

## **Introduction to the Round Table Discussion**

### ***Double Identity***

Tens of volumes have been written on the religious roots of political choices and activism. In the modern era, in particular, when theological doctrine and political theory are mutual influences, becoming the principal vectors of secularisation, the interweaving of these two elements has come to be seen as a determining factors in the formation of philosophy and of the “powerful” ideas of modernity. The common paths of politics and religious have developed on various different levels: in the first place there was a process of theoretical osmosis, where the doctrinal presuppositions of a particular theological system have provided a source of generalisations and assumptions applicable to living together in society. Secondly, particular forms of antagonism which are intrinsic to a particular religious culture (radical Protestantism, evangelical Methodism, Ashkenazi Judaism, Islam, etc.) have been transposed to the political sphere. In some cases there has also been the phenomenon of a “return”, when the impact of a political paradigm on a certain religious culture has been disruptive. This was the case with, for example, the meeting of liberalism and Protestantism in late-nineteenth-century America, with the development of a liberal modern theology on the one hand and of the fundamentalist and anti-modernist form on the other.

The encounter between anarchism and Judaism has basically been of this type. It shows in the reflections of the activists of Jewish origin who have populated the course of the anarchist movement. On the one hand, the spirituality of Judaism provides a powerful impulse towards equality and in its prophetic aspect towards the construction of a reign of justice and freedom, providing the cultural basis of Jewish activism. On the other hand, secular Jews - i.e. those who had renounced their faith - brought to their political activity the antagonism of a whole community (the Ashkenazi) and of an oppressed and persecuted tradition, that over the course of centuries in which it was a *pariah*, had reacted to marginalisation and segregation by developing a culture of resistance and rebellion.

The interaction between anarchism and Judaism therefore raises the question of a *double identity*, which is particularly evident in the “secularised” activists. Paul Goodman, a likeable atheist whose writing was at times emphatically religious, laid conscious claim to the various different identities which made up his character of dissident (anarchist, Jew, homosexual) to the point of asking Leroy Jones to bestow upon him the honorarium of a “negro”. It is however undeniable that the encounter also presented irreconcilable elements. In what varying senses, therefore do those anarchist activists coming from the *ethos* of Judaism live out their dual belonging, bearing in mind that the Jewish elements tend to emerge on the cultural level, rather than on the purely religious one? To what degree is the Jewish matrix indeed present and to what point has it been avoided? The participants in the round table discussion will be attempting to answer these questions, drawing on their own wealth of experiences of both life and politics.

## Social Utopia and Jewish Spirituality

Furio Biagini

The ties between social utopianism and Jewish spirituality are close and deep-rooted. “Anarchist” tendencies can be found in certain central aspects of Jewish culture, some of which are seen as the Jews’ particular contribution to human civilisation. Within Judaism itself, these tendencies, together with the messianic idea, have produced a certain diffidence towards all forms of power. At the same time the particular historical experience and social situation of the Jewish people over centuries, exiled throughout the world, uprooted and subject to constant persecution by foreign powers, has strengthened this political orientation, even if it has often led an underground existence in *halakhic* Judaism.

The utopian and revolutionary element of prophecy and particularly of Jewish messianism reached its ultimate form in the Kabbalah of Luria and the critical theology of the Shabbatin (and later in the antinomism of the Frankists). These two worlds of thought contributed to a new vision of the world and were at the roots of the birth of Hassidism, the final phase in the development of Jewish mysticism. Hassidism was a popular religious-mystical movement that developed among ordinary Jews in the early 18th century. The movement represented a rebellion, which had strong mystical and “libertarian” connotations, of the poor against the elites which held the reins of power within the Jewish community. Hassidism taught the need for critical vigilance in order that individuals could avoid beginning to play power games which would take away the autonomy of individuals, their capacity to develop their abilities to the full and to carry out their unique vocations.

Some people have focused here on the social revolutionary dimension, others on the rehabilitation of the imagination and the dream, while still others see this as a mutation and vulgarisation of the Kabbalah of Safed and Rabbi Isaac Luria. Hassidism is not however a single system or a single doctrine. It is a religious current which has many different manifestations, each of which focuses on a particular aspect.

## **Libertarian Judaism between Assimilation and Rupture**

Sylvain Boulouque

Here I have used a number of specific examples to study the relations between libertarian Jews and the anarchist organised movement. These activists generally joined generic anarchist groups, but their assimilation was not complete. There are a number of major stages marking the evolution and attitude of activists which seem to apply to all groups. The first, which was of varying duration, was the assimilationist phase, in which libertarian Jews shared the hopes and struggles of their comrades. The second aspect studied is the Jewish activists' more or less voluntary break with their comrades, which was in its way an affirmation of their own identity. Finally, I try to identify the areas of conflict, the subjects involved and why they emerged, and I ask if all activists were affected. The material used in this study included the biographies of Bernard Lazare and Henri Dhorr, Ida Mett, Nicolas Tchorbadieff, Volin and Jules Chazoff.

# **Some general remarks on anarchism, «Jews», zionism and anti-semitism with some concrete information on the Netherlands**

Rudolf de Jong

## 1. General remarks

There are good reasons to write here the word Jews with inverted commas – «Jews» - because there are and there have been, and especially in the anarchist and in other revolutionary movements, a lot of with Jewish origin or background without being Jew in the religious sense of the word. For practical reason however I don't use the inverted commas.

So, what is a Jew? In my opinion: an aspect of the personality of a certain individual. The content of this aspect and the importance it has for the person has to depend on the person in question. In other words: everybody has to decide for himself if he is Jewish and in which way. So it is possible to consider oneself to be Jewish and to be an atheist at the same time. I hope to illustrate this with the personality of Gustav Landauer.

A lot of anarchist militants were Jewish. Many had their roots in Germany, Eastern Europe or Russia and many came as immigrants to Western Europe or the Americas. Their anarchist conceptions were not influenced by the religion of their parents, or only in a negative way. I don't see much difference between the attitude towards religion of these Jewish anarchists and other libertarians. About their importance for the movement there is certainly a lot to say. I will mention some persons and some movements.

Antisemitism has been «justified» on religious grounds, on social-cultural and economic grounds, on racist grounds and for political reasons. Mostly we see a mixture of the arguments. Antisemitism clashes with all forms of liberalism, socialism and anarchism, it denies fundamental human rights and denies the right of persons to decide for themselves if they want to be Jewish and in what sense.

Nevertheless it remains a shameful fact that anti-Jewish remarks and antisemitism is to be found in the writings of anarchists. Proudhon, Bakounin and others has to be mentioned here. We have to investigate their antisemitism and the reaction of other anarchists. And we have to ask if their antisemitism was different from other forms of prejudice (national prejudices for instance) among libertarians. We have to ask too if the anarchists differed from other revolutionaries and socialists in their attitude against Jews and about antisemitism.

Antisemitism as a social movement dates from the end of the 19th century (Dreyfus-affaire, pogroms in Russia; Christian [Catholic] social movements in

Austria). It was – perhaps with a few exception – rejected by the anarchists. Zionism was in a decisive way the reaction against the antisemitic social movements. An interesting anarchist report about antisemitism and zionism was written for the (forbidden) international anarchist congress in Paris in 1900. As a specific issue antisemitism remained rare in anarchist writings. The libertarian reaction towards Nazism and the Shoah (holocaust) didn't differ very much from the reactions of other civilised people. It made however many libertarians realized that their conceptions about progress and revolution had been too optimistic. In consequence many turned away from revolutionary expectations to a more modest libertarian aims. On the kibbutz movement I found few signs of interest in anarchist writings (Augustin Souchy being an exception).

## 2. The Netherlands

The Netherlands have a reputation of tolerance. Nevertheless there has been social-cultural and religious antisemitism in moderated forms. In these moderated forms it was often social accepted, as has been the case with other – religious and racist – prejudices.

It was rare in anarchist and socialist circles.

In the labour movement Holland – especially Amsterdam has known a socialist trade-union of diamant-workers: ANDB. The ANDB was of course not religious but the diamant workers came fast exclusive from the Jewish community in Amsterdam.

This ANDB was the model of the social-democratic ideas about trade-unionism: discipline, strong leadership, rejection of direct action, collaboration with the party etc. So the anarchists and revolutionary syndicalists were outspoken enemies of the ANDB. I found only once in the biography of Henri Polak, the leader of the ANDB, an accusation of antisemitism directed against Polak by an anarchist; this anarchist was a Jew himself.

Cultural antisemitism was rare in libertarian circles. In the thirties however, at the time that Hitler was already in power there was a bitter discussion in the libertarian press about antisemitic remarks in the «Vrije Socialist» and in its editor G. Rijnders.

After the cration of the state of Israel there has been discussions on Zionism, the existence of Israel, its policy etc. These discussions didn't differ much from the discussion among other people. The outstanding libertarian publicist A.L. Constandse was involved in this discussions.

## 3. Israel and the Palestinians

In the anarchist movement the discussions and positions on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian-Arabian world has often been a question of «taking sides».

The older generations of anarchists has been mostly in favour of Israel and indeed very happy about the existence of Israel and they accepted without much criticism the Israelian position in the conflict.

In the sixties the tide turned: young anarchists and activists embraced uncritically the Palestinian position and defended the activities of the PLO. Sometimes this anti-Israelian position was mixed up with antisemitism. Especially in France there has been discussions on this topic.

I believe an anarchist approach to the conflict is possible. It has to turn away from a nationalistic approach and from the admiration for national liberation movements.

The anarchist conceptions about the social revolution has been partly formed (and it was an essential part) in the ideological debates of Proudhon and Bakounin against the idea about national revolution, defended by men as Garibaldi and Mazzini. Today the accent has to be on the human rights of ordinary people versus the idea of national identity (the state).

In the dutch libertarian review «De AS» I once tried to formulate an anarchist and at the same time realistic approach without much illusions. I compared Yasser Arafat with the dutch national heroe William of Orange and blamed both for the same reason: looking everywhere for help and prestige, forgetting selfhelp. After all: real peace is a peace between human beings, not a state-of-no-war between states.

## The Jewish Question in Max Stirner and in the Libertarian Perspective

Enrico Ferri

The political emancipation of the Jews following the French Revolution, the philosophical debate on the nature of Christian religion and of its Jewish pattern in the Enlightenment first and then in German Idealism, and the call for civil and political emancipation by many of the Jewish communities in western Europe are some of the most important theoretical and social questions in the debate on the “Jewish question” that emerged in Germany after the death of Hegel in the revolutionary current of the philosophical movement that he inspired, the Hegelian left, among such figures as Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, Karl Marx and Max Stirner.

This debate also influenced such philosophers as Proudhon and Bakunin, who were drawn towards revolutionary Hegelianism in the 1840s, even if only briefly.

The writers remembered here saw the “Jewish question” essentially as a variable of the broader “religious question”, which was primarily as the presence and role of Judeo-Christian tradition and culture in European history. In both revolutionary Marxism and in the more variegated libertarian and anarchist thought, with its far richer set of influences, history is seen as a long and tormented story which prepared the way for the coming “Reign of God on Earth”, to use Hegel’s term; what Marx in 1844 called the solution to the enigma of history, the reconciliation between essence and existence. In other words, the new society which would emerge from the revolution was presented using categories which were entirely foreign to philosophy and to the history of ancient and modern European thought. It aimed at a “new man” who would be completely and definitively reconciled with himself and with other men, at a humanity which would have defeated the war, poverty and discrimination that had recurred constantly in the course of history.

The works of Max Stirner show the ambivalence of Hegelian philosophical radicalism, which interested both Marxist and anarchist thought. It saw the Jewish-Christian tradition as a factor in alienation and a cultural element at the roots of the “principle of authority”, that is as justifying the domination of man over man, while taking from that tradition the idea and the certainty of a definitive, radical and universal “liberation”. In Stirner it is possible to see, admittedly somehow vaguely, the anti-Semitic prejudice which recurs constantly in modern revolutionary thought and in writers such as Proudhon and Bakunin, according to which Judaism would be not only a religion but rather a *forma mentis*, a psychology and a social and political attitude of exclusivity and exclusion.



## **Anarchic Elements in Proto-Judaism**

Jacob Goren

The points I want to make in the communication concern some facts and trends which have developed lately in Biblical research, about the formation of the monarchy and its institutions in ancient Israel. It seems that contrary to other cultures the monarchy in Israel developed mainly through external pressure and not as an internal cultural development. Many tribal and even clanish institutions remained therefore and withstood pressure from the State and its servants, the prophets being the main agents of the struggle for survival of anti-monarchical, so to say proto-anarchical sets of beliefs and customs.

The prophets gave those beliefs a new and distinct flavour, keeping the bias against human authority by imbueing it with new contents of human values. In this form they consisted a main part of the cultural development in the Jewish commewealth of the second Temple, forming the background to the resistance to Hellenistic culture and Roman imperialism. By this, they were also influential in giving a distinct anti-authoritarian flavour to the early institutions of the ancient Christian Church. Therefore I think that these trends of ancient Biblical history should be of interest for everyone who is concerned with non-authoritarian traits in human culture.

## **Anarchism and Zionism: the Debate on Jewish Nationalism**

Mina Graur

The need to belong to a distinct, well-defined group has been a natural, some say a biological urge of human beings since early times. Common language and traditions, shared ancestry, history, and mythology, as well as territorial unity have been frequently used to demarcate one people from another. During the nineteenth century, however, these distinctive traits assumed a wider scope in the lives of people, heralding the era of rising national feelings and struggles for national self-determination. Jews began to ponder the issue of separate Jewish national identity relatively late; indeed, they resorted to nationalistic themes only after realizing that emancipation could no longer be considered a suitable solution for the specific problems confronting secular Jews in an era suffused with national outbursts.

Most Jewish radicals, socialists as well as anarchists, initially subscribed to the universalist ideas common to radical thought. They believed that the social revolution, which would solve the problems of the oppressed masses throughout the world, would also solve the specific problems of the Jews in a manner divorced from a national context. However, the belief in internationalism was undermined by events such as the pogroms in Russia in 1881-1882, during which the Russian revolutionary group «Narodnaia Volia» declared that it considered the persecution of the Jews as a positive step on the way to accomplish the social revolution, or the Dreyfus Affair of 1896, during which a wave of antisemitism swept over France. These events caused many frustrated Jewish radicals to question the validity of their international orientations. Suddenly, they realized that a socialist or an anarchist ideology might not solve the problems of the Jews in a satisfactory manner. As a consequence, they started to look for ways to combine their radicalism with their growing sense of national identity.

This paper surveys the anarchist attitudes towards nationalism and examines the various answers given by both Jewish and non-Jewish anarchists to the questions pertaining to Jewish national identity, Jewish political sovereignty, and Zionism. Pillars of anarchist thought, such as Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, rejected Jewish nationalism. While Proudhon and Bakunin expressed racist antisemitic remarks, Kropotkin gave the problem some thought, and came up with an alternative to the Zionist call for a Jewish state. Kropotkin advocated social, but not cultural assimilation of the Jews in the countries in which they resided. He urged the Jews to continue developing their culture and national folklore, similar to other people devoid of a country, such as the Bohemians and Georgians.

Gustav Landauer considered the Jews to have achieved a level of nationhood,

yet he rejected the Zionist interpretation of Jewish national self-determination, and did not advocate a separate Jewish state. Landauer believed that the Jews were entrusted with a historical mission which was to become the driving force behind the construction of socialist communities, divorced from any connection to the state. Rudolf Rocker, too, rejected national sovereignty for the Jewish people, and favored instead the establishment of a cultural, yet by no means a geographical, center for Jews that would serve as a unifying core for Jewish cultural life. Following the establishment of the state of Israel, Rocker was concerned that the new state would destroy the achievements of the communal settlements, the Kibbutzim.

Bernard Lazare, the archetype of the assimilated French Jew, was driven by the Dreyfus Affair to question the validity of assimilation. He reached the conclusion that the Jews should aspire to create a spiritual and moral nation, become a nation within a nation, and not necessarily in the boundaries of a separate state. Lazare's ideas, however, underwent a change, and towards the end of the nineteenth century he was fully converted to Zionism. Hillel Solotaroff's anarcho-national solution to the Jewish question acquired a distinctive Zionist flavor in his proclamation that the only suitable place for a Jewish national homeland was Palestine, yet he also advocated that it would be consisted of independent communes, which would be incorporated within the framework of a federative republic.

## **The Radical Jews of Poland: challenges and responses**

Daniel Grinberg

The Jewish radicalism of libertarian creed is typically regarded in two opposite perspectives. For the first of them, taking as point of reference traditional and orthodox Jewish masses, the characteristic question is: how was it possible at all. For the other perspective guided by strong Jewish presence in many leftists movements the question is rather: why was it so weak in comparison. Most of the publications on this subject answer rather the first question. However, at least for the anarchists born on Polish territories, more important seems finding answers for the second problem of disproportional activities of Jewish anarchists not only in comparison with Jewish marxists but even when compared with more russified Jewish anarchists from territories to the East of Poland.

Although in contemporary Poland Jewish subjects are again “hot” and this not so long ago almost “forbidden territory” is now of great interest for the readers, very little was written about Jewish followers of Bakunin and Kropotkin.

**The Anarchism of Jewish Tradition:  
Gershom Scholem, Walter Benjamin and political theology**

Eric Jacobson

This presentation will focus on the mediating relationship between Anarchism and Judaism, drawing on the recently completed study of the early political theology of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem (*Metaphysics of the Profane*, Ph.D, Institute for Jewish Studies, Free University of Berlin, 1999). I would like to present a few key elements of this research in the context of the meaning of anarchism in Jewish tradition. I will first seek to address the idea of tradition in Judaism (*mazoret, halacha, kabbalah*), followed by a discussion of four Judaic conceptions of anarchism in the work of Gershom Scholem. His writings on the messianic idea and the early exchange with Walter Benjamin on law, violence and justice (1915-1924) will form the body of the presentation. In the final section, I would like to speculate on the dynamics of destruction and creation in tradition, leading to a general discussion of the future of anarchism.

## **Judaism and Anarchism in *Mitteleuropa*. The Case of Franz Kafka**

Michael Löwy

From the end of the 19th century Jewish culture in *Mitteleuropa* saw the emergence of a romantic current which rejected bourgeois rationalism, industrial progress and capitalist civilisation but was drawn towards libertarian utopias rather than social democracy. In the particular context of central European Judaism, a complex network of relations – of *chosen affinities*, to adopt a concept used by Max Weber in his sociology of religions – was built up between romanticism, the Jewish religious renaissance, messianism, the revolt against bourgeois and statist culture, revolutionary utopianism, socialism and anarchism.

There were two poles in this nebulous messianic/romantic/libertarian current of Central European Judaism. The first was represented by the religious Jews with utopian leanings: Franz Rosenzweig, Rudolf Kayser, Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem, Hans Kohn, the young Leo Löwental. Their aspirations towards a national and religious Jewish revival did not lead them towards political nationalism and their conception of Judaism was coloured by German culture. All of them had, to varying degrees, a universal utopian vision of a socialist libertarian nature, which they expressed, explicitly or implicitly, through their messianic religious faith.

The second pole was that of the assimilated Jews, religious atheists and libertarians: Gustav Landauer, Ernst Bloch, Erich Fromm, the young Gyorgy Lukacs, Manes Sperber, Walter Benjamin. Unlike those of their contemporaries mentioned above, they moved away from Judaism, without however breaking their ties completely. The term *religious atheism* – used by Lukacs in speaking of Dostoievsky – offers an insight into these paradoxical spiritual figures who seem to be seeking, with all the energy of despair, the messianic point of convergence between the sacred and the profane. While close to libertarian ideals in the period 1914-1923, most of them moved progressively closer to Marxism in the following years.

Kafka was slightly removed from both these configurations, with elements of both Jewish messianism and libertarian utopianism, both in a negative form. The world of his novels is characterised by the simultaneous absence of God and of Freedom. Here we could speak of *negative theology* and *negative utopia*.

Three reports from contemporary Czech documents bear witness to Kafka's sympathy for Czech libertarian socialists and his participation in some of their activities. In the early 1930s, Max Brod heard from one of the founders of the Czech anarchist movement, Michal Kacha, about Kafka's presence at the Klub mladych (Young People's Club), a libertarian, anti-militarist and anti-clerical organisation which attracted a number of Czech writers.

The second contribution is from the anarchist writer Michal Mares, who met Kafka in the street (they were neighbours). Mares claims that Kafka accepted his

invitation to a demonstration against the execution of Francisco Ferrer, the Spanish libertarian educationalist, in October 1909. Between 1910 and 1912 he attended anarchist meetings on free love, on the Paris Commune, on Peace and against the execution of the Parisian activist Liabeuf.

The third document is Gustav Janouch's *Conversations with Kafka*, which were first published in 1951 and again, considerably extended, in 1968. These conversations with the Prague writer were held in the last years of his life (from 1920 onwards) and show that Kafka had retained his sympathy for the libertarians.

This biographical episode casts new light on his work. There is a libertarian anti-authoritarianism running through all his novels, a depersonalisation and reification, from personal and paternal authority to its anonymous administrative counterpart. It is not a question of a *political doctrine*, but of *state of mind* and of a *critical spirit*, in which the principal weapon is irony, humour, that black humour which is a revolt of the spirit (André Breton).

The main characteristics of authoritarianism in Kafka's literary works are 1) *arbitrariness*: decisions are imposed from above without any moral, rational or humane justification, often by making extreme and absurd requirements of the victim; 2) *injustice*: guilt is - wrongly - taken for granted, without any need of proof and punishment is totally out of proportion to the trivial or inexistent "crime".

Libertarian inspiration lies at the heart of his novels, which tell us of the *State*, whether in the form of the "administration" or of "Justice", as a system of impersonal domination which crushes, suffocates or kills individuals. It is a world of anguish, obscure, incomprehensible, which is the realm of unfreedom. It should be recalled that the states that Kafka described in his novels were not intended as exceptions. One of his most important ideas suggested by his works, which clearly shows his closeness to anarchism, is the alienated and oppressive nature of the "normal", legal, constitutional state. In the first lines of *The Trial* it is clearly stated that CK lived in a state of law (*Rechtstaat*), there was peace everywhere, all laws were enforced, so who could dare to attack him in his home? Like his friends, the anarchists of Prague, he seems to have seen all forms of the state, the state *per se*, as an authoritarian and freedom-killing hierarchy.

## The Kibbutz Movement and Anarchism

Yaacov Oved

Israel's kibbutz movement uniqueness lies in the fact that while it embodies anarchist values in its way of life, it has never had any real linkage to anarchist movements. Anarchist literature was quite common among the kibbutz movement's founders, who had a theoretical, socialist education. The doctrine of Kropotkin, who at the end of the 19th century formulated the anarcho-communist theory, influenced the adoption of commune principles in the first «kvutzot» during the first decade of the 20th century. Similarly the views of Tolstoy also had considerable influence on these circles.

With the establishment of the big kibbutzim and the founding of the kibbutz movements in the 1920s, the influences exerted by Kropotkin's views was intensified. These views extolled Man's social potential and envisioned a society of federative-connected independent communities embodying a combination of village and city, agriculture, industries and workshops. During the same period, Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber made also a significant contribution by conveying theoretical anarchist messages. These two philosophers profoundly influenced the first members of «Hashomer Hatzair» who founded the «Hakibbutz Ha'artzi» movement which became one of the three big kibbutz movements.

From the thirties onward, the years of expansion and institutionalization of the three kibbutz movements and their integration into the building and settlement of the Jewish community in the Land of Israel, their Marxist and Social-Democratic views were strengthened and the linkage to anarchist theories was shunted aside. Between 1937 and 1939 a small group of young anarchists calling itself «The Free Socialists» was organized. The group published a broadsheet in which they printed excerpts from works of the classical anarchist theoreticians together with current information on the anarchist activities in the Spanish Civil War.

Among the few examples of linkage with anarchist theory over the next years was the publication of Kropotkin's works, and also the devoting of study time to the anarcho-communist theory at the kibbutz movement's ideological seminars. It should be emphasized that the kibbutz movement's institutions – which with the establishment of the State of Israel, sought to be at the center of the national endeavors, carefully avoided anarchist definitions because of their apparent damaging connotations.

More recently, especially from the 80s onward, a change in the attitude towards anarchist theory has taken place. A renewed tendency is discerned towards the plausible contribution of anarchist theory to the consolidation of



voluntary communal life preserving the individual's free development. This tendency exists in a limited intellectual circle that is concerned with the superficial social thinking in the kibbutz movement and which is seeking new sources of inspiration. Nowadays too the leadership of the movement is exercising great caution with regard to anarchist definitions for the same reasons that characterized this caution in the past.

The lecture will review the various stages of the adoption of anarchist views in the course of the kibbutz movement's history, and will examine the link between communality in its lifestyles and the interest revealed in anarcho-communist theory.

## **The Jewish Rationalist League of Buenos Aires and its Relations with the Argentinian Anarchist Movement**

Gregorio Rawin

The *Racionalista Judia* was a broad and productive movement in Argentina which was very closely related to the anarchist movement. This paper looks at the origins of the organisation through the testimony of activists from both town and country who were active in it. How the *Racionalista Judia* appeared in the pens of the editors of *Dos Freye Vort* particularly in the writings of Gorodisky and the main subjects dealt with in the 1960s.

It also considers the activities of the library, in publishing and of Jewish libertarians in Yiddish publications. Three areas will be looked at using texts of Peretz: 1) Revolution, 2) Zionism, 3) Yiddish language and culture.

In addition there is a personal account on the activities in the rationalist league and the vision of the Jewish community since its dissolution and the dispatch of the library to Israel. In conclusion it asks whether the Jewish libertarian diaspora can be said to have its own set of ideas.

Notes for the contribution

## **Utopianism, Messianism and Secular Messianism**

Chaim Seeligmann

What is Jewish Messianism? Its roots.

The hope of Redemption - the hope of renovation of the political life?

Tendencies of Eschatology?

Pseudo-Messianism!

Messianic movement in the end of the Jewish middle age!

The movement of Shabbtai Tsvi-consequences for the Jewish life and Judaism.

His mystical roots - Rabbi Isaak Luria (Safed)

The transformation to modern Judaism

Yakob Frank and his followers in Poland

Tendencies of Nihilism and anarchism

Anarchistic Theology

The rationalisation of the Messianism

The secular Messianism in the Zionist movement and in liberal Judaism

The political Messianism in Israel

## **Anarcha-feminism and Judaism - Some topics**

Birgit Seemann

I want to open the unexplored field of relations between the topics of Anarcha-feminism and Judaism. Anarcha-feminism is the answer to Western anarchism as a political project dominated by white American and European middle-class men. Till today most anarchist men and women want to free the public sphere but neglect the private sphere and family life.

In the history the most famous anarcha-feminists were Jewish women, for example in the United States and later in Europe Emma Goldman, in Germany and England the anarcho-syndikalist Milly Witkop-Rocker, the wife of Rudolf Rocker. The libertarian pacifist author Hedwig Landauer-Lachmann, who was married with Gustav Landauer, refused to close to the anarchist and feminist movements in Germany but connected women's lives with non-hierarchical Judaism at her poems. The writings of Emma Goldman, Milly Witkop-Rocker or Hedwig Landauer-Lachmann present various views on a female interpreted libertarian Messianic socialism.

In my lecture I want to discuss three topics: the «life-centered» base of Jewish religion with its matriarchal essentials, the emancipative influence of Jewish social traditions on the revolutionary change of society, and the critics especially on Christian and Capitalist patriarchy. Jewish anarcha-feminists don't look on «society» as a «system», «structure» or «production sphere» but as a multidimensional arrangement of human relations; they connect caring human life with every revolutionary vision and strategy.

## **Jewish Anarchism and Communitarianism From Stelton to Sunrise**

Francis Shor

The massive influx of Eastern European Jews to the United States in the first two decades of the twentieth century also witnessed a significant increase in the number of Jewish anarchists in urban centers across the country. While there had been a Jewish presence within anarchist circles at the end of the nineteenth century, what emerged in the early twentieth century marked a transition towards more extensive communitarian and cooperative networks among Jewish anarchists. Although many Jewish anarchists, especially immigrants from Russia, had been radicalized by waves of anti-Semitic pogroms and alienated from their religious heritage, their desire to establish counter-cultural practices led some of these Jewish anarchists to develop intentional communities. The most prominent intentional communities founded by Jewish anarchists in the early twentieth century were at Stelton, New Jersey and Sunrise, Michigan.

Stelton grew out of the Ferrer Center and Modern School that had been established in New York City in 1910 and 1911. Both places were cultural magnets that attracted the leading anarchists and free thinkers of the day from Emma Goldman to Margaret Sanger, from Hutchins Hapgood to Alexander Berkman, from Robert Henri to Many Ray. As one historian of the Ferrer Center noted: «it provided a foretaste of the libertarian future, of what life could be like once the restraints imposed by authority had been removed». The Ferrer School moved to Stelton, New Jersey in 1915 in order to escape the growing anti-radical hysteria and to develop a more extensive communal experiment. Most of the colony members were anarchists from Philadelphia and New York with immigrant backgrounds, Eastern European Jews predominating. In fact, as recalled by one youngster, Stelton «was essentially a Jewish community with a traditional feeling about education, but with a libertarian slant». While receiving support from a number of Jewish related labor and fraternal organizations, the Stelton Colony did not become the spark for cultural revolution in America as some had hoped. Although Stelton survived the Red Scare of the post WWI period, its vital moment had passed by the beginning of the 1920's.

One of the key organizers at Stelton was Joseph J. Cohen, a Jewish anarchist who had emigrated from Russia in 1903 and had been schooled in anarchist thought during his early residence in Philadelphia by Voltarine de Cleyre, called by her biographer "the apostle of anarchism to the Jewish immigrants of the Philadelphia ghetto". Cohen's disappointment that Stelton had not really developed into his Kropotkin-like ideal of an anarcho-communist commune became a motivating

factor for the experiment at the Sunrise Community in Michigan during the Great Depression. Cohen used his position as editor of the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* (*Free Voice of Labor*), a Yiddish anarchist newspaper that traced its beginnings back to 1890 and had a circulation of over 20,000 around the time of WWI, to recruit members for a communal experiment at a 10,000 acre farm located near Saginaw, Michigan. In its short existence from 1933-36, Sunrise never realized the «heaven on earth» envisioned by Cohen and his supporters. Instead, the colony was rent by divisions sparked by different factions of Jewish anarchists who demanded that Yiddish be the primary language (even though there were numerous Italian anarchists from Chicago and Detroit at Sunrise) and individual choice take precedence over collective and communal arrangements. Moreover, Sunrise became embroiled in federal bureaucratic snares as a result of accepting funds from the New Deal Farm and Resettlement agencies.

In assessing these two intentional communities, this paper will attempt to identify what factors contributed to the growth of communitarianism among Jewish anarchists and how that communitarianism changed over time. In addition, the capacity of Jewish anarchists to realize their counter-cultural and counter-hegemonic ideals will be measured against the transformations within the American Jewish community and within the larger socio-economic and socio-cultural contexts. Thus, Stelton and Sunrise will be investigated for defining the socio-historical boundaries of Jewish anarchism and communitarianism in early twentieth century America.

**«The real place for realization is the community».**  
**The intellectual relationship**  
**between Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber**

Siegbert Wolf

The deep personal and intellectual friendship between Gustav Landauer (1870-1919) and Martin Buber (1878-1965) and their «antipolitical» cooperation over many years (*Neue Gemeinschaft, Sozialistischer Bund, Forte-Kreis* etc.) has an extraordinary importance in libertarian utopia. In the international libertarian movement we find many Jewish women and men as libertarian activists. In the German speaking area Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber belong to this Jewish-libertarian group. In the centre of their social-philosophical thinking and practice stood the individual and the relations between the individuals.

Landauer's influence on Buber was referred to his communitarian anarchism, which Buber carried further with his philosophy of dialogue and with his *Hebraic Humanism* which meant a radical cultural regeneration of Judaism above all in Palestine. This also includes an approach between Jews and Arabs (*Binationality*). On the other side Landauer was influenced by Buber to an intensive exposition with his Judaism. His confession to Judaism was founded in the community traditions on Judaism and accented the intimate liaison between Judaism and libertarian socialism. This included Landauer's rejection of the zionist movement also as his critics on the assimilation of Judaism in Western Europe. Looking at Judaism and his traditions of charity, justice and community it is possible to know Landauer's libertarian utopia.

Landauer and Buber both agreed in their rejection of a national Jewish state in Palestine. Buber sympathized with a cultural zionism which aimed at a renewal of the whole Judaism, on the overcoming of the growing distance between the Jewish communities in Western and Eastern Europe, and the strengthening of the feelings of solidarity of all Jewish people. Not in the diaspora but only in Palestine within the Kibbutz-movement Buber saw an intellectual Jewish center.

Buber's concept of the development of a selfconfident Judaism with his task to regenerate all human beings found consent by Landauer who sympathized with the Kibbutz-movement too. The Jewish settlement-movement in Palestine both Landauer and Buber interpreted as a community which was very similar to Landauer's anarchy. After Landauer's brutal murder in 1919 Buber carried on his anarchism and declared Landauer to the secret *spiritus rector* of the Jewish settlement movement in Palestine.

With their practical projects to revolutionate society Landauer and Buber got a very important role in utopian thinking in 20th century.