, 73.

language reform projects of Ataturk and Stalin. While anarchists did use Yiddish strategically in times of surveillance and censorship, this was no safeguard against police or mob violence by those who did not understand it. Nor was their pragmatic usage in the utilitarian vein of the *maskilim,* who begrudgingly adopted Yiddish to counter Hasidism's populist influences.[359] Jewish anarchists never rejected English, as European movements turned away from Russian or Hebrew. Harkavy's bestselling *brivnshteler* did not advocate English as a replacement for Yiddish; his letters placed the two languages beside each other. Dovid Katz notes Harkavy's "unique ability to balance the need for Americanization with Yiddishist loyalty."[360] This chapter also documented the circulation of cultural and literary production in Yiddish anarchist newspapers and English-language journals, and the lingering force of Proletarian poetry upon Goldman's aesthetic—a kind of Yiddish thinking expressed in English. Language heterogeneity is linked with literary affiliation: realism, romanticism, and revolutionary expressionism circulated differently in Yiddish and English, so erasing the Yiddish roots of English radical writers such as Goldman place them in the incorrect genealogy.

Jewish anarchist language politics were uniquely encouraged by the United States context. There was no anti-Yiddish government policy analogous to the attempted eradication of Native American languages, nor was Yiddish publication banned, as it was in Israel and the USSR. However, although Yiddish was not an "insurgent" or colonized language in the US, its usage did render its speakers more vulnerable, as shown in the bungled translations prepared for the trials of Emma Goldman, Mollie Steimer, Jacob Abrams, and others. Yiddish, then, was chosen by anarchists for its ease and creative possibility, out of love of their culture, and as a response to state censorship, in equal measure.

Further research is needed on the subject of anarchist language politics in Russia, Poland, and Mandate Palestine and Israel. Such an analysis would shed light on major anarchist figures like Abba Gordin, who wrote copiously in Yiddish about Jewish themes while living in Israel. Another generative area would be linguistic analysis of anarchists' oral histories, but these are rare. Footage taken by a young anarchist organizer in Tel Aviv of his neighbor, Yosef Luden, supplies one example. Luden's speech is dotted with Yiddish for emphasis, such as in the otherwise-Hebrew sentence, "Those [Israelis] who write 'death to the Arabs,' you need to give them a *patsh* (slap) they'll remember for the rest of their lives." Luden's Hebrew retains both the sentence structure and idiom from Yiddish. Similar speech patterns appear in his description of how he was captured by the English en route to Palestine during the Third Aliyah and awaited a passport.[361] In simple Hebrew, he recalls telling his friend Yitzkhok Tabenkin (who had translated Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* and gave fiery Yiddish speeches in Haifa): "I will travel like a *porets*, like an important man, in a legal way, me and my family." Luden uses the Yiddish pronunciation of the *loshn-koydesh* word *porets,* a nobleman, landowner, or magnate. The expression *zayn a porets* means to do as one pleases; in the reflexive mode, it means to put on airs. He internally translates *porets* to *ben-adam gadol,* revealing his awareness of archaic Hebrew components within Yiddish when speaking Israeli Hebrew! Harkavy would smile.

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[359] See David Shneer, *Yiddish and the Creation of Soviet Jewish Culture: 1918-1930,* 34.

[360] Dovid Katz, "Alexander Harkavy and His Trilingual Doctionary," xvii.

[361] I thank David Massey for transcribing this footage, 9:26-10:45 of his video.

Debates on language politics continue today, in forms new and familiar. How might the variety of Jewish models speak to contemporary questions? There are parallels between decolonial and postcolonial language movements, which favor re-centering native languages, and the Czernovitz debates about selecting "a" or "the" national language. The Kenyan essayist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, for example, recently addressed students at Kenyatta University and the University of Nairobi about speaking their native language as an act of "aesthetic resistance." In one of his plays, Thiong'o wrote, "*African languages were our beginning* [said the villagers]. *English is our beginning*, said those who imprisoned me."[362] Thiong'o was incarcerated for one year for writing that play. His decolonial move, then, is a return to precolonial language:

> Why should English national literature serve as the core at a University in Kenya, Owuor Anyumba, Taban lo Liyong, and I asked. We called for the abolition of the English Department. In reality we were not calling for the abolition of English literature but rather for the reordering of its relationship to our realities: Do we start from There and move to Here—a colonial process, a self-negating process—or move from Here to There—the anti-colonial, the self-affirmative, the progressive process? […] An imitator is always a follower and is driven by lack of faith in self, which begins with language. If you know all the languages of the world and you don't know your mother tongue or that of your culture, that is enslavement. If you know your mother tongue or the language of your culture and add all the languages of the world to it, that is empowerment.[363]

Thiong'o's argument for moving "from Here to There" as a "self-affirmative" process echoes Zhitlovsky and other Bundists, both in his call for elites to lift up folk culture and in his language of Hereness, of *do'ikayt.* The gesture of abolishing the university English department does not represent a heterogeneous language politics, but reifies language choice as declaration of an anti-colonial national identity. At the same time, his insistence on starting here and moving *there* represents an openness to unknown, future difference. Thiong'o's decolonial language politics influenced some contemporary Jewish scholars: Jonathan Boyarin notes the Kenyan scholar's impact, inspiring him to turn to Yiddish as the language for his anti-universalist essay on postmodernism and marginality in the book *Thinking in Jewish* (1996).[364]

Another model of Jewish language politics is represented by Harkavy's playful multilingualism. We see similar approaches and interpretations of etymology in the work of Chilean environmentalist, poet, and filmmaker Cecilia Vicuña. She explores the

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[362] The play was *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (*I Will Marry When I Want*), 1977.

Thiong'o, "Teach Me to Be Me." *Guernica,* March 15 2016. Article is adapted from speeches delivered at Kenyatta University and the University of Nairobi in Kenya in June 2015. https://www.guernicamag.com/features/teach-me-to-be-me/

[363] Ibid.

[364] See Naomi Seidman's translation and discussion of this essay, "Yiddish Science and the Postmodern," *In Geveb,* March 13 2016. http://ingeveb.org/articles/yiddish-science-and-the-postmodern

indigenous Latin American languages Quechua and Mapuche alongside Spanish in her work. Vicuña writes:

> Language is migrant. Words move from language to language, from culture to culture, from mouth to mouth. Our bodies are migrants, cells and bacteria are migrants too. Even galaxies migrate. What is then this talk against migrants? It can only be talk against ourselves, against life itself. 20 years ago, I opened up the word "migrant," seeing it as a dangerous mix of Latin and Germanic roots. I imagined "migrant" was probably composed of mei, (Latin), to change or move, and gra, "heart" from the Germanic kerd. Thus, "migrant" became: "changed heart," a heart in pain, changing the heart of the earth. The word "immigrant" really says: "grant me life." "Grant" means "to allow to have," and is related to a far more ancient Proto Indo European root: dhe, the mother of "deed" and "law" in English and sacerdos in Latin: performer of sacred rites.[365]

As anarchist genealogies sought to undermine our sense of the present as inevitable, so can Jewish anarchist etymologies of the type Harkavy developed in *Der Nayer Gayst* be deployed to break apart the isolationism of linguistic nationalism. Vicuña's writing is a contemporary example of that same gesture: etymology can illuminate the foreignness inherent in that most familiar thing, one's native tongue, thus welcoming in the "foreign" and dissolving the borders of single-language ideology.

[365] Cecilia Vicuña, "Language is Migrant," March 2016. http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2016/04/language-is-migrant/

— Chapter Three —

The Anarchism of Time: Comparative Temporalities in Yiddish and English-Language Sacco-Vanzetti Poems

This chapter examines the presence, persistence, and influence of anarcho-syndicalism in Yiddish poetry, from the Proletarian poets to Modernist responses to the Sacco-Vanzetti trial. Beginning with the Labor poets, also known as the *svetshop* or Proletarian Poets, I discuss the role of the anarchist press in the development of immigrant social worlds. Through close readings of a selection of *svetshop* poems, I examine the poetics and political valences of temporality, particularly their utopian futurities and critique of capitalist time. Despite their lack of anthologization alongside other Yiddish literary movements, I argue that the Proletarian poets exerted a broader influence on later, more "experimental" writers. Following Chana Kronfeld's metaphor for the transmission of literary history as a rope with multiple overlapping threads, this chapter aims to rethink the relationship between Labor Romanticism and Yiddish Modernism.[366]

The second half of this chapter examines how archetypal elements of Proletarian poetry— alternative temporality, anarchist themes, and imagery of garment workers' needles—were reinvented by Modernist poets. Moyshe-Leyb Halpern and Yankev Glatshteyn wrote poems on the Italian-American anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, who were executed in Boston, 1927. The sheer volume of literature on the theme of the Sacco-Vanzetti case demonstrates the ongoing engagement with anarchist history and thought among writers across the Left after the *svetshop* period. Halpern deconstructs the idealized brotherhood of workers, and Glatshteyn's longer verse weaves surreal and mythic imagery throughout documentary presentation of events in Sacco and Vanvetti's case. The poetic structures of their work, through repetition and kaleidoscopic montage, embody alternative temporalities beyond the linear and punitive temporality of the state.

While the dominant forms of early anarchist poetry were highly public, social forms such as the ballad and elegy, Halpern and Glatshteyn's Modernist verse engaged with the anarchism of their subjects without intentional social use for the labor movement. Yiddish Sacco-Vanzetti poetry, in contrast to English-language counterparts of the same genre, modeled an alternative temporality — what I have termed *anarchist diasporism*, undefined and unrestrained by the limits of state time. Yiddish poets' focus on Sacco and Vanzetti's seven years in prison, rather than their execution, shows an orientation towards state violence different from the anglophone literary and journalistic world. Glatshteyn and Halpern portray state violence as part of a history causing immigrant suffering, rather than an anomalous event rupturing democracy, as in other North American poems on Sacco and Vanzetti.

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[366] Chana Kronfeld, *On the Margins of Modernism: Decentering Literary Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p63.

The literary readings in this chapter build on earlier chapters' research on Yiddish anarchist models of history, genealogy, and temporal models. I focus on the political valences of temporality in two poems — Yankev Glatshteyn's *"Sacco-Vanzettis montik"* (Sacco-Vanzetti's Monday) and Moyshe-Leyb Halpern's "Sacco-Vanzetti." I introduce the idea of radical temporality as a key aspect of anarchist Modernism: whereas experiments in literary representations of time are often viewed as primarily aesthetic and apolitical, these Sacco-Vanzetti poems disrupt nationalist models of time. Halpern and Glatshteyn's sense of history undermines linear ideas of progress or regression. For them, the tragedy of Sacco and Vanzetti lies in its everydayness. Imagining time beyond the state is of central concern in anarchist thought. Nationalist temporality makes a claim that the moment of establishing a state resets time, erasing the "before," and casting others out of history (for example, viewing Native Americans as living in "mythical times"). Legislative temporality can be punitive: doing time, serving time. Socialist and Communist temporalities often bend towards messianism, deferred until "after the revolution." So if nationalist time begins with the state, and Communist time begins with revolution, what is anarchist temporality? Yiddish anarchists sought to dissolve the consciousness of "before and after." This "diasporic time" exceeds the temporal regulations of prison and national narrative, and is embodied throughout the poetic structure of their poems. Finally, by portraying the body in time—aging and vulnerable, during their prison years—anarchist modernism diverges from other Leftist representations of masculinity, such as the muscle-bound heroes of some Socialist and Communist verse.

Proletarian Poetry: The Social Lives of Poems

Anarchist literature in Yiddish, as a self-conscious project expressive of the ideology of its authors, properly began in the late nineteenth century, and its development was inextricable from the rise of the radical Yiddish press. Early Yiddish anarchist poetry maintained a highly social purpose and was primarily composed in forms suited to public performance, such as the ballad and elegy. The poets Morris Rosenfeld (Moyshe Yakov Alter, 1862-1923), Dovid Edelshtat (1866-1892), Yoysef Bovshover (1873-1915) and Morris Vinchevsky (1856-1932) primarily comprised the Proletarian or *svetshop* poets. This group encompassed poets of varying leftwing positions, who frequently participated in varied strands of anti-capitalist movements, their political affiliations always multiple and partial. Rosenfeld was first drawn to anarchism upon visiting London, where his parents had immigrated.[367] After moving to New York City in 1886, Rosenfeld published socialist writing, and his later work included nationalist and Zionist poems. Vinchevsky founded both the first Yiddish socialist newspaper and the first Yiddish anarchist newspaper. The Russian-Yiddish anarchist historian Moshe Goncharuk notes that "not all knew that Edelshtat was an anarchist, although his poems were known and sung by the workers of many parties."[368] While they may have had partial and multiple dogmatic allegiances, they inhabited a shared social world formed from opposition to capitalism.

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[367] Harshav and Harshav, *Sing, Stranger,* p13.

[368] Goncharuk, *On the History of the Yiddish Anarchist Press.* Jerusalem: Farlag "Problemen," 1997.

In their political heterogeneity, the *svetshop* poets reflected the world of the Yiddish radical press: the first Yiddish anarchist newspaper in the world, Vinchevsky's *Arbeter Fraynd* (London, 1885) had a mixture of anarchist and socialist writers until 1892, while *Varhayt* (1889), the first Yiddish anarchist newspaper in the United States, published both Edelshtat and Rosenfeld.[369] The anarchist and socialist press in New York City only became truly differentiated after an attempt to publish a joint newspaper at the first conference of Jewish radicals in the United States on December 25, 1889. Almost fifty delegates representing thirty-one organizations met in the hall of the Essex Street Market on the Lower East Side, "decorated for the occasion with red flags, portraits of the Haymarket martyrs, and a banner inscribed 'Neither God Nor Master!'"[370] The historian Paul Avrich writes:

> From the outset it was evident that no agreement would be forthcoming. The anarchists, favoring a joint newspaper, argued that the workers should acquaint themselves with all streams of radical thought, if only to choose intelligently among them. The socialists, however, branded a nonparty paper as "*pareveh lokshn*" (neutral noodles, i.e., neither dairy nor meat), a term imported from London, where it had been used to deride the *Arbeter Fraynd*. An effective journal, they maintained, must have a consistent point of view, with a clear stand on basic social, political, and economic issues. Would it make sense, they asked, to reject violence and uphold the ballot in one article while condoning terrorism and decrying elections in another? Such a publication, far from uniting workers, would leave them in hopeless confusion. After six days of bitter debate, the issue was put to a vote. The anarchists were narrowly defeated, by a margin of twenty-one to twenty.[371]

Avrich's colorful account illustrates the narrow divide between the groups and the anarchists' tolerance for publishing inconsistent or heterogeneous editorials (a habit which continued within later anarchist newspapers). It was only when trying to establish a joint written project that the camps first clashed; collaboration in organizing was far more fluid. After that conference of 1889, the socialists founded the weekly *Arbeter-Tsaytung.* Likewise, the *Pyonirn der frayhayt* (Pioneers of Liberty) began plans for an anarchist newspaper and invited Morris Vinchevsky of London to edit. Vinchevsky, "as much a socialist as an anarchist,"[372] declined their offer, and the Russian Roman Lewis became the first editor of the first Yiddish anarchist newspaper in the U.S. The founding of *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* (Free Voice of Labor) in 1890 was a milestone for the movement, and it ran until 1977 — the longest-running anarchist newspaper in the world. The poet Benjamin Harshav described *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* as "a marvelous abode for Yiddish poetry."[373]

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[369] Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p179.
[370] Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits,* 183.
[371] Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits,* 183.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Harshav, *Shirat hayakhid benyu york* (Jerusalem, 2002), 75.

Marked by rousing calls to revolution, the Proletarian poets' work circulated in socialist newspapers such as *Di Tsukunft* (The Future) and *Di Arbeter Tsaytung*[374] (The Worker's Newspaper) and anarchist newspapers such as *Fraye Arbeter Shtime,* under Edelshtat's editorship. Often read aloud in meeting halls, the papers reached far more people than their circulation numbers alone indicate. That these poems appeared alongside editorials and news stories, not in the pages of an anthology, reflects their integration into the daily life of their readers.

Yiddish anarchists emphasized cultivating civilian comradeship as an alternative to both alienation and the utilitarian comradeship of the military.[375] In contrast to the Communist credo of "remaking Man" to change inherent aspects of human nature, anarchism sought to remake social relations. Everyday practice of comradeship was central, and cafes and social spaces played an important role in developing both the movement and the later avant-garde. Anarchist poetry tended towards social forms, such as songs, elegies, and ballads. In the precariousness of immigrant and radical life, memorializing "martyrs of Labor" was an important function for Yiddish poetry.[376] Publishing in the daily press allowed Proletarian poets to quickly respond to events in the lives of workers. When 146 young people (primarily women) were killed in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911, Morris Rosenfeld responded with an elegy for the victims printed down the full length of the Socialist daily *Forverts'* front page*.* Readers' letters and editorials in the Yiddish radical press were also highly performative. One letter to the editor of *Di tsukunft* describes how it was read communally:

> "Di tsukunft" is the only ray of light in our lives. We gather in a hall evenings and somebody reads the learned articles aloud and then we discuss them. The effect which "Di tsukunft" has had on us is indescribable. Finally, we [workers] have the possibility to partake in forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge.[377]

Svetshop poetry was thus embedded, through the acculturating press, into immigrants' daily social spaces. This sociological role for literature was described by the Yiddish critic B. Rivkin: "They sought in literature the same thing they wanted in a newspaper: a way of becoming somewhat less of a 'greenhorn'… They began to search out the 'literary evening' which offered poetry readings and storytelling and would soon become a major folk institution. And then the newspaper brought the 'literary evening' directly into their homes.[378]" Shachar Pinsker's descriptions of the literary cafes of East European Modernists

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[374] See also Michels, "Speaking to Moyshe: The Early Yiddish Socialist Press and Its Readers," *Jewish History* 14: 51–82, 2000.

p24.

[375] See discussion of comradeship as social practice in the Introduction.

[376] For an analysis of anarchist rhetoric of martyrdom, see Karen Rosenberg, "The Cult of Self-Sacrifice in Yiddish Anarchism and Saul Yanovsky's *First Years of Jewish Libertarian Socialism*," in *Yiddish and the Left: Papers of the Third Mendel Friedman International Conference on Yiddish.*

[377] Cited in Michels, "Speaking to 'Moyshe': The Early Socialist Yiddish Press and Its Readers," 14.

[378] Introduction to the *Penguin Book of Modern Yiddish Poetry,* 24.

as a "thirdspace" where Jewish writers articulated a social identity also applies to the cafes and houseparties of the Proletarian poets in New York City. Pinsker writes:

> Thirdspace is important to a study of the cafe in modernism/modernity, especially to my exploration of Jewish modernism. First, it provides epistemological starting point for developing a mobile methodology that is spatially, culturally, and historically aware. Second, the literary cafe is a thirdspace in which the theoretical, the historical, and textual meet and constantly intersect without an attempt to demarcate them. And third, it functions as a geographical metaphor: the modernist cafe is a thirdspace located at the thresholds and the slippery border-zone between the "public" and the "private," the "inside" and the "outside," the "real" and "imagined," the "immigrant" and the "native," artistic avant-garde and mass consumption… The cafe can be and has been a site of the enunciation of identity, lived experience, and contested meanings.[379]

Pinsker's study of the social role of the cafe, though focused on the Modernists, also describes the role of New York cafes and "literary evenings" organized for the pre-Modernist *svetshop* poets. While further research on the socio-poetics of the New York Yiddish cafe scene remains to be done, the Proletarian poets did perform and declaim their work in spaces substituting the *shabbos tish* (sabbath table) as "sites where identity is enunciated." Set apart from the workweek, communal, and usually held on Friday nights, it has been noted that the speeches and literary discussions organized by the Yiddish anarchists fulfilled the form (but not the content) of Jewish ritual.[380]

Edelshtat and Bovshover were hailed by prominent anarchist writers, journalists and historians, as in Emma Goldman's reflections on the importance of such evening gatherings: "Among the frequenters were some very able young men whose names were well known in the New York ghetto; among others, Dovid Edelshtat, a fine idealistic nature, a spiritual petrel whose songs of revolt were beloved by every Yiddish-speaking radical. Then there was Bovshover… a high-strung and impulsive man of exceptional poetic gifts."[381] Yosef Cohen, the historian and editor of *Fraye Arbeter Shtime,* also attests to the wide reach of the *svetshop* poets and translations into Yiddish from European anarchists:

> Our movement played a preeminent role in the development of the Jewish labor movement and the cultural, educational and social life of the Jewish immigrant communities, not only in this country but also in the wide world wherever circumstances had cast our Jewish wanderers… We have sent our newspapers, our journals, our books, our pamphlets, the inspired songs of struggle by Edelshtat and Bovshover everywhere. Where have the crystal-

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[379] Pinsker, p434.

[380] See, for example, Avrich, *Anarchist Voices,* 89. Kropotkin's meetings at the home of Hillel Solatoraff planned for shabbat. The back pages of FAS also record the dates of individual lectures, typically scheduled on Friday evenings.

[381] Goldman, p55.

> clear words of Peter Kropotkin translated into our own mother tongue not reached![382]

Because of their remarkable social and participatory function, most literary historiography casts Proletarian poetry as primarily of documentary interest, framing their songs as an archive of immigrant life. In the *Penguin Book of Modern Yiddish Poetry,* editors Ruth Wisse, Irving Howe and Khone Shmeruk explain their decision to include little work from the *svetshop* poets:

> When translated into another language, these poems are likely to seem little more than propagandistic and sentimental — which is why we have chosen not to include most of the sweatshop poets in this anthology. But if read in their own language and with a sense of historical context, some of these poems can still be quite moving. They are not the manufactured agitprop verses of the kind that appeared in the 1930s; they are genuine expressions of the folk.[383]

Positioning the *svetshop* poets as part of labor history, rather than literary history, elides their contributions to the collective consciousness of later Yiddish writers. The Penguin anthology editors present *svetshop* writing as primarily of sociological interest:

> In their calls to social activism, often set to stirring music and sung by thousands of Yiddish-speaking immigrant workers, and in their poignant evocations of the misery, waste, and loneliness of the early immigrant generations in America, these poets played an important part in the social history of American Jews. If only because they wrote verses that appeared in the Yiddish press and periodicals, they also played an important role in the history of Yiddish literature. In the main, they were not middle-class ideologues speaking for or to the masses; they had arisen organically out of Jewish working-class life, sharing its ordeals, hopes, and limitations. If ever there have been genuine proletarian writers, it was these poets—especially figures like Dovid Edelshtat and Morris Rosenfeld.[384]

In naming and valuing their proletarian "authenticity" (defined contra Soviet communist artists, it may be insinuated), however, we might ask what separates their class identity from that of any other poor, "amateur" or autodidactic Yiddish writer?[385] What are the implications of reading *svetshop* poetry as working-class literature, but not the modernist

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[382] *Geshikhte fun di yidishe anarkhistishe bavegungin di faraynikte shtotn.* Translation from the Esther Dolgoff manuscript, p13.

[383] Ibid.

[384] Introduction to the *Penguin Book of Modern Yiddish Poetry,* 23.

[385] There has been much recent attention to this question. A panel at the 2015 ACLA, "Amateur Theories," addressed "the figure of the amateur… as a peculiar agent of cultural production," in contrast to the "professionalization and legislation of different spheres of productivity and creativity." The political question of how literary historians construct the "amateur" writer deserves further study. See http://www.acla.org/amateur-theories-0

poets, whose material circumstances did not necessarily differ? Edelshtat, for example, refused payment for his work as an editor at *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, which led to his living in poverty and fatally contracting tuberculosis at age twenty-six. Although Edelshtat's commercial purity was celebrated by many, including Yiddish anarchist poet and editor Yosef Luden, his and others' refusal of professionalization was at times an ideological choice.[386] Placing primary value, then, on their "authenticity" as workers may elide some of their own decisions on how to dis/engage with labor and the market for popular writing. In interpreting the shortcomings and formulaic aspects of Yiddish texts as illustrative of the oppressions they describe, Howe, Shmeruk and Wisse's framing parallels Cynthia Ozick's view of the literary value of *tkhines* (women's supplicatory prayers), which she likens to the chants of a bird in a steel cage in the middle of the desert.[387] Here, the steel cage is class, not gender.

How the Proletarian poets are anthologized—as activists, writers, or folk artists—reveals a great deal about editors' political orientation. What would a literary historiography of Proletarian poets look like if it balanced the social aspect with their poetic choices, and took their working-class audience seriously as readers? In a recent article on his lifelong re-readings of Bartolomeo Vanzetti's memoir *The Story of a Proletarian Life,* anarchist historian Barry Pateman reflects on the significance of canonical literature in English miners' lives in connection with own Vanzetti's life and auto-didacticism:

> [T]heir intellectual life could be described as messy and contradictory… Proscribed by what they could find in libraries, afford to buy, or could borrow from friends, they became autonomous learners in charge of their own education. They always recognized the 'literary canon' and had, sometimes, a rather exaggerated respect for it. That said they brought their own frame of reference to the classics. I can remember sitting in a pub listening to two old miners tell me that Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* was a radical novel because they read it as an exercise in solidarity and anti-racism. Others felt the same about those awful novels of the English public school… It was like that for Vanzetti.[388]

Pateman's readings remind us that these poems existed and were interpreted through workers' social lives, creating kinship between readers. If, as Lawrence Venuti writes, "a translation projects a utopian community that is not yet realized," then minor literature's readership is a community already realized.[389] Pateman reflects:

> In some cases it was working class and "uneducated" writers striving to find the right words to describe the elation and possibilities that were inherent in the struggle for the attainment of anarchy. If anarchy was to be new and original and startlingly wonderful what words could they find to express

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[386] See Luden's poem "Dovid Edelshtat," *Gezamlte lider,* 16.

[387] Ozick, "Notes Toward Finding the Right Question," 129-130.

[388] Pateman, "'Nameless in the crowd of nameless ones…" Some Thoughts on *The Story of a Proletarian Life,* by Bartolomeo Vanzetti," *Kate Sharpley Library Bulletin,* No. 81, February 2015.

[389] Venuti, "Translation, Community, Utopia," *Translation Studies Reader,* 485.

> these hopes, dreams, and potential possibilities? Inevitably they drew on their experiences with what we might call the literary canon and, as a result, their writings are often awkward, ungainly, hyperbolic and hauntingly beautiful, often all at the same time.[390]

I suggest approaching the *svetshop* poets neither as purely of historical interest based on their "authenticity," as in Shmeruk, Howe and Wisse's formulation; nor necessarily in comparison to avant-garde anarchist writers, positioning pre-modernist "workers' literature" as itself a servant to later writing. Rather, we might consider their work as Yiddish interpretations of the conventions and aspirations of English Romantic poetry, Russian ballads, and Walt Whitman's work. Their more conservative forms may seem to undermine the message of individual freedom and the right to expression, yet as Kathy E. Ferguson writes, "Romanticism gave subversive names to some of the things that went without saying among the genteel moralists. It offered a joyous celebration of life and eros, an impudence towards authority, and a spiritual validation of the common person […]."[391] As in Pateman's story of striking miners claiming *Ivanhoe* as "an exercise in solidarity and anti-racism," this generation of Yiddish anarchists created a vibrant body of poetry that lived in public through newspapers, songs, declamation, and memorization.

Lunch Poems: Temporality in Proletarian Poetry

Svetshop poetry bursts with messianic and utopian futurity. Zohar Weiman-Kelman defines the term: "By 'futurity' I do not mean the progression of time towards the future, but rather, I am referring to a current emphasis on the value of the future, with a particular set of dictates and goals to be fulfilled in the service of this future to come. If the future is what comes, futurity is what I call the present orientation towards that future."[392] Orienting themselves towards a future without hierarchy gave order to struggles of the present; it located them in a long line marching towards a workers' redemption. This rhetoric of the future was certainly influenced by both political and religious Jewish messianism, which speaks of deferred redemption for individual and nation.[393] But unlike that absolute resolution of time, the *svetshop* poets' futurity is closer to the "queer futurity" described as a continued state of being by José Esteban Muñoz: "The queer futurity that I am describing is not an end but an opening or horizon… It is a being in, toward, and for futurity."[394] The memorization and collective performance of these songs embodied their "being in, toward, and for futurity."

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[390] Pateman, 3.

[391] Ferguson, 747.

[392] Weiman-Kelman, *"So the Kids Won't Understand": Inherited Futures of Jewish Women Writers,* 2-3.

[393] See, for example, introduction in *Time and Eternity in Jewish Mysticism: That Which is Before and That Which is After,* ed. Brian Ogren, 2015.

[394] Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity,* 91

The anti-capitalist futurity of *svetshop* poetry was epitomized in Morris Rosenfeld's "*Vi lang nokh?"* (How Much Longer?) and Dovid Edelshtat's "*Dos iz anarkhi*" (That is Anarchy). Morris Winchevsky's *"Di tsukunft"* (The Future) foretells the transformed sociality of the future: the mourner will become a singer, all will become brothers, and "truth will grow dearer, / dearer like a friend" (*un in ir vorhayt tayer, tayer vi a fraynd"*). This messianic verse echoes Isaiah 61:2 on the restoration of ruined cities, when mourners will be comforted and captives will be freed. Winchevsky foretells that "love will grow greater, hatred smaller / between women, between men, between nation and nation," ending with the total dissolution of hierarchy: "*Un es vet nit zayn a mayster / Nit di kroyn un nit di tayster / Nit dem zelners shverd" ("*And there will be no masters / no crown, no purse / no soldier's sword").[395] This verse, with its straightforward rhymes and propulsive melody, substitutes symbolic objects for the human identities: he doesn't say there will be no masters, kings, rich men and soldiers, as in the Internationale, but negates their material symbols of crown, wallet, sword. Using metonymic objects tempers the rhetoric, as evident when compared to S. An-sky's translation of the Internationale, which declares there will be no rich man and no king. An-Sky's version draws on Jewish traditional imagery from *gan-edn* (the Garden of Eden) to Hillel's famous question, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?" The better known Yiddish version of the Internationale prophesies a "final and decisive battle" in which workers will tear down and rebuild the world.[396] Winchevsky recasts the Peaceable Kingdom as a workers' paradise, imagining beyond strife, rather than the Internationale's absolute martial achievement.

Winchevsky's expansive vision of a future without class divisions is shared by Edelshtat's "*Dos iz anarkhi*" (That is Anarchy), in which he idealizes a future where "freedom will bring fortune for all, the weak and strong, the 'he' and the 'she.'" Edelshtat's *"In kamf*" (In Struggle) begins with a cumulation of oppressions suffered and stretches to fighters of the future, who will redeem the oppressions of the present. The "we" is not identified by a political label, only as those who help the poor. The poem ends with a declaration of indomitable struggle: "*Ir kent undz dermordn tiranen / naye kemfer vet brengen di tsayt. / Un mir kemfn mir kemfn biz vanen / di gantse velt vet vern bafrayt."* In a recent recording, the Berlin-based klezmer punk band Dan Kahn and the Painted Bird translate the verse thus: "You tyrants may murder or beat us / New fighters will rise in their place / And we'll fight and you'll never defeat us / We fight for the whole human race."[397] The future is imagined as an extension of the present; the descendants are not children, but fighters who will fulfill the imagination of those singing today. Although this poem does not echo the Bible in Winchevsky's mode, Edelshtat's other elegies mobilize religious imagery. In "Louis Lingg," an elegy to the German immigrant and anarchist who died by suicide in jail after the Haymarket Square bombing, Edelshtat describes Lingg's "exquisitely beautiful face" (*vundersheynem gezikht)* upon which rests "freedom's holy Shekhinah" (*frayhayts helige shkhine*).

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[395] Adrienne Cooper's stirring recording may be heard at http://archives.savethemusic.com/bin/archives.cgi?q=songs&search=title&id=Di+Tsukunft

[396] From the songbook "Unzer Vort," Kh. Bezprozvani and Z. Yefroykin, Maks N. Maisel Farlag, N.Y., 1933, 200.

[397] Dan Kahn and the Painted Bird, "*In kamf,"* on the album *Lost Causes* (2011).

Rosenfeld's poem "The Sweatshop" is a stirring representation of the loss of self and alienation through wage labor. "The Sweatshop" is structured as a schedule of the working day. The poetic speaker begins with the loss of self and subordination into alienated labor: "The machines in the shop roar and shriek out of tune, / I forgot who I am in the noisy routine… / My self melts away, I become a machine."[398] *Mayn ikh vert dort botl, ikh ver a mashin:* literally, "My self become null and void, I become a machine." Rosenfeld uses the less common, *loshn-koydesh* word *botl*, a halakhic legal terms which amplifies the particularity of selfhood in contrast to the repetitive sounds of the machines, mimicked by vocabulary from the germanic component of the language. The speaker's sense of self wanes as meaningful time is erased: "The seconds, the minutes, the hours streak by, / Like sails disappear all the nights and the days…" The object of the clock becomes anthropomorphized as a boss:

> And often when I hear the tick of the clock,
> I see all at once through its pointing, its tongue;—
> I feel that the pendulum prods me go on,
> To work and to work, even more, fast and long!
> I hear in its tone all the boss's wild anger,
> His dark, gloomy look in the pointers that show;—
> I fear that, relentless, the clock drives me on
> And calls to me: "Machine!"
> And screams to me: "Sew!"[399]

This passage exemplifies how the romantic insistence on the lyrical "I" acts as a stylistic counterpoint to the erasure of self described thematically. The speaker describes their body phenomenologically, beginning with the loss of sensation and attendant loss of self; at noon, when "the master goes off for his lunch," feeling returns to the work-numbed limbs, and the speaker begins to weep. The workroom, now empty, appears as a battleground. In their hour of freedom "the dead come to life"—a strongly messianic phrase, evoking religious visions of the World to Come, when all will be resurrected. For three verses, the speaker is filled with a visceral need to fight. The clock now rouses him, urges him to rebel, and returns to him feeling and thought, the hours like "a stream with no dam." Time itself is liberated and flows beyond the clock's regulation, the lunch hour becoming an "island in time," mobilizing religious metaphor. But just as the speaker begins to awaken from a stupor of selflessness, the alarm sounds to mark the end of lunch and the boss' return. The felt sense of liberation from time subsides: "I forget who I am in this deafening scene— / I'm losing my reason, I'm losing my self— / I don't know, I don't mind, for I am a machine…" Rosenfeld captures the ebb and flow of the felt self over the course of the work day; this is no less "individualistic" for vividly illustrating the erasure of self, identity and bodily autonomy. In his 1923 memoir *The Story of a Proletarian Life,* Vanzetti writes, "I know that only in liberty can man rise, become noble, and complete." This individualism, expressed through the insistent first person voice, posits that liberty, impossible in the sweatshops, is a prerequisite for the development of identity. In the same

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[398] Harshav and Harshav translation, *Sing, Stranger,* 21.

[399] Ibid.

way, Rosenfeld's speaker, addressed not by any human boss but by the metonymic object of a clock, cannot achieve the horizon of being within capitalism's temporal regulation.

Rosenfeld's poem about miners, "*Shist di bestye"* (Shoot the Beast), takes his theme of oppressive temporality even further.[400] The poem, sardonically addressing someone (perhaps the Pinkertons) to open fire upon miners, is to be read against itself. The speaker casts miners, who spent their days in mineshafts, as subhuman because they live in darkness. Living outside of normative temporal schemas through the demands of their work, the miners are othered as animalistic and fearless:

> …What does a miner care for night?
> Will light console him here, perhaps?
> A man who lies in a black shaft
> And hears the mountains all collapse.
> A miner's not afraid of death!
> Oh, load your gun, and fire away!
> His place is deep below, he should
> Not bother us in light of day…[401]

Zayn ort iz untn, zol er geyn / un nit fardreyen do a kop: His place is down below, where he ought to go / and not vex us. The appearance of the miner above ground, "here," in the space of the managers, confuses: if the world was created through separation into above and below, the presence "above" of those who belong underneath troubles that order. The idiomatic expression *fardreyen a kop,* to bother or baffle someone, literally means "to twist and turn one's head," as in refusing to see or acknowledge. For the miner to appear during daylight transgresses "natural" time, literally upending the order of the above and the below.

The eruption of radical futurity into the present, such a hallmark of *svetshop* poetry, ran through the common speech of Yiddish anarchists. The final sequence of the documentary *Free Voice of Labor: The Jewish Anarchists* synthesizes the Romanticism and utopian temporality of Rosenfeld and Edelshtat. As a narrator reads Edelshtat's "*Dos iz anarkhi*" in voiceover, veteran organizer Irving Abrams—comrade of Big Bill Haywood, a founder of the IWW (the "Wobblies")—leans against the tombstone of August Spies and declaims his philosophy:

> Tie yourself to a star and sail with it. Every person must have a star, an ideal, to which he clings. The ideal may not be realized today, or tomorrow, but you must have an ideal which will carry you forward in life… there are people, foolish like myself and many others, who feel like this injustice can be done away with, that people can be educated. We must in our soul believe that justice must prevail. We must have that concept that we will carry on, little by little.[402]

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[400] Rosenfeld, *Gezamlte lider,* 58-59.

[401] Harshav and Harshav, *Sing, Stranger,* 32.

[402] *Free Voice of Labor* documentary. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAUgK4e8Q-Q

Abrams' manner of speaking hews closely to the rhetoric of the *svetshop* poets, with their propulsive ideals, starry metaphors and utopian futurism. The film thus closes with the image of an elderly anarchist alone in a cemetery, fervently expressing his utopian futurity with a Yiddish accent.

Poetry of the Needle

The needle is the paradigmatic metonymic object of *svetshop* poetry, alluding to proverbs, fables, and scripture. The needle has been associated with humility in Jewish and Christian religious text, from the Babylonian Talmud to Matthew 19:23, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."[403] The image of the needle and the representation of temporality in verse are linked: the staccato of an electric sewing machine marks time like the ticking of a clock. The repetition of a single gesture over long hours of work makes the movement of the worker an extension of the machine's automation. In Morris Rosenfeld's *"*To My Beloved," the gestures of labor include shaking with fear: "Here rules the struggle harsh for bread, / And I must tremble when I sew."[404]

The needle was featured as a central metaphoric object in the fables of Bessarabian writer Eliezer Shteynbarg (1880-1930). Although not affiliated with the New York Proletarian poets, Shteynbarg's work achieved mass popularity, and his trademark usage of satirical tales may have influenced Edelshtat, who wrote animal parable-editorials for *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* parodying his political arguments and enemies. Curt Leviant notes that Shteynbarg's fables "focus on deceptively mundane objects, animals, or people whose interactions are then elevated by Shteynbarg's moral concerns into spiritual encounters. In 'The Bayonet and the Needle'… Shteynbarg makes the tiny and innocent needle the symbol of tenderness, peace, and creativity, while the big, boorish bayonet is obviously emblematic of violence and war."[405] In "The Needle and the Thread," a conversation between cotton and needle becomes a parable of power:

> "Mr. Needle, you have an eye to see, so look," the cotton said.
> "What am I? Just a simple little thread.
> But you, you're made of steel and iron, and you have a pointy metal head.
> You're important, but here's a fact which is —
> It's thanks to me, the thread, it's *I* who hold the stitches."[406]

Yitskhok Niborski notes, "In a confrontation between a dagger and a needle ("*Di shpiz un di nodl*" [The Sword and the Needle]), the needle has the last word, but it is not in order to exalt the peaceable worker over the bloodthirsty warrior, but rather to draw the pessimistic conclusion that pricking people is ridiculous because one cannot sew anything

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[403] References to an elephant or camel passing through the eye of a needle appear in B. T. Berakhot 55b, Baba Metzia 38b, and elsewhere.

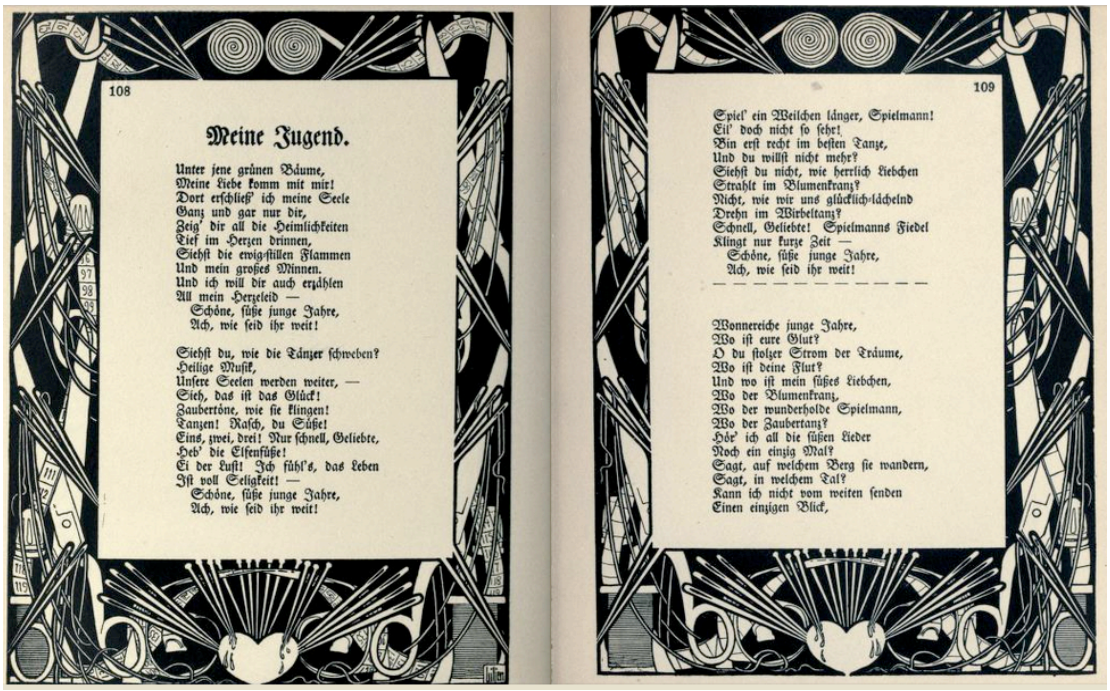
[404] *Sing Stranger,* 27.

[405] Introduction, *The Jewish Book of Fables: Selected Works,* xiii.

[406] *Jewish Book of Parables,* 113.

from them.[407] In this way, the reader realizes that, as Shmuel Niger wrote, Shteynbarg's parable is "a fable for intellectually aware adults, not for children; for the intelligentsia, not for the simple folk."[408] Shteynbarg's image of the needle is not stable: in one fable, the needle is shown up by the clever thread, while in another, the needle speaks truth to power as embodied by the dagger.

The needle became a trademark leitmotif in the visual art associated with the *svetshop* poets, which was highly mobile across countries, movements and languages. Rosenfeld's poetry was beloved in translation: a 1903 German edition of Rosenfeld's *Songs of the Ghetto* featured illustrations by Ephraim Moses Lilien (1874-1925), a Zionist artist known for combining images of ancient Israelites with German Art Nouveau (*Jugendstil).*[409] Lilien wreathes Berthold Feiwel's German translation with a garland of measuring tapes, scissors, and thread. In the bottom center of the composition, a pincushion is formed from a heart, bleeding from the needles penetrating it. The needle becomes a decorative element, and the threads arching down from the needles frame the poem with sinuous Art Nouveau lines. On the facing page is Lilien's most famous illustration of a jewel-draped capitalist who, like an Aubrey Beardsley vampire, sucks the blood of a humbly dressed, hunched-over tailor.



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Meine Jugend.

Unter jene grünen Bäume,
Meine Liebe komm mit mir!
Dort erschließ' ich meine Seele
Ganz und gar nur dir,
Zeig' dir all die Heimlichkeiten
Tief im Herzen drinnen,
Siehst die ewig-stillen Flammen
Und mein großes Minnen.
Und ich will dir auch erzählen
All mein Herzeleid —
Schöne, süße junge Jahre,
Ach, wie seid ihr weit!

Siehst du, wie die Tänzer schweben?
Heilige Musik,
Unsere Seelen werden weiter, —
Sieh, das ist das Glück!
Zaubertöne, wie sie klingen!
Tanzen! Rasch, du Süße!
Eins, zwei, drei! Nur schnell, Geliebte,
Heb' die Elfenfüße!
Ei der Lust! Ich fühl's, das Leben
Ist voll Seligkeit! —
Schöne, süße junge Jahre,
Ach, wie seid ihr weit!

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Spiel' ein Weilchen länger, Spielmann!
Eil' doch nicht so sehr!
Bin erst recht im besten Tanze,
Und du willst nicht mehr?
Siehst du nicht, wie herrlich Liebchen
Strahlt im Blumenkranz?
Nicht, wie wir uns glücklich-lächelnd
Drehn im Wirbeltanz?
Schnell, Geliebte! Spielmanns Fiedel
Klingt nur kurze Zeit —
Schöne, süße junge Jahre,
Ach, wie seid ihr weit!

Wonnereiche junge Jahre,
Wo ist eure Glut?
O du stolzer Strom der Träume,
Wo ist deine Flut?
Und wo ist mein süßes Liebchen,
Wo der Blumenkranz,
Wo der wunderholde Spielmann,
Wo der Zaubertanz?
Hör' ich all die süßen Lieder
Noch ein einzig Mal?
Sagt, auf welchem Berg sie wandern,
Sagt, in welchem Tal?
Kann ich nicht vom weiten senden
Einen einzigen Blick,

Illustrations by E. M. Lilien in Lieder des Ghetto.[410]

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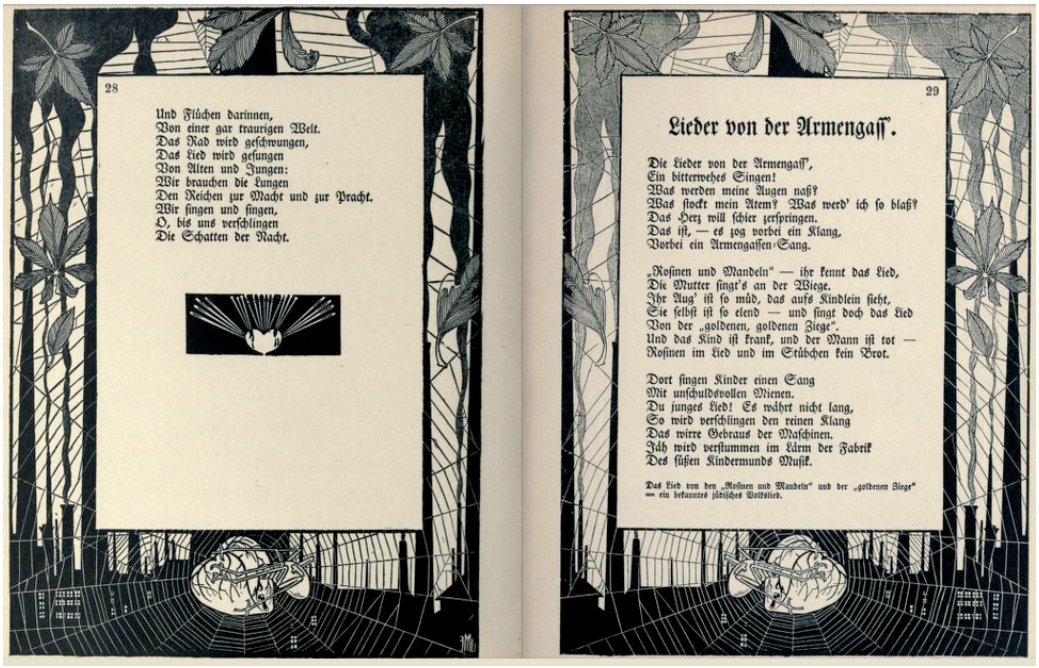
[407] YIVO Encyclopedia, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Shteynbarg_Eliezer

[408] Niger, *Yidishe shrayber fun tsvantsikstn yorhundert*. New York, 1973, 222.

[409] See Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (University of California Press, 2001).

[410] Morris Rosenfeld (1862-1923) and translator Berthold Feiwel (1875-1937). *Lieder des Ghetto* (Berlin: Hermann Seemann), pp. 32-3.



28

Und Flüchen darinnen,
Von einer gar traurigen Welt.
Das Rad wird geschwungen,
Das Lied wird gesungen
Von Alten und Jungen:
Wir brauchen die Lungen
Den Reichen zur Macht und zur Pracht.
Wir singen und singen,
O, bis uns verschlingen
Die Schatten der Nacht.

29

Lieder von der Armengaß'.

Die Lieder von der Armengaß',
Ein bitterwehes Singen!
Was werden meine Augen naß?
Was stockt mein Atem? Was werd' ich so blaß?
Das Herz will schier zerspringen.
Das ist, — es zog vorbei ein Klang,
Vorbei ein Armengassen-Sang.

„Rosinen und Mandeln" — ihr kennt das Lied,
Die Mutter singt's an der Wiege.
Ihr Aug' ist so müd, das aufs Kindlein sieht,
Sie selbst ist so elend — und singt doch das Lied
Von der „goldenen, goldenen Ziege".
Und das Kind ist krank, und der Mann ist tot —
Rosinen im Lied und im Stübchen kein Brot.

Dort singen Kinder einen Sang
Mit unschuldsvollen Mienen.
Du junges Lied! Es währt nicht lang,
So wird verschlingen den reinen Klang
Das wirre Gebraus der Maschinen.
Jäh wird verstummen im Lärm der Fabrik
Des süßen Kindermunds Musik.

Das Lied von den „Rosinen und Mandeln" und der „goldenen Ziege" — ein bekanntes jüdisches Volkslied.

The theme of the heart pierced by needles is carried through as a central element in Lilien's illustration. The spider feasts on the heart of the worker, weaving a web that forms a veil over the city. The elegance of Lilien's line may seem incongruous with the misery Rosenfeld describes, or it may be read as ennobling the experience of the sweatshop worker. Lilien's illustrations became indelibly associated with Rosenfeld's poetry. In his later period, Rosenfeld abandoned the simplicity and optimism of his early contributions. Marc Miller's *Representing the Immigrant Experience: Morris Rosenfeld and the Emergence of Yiddish Literature in America* (2007) argues for the complexity of Rosenfeld's work post-Proletarian period, when he turned away from the propagandistic fervor of his earliest pieces.

The Genre of Sacco and Vanzetti Poems

In 1920, the Italian immigrant anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were tried and convicted for the murders of two payroll guards shot during a robbery in South Braintree, Massachusetts. The case unfolded in a time of prejudice against southern and eastern European immigrants, as well as fear of anarchism and communism in the U.S. Another man with connections to organized crime, Celestino Madeiros, later confessed to the two murders — but all seven of Sacco and Vanzetti's appeals were rejected by Judge Webster Thayer, who sentenced them to death after seven years in prison. The governor of Massachusetts, who had the power to commute the sentence at any time, also rejected their pleas. A worldwide response followed their executions in 1927: Latin America saw mass walkouts; movie theaters showing Hollywood films were ransacked in Geneva; and in Paris,

tanks protected the U.S. embassy from mobs.[411] The IWW called for a strike, setting off the major Colorado coal strikes. Many feared that the Sacco-Vanzetti execution would trigger international revolution.

Sacco and Vanzetti's own literary output was prolific, and their courtroom statements, letters, and memoirs were widely disseminated and republished. Their letters to their sons were put to music by Woody Guthrie and, later, Pete Seeger, in one of the earliest concept albums ever recorded.[412] Their case became a literary cause célèbre: at least 144 English poems were published, by such writers as William Carlos Williams and Edna St Vincent Millay, a few in German, and one French novel.[413] Perhaps surprisingly, there was no real Italian-language literary response. In the United States, high-profile writers such as Dorothy Parker were arrested demonstrating for their retrial. In 1927, Henry Harrison edited the 32-page *Sacco-Vanzetti Anthology of Verse,* which featured poems by Ralph Cheyney, Siegfried Sassoon, and Louis Ginsberg, the father of Allen Ginsberg, who himself wrote in the mid-1950s: "America Sacco & Vanzetti must not die."[414] A second poetry anthology, *America Arraigned!,* appeared in 1928.

Like their English-language counterparts William Carlos Williams and Edna St Vincent Millay, Yiddish poets were quite prolific on the subject of Sacco-Vanzetti. Yiddish poems responding to the court case appeared in the Communist *Proletpen* as well as the *In-zikh* journal, by N.B. Minkov, Ahrne Glantz Leyeles, Moyshe-Leyb Halpern, Yankev Glatshteyn, and others. Upton Sinclair's *Boston: A Documentary Novel* was translated as *Boston: di tragedye fun Sacco un Vanzetti* in 1930 in Warsaw, and Howard Fast's *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti: A New England Legend* was translated into Hebrew in 1921. In Buenos Aires, Nechemias Zucker published *In nomen fun gerekhtikayt: tragedye in dray aktn (En Nombre de la Justicia,* 1935) and Melekh Epshtayn's *Sacco-Vanzetti: di geshikhte fun zeyer martirertum* (1927). Nathan Asch, son of Yiddish writer Sholem Asch, wrote *Pay Day* (1930), a compact, plotless novel set on the night of Sacco and Vanzetti's execution.[415]

English-language protest poems generally portrayed the executions as a pivotal moment *disrupting* the stream of American democracy—a loss of innocence. Edna St Vincent Millay's "Justice Denied in Massachusetts" describes America as a once-fertile landscape, scarred by the verdict: "Shall the larkspur blossom or the corn grow under this cloud? / . . . we have marched upon but cannot conquer; / We have bent the blades of our hoes against the stalks of them." On the picket line Millay carried this sign: "If these men are executed, justice is dead in Massachusetts," a phrase mourning the loss of American exceptionalism. Unlike these portrayals of Sacco-Vanzetti's execution as a rupture of history, Sacco-Vanzetti poems in Yiddish reveal a very different orientation: they focus on the seven years in prison, rather than the execution; they address the Italians as fellow immigrants, not betrayed citizens; and they position the case within a continuous diasporic present haunted by past injustice. Furthermore, although these poems were written by Modernists of the 1920s, they reinvent the tropes, temporal schemas, and imagery of

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[411] Watson, 347.

[412] Niccola Sacco's letter to his son, 1927. Put to music by Pete Seeger, 1951, commissioned by Moses Asch.

[413] Finkin, 47.

[414] Ginsberg, "America," written in 1956. Poem appeared in *Howl and Other Poems.*

[415] See *The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism,* 43.

anarchist writers of the 1890s, suggesting a broader and more sustained encounter between anarchism and Modernism than is often granted in literary historiography. Temporality in the Yiddish poems also reflects the emphasis of anarchist historians, such as in Yosef Cohen's massive history of American anarchism, which emphasizes the prison sentence: "Seven years of torture, how can one forget this?"[416]

Glatshteyn's "*Sako un vanzetis montik*" ("Sacco and Vanzetti's Monday")

Glatshteyn's "*Sako un vanzetis montik*" ("Sacco and Vanzetti's Monday") was published in 1929, two years after the execution, when Glatshteyn was thirty-three—the same age as Vanzetti at his death.[417] At about two hundred and seventy lines long, divided into four sections and a prologue, it's an expansive work. The title of the poem, "Sacco and Vanzetti's Monday," establishes its unusual temporality. Is this the Monday before their execution? The title sets it in mundane, expectant time during their prison sentence: neither the day of the execution (a Saturday), nor the day before or after. In the opening verse, blue dawn fog wraps a city (unmarked as Boston). The city is returning to rhythms of mass industry, as people emerge from the privacy of the weekend into collective working life: "everyone solitary while together, / everyone together while solitary, / tens hundreds thousands millions— / millions walking, walking, walking / (solitary while together) /[. . .] gates shut and sealed like coffins, / deafened are the ears of the city. / Nothing, nothing will happen."[418] Glatshteyn's first lines echo the first line of Vanzetti's 1924 memoir, *Story of a Proletarian Life*: "Nameless, in the crowd of nameless ones, I have merely caught and reflected a little of the light from that dynamic thought or ideal which is drawing humanity towards better destinies."[419] Vanzetti introduces himself as apiece with the masses, coming into being as mere refraction of "the Ideal." This first verse draws from archetypal images of Labor poetry, such as Bovshover's image of the city as teeming factory.[420] Glatshteyn here echoes Bovshover's cumulative structure in "A Song to the People," which describes factory work through the precise accumulation of repetitive gesture, mimicking the repetition of labor itself: "…The mute ordinary (*der shtumer geveynlekh*) knocks swiftly and in haste in every gate, / in the houses alarm clocks are ringing, / coffee grumbling in blackened pots, / fresh rolls waiting. / A heavy cover of holiness winds above the city, / Is it the train of Sunday's dress, or a dream clinging / To the city's marrow? / Was there something or will something happen?" Translator Larry Rosenwald writes, "[Glatshteyn] is

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[416] *Di yidish-anarkhistishe bavegung in amerike (The Yiddish Anarchist Movement in America),* 1945, p533.

[417] Glatshteyn, *Kredos* (1929)

[418] Yankev Glatshteyn, "Sacco and Vanzetti's Monday." Translated by Lawrence Rosenwald. *In geveb* (May 2016). Accessed Aug 10, 2016.

[419] Vanzetti, *Story of a Proletarian Life,* 1923. http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/SaccoVan/VanzettiProletarian/Pages/9.html

[420] In Bovshover's "A Song to the People," for example, factory walls rise higher but there is neither inside nor outside: "Lift up your eyes and see the factory walls that grow, / Where workers saw and plane and weave and knit and sew, / And forge and file and carve and chisel and sand and brace, / And create wares and create riches for the human race." *Sing, Stranger,* 72.

more interested in the relation between the two prisoners' calendar and the regular calendar of the week than he is in either by itself… We might sum up that exquisite balance [of *chronos* and *kairos*] by looking at an apparently simple line: *di frishe zeml vartn*, 'the fresh rolls are waiting.' What are they waiting for? On the one hand they wait to be picked up, brought inside, buttered, and eaten; they await their ordinary fate. But they and the other beings and objects in the scene are also waiting for something extraordinary to happen, some unique event in the non-cyclical story of Sacco and Vanzetti.*"*[421]

Glatshteyn alternates between biblical intertextuality and mock-epic register: "A heavy cover of holiness winds over the city, / Is it the train of Sunday's dress, or a dream sleepily clinging / To the city's marrow?" *("Iber der shtot viklt zikh a shvere hil fun heylikayt, / Iz es nokh di shlep fun zuntik, oder a kholem vos klept zikh / Tsum farshlofenem markh fun der shtot?")* The specter of a divine presence covering the city is feminized: here it is not the Shkhine hovering over the city, but "the train of Sunday's dress." Rather than *havdole*, the ritual marking sabbath's departure, the workers feel Sunday's dress sweep past as the work-week begins. The religious image is further deflated and ironized by Glatshteyn's orthography, which phoneticizes *loshn-koydesh*, severing the visual relationship between Hebrew/Aramaic and modern Yiddish. The line "Deafened are the ears of the city" has shades of Jeremiah: wailing for the destruction of Jerusalem merges with images of a fallen city and the grinding banality of state violence. The socialist Ahrne Glanz Leyeles' Sacco-Vanzetti poem also employs biblical intertextuality: "Sing me a song of that which must come. / Sing me the song of payment. / How can I sing when every night I turn on and off electric lights…"[422] Leyeles parodies a verse from Psalm 137: "Sing us a song of Zion. / How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Here it is not exile, but the American electric chair, that mutes the singer's tongue.

Glatshteyn's rhythm twists and turns back on itself, repeating the sound of *tse-* (emphasizing fracture or dispersion) and *tsu-* (together), as in the line *Klor in der tsetumlenish hot er a tsetumlter klorn gezen,* whose sounds themselves are indeed bent together*:*

Fartsvilingt hot zikh der nekhtn un der haynt
Un zikh tsuzamengevaksn un zikh tsuzamengehorbet
In ayn klorn plonter.
Klor in der tsetumlenish hot er a tsetumlter klorn gezen
Vi vaynik treyst es brengt der roz fun a fartog
Ven der tog aleyn ligt shoyn a basheydter
Fun nekhtn un fun eyernekhtn,
Ven di sho'en zaynen bloyz shvindltrep aroyf tsu yener sho fun yenem tog,
Vu er iz aleyn vi a ganef bahaltnerheyt shoyn geven
Un areyngeshtekt dort a meser.

> Twinned are yesterday and today
> and grown together and bent together

[421] Rosenwald, 4.
[422] Translation by Finkin, 56.

in a single clear tangle.[423]
Clear in disconcertion he, stunned, saw clearly[424]
how little comfort the dawn's rose pink can bring
when the day is already determined
by yesterday and the day before,
when the hours are only a spiral staircase leading up to that hour of that day,
where he himself in secret, like a thief, has already been
and has stuck in a knife

A reader would initially assume, based upon the title and mood of existential monotony, that this stunned figure is Sacco or Vanzetti awaiting execution at dawn, but this expectation is upended: "Because from yesterday till today the Governor / has paced on the bridge of a sleepless night." The governor, self-appointed "guard… of the consciences of the world," paces with a gun on his shoulders. The poem centers not Sacco and Vanzetti's suffering but the governor's dark night of the soul. Glatshteyn describes the governor's nocturnal musings with mythic invention: "Midnight. Joyous demons have danced his own thoughts around him / and laughed away, mocked away from him the fear in his eyes." This verse is reminiscent of the visitation from ghosts of history in Yosl Grinshpan's poem "Vanzetti's Ghost" (1929): as Judge Webster Thayer lies "in his palace / on his golden bed," he envisions Vanzetti as an incinerated skeleton, pacing the floorboards, bringing with him ghosts of the American past: "And behind the red Satan stands, / the Yankee Klan… and the anthem swarms with slaves."[425] In Grinshpan's poem, Thayer's own mind produces historical hauntings far before the Vanzetti case. Compare both Grinshpan and Glatshteyn's mythic temporality—where the present is penetrated by the past—to, for example, John Dos Passos' 1927 poem, where prison regulates time ("Do you know how many hours there are in a day / when a day is twenty-three hours on a cot in a cell…?").[426] In the world of Dos Passos' poem, the machinery of time within the prison has no hold upon those on the outside, and the "black automatons" are ideological stereotypes of wardens, judges, and statesmen. In contrast, Glatshteyn richly imagines the governor's haunted nights:

Di nakht iz gelegn vi ayn shtik fun shvartse tsayt,
Un nit er hot gehert vi es ankern op di minutn,
Un nit er hot gehert dem plyesk fun a gefalener sho in vaser.
Nor vi a shvere dumpike vog hot di nakht gehoyert iber im
Un farshtelt dem toyer tsu a morgn.
Vet morgn keynmol nit kumen?
(Zol morgn keynmol nit kumen)
Di fis vern mid fun hin-tsurik,
Shpan avek fun zikh,
ariber yener zeyt fun farglivertn fintster.

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[423] Rosenwald trranslates *plonter* as 'confusion,' but I think it is a more material image.
[424] I adapted Rosenwald's line, "Clear in the bewilderment did he bewildered see clearly."
[425] "Vanzetti's Ghost," *Proletpen: America's Rebel Yiddish Poets,* 77-79.
[426] John Dos Passos's "They Are Dead Now—–" appeared in the *New Masses*, October 1927.

The night lay there like a piece of black time,
and he hasn't heard how the minutes weigh anchor,
and he hasn't heard the splash of a fallen hour in the water,
but only how a heavy, musty wave hangs in the night above him
and blocks the gate to a new day.
Will tomorrow never come?
(Let tomorrow never come.)
The feet grow weary of back-and-forth,
stride away from themselves,
beyond the far side of the curdled darkness.[427]

Time is at once material and fluid, with the heaviness of an anchor and the mystery of a suspended wave. The repetitive movements of the governor, pacing back and forth in his room at midnight, recall the movements of workers walking to work on Monday morning at the opening of the poem. Everyone faces the same horizon of dread, eroding the difference between powerful and powerless.

Only in the third section of Glatshteyn's poem are Sacco and Vanzetti themselves alluded to, in a hallucinatory flight of imagery—storming the Bastille (for they were sentenced on Bastille Day), leaping flames and children rejoicing at the prisoners' liberation, history and the present unfurling simultaneously: "Someone has reshuffled the cards. / Reversed what's to come and what's been." These lines embody the spiraling of time: "Twinned are yesterday and today / and grown together and bent together." In the Yiddish, time has agency: Glatshteyn coins the word for literally "twinning themselves." In Glatshteyn's vision, Sacco and Vanzetti might experience a liberation of time, while the temporality of the state constrains the governor to live like "a prisoner in the State House" peering out of a tiny window. This inversion evokes Morris Rosenfeld's poem "The Sweatshop": set during lunch hour, an "island in time" during which the worker can imagine beyond the oppressions of the present. Similarly, the fluid temporality of Sacco and Vanzetti allow for moments of possibility not available to the governor.

This "chaotic, kaleidoscopic" mode performs the political work of undoing the stringencies of nationalist time, interrupting the notions of history espoused by the governor, who says: "the cloak of method can never be stripped away, / and revolutions happen only in history. / And history is what is taught by old grandfathers with no teeth / and it always begins with Once — once upon a time." The governor's ambivalence towards his role in history is revealed in his imagined monologue to the singing protesters calling for clemency:

Ver hot oysgezungen inmitn nakht?
Oyf der brik zitst eyner un tsitert fun kelt.
Di fis aruntergehangen in vaser,
Zitst er un zingt shtil:
Ratevet! Ratevet!
Gut. Zing biz veytok.
Shtekh mikh durkh mit dem gezang vi mit goldene shpilkes,

[427] Adapted from Rosenwald's translation.

Ober ze, hoyb oyf dem kop tsu mir un farshtey:
Ikh bin nit ersht un bin nit tsveyt un bin nit sof.
Ikh bin a flater in dem bliask fun shneln farbrikn baveg,
Ikh trog mit shrek an opgetrogenem guf,
Ver bin ikh tsu vern mer vi ikh bin?

Who sang out in the night?
Someone sits on the bridge and trembles with cold.
His feet hanging down in the water,
he quietly sits and sings:
Clemency! Clemency!
Good. Sing till you break.
Run me through with your song like a golden needle,
but look, lift your head up to me and understand:
I am not first and not second and not the end.
I am a fluttering in the brightness of quick, colorful motion,
I carry in fear a worn-out body,
who am I to be become more than I am?

Although Sacco and Vanzetti were no Gandhi, they were often portrayed as Christ-like, as in Vincent G. Burns' poem: "Cruel men, beware! The Christs you kill / Will walk in power with us still!"[428] Glatshteyn flips that trope of the alpha and omega, placing it in the mouth of the governor: "I am not the first and not the end, / before me and after me a chain of people / cynically immortalizing themselves, / fastening themselves to the neck of a world-memory / and the waters will never erode their names." Glatshteyn's sardonic, mock-epic reference to Song of Songs 8:7 is juxtaposed with Christ-like imagery of alpha and omega. This passage further Judaizes the judge, as one to whom they lift their eyes for help. The governor knows his immortality will be granted not in history books, but through the protest songs of his opponents:

Vey iz mir. Vey un vey un vey.
In mayn oyern klingen tsvey nemen
Un mit zey vet mitklingen mayn nomen.
Un du vos zingst inmitn der shverer nakht
zing mikh oykh areyn in dayn gezang,
un veb mikh oykh areyn in di fedim [fodem] fun dayn lid
Her du mikh un mayn shtim vi zi shneydt durkh di velt:
Ratevet!

Woe is me, woe and woe and woe.

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[428] Burns, "Who Are the Criminals?" http://saccoandvanzetti.org/poems/SV_Poem_01_Burns.pdf

See also *The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti,* eds. Louis Joughin, Edmund M. Morgan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

In my ears two names are sounding
and my name will resound with theirs.
And you singing amid the heavy night
sing me too into your song,
weave me too into the threads of your song
hear me and my voice as it cuts through the world:
Clemency!

Svetshop tropes of labor converge in this image of song: threads of music, weaving, and the remarkable "Run me through with your song like golden needles"[429]. *Shtekh mikh durkh mit dem gezang vi mit goldene shpilkes* transforms the humble instrument of garment workers, or perhaps the shoemaker Sacco's leather-working tool, into gold. The pin and are needle are the paradigmatic image-object of *svetshop* poetry, with intertextual echoes in proverbs, fables, and scripture. The repetition of a single gesture over long hours of work renders the movement of the worker an extension of the machine's automation: the staccato of an electric sewing machine marks time like the ticking of a clock. Morris Rosenfeld's *"*To My Beloved" represents these gestures of labor: "Here rules the struggle harsh for bread, / And I must tremble when I sew."[430] Imagery of needles is found in many popular Yiddish labor songs, such as *"Mit a nodl, on a nodl*," which emphasizes the nobility of work, combining pious traditions with labor consciousness.[431] This needle passage is among the most direct of Glatshteyn's reinventions of *svetshop* poetry. In his signature poem "The Millionaire of Tears," Morris Rosenfeld writes:

Oh not a golden tuning-fork	*O, nit keyn goldner kamerton*
Tunes up my throat to sing,	*shtimt on meyn kol tsum zingen,*
A hint from high above cannot	*es ken der vunk fun oybn on*
Raise high my voice to ring;	*mayn shtim nit makhn klingen;*
The sigh of weary slaves awakes	*dem shklaf's a krekhts ven er iz mid*
The song I make for others—	*nor vekt in mir di lider, —*
And flaming high my song revives,	*un mit a flam lebt oyf meyn lid,*
The song for my poor brothers.[432]	*Fir meyne or'me brider.*[433]

[429] Glatshteyn's imagery of needles recurs in "The Baron Tells of His Last Experience," recasting acts of labor as producing magic. Using common and familiar materials, the worker reinvents Creation: "And here I am, in the middle of a forest, / Where needle-and-thread don't grow on trees. / So I carved a needle from a thin twig, / Threaded its eye with sundust / And sewed my blue military trousers. / When night fell / The trousers served me well on the road — / The sunstitches glowed like lanterns / And the road was like a highway of diamonds." *Sing, Stranger,* 438-9.

[430] *Sing Stranger,* 27.

[431] You may listen to Ruth Rubin singing this song on the Smithsonian Folkways website: http://www.folkways.si.edu/ruth-rubin/mit-a-nodl-oh-a-nodl-with-a-needle-without-a-needle/judaica/music/track/smithsonian

[432] Translation by Harshav and Harshav, *Sing, Stranger: A Century of American Yiddish Poetry,* 20.

[433] Rosenfeld, 7.

Rosenfeld's sweatshop worker laments that "not a golden tuning-fork / tunes up my throat to sing": the speaker's creativity is circumscribed by poverty. Glatshteyn's image of "golden needles of song" is the art of proletarian singers holding the governor accountable—a tribute, perhaps, from the Modernist to the Proletarian poet.

The modernist poetic reinvention of images of domestic labor is not unique to the Yiddish context. In *Aesthetics of Anarchy: Art and Ideology in the Early Russian Avant-Garde,* Nina Gurianova notes that while Italian Futurist artists tended to ecstatically embrace images of new machinery, such as trains and airplanes, Russian modernist artists tended to depict hand tools of traditional trades:

> It is difficult to spot any significant objects of technological innovation or new machines, such as cars, or electric lanterns, in Russian Futurist compositions. Instead, there are familiar traditional objects, often rural—such as bicycles, knife grinders, sewing machines, samovars, sickles, and saws—that are normally associated with domesticity, or the backward life of the agricultural societies… I think the reason for such a marked rejection of technological 'subjects' is much deeper [than their relative urbanism] and reflects the ideological difference between Russian and Italian Futurisms. While Italians chose to be the utopians in their purely futuristic ambitions, Russians never rejected the past, and indeed 'internalized' and deconstructed archaic myth, making a clear argument in their poetics for primitivism against all the attractions of civilized modernity.[434]

As the Russian Futurists "deconstructed archaic myth" and experimented with imagery of the humble hand tool, so too did the Yiddish anarchist modernists refuse to give up Labor symbology. This represents not a rejection of the previous generation, but a retention and reinvention.

Like Harry Houdini, the magician (and rabbi's son) who primarily used common household objects like needles and locks in his stage act, this is an image of transcendence via the tools of the mundane. One of Houdini's signature acts was called the "East Indian Needle Trick," described as a "yogie masterpiece." Despite dressing it up with an orientalist name, that stage image was read by Jewish audiences as the cunning transcendence of a man over drudgery and labor.[435] Houdini would have his mouth inspected by a committee of men on stage, then swallow 50 to 100 needles, 20 yards of thread, and drink a glass of water to "wash them down." He would then pull out the thread, with all the needles threaded upon it. Although earlier magicians had performed this feat using a few dozen needles, Houdini used enough needles and thread to stretch across the length of the stage. In this studio portrait from about 1915, he stands before the committee who had inspected his mouth for hidden needles; in the second image, he triumphantly holds the threaded needles aloft. Like Houdini's stunning stagecraft built from domestic tools, Glatshteyn takes the signature vocabulary of the *svetshop* poets—needles, workers' songs as resistance—and creates a Modernist image from it. By re-combining the components of an older style, he

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[434] Gurianova, 62.

[435] See the exhibit *Houdini: Art and Magic,* Contemporary Jewish Museum of San Francisco, October 2010 – March 2011.

threads the needle anew. Like Houdini's transcending tools of hand-labor, Glatshteyn takes the signature vocabulary of the earlier anarchist poets—needles, workers' songs of resistance, the possibility of time liberated—and reinvents them in magical, Modernist images.

Moyshe-Leyb Halpern's "Sacco-Vanzetti"

The poet and critic Benjamin Harshav has characterized the work of Moyshe-Leyb Halpern [1886-1932] as "an existentialist-anarchist slashing at life in general and at

American capitalism in particular."[436] Like paintings labeled "Degenerate" by the Nazis, Halpern's imagery reflects the grotesqueness of society. His poem "Sacco and Vanzetti" (1927) is explicitly connected to those executions only through its title, de-sensationalizing their case as singular event. Halpern's propulsive, self-interrupting rhythm creates an anarchist hurly-burly music. "Sacco-Vanzetti" is structured by a series of twinned images, such as the coronation of a king with the placing of a copper execution band around the convicts' heads. The image of the head bowed before execution is paired with the opening lines, in John Hollander's translation, "You can pull from your head a gray hair…" *(Men ken zikh oysreysn a groye hor fun kop….*).[437] *The phrase "men ken*," literally "one can," universalizes the field of speech towards the common horizon of aging. Rather than fixing upon the moment of execution, this aging evokes Sacco and Vanzetti's seven years in prison. This anti-sensationalistic reframing flattens the moment of execution which, as I've shown, was usually at the center of English-language Sacco-Vanzetti poems. There is no exceptional suffering in Halpern's poetic world-system. Like Glatshteyn's opening passage, it is situated within ongoing everyday life. Halpern doubles the prisoner with a patient:

> *Men darf nor ruik zayn a vayl,*
> *Un vi a tifus-kranker tsuboygn dem kop tsu dem, vos golt.*
> *A bruder iz er dokh,*
> *Un men darf nit broygez dayn oyf im,*
> *Far vos er nemt di hoyt nit mit.*
> *Er tut nor vos men heyst un ven men tsolt derfar.*
> *Un oykh dos toytnkleyd,--*
> *Dos oykh -- hot oyfgeneyt a bruder, vos iz hungerik.*[438]
>
> You have only to keep quiet for a while
> and submit your head, like a typhus patient, to someone who shaves it.
> He is, after all, a brother,
> and you shouldn't be cross with him
> for not scraping up the scalp as well.
> He only does what he's told and when he's paid for it.
> And the death-smock, as well,
> that, too, was sewn up by a hungry brother.

Larry Rosenwald reads the poem as "an invitation to identify with the oppressed… [he] directs sympathy most explicitly, not to Sacco and Vanzetti, but to the ordinary people one might at first think of as their oppressors. Halpern's man who sews the 'death-smock' … is complicit with the state… But to treat him as an oppressor would be to be in accord with the dominant ideology of the period, … by warding off the threat of general working-class solidarity.[439]" Jordan Finkin similarly understands these lines as sounding a straightforwardly "sympathetic note" to the executioner and the workers who made the

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[436] Harshav 1990:107, cited by Kronfeld, 165.
[437] *Penguin Book of Yiddish Verse,* 212.
[438] Halpern, in *American Yiddish Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology,* Harshav and Harshav, 439.
[439] Rosenwald, *The Turn Around Religion in America,* 274.

prison uniform: "This passage offers yet another image of acquiescence at the heart of the poem, this time with a note of sympathy for the executioner and the functionaries of execution. They are 'brothers,' after all, not to be condemned by misdirected contempt or even scorn. The poem describes them as part of a larger apparatus against which appeals are futile."[440] Rosenwald and Finkin's expositions, however, do not quite register the sarcasm of these lines. Rather than positing any exculpatory or unifying "brotherhood," Halpern models a world with no possibility of workers' innocence. Lest we mistake his caustic passage for sincerity, he also implores the reader not to be cross with the barber "for not scraping up the scalp as well"! This is a grotesque solidarity, a macabre understanding of brotherhood as mutually destructive. Halpern consistently interrogates any rhetoric of brotherhood in struggle that does not acknowledge mutual injury. His long poem "*A Nakht"* (A Night) similarly uses brutal gallows humor to dismantle the rhetoric of brotherhood forged through war:

Ongevirn hot dayn bruder
Nebekh, beyde hent in shlakht.
Ken er zikh shoyn mer nit kratsn
Nemt im nit keyn shlof baynakht.

Your own brother, poor thing,
lost both his hands in the war.
Now he doesn't sleep at night—
since he can't scratch himself anymore.[441]

Even the possibility of that most private peace, sleep, is revoked by war. This soldier, even granted a sarcastic "*nebekh,*" might be the brother of the tailor sewing shrouds for Sacco and Vanzetti: no less implicated in violence for having himself suffered, and no less immune from pillory.

The worker sewing a prisoner's death-garb reflects debates surrounding labor and World War I, when mainstream unions organized for jobs in arms manufacture. Radical labor groups such as the IWW critiqued the creation of jobs in the weapons industry as harmful to workers and soldiers abroad; instead, they urged workers to organize towards a transnational kinship of workers. To write "And the death-clothes too / These too were tailored by your brother who was hungry" models a world where all are brothers, and all are complicit, always at the same time. Here, Halpern critiques the socialist valorization of labor for the war effort and the instrumentalization of comradeship. Halpern himself immigrated to the United States to avoid the military draft in Germany, but we needn't turn to biography to explicate these lines. Sacco and Vanzetti's actual ethos was transcendently comradely: in the moment before his execution, "Vanzetti shook the warden's hand and thanked him for caring for him, a display of composure that reportedly affected many of the witnesses very deeply. He declared that he wished to forgive [those] putting him to death[442]."

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[440] Finkin, 52.
[441] Halpern (1919, p 200). Translated by Ruth Wisse, p96.
[442] Topp, *Sacco and Vanzetti Case*, 46.

(Cartoon from the New York Globe, *portraying IWW members linked to the German Kaiser, illustrating the demonization of anti-war unions in the US during World War I.)*

Halpern's poem analyzes power in a way that we might call Foucauldian: power is not relegated to the category of warden, but circulates between workers. There is no subject position outside of power, and the structure of the prison extends into the hospital and barracks. As in his poem "Salute," a scalding indictment of both Southern lynchings and non-Black poets who would appropriate such imagery, Halpern implicates the reader: the narrative lens is so wide that it becomes convex, reflecting those in the periphery and himself.

The laboring body is affected by time, deteriorating and vulnerable. Halpern dismantles the human body into its animal parts:

> *Men ken zikh oysraysn a groye hor fun kop,*
> *Vos kumt tsu fri amol fun tsar, vos iz tsu shver;*
> *Nor vemen in dayn tsar es dakht zikh oys,*
> *Az s'iz im shver der kop zayner mit hoyt un hor,*
> *Vi epes, vos er ken nit trogn mer,*
> *Oyf ot di knokhn di tsvey orime, bos heysn aksl, --*
> *Bay dem mentsn --*
>
> You can pull from your head a gray hair
> But for someone whose troubled head

That sometimes comes too early with troubles that are too hard,
Feels too hard with its skin and hair,
Too hard to bear any more
On these wretched bones called — in humans —
Shoulders…[443]

Di knokhn di tsvey oreme, vos heysn aksl, / bay dem mentshn — which Barbara Harshav and Benjamin Harshav render as *"these wretched bones called — in humans — / shoulders."* The word *knokhn* literally means a knob or knuckle, making the body's posture even more abject. Yiddish has several verbs differentiating human activity from that of an animal, such as *esn* vs *fresn*, but few nouns. By alluding to the vocabulary of the human in this way, Halpern reminds us of the proximity of the animal—separated not by essential biological difference, but solely through language. In *Animacies*, Mel Chen explores "how objectification and dehumanization are positioned in relation to animacy."[444] Halpern's discomfiting animal metaphors trouble the human order: a king shaking upon his throne juxtaposed against the freedom of nature and animals also appears in his poem "*Der gasnpoyker*" (The Street-Drummer). The animal presence heightens the artificiality of human power, which seeks to regulate time and its working upon the body.

"Sacco-Vanzetti" portrays extremes of hierarchy from thieves to kings, from the forest wolf to a butterfly hastening towards its fiery end. Halpern's mysterious animal metaphors do parodical work of disrupting the human order. The image of a king shaking upon his throne juxtaposed against the freedom of nature and animals also appears in Halpern's "*Der gasnpoyker*" (The Street-Drummer):

The bird sings free and clear, alone,	*Zingt der foygl fray un fraylekh,*
There the king trembles on his throne.	*tsitern oyf zayn tron der meylekh,*
Trembling is too absurd:	*tsitert iz nit keday,*
I sing freely as the bird,	*zing ikh, vi der foygl, fray,*
And as fast	*un geshvind,*
As the wind's blast…	*vi der vint…*[445]

Tsitert iz nit keday is more literally rendered "Trembling is not worth the trouble." The persistent presence of the animal within the sphere of human parable — and the poet's playful alignment and identification with the unbounded animal realm — emphasize the artificiality of human power.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced lines of anarchism from Proletarian through Modernist poetry to the present, focusing on their imagery of workers' tools and anti-nationalist temporalities. I've argued for recognizing an "anarchist turn" in Halpern's critique of liberal unionism, the instrumentalization of comradeship, and worker solidarity rhetoric in

[443] Translation by Harshav and Harshav, *American Yiddish Poetry,* 436.
[444] Chen, 42.
[445] *Penguin Book of Yiddish Verse*, translation by John Hollander, 168.

collusion with militarism. Glatshteyn's imagery and alternative temporality, meanwhile, draw deeply from earlier anarchist Yiddish poets to address the Sacco-Vanzetti trial. Reminding us of the transience of hierarchy, Halpern's king is uncrowned and Glatshteyn's Judge Thayer endures haunted nights. Both poems model a temporality of the margins, their gaze fixed upon the machinations of power rather than elegizing its objects. Halpern and Glatshteyn reference the tradition of anarchist elegies for fallen comrades, which continued from Edelshtat's "Louis Lingg" to Yosef Luden's "Edelshtat."[446] In Glatshteyn's work, however, Judge Thayer is the poetic speaker; in Halpern's, the sentenced men appear not at all. The rhetoric of martyrdom discussed by Rosenberg is, in the modernists' writing, replaced by the imperative of demystifying power.

Because of their remarkable social and participatory function (much as Shachar has just described the 'third space'), Proletarian poetry is often marginalized or cited as first and foremost an archive of immigrant life. Positioning the *svetshop* poets as an authentic part of labor sociology, yet outside of proper literary history, minimizes their contributions to the collective consciousness and to later Yiddish Modernism. In fact, their imagery and iconography endure through later reference and reinvention.

The anarchist presence in modernist Yiddish poetry—even Sacco-Vanzetti poetry, with its straightforward connection to political movements—has been obscured by critics. Introducing Halpern's "Sacco-Vanzetti," the *Penguin* editors write: "Liberals protested that [Sacco and Vanzetti] had been sentenced for their anarchist beliefs rather than for any crime they had committed, and radicals used the case to attack the American system of justice. Many Yiddish poets and writers wrote commemorative works on this subject."[447] While factually correct, the editors locate Yiddish writing within a de-fanged commemorative, elegiac mode, though the Yiddish poets themselves participated in critical discourse and often identified with Sacco and Vanzetti's own politics.

In *Choosing Yiddish,* Jordan Finkin argues that Sacco-Vanzetti poems form a Yiddish-American "discourse of identity," although there is no particularized sense of identity in Halpern's work. To the contrary, Halpern's own poetic voice is consistently expansive rather than prescriptive, opening not with "you must" nor "I do," but "one may…" Symbology in the two poems read most closely here is strongly mythic, kaleidoscopic and universalized (kings, a wolf in the forest, a butterfly in the dark). Furthermore, the body is dismantled to its bones so that visible race does not remain, and trappings of Italian-ness (or Jewishness, for that matter) are erased. Finkin writes:

> Taken together, the Yiddish Sacco-Vanzetti poets went beyond their English-language contemporaries to develop a distinctive thematology, one that claims a stake in American identity politics. […] They poetically construe a Yiddish American identity not as something stative but as something participatory. The themes, for example, of Christianity, electricity, and fatalism, all relate to power and the anxieties of the conflict between an

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[446] In "The Cult of Self-Sacrifice in Yiddish Anarchism and Saul Yanovsky's *The First Years of Jewish Libertarian Socialism*," Karen Rosenberg characterizes the popularity of elegies as evidence of a pervasive rhetoric of martyrdom.

[447] *Penguin Book of Yiddish Verse*, 212.

> image of nationhood (the American ideal) rooted in an idea and the exercise of power.[448]

By situating the poem in a "discourse of American identity," Finkin elides the distinctively *anarchist* analysis of power which Halpern and others presented. Though the Yiddish poets engaged elliptically with Sacco and Vanzetti themselves, they engaged directly with their ideas. Finkin asks why Jewish poets writing in the English language largely ignored Sacco and Vanzetti, while it was nearly a social mandate for Yiddish poets to address it. Perhaps this has more to do with the presence of anarchist consciousness amongst Yiddish readers, with their two-dozen anarchist newspapers to choose from and legacy of popular song and verse, in comparison to the smaller English-language radical media. Finkin argues that the prolificness and depth with which Yiddish poets addressed the Sacco-Vanzetti case primarily revealed Jewish identitarian anxieties.[449] This does not explain, however, the significance and *particularity* of their attraction to the Sacco-Vanzetti case, nor why it was treated so similarly across the lines of aesthetic and (Left) political affiliation. Finkin frames Yiddish concern with the executions as a co-optation of anarchism by others on the Left, rather than as evidence of the extent and influence of American anarchist culture.

Coda

Taken together, the poems of Rosenfeld, Bovshover, Halpern, and Glatshteyn model a temporality of the margins, making visible the machinations of power and punitive time from a diasporic position. One hundred years after Edelshtat, Xu Lizhi (1990-2013), a worker at the Apple computer factory Foxconn, wrote the poem "A Screw Fell to the Ground" before his suicide—one of fourteen deaths by suicide at at that factory between 2010 and 2013:

> A screw fell to the ground
> In this dark night of overtime
> Plunging vertically, lightly clinking
> It won't attract anyone's attention
> Just like last time
> On a night like this
> When someone plunged to the ground.

The garment workers' needle has been replaced by the tiny electronics screw, falling in the "dark night of overtime." But the visual vocabulary of Proletarian poetry remains: the tool becomes the metonymic object for the body of the worker. Xu Lizhi's fellow Foxconn worker, Zhou Qizao, wrote the poem "Upon Hearing the News of Xu Lizhi's Suicide," taking

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[448] Finkin, *Choosing Yiddish,* 58.

[449] See Jordan Finkin's article "Sacco-Vanzetti Poems and Yiddish American Identity," *Choosing Yiddish,* 47-64.

up his friend's image of the falling screw. The interchangeability of mass-produced tools stands in for the substitution of one life for another: “The loss of every life / Is the passing of another me / Another screw comes loose / Another migrant worker brother jumps / You die in place of me / And I keep writing in place of you / While I do so, screwing the screws tighter…”[450] Like Glatshteyn and Halpern—like Bovshover, Edelshtat, Rosenfeld, and Vanzetti—Xu Lizhi reminds us of the persistence and urgency of svetshop poetics.

[450] “The Poetry and Brief Life of a Foxconn Worker: Xu Lizhi (1990-2014).” October 1, 2014. https://libcom.org/blog/xulizhi-foxconn-suicide-poetry

— Chapter Four —
"With An Undone Shirt (*Mit a tseshpilyet hemd*)": Peretz Markish's Poema.

Poetry and power are estranged nations: it is impossible to hold both nationalities. [. . .] The poet (by this I mean the writer for whom the literary text is a question of life and death) knows very well that the influence of a text is always postponed: but it does exist… Suddenly, in the midst of our terrible century, art became regimented, and the majority of artists flocked to the safety of the established order. To write from outside the protection of this boundary—outside the protection of the state—thus becomes itself a kind of historical gesture. I have passionate admiration for the three or four Russian poets—Mandelstam, Tsvetaeva, and Akhmatova, for example—who remained outlaws… The signs of the rootless alien, of exclusion, and of mourning are inscribed into the fabric of their texts, but they have not been enslaved: stubbornly, without straying, they have kept to their path. And thus, in our eyes, their works take on the value of immense, invisible flags. They are banished, unedited in their lifetime, and condemned to anonymity: deported because of a poem, they become citizens of the nation of poetry.[451]
— Hélène Cixous

To Hélène Cixous's list of "citizens of the nation of poetry"—those deported for a poem, those for whom the literary text is a matter of life and death—we should add Peretz Markish (1895-1952). Highly disciplined in its formal aspects, brashly inventive in its imagery, Markish's work was celebrated in Yiddish—yet only a fraction of it has been translated into English. This chapter presents analysis of his early work and selections from his hitherto-untranslated masterpiece *Der fertsikyeriker man* (The Man of Forty), a book-length poema that was rescued hours before his arrest by the Soviet Secret Police and smuggled out of Russia. I examine how anarchist themes circulated through his work, including revolutionary temporality, his vision of nature without borders, and his representations of the autonomous body. Despite the Soviet Union's brutal surveillance and persecution of Yiddish writers, Markish defiantly used Jewishly-marked vocabulary—the *loshn-koydesh* (Hebrew and Aramaic) component of the Yiddish language—which multiple waves of Soviet language reform campaigns had attempted to purge in order to construct an "international workers' language" severed from religious connotation. As Yiddish anarchists claimed genealogies originating in talmudic and biblical texts, Markish's *loshn-koydesh* etymology claims a proudly Jewish genealogy. In David Shneer and Robert Adler Peckerar's words, "He made the Revolution a modern Jewish event."[452]

As a Jewish poet whose convictions led him to return to the Soviet Union from Eastern Europe, Markish's personal biography, writing, and politics are inseparable.

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[451] Cixous, 89.

[452] Shneer and Peckerar, 5.

Understanding the relation between his life and his political commitments, then, is crucial background for his poetic choices. Markish's career began in the period between the Russian Revolution and the Kronstadt Rebellion[453] of 1921, a twelve-day sailors' uprising against the Bolsheviks. The sailors of two huge battleships in Russia's Baltic Fleet sought freedom of the press and release of anarchist prisoners, among other demands; the Red Army's military campaign against the rebel sailors resulted in the deaths of several thousand. This period of Bolshevik repression was documented by anarchist philosopher V. M. Eikhenbaum (Volin) in the book *The Unknown Revolution*, *1917-1921*. Historian Nina Gurianova identifies this liminal period before the repression at Kronstadt as a golden age for experimental, heterogeneous aesthetics before the uniformity of Socialist Realism. Gurianova argues compellingly for a strong link between anarchism and the Russian avant-garde, which "created an aesthetics attuned both to Mikhail Bakunin's anarchist theory of 'creative destruction' and to the anti-utopian philosophy of Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground*. [...] For the early Russian avant-garde, the 'poetics of the underground' opposed the creation of any fixed or immutable ideas or absolutes in both social and aesthetic philosophies.[454]" This heterogeneity encouraged Markish's "multiple and partial affiliations"[455] with various trends of Modernism, including both Futurism and Expressionism.

Markish successfully cultivated a charismatic public persona, and many of his contemporaries called him the "most handsome man of the twentieth century." He lived in Kiev and Warsaw between 1919 and 1926, publishing, editing, and performing prolifically, then returned to the Soviet Union. The poet and partisan Avrom Sutzkever recalls: "In 1933 when I first came to Warsaw, Markish's echo was still shaking the windows of Tlomackie 13. Someone [...] told me one of the many stories about the poet: 'After one of Markish's lectures in Warsaw's Association of Jewish Writers the audience went into such ecstasy that they applauded him for half an hour.'[456]" But Markish's presence extended far beyond the urban literati: in a recent oral history conducted in Yiddish, a woman named Frida Zak recounts when Markish returned to his hometown of Polonne in the borderlands of the Russian Empire and visited her high school in 1939, dancing and reciting poetry with students around their New Year tree until five o'clock in the morning. Zak's reminiscences illustrate how Markish created artistic sociality whether at a cosmopolitan salon or celebrating until dawn with youth in a *shtetl*.

This chapter begins with a biographical note, foregrounding the influence of Russian and Ukrainian anarchist movements from 1918 to 1922. The second section studies temporality and embodiment in his early work and offers several original translations from *Der fertsikyeriker man*. The chapter concludes with a consideration of anarchist responses to Markish's poetry in the contemporaneous anarchist newspaper *Arbeter Fraynd* (Worker's Friend), claiming him "as much our comrade as our poet." Whether or not Markish personally identified with the historical Russian anarchist movement, his poetry

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[453] See Avrich's *Russian Anarchists* for a detailed discussion of its impact and organization.

[454] Gurianova, 2.

[455] The phrase was coined by Chana Kronfeld, in reference to other Yiddish poets. *On the Margins of Modernism: Decentering Literary Dynamics,* 12.

[456] Sutzkever, *Bam leyenen penimer: Dertseylungen, dermonungen, eseyen* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1993), p. 64. Cited by Karolina Szymaniak in "Peretz Markish's Manifestos," 83.

engaged with some centerpieces of its political imagination, particularly borderlessness, antimilitarism, and liberated temporality.

Image: Peretz Markish. Courtesy of the Blavatnik Archive, New York.

Markish's Biography and Anarchist History

By mapping Russian anarchism and its cultural production around Markish's life, we may restore some crucial context to his work. Born in the small town of Polonne in Volhynia (west of Kiev) to an impoverished family, Markish was discharged from the military after the March Revolution and settled in Ekaterinoslav in 1917. That city became a key site for the anarchist army led by Nestor Makhno, fighting to create a stateless society between 1918 and 1921 during the Ukrainian Revolution.[457] The Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine (popularly known as the Black Army) had tens of thousands of volunteers (some historians estimate up to 100,000); several high commanders and hundreds of infantry were Jewish.[458] While Makhno himself lambasted anti-Semitism and personally executed pogromchiks,[459] not all volunteering in his army followed his lead. As Markish's wife Esther relates in her memoirs, her father was threatened one night by a mob of anti-Semitic Black Army volunteers, and then saved by a man on horseback—Nestor Makhno himself. After rescuing him, Makhno called after her father to put on galoshes, lest he catch cold.[460]

The difference between Bolshevik and anarchist practices played out on the local level in ways that impacted Markish directly. Makhno dissolved the Bolshevik 'revolutionary committees' (*revkomy)* in Ekaterinoslav, and his presence in the Markishes' town also brought about a proliferation of the press: his "first act on entering a large town [was] throwing open the prisons… Free speech, press, and assembly were proclaimed, and in Ekaterinoslav half a dozen newspapers, representing a wide range of political opinion, sprang up overnight."[461]

In 1918, at the height of Russian anarchism, the artistic and political journal *Anarkhiia* appeared in Moscow with a critique of Bolshevik statist approaches to the arts. *Anarkhiia* was edited and published from September 1917 until July 1918, first as a weekly and then as a daily, by the brothers Aba and Zeev Gordin.[462] Its masthead declared "No Gods, No Masters!" and "Anarchy is the Mother of Order!"[463] While there was considerable activity among Russian anarchists during those years, only a small part of their writing was published in Yiddish. Several newspapers were actually imported, which was very common throughout the Yiddish modernist world[464]. Yiddish copies of the London newspapers *Der*

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[457] In the region of Guliai-Pole, Makhno's Military-Revolutionary Council set up communes of up to 300 members each, who "operated the communes on the basis of full equality and accepted the Kropotkinian principle of mutual aid as their fundamental tenet." (Avrich, 217) Worker-ownership represents a major ideological difference between Communist and anarchist collectivization efforts. Similar communes had previously sprung up in Guliai-Pole during the 1905 Revolution and in 1917—a rare example of continuity between Russian anarchist movements.

[458] Alexandre Skirda, *Nestor Makhno: Anarchy's Cossack,* 339.

[459] D. Lebed, *Itogi i Uroki Tryokh Let Anarkho-Makhnovschiny* (Kharkiv, 1921), 43.

[460] Esther Markish, *The Long Return,* 12.

[461] Ibid.

[462] The Polish-born Aba Gordin (1887 -1964) later founded *Problemen/Problemot* in Tel Aviv, after editing *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* in New York City. He was tremendously prolific on Jewish themes, writing such articles as "The Doctrine of Sin in Freud and Midrash."

[463] Gurianova, 220.

[464] See Avrich's *Russian Anarchists.*

Arbeter Fraynd (The Worker's Friend)[465] and *Zherminal* found their way to the Pale,[466] as did six Russian-language issues of Rudolf Rocker's Yiddish newspaper *Der Hilf Ruf*.[467] Columns from some of the more than two dozen U. S. Yiddish anarchist newspapers were syndicated in Russian newspapers. That same year, Abba Gordin wrote the influential Pan-Anarchist Manifesto, which assailed Marxism as "a hybrid born of quasi-religion and pseudo-science."[468] The Gordin brothers' goals were fivefold: "the complete liberation of people from property, children from schools, society from the state, nations from empire, and women from men."[469] Their manifesto articulated an awareness of the collusion between racism, colonialism and gender oppression that might be considered "intersectional" today. In July of 1918, *Anarkhiia* was raided, banned, and shut down. The struggle for a free press as a vehicle for literary experimentation was led, both in the United States and the USSR, by anarchists.

In considering the differences between anarchist modernisms in the United States and the USSR, we must also recognize the relationship between Soviet and North American policies towards anarchist dissidents. Both nations used deportation as a tool of control. After the Kronstadt affair, internal factions were banned by the Communist government, which raided anarchist groups and deported leaders (including Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Volin, Efim Yartchuk, and Alexander Schapiro).[470] Zimmer notes:

> In 1923, anarchists were included in the first group of prisoners sent to the island of Solovetsky, the initial outpost of the Gulag Archipelago, and by 1924 anarchist relief groups could count at least 300 Russian anarchists in prisons or work camps, 181 exiled abroad, and scores who had been executed or died in prison. According to one well--informed source, approximately 90% of the anarchists who had returned from America eventually met their deaths in Russian prisons, camps, or at the hands of the Cheka and its successors.[471]

These deportations severed the lines of transmission between the two major generations of Russian anarchism (the 1870s and 1905-7).

During this period of deportations, Markish was in Warsaw, where anarchist presence was quieter than twenty years earlier. Warsaw did contain some Ferrer Modern Schools, however, with anarchist instructors and radical pedagogies. It was there that he wrote *"Veys ikh nit tsi kh'bin in d'reym"* ("I Don't Know if I'm at Home") in 1918-1919 and began *Der fertsikyeriker man* (The Man of Forty) in 1922. This period marked the height of the Russian Futurist movement, the social and artistic context of which informed Yiddish-language culture as well. The Russian Futurist poet Vladimir Mayakovsky's career was

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[465] See Chapter One, section on its editor Rabbi Dr. Yankev Meir Zalkind.

[466] Avrich, 40.

[467] See Goncharuk's *Geshikhte fun der yidisher anarkhistishe prese.*

[468] Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists,* 249.

[469] Michael G. Smith, *Rockets and Revolution: A Cultural History of Early Spaceflight* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), p129.

[470] Zimmer, 344.

[471] Zimmer, 344.

accelerating[472] then, too. Mayakovsky was a tremendous inspiration to Markish, who held him in nearly spiritual reverence; both poets spoke the major language as well as their minor language (Georgian, in the case of Mayakovsky). Esther Markish recounts her husband's reaction to hearing the famous Hasidic tale of a little boy whose simple flute-playing redeemed his village on Yom Kippur, more powerfully than a sophisticated or learned prayer:

> I remember how this story shook me to the bottom of my soul. Markish gave me a sidelong glance, and I saw that his eyes were radiant with tears. "Why, there you have the history of art," he said with a sigh. "Only today it isn't a penny flute that's needed, but the trumpet of a Mayakovsky!"[473]

In this period, Hasidism—or rather, romantic notions of the movement—appealed to many on the Left. In this anecdote, Markish maps the hero of the Soviet avant-garde onto the hero of a Hasidic tale, each subverting elitism (artistic and religious) in favor of simple expression.

Markish moved to Kiev in 1919, during which year he published four books of poetry. The most acclaimed of these was *Shveln* (Thresholds). His long poem *Di Kupe* (The Heap, 1921) responded to the Ukrainian pogroms of 1919-1920. Markish's Yiddish expressionist manifesto "*Estetik fun kamf in der moderner dikhtung*" (The Aesthetics of Struggle in Modern Poetry) caused a sensation, and the poet Melech Ravitch named Markish the "literary strategist" of their set.[474] Markish left Kiev for Warsaw in 1921, where he lived until returning to the Soviet Union in 1926. Markish also traveled to Paris, Berlin, London, and Palestine.[475] In Warsaw, Markish co-edited with I. J. Singer the expressionist literary journal *Di Khalyastre* (The Gang), which ran for two issues. Markish chose the journal's name from a phrase in Moyshe Broderzon's poem, indicating the mood and perspective of their project:

> *Mir yungen, mir a freylekhe tsezungene khalyastre*
> *Mir geyen in an umbavustn veg,*
> *In tife moreshkhoyredike teg*
> *In nekht fun shrek*
> *Per aspera ad astra!*
>
> We the young, a jolly, boisterous gang
> We're trodding on an unknown path
> through deeply melancholic days
> through nights of terror

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[472] In 1919, Mayakovsky founded the Left Front of Art with Osip Brik and began working at the newspaper *Art of the Commune.* The following year, Mayakovsky wrote his narrative of the Russian Revolution, *150,000,000.*

[473] Esther Markish, 83.

[474] Ibid.

[475] Novershtern, YIVO Encyclopedia. http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Markish_Perets

Per aspera ad astra![476]

Distinct in its aesthetics from both Soviet Yiddish stylistics and the New York *In-zikhistn* (Introspectivists), under Markish's editorship *Di Khalyastre* advocated for Bolshevism and collaborated with the Łódź-based *Yung-yidish* group. In his manifesto, Markish declared that *Unzer mos iz—nit sheynkayt—nor shoyderlikhkayt* (Our measure is not beauty, but horror).[477] *Shoyderlikhkayt* is, more literally, "uncanniness" or "shudderingness"—a coinage (related to the German *schaudern)* that gets to the visceral quality of Markish's aesthetic. This embrace of the grotesque is a tactic linked also to Expressionism—a fierce commitment to representation of marginality. In later works, that quality of "shudderingness" is an ethical statement, representing the disfigurements of war.[478]

While revered as a performer, Markish's critical reception in that early period was somewhat more ambivalent. Avrom Novershtern notes that while he was praised by the Soviet critic Yekhezkl Dobrushin as a "strong poet," Dovid Bergelson "expressed reservations about Markish's poetry. In a key article from 1919, '*Dikhtung un gezelshaftlekhkayt*' (Poetry and Socialty), which deals with the problems of contemporary Yiddish literature, Bergelson points to the "naked lines" in Markish's poetry, which, according to Bergelson, are characteristic of futurism."[479]

In 1926, Markish left Poland and returned to the USSR. In its early years, the Soviet regime supported the flowering of Yiddish literature, and Markish periodically benefited financially. His professed politics were consistently anti-fascist, serving on the executive board of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and producing broadcasts calling upon diaspora Jews to join in its struggle. The beginning of World War II catalyzed a shift in his work: in 1940, his poema *Tsu a yidishe tentserin* (To a Jewish Dancer) expressed then-taboo Jewish national sentiment together with Soviet patriotism.[480] Markish was the only Yiddish writer to be awarded the Order of Lenin; seven years later, in 1946, Markish was awarded the Stalin Prize, another major honor. But Markish deplored state control of art. Witnesses recalled his refusal to applaud at cultural events honoring Stalin—a great risk which few in the massive crowd took.

Complicating the narrative of Markish's Communist affiliation is the fact that there often was no practical antagonism between communists and anarchists, as we will see later in the anarchist article about Markish and as we have seen in earlier discussions of the Yiddish radical press. Many anarchists fought in the Civil War and with the Red Army. In 1919, at the height of the Civil War, even Lenin himself praised the anarchists as "the most dedicated supporters of Soviet power."[481] Indeed, a Red Army anarchist officer named Bill

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[476] Adapted from Seth L. Wolitz's translation in the YIVO Encyclopedia entry, *Di Khalyastre*. http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Khalyastre#suggestedreading

[477] *Khalyastre,* vol. 1

[478] For further discussions of *Khalyastre,* see Alison Schachter, *Diasporic Modernisms: Hebrew and Yiddish Literature in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

[479] Cited in Novershtern, YIVO Encyclopedia. http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Markish_Perets

[480] Ibid.

[481] Avrich, 197.

Shatov worked with fellow anarchist Aleksandr Krasnoshchekov, Minister of Transport in the Far Eastern Republic, to supervise the construction of the Turk-Sib Railroad. When Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman visited Russia in 1920, Shatov justified his affiliation with State offices thusly:

> Now I just want to tell you that the Communist State in action is exactly what we anarchists have always claimed it would be—a tightly centralized power still more strengthened by the dangers of the Revolution. Under such conditions, one cannot do as one wills. One does not just hop on a train and go, or even ride the bumpers, as I did in the United States. One needs permission. But don't get the idea that I miss my American 'blessings.' Me for Russia, the Revolution, and its glorious future.[482]

Shatov asserted that the anarchists were the "the romanticists of the Revolution," though he took a conciliatory stance toward Bolshevism: "We anarchists should remain true to our ideals, but we should not criticize at this time. We must work and help to build."[483]

However, this argument for nuance should not obscure the real clashes between ideological factions. Following Bolshevik raids of anarchist centers for organizing and publishing in Moscow 1918, some anarchists retaliated violently. In September 1919, the Underground Anarchists (*Anarkhisty Podpol'ia*)—led by a member of the Moscow Union of Railway Workers—published two issues of an "incendiary" leaflet titled *Anarkhiia* (distinct from a publication of the same name by the Moscow Federation, which the government shut down in 1918). Members of *Anarkhisty Podpol'ia* then bombed the headquarters of the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party during a meeting, killing 12 members and injuring 55 more, including an editor of *Pravda* and Emelian Iaroslavskii, who later wrote a history of Russian anarchism.[484]

A turning point for Markish and other Yiddish cultural figures came in January 1948, when Soviet authorities announced the death of the great Jewish actor Solomon Mikhoels, explaining it as a car accident. Markish immediately responded to the death of Mikhoels—his dearest friend—in a long poem, *Sh. Mikhoels—a neyr-tomid bam orn* (An Eternal Light at Sh. Mikhoels' Coffin), invoking Jewish tradition and naming the actor's death as an assassination. Chana Kronfeld notes that "by 1948 his foregrounding of the *neyr-tomid* [Hebraic religious term for 'eternal light'] can be read as an act of cultural and national resistance. Moreover, invoking the *neyr-tomid* in the context of a poetic condemnation of Mikhoels' murder by the state is a gesture of extraordinarily courageous defiance."[485] In his earlier narrative poema *"Di Kupe"* (The Heap), Markish had also invoked traditional Jewish mourning rituals from the opening: "To you, the murdered people of Ukraine—how full of you the Earth is! / And also to you, the slaughtered people in the Heap, / in Haroditsh on the shores of the Dnieper, / Kaddish!"[486] The context of the two poems, however, was very

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[482] Avrich, 198.

[483] Ibid.

[484] Avrich, 188.

[485] Kronfeld, "Murdered Modernisms: Peretz Markish and the Legacy of Soviet Yiddish Poetry," 190.

[486] Trans. Barnett Zumoff, *The Heap* (Moscow: Orenburg Publishing House, 2015), p9.

different: in 1920-1921, when Markish wrote *"Di Kupe,"* it was much safer to use hebraic diction and biblical allusions.

While it may be difficult for contemporary readers to comprehend the politicization of vocabulary and orthography, Esther Markish recalls the very real apparatus of literary censorship:

> In 1969, I saw something that the ordinary Soviet citizen is never permitted to see: the censor's corrections on the galley proofs of the last book of Markish to be published in the USSR. The censor had red-penciled the word *Jew* wherever it appeared—as it did frequently—in the volume, and he suggested that the editor replace this "unacceptable" term by words such as *man, citizen,* or *passer-by.* The word *Jew* was taboo. The censor, moreover, threw several poems out of the collection: "Jerusalem," "Galilee," a few chapters of "The War"—all of which were seen as infused with Jewish nationalism—and, it goes without saying, "To Mikhoels—Eternal Light."[487]

Substituting "man" for "Jew" not only obscures the Jewishness of the poem, but in rendering the very word verboten, erases the identity of the poet. When it was forbidden to write the word "Jew," that identity became at once ethnic, religious, and political.

After Mikhoels' 1948 execution and the subsequent closing of the Yiddish State Theater in Moscow, Stalin began mass arrests of Yiddish writers, part of the liquidation campaign against Soviet Jewish culture. These arrests were scheduled at deliberately unpredictable intervals, arguably a form of state temporal torture in its own right. Last to be arrested was the novelist and philosopher Pinkhas Kahanovich, pen name *Der Nister* (The Hidden One), on February 19, 1949.[488] He is said to have exclaimed "At last!" when the secret police arrived.

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[487] Esther Markish, 250.

[488] Peter B. Maggs, *The Mandelstam and 'Der Nister' Files: An Introduction to Stalin-Era Prison and Labor Camp Records* (1996), p12.

Jewish cultural figures who would become members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee signing an appeal to world Jewry to support the Soviet war effort against Nazi Germany, Moscow, 1941. (Front row, left to right) Dovid Bergelson, Solomon Mikhoels, and Ilya Ehrenburg; (second row) David Oistrakh, Yitskhok Nusinov, Yakov Zak, Boris Iofan, Benjamin Zuskin, Aleksandr Tyshler, Shmuel Halkin.[489]

Esther Markish smuggled manuscripts out of their house wrapped in a potato sack.[490] This literary contraband included a novel about the Warsaw Ghetto, a number of long poems, and *Der fertsikyeriker man*. The Secret Police arrived at Markish's house on Gorky Street soon afterwards. After three years in prison, he faced a secret, orchestrated two-month trial. His wife was told by a friend[491] that Markish delivered an "eloquent and devastating" speech at the trial: "No one interrupted him… In his final summation, Markish lashed out against his tormentors and their mentors with all the power of his creative genius. [H]e spoke not as a defendant but as a prosecutor."[492] He was sentenced to death.

Markish was one of the fifteen prominent Soviet Jews, including five Yiddish writers, executed as an "enemy of the motherland" in the basement of the notorious Lubyanka

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[489] Image: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Martin Smith. Reproduced from YIVO Encyclopedia.

[490] S. L. Shneiderman, "Yiddish in the USSR." *New York Times Book Review,* November 15 1970, p71.

[491] This friend was Lina Stern, an academic scientist who relocated to the USSR out of political conviction. Her work pioneered the study of the blood-brain barrier of the nervous system. She was tried, along with members of the JAFC, as a "Zionist agent" and was the only survivor of the trial.

[492] Esther Markish, 244.

prison on August 12, 1952—the "Night of Murdered Poets." The other poets were Leyb Kvitko, Dovid Hofshteyn, Dovid Bergelson, and Itzik Fefer. These executions were kept secret from the public as well as the widows until years after Stalin died. As late as 1955, Soviet officials denied the killings to the United Nations Assembly. Questioned about Markish's whereabouts, the Soviet Foreign Ministry's press chief "unblinkingly" invented a story about having just seen him at the *Pravda* newspaper office.[493] Memorial services are still held on the date of "The Night of Murdered Poets," and the mass execution of Yiddish intellectuals remains a theme in contemporary Jewish literature.[494]

Following the official "rehabilitation" of Markish's work in the Soviet Union in 1955, several collections of his writing appeared in Russian translation.[495] Anna Akhmatova translated his ode to Dovid Bergelson into Russian, included in an anthology published in 1957. Another translator worked on *Sh. Mikhoels—a ner-tomid bam orn,* preserving some of the *loshn-koydesh* of Markish's Yiddish, such as terms like *nes* (Hebrew for 'miracle').[496] The young Yevgeny Yevtushenko, however, found Markish's poetry "too overpowering for him to do justice to a translation."[497] Boris Pasternak, although he may have earlier collaborated with Markish on translating *"Sh. Mikhoels—a neyr tomid bam orn,"* also declined.[498]

In "Murdered Modernisms: Peretz Markish and the Legacy of Soviet Yiddish Poetry," Chana Kronfeld critiques the "ideologically inflected historiography" that "backshadows" his work: "Markish remained an avant-garde, experimental verbal artist literally to his dying day. One may ask why it is that almost all research on his work—and until recently that of [Dovid] Bergelson as well—stops at the moment of their return to the Soviet Union. Worse yet, one cannot but recall the the ten-year and twenty-year anniversary issues of *Di goldene keyt*[499] in 1962 and 1972, in which narratives of personal loss and the important publication of the murdered modernists' work (including Markish's 'An Eternal Flame') are intermingled with an ahistorical blaming of the victims."[500] The "backshadowing" described by Kronfeld affects both Markish's life and the artistic production of the Russian anarchist avant-garde, which has long been co-opted as mere preamble to Soviet Realism or collapsed into other movements.[501]

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[493] Ibid.

[494] See Nathan Englander's short story "The Twenty-Seventh Man," *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999).

[495] Avrom Novershtern, "Perets Markish" entry, *YIVO Encyclopedia*. http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Markish_Perets

[496] See a selection of Russian translations of Markish here, including Akhmatova's version: *http://www.languages-study.com/yiddish/markishlider.html*

[497] Esther Markish, 246.

[498] Esther Markish, 247.

[499] "The Golden Chain," an Israeli literary journal.

[500] Kronfeld, 195.

[501] See Shneer's Introduction, *Captive of the Dawn*, 1-15.

Peretz Markish, following his arrest by the Soviet authorities. Courtesy of the Forverts.

Genealogy and Temporality in Markish's Early Futurism ("Veys ikh nit tsi kh'bin in d'reym")

Having located Markish within the milieu of the Russian anarchist and transnational avant-garde, we may read his poem *"Veys ikh nit tsi kh'bin in d'reym"* ("I Don't Know if I'm at Home," 1919) as his early credo—a revealing anarchist moment in his work. It bears the hallmarks of European Futurism, while innovating a uniquely Jewish and diasporic sense of time and space, contracted to a single ecstatic moment:

Veys ikh nit tsi kh'bin in d'reym,
Tsi in der fremd —
Ikh loyf!…
Tseshpilyet iz mayn hemd,
Nito z'af mir keyn tsoym,
Kh'bin keynems nit, kh'bin hefker,
On an onheyb, on a sof…

Mayn guf iz shoym,
Un s'shmekt fun im mit vint;
Mayn nomen iz: Atsind…
Tsevarf ikh mayne hent,
Derlangen zey di velt fun eyn ek bizn tsveytn,
Di oygn kh'loz gevendt,
Fartrinkn zey di velt fun untn biz aroyf!
Mit oygn ofene, mit a tseshpilyet hemd,
Mit hent tseshpreyte —
Veys ikh nit, tsi kh'hob a heym,
Tsi kh'hob a fremd,
Tsi kh'bin an onheyb, tsi a sof.

Don't know if I'm at home,
Or if I'm afar —
I'm running!…
My shirt's unbuttoned,
There are no reins on me,
I'm nobody's, I'm unclaimed,
Without a beginning, without an end…
My body is foam,
And it reeks of wind;
My name is: 'Now'…
If I throw out my hands,
They'd give the world a smack from one end to the other,
My eyes if I let roam about,
They'd guzzle up the world from the bottom up!
With eyes open, with an unbuttoned shirt,
With hands stretched out,
I don't know if I have a home,
Or have a-far,
If I'm a beginning, or an end.[502]

The poetic speaker links temporality and embodiment, declaring *Mayn nomen iz: Atsind.* "My name is: Now…" "*Atsind*" is the abstract noun for "the present," the continuing now. Yet at the same time, the ravenous poetic speaker also declares indeterminacy: "Don't know if I'm at home, / or if I'm afar." Those opening lines are repeated at the end with a small but significant variation: "I don't know if I have a home, / Or have a-far, / If I'm a beginning, or an end." Declaration of self, then, is a declaration of uncertainty. This is perhaps the epitome of Yiddish anarchist diasporism, as Markish's unending whirlwind of the present obliterates the duality of before and after, here and there. As such, it also marks a departure from political aesthetic movements which championed *do'ikayt*—the sense of hereness, associated with Bundism—and *dortikayt*—thereness, affiliated with Zionism and

[502] English translation: Chana Kronfeld (in *A Captive of the Dawn: The Life and Work of Peretz Markish, 1895-1952.* Legenda: 2011*),* 197-198.

the longing for a deferred homeland.[503] Both *do'ikayt* and *dortikayt* are dissolved by Markish's ecstatic refusal of fixity.

The heightened embodiment of "I don't know if I'm at home" was in dialogue with both Italian and Russian Futurist visual art and literature. Umberto Boccioni—whose figurative sculpture *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* seems carved by gusts of winds—wrote: "Let us fling open the figure and let it incorporate within itself whatever may surround it."[504] Mayakovsky begins his most famous poema "A Cloud in Trousers" (1915) with a self-portrait of the poetic speaker striding through space: "The might of my voice shakes up the world / as I walk, a beautiful twenty-two-year-old."[505] Mayakovsky wrote in the poema's foreword: "Out with your love,' 'Out with your art,' 'Out with your regime,' 'Out with your religion'—[such are its] four cries."[506] Yet where Boccioni and Mayakovsky portrayed the (male) body as inviolable, in Markish's verse, the body is vulnerable and ephemeral as sea foam. Furthermore, its gender is unspecified, since Yiddish does not indicate gender in first person verbs. While Mayakovsky's Russian Futurism severed the genealogy of religion, Markish's *loshn-koydesh* claims a linguistic *yikhes* [lineage] extending from talmudic thought to the present, located in the words *hefker* and *sof,* two key concepts in Jewish thought. And while Boccioni's helmeted figure marches, Markish's speaker wears no uniform, only his unbuttoned shirt. Thus Markish retains his ethnic particularity and reiterates uncertainty of one's place in the world within Futurist forms, unlike Mayakovsky's brash universalism and Boccioni's proto-Fascism.

Although the tousled speaker may evoke Romantic archetypes, he is no Byronic hero striding across the moors in flowing tunic. Markish describes freedom with Jewishly-marked terminology:

> *…Nito z'af mir keyn tsoym,*
> *Kh'bin keynems nit, kh'bin hefker,*
> *On an onheyb, on a sof…*
>
> …There are no reins on me,
> I'm nobody's, I'm unclaimed,
> Without a beginning, without an end…

This is a judaized wandering, with echoes of the traditional trope of the *luftmensch*, the drifter or "man of air" — now, a man shaped by wind. Key to this fusion of Yiddish folk figure and modernist troubadour is the word "*hefker,*" as Kronfeld explicates:

> …a complex notion implying lawlessness and recklessness on the one hand,
> and neglect and abandonment on the other. Moreover, it is a central marker

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[503] For a detailed examination of this concept, see Madeleine Cohen's dissertation, "Here and Now: The Modernist Poetics of Do'ikayt," UC Berkeley, 2016.

[504] Museum of Modern Art, NYC. See museum catalogue: http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=81179

[505] Mayakovsky, 79

[506] "Commentaries to A Cloud in Tousers." *The Complete V.V. Mayakovsky in 13 Volumes*, Vol.1 (Moscow, 1957).

> of the young modernist's early engagement with the echo-chamber of traditional Jewish intertextuality. In the background one hears the expression *hefker-mentsh*, 'derelict,' as well as the humorous saying *hefker petrishke* (literally, 'ownerless parsley'), which stands for 'anything goes.' But beyond these slang collocations, and the impoverished anarchist they portray, the idea of *hefker* is central to rabbinic law (Tractate Shkalim and Yevamot, for example), one of the most ambivalent *Halakhic* concepts.[507]

Because it refers to the redistribution of wealth and land, defines one's duty to the poor, and the parameters of community legislative authority, *hefker* is also articulated as a key aspect of anarchist ethics. *Hefker* was particularly important to translator and philologist Dr. Yankev Meir Zalkind, a comrade of Rudolf Rocker, who served as an Orthodox rabbi while working for labor rights and against British militarization. In the 1920s, Zalkind held regular lectures on anarchist ethics and translated talmudic tractates related to labor issues into Yiddish, producing accessible guides for the working class. *Hefker* was also used as a key concept by Russian Yiddish anarchist historians Moshe Goncharuk and Yosef Luden. The legal concept of *hefker* evolved over centuries and was also projected back upon the Talmudic material itself.[508] Understanding the evolution of thought on *hefker*, then, positions Markish's claiming of *hefker* as a continuation, not a rupture, of talmudic genealogy.

Markish's play with genealogy and religious time is explored in *An Inch or Two of Time: Time and Space in Jewish Modernisms* (2015). Jordan Finkin explores the metaphorical power of time and space as a literary response to the Ashkenazi experience of exile:

> For those Jewish communities which place a strong emphasis on their exile-consciousness—or indeed on redefining the exilic concept—such a vocabulary of dislocation has a dramatic response (or a distinct usefulness). Because of the complicated features of its spatiotemporality, modernism offered a literary language with which to understand and express these perceptions of reality. This foregrounding of the *moment* as a conceptual building block of modernity is, again, a central innovation of literary modernism.[509]

Finkin discusses time as "a complicated system of understandings and perceptions," not a single unified concept. I expand Finkin's reading to analyze the political valences of temporal schemas, arguing that they reject nationalist time and prefigure anarchist, rather than messianic, time, which does not seek to "heal" exile through nationalism.

Markish imagines time before and beyond the state, eluding nationalist time—as he later writes, "Smashed are the clocks of the capitals and cities, smashed is the order of hours and days." Nationalist temporality took many forms, beyond reifying moments of

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[507] Kronfeld, 198-199.

[508] "Notes on Hefker Bet-Din Hefker in Talmudic and Medieval Law," Gerald J. Blidstein, xxxv.

[509] Finkin, ebook location 795.

state origin. In the Soviet context, between 1929 and 1940, the day of rest was desacralized and changed from Sunday to one day within a five-day work week. Another confluence of Soviet temporality and specifically Jewish cyclical time is represented in Yiddish Communist newspapers. Anna Shternshis describes their printing a daily timetable for studying Marxist texts based upon traditional devotional schedules. By maintaining religious temporal structures but refilling them with Communist content, the editors mapped new state ideology upon familiar experiences.[510] Against these nationalist manipulations of time, Markish's temporality is unregulated: as he writes, [I'm] "without a beginning, without an end," alluding to the Divine in the *Adon Olam* prayer.[511] In reference to the simultaneous "Jewishness" and "revolutionariness" of Yiddish modernism, Finkin writes:

> …I claim that these poets' particular deployment of spatiotemporal metaphors is from the point of view of non-Jewish poetry an innovation, but from an internal "Jewish" literary perspective a more or less natural development. This was a poetics which co-opted traditional temporality as static and combined that with the equation of homelessness and positive universalism. That their spatiotemporal metaphorical language can appear both so natural and so radical in the context of the new social, political, and especially ideological environment means that these Yiddish poets were uniquely positioned to produce revolutionary works that were still recognizably Jewish.[512]

In earlier chapters, I have documented how Yiddish anarchist theories of time before and beyond the state informed both literature and the writing of history. This diasporic tactic of bending time, eluding nationalist time and punitive temporalities—"smashing the clocks of the capitals and cities"— orders and disorders Markish's poetry.

Der fertsikyeriker man (The Forty-Year-Old Man)

Among the manuscripts smuggled out of the Soviet Union by Esther Markish was his poema *Der Fertsikyeriker Man* (The Forty-Year-Old Man). Hours before his arrest, as he was preparing to hide the documents, Markish told his wife twice: "*Fertsikyeriker man* is the best thing I've ever done. I want you to take special care of it."[513] She rescued the manuscript and brought it with her to Israel, where it was published in 1978 in Tel Aviv with commissioned illustrations by famed Soviet muralist Lev Syrkin. In her afterword, Esther Markish notes that its publication has fulfilled her late husband's last will and

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[510] See facsimile in *Soviet and Kosher: Jewish Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939.* Indiana University Press, 2006.

[511] The verse in "Adon Olam" which Markish references is: *B'li reishit, b'li tachlit, v'lo ha'oz v'hamisrah, "*Without beginning, without ending, dominion and power belongs to Him."

[512] Finkin, *An Inch or Two of Time,* chapter four (unpaginated).

[513] Esther Markish, 154.

testament.[514] According to Kronfeld, "[*Fertsikyeriker man* is] at once his most Jewish and his most anarchist book, and I believe it is the key to his life's work."[515] The anarchism of the work may be located in his poetic defiance of Soviet totalitarianism, subversion of Communist iconography, erasure of temporal and territorial borders, and anti-militarism; and the poema's Jewishness—no less defiant—in its web of biblical intertextuality, strategic use of linguistic components, and engagement with classical Jewish themes. Anti-authoritarianism in this context is expressed through assertion of Jewish identity, and vice versa.

Der fertsikyeriker man is comprised of two books with about forty sections each. These sections have twelve rhyming couplets each, and the meter is primarily propulsive amphibrachic tetrameter, a meter also popular in English and Russian. Markish's meter is not completely regular, and its deviations signal rhythmic and poetic meaning. It brackets a stressed syllable between two unstressed syllables in each metrical foot (for example: "bay *nakht* in / di *hey*ln / in *heyl* mit / a *lekht"*). Such strong meter lends the poema an incantatory, relentless quality and stabilizes his extravagant metaphors and abstractions. Throughout this tightly-corseted form, Markish sustains the sense of hurtling movement which characterized his early Mayakovskian work.

Forty is an organizing number throughout *Fertsikyeriker man.* Markish's son David—who translated this poema into Russian—commented that the number forty is very significant for Jews, as the age of maturity and the length of the Israelites' sojourn in the desert. David suggested that his father was, through this poema, making the case for a Soviet utopia.[516] However, the complexity of the poem prohibits such straightforward readings. Markish wrote a few poemas during his years in Warsaw, and in its form, *Fertsikyeriker* resembles the three poemas which Seth Wolitz frames as a triptych, with "*Volin* as the past; *Di kupe* as the present; and *Radyo* as the future.[517]" Wolitz notes that Markish "espoused the long poem, or *poema*, a new genre for him but one which was enjoying great esteem in Russian poetry of the time due to its capacity for multiple faceting and perspective, suspensions of time, simultaneity and meditative concerns. The use of fragments permitted both concentration and variety in very intense short space and temporal play.[518]" Like *Volin* (named for the Ukrainian region, not the Russian anarchist writer), *Fertsikyeriker* is structured in two sets of about forty poems. Seth Wolitz notes:

> The fragments of this long poem [*Volin*] play a crucial role in structuring the text. It is not accidental that there are forty fragments. The mytho-poetic narrative references Moses ascending the sacred mountain to bring the New Truth, but in this latest version of the grand narrative, the Moses *persona* now brings down the New Truth of the Red Revolution. As Moses' task took

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[514] Esther Markish, p130.

[515] Kronfeld, 204.

[516] Interview conducted by Rose Waldman, translated simultaneously into Hebrew by the wife of David Markish. From email correspondence with Waldman, winter 2015. Waldman viewed the Forty-Year-Old Man as a symbol of the Jewish nation, an interpretation which, she says, David initially "pooh-poohed" but later considered as a possibility.

[517] Wolitz, "*Radyo:* Yiddish Modernism as Agitprop," 104.

[518] Ibid.

> forty days and forty nights so each of the forty fragments represents a day in the *persona's* experience as he brings the truth from Moscow down to the people. Moreover, by using fragments, the poet breaks traditional linearity in time and space, fracturing them into discrete parts for the purpose of introducing the new age that breaks received conceptions of time and space. The poem seeks to ridicule Jewish, Christian, and bourgeois values and concepts of time as defined by the religious or national calendar, and space as measured by religious and bourgeois concepts of place and ownership.[519]

Fertsikyeriker man is composed on an even grander scale than these earlier poemas: its plotless intensity of emotion and density of imagery is unrelentingly sustained for 144 pages, spanning the heights of revolutionary euphoria to the depths of wartime.

This complexity of verse saved it and allowed his son David's translation to be published in Russian. Esther Markish recalls, "The only thing we could count on was the abysmal ignorance and stupidity of the censors, and they did not disappoint our hopes. They couldn't make head nor tail of this difficult poem, and they gave their okay.[520]" Esther Markish notes that censors "let slip by" the poem "The Red Monks.[521]" Although she seems to describe this as a distinct poem, it is identifiable as, in fact, the twenty-ninth section in Part One of *Fertsikyeriker man.* This poem contains some of the most furiously anti-Communist passages of the book, coded as a critique of religion. It depicts "red monks" (*monakhn*) as self-castrated bureaucrats: *Bay nakht in di heyln. In heyl mit a lekht. / Zey shnaydn far frumkayt zikh oys dos geshlekht. "*Night in the caverns. In a cave with a piercer / Piously, they excise their sex." The pettiness of these red monks "with stars on their sleeves" is inhuman: "With relish they take vengeance *[zaynen zikh noykem]* / On men for their laughter, on a flea for its bite."[522] The world is suffused with the red of ideology, upturning natural order: *Di nakht iz avek, nor der khoyshekh iz do / Un tshadyet mit roytlekhn veyroykh in tol. "*Night is gone, only darkness is here / And it is filled with fumes of reddish incense in the valley." Yet the poetic speaker prophesies that the red monks will be obliterated: *Nor yung iz der tog un frish iz der tog, / Un s'brot zey di zun oys vi flekn fun tol.* "But the young is the day and fresh is the day, / And the sun will scorch them to stains on the valley."[523] Finally, the power of the sun will obliterate petty human authority—the triumph of natural, even pagan, justice over these unnatural men. In their premonition of cosmic retribution, the final lines have a biblical cast to them.[524] Markish's verse was opaque enough that censors did not recognize the trifling, doomed red monks as portraits of themselves.

Hefker—that talmudic category of being unclaimed or wild—remains a key term in *Fertsikyeriker man*. One of the poema's opening images reveals not the adult modernist but a *hefkerdik* child, who is encountered abandoned or unclaimed by the side of the road.

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[519] Wolitz, 107.

[520] Esther Markish, 250.

[521] Esther Markish, 250-251.

[522] Esther Markish's rendering of that line, 250-251.

[523] Peretz Markish, 49.

[524] Such language is found in, for example, the "Song of Moses" in Deuteronomy 32:26, which promises to "slice into pieces" Israel's enemies and "blot out" their name.

Karolina Szymaniak has examined "a corpus of keywords" in Markish's manifestos, such as *umru* (unrest), *shturem* (storm), *heymlozikayt* (homelessness), *brodyage* (vagabond), and others:

> [T]he word *umru* that appears in almost every one of Markish's manifestos refers both to the external world—meaning '(political) unrest,' 'riots,' 'disturbances' such as those experienced during the Great War and revolutions—and to a frame of mind, indicating 'anxiety'… 'inquietude.' These emotions have not only a negative but also a positive meaning in Markish's texts. They prevent humanity in general, and a poet in particular, from falling into a sense of bourgeois complacency. Markish describes *umru* as "the yearning and striving for a home of unknown spirit-lands […] that is the sunny seed fertilizing the human spirit. The ways through which the spirit sets off seeking and wandering—this is the style, the individual expression of a personality. And that anxious wandering and seeking, incarnated in sounds, movements, melodies and plastic colours—is called 'art.'" As is the case with other terms in Markish's texts, *umru* — a word describing the social-political world and the inner world of modern man — also becomes a literary term: the anxious searching of each individual poet, which is his *style.* Hence, the state of *umru* is in fact the *sine qua non* of all artistic creativity and is synonymous with being in constant movement, uprooted and homeless.[525]

Ru, rest, and *umru,* restlessness, appear multiply in the beginning of *Fertsikyeriker Man*[526]*.* These are keywords for Moyshe-Leyb Halpern, the anarchic New York poet, as well:

> *Mayn umru fun a volf un fun a ber mayn ru,*
> *Di vildkayt shrayt in mir, di langvayl hert zikh tsu.*
> *Ikh bin nit vos ikh trakht, ikh bin nit vos ikh vil,*
> *Ikh bin der tsoyberer un bin dos tsoyber-shpil.*
>
> My restlessness is of a wolf, and of a bear my rest,
> Riot shouts in me, and boredom listens.
> I am not what I want, I am not what I think,
> I am the magician and I'm the magic-trick.[527]

Unrest—exilic unrest—is the substratum of the world. Thus style and diasporism are inseparable. Like Hannah Arendt's claim that refugees are the avant-garde of their people, Markish's incantation of *hefker, umru, shturem* thematizes the condition of unrest. The

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[525] Szymaniak, 75.

[526] He also wrote a poem titled *"Tsum hafn: Ru"* (To the Harbor: Rest), which begins, "Day after day, the wandering ship caravans…" For manuscript facsimile, see YIVO Encyclopedia entry: http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Markish_Perets

[527] Benjamin and Barbara Harshav, *American Yiddish Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007), 400-401.

sage-like *hefkerdik* child by the road in the first poem evokes Rachel lamenting by the side of the road, further converging classical tropes of Jewish exile.

Borders and Landscape

Throughout his last poema, Markish links images of the expansive future with borderless space. Indeed, this theme was evident from his very first book, titled *Rubezh* ("The Border," in Russian) and remained constant throughout his literary production, as in Poem 33 of Part I:

Es trift der kayor vi a goldener zalb
Oyf shpitsn fun berg un oyf shpitsn fun vald.

Mit a tsitrikn vint un mit likhtikn shorkh
Leygt zikh tsu, rirt zikh on un vekt oyf der kayor.

S'pruvt di kleyninke fligelekh—tsum flien a shvalb
Un der klung fun kayorikn shmid vekt dem vald.

A gefokh, a gefli, a getsvitsher bafalt
Un es filt zikh mit freyd un gezang on der vald.

Ot-ot gist zikh shoyn iber di velt bizn rand
Mit zalbung fun sheyn un mit goldn getrank.

Nor a shtrek ton di hant un a tsi ton dos moyl
Funem hoylinkn leyb, fun der hoylinker hoyt—

Un es git zikh der vald in di heykhn a trog,
Un mit hent—dem kayor, un mit grables—dem tog.

Un ikh bin do oykh, un oykh mir iz bashert
Tsu zayn oyf a freyd fun kayor oyf der erd.[528]

Daybreak drips like a golden salve
Upon mountain peaks and forest peaks

With quiverly[529] wind and bright rustle

[528] Poem 33, Book 1.

[529] I coined a slightly-off English word to attempt a match with Markish's odd "tsitrikn," seemingly a portmanteau of "tsiter" and "trikn," quiver and trick.

Lies down, touches and wakes up the dawn.

Small birds try, a swallow almost soars
Dawn's blacksmith peals rouse the woods.

A waving, a winging, a twittering strikes
The forest feels joyous, replenished by song.

Any minute now the world already streams over its border
Anointing with beauty and golden drink.

Just to reach out the hand and tug at the mouth
of the bare body, of the bare skin—

And the forest lifts itself up high and fast
And with hands, lifts the dawn and with shovels—the day.

And I am here too, I'm also fated
To be upon earth at joy of daybreak.

Markish does not write that the nation or state overflows its borders, but: *Ot-ot gist zikh shoyn iber di velt bizn rand, "*Any minute now the *world* already streams over its border." *Rand* is the rim or circumference of a container, not the geopolitical border (*grenetz*). Markish again shakes the norm of temporality with the phrasing "any moment now already": this is not the "always already" of postmodernism, but the Modernist merging of past, present and future into a single, urgent moment. The second half of the rhyme connotes messianic time: *Mit zalbung fun shayn un mit goldn getrank. "Zalbung"* is a noun coined from the verb *zalbn,* to anoint or consecrate. Biblical anointment is performed with oil; this anointment is done with the more hedonistic "beauty and golden drink." The poetic speaker's presence at the joy of daybreak is fated, apiece with the world, in the realm of the animals and birds also fated to be there, singing. Each element exceeds its imposed limit: the world overflows its borders as the human body reaches beyond itself. Furthermore, the familiar Soviet iconography of hammers striking, harbinger swallows circling, and red dawns rising is here subsumed into open signifiers of nature. His daybreak is an undetermined, ambivalent moment of possibility, before birds even know how to fly, rather than overdetermined metaphor.

This unresolved unity of multitudes and embodiment in nature continues in the third poem of Part II:

Ot do iz a barg, un ot dort iz a teykh,
Nor der veg iz mit ale, mit yedn baglaykh!

Ot do iz a grenets, ot dort iz der rand,
Nor iber dem rand iz a hant mit a hant.

An opbeyg fun rekhts un fun links—a gefar,

Nor onkumen vet men farvundikt un dar.

Gegangen a tog un gegangen a yor,
S'bagleyt der farnakht un es vart der kayor.

Es benken di trit nokh a veg un nokh geyn,
Un shtendik far eynem tseviklen zikh tsvey.

Un di tsvey zikh geport, un di tsvey zikh gemert,
Un ot viklen zey oyf shoyn di gantsinke erd.

Un dos moyl iz in dorsht un in fiber farzoymt.
Vel ikh oyfgeyn tsu dir un dir zogn azoy:

Fun undz — iber rand, fun undz — unter rand,
Tsegeyen zikh vegn tsu yetvidn land,

Tsu yetvidn mentsh un tsu yetvidn kind —
Un epes fargeyt, un epes bagint.

Keyn eynem — farteylt, keyn eynem — farzen,
Un oyf yetvidn trot zikh tseglekern tsen,

Un hundert un toyznt fun gor fun der erd —
Un s'stayet keyn otem, un s'klekt nit keyn trer.

Iz vos iz a barg un vos iz a taykh,
Az der veg iz tsu ale — mit yedn baglaykh….

Right here is a mountain, right there is a stream
But the path is for all, for all as equals!

Right here is a border, right there is the edge
Yet over the edge is a hand with a hand.

From the right, disparity. From the left—danger,
Yet they will arrive wounded and wan.

They walked a day, they walked a year
The dusk accompanies and the dawn awaits.

Footsteps yearn for a path, yearn to walk
Now they're rolling up the whole world as one.

And the two mated, the two multiplied,
And there at once enfolded the entire world.

And the mouth thirsts, stitched closed in fever.

I'll rise up to you and tell you this:

From us—over the edge, from us—under the edge,
Roads dissolve away towards every land

To each person, to every child
Something sets and something dawns.

Nobody passed over, not one overlooked
Each footstep chiming out ten chimes

Hundreds and thousands from over the earth
No breath is enough, no tear suffices.

So what is a mountain and what is a stream
When the road is for all — all as equals…

This prefigured universal brotherhood begins with human kinship with space. "Beyond the edge is a hand with a hand": this suggests the icon of unions and internationalist idealism, while still retaining the quality of a line of experimental poetry, rather than a slogan. The choice of *rand* (rim, edge) rather than *grenetz* also evokes a hand helping another person from over the edge of an overflowing, deluged world. In the line *Un dos moyl iz in dorsht un in fiber farzoymt (*And the mouth thirsts, stitched closed in fever), the word *farzoymt* also plays with border imagery: *zoym* is a seam, hem, or border, so the throat could also be seamed or bordered in fever. Markish unsettles the categories, not only of human borders, but of natural difference ("What is a mountain and what is a stream"). The images of dissolved duality reference the Platonic creation story in which one being is separated into two, and Genesis, with its injunction to be fruitful and multiply.

Poem 30 of Book II revels in nature beyond borders, with a richness and lushness of embodied detail:

S'shmekt der tog oyf di vegn mit zunzaft geshmak
Un der yam hengt in vayt, vi a bloyer hamak.

Ven es git a tsefokh zikh a vel nokh a vel,
Iz tsetantst zikh der yam, iz der yam — karosel.

Beygt di khvalyes vi kemeln di hoykers oyf frakht,
Un oyf freydike rayters un makhnes er vart.

Iz durkh bergn-gevelb iber yamikn breg,

Geyen makhnes arayn, geyen makhnes avek.

S'bagegnen zikh makhnes un shnaydn zikh ayn,
Un gezang baym avek, un gezang bayn arayn.

S'zaynen tsugn aroys funem gantsn farband
Un: "—di zun un dem yam un dem opru derlang!"

Nor oyf eynemens ru veln zibn zayn vakh,
Un oyf zibn mol tog—zol nor eyn mol zayn nakht!

Az di hoykh hot farvigt un der vint—nit geshtert,
Lign berg mit di bergike brust tsu di shtern.

Un kvaln fun vaynzaftn kvalndik kvelt—
Iz der yam biz di kni, un di gantsinke velt!

Es shlayfn zikh shteyndlekh fun layber getsundn
Un der breg iz gebet mit geshlifener zun.

N'az dos harts trinkt zikh on mit a tog oyfn yam,
Mit a tog oyf der zun, un di zun hot gezamt,

Vert farshikert dos leyb, un tsu kukn vert shver
Vi es lign di berg mit di brust tsu di shtern…[530]

Upon the roads, day fills with savory sun-sap
And the sea hangs in the distance like a blue hammock.

When wave lands a blow upon wave
The sea bursts into dance, the sea's a carousel.

The sea bends the waves' back like camels' humps
Laden with cargo, awaiting joyful riders and hordes.

Through vaulted mountains over marine borders
Multitudes come, multitudes leave.

Masses collide, cut through each other
There's song for departing, song for arriving.

Trains depart from the whole union[531]

[530] Part II, poem 30, p112.
[531] In Yiddish, this evokes both a labor union and the USSR itself.

Saying: "Strike sun and sea and rest!"

For every single rest, seven will keep watch
And for sevenfold day, let only one be night!

When the heights get lulled and the wind unhindered
Mountains repose, mountainous breast to the stars.

Springs of wine-juices spring, springing
The sea, the whole world—they reach to your knee!

Flint polished by kindling bodies
The shoreline beds down with sharp-polished sun.

When the heart gets soused on a day at sea
From a day of sun, and the sun lingered

When the body's drunk, it's hard to see
How mountains lie, breast to the stars…

This section has a psalm-like quality, where the natural world is animated lustily. The hills do not skip like lambs, but repose like breasts towards the stars; the sea does not sing the glory of God, but dances with gusto and abandon. The cryptic lines seem to re-enact the seven days of creation in Genesis (*Nor oyf eynemens ru veln zibn zeyn vakh,/ Un oyf zibn mol tog—zol nor ayn mol zeyn nakht!* For every single rest, seven will keep watch / And for sevenfold day, let only one be night!). There are echoes of a Mayakovskian giant figure: "The sea, the whole world—they reach to your knee!"

Fittingly, this poem uses markedly more "international" vocabulary, such as the words "hammock" (originally from Taíno) and "carousel" (French). The irreligious imagery is reflected in the near-total lack of *loshn-koydesh,* except for *makhnes,* 'crowd.' Although Markish's handwritten manuscript spells *makhnes* with Soviet orthography (מאכנעס), the 1978 Tel Aviv edition alters it to standard spelling (מחנות), which unmarks the text's geographic origins and historical context. Markish consistently uses Soviet orthography for *loshn-koydesh,* which was overturned by the poema's Tel Aviv editors. David Shneer and Robert Adler Peckerar describe Markish's language politics in the Russian context:

> For someone so clearly invested in the Russian Revolution, why would Markish not write in Russian, the language of the Revolution? The easy answer is that he wasn't good enough to earn a reputation among the lights of radical Russian poetry like Mayakovsky and Blok. And that may well be true. But for Markish, Yiddish would not just be a safe linguistic universe in which to write. It was also the most modern of modern *Jewish* choices. In the same year that several volumes of his poetic works appeared, the Soviet state, centered in Russia but expanding to include Ukraine, Belorussia, and elsewhere, named Yiddish the official language of Soviet Jews. On the one hand, this was simply an act of normalizing Jews' relationship in the

> brotherhood of nations that would come to define the Soviet Union, an entity officially established in 1924. But it was also a way of making the Bolshevik Revolution Jewish by overturning the Jewish linguistic hierarchy. […] By choosing Yiddish, Markish was taking his place in the Soviet Revolution in the most Jewish way possible.[532]

Using *loshn-koydesh* terminology with Soviet orthography; his original spelling was later erased in Israeli publication, which standardized it. While his choice of Yiddish does "overturn the Jewish linguistic hierarchy" internally, it also strategically eludes censorship within major-language state apparatus and surveillance of minor languages.[533]

Reading and translating these lines, I tried to imagine how Markish would have performed them. Esther Markish recalls Russian translators visiting their house to collaborate:

> No sooner would a translator enter the room and I leave it than the air would be filled with shouts, in Russian and Yiddish, singing, stamping, and general clamor: Markish was working with the translator—that is, he was tearing the translation to pieces, demonstrating that words were only the receptacle for feelings and that poetry could not be translated by trying to match up word with the original… On one occasion, alarmed by a strange thud, I peered through the crack in the door. Markish was prone on the floor, arms wide, literally embracing it: the verses in question represented the author embracing the whole world, the entire universe.[534]

While we don't know which poem he was translating in that anecdote, there are many moments of such all-embracing kinship:

> *Es blit undzer erd mit shtol un mit roykh—*
> *A bruder di vayt un a bruder—di hoykh.*
>
> Our earth buds with steel and smoke
> The distance, a brother and a brother—the heights.

Without borders, comradeship with all life becomes possible. In the very last poem of the book, nature blooms in concert with human industry, as in the passage above, "*Un der klung fun kayorikn shmid vekt dem vald /* And the pealing of dawn's blacksmith rouses the woods":

> *In likht un in fayer der tog khapt zikh oyf—*
> *Yeder otem in vint,—un der vint iz a ruf:*

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[532] Shneer and Peckerar, 325.

[533] See my discussion of code-switching, the anarchist press, and Yiddish language politics in Chapter 2.

[534] Esther Markish, *The Long Return,* 57.

Bashtoln dos land un es koven azoy—
Fun fligl der kop un fun ayzn—di zoyl!

Ot dort vu an oks hot geshlept zikh in yokh—
Zol loyfn a traktor, a tsveyter un nokh.

Un dortn vu eyner un tsvey shoyn gepruvt—
Iz a tshat oyf dr'erd un a tshat in der luft.

Un s'rufn zikhh koymenem iber in dr'hoykh:
—Deryogn di hent fun badarf un gebroykh.

Es zol zikh farmestn oyf gob un fartser
Mit varshtat a varshtat un a tsekh mit a tsekh.

Ot dort vu eyn koymen—zol oyfshteyn a vald.
Un s'ayln zikh hastik fun yung un fun alt,

Un vayber un kinder, un ale baynand—
Di hent un di aksl oyf hoybn dos land.

Es raysn zikh hent. Me dervart nit keyn sof.
Di drite ashmoyre. Es klekt nit keyn shtof.

Fargeyt shoyn der tog, in di oygn er tayet.
Es hot far di hent keyn varshtat nit gestayet.

Un s'raysn zikh hent dort geshtrekt in farlang:
A hoyb ton dos land un a trog ton dos land.
Un s'vert der farmest nit geshtilt un nit zat—
A tsekh mit a tsekh, mit varshtat a varshtat![535]

In light and in fire, the day's startled awake
Every breath in the wind, and the wind is a cry:

Steel the land and hammer it so:
Of wing the head and the sole, of iron!

There, where a yoked ox trudged
A tractor will run. Another, and more.

Where one and another already struggled
Fumes on the earth, fumes in the air.

[535] Book 2, Poem 38, p122 (last page of poema).

Smokestacks call across the heights to each other:
Overtake the hands of need and use

May they vie for the bounty,
Workshop with workshop and union with union.

Where once just one smokestack—a forest will rise
Young and old rush and hustle

Wives and children, side by side
Their hands and shoulders to lift up the land

Hands rush in. They don't wait for the end.
Third work shift of the night. There's not enough.

Day passes already, it melts before the eyes.
No workshop sufficed for these hands.

Hands struggle there, extend in desire:
To lift up the land, to carry the land.

The contest is unquenched, unsatisfied
Union against union, workshop against workshop!

Markish's metaphors of nature, though sometimes gendered, are not stereotypically feminized here. Land is not a mother. Smokestacks, typically a phallic image, instead call to each other across rooftops, and women and children are the ones to raise the land. The living land overflows circumscriptions of human gender as fluidly as it remains uncontained by national borders. Masses of workers are rendered anonymous and unified, a flurry of reaching hands and melting eyes. These verses interweave the iconography of human labor with the unboundedness of nature, creating a felt sense of being in the world beyond both the 'party ticket' worldview of industrialization *and* Romantic transcendentalism.

In this final poem, Markish defiantly uses *loshn-koydesh* in his description of the factory. In its biblical context, *ashmoyre* means "one of the three shifts of the night watch," such as arising during the night to pray; here, it signals the nighttime shift of workers at a factory. There is not enough fabric or material at the factory to produce everything that's needed, and smokestacks urge the workers on, to overtake the needs of empty-handed people. In the final couplet, teams of workers compete to produce the highest quantity of some unnamed product. Knowing that the poema would be read by censors, the *loshn-koydesh* of the last poem resounds like a final salute. At the same time, this poem is much more in the idiom of officialdom: on the surface, it reads like a Soviet ode to overproduction, but upon closer examination, it's filled with ominous portents of

environmental disaster. Just like his earlier poem *A ner tomid baym orn,* the outer poems frame a more subversive core.

Troubled Temporality

Markish creates an almost Blakean expectation of revolution, as though we are eternally poised on the cusp of new dawn. Yet his *metaphors* for time are broken, flea-bitten, suffused with animality. This thick texture of time alternates between the unbounded grotesque and ecstatic: time overflows the marking of hours, days, clocks, and sabbath alike, as land overflows borders. Poem five of Book One begins:

Der baginen iz frish, der baginen iz royt,
Un der veg iz a veg un iz yedn fartroyt.

Geyt der tog oyfn veg, geyt geboygn un fest,
Un es baysn zikh flign oyf im far di kest.

Eyne shvert mit der mamen un kind zikh in dr'hoykh,
Az zi iz mit fon nokh aroys funem boykh.

Un a tsveyter mit vayb un mit bet taratakht,[536]
Az zi iz mit a hamer aroys fun der trakht.

The dawn is brisk, the dawn is red
the path is a path and entrusted to all.

Day walks the road, walks hunched and steady
flies bite it for their daily bread.[537]

One woman swears by her mother and child on high
That she emerged with a flag from the belly.

Another makes ruckus in bed with his wife
Vowing she came from the womb with a hammer.

In this passage, Markish sets up readers' expectations of Communist temporality, then swiftly subverts them through the hyperbolic pitch of the second half of the poem. The vision of a Communist future signified through a red dawn and a hammer-clutching baby

[536] Taratakh is an onomatopoeic Russian word meaning "snap-crack" or "smash-pow!" Perhaps Markish created a Yiddish verb from the Russian, like the Tatar/Turkish words that entered colloquial Russian, such as "Ajda!" ("Get moving!")

[537] *Esn kest* is the rabbinic custom of feeding the Torah student in a rich Jew's house (typically as part of a prospective marriage match). It may also be the period of room and board, when a Torah student is supported in his learning by the bride's family. Here, the flies eat at the weary day for their "*esn kest*."

has disturbing cracks in it: time does not stride gloriously towards the sun, but shuffles on a dusty road, bitten by fleas. Markish employs Christian messianic temporality: the mother and child are "risen," and she holds not the scepter and castle but hammer and flag—perhaps an immaculate conception of ideology.

The first poem of Part Two announces itself with lines nearly Cubist in their shape and fracture, and with imagery in a surrealist or Dalí-esque mode:

Tsebrokhn di zeygers fun kroynshtot un shtet,
Tsebrokhn der seyder fun sho'en un teg!

Un ibergekert oyf der anderer zayt
Shoyn hengt kalendar un er dart un er tayet.

Es lign di teg in gevalger fun brokh—
Un vu iz do shabes, un vu iz do vokh?

Oysgemisht ale vi zangen in shnit —
Iz velkher den zuntik, un velkher— nit?

Es shit zikh der brokh un di horns gegurt
Oyf shmelts un tsegli un oyf nayes geburt.

Es brenen di oyvns getsundn fun freyheyt
Un s'shtraln zikh oys — nit keyn teg, nor di tseyt!

Un mishmoyres zi shneydt, un mishmoyres zi bayt
In di roymen in dr'hoykh, in di shtrekes oyf vayt.

Durkh gezang fun bavegung, geverb un geboy,
In freyd fun vuks un farlust, durkh gebert un geboykh.

Durkh dem menschlekhn zayn, durkh dem mentshlekhn min,
In freyd fun der arbet, in freyd fun der mi!

Un zi geyt un zi shtaygt mit gezangikn takt:
— Rum tsu ot di velkhe hobn gevagt!

Rum tsu dem akhzer mit hamer in hant
Vos hot nit getsitert, vos hot nit gezamt,

Baym haldz funem gliver, baym haldz fun fargang
Un hot zikh farmostn aroyf — un derlangt!

Smashed are the clocks of the capital[538] and cities,
Smashed is the order[539] of hours and days!

Overturned, the calendar hangs
on the other side, already withering, melting.

Days wallow in scattered rupture—
Where here is sabbath, where here is weekday?

All mixed like sheaves at harvest
Which then is Sunday, which is not?

Rupture overflows, the horns girded
Forged and smelted and newly reborn.

Ovens burn, with freedom alight
radiating not days, but time!

Night workers reap, night workers trade
in rooms above, in stretches of distance.

Through song of movement, of verb and of form,

And of growth and loss, through birth and through use.

Through human existence, through human kind,
In joy of work, in joy of toil!

And she goes and she rises with chanted cadence:
— Glory only to those who were daring!

Glory to the cruel one, hammer in hand
who did not tremble, who did not tarry

At the paralyzed throat, at the throat of the past

Who fixed aim — and strikes!

The metaphor of mixed sheaves at harvest echoes biblical time, as agriculture is ruled by the seasons. Finkin discusses an image from an earlier Markish poem: a deserted

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[538] Yiddish: *kroynshtot,* literally "City of the Crown." There is an echo of Kronstadt, the anarchist sailors' rebellion in Russia, 1921. There are other words for 'capital' (*kapital* and *hoyptshtot),* the echo with Kronstadt is likely.

[539] Yiddish: *seyder,* hebraic term for 'order' with philosophical, ritual, and religious meanings. Markish uses two hebraic terms related to time in one line: *seyder* and *sho'en,* hours.

marketplace wall where "clocks hang, hairy like hacked-off heads of calves, / And lick emptiness with the pendulum's back-and-forth." As in that image, where clocks are suspended carcasses at the butcher's shop, the shattered machinery of time once had animal life.

The confusion of secular or state time and biblical cyclical time is not merely a stylistic device, but has political and psychological resonance. The calendar hangs wilting like a Dalí clock, but the speaker's consternation is real: *Es lign di teg in gevalger fun brokh— /Un vu iz do shabes, un vu iz do vokh?* "Days wallow in brokenness— / Where here is sabbath, where here is the week?" This is not an untroubled liberation from repressive hourly wage systems or absurd religious strictures; rather, these lines dramatize psychological trauma of being cut adrift in undifferentiated time. The line *Rum tsu dem akhzer mit hamer in hant / Vos hot nit getsitert, vos hot nit gezamt,* "Glory to the cruel one, hammer in hand / who did not tremble, who did not tarry," inverts the messianic prayer of Habbakuk 2:3, "Though he tarry, he shall come." Markish begins with lines worthy of the most emphatic Futurist: *Tsebrokhn di zeygers fun kroynshtot un shtet, / Tsebrokhn der seyder fun shoen un teg!* "Smashed are the clocks of capitals and cities, / Smashed is the order of hours and days!" Yet by the end of the poem, he has Judaized futurist time and troubled its promise of liberation by emphasizing its violent implications. The final lines ascribe a *loshn-koydesh* term (*akhzer*, the cruel one) to the figure who wields the hammer: "Glory to the brute, hammer in hand / who did not tremble, who did not linger / At the throat of death, at the throat of the past / Who fixed aim — and strikes!" This ironic declamation perhaps indicts the brutality of those who would destroy the past, who would linger at the throat of the past.

Soldiers' Embodiment

Markish advocated for a vital poetics through visceral metaphors. As Karolina Szymaniak notes, "The metaphor of poetic language is at the same time a metaphor of the poetic body since for Markish true poetic expression comes from the internal poetic 'guts': 'the poet spits out a poem like a blood clot.'"[540] Poet Melech Ravitch describes Markish performing his manifesto as a kind of self-sacrificial offering: "He was sweating so much that steam, as if from a big kettle, rose off of him up to the high wings of the stage, as if he were burning on some kind of altar."[541] These displays of poetic prowess performed the kind of able-bodied, virile masculinity idealized by Expressionism. However, there is an inherent vulnerability in being a body alone on stage, and contemporary accounts reveal his androgynous appeal to men and women alike.

Markish's metaphors of literary production were always visceral, from his early credo *of shoyderlikhkayt* (shuddering/shivering-ness) to his later declarations. As Jesse Cohn shows in his study of anarchist visual iconography, female bodies were rarely idealized as revolutionary[542], while disabled bodies were rendered invisible. Yet in

[540] Szymaniak, 79.

[541] Szymaniak, 68.

[542] Jesse Cohn, "Beyond the 'Virile Body'?: The Past, Present and Future of Anarchist Iconography." Presentation at Anarchism and the Body conference, Purdue University, Indiana, June 2015.

Fertsikyeriker, Markish portrays bodies broken and physically traumatized by war, which is more typical of post-World War I Expressionism. The moment of destruction is not represented; we see the head after it is severed, we meet the soldier after he has lost a foot. The moment of the poem is post-destruction. This is not a discourse representative of difference and disability, but disintegration of the body as essential and inevitable end. While Soviet Realist art is dominated by strong men and women, the Expressionist visibility of the war-traumatized body is most shocking in its disruption of the visual field: *Ven es rayst oyf a shlakht op a zelner di fis, / Iz khapt er zikh on mit di hent far der shpiz: "*When battle tears off a soldier's feet, / He hangs on to his bayonet with his hands." In the middle of Poem 40 in Part I, Markish represents the body of a soldier left by the side of the road:

Der tog zikh fartsit, zikh fartsit un fartsert,
Un ver mit a hamer, un ver mit a serp.

S'bafelt der hamoyn un mit zun er bashvert,
Un ikh mit a zastup[543] far keyversher erd.

Iz farkhlyanet dos harts un mit fiber farzoymt.
Vel ikh oyfgeyn tsu dir un dir zogn azoy:

Itst mit dorshtike oygn di vaytn me mest
Un tsu kvure vil keyner itst brengen keyn mes.

Ligt der mes oyfn veg, s'iz vi shrift zayn gebeyn.
S'zaynen foystn farshtart un tsum himl—di tseyn.

Nor di geyers farbaygeyn un tsrik kumen on,
Un dem mes unter pakhve farrukt m'hot a fon

Mit oyfshrift mit heln, mit oysyes royt:
—Der toyter in lebn zol lebn in toyt!

The day drags on, drags on and pines away
And who by hammer, and who by sickle.

Mobs command and swear on the sun
And I with a spade for burial earth.

The heart's flooded, stitched closed in fever.
I will rise up to you and tell you this:

Now with thirsty eyes one measures the distance

[543] From the Ukrainian. Term used also by Sholem Aleichem. A spade is used to cut the outline of a grave.

No-one wants to bear a corpse to burial.

The corpse lies on the path, bones like metal type
Fists frozen rigid, teeth towards heaven.

Only wanderers come and go
A flag was shoved under the cadaver's armpit

Inscribed with gleaming red letters:
— May the one dead in life live long in death!

These verses juxtapose deeply religious imagery with state idiom, undercutting each. The fake sanctity of the fallen soldier is grotesquely underscored by the hebraic *oysyes* (letters) of Jewish mysticism, colored red for blood and revolution. The corpses' bones are also like *shrift,* typographical letters placed on a printing press. The famous refrain of the Yom Kippur prayer *Unetanneh tokef* —"who by water and who by fire, who by sword and who by beast…"—is radically parodied with "Who by hammer, and who by sickle…" In the last verse, only *geyers* pass by; these are almost-mythical flâneurs or wanderers who sometimes appear as messianic figures in Jewish lore. The landscape appears devastated and apocalyptic, populated only by corpses and these mythical figures. Markish satirizes the attempt to posthumously co-opt a soldier's body into an emblem: "A flag was shoved under the cadaver's armpit." Rather than burying the soldier's corpse under a flag, the poetic speaker witnesses this devastating attempt to give meaning and symbol to the immeasurability of death by the crude gesture of shoving a flag—with red type—beneath its armpit. *Un ikh mit a zastup far keyversher erd, "*And I with a spade for burial earth"—the speaker is the only one equipped to perform the ritual task of male mourners. The sound of soil heaped upon a grave is traditionally considered to help mourners comprehend the reality of death.

Markish wrote *Der fertsikyeriker man* against the visual backdrop of new technologies of newsreels, medical documentation, and war photography, as well as his own memories of the pogroms and Russian Revolution. Artists of the World War I era countered government imagery glorifying war and soldiers' virility by appropriating war documentary. The shattered frames of Cubism, for example, incorporated headlines and newspapers.[544] Perhaps the most powerful of visual anti-war publications came from Germany. In 1925, a young anarchist named Ernst Friedrich (1894-1967) published the photo book *Krieg dem Kriege! (War Against War!*). Its title is probably a reference to the pacifist ideology expressed in William James' 1906 essay "The Moral Equivalent of War." *War Against War!* is a graphic book of photography, including more than 180 photographs primarily drawn from German military and medical archives that had been censored during wartime. The book opens with images of boys' playthings, such as toy soldiers and cannon. It closes with a sequence entitled "The Face of War" — twenty-four close-up photographs of soldiers with disfigured and maimed faces. Beside each picture is an anti-militarist caption,

[544] See, for example, Picasso's collages combining newspaper headlines and embroidery, produced throughout 1912.

translated across four languages: German, French, English, and Dutch. Susan Sontag writes of Friedrich's book:

> This is photography as shock therapy. Between the toys and the graves, the reader has an excruciating photo tour of four years of ruin, slaughter, and degradation: wrecked and plundered churches and castles, obliterated villages, ravaged forests, torpedoed passenger steamers, shattered vehicles, hanged conscientious objectors, naked personnel of military brothels, soldiers in death agonies after a poison-gas attack, skeletal Armenian children.[545]

Left-wing intellectuals predicted that the book would sway public opinion against war, while veterans' groups sued public galleries that displayed the photographs and police raided bookstores selling copies.[546] By 1930, the book had gone through ten editions in Germany and been translated into many languages, defining the visual iconography of antimilitarism.[547] *Der fertsikyeriker man* follows the same trajectory as *War Against War!*: the poema opens with images of militarized childhood, juxtaposing the violent world of adults with the figure of the little boy, and concludes with panoramas of the ravages of war centered on the human face. Markish also uses strict couplet form in mock-epic tone as another tactic of anti-war poetic subversion.

A major contribution to the visual vocabulary of anti-militarism referenced by Markish was the French melodrama *J'accuse.* The film was distributed in Russia by the Danish corporation Nordisk, and its imagery and technique became highly influential for filmmakers in Moscow.[548] Its director, Abel Gance, stated that its purpose was "to show the horror of war and consecrate to the execration of the ages those who are responsible."[549] Gance's own politics vacillated between pacifism and militancy, and he at one point joined the Comite International de defense de l'Union Sovietique.[550] The romantic aspect of its plot is driven by a love triangle between a young woman married to an older man, but in love with a poet; Gance pits these archetypes of soldier and poet against each other, but they reconcile after returning from war. The film's notorious final sequence lingers in close-up on the disfigured faces of soldiers, some perhaps chemically melted, some with

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[545] Susan Sontag, "Looking at War: Photography's view of devastation and death." *New Yorker,* December 9, 2002.

[546] After receiving a donation, Friedrich bought property and opened the Anti-War Museum (Anti-Kriegs Museum) in Berlin. The museum was a center of pacifist, anti-militarist organizing until 1933, when the Nazis destroyed it and arrested Friedrich. The museum was re-opened in 1982, 15 years after Friedrich's death, and is today run by his grandson Tommy Spree. http://www.anti-kriegs-museum.de/english/start1.html

[547] Ibid.

[548] Robert Byrne, San Francisco Silent Film Festival, 2009. http://www.silentfilm.org/archive/jaccuse-1918

See also: entry on *Film Reference, http://www.filmreference.com/encyclopedia/Romantic-Comedy-Yugoslavia/World-War-I-EUROPE.html*

[549] Abel Gance, *Prisme* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1930), p164

[550] Steven Philip Kramer, review of Norman King's book *Abel Gance: Politics of Spectacle.* In *Literature/Film Quaterly,* Vol. 13, No. 4 (1985), pp. 275-276

heads wrapped in white cotton, all in uniform.[551] Here and there, skeletons appear amongst the crowd. Their movements are echoed in the crashing of superimposed waves and the passing of clouds before their faces. The wounded masses are filmed through a bug-eye lens, multiplying their numbers. These men were a hidden population, nicknamed *les gueules cassess* ("the broken mugs"). At the sight of one man with a chemically melted face, we hear women's screams; behind a man with no nose, a skeleton looms. The film ends with resurrection upon a battlefield: the wounded rise[552], intercut with news footage of soldiers' fanfare through the Arc de Triomphe as a martial fanfare plays. The camera pans across rows of crosses, kaleidoscopic in their multitude. The actors were in fact 2000 soldiers on eight-day leave, briefly back after four years at the front in Verdun. Eighty percent of the actors were killed there upon their return.[553]

[551] *J'accuse,* 1938 (clip). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPr-TwPh9sk

[552] *J'accuse,* 1919 (extract). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNDwVK7Gwlw

[553] Kevin Brownlow. *The Parade's Gone By....* (London: Columbus Books, 1989; first publ. 1968) p.533.

Stills from *J'accuse* (1938), France. Written and directed by Abel Gance.

Gance again explored the theme of the anti-miltarist poet in *La Fin du Monde* (1930). Set after the international anarchist revolution of 1950, which eliminated war, taxes, and social strife, the planet now faces an impending comet. A pivotal moment occurs when the hero—played by Gance himself—reads aloud a passage from Kropotkin: "There are times in the life of humanity when the necessity for a powerful shock, for a cataclysm to come and shake society to its very depths, imposes itself in all respects.[554]" After the war, Gance re-made *J'Accuse;* together with *La Fin du Monde,* they form a thematic trilogy about war and poetry.

The mass-circulated, anarcho-Expressionist images of these and other period films form the visual background of Markish's antimilitarist imagery. Foregrounding physical grotesquerie after the ravages of war was a political act of witness, as in this very Expressionist passage from Part II:

> *Es shvartsn tsum himl zikh foystike festungs—*
> *Firshtokike kvorim far brider un shvester.*
>
> *Antkegn di fentserlekh — grinsn un nest,*
> *Un taykhn fun untn—di spre tsi der dniester.*

[554] James M. Welsh and Steven Philip Kramer. "Abel Gance's Accusation against War." *Cinema Journal.* Vol. 14, No. 3 (Spring, 1975), p59.

In shteynerne shtaygn fun khoyshekh farshtekt
Hungern shvester tsu fertsiker teg.

Tsu fertsiker teg un tsu fertsiker nekht
Dos moyl nit ge'efnt un oyg—nit fartrert…

Zey hungern herlekh un shtolts un getray
Un khoven mit letstinke reges dem shtrayk.

Mit letstinke reges fun lebn un layb,
Nor dakh iz fun shteyn un der himl iz blay…

In brust in farbrenter,in layb in fardarts,
Shtelt op azoy shtil zikh un langzam dos harts.

In dorshtikn fiber, in bren un in turem,
Trikenen langzam di odern oys.

N'bay nakht iber festung, bay nakht iber turem
Onlaybike kumen zey libn dem shturem…

S'iz hel in arum, un s'iz likht umetum,
Un zey kern zikh mer in di shtaygn nit um.

Un nokh dem iz fintster fun droung di gas
Un s'shrayen di shteyner fun tsorn un has.

Un s'trogn zikh droendik gasn aleyn
Mit flamike fonen, mit flamen gebeyn.

Fist of fortresses rise black to heaven
Four-storied graves for brothers and sisters.

Across small windows — foliage and nest,
Underneath, streams: Spree stretching to Dniester.

In stony cages of concealed darkness
Sisters starve for forty days.

For forty days and forty nights
Mouth unopened and eye, untearful

They starve in splendor and pride and devotion
And rear the strike in the final moments.

In final moments of life and body
The roof is stone and the sky is lead…

In burning breast, in withered body
Calm and slow, the heart stops.

In thirsty fever, in fire and ferment,
Veins slowly empty.

At night over the fortress, at night over the spire
They come bodiless to sex the storm…

It's bright around them, it's bright everywhere
And they never return to their cages again.

Later the street is dark with threat
Stones shriek with rage and hate.

Streets of menace carry along
Flaming flags, blazing skeletons.[555]

Markish's imagery of the marching skeletons, the rising spirits of the hungry and dead, forms a cinematic sequence deeply informed by the visual culture of anarchist anti-war agitation.

In its final pages, *Der fertsikyeriker man* reaches a fever pitch of effulgent utopianism. Poem 36 moves from political iconography of marching masses towards the fullness of nature, luminosity, and eroticism:

Un makhnes nokh makhnes in freyd kumen on.
Me hert nit keyn fokh un keyn flater fun fon.

S'iz ponimer hele, vi fonen kayor,
Un ale iz farshtendlekh un zunik un klor.

Un vint tsum badinen, un vint tsum bafel,
Un keynem gemitn, un keynem gefelt!

A tog vi a kavn tseshnitn oyf helft —
Un s'shtromt fun im zaft, un s'shtromt fun im hel.

Un zunenzaft gist zikh, zunenzaft kvelt,
Un s'vilt oyf di hent itst zikh nemen di velt.

[555] Part 2, Poem 18, p92.

Pamelekh zi nemen, tsuzamen, vi eynem.
—Ot dort iz a vund nokh, ot do tut nokh vey…

Ot do nit farheylt nokh, ot dort nokh a shram,
Un ergets nokh trifndik vundfleysh faran.

Az borves iz zi nokh, oyf gloz nokh ir trot,
Un s'shtekht zi der krants nokh fun dernerdik drot.

Un vu s'iz farvorlozt, un vu s'iz farbrent
Dokh vilt zi zikh nemen azoy oyf di hent.

Pamelekh zi nemen, pamelekh, in eynem—
Ot do iz a vund, ot do tut nokh vey…[556]

Multitudes upon multitudes arrive with joy.
You hear no ripple of air, no flutter of flag

Faces bright as the flags of dawn
All is knowable and sun-lit and clear.

And wind to serve, wind to command,
No-one shunned, no-one absent!

A day like a watermelon sliced open —
Juice streams out, bright streams out.

Sun-sap pours forth, sun-sap gushes,
Now it wants to grab the whole world in its hands.

Slowly take her, together, as one.
—Oh there's still a wound, here it still aches…

Here's still unhealed, ay, there's still a scar
And somewhere a flesh-wound's still oozing.

She's still barefoot, her step still on glass
Still stung by a wreath of thorny wire.

And where it's neglected, where it's burnt up
Still, she wants to take her in her own hands.

[556] Markish, p120.

Slowly take her, slowly, as one
Right here's a wound, here it still hurts…

Markish's erotic dawn subverts Communist iconography and creates another possible temporality, neither an untroubled utopia deferred "after the revolution" nor a co-opted past, but a radiant present containing all time within itself. The masses assemble, without ideology: "And multitudes upon multitudes arrive with joy / You hear no ripple of air, no flutter of flag / Faces bright as the flags of dawn / All is knowable and sun-lit and clear." Markish uses the *loshn-koydesh* word *makhnes* for 'multitudes,' rather than more common germanic words like *masn* (masses). In this moment of lucidity, banners and slogans are replaced by the irreducible human face—in contrast to the earlier image, of a flag shoved in the armpit of a corpse, when the meaning of a life is reduced to a flag. The woman's body, though wounded—she points out her scars—remains libidinous. Undeterred by the land strewn with weapons, she continues to walk barefoot. It remains open whether this is a literal woman or a metaphor for the world. As before, here the poetic speaker is 'fated' to stand at the moment of daybreak, with all the joy and violence that contains. As in his declaration "My name is: Now," time explodes, the body can barely contain itself, and the world is suffused with radiant urgency, what Octavio Paz has termed "the outbreak of the now": "A day like a watermelon sliced open — Juice streams out, bright streams out."

Historical Anarchist Readings of Markish's Work

This project considers the anarchist modernism of Markish's poetics, from the dissolution of borders and anti-militarist bodies to his particularly *Jewish anarchist* aspects, including his usage of *hefker* terminology and defiant incorporation of *loshn-koydesh.* This analysis is not an anachronistic interpretation: during Markish's own lifetime, he was claimed by Yiddish anarchists as "our poet and our comrade." One such article is "*Vegn Peretz Markish's Lektsye"* (Regarding Peretz Markish's Lecture), published on a full broadside page of *Arbeter Fraynd* (Worker's Friend, edited by Yankev Meir Zalkind) in January 1923. Here, Ahrne Goldberg describes Markish as an anti-nationalist "storming the Yiddish Bastille" and "sing[ing] with wind and hurricanes, with the creative unrest of a furious world… carrying within himself the strengths of Prometheus to hasten and scorch worlds and build other, more beautiful worlds in their place." Goldberg liberally borrows the poet's keywords (*umru, shoym, shturem, huragan,* and profligate use of the "Modernist *tse*—"). Goldberg names Markish an *apikores*[557] (intellectual heretic) and compares him to a "young, complicated Stirner," the German anarchist-individualist philosopher. Goldberg was particularly taken with the Jewish themes of his poetry, referring to "Markish the Jew, the anarchist, walking with the heavy baggage of his people, like Shimon a bleeding and wounded vagabond, with refugees and ruined ones… Markish's depth of being-together with comrades is also apparent. Here, he is more comrade than poet. Here, he is 'ours.'"

[557] Term for an intellectually-informed heretic. After Epicurus.

Goldberg lambasts the assumption by Jewish "nationalist" readers that a radical's art would inherently seek "to destroy classical, traditional ethics and aesthetics of beauty":

> Just one brief characteristic lays down the difference between us and "them": A year ago I read an article by our deceased Dovid Frishman,[558] in which he marveled "that such destructive and revolutionary nature as that of the socialist Rosa Luxembourg also possessed a spring-source of poetic music (*negine*), of poetic songs and love for every creature." Markish will perhaps remain a marvel to them as well, but not to us…[559]

While Markish might "remain a marvel" to those readers who imagine an impenetrable division between complex artistry and a "revolutionary nature," Goldberg recognizes a deep affinity between the two.

Like Goldberg's literary criticism in 1923, my own project listens to Markish with an ear for the presence and echoes of anarchist imagination that ran through the decades during which he composed the poema. By attending to the political valences of Markish's temporality and embodiment, we may appreciate his profoundly radical—and defiantly Jewish—poetic innovation anew.

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[558] David Frishman (1859-1922) was an editor, literary critic, translator and poet who wrote in Hebrew and Yiddish. As editor of Hebrew literary journals in Warsaw, he championed Bialik, Y. L. Peretz, and others.

[559] Goldberg, *Vegn Perets Markish's Lektsye* (About Perets Markish's Lecture), *Arbeter Fraynd,* January 1923.

— Coda —

This project opened by defining anarchism as "a constellation of anti-statist and anti-capitalist aspirations: imagining and working towards a world without borders, an ethics of consensus, bodily autonomy, and escape from the temporal strictures of wage labor. *Anarchist diasporism* describes the anti-statism of stateless peoples based upon their specific relationship to time and territory, and links the theoretical insights of diaspora studies with the historical study of anarchism." In this final section, I point to possibilities for further research and connections between contemporary movements and Yiddish anarchist literature, language politics, and social practices.

Literary Anarchism and Comparative Literature

In the May 1914 issue of the *Little Review*, Margaret Anderson published a few articles related to anarchism. In Chapter Two, I discussed her article on Emma Goldman.[560] This issue also included a lyrical essay, "On Behalf of Literature," by DeWitt C. Wing, envisioning a transnational and antinationalist literature of the future:[561]

> Walt Whitman's poetry was cosmic; the new poetry will extend to the planets. […] Man today soars in flying machines in the old realm of his imagination. Poets must outreach mere science. What little patriots call a nation is a huge dogma that must be overcome. In poetry there must be an increasingly larger sense of the universe instead of nations as man's habitation. National literatures are exclusive of and alien to one another: they should be interrelated and fundamentally combinable. There can be no local literature if the thought of the world is embodied in it, and any other quality of literature must lack integrity. Wild dreamers insist upon a literature that shall be superior to political boundaries. The idea of nationalism involves the setting up of barriers and the fossilizing of life. It is a small idea that belongs to the dark ages. If we are ever to expand in feeling, thought, and achievement we must rise above nations into the starry spaces. We shall at least be citizens of the world, and, if citizens of the world, then truth-seekers beyond the reach of land and sea.[562]

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[560] Facsimile at the Brown University Library's Modernist Journals project: http://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1288994623603250.pdf

[561] DeWitt C. Wing provided financial backing to the *Little Review*, and his other work included an encyclopedia of agriculture and writings on Nietzsche.

[562] *Little Review,* 1-4.

Like Luden and Goldman, who saw literature as capable of transcending nation—and like Gordin, who dreamed of a language reaching to space—Wing exhorts us to "rise above nations." And despite the rhetorical flourishes of his era, Wing's statement on national literatures as "interrelated and fundamentally combinable" is essentially the guiding principle of Comparative Literature as a field today. For comparison, consider this statement by Hélène Cixous, explaining why she founded the Centre d'Etudes Feminines in 1974: "…I was a professor of English literature, and I felt I was hemmed in, since I had become an academic, in a definition in which the referent is national. For me, a literature cannot be a literature enclosed within borders. That is the first thing. Literature is a transnational country. The authors we read have always been the citizens of the other world, border-crossers and outlaws. And they have always strangered their own language."[563]

Jewish History Beyond Yiddish

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss many other intriguing Jewish anarchist figures, such as Sephardic painter Camille Pisarro, whose curator called him "the only impressionist with a big police file."[564] Further work is needed on Yiddish anarchism in the spheres of Minsk-born Paula Ben-Gurion, a follower of Emma Goldman and wife of Israel's first prime minister—who had been "confident she could dissuade him, by means foul or fair, from both [enlistment in the Jewish Legion and moving to Palestine]."[565] Further research is also needed on the role of Sephardim in the Spanish anti-fascist struggle and the Yiddish anarchist press of Buenos Aires.[566]

While Yiddish-speaking anarchists were often radicalized by immigration and deportation, Sephardim experienced a very different relationship to the state due to the legal pluralism of Ottoman Empire. In the recent book *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews and the Ottoman Twentieth Century,* Sarah Abrevaya Stein writes, "The story of Jewish protégés and their descendants pushes us to consider citizenship as a spectrum: a range of conditions or positions that Jews could access rather than a singular possession they could or could not claim," when European citizenship "bespeaks cacophony

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[563] Cixous, *White Ink,* p85.

[564] Christine Temin, "Pisarro: Lifelong Anarchist," *Art New England,* 2016. http://artnewengland.com/ed_columns/pissarro-lifelong-anarchist/

[565] Anita Shapira, *Ben Gurion: Father of Modern Israel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p48. Ruth Kark, Margalit Shilo, and Galit Hasan-Rokem, eds., *Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel: Life History, Politics, and Culture* (UPNE, 2009), p65.

[566] Some research has been done on Jewish communities and Argentinian anarchist movements, but not on the literature. See: Jeff Lesser, *Rethinking Jewish-Latin Americans,* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008.

Antonio López and Gregorio Rawin, "The Jewish Rationalist Association of Argentina: Anarchism and Judaism." *L'Anarchico e L'Ebreo* (Milan 2001), pp. 179-186. Translated by Paul Sharkey. http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/p2nhks

rather than harmony."[567] Rather than the "rule by deportation" which Goldman describes, Abrevaya Stein explains: "No rigid doctrine, protection emerged from negotiation and experimentation, and ultimately proved to be a measure of the diffuse and unruly nature of state power."[568] In her nuanced study, Abrevaya Stein portrays the protégé as "neither pawn nor victor" in relation to state power.[569] The mercurial, precarious nature of citizenship for Jews in the Ottoman Empire produced a distinct relationship to nationalism than to those living in the Russian Empire or United States, for whom legal status had different stakes.

Jewish Anarchism and Decolonialism

Reading indigenous critiques of colonialism *alongside* anarchist and diasporist critiques of the state undoes any binary construction between the politics of diaspora and indigeneity. My approach responds to anarchist anthropologists who sought to document Native societies, from Kropotkin's research with the Russian Geographic Expeditions to David Graeber's recent studies of Malagasy people. In *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution,* Peter Kropotkin writes in the section titled "Mutual aid among savages": "Wherever we go we find the same sociable manners, the same spirit of solidarity. And when we endeavour to penetrate into the darkness of past ages, we find the same tribal life, the same associations of men, however primitive, for mutual support."[570] At the same time that anarchist philosophers' political imaginations were fired by non-Western societies, Modernist poets turned towards indigenous art forms and folk songs for artistic inspiration, such as those collected by S. An-sky. Diasporic anarchism and decolonial

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[567] Abrevaya Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews and the Ottoman Twentieth Century (*Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), p5.
"Citizenship has typically been understood by Jewish historians as something the state either offered or denied Jews, notwithstanding the recognition that Jews often agitated for it. Under certain circumstances, however, Jewish women and men could strategically navigate—or even manipulate—the existing legal options, exploiting loopholes and exploring opportunities to transform their official status to their advantage. This access to juridical fungibility hinged on ambiguities inherent to extraterritoriality as it was shapedin the Ottoman (and extra- and post-Ottoman) context. These opportunities for self-determination were not broadly available to all Jews, including (or perhaps especially) those with ambiguous legal standing such as the stateless, expelled, exchanged, or transferred. Yet, despite the particularity of this story, Ottoman Jewish experiences of the gradual, slumping collapse of the capitulatory regime upend enduring scholarly typologies and chronologies of emancipation. [...Some] Ottoman Jews wiggled their way towards the possession of European citizenship; not as a result of migration, which we might expect, but through persistence, ingenuity, and luck. Though that which could be acquired could also be snatched away."

[568] Ibid.

[569] Abrevaya Stein, p11.

[570] David Graeber, *Lost People: Magic and the Legacy of Slavery in Madagascar* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2007).

thought both critique statism and territoriality through spiritual genealogy, although their respective theorists have rarely been in conversation. Despite the historical distance between today's vocabulary of decolonization and the Yiddish anarchists—who wrote during a period when racial theory, eugenics, and antisemitism was developed by the scientific community—there are also many resonances. Abba Gordin's analysis of multiple "pillars" of oppression (including gender, colonialism, and educational indoctrination) and Yevzerov's analysis of segregation, abolition and suffrage may be read as prototypes for what contemporary legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw terms intersectionality.

In the recent book, *Decolonizing Anarchism: An Antiauthoritarian History of India's Liberation Struggle,* Maia Ramnath documents anti-statist movements in the Global South while seeking to return the anthropological gaze. Ramnath writes of the need "to bring an anarchist approach to anticolonialism, and an anticolonial approach to anarchism. […R]ecognizing other histories as relevant to the anarchist tradition means seeing anarchism as one instance of a polymorphous engagement with certain key questions and issues, as one manifestation of a larger family of egalitarian and emancipatory principles.[571]"

Contemporary diasporic anarchist movements include the Kurdish women's movement in Rojava and Sápmi Anonymous, from the Northern European indigenous Sápmi people (commonly called Laplanders).[572] Like the Yiddish anarchists, social practice in Rojava intentionally cultivates comradeship, as through the Mesopotamia Academy of Social Sciences, created in Qamishlo in September 2014 to "challenge hierarchical structures in academia, science, and thought. […P]eople at the academy usually do not refer to each other as teacher or student, but 'heval' (friend or comrade), as hierarchies and power relations are trying to be eliminated."[573] Young feminist writer and organizer Dilar Dirik writes on "building democracy without the state" and describes the phenomenological transformation of arriving in Rojava:

> I don't know if you will believe me when I say I could physically feel the revolution. "How does one feel freedom on a body?" you might rightfully ask. But—goddess

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[571] Maia Ramnath. *Decolonizing Anarchism: An Antiauthoritarian History of India's Liberation Struggle* (Oakland: AK Press, 2011), p1.

[572] "The Saami Manifesto 15: Reconnecting Through Resistance," http://www.idlenomore.ca/the_saami_manifesto_15_reconnecting_through_resistance_the_saami_manifesto_15_reconnecting_through_resistance

[573] "After each session, the teachers are criticized by their students. Students in their last term teach their fellows. Learning is then a constant process rather than something that can be completed. I hear stories of a 70-year-old woman who recites traditional folk tales at the Mesopotamia Academy to challenge the history-writing of hegemonic powers and positivist science, a radical act of defiance against the former monist regime. Recovering wisdom and knowledge outside of the hegemony of the modern sciences is a central focus of Rojava's attitude towards education. Knowledge is everywhere, it needs to be valued and shared." Dilar Dirik, "Rojava: To Dare Imagining," in *To Dare Imagining: Rojava Revolution* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2016), p102.

> Ishtar be my witness—as soon as I stepped on Rojavan soil, suddenly, I breathed freely for the first time in my life. […] Something insidious and subtle, yet intrusively oppressive seems to have vanished. As if the non-existent eyes I always felt on me had disappeared and I for once had become a subject myself. This when I realized that the omnipresence of the institution of the State was missing. That Kurdistan was inviting history for a reconciliation dance. […] Somebody hugs me: "Welcome to Rojava!" Everything is sacred, but not in the classical sense: not sacred as in frightening, not sacred as in taboo, not sacred as in there to maintain a status quo. All is sacred because it belongs to me, to you, to everyone. Because its preciosity relies on all of us collectively taking up responsibility for it, on us claiming it as ours, as everyone's. Smiling people everywhere, so beautifully human you don't dare look. What is perhaps unintelligible between the written lines of official statements or social contracts to the outside world radiates from the eyes of the ordinary working people who see organization, mobilization as the only way to survive. […P]olitics is becoming alive, as children's laughter becomes the melody behind which decisions on electricity hours and peace-making committees are made. How inefficient, unofficial—but that is the beauty of it. Giving power to people who never had anything requires courage, requires trust, requires love.[574]

In this passage, Dirik stirringly describes a collective revolutionary euphoria, a collective sacredness that Markish reaches towards at the end of *Der fertsikyeriker man:* "Multitudes upon multitudes arrive with joy. / You hear no ripple of air, no flutter of flag // Faces bright as the flags of dawn / All is knowable and sun-lit and clear. // And wind to serve, wind to command, / No-one shunned, no-one absent!"

Diasporic Language Politics

Sápmi Anonymous' trilingual manifesto begins with one of the Sámi languages, centralizing the issue of language rights and transmission:[575]

> Mii leimmet dá ovdal stáhtaid ja mii leat ain dá maŋŋá go stáhtat bieđganit.
> Me olimme täällä ennen valtioita ja olemme täällä valtioiden hajottua.
> We were here before states and we will be here after them.[576]

This trilingual statement tactically invokes a pre-state temporal schema, connecting their identity from pre-national origins to post-state imagined time through a genealogy of indigenous existence. Although the statement is presented as though the translations are equivalent, the tone is considerably more aggressive in Finnish: the word *hajottua* means

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[574] Dirik, "Rojava: To Dare Imagining," p101.

[575] Niillas Holmberg and Jenni Laiti, http://www.idlenomore.ca/the_saami_manifesto_15_reconnecting_through_resistance_the_saami_manifesto_15_reconnecting_through_resistance

[576] Sápmi Anonymous, Twitter statement, https://twitter.com/sapmianonymous.

"the fall" or "the ruin," as in "after the ruin of the state," in contrast to the more neutral "after the state.[577]" As with the Yiddish anarchists Mollie Steimer and Jacob Abrams, they center a minor language over the state language, and present asymmetrically-radical texts as equivalent.[578] Connecting the Yiddish genealogies of the past century to the genealogical tactics of contemporary anti-statist movements illuminates the unresolved nature of the relationship between diasporism and anti-statism. Considering that Kropotkin's geographic expeditions to Finland and Sweden so profoundly informed his political imagination and theory of mutual aid, it seems fitting to conclude this study of anarchist genealogy with the multilingual words of contemporary Sápmi activists.

In the present, more than 65.3 million people remain displaced and last century's questions of borders and statelessness remain unsettled. I hope that my study of Yiddish anarchist literature, language politics, and genealogy will contribute to future conversations and collaborations.

[577] I thank the feminist poet Anna Tomi for analyzing the Finnish.

[578] The number of Finnish speakers rose in the Romantic period, as the hegemony of Swedish diminished. Today, 1% of the Finnish population speaks Swedish.

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