Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia in Central Europe (1900-1933)

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by Michael Löwy

The thesis that socialism is only a secularized form of Jewish messianism has frequently been put forward by its contradictors and critics. Lucien Goldmann is one of the rare Marxists who was ready to assume this possible heritage in positive terms: "It is representations like the coming of the Messiah, the Kingdom of Heaven, etc., which are found devoid of any transcendent or supernatural element in this immanent religion called socialism, in which they take the form of hope and faith in an immanent historical future that men must realize by their own action.[1]

This hypothesis, however, remains too abstract and too vague. The suggestion presented by Karl Mannheim in *Ideology and Utopia* seems more precise and concrete: radical anarchism is the modern figure of the chiliastic principle, the relatively most pure form of modern utopian/millenarian consciousness. According to Mannheim, the 20th-century thinker, who most closely personifies this spiritual attitude of a "demonic depth," is the Jewish anarchist writer Gustav Landauer,[2] one of the *spiritus rectores* of the Bavarian Republic in 1919. It is interesting to recall in this connection that, according to the German sociologist Paul Honigsheim (former member of the Max Weber Circle of Heidelberg and friend of Georg Lukács and Ernst Bloch), some of the participants in the Republics of the Workers Councils of Bavaria and Hungary were convinced of being called to carry out the mission of the redemption of the world and belonging to a collective messiah.[3] Actually, besides Gustav Landauer, other Jewish intellectuals (Kurt Eisner, Ernst Toller, Erich Mühsam) played an important role in the Bavarian Republic, while Lukács and other members of the Budapest Jewish intelligentsia were among the leaders of the 1919 Hungarian Republic.

In order to attempt to examine this issue thoroughly, it would be necessary to examine the possible political implications of Jewish messianism itself. By

1. "Economic Democracy and Cultural Creation," 1961, in Goldmann, *Epistemology and Political Philosophy* (Paris, 1978), p. 217.

2. Karl Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*, 5th ed. (Frankfurt am Main, 1969), pp. 195-196, 210, 214.

3. Paul Honigsheim, "Soziologie der Mystik," in *Versuche zu einer Soziologie des Wissens*, ed. Max Scheler (Leipzig, 1924), p. 343.

taking the analyses of Gershom Scholem (universally recognized as the greatest authority in this area) as the point of departure, the question can be narrowly defined. In his essay, "Towards an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," Scholem states: "There is an anarchic element in the very nature of messianic utopianism: the dissolution of ancient ties which lose their significance in the new context of messianic freedom."[4] This statement is very illuminating, but it seems that the analogy between the messianic utopia and the libertarian utopia goes beyond this factor and is manifested in several other decisive aspects of these two cultural configurations. To examine this analogy, I shall use a theoretical model — the ideal type — of Jewish messianism formulated by Gershom Scholem and a few remarks by Karl Mannheim on radical anarchism.

1. Jewish messianism includes two tendencies which are intimately linked and contradictory at the same time: a *restorative* tendency, oriented toward the reestablishment of a former ideal state of a lost golden age, a shattered Edenic harmony, and a *utopian* tendency, aspiring to a radically new future that has never existed. The proportion between the two tendencies can vary, but the messianic idea is only crystalized by their combination; they are inseparable in a dialectical relationship remarkably demonstrated by Scholem: "Even the restorative factors are at work. . . . The completely new order contains elements of the completely old one, but even this old order does not lie in the real past. It is rather a question of a past transformed and transfigured into an enlightened dream by the rays of utopia."[5] The Hebraic concept — biblical and cabalist — of *tikkun* (simultaneous restoration, reparation and reform) is the condensed expression of this duality of the messianic tradition.

However, it is precisely in libertarian thought that a similar combination of conservatism and revolution is found, as Mannheim stresses elsewhere.[6] With Bakunin, Proudhon or Landauer, revolutionary utopia is always accompanied by a profound nostalgia for past pre-capitalist forms of the traditional peasant or artisan community. With Landauer, this amounts to an explicit apology for the Middle Ages. Actually, most of the great anarchist thinkers integrate a romantic attitude toward the past in their approach.

It is true that a romantic-nostalgic dimension of this type is present in all anti-capitalist revolutionary thought, Marxism included, contrary to what is usually thought. Nevertheless, while with Marx and his followers this dimension is relativized by their admiration for industry and economic progress brought by capital, (who in no way share this industrialism) it is manifested by a particular intensity and even unique force with the anarchists. Of all the modern revolutionary currents, anarchism is undoubtedly the utopia which

4. Gershom Scholem, "Zum Verständnis der messianischen Idee im Judentum," *Judaica* I, (Frankfurt am Main, 1963), pp. 41-42.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

6. Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie,* p. 196.

contains the strongest romantic and restorative weight. The work of Landauer is in this regard the supreme expression of the romantic spirit of libertarian utopia.

It is perhaps in this aspect that the analogy between Jewish messianism and anarchism is the most significant, the most fundamental, the most decisive. It alone could create a privileged spiritual link between them. I shall come back to this later.

2. According to Scholem, Jewish messianism (as opposed to Christian messianism) considers redemption as a necessary event that takes place on the stage of history, "publicly" so to speak, in the visible world. It is not conceivable as a purely spiritual process, in the soul of each individual, and resulting in an essentially internal transformation. What type of "visible" event is at issue? For the Jewish religious tradition, the coming of the Messiah is a catastrophic irruption: "Jewish messianism is by its origin and its nature — this cannot be stressed enough — a theory of catastrophe. This theory stresses the revolutionary and cataclysmic element in the transition from the historical present to the messianic future."[7]

Between the present and future, the present-day decline and redemption there is an abyss; moreover, in many talmudic texts the idea appears that the Messiah will only come in an era of corruption and total culpability. According to the *Midrash Tehilim* "Israel asks God: when will You send us redemption? He answers: when you have descended to the lowest level, at that time I shall bring you redemption." This abyss cannot be crossed by some sort of "progress" or "development." Only the revolutionary catastrophe, with a colossal uprooting, a total destruction of the existing order, opens the way to messianic redemption. The secularized messianism of 19th-century Jewish thought (the neo-Kantian philosopher Hermann Cohen, for example), with its idea of uninterrupted progress, the gradual perfection of humanity, has nothing to do with the tradition of the prophets and Aggadists, for whom the advent of the Messiah always implies a general disturbance, a universal revolutionary storm. As Scholem emphasizes: "The Bible and the apocalyptic writers are not aware of any progress in history leading to redemption. Redemption is not the product of immanent development. . . . It is rather the transcendence that causes an irruption in history, an intrusion in which history perishes, transformed in its ruin because it is struck by a ray of light from an external source."[8]

The parallel between this significant structure and modern revolutionary doctrines is suggested by Scholem himself: "Messianism of our era proves its immense force precisely in this form of the revolutionary apocalypse, and no longer in the form of a rational utopia (if one may call it that) of eternal progress as the Enlightenment's surrogate for Redemption." In his view, the heirs of this Jewish tradition are those whom he calls "the most important

7. Scholem, "Zum Verständnis," p. 20.
8. Scholem, "Zum Verständnis," pp. 12-13, 20, 24-25, 27-28, 29-30.

ideologists of revolutionary messianism in our century": Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse.[9]

It seems to me, however, that without denying the more general scope of the analogy, it is in libertarian thought (including that of Walter Benjamin) that the parallel is most striking. It is indeed with the anarachists that the revolutionary/catastrophic aspect of emancipation is most evident: "The destructive passion is a creative passion" wrote Bakunin. On the other hand, as Mannheim emphasizes — again referring to Landauer as paradigm — it is with the anarchists that the abyss between all existing order ("Topia") and utopia is the sharpest. There is here a *qualitative* differentiation of time, opposing epochs pregnant with meaning and epochs devoid of meaning. All possibility of *progress* or *evolution* is denied, and the "Revolution" is conceived as an *irruption* in the world.[10]

3. There remains the aspect of Jewish messianism that Scholem had designated as intrinsically "anarchic": the idea, which appears in several talmudic or cabalistic texts, according to which the advent of the Messiah implies the abolition of restrictions that the *Torah* had until now imposed on the Jews. With the messianic era, the former *Torah* loses its vitality and will be replaced by a new Law, the "*Torah* of the Redemption," in which interdictions and prohibitions will disappear. In this new paradisaic world, where the force of evil has been broken, and which would be dominated by the light of the Tree of Life, the restrictions imposed by the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil would lose their significance. This "anarchic" element is also manifested, as Scholem very clearly shows, in certain interpretations of Psalm 146:7 that offer a new reading of the Hebraic text. In the place of the traditional version according to which, in the messianic era "the Lord frees the prisoners" (*matir assurim*), it should read "The Lord lifts the interdictions (*matir issurim*).[11] Scholem correctly qualifies this problem of "anarchic": one need only think of Bakunin's famous formula — cited by Mannheim as characteristic of the chiliastic posture of radical anarchism — "I do not believe in constitutions or laws. . . . We need something else; passion, life, a new world without laws and thus free."[12]

The analysis of the three aforementioned aspects must be conceived as a whole; thus it reveals a remarkable *structural homology*, an undeniable *spiritual isomorphism* between these two cultural universes situated in these apparently completely distinct spheres: the Jewish messianic tradition and the notably libertarian modern revolutionary utopias. During the years 1900-1933, among a certain number of Jewish intellectuals of German culture, this

9. Scholem, "Reflections on Jewish Theology," in *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis* (New York, 1976), pp. 285-287.

10. Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*, pp. 173, 189, 195-196.

11. Scholem, "Zum Verständnis," pp. 41-50 and "The Crisis of Tradition in Jewish Messianism," in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), p. 55.

12. Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*, p. 190.

homology became *dynamic* and took the form of a veritable *elective affinity,* in the Goethian sense of *Wahlverwandschaft:* two elements or beings which "are looking for one another, are attracted and seize each other . . . and then resurge from this intimate union into a regenerated, new and unexpected form."[13] In the *Weltanschauung* of these intellectuals, it evolved into a process of "cultural symbiosis" of stimulation and reciprocal nourishment, and even, in certain cases, of articulation, combination or *fusion* (at least partial) of these two currents of thought. Ideological *alliages* of this type are not rare in the history of culture; it suffices to think of the cabal and alchemy since the Renaissance, or, to take the most famous example in modern sociology, the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.

The simplest explanation of this relationship, the one which comes to mind right away as proof, would be to consider the messianic tradition as the *source* (more or less direct) of the development of libertarian utopianism among these Jewish thinkers. Without completely rejecting this hypothesis, which probably contains its part of truth, we must recognize that it raises more difficulties than it resolves.

a) The influence in itself is not an adequate explanatory factor. It itself needs to be explained. Why did such a doctrine, and not another, influence such a thinker? This question is all the more relevant since all the authors in question, were, as the large majority of Jewish intellectuals of German culture, by their education, removed from Jewish religious traditions (which remained much more alive in Eastern Europe). Their place of origin was largely assimilated. The Central European Jewish intelligentsia drew their cultural references from literature and German philosophy; Goethe, Schiller, Kant and Hegel were the acknowledged and respected sources, and neither the Talmud nor the cabal, both considered by most as atavistic and obscurantist vestiges from the past.

b) The Jewish messianic tradition used to lend itself to multiple interpretations: purely conservative readings as in certain rabbinic texts, or purely rationalist texts (Maimonide), or also those inspired by the liberal-progressive spirit of the *Aufklärung* (Jewish Haskala), as with Hermann Cohen. But why precisely did a certain group of thinkers choose an interpretation which was apocalyptic, restorative and utopian all at the same time?

The inverse explanation would be namely the utopian-restorative tendency of these authors who were aware of their borrowing from the messianic tradition. This explanation is as limited and curtailed as the first. One of the great merits of the *Wahlverwandschaft* concept is precisely to allow going beyond these two unilateral approaches, toward a richer and more dialectical understanding of the relationship.

It seems more useful to take as a point of departure a wider socio-cultural context, which serves as a general framework, common to the two mentioned tendencies, and which grows organically, so to speak, out of central European societies in crisis. The new development of romanticism from the end of the 19th century until the beginning of the 1930s does not designate here a literary

or artistic style, but a much vaster and more profound phenomenon: the nostalgic current of pre-capitalist cultures and the current of cultural criticism of industrial/bourgeois society, a current that is manifested in the realm of art and literature as well as in economic, sociological and political thought.

Anti-capitalist romanticism — to use the term created by Lukács — is a particular political and cultural phenomenon, which has not yet received the attention it deserves because it escapes habitual classifications; the traditional division of the political field into the left/center/right triad — or conservatives/liberals/revolutionaries, or still regression/*status quo*/progress — does not permit it to be grasped; it slides into the mesh of this classical framework and seems ungraspable in the framework of categories which the great political options have defined since the French Revolution. This difficulty is even more accentuated in comparison with one of the tendencies of the romantic current, which we have elsewhere designated as *revolutionary romanticism,* and to which thinkers as diverse as Hölderlin, Fourier and Landauer belong. It concerns a tendency in which nostalgia for the pre-capitalist past (real or imaginary, near or far), and the revolutionary hope in a new future,[14] *restoration* and *utopia,* are combined and inextricably associated.

For reasons which we cannot elaborate upon within the framework of this essay, neo-romanticism was developed especially in Germany where it expressed the reaction of a diverse social strata — notably the traditional intelligentsia and its university elite — facing the vertiginous development of capitalist industry at the end of the 19th century.[15] In our opinion, the essential element of cultural, political and scientific production in Central Europe of German culture is traversed by this current and one cannot understand works as important as those of Thomas Mann, Stephan George, Ferdinand Tönnies, Max Weber, Ernst Bloch or phenomena like *Katheder-sozialismus* or expressionism, without referring to the neo-romantic problem.

However, this makes the rapprochement by elective affinity and (sometimes) the convergence and fusion of Jewish messianism (in its restorative-utopian interpretation) and libertarian utopia more understandable. The two are rooted in the same ground, the two develop in the same spiritual climate — that of the anti-capitalist romanticism of the German intelligentsia. Indeed, this cultural current, particularly in its romantic-revolutionary version, could only favor the discovery, revitalization or the growth of both the restorative-utopian version of messianism, and of a restorative-utopian version of revolution (anarchism).

In order to understand the particularity of the reception of anti-capitalist romanticism among Jewish intellectuals, their specific and contradictory situation in the social and cultural life of Central Europe must be sociologically

13. Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandschaften* (Gütersloh, 1948), p. 51.

14. See my work on this subject in *Marxisme et romantisme revolutionaire* (Paris, 1979).

15. I refer to this subject in Chapter I of my book *Pour une sociologie des intellectuels revolutionnaires: l'évolution politique de Lukács 1909-29* (Paris, 1976).

examined: they were *both* deeply assimilated and largely marginalized; they were attached to German cosmopolitan culture, yet *freischwebend* and uprooted; they broke from their business bourgeois origins, were rejected by the traditional rural aristocracy, and excluded from their natural place of reception (the University). It is not surprising that a significant number (much larger in England or France, countries that had a completed bourgeois revolution behind them) of Jewish intellectuals from Germany and Austria-Hungary were ideologically available for the tide of radical questioning of the established order.

Of course, many members of the assimilated Jewish intelligentsia leaned toward liberal, *Aufklärer,* moderate and progressive ideas: Hermann Cohen and Eduard Bernstein are typical representatives. But the predominant current in German cultural life — neo-romanticism — could itself only attract partisans among the Jewish intellectuals. However, the romantic Jewish intellectual was immediately presented with a problem: the return to the past, which was at the heart of the romantic approach, was nourished from national (German ancestry), social (feudal aristocracy), or religious (Protestant or Catholic Christianity) references from which the Jew was *radically excluded.* It is true that, some Jewish thinkers were capable of making the leap and transformed themselves into German nationalists (Rudolph Borchardt), conservative Germanists (Friedrich Gundolf), or Protestant theologeans (Hans Ehrenberg). But these are extreme and rather rare cases in so far as they imply a fairly artificial approach and a total negation of their Jewish identity. For the others, that is to say, most, there were only two possible outs (in the neo-romantic framework): either a return to their *own* historical roots, to their *own* culture, nationality or ancestral religion, or adherence to a romantic-revolutionary utopia of *universal* character. It is not surprising that a certain number of Jewish thinkers of German culture, close to anti-capitalist romanticism simultaneously chose these two roads under the form of the (re)discovery of the Jewish religion (in particular the restorative-utopian interpretation of messianism) *and* of sympathy or identification with revolutionary utopias (notably the libertarian ones) heavily charged with nostalgia for the past — all the more as these two paths, as we have seen above, were structurally homologous. This double approach characterizes several Jewish thinkers from Central Europe who constitute an extremely heterogenous group but nevertheless unified by this common problem. One can find among them some of the greatest minds of the 20th century: poets and philosophers, revolutionary leaders and religious guides, Commissioners of the People and theologians, writers and cabalists, and even writer-philosopher-theologian-revolutionaries: Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem, Gustav Landauer, Walter Benjamin, Franz Kafka, Ernst Toller, Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukács.

These authors have been sufficiently studied, but until now it has never been suggested that their thought could have a *common fundamental dimension.* It seems paradoxical and even arbitrary to regroup personalities so

diverse and distant under the same roof. Let us state, first, that without constituting a group in the concrete and immediate sense of the term, they are, nevertheless, linked by a complex and subtle social network. Relationships of deep friendship and/or intellectual, and political affinity unite Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem and Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch and Georg Lukács, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, Gustav Landauer and Ernst Toller. Scholem was attracted to Buber and to Landauer, Buber corresponded with Kafka, Bloch and Lukács. At the center of this network, at the intersection of all these spiritual currents, containing in itself the most opposing poles, Walter Benjamin, the close friend of Scholem, linked with Ernst Bloch, profoundly influenced by Lukács, Rosenzweig and Kafka, interested but critical reader of Landauer and Buber.

However, that is not the essential point. What permits us to conceive of these nine men as a group — which could be expanded with further research to include other thinkers of the time — is the fact that *within a cultural neo-romantic background and in a relationship of elective affinity, their work contains a Jewish messianic dimension and a utopian-libertarian dimension.* For some, this constellation was a transient episode of their intellectual itinerary (Lukács); for others it was the central axis of all their work (Benjamin). Of course, the respective weight, the relative importance of each one of the two dimensions was not the same. For some (Rosenzweig) it was the religious component that dominates; for others (Bloch) it was the utopian/revolutionary project; but the two aspects could be found among them all.

It would be useless to look among these nine authors for a systematic and explicit presence of the two structures in their entirety. Jewish messianism as well as libertarian utopia are found in their work as powerful currents, sometimes underground, sometimes visible, manifesting sometimes one of their themes, sometimes another (according to the authors or the different periods of the same author), sometimes separate, sometimes articulated between them, sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit, sometimes dominating the thinker's work, sometimes simply sparkling here and there in his writings.

On the basis of the predominant role of one or another dimension, it seems possible to divide the group into three sets: I — the anarchistic religious Jews: Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem. The latter two were Zionists, the first, rather hostile or reticent toward Zionism. In spite of their refusal to assimilate and their return to Judaism (as a religion and a national culture), political and spiritual (utopian and libertarian) preoccupations of universal character are present in their work and separate them from a narrow or chauvinistic nationalism (Buber and Scholem, after leaving for Palestine, were among the founders of the pacifist organization *Brit Shalom,* which advocated fraternizing with the Arab population and opposed the establishment of an exclusively Jewish national state). II — The religious Jewish anarchists: Gustav Landauer, Franz Kafka, and Walter Benjamin. These three are characterized by a contradictory and torn attitude towards Judaism and Zionism, which they periodically approached and drew away from. Their

anarchistic utopia is strongly tinted with religiosity and drawn from messianic sources (usually Jewish but sometimes Christian, too). III — The assimilated, atheist-religious, anarcho-Bolshevik Jews: Georg Lukács, Ernst Toller, Ernst Bloch. Contrary to the others, they tended to abandon their Jewish identity, while keeping, nevertheless, an obscure link with Judaism. Their religious atheism (Lukács' term) was nourished by Jewish as well as Christian references, and their political evolution led them from a utopian-libertarian problem toward Marxism and Bolshevism, or resulted in an attempt at a synthesis of the two (that goes for Benjamin also).

The differences between these three groups reveal that the elective affinity between Jewish messianism and anarchist utopia also includes *an antinomic element.* It is a question of a tension, if not a contradiction, between Jewish *particularism* (national-cultural) of messianism and the *universal* character (humanist-internationalist) of emancipatory utopia. In the first group, the predominance of Jewish particularity tends to relativize the universal revolutionary aspect of utopia without making it disappear completely. In the third, on the contrary, the universality of utopia is the preponderant dimension, and messianism tends to be devoid of its Jewish specificity — which is not, in spite of everything, entirely erased. The intermediate group is characterized by a fragile and unstable equilibrium between particularism and universalism, Judaism and internationalism, Zionism and anarchism.

As we have already mentioned, the list of names cited above is not limited. On the other hand, the three tendencies outlined here are not the only possible ones (within the common problem). In order to concretize these two remarks, the example of *Rudolf Kayser,* a friend of Benjamin and his "protector" in the Fischer Publishing Company is useful. Kayser, a historian and writer, became editor of the principal literary journal in Germany, *Die Neue Rundschau,* in 1924. His doctoral dissertation (1914) was dedicated to romantic literature (Arnim and Brentano), but he was also interested in the Jewish religion. In 1921, he published *Moses Tod* (The Death of Moses). As contributor to the journal *Der Jude* edited by Martin Buber in 1919, he published a surprising article which placed him in a separate category, halfway between Buber and Landauer. While refusing Zionism, he favored the establishment of a "New Alliance" (*Neue Bund*), a "Jewish Association" (*jüdische Genossenschaft*) — which he compared to the Taborites and Hussites of the 15th century — whose mission would be to "prepare for the era of the Messiah" by helping humanity to pass from "the hell of politics" to the "messianic paradise." This mission implied the abolition of the State, a task for which the Jews are called upon to fill an essential role, in so far as "one can imagine no community farther from the State than this, religious ethic of the Jews. . . . The idea of the State is a non-Jewish (*unjüdisch*) idea." The Hebraic religious community was distinguished from the State by the absence of relationships of domination: power belongs to the divine idea alone. In conclusion: "Here then is the mission of the Jews: remaining themselves

without a State, to make of the earth a homeland of men."[16]

In what milieu, group or current could one find other thinkers with a vision of the world similar to that of the nine mentioned authors? It is not likely that one can find them among intellectuals of Jewish origin from the KPD (German Communist Party), who were bound up in another problem, foreign to Jewish messianism (and to religion — Jewish or any other — in general) as well as to anarchist ideas. Some were from the same milieu that we are studying — it suffices to think of Gershom Scholem's brother Werner, who became a communist deputy and was excluded from the Party in 1926 as leftist dissident (with Ruth Fischer and her current) — but the most important were the natives of the Eastern European Jewish communities: Rosa Luxemburg, Leo Jogiches, Eugen Levine (the Spartakist leader of the Bavarian Revolution, shot after the defeat of the Bavarian *Räterepublik*), Karl Radek, etc. The difference of perspective between the radical Jewish intelligentsia of Central Europe and that of the Russian Empire is sociologically explicable; some rebelled against an assimilated and vaguely liberal bourgeois milieu; others rebelled against the traditionalist and cramped ghetto. Parallel to the romanticism of some intellectuals seeking their Jewish roots we find the internationalist, atheist and *Aufklärer* Marxism of others. That is true, to a large extent, for the Jewish anarchists of Russian origin like Emma Goldmann or Berkmann.

On the other hand, it is possible that the thinkers with a utopian-messianic conception similar to the one which we have described are found among certain groups which must still be researched.

1) The German anarchist movement, a rather restrained current but with a high proportion of Jews among its cadre, Siegfried Nacht, Peter Ramus, Johannes Holzman, not to mention Landauer himself and the libertarian writers who were close to him: Benedikt Friedländer, Stefan Grossman, Erich Mühsam. One could also add Robert Michels who, before the First World War, at Marburg had led a small circle of syndicalist-revolutionary Sorelian intellectuals.

In his work on Landauer, Eugene Lunn advances an interesting sociological hypothesis in order to explain the attraction of so many Jewish intellectuals to anarchism: "If, as I have said, marginal intellectuals have the strongest tendency toward anarchism in highly industrialized societies, then it was far more likely for a Jewish intellectual to become an anarchist in Germany than a non-Jewish one. One reason was the fact that a disproportionate number of German Jews were free-lance writers, artists and private scholars, which may have been partly owing to the discrimination against them in the established judicial, administrative and educational fields."[17] These intellectuals found

16. Rudolf Kayser, "Der Neue Bund," *Der Jude,* III (1918-19), 524-26.

17. Eugene Lunn, *Prophet of Community: The Romantic Socialism of Gustav Landauer* (Berkeley, 1973), p. 80. See also Ismar Elbogen, *Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main, 1966), p. 251. The sociologist Robert Michels sees also in the exclusion and

themselves then in a marginal and "free-floating" position, which constituted the most favorable sociological context for revolutionary, notably libertarian currents.

2) The young Zionist socialists of the *Hapoel Hatzair* (the Young Worker) movement, which had been profoundly influenced by Martin Buber as well as by Gustav Landauer, and, who were going to try to apply their ideas of a socialist rural community in the *kibbutzim* in Palestine.

3) The Hungarian revolutionary anarchists of Jewish origin, like Erwin Szabo, who died in 1918 but is considered the "spiritual father" of the generation, who led the Revolution of the Workers's Councils, and whose disciples became communists. They constituted, around Lukács, the group of "ethical Bolsheviks" in 1919: Erwin Sinko, Bela Balasz and, to a certain extent Otto Korvin, the chief of the Red Security of the Hungarian Republic of Councils (shot by the Whites in 1919).

4) Some Jewish writers or those of Jewish origin, of revolutionary pacifist and/or anarchist tendency participated in the expressionist movement and notably in the journal *Die Tat* (*Action*): Ludwig Rubiner, Franz Werfel, Walter Hasenclever (friend of Ernst Toller), Albert Ehrenstein, Rudolf Leohand, etc.

Only a precise analysis of the significant structure of the thought of these different authors or personalities can prove whether Jewish messianism played a role in the constitution of their political anarchist, anarchistic or libertarian vision (in a broad sense). If the response is positive, it is possible that the nine great thinkers were only the most visible and most prominent expression of a vast current that crossed all of Central Europe and which touched a significative fraction of the radical Jewish intelligentsia.

Translated by Renée B. Larrier

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social marginalization of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe the reason for the acknowledged "predisposition of Jews to join revolutionary parties." Robert Michels, *Zur Soziologie des Parteiwesens in der modernen Demokratie* (Leipzig, 1925), pp. 331-336.