Maria Tarasova Chomard[1]

"The Fertile Soil of Growth, Life and Ideas": Jewish Anarchist Solidarity in Winnipeg

Abstract

This article focuses on the political and identity dynamics of early twentieth century Jewish anarchism in Winnipeg, a local movement situated at the intersection of two gravitational poles. One of these poles was the Jewish left and, in particular, its socialist (Marxist) current, represented by the Arbeiter Ring ("Workmen's Circle"). The other was the Jewish anarchist mutual aid network of North America, centred on the East Coast of the United States but extending its activity throughout the continent. Using a prosopographical ("collective biography") approach to highlight the relational patterns of the radical Jewish community of Winnipeg, this article assesses the movement's unique effort to balance between the two larger ideological frameworks from which its members drew. The article identifies the factors which determined this midway stance—namely, the close connection that the local activists maintained with the Yiddish language and culture—demonstrating how the latter contributed to compromising the movement's viability in the long term.

Résumé

Cet article porte sur les dynamiques politiques et identitaires de l'anarchisme juif à Winnipeg au début du XXe siècle, un mouvement local situé à l'intersection de deux pôles gravitationnels. L'un de ces pôles était la gauche juive et tout particulièrement son courant socialiste (marxiste), représenté par l'Arbeiter Ring (« Workmen's Circle »). L'autre était le réseau d'entraide juif nord-américain, centré sur la côte Est des États-Unis, mais étendant ses activités à travers le continent. En utilisant une approche prosopographique, celle de la biographie collective, pour mettre en lumière les modèles relationnels de la communauté radicale juive de Winnipeg, l'article évalue l'effort unique du mouvement à maintenir l'équilibre entre les deux sources d'inspiration de ses membres. L'étude établit les facteurs déterminants de cette position médiane — notamment, le lien fort que les activistes locaux maintenaient avec la langue et la culture yiddish —, en montrant comment ce dernier a contribué à compromettre la viabilité du mouvement à long terme.

"Winnipeg is the place of promise. It is the fertile soil of growth, life and ideas" was how Emma Goldman, a renowned militant anarchist, described her early impressions of radical activism in Winnipeg, the political centre of the Jewish left in the Canadian West.[2] Goldman, a Russian-born Jewish anarchist, came to be known as one of the most prominent figures of American progressive thought in the early twentieth century. She visited the Prairies of Canada for the first time in April 1907, during her lecture tour across North America. This visit was welcomed with great agitation by local anarchists and even socialists, and established the first substantial connection between the U.S. and Western Canadian anarchist movements.[3] It also gave a boost

to radical activity in Winnipeg, encouraging the shaping of a specifically anarchist approach to political education and mutual aid.

The early twentieth century affirmation of Jewish anarchism in Winnipeg was not an exceptional case in the context of Canada. Although some scholars have advanced the concept of "Western exceptionalism" arguing that a particular set of conditions made the Prairies of Canada more prone to radicalization compared to rest of the country, the development and institutionalization of anarchism was in fact consistent with North America's general fin de siècle progressive trend.[4] In Canada, anarchism constituted an important element of the nation's first progressive "formation" to borrow the term from historian Ian McKay.[5] While this formation was largely dominated by socialist ideas, it relied on a variety of currents of thought across Canada, which often developed within distinct ethnic groups. Thus, the anarchist ideology was particularly present in the left-wing Jewish immigrant community, where it manifested in the form of both formal and informal organizations established at the beginning of the century in Winnipeg as well as Montreal and Toronto.[6]

Like their Eastern Canadian counterparts, the Jewish anarchists of Winnipeg pledged allegiance to anarchism "without adjectives"[7] advocating for a holistic approach against oppression and prioritizing mutual aid to support its victims. They adopted and implemented the activities of the United States' anarchist core, especially with regard to humanitarian aid, and introduced their own initiatives in response to local needs and challenges. This community organizing often took place within Winnipeg's more general Jewish left-wing framework from which the local anarchist movement derived and was still institutionally dependent, maintaining a relationship of ethnic solidarity. While substantially limiting the anarchist autonomy on a local scale, this alliance with the Jewish left—that, besides anarchists, included the state-centrist socialist and nationalist currents—also constituted a derogation from the movement's cosmopolitan, anti-state doctrine. This provoked criticism of Winnipeg's Jewish radicals on the part of the broader anarchist community, preventing them from fully entering the latter's institutional framework.

The quest for balance between two types of solidarity—ethnic (Jewish) and political (anarchist)—became the determinant feature of Winnipeg's radicalism, putting it in a unique position with regard to the North American anarchist community. This article sets out to follow the development of the local anarchist movement, aiming to explain the reasons and effects of its exceptional status and to demonstrate how and to what extent it was impacted, over time, by the activists' personal choices as well as by the political, social and geographical characteristics of the Prairies. By presenting a particular, micro-scale case of Winnipeg's radical scene and delving into the dynamics of a multi-ideological alliance, the article seeks to contribute to the broader discussion on the role of solidarity and ethnicity in a social movement.

A Radical Melting Pot? The Symbiosis of Jewish Progressive Thought in Winnipeg

The turn of the twentieth century in North America was marked by a new, third wave of immigration, which brought over 2.9 million newcomers to the Canadian shores between the years of 1900 and 1914.[8] While this number is significantly lower than the 13 million immigrants estimated to have entered the United States of America within the same time frame, it still surpasses by nearly four times the total number of immigrants admitted to Canada during the previous fourteen-year period.[9] Jewish refugees from the Russian Empire, although relatively modest in proportion, constituted an important part of this new immigration.

The Jewish exodus from Russia was a consequence of persistent oppression. Since 1791, Russian Jews had been subject to the restrictive settlement policy of *cherta osedlosti* ("Pale of Settlement"), established by Empress Catherine the Great. This segregation measure primarily aimed to protect Orthodox Christians from the influence of Judaism, a religion associated with all Jewish people regardless of their personal beliefs. Throughout the nineteenth century, religion constituted the basis for antisemitism in conservative and even some progressive milieus within Russia; namely the liberal Slavophile movement, which was characterized by a strong nationalistic tendency and presented prejudice against Jews as "inherent to every Christian."[10] At the state level, the calcification of antisemitism was complete with the 1882 adoption of the highly restrictive "May Laws," provoking a wave of anti-Jewish pogroms largely connived at by the tsarist government.[11] As the violence intensified towards the late nineteenth century, nearly two million Jews were pushed to exile from Russia.[12] After the United States, which welcomed about 76% of these refugees, Canada was their second most popular transatlantic destination.[13] This was largely due to the country's economic and urban growth, which promised ample opportunities for employment. By the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Canada's total Jewish population had reached the size of 100,000.[14]

Western Canada, and in particular the city of Winnipeg, quickly established itself, alongside Toronto and Montreal, in the vanguard of destinations attracting the new workforce. Emerging as the West's rapidly developing urban centre, between 1870 and 1908, Winnipeg welcomed approximately 45,000 newcomers.[15] Jews constituted roughly 20% of this number, reaching the total of 9,023 in 1911, which accounted for 6.6% of the city's population at the time.[16] According to other accounts, by 1907 the ensemble of Russians and "other Slavs and Bohemians" including those of Jewish origin, reached 15,000.[17] But Winnipeg's economic progress and prospects of plentiful work were not the only reason for its popularity among those seeking asylum. Many of the immigrating Jews were secular and already influenced by radical revolutionary ideas so the promise of a secular life, freedom from religion, and the opportunity to

practise the politics they believed in was attractive. Such was the image transmitted by the Canadian West, largely seen as a wild, virgin land, where a new life free of oppression could be built—unlike predominantly Catholic Quebec, where the big cross atop Montreal's Mount Royal represented for the newly arrived "what [they were] running away from."[18]

In the Prairies of Canada Jews would find themselves among the principal advocates of the Canadian radical thought. Constituting a minority ethnic and religious group, many Jews appeared to be particularly receptive to radicalism not only due to oppression, but also as a result of their religious and cultural upbringing. While the Tanakh taught them human dignity, equality and community spirit, the customs of a hierarchical, highly socially coded Jewish home cultivated protest against dogmatic authority.[19] Thus, for many future émigrés of the early twentieth century, radicalization began as early as adolescence, when Jewish *yinglekh* and *meydlekh* became acquainted with the Marxist concept of class consciousness and joined the nascent Russian revolutionary movement. Some of the refugees were members of the Bund—the General Jewish Labour Federation of Lithuania, Poland and Russia (*Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeter-bund in Lite, Poyln un Rusland*), a secular Jewish socialist party organized in 1897 on the basis of Marxist ideas, which operated underground to avoid surveillance by the tsarist secret police. Other Jewish revolutionaries adopted a more radical stance, joining the anarchist current.[20] The latter was gaining popularity among the European workers influenced by the political ideas of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin.

Cover of *The Voice of Anarchists Exiled and Imprisoned in Russia*, published by the New York Anarchist Red Cross. No. 2 (October 1914).

Source: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

Although often presented as rivals, the two factions of anarchism and socialism had a common basis: both were founded on ideals and values of collectivism, mutual aid, and social equality. Both relied predominantly on nonviolent methods. By the turn of the twentieth century, contrary to the popular image of anarchists as political terrorists, they had largely abandoned a "propaganda by the deed" agenda in favour of gradual change through education and peaceful political protest. The true substantial difference between the two ideological currents consisted in their attitude towards the state. While socialists saw the state as instrumental in ensuring the durability of change, both revolutionary and reformatory, anarchists denounced completely the grounds for its existence and condemned any form of social hierarchy, constraint and privilege.[21]

Constituting two separate currents of progressive thought, socialists and anarchists did not always get along, be it in Europe or after emigration across the Atlantic. From the early 1900s, exiles began to set up funds to help revolutionaries in Russian prisons and labour camps, including the famous Political Red Cross,[22] and the issue of discrimination against anarchist prisoners quickly arose. The latter testified that the allocations, originally destined for all victims regardless of their political convictions, had been sent exclusively to the representatives of the socialist current.[23] This discriminatory tendency led to the establishment of a separate anarchist relief campaign, launched in 1905 by the radical Jewish immigrants of England.[24] Following the example of their counterparts, the anarchists of the U.S. East Coast developed this early initiative into a truly international solidarity network under the title Anarchist Red Cross, and between 1907–1913 established a number of fundraising branches in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Detroit.[25] The mutual aid groups collected money to send to the prisoners and exiles of Russia by way of organizing charity events (lectures, dinners, balls) and launching appeals in anarchist newspapers, either already existing, like the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* and *Mother Earth*, or newly created for this purpose, such as *The Voice of Anarchists Exiled and Imprisoned in Russia* published by the Anarchist Red Cross of New York. This separate, specifically anarchist campaign resulted in a significant deterioration of relations between socialists and anarchists in the region.[26]

The situation in Winnipeg was different. The relationship between the two progressive factions of the local Jewish diaspora was largely symbiotic. In 1907, anarchists and socialists formed the joint local branch No. 169 of the Workmen's Circle (W.C., Yiddish title *Arbeiter Ring*)—a social and cultural Jewish organization with a broad socialist agenda, first created in New York in 1892 under the title "Workingmen's Circle."[27] Anarchists, whose exact count at the time remains difficult to establish, composed a subgroup within the new branch, known as the *Fraye Gezelshaft* ("Free Society") group.[28] Despite being a minority, initially the group's members carried out their activities within the common framework, on an equal footing with the Marxists.

Thus, while most anarchists of America at the dawn of the century chose to keep their socialist counterparts at a distance,[29] only partially joining the *Arbeiter Ring* as separate, strictly anarchist branches,[30] the Jewish anarchists of Winnipeg favoured cooperation and willingly participated in joint initiatives. Namely, the activists Feivel Simkin, Samuel (Zalman) Prasow and Max Alcin were instrumental in establishing the first *Arbeiter Ring* school named after the Yiddish-language author and playwright Isaac Leib Peretz, launched in 1914 after several years of preparation.[31] It is worth noting the chiefly educational, working-class character of this involvement; for example, neither the anarchists of Winnipeg, nor the *Arbeiter Ring* branch they belonged to participated in the charities of local Jewish elites, such as the Jewish orphanage (1913), a dispensary (precursor to a hospital) nor the retirement home known as the Old Folks' Immigration Home (1915).[32] The priority of Winnipeg's Jewish anarchist community was to propagate ideas among workers, thus promoting their relief work.

Anarchist international mutual aid constituted a significant part of the group's agenda from the moment of its creation. Since 1907, the launch of the Anarchist Red Cross solidarity campaign in the U.S., charity lecture tours were organized at the initiative of Emma Goldman and Rudolf Rocker, two prominent figures of transatlantic Jewish anarchism. Both speakers relied on local Jewish anarchist groups for the arrangement of their visits, recruiting Winnipeg's *Fraye Gezelshaft*, as well as the anarchist sections of Toronto and Montreal, as campaign donors and organizers.[33] The proceeds from lectures, which sometimes charged an admission fee, other times asked for donations during the event, went straight to the Russian political prisoners' fund in New York. In the same year of 1907, following Goldman's request, Winnipeg created a distribution outlet for her anarchist journal *Mother Earth* with Samuel Prasow becoming its local agent and contact person.[34] Finally, in December 1910, delegates from Winnipeg participated in a Jewish anarchist convention in Philadelphia, where they took part in establishing the *Federirte Anarkhistishe Grupen in Amerike* (Federated Anarchist Groups in America).[35]

Mutual aid flowed in both directions. In 1909, Winnipeg's Jewish anarchists successfully rallied their American counterparts to a local cause, when they launched a campaign in support of a Russian revolutionary Zhenia Federenko, a refugee from the tsarist police arrested in Winnipeg. Organized by Feivel Simkin, the Federenko committee, which included both anarchist and non-anarchist Jews, sent out appeals to help fight against the young man's extradition to Russia. Their appeal was heard by Alexander Berkman, Goldman's New York-based comrade and anarchist leader, who arranged for Federenko's legal defence.[36] The appeal also attracted significant financial contributions both locally and continentally. Following Federenko's release, Simkin's fund was able to cover his passage to England, where the revolutionary went into hiding.[37]

As these relief initiatives raised awareness among Winnipeg's activists about their comrades' hardships in Russia, they also progressively steered the identity of the local anarchist group towards its ideological roots—and, eventually, facilitated its shaping into a separate institution with a greater level of autonomy from the local Jewish left. The new institution, under the title "Winnipeg Group of Anarchists Communists" [sic], was first mentioned in the context of humanitarian aid in Samuel Prasow's 1912 letter to Peter Kropotkin. According to Prasow, the group divided its proceeds between two outlets: the Political Refugee League of Winnipeg, which likely functioned as a local branch of the socialist Political Red Cross; and the anarchist international mutual aid campaign.[38] However, this dual allegiance did not last: in 1915, a falling out occurred between the anarchists and socialists of the *Arbeiter Ring*, leading to Feivel Simkin's expulsion from the Workmen's Circle branch No. 169. While the official reason for this expulsion remains unknown, it is likely that the predominantly socialist branch condemned separate anarchist activity within its realm and demanded that all proceeds be directed to the common cause.

In defence of his loyalty to the anarchist movement, Simkin created a new, exclusively anarchist group. Registered with the *Arbeiter Ring* as branch No. 564, it became the third local chapter of the Workmen's Circle after the foundation in 1912 of a nationalist (Socialist–Zionist) branch: No. 506.[39] This continued affiliation, maintained despite the conflict, attested to the anarchists' willingness to retain their role in collective projects, as well as to potentially preserve access to the resources offered by the transcontinental Jewish network. Most importantly, it implied the fidelity of the group members to their Jewish identity and kinship—not so much from a religious or even ethnic point of view, but from a cultural and historical one. Indeed, the idea of *Yiddishkayt* ("Jewishness," or a Jewish way of life), which referred to the shared experience, culture, language, and worldviews of Eastern European Jews, presented a great unifying element in the Jewish community that prevailed over passing ideological strife.[40] If the split had left any tension, it did not last long. Already in 1917, Feivel Simkin, along with Samuel Prasow's brother Israel, was invited to speak at the Marxist branch jubilee banquet and warmly accepted the invitation, marking a decisive end to the conflict.[41]

The Anarchist Branch and Its Personalities

Branch No. 564, an equal and independent member of the *Arbeiter Ring* network, retained the name of the former group *Fraye Gezelshaft*. Counting thirty-five members in its ranks at the moment of its creation, most of them garment workers, it adopted a wider radical agenda, and devoted more time and effort to the cause of anarchist international mutual aid.[42] To maximize fundraising profits and reinforce its place in the progressive Jewish milieu of Winnipeg, the branch mobilized new ways of promotion, particularly by organizing theatrical productions to appeal to the

general public. One such event—a performance of the Jewish play *God's Punishment*—took place at Queens Theatre in November 1917 in support of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, who had been arrested in New York earlier that year. The production, followed by a political meeting, was advertised in *Dos Yiddishe Vort* ("The Israelite Press"), a Yiddish-language newspaper published by Feivel Simkin.

A Jewish immigrant from Mogilev, present-day Belarus, Simkin came to be known in Winnipeg as a publisher and "printer in quite a large way."[43] Born into a family of religious Jews, he deviated from his parents' plan for him to become a rabbi, instead joining the Bund. There, he helped defend his Jewish compatriots during pogroms; then adhered to anarchist ideas. Simkin fled to Winnipeg in 1906 in the wake of the First Russian Revolution of 1905.[44] He later brought his wife Gittl, as well as both their families across the Atlantic to join him. A pacifist and advocate for education above all, he pursued his involvement in the anarchist movement after emigration. In 1905 he started a *Radikale Bibliotek* ("Radical Library") discussion club then became one of the local *Arbeiter Ring* leaders, creating Western Canada's first specifically anarchist *Arbeiter Ring* branch, organized with the help of several former anarchist members of branch No. 169.[45]

Besides Simkin the organizational core of the new group included his long-time comrade Samuel Prasow. Born in present-day Belarus into a secular, Russian-speaking Jewish family, he emigrated to Canada in 1904 with his brother Israel, after an anti-Jewish pogrom had erupted in 1903 in the city of Gomel. Both brothers took up construction jobs and, joining Winnipeg's working class, became "very politically aware."[46] While Israel gravitated at first towards Zionism, Samuel was always described as a devoted anarchist. Both Prasow brothers are referenced as leaders of the local anarchist group.[47] Both were also good friends of Emma Goldman, who stayed at their home in the North End during her visits.[48] The Prasows owned a department store in Winnipeg—a popular line of work among anarchist leaders, though it might appear contradictory, as they strove to create decent working conditions while anticipating the elimination of exploitation for all.[49] The Prasows were also writers whose work was featured in the pages of Simkin's first paper *Der Kanader Yid*.[50]

Another active core member of the anarchist branch was Max Alcin, a Jewish immigrant from present-day Belarus who had come to Canada in 1903. Alcin was a watchmaker by profession and owned a store in the North End of Winnipeg.[51] His wife Rose Alcin (née Cherniak), who eventually joined the Social Democratic Party of Canada (SDPC), was close to both the anarchist and socialist milieux.[52] She taught Yiddish culture at the radical *Arbeiter Ring* and I. L. Peretz schools.[53] Finally, another anarchist David Matlin, born in England into a Russian-Jewish émigré family, is mentioned in Rudolf Rocker's memoirs as a hospitable and efficient lecture organizer, who likely joined the new branch upon its creation.[54]

These key members of the anarchist branch were united by several common points. All of them were of Jewish descent, and hailed mostly from present-day Belarus, a region within the former Jewish Pale of Settlement which was particularly impacted by violent anti-Jewish pogroms. Although lacking formal education, most were naturally bi- or even trilingual (Yiddish, English, sometimes Russian). They were well read and highly ambitious, succeeded as small-scale entrepreneurs and some as political and syndicalist leaders—a calculated derogation from their anarchist beliefs. Most lived within a traditional family model, and established nuclear families with several children—the charge of care for whom might well explain the underrepresentation of women within local anarchist leadership.

Most importantly, nearly all of these activists adhered to the anarchist movement after their arrival in Canada—an example that challenges the common perception of anarchism as an imported, alien ideology.[55] Their emigration was not directly caused by political motives; in fact, most had left Russia prior to the First revolution of 1905.

Rose Alcin (centre) with family and friends, including sister Fanya Cherniack (to her right) and brother Joseph A. Cherniack (leaning on chair), both Socialist Territorialists.

Source: JHCWC, Winnipeg, Canada. JM 1857, Winnipeg, c. 1910.

Even Simkin, the only post–revolutionary refugee of the group, had fled Russia as a Bundist and a Jew. Thus, the core of Winnipeg's Jewish anarchist movement represents the earlier of the two third–wave Jewish immigration currents as defined by the historian of the American Jewish diaspora Irving Howe: that of ethnic, antisemitism refugees of 1881–1905. According to Howe, ethnic émigrés were generally less concerned with reforming the political situation of their native land compared to the later revolutionary exiles of 1905–1917. Instead, they focused on improving the conditions of their new life through local community organizing.[56] Howe's theory should be taken with precaution, as it does not apply to several key figures of anarchism—including Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman who, despite having come to America in 1885 and 1888 respectively, were very politically minded. However, it proves valid when comparing the Winnipeg "bunch" to the Anarchist Red Cross composed predominately of former Russian–Jewish revolutionaries.[57]

Moreover, as the Jewish tradition and way of life played a big part in defining their identity as exiles, the antisemitism refugees had a natural tendency to rely on their Jewish origins as "a shield from the emotional rift of displacement," in the words of historian Nancy Green.[58] Following the principle of Jewish kinship, they were inclined to form alliances with other progressive Jews already present on the American continent, which explains the cooperative tendency within the Winnipeg Jewish left despite the political differences among them.

Indeed, newly acquired institutional autonomy notwithstanding, the *Fraye Gezelshaft* members did not cut ties with their former socialist counterparts. The two progressive currents still belonged to the same network—the Workmen's Circle—and not only continued to be involved in the existing collective initiatives, but enthusiastically engaged in new ones. According to historian Arthur Ross, the anarchists of Winnipeg first extended their agenda to include local mutual aid in 1915. Ten members of the branch No. 564 joined the *Arbeiter Ring* in its request of a letters patent to establish a Free Loan Association—an intra–institutional mutual aid initiative, common in the local Jewish milieu, that would use its membership fees to give out interest–free loans to the needy.[59] In parallel, anarchists contributed to the Western Jewish Fund for the Relief of War Sufferers established in 1916 to assist orphans and other Jewish victims of war.[60] The cooperation on radical education also continued: in 1915, anarchists joined forces with both the Marxist (No. 169) and the Zionist (No. 506) branches to create the Jewish Radical Forum, which was later transformed into the Liberty Temple Association (*Frayhayt Templ*).[61] This initiative, which constituted an open forum for Jewish political discussion and aimed to "spread knowledge among Jewish socialist workers."[62] This later gave way to the founding of the radical, Yiddish–speaking *Arbeiter Ring* school.[63] Finally, a City Committee of the *Arbeiter Ring* was created to coordinate local joint activities and ensure representation at the all–American Workmen's Circle conventions.[64]

Liberty Temple Executive, 1917. The anarchist members are seated in the front row. Among them are Feivel Simkin (vice-president, third from left), Max Alcin (manager, third from right), and Israel Prasow (treasurer, second from right).

Source: JHCWC, Winnipeg, Canada. JM 0753/1/2/3 Liberty Temple group photo of executives.

Thus, against all odds, the anarchist split from the Marxist current into an independent Workmen's Circle branch neither halted nor reduced their involvement and cooperation on a local level. On the contrary, the centrality of their Jewish identity pushed Winnipeg's anarchists to maintain close relationship with former comrades and keep collective initiatives running. However, as communal solidarity became a new priority on Winnipeg's Jewish anarchist agenda, it appears to have completely eclipsed the international relief work for the anarchist movement.

Despite the initial boost, Winnipeg's role in anarchist relief worldwide remained incidental and limited to sporadic fundraising actions. The local branch did not become a consistent contributor to the Anarchist Red Cross campaign, nor did it succeed in establishing a sustainable anarchist mutual aid initiative on a global scale, being too isolated from the political context of the Old World. In part, this isolation is to be understood in a literal sense: the remote position of the Canadian West made its population naturally less receptive to the trends that developed on the East Coast, where the groups of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia comprised the core of

American Jewish anarchism. A similar case could be observed in the equally distant U.S. state of California, where the first anarchist relief organization did not appear until the 1920s as a consequence of eastern migration.[65] But as local involvement of the Winnipeg anarchist branch progressed, this distance took on an additional, figurative sense, gradually shifting the group's balancing position towards Jewish solidarity.

The Limits of Local Anarchism: A Short-Lived Commitment?

Institutional independence notwithstanding, the early years of existence of the anarchist Workmen's Circle branch No. 564 announced an unexpected turn in its priorities, which now clearly upheld the local progressive Jewish agenda. However, this was not the end of anarchist activity in the area. The movement continued to exist, even if on the margin of the American anarchist milieu, and to spread its ideas locally. Still, the unconventional character of these ideas, and particularly their perception as dangerous by the authorities, made their popularization a difficult task.

Since 1907, the movement found itself under surveillance as instructed by the municipal government. James Ashdown, Mayor of Winnipeg during 1907–1908, was particularly wary of anarchist tendencies and had repeatedly condemned the admission of "Red Emma" Goldman and other "undesirables" into Canada.[66] Later, in 1911, as the Winnipeg Library Committee accepted the public request to establish a section of Jewish and Ruthenian literature, it stipulated that all potential additions to the collection be subject to review by censorship board with the aim to identify and ban "books along very radical lines."[67] More limitations followed Canada's entry into the First World War. The implementation of the War Measures Act of 1914 gave the federal government broad powers to not only censor publications, but also ban radical organizations—including a certain Social Democratic Anarchist group.[68] Additionally, they had a mandate to suppress the civil liberties of "enemy aliens."[69] While the new legislature did not immediately disrupt the Jewish anarchist movement, which continued to operate underground, it significantly compromised the security of its members and prepared the ground for further repression that followed the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919.[70]

Mostly joined in emigration by their families and focused on local sociopolitical issues, few Canadian Jews returned to Russia in 1917, although several American Jews did. Though it was never directly affected by the Russian Revolution, the radical movement of Canada suffered a hard blow following the six-week Winnipeg strike for the improvement of work conditions. Despite its peaceful character and the eventual long-lasting impact on labour relations, the strike ended in arrests and political violence, causing significant repercussions on a federal scale. The Canadian state was apprehensive of the propagation of radical ideas, especially in immigrant circles, a fear

further escalated by the simultaneous Red Scare in the U.S.[71] The Parliament of Canada changed the Immigration Act so that even British-born foreigners could be deported and broadened the Canadian Criminal Code's definition of sedition, amending it with Section 98.[72] The new section banned "unlawful associations" and entitled the state to sentence charged offenders with up to twenty years in prison.[73] The reform produced long-lasting consequences: in the late 1920s, the Italian-born Toronto anarchist Attilio Bortolotti was threatened with the maximum penalty for mere possession of revolutionary literature and was eventually ordered to leave Canada.[74]

On a local level, although the Jewish social initiatives within the Workmen's Circle remained in place, the wartime and post-strike legislation appears to have nearly suppressed the anarchist movement as far as overt activity was concerned. A significant part of the movement's sympathizers moved away from radicalism and gravitated towards more mainstream lines of activism, such as socialism, Communism, and Zionism for the staunchest of Yiddishists. As for the group's organizational core, sources are unclear on what their paths looked like after the strike. Several members likely withdrew from the anarchist movement, their names disappearing from the local press and the accounts of their contemporaries, including Goldman and Rocker. Some activists left Winnipeg, as was the case for David Matlin who relocated to Vancouver to become a coat designer.[75]

The two activists that remained in the local spotlight, Feivel Simkin and Rose Alcin, were now evoked by the press in a different context of public office structures and private enterprise, with no reference to their anarchist background.[76] While this change in discourse did not speak to their abandonment of anarchist beliefs, it did illustrate a necessary shift in strategy. Thus, despite the anarchist disregard for institutional politics, in 1919 Alcin, already a SDPC member, ran for the position of the Labour Party's school trustee and became the first Jewish woman to hold public office in Canada. She did it as part of the anarchists' plan to oust the then incumbent Max Steinkopf, president of the Hebrew religious school Talmud Torah. Later, when asked to comment on Alcin's election, Feivel Simkin explained: " . . . we overlooked some things because we wanted to make a point"—that of the viability and adaptability of anarchist principles despite political repression.[77] Simkin himself attempted to pursue his anarchist activities covertly. In the late 1930s, he offered his help in advertising the project of Federated Libertarian Groups of Canada, authored by the anarchists of Toronto. As a printer, he was able to offer an advantageous price for the printing of leaflets, and later helped with their distribution across Western Canada.[78] Nevertheless, the Canadian anarchist groups were unable to unite, and the project never saw the light of day.

Another way for Winnipeg's anarchists to advance and transmit their ideals was through teaching. Post-strike, both Simkin and Alcin, as well as the Prasow brothers,

continued their educational mission at I. L. Peretz school, a collective initiative that brought together Jews of various ideological backgrounds.[79] Although Jewish-oriented, Yiddish-speaking and led by the Workmen's Circle sourdoughs, the Peretz school constituted a sustainable platform for progressive education as it allowed anarchist teachers to focus on radical thought and Jewish secular tradition.[80] Under the new political strain, this broad-profile, collectively funded initiative appeared a better choice than the more marginal *Arbeiter Ring* school.[81] The latter, although it positioned itself as more radical, suffered great ideological discord and managed to only briefly attract Simkin and Alcin to its ranks.[82]

This new ideological compromise, accepted by the Jewish radicals of Winnipeg as inevitable, was hardly welcomed by American anarchist leaders. Rudolf Rocker, who came back to lecture in Winnipeg in 1925, was especially sensitive to the change. Interpreting the fellow activists' concessions as an indifference to the common cause enabled by personal success, he stated that the local movement had turned into "a group of contractors, bosses, and 'alrightnikes'" (i.e. upstarts).[83] The opinion was shared by Emma Goldman on her return in early 1927, whose visit to Winnipeg allegedly constituted the least successful chapter of her tour from a financial as well as spiritual point of view.[84] The only highlight of the visit, according to Goldman, was the organization of a Women's Aid Society for Relief of Russian Political Prisoners among young female anarchists of the Workmen's Circle; however, left without guidance upon Goldman's departure, the initiative quickly lost momentum and ceased its fundraising efforts.[85]

While these accounts attest to the continued existence of the outlawed group, they are far from presenting the local post-General Strike anarchism as "very able and active until the 1950s" as the Toronto anarchist Julius Seltzer later claimed.[86] Indeed, apart from Alcin's controversial election to office in 1919 where she stayed only two years, and about 115 U.S. dollars raised and sent to the USSR in 1927 by the young women's group, post-strike anarchist activity in Winnipeg was hardly fruitful.[87]

From 1920 onwards, local Jewish anarchism appears to have entered a crisis which resulted in part from a gradual loss of enthusiasm by its supporters. Now in their late thirties, some ill and busy making their living, they lacked the ardour needed to revive the movement after the Red Scare, an issue they were left to face on their own as the American purges had driven away from the continent several of the movement's key figures, including Goldman.[88] Now that the centre of anarchist activity gravitated towards Europe, the already distant Winnipeg group was left completely on the margin of the anarchist network and practically ceased to contribute to the latter's relief effort. Observing discouragement on the Canadian front, Goldman proposed to then France-based Alexander Berkman to settle together in Canada, believing that their proximity would help reinvigorate local activism.[89] The plan, however,

could not be realized due to Berkman's own poor health.

Another reason for the decline of Winnipeg anarchism identified by Goldman stemmed from the *Yiddishkayt* of its adherents, and in particular from their attachment to the Yiddish language. Having regularly presented in Yiddish herself in the beginning of her lecturing career, from the 1920s onwards Goldman insisted on the importance of conducting North American propaganda in English.[90] Speaking the local language was the only way to make anarchist ideas accessible among the local population and the immigrants of other origins, and thereby replenish the movement's ranks which had greatly thinned as a result of post-strike and Red Scare repression. In response the U.S. Jewish anarchist groups in New York and Chicago switched to operating entirely in English and opened their doors to Italian and Spanish militants, as well as some Americans. In Winnipeg, however, this strategy was heavily compromised by the inability of many Jews to speak, read, and write in English effectively, and by their general preference to use the Yiddish language in their activist work. Consequently, the monolingual movement had little chance of attracting fresh blood among the locals and was left with a limited pool of contributors and sympathizers. Its future legacy looked equally obscure, as even the younger generation of Jewish anarchists, Canadian-born and with a linguistic preference for English, had trouble understanding the cause for which their parents fought.[91]

Winnipeg's anarchist initiatives continued to be undermined by the group's rapprochement with the Jewish left, especially as the latter developed new tendencies and inclinations. Indeed, since the victory of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia, the syndicalist movement of North America was characterized by a growth of socialist and especially Communist influence. This was the case in Winnipeg too, where Communists gained popularity within the Workmen's Circle, but also in the radical One Big Union—a remnant of the 1919 General Strike characterized by significant Jewish participation.[92] Suddenly at its peak, Communism presented a serious threat to the anarchist movement, as it constituted one of the greatest forces of attraction for those who had shied away from radicalism post-strike.

Moreover, the Communist factor imposed serious limitations on the anarchist ideological agenda. As anarchist organizers negotiated access to collective venues in order to reach the *Arbeiter Ring*'s significant audience, they were compelled to adapt their own language to the latter's new ideals. Thus on more than one occasion, they had to restrain their invitees from publicly criticizing the Soviet regime.[93] This was the last straw for Goldman, who accused her Winnipeg comrades of collaborationism and ideological erosion. She was not the only one to note the Communist influence: Rudolf Rocker, despite his high reputation in both the international and local Winnipeg's anarchist milieux, failed to convince the latter of Soviet political crimes and raise sufficient funds for their victims when he visited Winnipeg in 1925. The

local movement could only be persuaded by Goldman herself, a first-hand witness of the Bolshevik revolutionary dictatorship in 1920–1921.[94]

According to Goldman's accounts, following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the General Strike of 1919, Winnipeg's anarchist movement practically ceased to develop initiatives of its own, be it on a local or an international scale. Outlawed by the Canadian government, the *Fraye Gezelshaft* group lost its independent institutional status as well as many of its members, and was once again transformed into a minor current within the Jewish labour milieu. The movement's political and humanitarian activity was practically abandoned, save for scant participation in fundraising appeals of visiting activists and occasional individual contributions to the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* newspapers' fund.[95] As for the educational work still ongoing within the general *Arbeiter Ring* school framework, it now relied on a smaller proportion of anarchist teachers whose own ideologies had undergone transformation. Thus, initially effective in the pursuit of its multiple goals, the balancing strategy of Winnipeg's anarchist group proved fatal in the long term. Geographically distant and lacking the resources to progress as an independent ideological movement, local anarchists could not survive the wave of repression and ensuing rivalry with left-wing currents. Unlike the Jewish anarchist groups of Toronto and Montreal, who gained momentum in the 1920s and inserted themselves into the anarchist humanitarian network, the radicals of Winnipeg eventually left its orbit, either fully giving up activism or gravitating towards different forms of local community organizing.[96]

The study of Winnipeg's Jewish anarchist group through the prism of North American anarchist movement has established its two central unique features. On the one hand, it is the relative autonomy of the group with regard to the general movement in America. On the other, it is its symbiotic relationship with the Workmen's Circle, and thus more generally with the Jewish left in the city. The choice of allies among the Jews, as well as the prevalence of a local Jewish community agenda over a universal anarchist one, reveals the close ties that the radicals maintained with their Jewish identity, or *Yiddishkayt*. Stemming from the members' shared experiences both prior to and following emigration, this idea of Jewish kinship appears to have largely determined the political choices of the local movement despite political and ideological differences.

Consequently, this choice of priorities determined the limits of local anarchist activity, and distanced the Winnipeg group from its anarchist counterparts across the continent and around the world. In parallel, its rapprochement with the local Jewish left, due in part to practical factors such as common infrastructure and audience, brought change to the ideological stance of the anarchist group and aligned its objectives with those of the local labour milieu. This attenuated the anarchist dimension of the group and effectively led to its premature crisis in the 1930s, almost

thirty years before the general decline of the Jewish anarchist solidarity movement in the wake of the Second World War.

Winnipeg's Jewish anarchists, specifically the limits of their involvement in international mutual aid, present a curious page in the social and political history of Western Canada. The interest of the movement extends well beyond the local and even national scale. This local case of anarchist activity falls within a more general context of the Jewish anarchist movement in North America, its development, its undertakings, its inner political and identity dynamics, as well as its relations with other ideological currents. Thus, while the evolutionary trends of the general movement have helped interpret the specific local features of anarchist engagement in Winnipeg, the latter may in turn offer an important vantage point to explore and explain developments on a larger scale. By way of cross–scale comparison, this prosopographical study may enrich our understanding of anarchist activity in North America. Namely, its revelation of the internal collisions and contradictions that surrounded the question of mutual aid provides new insights into the history of anarchism in Canada and the United States, shifting the focus towards humanitarian and advocacy work.

1
This article is an extension of the author's research essay on Winnipeg's Jewish anarchist solidarity, awarded in 2021 with the Switzer-Cooperstock Student Prize in Western Canadian Jewish History. The author would like to express her gratitude to Daniel Stone, Stan Carbone and Belle Jarniewski of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada for kindly accompanying her in her research work and facilitating access to the Centre's archives. She also thanks Pauline Peretz, Travis Tomchuk and Mikhail Belousov for their comments on earlier drafts of this article.

2
Emma Goldman, "On the Road," *Mother Earth*, vol. 2, no. 3 (May 1907), 133. Cited in Paul Burrows, "'Apostle of Anarchy': Emma Goldman's First Visit to Winnipeg in 1907," *Manitoba History*, no. 57 (Feb. 2008).

3
Henry Trachtenberg, *"The old CLO' move": Anti-Semitism, Politics and the Jews of Winnipeg, 1882–1921* (PhD diss., York University, 1984), 456.

4
A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899–1999* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); David Bercuson, *Fools and Wise Men: the Rise and Fall of the One Big Union*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson 1978).

5
Ian McKay, *Reasoning Otherwise: Leftists and the People's Enlightenment in Canada, 1890–1920* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2008).

6
See Simon Belkin, *Le mouvement ouvrier juif au Canada, 1904–1920/Di Poale-Zion Bavegung in Kanade, 1904–1920*, trans. Pierre Anctil (Sillery: Éditions du Septentrion, 1999 (1956); Allan Levine, *Seeking the Fabled City: The Canadian Jewish Experience* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2018).

7
"Anarchism without adjectives," also known as "unhyphenated" or "synthetic" anarchism, is an approach that presents a synthesis of ideological currents, such as anarcho-syndicalism, anarcho-communism or anarcho-individualism, imagined as "complementary and non contradictory." See Sébastien Faure, "The Anarchist Synthesis," 1927, published in *Le Mouvement social*, no. 83, L'Anarchisme ici et là, hier et aujourd'hui (Apr. - Jun., 1973), p. 64–72.

8

Monica Boyd and Michael Vickers, "100 Years of Immigration in Canada," *Canadian Social Trends* 11, no. 8 (Autumn 2000), 2–12; Walter T. K. Nugent, *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870–1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 14.

9

Nugent, *Crossings*, 14.

10

Ivan Aksakov, "On How to Render the Jews Innocuous for the Christian Population" (О том, как бы обезвредить евреев для христианского народонаселения), in *The Jewish Question (Еврейский вопрос)* (Moscow: Sotsizdat, 2001).

11

Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence: the Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union* (New York: Schocken Books, 1998), 1–58.

12

Between 1881–1914, 1,980,000 Jews left the Russian Empire. Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research*, trans. Serguei Dobrynin (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), 93–137.

13

"Jewish Emigration from Russia: 1880–1928," Beyond the Pale: the History of Jews in Russia, accessed Aug. 30, 2022, https://web.archive.org/web/20181017163146/http://www.friends-partners.org/partners/beyond-the-pale/eng_captions/39-4.html.

14

Stuart Shoenfeld, "Jewish Canadians," The Canadian Encyclopedia, Mar. 18, 2020, accessed Aug. 30, 2022, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/jewish-canadians.

15

J. S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates* (Canada: Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1909), 259.

16

Louis Rosenberg, *The Jewish Community of Winnipeg* (Montreal: Research Bureau of The Canadian Jewish Congress, 1946), 10–13. Cited in Roz Usiskin, "The Winnipeg Jewish Community: Its Radical Elements, 1905–1918," *MHS Transactions* 3, no. 33 (1976–77).

17

James Henry Ashdown (Mayor of Winnipeg, 1907–1908) to Frank Oliver (Minister of the Interior, 1905–1911), Winnipeg, 1907. Cited in Trachtenberg, *"The old CLO' move,"* 457.

18

Merle Zita Langbord Levine, *My Memoirs* (Toronto, 2019), 7.

19

See Frank Jacob and Sebastian Kunze (ed.), *Jewish Radicalisms: Historical Perspectives on a Phenomenon of Global Modernity* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019). Several Jewish anarchists in North America, including Feivel Simkin, Emma Goldman and Joseph Spivak, linked their departure and radicalization to family conflict.

20

The two paths were not mutually exclusive. For example, Winnipeg's activist Feivel (Frank) Simkin was a former Bundist who adhered to anarchism while still in Russia and continued his involvement with the anarchist movement after his emigration in 1906.

21

See, for example, *Free Voice of Labour (Freie Arbeiter Stimme)*, documentary film (New York: Pacific Street Film Collective, 1980).

22

Evgenija Strelnikova, "The Political Red Cross in the Russian Empire and Abroad (1906–1914)" (Политический Красный Крест в Российской империи и за рубежом (1906–1914)), *Vestnik PSTGU*, vol. 2, no. 1 (38; 2011), 77–88.

23

Harry Weinstein to Boris Yelensky, undated, letter published in Boris Yelensky, *In the Struggle for Equality: the History of the Anarchist Red Cross* (Chicago: A. Berkman's Aid Fund, 1958), 12–13.

24

According to Rudolf Rocker, the treasurer of the European Anarchist Red Cross, the organization was first created in London circa 1905. See Rudolf Rocker to Boris Yelensky, June 2, 1956, letter published in Yelensky, *In the Struggle for Equality*, 11–12.

25
The Voice of Anarchists Exiled and Imprisoned in Russia (Голосъ ссыльныхъ и заключенныхъ русскихъ анархистовъ), no. 2 (Oct. 1914).

26
See Yelensky, *In the Struggle for Equality.*

27
"Our History," *The Workmen's Circle*, accessed Aug. 11, 2022, https://www.circle.org/about-us; "History," *Boston Workers Circle*, accessed Aug. 11, 2022, http://circleboston.org/history.

28
The title was likely chosen as an homage to the turn-of-the-century American anarchist newspaper *Free Society*, published by Abraham Isaak and his family in 1897–1904. The anarchist groups of Chicago (1897–1904) and Toronto (1910–1959, Workmen's Circle branch No. 339) adopted the same title.

29
University of Michigan Library (UM), Ann Arbor, Special Collections Research Center (SCRC), Joseph A. Labadie Collection, Boris Yelensky papers, 1939–1975, Box 1, F. 3 [Chicago], 9.

30
Kenyon Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 37.

31
See "Extreme Radicals Org. School," *The Israelite Press*, Feb. 13, 1951, 11.

32
Ross, *Communal Solidarity*, 164, 184.

33
The early-1900s Jewish anarchist group of Toronto was known as *Royter Krayz* ("Red Circle"). It subsequently transformed into the Workmen's Circle branch No. 339, which existed from 1910 until 1959. Montreal's Jewish anarchist section *Arbayter Fraynt* (also known as *Frayhayt*) derived from the local progressive Mutual Aid group. It crystallized as a separate political institution in 1908, affiliating itself with the New York-based American Anarchist Federation. Although all three Jewish anarchist groups of Canada established a connection with the U.S.

Anarchist Red Cross network, they did not communicate among themselves until after 1919. See Belkin, *Le mouvement ouvrier juif au Canada*, 92; Harry (Hirsch) Hershman, "À l'occasion des vingt-cinq ans du mouvement ouvrier juif à Montréal / 25 yor yidish arbeter bavegung in Montreal," *Unzer Vort*, Dec. 23, 1927–Mar. 2, 1928, trans. Pierre Anctil, in *Bulletin du Regroupement des chercheurs en histoire des travailleurs du Québec*, vol. 26, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 50.

34
See advertisement for "Agents of Mother Earth" in *Mother Earth*, vol. 2, no. 3 (May 1907). Cited in Burrows, "'Apostle of Anarchy.'"

35
The 1910 convention in Philadelphia was arranged by the local Radical Library group (*Arbeiter Ring* branch No. 273) and, apart from Winnipeg, included delegates from New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Chicago and other cities. The Federated Anarchist Groups formed there replaced the Anarchist Federation of New York which had existed since 1908. The new organization was succeeded in 1914 by the Anarchist Federation of America, which itself disbanded two years later. See *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, Jan. 7, 1911; *The Agitator*, Jan. 15, 1911. Cited in P. Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 191.

36
"Morris Ganberg" in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 371–76.

37
Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada (JHCWC), Winnipeg, interview with Feivel Simkin, Feb. 23, 1977, media no. 107.

38
Prasow to Kropotkin, Winnipeg, Dec. 24, 1912. State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), Moscow, F. 1129, Op. 2, D. 2030.

39
Usiskin, "The Winnipeg Jewish Community," 161–62.

40
Irving Howe, *World of our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 16.

41
See *The Israelite Press*, Sept. 5, 1918; B. Noznitsky, "Memories," in *Sholem Aleichem Twenty-Five Years Jubilee Book*, *1921–1946* (Winnipeg: The Israelite Press, 1946), 17. Cited in Usiskin, "The Winnipeg Jewish Community."

42
The Israelite Press, Sept. 15, 1915. Cited in Usiskin, "The Winnipeg Jewish Community."

43
Giesecke to Goldman, Scarboro Bluffs, Ontario, undated. International Institute of Social History (IISH), Amsterdam, Emma Goldman papers, F. 64 [Giesecke-Rogers, Dorothy 'Giessecke', and Laddon, Esther. - Toronto Libertarian Group. (Scarborough Bluffs, Ontario, Canada). 1935–1939.].

44
JHCWC, interview with Feivel Simkin, Feb. 23, 1977, media no. 107.

45
Joseph A. Cherniak, "Reminiscences of 40 Years of Jewish Community Life," trans. Harvey H. Herstein, *Second Annual Publication of the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada: A Selection of Papers Presented in 1969–70* (Winnipeg: Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, 1972). Cited in Belkin, *Le mouvement ouvrier juif au Canada*, 115.

46
JHCWC, interview with Bertha Plotkin (Prasow), Apr. 21, 1972, media no. 054.

47
"Julius Seltzer" in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 328–30.

48
Trachtenberg, *"The old CLO' move,"* 455.

49
This was also Seltzer's case in Toronto. See "Julius Seltzer" in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 328–30.

50
Arthur Chiel, *The Jews In Manitoba: A Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 125–28. Cited in Burrows, "'Apostle of Anarchy.'"

51
Winnipeg Free Press, Jan. 5, 1937, 7.

52
Usiskin, "Toward a Theoretical Reformulation of the Relationship Between Political Ideology, Social Class, and Ethnicity: A Case Study of the Winnipeg Jewish Radical Community, 1905–1920," MA Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1978, 228.

53
"Rose Cherniak Alcin (Elkin)," *Manitoba Social Science Teachers' Association Journal*, vol. 40, no. 3, Apr. 2015, 15.

54
Rudolf Rocker, *The London Years* (London: Robert Anscombe & Co., 1956), 235. Cited in Usiskin, "The Winnipeg Jewish Community."

55
The historiographical tendency to view "radical" ideologies as a consequence of immigration, inherently foreign to the political tradition of Canada and the United States was particularly present in the 1940s–60s. This perception has shifted since the 1960s, as conflict and dissent were first placed at the heart of the North American political history. For references, see Alice Béja, "Introduction: A Significant Other," *Transatlantica*, no. 2 (2021). On the Canadian case, see Kenneth D. McRae, "The Structure of Canadian History," in *The Founding of New Societies? Studies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada, and Australia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), 219–74; Gad Horowitz, "Conservatism, Liberalism, and Socialism in Canada: An Interpretation," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science/Revue canadienne d'Economique et de Science politique*, vol. 32, no. 2 (May 1966), 143–71.

56
Howe, *World of our Fathers*.

57
See Yelensky, *In the Struggle for Equality*.

58
Nancy L. Green, *The Limits of Transnationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 48.

59
AM, G 7406, File 27, Charters Granted under the Charitable Associations Act. Cited in Ross, *Communal Solidarity,* 121.

60
The Israelite Press, Aug. 25, 1915.
Cited in Usiskin, "Toward a Theoretical
Reformulation...," 130. On the Western Jewish
Fund for the Relief of War Sufferers, see Ross,
Communal Solidarity, 131, 134.

61
JHCWC, Liberty Temple group photo of
executives, JM 0753/1/2/3.

62
The Israelite Press, Dec. 2, 1915. Cited
in Usiskin, "Toward a Theoretical
Reformulation...," 169.

63
Herstein, "The Growth of the Winnipeg
Jewish Community and the Evolution of its
Educational Institutions," *MHS Transactions* 3,
no. 22 (1965–66).

64
Usiskin, "Toward a Theoretical
Reformulation...," 167–68.

65
On anarchist activity in the U.S. state of
California see Caroline Luce, "Socialism,
Radicalism and the Social Labor Movement in
Los Angeles: History and Historiography,"
Perush, vol. 2, no. 1 (Feb. 2010).

66
Trachtenberg, *"The old CLO' move,"* 451–52.

67
Ibid., 460.

68
The Israelite Press, Oct. 18, 1918.
Cited in Usiskin, "Toward a Theoretical
Reformulation...," 223.

69
Denis Smith, "War Measures Act," The
Canadian Encyclopedia, Mar. 13, 2020,
accessed Aug. 11, 2022, https://www.
thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/war-
measures-act.

70
McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and
Revolutionaries*.

71
John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns
of American Nativism 1860–1925* (New

Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963),
279.

72
Dennis Molinaro, "Section 98 Criminal Code,"
The Canadian Encyclopedia, Dec. 16, 2013,
accessed Aug. 30, 2022, https://www.
thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/
section-98-criminal-code.

73
Thomas R. Berger, *Fragile Freedoms: Human
Rights and Dissent in Canada* (Toronto: Clarke,
Irwin & Company, 1981), 132–33.

74
"Attilio Bortolotti" in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*,
175–88. Bortolotti avoided deportation thanks
to the defense campaign organized by Emma
Goldman. See Adam Bunch, "Emma Goldman
in Toronto — one last victory for The Most
Dangerous Woman in the World," *Spacing*,
Jan. 12, 2016, accessed Aug. 26, 2022, http://
spacing.ca/toronto/2016/01/12/53895/.

75
Library and Archives Canada (LAC), *Voters
Lists, Federal Elections, 1935–1980* (Ottawa,
Ontario, Canada: LAC, undated), R1003-6-3-E
(RG113-B).

76
Simkin continued his publishing activity and in
1949, became president of the newly founded
Universal Printers enterprise. He did not
retire from his position until the company's
sale in 1960. John M. Bumstead, *Dictionary of
Manitoba Biography* (Winnipeg: University of
Manitoba Press, 1999), 228.

77
JHCWC, Interview with Feivel Simkin, Feb. 23,
1977, media no. 107.

78
Giesecke to Goldman, Scarboro Bluffs,
Ontario, undated. IISH, Emma Goldman (EG)
papers, F. 64.

79
The U.S. Jewish anarchist Joseph Cohen,
who visited Winnipeg in 1929, later recalled
the cooperation spirit that he encountered
within the Peretz school. See Cohen, *Di
yidish-anarkhiṣtishe baṿegung in Ameriḳe
: hiṣtorisher iberbliḳ un perzenlekhe
iberlebungen / The Jewish Anarchist
Movement in the United States: A Historical*

Review and Personal Reminiscences (Philadelphia: Radical Library Branch 273, Workmen's Circle, 1945), 458. UM, SCRC, Labadie Collection, Esther Dolgoff "Jewish Anarchist Movement in America" collection.

80
"Rose Cherniak Alcin (Elkin)," 15.

81
According to Cohen, the school was supported by local fundraisings that took place namely during "weekly bridge parties." Cohen, *Di yidish-anarkhiṣtishe bayegung in Ameriķe*, 458.

82
The *Arbeiter Ring* school had a relatively short existence, from 1921 until 1937. See Herstein, "The Growth of the Winnipeg Jewish Community…"; JHCWC, Interview with Feivel Simkin, Feb. 23, 1977, media no. 107.

83
Der Kamf, Montreal, Jan. 1, 1926. Cited in Usiskin, "The Winnipeg Jewish Community."

84
Goldman to Berkman, Winnipeg, Mar. 15, 1927. IISH, Alexander Berkman (AB) papers, F. 25 [Goldman, Emma. January-May 1927].

85
Goldman to Berkman, Winnipeg, Feb. 22 and Mar. 2, 1927. IISH, AB papers, F. 25. EG papers, F. 64 [Cohen, Joseph J.; Freedman, Samuel; Mratchny, Mark and Johanna Boetz. - Fraye Arbeiter Stimme, Jewish Weekly. (New York, USA). 1927–1929, 1931, 1935–1939 and n. d.]. Among the Women's Aid Society members were Israel Prasow's wife Eva (née Sokolofski), her sister Rachel Genoff (née Sokolofski) and a certain Mrs. Goldstein. See Goldman to "dear comrade" [Jacob Silverstein], Toronto, May 26, 1927. IISH, Fraye Arbeyter Shtime archives, F. 1 [Brieven von Emma Goldman. S. Linder 1927–1940].

86
"Julius Seltzer" in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 328–30.

87
Goldman to Cohen, Edmonton, Mar. 7, 1927. EG papers, F. 64; *Bulletin of the Relief Fund*, Nov. 1927, ed. by A. Berkman. Walter P. Reuther Library, Detroit, International Workers of the World papers, Series

IX [Miscellaneous Materials], B. 155 [Miscellaneous Non-IWW Publications], F. 2.

88
Goldman to Berkman, Winnipeg, Feb. 16, 1927. IISH, AB papers, F. 25.

89
Goldman to Berkman, Winnipeg, Feb. 22, 1927. IISH, AB papers, F. 25.

90
Goldman to Boris Yelensky, Toronto, Oct. 31, 1934. IISH, EG papers, F. 172 [Yelensky, Boris. - Free Society Group, Committee to help the Spanish workers and their cause. (Chicago, Illinois, USA). 1934, 1937.].

91
Goldman to Berkman, Winnipeg, Mar. 15, 1927. IISH, AB papers, F. 25.

92
Goldman to Berkman, Winnipeg, Feb. 7, 1927. IISH, AB papers, F. 25.

93
Goldman to Berkman, Toronto, Dec. 27, 1926. IISH, AB papers, F. 24 [Goldman, Emma. August 1925–1926.].

94
Goldman to Berkman, Winnipeg, Feb. 7, 1927. IISH, AB papers, F. 25.

95
According to the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* archives, several Winnipegers, including Feivel Simkin, kept up financial contributions to the newspaper until its closure in 1977. National Library of Israel, The Jewish Press in the USA / The Yiddish Press Section, ארבייטער שטימע פרייע [Freie Arbeiter Stimme], accessed Aug. 15, 2022, https://www.nli.org.il/en/journals/NNL-Journals002156849/NLI.

96
Both the Toronto and Montreal chapters of the anarchist movement took part in the U.S.-initiated Jewish anarchist campaign to aid the libertarian Holocaust victims during and after the Second World War. Yelensky, *In the Struggle for Equality*; IISH, Boris Yelensky papers, F. 47 [Rezanovich, H., Montreal. 1946–1947.].