Propaganda and the Deed: Anarchism, Violence and the Representational Impulse

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Anarchism literally exploded onto the American political scene on May 4, 1886, with the now famous Haymarket riot. A relatively commonplace labor rally in Chicago began to break up as rain clouds rolled in. As the crowd was dispersing and the day's final speaker—an anarchist—was concluding, police moved to end the meeting prematurely. A skirmish ensued, a bomb was thrown into a group of police officers, and they opened fire: soon, numerous civilians and officers were dead. Suddenly everyone was talking about anarchism. The Haymarket affair has dominated critical attention to pre–World War II American anarchism, a focus that signals the convergence of popular caricature—the bomb-wielding anarchist depicted in countless newspapers from the 1880s to the present—with scholarship. The highly visible moment of anarchist violence produced an historical conflation, an elision of anarchism's internal conflicts, the near synonymy of "anarchism" with "violence." This essay seeks not to sever anarchism from violence, but to explore a far more complex relationship between the two by detailing the ambivalent, fractured, contradictory relationship between late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century American anarchism and anarchist violence—between propaganda and the deed.

Most examinations of anarchist violence rely on the appellation "propaganda by deed," a construction that itself suggests a tension between words (propaganda) and actions (deeds). This tension, however, is not simply rhetorical; it's also historical: anarchists inconsistently endorsed violence. In fact, the

0026-3079/2017/5504/5601-163$2.50/0 American Studies, 55:4/56:1 (2017): 163–186

anarchist rhetoric surrounding violence evinces tension between their orientation to theoretical violence and their response to actual violence, a fracture often characterized by a strong logical defense of violence and an equally potent aversion to violent acts. At other times it appears merely as an inconsistent appeal to violence's validity as a political tactic. This essay explores the anarchist inconsistency—an historical ambivalence toward violence—to reevaluate anarchism's relationship to violence and thus to reconsider the link between propaganda and the (violent) deed.

Foregrounding two anarchists—Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman—and two moments of anarchist violence—Berkman's 1892 attempt to kill industrialist Henry Clay Frick and Leon Czolgosz's 1901 assassination of U.S. president William McKinley—I elucidate a fundamental anarchist ambivalence toward violence, then posit an explanation for this tension. First, I discuss efforts to theorize the relationship of American anarchism to representation, addressing the philosophical links between democracy and propaganda. Next, I explain the philosophy of "propaganda by deed," a theoretical stance toward the potential value of violence. Then, I outline Goldman's and Berkman's specific orientation to propaganda by deed and its violent rhetoric before turning to their responses to real instances of violence. I argue that these multiple forms of ambivalence all emerge from the complex interstices of registers of representation: on one hand, anarchists actively rejected representative democracy; on the other hand, they were surprisingly willing to represent their politics (to produce propaganda). The ambivalence appears because these two forms of representation are not fully distinct—there exists a consonance between representative democracy and other forms of representation that forced anarchist violence itself to become propaganda. Ultimately, then, anarchists' ambivalence was an at times strategic, at times unconscious, effort to represent their radical politics within the American political sphere.

Registers of Representation

The question of anarchists' relationship to representation has been asked since the origins of American anarchism. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, global politics struggled with multiple autocratic and totalitarian nations, alongside monarchies and varyingly successful forms of democracy. These disparate governmental forms produced a wide range of anarchist reactions, many of which address local or national concerns—the concrete forms of government against which individual anarchists react.[1] As Voltairine de Cleyre—one of the period's most prominent anarchists—pointed out, "anarchism is concerned with present conditions," with *specific* "oppressions," so anarchists tend to critique the instantiation of government under which they live.[2] Therefore, any study of American anarchism will find that it "is associated primarily with a rejection of representative democracy."[3] This rejection of political representation dates back at least to Mikhail Bakunin, who argued

that "the whole system of representative government is an immense fraud."[4] As philosopher Brian Seitz contends, democracy and representation "have become inseparable from each other, an inseparability not of logic but of historical contingency": democracy need not be representative, but historically—and in the United States—it has been so.[5] Intellectual historian F. R. Ankersmit further argues that "without representation there is no represented—*and without political representation there is no nation as a truly political entity.* . . . Political reality only comes into being after the nation has unfolded itself in a represented and in a representation representing the represented. Without representation, no democratic politics."[6] Put simply, representation is the mechanism through which the nation is constructed, so it's no wonder the American anarchists reject it: they critique representative democracy because it structures and sustains U.S. state government.[7]

Recently, however, scholars have interrogated the relationship of anarchism to representation more broadly. Todd May, for instance, claims "the critique of representation in the anarchist tradition runs deeper than just political representation. . . . Representation, in the anarchist tradition, must be understood not merely in its political connotations, but more widely."[8] Here May weds the anarchist rejection of democratic representation to poststructural critiques of representation/signification to define a "type of anarchism characterized by its 'wariness about representation.'"[9] Positing an historical link, May suggests that anarchists—like post-structuralist critics—were wary of representation far beyond their rejection of representative democracy.

Jesse S. Cohn expresses skepticism about this overly neat conflation of representational registers, questioning the "translation of an anarchist refusal of political representation into a generalized 'resistance to representation.'"[10] He rightly asks "is it true, historically speaking, that anarchism has always rejected representation in all its forms . . . or is it possible for anarchists to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate representational practices?"[11] Whereas Cohn seeks to recuperate the possibilities for anarchist representation, I see in his response to May a yet unresolved tension. Yes, anarchist "opposition to representation was incomplete and inconsistent."[12] But this inconsistency indicates neither a wholesale rejection of representation nor a willing embrace. Rather, May and Cohn together elucidate the *problem* representation has presented for anarchists since Haymarket.

This problem emerges, I argue, from the philosophical similarity of representational registers: representative democracy and other forms of representation share a core. Hanna Fenichel Pitkin argues that representation—in all of its forms—is a unified philosophical concept:

> Representation does have an identifiable meaning, applied in different but controlled and discoverable ways in different contexts. It is not vague and shifting, but a single, highly complex concept. . . . There is . . . no great difficulty about

> formulating a one-sentence definition of this basic meaning, broad enough to cover all its applications in different contexts. . . . [R]epresentation means, as the word's etymological origins indicate, *re-presentation*, a making present again. . . . [R]epresentation, taken generally, means the making present in some sense of something which is nevertheless not present literally or in fact.[13]

Pitkin's definition applies to all representation, from politics to basic signification. So, just as representational government calls the nation into being by "re-presenting" its collective will, propaganda re-presents political philosophy. This basic consonance certainly does not make representative democracy and propaganda identical. It does, though, gesture toward a complex connection between registers of political representation.

I have written elsewhere about a "logic of representation" in the United States during the height of American anarchism, an "impulse for Americans to represent and to be represented."[14] Within this overdetermining representational logic, we find two registers of representation converging in the political arena: democratic representation and propaganda (i.e., representing political positions). Anarchist violence frequently was directed at the former but also challenged the latter: it was not merely the utterance of political positions and thus appeared as anti-representational in multiple ways. The ambivalence toward this violence, however, reveals the problem of representation for anarchists: if democratic representation and propaganda are philosophically similar—that is, that they both re-present a political will—it would be difficult to reject one without rejecting the other. Obviously, it's not impossible (many anarchists openly embraced propaganda and similar forms of representation), but this tension helps explain the unsatisfactory theorizations of the relationship between anarchism and representation and, as I argue here, explains the anarchist ambivalence toward violence as the residue of their efforts to navigate a political arena structured by the impulse toward representation.[15]

Emma Goldman and Propaganda by Deed

To understand anarchism's relationship to violence, we must begin with one of its broadest concepts: direct action.[16] Late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century anarchists rejected mechanisms for change that were structured by government, eschewing voting and similar overtly political methods for social transformation.[17] Built upon the general assumption that laws were tools of oppression and the specifically American charge that majorities used representative democracy to oppress, direct action stood in contrast to the systemic reduction of all political action to those techniques sanctioned by government (namely voting).[18] Anarchists straightforwardly rejected not just government, but the uniquely American forms of political representation, signaling—as I

argue throughout this essay—the root of anarchists' inconsistent stance toward violence: anarchists attempted to challenge U.S. representative government, but forms of political representation—democratic participation and propaganda itself—are not easily detached: each adheres to the basic impulse to re-present political will. Anarchists were forced to re-present their ideologies even as they rejected the representation at the heart of American democracy.

As de Cleyre pointed out, almost no one rejected direct action outright: "The majority of thinking people are really opportunist, leaning, some perhaps more to directness, some more to indirectness as a general thing, but ready to use either means when opportunity calls for it."[19] She argued that those who accepted political action did not reject direct action, but that anarchists must, by definition, rely solely on direct action, because "the basis of all political action is coercion; even when the State does good things, it finally rests on a club, a gun, or a prison, for its power to carry them through."[20] Put bluntly, direct action was the political modality of the era's anarchist theory. While the theory and practice of direct action were responsible indirectly for anarchism's violent reputation, they did not necessarily imply or deploy violence. Theorists of propaganda by deed—a type of direct action—however, did entertain the possibility of violent action to effect political change.

The concept of propaganda by deed emerged in the 1870s and can be most "directly traced to Bakunin who . . . declared: 'Now we all have to embark together on the revolutionary ocean, and henceforth spread our principles no longer by words but by deed.'"[21] Errico Malatesta frequently is attributed with coining the phrase and helped to define it in 1873. He and Carlo Cafiero claimed that "the insurrectional fact, destined to affirm socialist principles by deeds, is the most effective means of propaganda and the only one which, without tricking and corrupting the masses, can penetrate the deepest social layers and draw the living forces of humanity into the struggle."[22] Here Malatesta and Cafiero did not espouse violence directly, but gestured toward insurrection or revolution as a logical, factual possibility. Their version of direct action moved beyond passive methods of resistance: all propaganda by deed might be direct action, but not all direct action was propaganda by deed. Cafiero went further, asserting that "our action must be permanent rebellion, by word, by writing, by dagger, by gun, by dynamite."[23] Similarly, Paul Brousse—the major French proponent of propaganda by deed—advocated "fight[ing] back, defend[ing] oneself" violently if necessary.[24]

For Malatesta, Cafiero, and other anarchists, the value of deeds was found in propaganda: insurrectional acts would inspire others to join "the struggle." They valued the violent act for its symbolic and inspirational value: the goal was propaganda; the deed was merely the mechanism. Peter Kropotkin, on the other hand, asserted that the "propaganda effect . . . is not . . . the primary motive for involvement in an act of revolt," because "an act of revolt should be a serious act of war—not a dramatic gesture."[25] Kropotkin was one of the most important influences on American anarchism, and he insisted that propaganda

by deed was a bit of a misnomer: "when individuals, outraged by the system, attempted to take the life of a man, they did so because he was a viper whom they hated—not because they wanted to make propaganda."[26] Clearly, propaganda by deed was not a unified theory—international anarchists debated it throughout the period and even those who espoused it shifted positions over time—but an ongoing conversation that American anarchists entered into from the 1880s to the 1910s.[27]

This context was made even more complex by Haymarket, because many American radicals turned to anarchism as a direct result of the violence in Chicago. Emma Goldman, the most famous American anarchist, for instance, "marked her political transformation [at] the chilling moment when she became aware of the horror and significance of the death of the Haymarket anarchists."[28] Upon hearing Johanna Greie speak of the "innocent blood of the Haymarket martyrs calling for revenge," Goldman was forced to reconcile Greie's radical position with the press's pejorative description of the men as "anarchists, bomb-throwers."[29] Out of this disconnect, she came to learn about anarchism and, upon hearing of the Haymarket martyrs' execution, found "a great ideal, a burning faith, a determination to dedicate myself to the memory of my martyred comrades, to make their cause my own."[30]

Anarchism existed in the United States before 1886, but Haymarket, "for the first time . . . brought anarchism to the attention of the general public, identifying it with terrorist violence and inspiring a horror of its teaching and practices."[31] Haymarket marked a turning point, the moment when anarchism became a force in American political discourse. The height of American anarchism, then, was always accompanied by the specter of actual violence: Goldman and others had not only to address the continued disagreement about violence's usefulness, but also to respond to acts of violence committed by or attributed to anarchists. Thus, it is vital to recognize a causal relationship: violence circulating around anarchists inspired new anarchists who in turn theorized violence and responded to later violent acts.

From her beginnings in the movement, Goldman was associated with the violent wing of anarchism. Johann Most—perhaps the most vocal advocate of propaganda by deed in the United States near the end of the nineteenth century—was one of her "earliest mentors," and her initial stance toward "propaganda by . . . deed bore the important influence of Kropotkin."[32] During the 1890s, Goldman was often reported to be advocating violence and, despite newspaper embellishment, it seems she did promote some form of propaganda by dead. For instance, she supported forcible expropriation: "You demand bread, and if you cannot acquire it through peaceful means you will get it by force."[33] Goldman at times praised violence, noting that anarchist Gaetano Bresci's assassination of Italy's King Umberto was a "good and noble, grand and useful" act designed to "free mankind from tyranny."[34] Yet, less than three years earlier she denounced the anarchist who killed Empress Elizabeth of Austria: "Even if this man Luccheni declared himself an Anarchist, I would be the first one to say

he is not one. Any man who understands the philosophy of anarchy could never commit such folly. The philosophy of anarchy forbids the destruction of human life."[35] Goldman sometimes expressed admiration for anarchist violence, other times denounced it; spoke of the value of force, then tempered the claim. Some scholars read in these disparate stances a chronological shift—seen most profoundly around 1901—in Goldman's position on violence's potential and in her "manner of addressing" it.[36] I argue, however, that Goldman does not shift so much as she is conflicted; she evinces ambivalence toward violence, using violent rhetoric and the rhetoric of violence, while questioning violence's effectiveness and looking to its logical causation rather than its position within anarchism. This seeming vacillation, of course, is partly strategic: she sought to retain violence's rhetorical power while distancing anarchism from actual violence. "The Psychology of Political Violence" exemplifies this strategy.

First delivered as a lecture in 1909, then published as part *of Anarchism and Other Essays* in 1910, "The Psychology of Political Violence" was Goldman's longest sustained attempt to theorize the relationships between government, anarchism, and violence. In it, she claimed that acts of political violence were produced "by the tremendous pressure of conditions, making life unbearable to [some] sensitive natures."[37] For Goldman, "the wholesale violence of capital and government [prompted] political acts of violence": government *is* violence and any concomitant anti-government acts "are but a drop in the ocean."[38] Here Goldman was willing to absolve those who committed political violence by explaining the logical causation of their acts, but she stopped short of embracing those acts as valid forms of direct action.[39] She distanced anarchism from violence first by suggesting that "a great number of acts, for which Anarchists had to suffer, either originated with the capitalist press or were instigated, if not directly perpetrated, by the police."[40] She may very well have been correct, but she added that even those "acknowledged Anarchists [who] committed acts of violence . . . were not impelled by the teachings of Anarchism."[41] Finally, she returned to the logical, psychological cause of violence, positing that the acts could not be measured in terms of the practical fight against government: "the question . . . is not whether [violent] acts were practical, any more than whether the thunderstorm is practical."[42]

Each of these moves separated the act of violence from anarchism. Either the acts were not committed by anarchists or the acts were committed by anarchists, yet not in the spirit of anarchism, because the violence of government produced violent reactions that could not properly be called anarchist. At the beginning of "The Psychology of Political Violence," Goldman quoted Alvin F. Sampson to clarify the link between government and violence:

> [Violent acts] have, from time immemorial, been the reply of goaded and desperate classes, and goaded and desperate individuals, to wrongs from their fellowmen, which they felt to be intolerable. Such acts are the violent recoil from violence.

> . . . The guilt of these acts lies upon every man and woman who . . . helps to keep up social conditions that drive human beings to despair.[43]

For Goldman, the primary source of these "social conditions" was government's existence, a form of violence perpetually reproduced by democratic participation. She suggested, then, that government was the necessary *and* sufficient cause for violence: its presence explained reactive violence, and these acts in turn demonstrated government's continued effect. She insulated anarchism by collapsing government and violence into a cause-effect loop, yet she never reduced violence to government: all government was violence, but not all violence was government. In this space remained the anarchist ambivalence I detail throughout this essay.

As the most visible anarchist figure in the United States for several decades, Goldman played a large role in shaping the movement's public image, but her work does not reveal full support for or absolute rejection of violence as political strategy. Rather, she seemed alternatingly strategic and genuinely torn, yet persistently inconclusive: she used the rhetoric of violence and was surrounded by violence attributed to her and her friends, yet the appearance of consequential violence led her to pull back. Her inconsistency certainly contains a measure of self-interest: periodically eschewing violence helped her avoid prison and resisted the caricature of the bomb-wielding terrorist. Self-preservation alone, though, is insufficient to explain the scope of her ambivalence. I argue, therefore, that Goldman's ambivalence was structured by her efforts to navigate the overlap of representational registers—to simultaneously challenge one form of representation while relying on another.

The period's anarchists rejected U.S. representative government, arguing that it was inherently violent. They thus had to allow for the possibility of violent reaction. But, at the same time, they must represent this violence—and hence *re-present* a political position—to have any meaning. As I noted above, American democracy was structured as representation; the historically inseparable combination of democracy and representation produced and sustained the nation as a political entity. The political sphere thus comprised a competing field of representations—efforts to present political visions (and political will) to reform or reshape the nation. Without representing the violence, it could not appear as politics in the American arena, because acts of violence were themselves interpreted as meaningless, random, and/or terroristic. That is, they did not *re-present* a coherent, recognizable political force that could be interpolated into U.S. democracy: both democratic participation (e.g., voting) and political rhetoric (i.e., propaganda) adhered to the representational impulse, while violence, as such, remained beyond it.

Much straightforward anarchist propaganda (propaganda by word) proposed violence. It operated through rhetoric, a form that made sense within American political discourse: espousing a position, even a radical one, was

logically consonant with U.S. governance. Actual anarchist violence, however, could not be part of American governance or the surrounding political discourse: it was outside the scope of "politics." Thus, anarchist propaganda suggested violent deeds a priori, but rejected them a posteriori, because the rhetoric of violence fit within the political sphere while violence itself did not. According to anarchists like Goldman, government produced violence; Goldman's writings show that the political need to represent (within U.S. democracy's market of ideas) also produced anarchists' fraught representations of violence. The anarchist ambivalence, then, reflects a paradox of sorts: to appear as politics, propaganda by deed must be propaganda without deeds. The full measure of this paradox is perhaps best seen in Alexander Berkman—Emma Goldman's longtime friend, co-conspirator, and lover—his writing, and his violent act.

Alexander Berkman and the *Attentat*

Among pre–World War II American anarchists, Berkman was unique: he was the only anarchist both to write about violence and to personally commit a violent deed. Most, Goldman, and other anarchists vocally promoted propaganda by deed, yet Berkman was the only major anarchist to enact it: he theorized through action rather than offering a rhetorical theory of action. Unlike Goldman, however, Berkman did undergo a chronological shift: early in his career he praised and committed violence; after a prison term, he rejected violence as an anarchist tactic. In 1892, he saw his attempt on Frick's life as a viable political strategy, because "the killing of a tyrant is in no way to be considered as the taking of a life."[44] Many years later, Berkman persistently condemned violence, noting that "the teachings of Anarchism are those of peace and harmony . . . of the sacredness of life."[45] By the end of his public life, Berkman claimed "Anarchism means OPPOSITION to violence, by whomever committed, [because] Anarchists value human life."[46] This transformation serves as an elucidating fulcrum, I contend reveals the representational impulse and consequently explains the fractured anarchist stance toward violence.

Berkman came of age as a radical in the wake of Haymarket. Following the explosion in Chicago, popular sentiment about anarchism was split. On one hand, anarchists were still viewed as a scourge, a menace, a threat to stable governance. Haymarket also, however, "kindled widespread interest in anarchist personalities and ideas and did more to disseminate the anarchist message" than direct propaganda had done.[47] The Haymarket bomb signaled a violent genesis of American anarchism's peak, as—in a propitious twist—anarchists found in its aftermath a perfect example of government's heavy-handed and misguided efforts to manage the populace. Neither the prosecution nor the media ever successfully established the true source of the bomb, so the farcical trial and seemingly unjust punishments resonated across the country. This relative highpoint of American anarchism contained multiple forms of violence: the bomb itself and—as anarchists argued—trials and executions that served as potent exam-

ples of government violence (which, according to Goldman and others, caused events like Haymarket in the first place). Haymarket and the complex causality of violence it suggested, provided the backdrop for Berkman's attempt to kill Frick—his *attentat*.

In early summer 1892, Berkman looked to the ongoing labor dispute at Carnegie Steel's Homestead Works, managed by Henry Clay Frick. The Works' employees were on strike, and Berkman saw a "tremendous struggle," in which "the people [were] manifesting the right spirit in resisting tyranny."[48] Frick responded to the strike by requesting Pinkerton troops to protect scab workers.[49] On July 6, less than a week into the strike, these troops arrived, a fight broke out, and the Pinkertons opened fire. By the end of the day, seven workers were dead. Hearing this news in New York, Berkman was resolute: "'Homestead!' he exclaimed. 'I must go to Homestead.'"[50] He was convinced that "the psychological moment for an *Attentat*" had arrived, that "a blow aimed at Frick would . . . call the attention of the whole world to the real cause behind the Homestead struggle."[51] Berkman committed to kill Frick.

Seventeen days after the battle between Homestead's workers and Frick's Pinkerton strikebreakers, Berkman barged into Frick's office with a revolver. He shot Frick, then his gun jammed. As a bystander tried to restrain him, Berkman stabbed Frick several times. Upon being subdued, Berkman felt "a strange feeling, as of shame," but quickly he became angry with "this sentiment, so unworthy of a revolutionist."[52] Beaten into submission, Berkman was dragged from the room, confident that his *attentat* "would strike terror into the soul of [Frick's] class [as] the first terrorist attack in America" and that all would "know that an Anarchist committed the deed."[53]

In one respect, Berkman's assault was quite successful: his few short moments in Frick's office suddenly brought anarchism to the center of the Homestead dispute and generated fury against anarchists not seen since Haymarket. The press began a "ferocious campaign" demanding "for the police to act, to round up 'the instigators, Johann Most, Emma Goldman, and their ilk.'"[54] After Haymarket, anarchists could turn their attention to the trial, to the executions, to the uncertainty of the bomber's identity—they could distance anarchism from the violence. At Homestead, an anarchist—and consequently anarchism—was undoubtedly responsible for the violence, even if that violence was a response to Frick's own violent tactics (a fact lost on the public). Gone was the luxury of simply theorizing violence: Berkman enacted propaganda by deed, and anarchists were forced to respond.

Immediately after the *attentat*, Goldman heard Most express doubt about reports of Berkman's act: "'It is probably the usual newspaper fake. It must be some crank or perhaps Frick's own man, to create sympathy for him. Frick knows that public opinion is against him. He needs something to turn the tide in his favour.'"[55] Goldman was incensed by Most's skepticism. Once he could no longer write off the attack as a fake, Most continued to demean Berkman and to distance anarchism from the *attentat*: "In a country where we are so poorly

represented and so little understood as in America, we simply cannot afford the luxury of assassination. . . . Berkmann [*sic*] . . . has stimulate[d] the most idiotic prejudices of idiotic Americans and thereby awakene[d] . . . the inevitable campaign against Anarchists."[56] He repeatedly insisted that "'America is not the place for assassinations'" and that Berkman's actions damaged the anarchist cause.[57] The anarchist movement was divided, with many "remain[ing] loyal to Most and violently oppos[ing] his critics."[58] Others, like Goldman, were furious: "Most, whom I had heard scores of times call for acts of violence, who had gone to prison in England for his glorification of tyrannicide—Most, the incarnation of defiance and revolt, now deliberately repudiated the *Tat!*"[59] These competing responses to Berkman's actions, however, might be remembered differently if it were not for Goldman's subsequent rise to prominence and Berkman's own writings.[60]

Goldman read in Most's response a "change of position regarding propaganda by deed," a shift that divided anarchists "into two inimical camps."[61] His disavowal of the *attentat*, though, neither signaled a shift nor did it contradict other anarchist responses to violence in 1892 or the following few decades. In retrospect, Goldman's defense of Berkman is the remarkable outlier. It is one of the only instances in which a major American anarchist claimed a violent act. But her desperate effort to stand by Berkman should not be interpreted as a wholesale embrace of violent political tactics or even an unequivocal endorsement of the attack on Frick. Goldman's defense instead is one part personal—she loved and revered Berkman—and one part residue of the anarchist ambivalence toward violence. Very often it appeared as character defense (and a simultaneous attack on Most), and, when she did defend the act, her language was evasive: "The heroically brave attempt of Comrade Berkmann to liberate human society from a beast."[62] Note the focus on the nature of the attempt itself ("brave") and the act's intent (the removal of a "beast"). Neither addressed the specifically anarchist nature of the act nor challenged Most's contention that the *attentat* damaged the movement.

Elsewhere, Goldman attacked Most for not "using this act for propaganda purposes," which signaled the real point of debate.[63] Goldman chastised Most less for disavowing violence than she did for his apparent rejection of propaganda by deed: he betrayed anarchism by failing to realize the propagandistic possibilities of Berkman's *attentat*. In the internal anarchist debate around the attempt on Frick, the *attentat's* target became irrelevant, as did the violence's outcome. The disagreement between Most and Goldman reveals the relationship of anarchism to violence as always a question of propaganda: how could anarchists—after the moment of violence—present themselves to the public in a way that was both meaningful and effective? Their schism thus demonstrates the anarchist ambivalence's structural cause: propaganda was representation—it offered a recognizably political vision—and thus could appear within the American political sphere. Violence was not and could not.

While this debate raged, Berkman went to trial, was convicted, and was sentenced to 22 years in prison. His *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* mirrored the core of Most's and Goldman's dispute, suggesting the *attentat* should be measured by its propagandistic effects. Written during the fourteen years Berkman served (1892–1906) and published in 1912, the *Prison Memoirs* include a narrative of Berkman's first few weeks in prison. During this period, he learned Frick survived the attack, realized the various ways in which his act was being misunderstood, and prepared for his trial, when he would have an opportunity to explain the reasons for the *attentat*. At first, Berkman experienced a sense of failure upon learning Frick survived: "If Frick had died, Carnegie would have hastened to settle with the strikers."[64] Very quickly, however, his self-policing image of the revolutionist forced him to reject such a simplified measure of success:

> As if the mere death of Frick was my object! The very thought is impossible, insulting. . . . The insignificant reptile, Frick,—as if the mere man were worth a terroristic effort. I aimed at the many-headed hydra whose visible representative was Frick. The Homestead developments had given him temporary prominence. . . . That alone had made him worthy of the revolutionist's attention.[65]

Berkman convinced himself that Frick's survival was immaterial—ultimately claiming that "the same results may occur whether Frick lives or dies"—and that the anarchist cause might still be served through propaganda after the fact.[66] He eliminated the possibility of any real effects from Frick's death, thus making the *attentat* purely propaganda. Berkman's internal struggle brought him to the same place as the Goldman-Most debate: could his actions be used for anarchist propaganda?

As the act and its immediate result became incidental, Berkman prepared himself to interpret the act for the outside world. Even in prison, when he tried to explain the meaning of his act to his working-class fellow prisoners, he was thwarted: "Why can't they understand the motives that prompted my act? Their manner of pitying condescension is aggravating. My attempted explanation they evidently considered a waste of effort."[67] Out of Berkman's initial inability to shape others' reaction to the *attentat* emerged a critical detachment of propaganda and the deed: "To be sure, an *Attentat* on a Frick is in itself splendid propaganda. It combines the value of example with terroristic effect. But very much depends upon my explanation. It offers me a rare opportunity for a broader agitation of our ideas. The comrades outside will also use my act for propaganda. The People misunderstand us . . . they must be enlightened."[68] He still clung to the propagandistic value of the deed itself, but admitted that the propaganda by word that followed the deed was crucial. Berkman realized that "The People"—for whom he attacked Frick—"may fail to comprehend" the

attack's meaning.[69] Thus, his anger toward Most arose from the negative effect his repudiation had on propaganda: "He will minimize the effect of my act, perhaps paralyze its propagandistic influence altogether."[70]

Strangely, the violent actor conformed his interpretation of his own violent act to the anarchist discourse outside the prison, in which Most, Goldman, and others discussed its consequences with relative impunity. Perhaps we can explain Berkman's attitude away as a strained response to failure, but in any case, he translated the deed into propaganda and thus elucidated the intersection of anarchist ambivalence toward violence and the theoretical construct of propaganda by deed. The *attentat* as an act had real consequences (bullets entered Frick's body; a directly oppressive and willfully violent industrialist was nearly killed), but the anarchist stance toward violence always theorized away from them. Generally, as the Goldman-Most debate revealed, the deed was always sublimated to propaganda. Specifically, Berkman's attack on Frick was further sublimated to propaganda after the deed. Anarchists' apparent ambivalence toward violence was a by-product of this sublimation of violent deeds to propaganda, which was itself an effort to negotiate the American political sphere.[71]

In his *Prison Memoirs*, Berkman effectively relegated violence to a minor occurrence that had no independent meaning, but was merely the genesis of an opportunity for propaganda, and, in this case, had not successfully educated workers. The work implied that violence's role within American anarchism was to be determined by its propagandistic effect, which produced self-reinforcing, yet fundamentally undercutting, logic: only violence that advanced anarchism was anarchist. This circular reasoning captures the sublimation of violent deeds to propaganda, explains the anarchist ambivalence toward violence, and functions as an anarchist aporia: only violence that was represented (turned into propaganda) appeared as politics. Anarchist violence was directed against capitalism and the U.S. representative democracy. In this way it was anti-representational. As violence, it also resisted the urge toward propaganda: by embracing the Kropotkin's understanding of the deed, it served as an attack on representation without itself becoming representation. Berkman's *attentat* reveals the paradox facing anarchists: violence itself must become propaganda; the deed must be sublimated. To be politics, violence must be re-presented, to represent a political will. This impulse to structure all politics as some form of re-presentation produced the anarchist ambivalence and gestures toward the difficulty of positing *any* alternative to extant forms of U.S. government. One might propose changes *within* the nation, but even literal explosions were quickly circumscribed by the representational impulse. This paradox became clearer in the wake of McKinley's assassination.

Leon Czolgosz and the Assassination of William McKinley

Nine years later after Berkman's *attentat*, a twenty-eight-year-old, working-class Polish-American shook the United States again. First elected in 1896,

William McKinley is remembered mostly for his intensification of American imperial presence.[72] While anarchists may have been angered by the expanding influence of American government around the world, they for the most part viewed him as they did every other president. He was "the chief representative of our modern slavery."[73] For anarchists, the position—not the person inhabiting it—was most important. Like Frick, McKinley happened to be the face of oppression, but as president he was a far more potent symbol of U.S. democracy. A strike at McKinley was a strike at American government.

On September 6, 1901, Leon Czolgosz, who had waited all day in line with other attendees of the Pan-American Exposition for the chance to shake hands with McKinley, pulled out "an Iver Johnson .32-caliber pistol, which he fired twice into the President."[74] The press quickly spread Czolgosz's purported confession: "'I am an anarchist. . . . I fully understood what I was doing when I shot the President. I realized that I was sacrificing my life.'"[75] Or, as alternately and more sensationally reported, "'I am an Anarchist—a disciple of Emma Goldman. Her words set me on fire."[76] Czolgosz's attack on McKinley generated "a wave of hysteria worse than the one after Haymarket, as the assassin's victim was not a local policeman but the President of the United States."[77] Again, with a few gunshots, the link between anarchism and violence was reasserted. Anarchists throughout the country were arrested and anyone "expressing the least sympathy with Czolgosz" ran the risk of being "tarred and feathered or threatened with lynching."[78] Anarchists and the popular press debated the extent of Czolgosz's anti-government political beliefs and activities, but because he professed to be an anarchist, there was a widespread attribution of his violent act to anarchism's teachings and a consequent increase in anti-anarchist sentiment.

For practical reasons, anarchists tried to distance *themselves* from Czolgosz in the months following his *attentat*, but they went further by distancing Czolgosz from *anarchism*. More than one hundred years later, though, it seems clear that while Czolgosz was not intimate with the era's prominent anarchists or affiliated with any anarchist organizations, he did—like many other anarchists—progress from socialism to anarchism, he did wish to learn more about the movements, its theory, and its practices, and he did act on his political beliefs in a violent manner. In other words, Czolgosz's act has more in common with Berkman's *attentat* than with Haymarket: in each case a self-professed anarchist enacted violence for political reasons—there was no question about the immediate source of the violence. These two shootings confirmed the public image of violent anarchism.[79] Both acts also required anarchists to reconsider and rearticulate the role of violence. McKinley's assassination appears quintessentially anarchist: Czolgosz struck at the representative head of democracy. Yet neither *attentat* was universally embraced by anarchists. Anarchists equivocated, disavowing the seemingly logical extension of their ideas. When confronted by realized violence, they shunned those who theorized through action rather than words. These responses illuminate the structural cause of anarchism's ambivalence toward violence: Berkman and Czolgosz acted in

the name of anarchism, yet after their violent acts, anarchists were forced to navigate a political arena in which violence itself was not politics. It must be re-presented as propaganda.

Ironically, Most, who nine years earlier disavowed assassination as a legitimate tool of American anarchism, was one of the first anarchists to be harassed following Czolgosz's attack on McKinley. On the day of the shooting, *Freiheit*—which Most edited—"contained an article on the general question of tyrannicide by the old revolutionary Carl Heinsen, then dead for a number of years."[80] The timing was unfortunate for Most, who a week later was arrested. Most's arrest for the publication of a provocative, yet unrelated article demonstrates the immediate anti-anarchist outrage: the police sent a man to jail who already had rejected individual acts of political violence in the United States, which "further convinced him that terrorism was wrong and counterproductive."[81]

Goldman and Berkman, on the other hand, were affected by Czolgosz's act in a way many were not. Berkman had to respond to an *attentat* much like his own (but successful: McKinley died), while Goldman became a magnet for anti-anarchist vitriol after Czolgosz and the popular press implicated her in the assassination. Several months before the assassination, Czolgosz heard Goldman give a speech in which "she gave a rundown of the recent violent measures enacted by Anarchists, obliquely praising them."[82] Picking up on this minimal connection, newspapers suggested that Goldman was Czolgosz's co-conspirator and from that moment forward "her life would forever be entwined with Czolgosz's act; the outside world, which may not have known her name before, would now associate Goldman with acts of terror."[83] There was no direct link between her and McKinley's assassination, "but, even in the absence of any formal establishment of guilt by association or official punishment," she remained linked to McKinley's assassination and returned to the subject in many of her writings over the next decade.[84]

Goldman very quickly began to write about and discuss Czolgosz. In some works, she demonstrated pity—"he was a soul in pain, a soul that could find no abode in this cruel world of ours"—and saw in his act evidence that government produced violent reaction.[85] She also, however, referred to Czolgosz's act as an *attentat*, granting it a political significance most anarchists denied.[86] In 1902, Goldman refused to label Czolgosz's *attentat* as "unanarchistic," because "Anarchism claims the right of Defense against Invasion and Aggression of every shape and form and no one . . . can deny that those in Power are the Invadors [*sic*], and McKinley certainly was one of them."[87] In the same letter though, she claims "not [to] know whether Czolgogz [*sic*] was an Anarchist."[88] Here she repeated her theoretical stance toward defensive violence, yet stopped short of claiming the assassination for anarchists. Goldman, who consistently chided anarchists who wrote Czolgosz off as a madman, did not locate his violence as part of anarchism; she merely asserted that it was not contrary to anarchism. Later she continued to question Czolgosz's anarchist credentials: "no evidence exists to indicate that Czolgosz ever called himself an Anarchist. . . . No living

soul ever heard Czolgosz make that statement, nor is there a single written word to prove that the boy ever breathed the accusations. Nothing but ignorance and insane hysteria."[89]

Goldman accepted the political intent of Czolgosz's act by calling it an *attentat*, but she located it in a political nonspace: neither anarchist nor unanarchist; directed against government, yet not properly part of anti-government politics. Goldman's negative definition was a magnified example of the anarchist ambivalence toward violence. Her effort to theorize *through* actual violence relegated the act to a political void: self-defensive violence against government enacted the theory of violence espoused by anarchists, yet still was not anarchist violence. Goldman obscured, avoided, rejected the connection between anarchism and violence by subtly disavowing Czolgosz's *attentat* because *he did not represent anarchism*. Czolgosz "wounded government in its most vital spot," so why not embrace his act as a legitimately anarchist attack on government?[90] Because anarchism needed to consolidate itself to have any meaning within a political marketplace that privileged representation in its multiple forms. It must become a tangible political entity to which the populace could look.

From Haymarket (1886) until McKinley (1901), the anarchist ambivalence toward violence manifested itself through individually and collectively conflicting rhetoric, logic, and action. As anarchists attempted to represent the nature of their political philosophy, anarchist violence served a dual, paradoxical role as a pillar of their theory (propaganda by deed) and as a specter haunting both anarchists (who distanced themselves from actual violence) and the nation as a whole. To have meaning within American political discourse, anarchism could illuminate the violence inherent to government, could preach defensive violence's validity, but could not commit real violence—doing so transformed anarchism from politics to terrorism. Berkman's act, and to a much greater extent, McKinley's assassination, forced anarchism to represent itself in relation to concrete acts of violence, because these acts had no political meaning until they were represented. When pressed to represent violence, Goldman continued the anarchist ambivalence in an extreme manner, making Czolgosz's act a political absence. The anarchist ambivalence must be understood, then, as the byproduct of efforts to present anarchism within an American political discourse that it rejected unequivocally. McKinley's assassination heightened the need to represent anarchism even as it demonstrated the irreconcilability of anarchism with American politics/government. Berkman's reaction to the assassination further confirmed the central cause of ambivalence and defined propaganda by deed as the only viable stance of anarchism toward violence within American politics.[91]

Propaganda Indeed: Anarchists and the Representational Impulse

In 1928 Berkman directly addressed the comparative value of the two *attentats*. Since he considered the matter of Frick's survival inconsequential, Czolgosz's success in killing his target was irrelevant. The measure of the act came from its propagandistic effects:

> As to Leon, I know very well that in my prison letter I told you that I understood the reasons that compelled him to the act, but that the usefulness, socially, of the act is quite another matter. I hold the same opinion now. That is why we do not condemn any such acts, because we understand the reasons. But that does not mean that we cannot form our opinion about its social effects and usefulness. . . . [A] terroristic act should take in consideration the effect on the public mind—not on comrades. . . . So I think that my act, not because it was mine, but because it was one easy to understand by most people, was more useful than Leon's. Though I am in general now not in favor of terroristic tactics . . . [t]hat acts of violence accomplish nothing, I do not agree at all.[92]

John William Ward argues Berkman here introduced "an element of pragmatic political calculation" that he did not use to evaluate his own *attentat*.[93] Ward and other scholars, however, fail to recognize the nature of Berkman's political calculations. In this short letter, Berkman contended that violence does accomplish something, then defined the criteria by which individual acts should be judged: the extent to which the public could understand and be affected by the act. McKinley's death meant nothing in itself and the act was reduced to propaganda. Berkman's apparent hypocrisy was in fact an extreme instance of the anarchist ambivalence toward violence—his *attentat* was good; Czolgosz's was not—but his explanation illuminates the ambivalence's cause:

> I do not believe that this deed was terroristic; and I doubt whether it was educational because the social necessity was not manifest. . . . In Russia, where political oppression is popularly felt, such a deed would be of great value. But the scheme of political subjection is more subtle in America. And though McKinley was the chief representative of our modern slavery, he could not be considered in the light of a direct and immediate enemy of the people; while in an absolutism, the autocrat is visible and tangible. The real despotism of republican institutions is far deeper, more insidious, because it rests on the popular delusion of self-government and inde-

> pendence. That is the subtle source of democratic tyranny, and, as such, it cannot be reached with a bullet."[94]

Berkman's ambivalence emerged from the unique structure of American governance. McKinley was only the embodied representation of oppression, not its cause. Under representative democracy, an attack on the representative head was meaningless as violence, but Berkman goes farther by evaluating the propagandistic value. In short, his response to Czolgosz's *attentat* immediately discounted the violence—because in the United States, the source of government oppression could not be touched by violence—then continued to evaluate all acts of violence on their ability to represent anarchism.

Berkman defined his own *attentat* as an attempt "to express, by my deed, my sentiments toward the existing system of legal oppression and industrial despotism . . . to give it a blow—rather morally than physically—this was the real purpose and signification of my act."[95] For him, the "signification" of his act—its "moral"—constituted its value. He evaluated Czolgosz's act by the same criterion. Both cases, however, entirely eliminated violence. Berkman did not conceptualize the American *attentat* as a real attack on the embodied representation of governance. The centrality of representation to the nation—its constitutive role, by which it constructs political reality—combined with the basic philosophical consonance of registers of representation, required anarchism's violence to be re-presented as propaganda. In other words, Berkman revealed that the American version of propaganda by deed was the anarchist strategy for making anarchism knowable within the American political discourse. It was an effort to navigate a political space in which the re-presentation of political will and positions were necessary to make anarchism appear as politics.

Propaganda—the representation of anarchism as one amongst a variety of competing political philosophies—met the representational impulse. Violence did not. Anarchist ambivalence toward violence reveals the central paradox of the period's anti-government politics: to challenge the nation, which was itself sustained by political representation that anarchism rejected, anarchists must transform their politics into propaganda—into another register of representation. American democracy structurally circumscribed all political action: any substantive threat that did not fit within the discourse was simply *not politics*. The ambivalence of anarchists toward violence is in fact an endemic trace of the power of representation within U.S. political thought. Though widely feared, the philosophy of violence was acceptable, because it re-presented the nation's evolution: calling for violence against an instantiation of government was well within the tradition of U.S. political life. Violence itself, though, was a fundamental challenge. It rejected rhetoric and threatened democracy, which explains its appeal to anarchists. But, in most cases, they banished it from anarchism. Rather than a cause-effect trajectory in which anarchists who theorized/justified the use of violence claimed responsibility for acts of violence, we see violence rejected even by those who theorized its logical necessity. This ambivalence

remains as a residue of anarchists' efforts to navigate a nation in which representation—in its various forms—was privileged; the effort to reject one register of representation while deploying another.

In the popular imagination, anarchism was inherently violent. But, anarchists' relationship to violence was far more complex than that. They espoused violence, then rejected it; they equivocated and they abjured; and, most notably, they re-presented violence as propaganda. Ultimately, this transformation of violence into propaganda reveals the difficulty radical movements faced as they sought to make their ideologies known in the American political sphere. Anarchists rejected political representation but obviously could not avoid representing their politics if they wished to have any impact. The basic consonance, though, of these registers of representation—democracy's drive to re-present its citizens political will and propaganda's drive to re-present political will as rhetoric—produced tension, ambivalence, paradox. The complex interrelationship of propaganda and deed shows us not just that anarchism's stance toward violence was far from uniform, but that the impulse toward representation in American politics impacts even those movements that seek to reject it.

Notes

1. This specificity is especially important the argument in this essay. Below, I address Berkman's theorization of political activity in representative democracies in contrast to, say, monarchies or autocracies (his reasons for rejecting violence in the American context). While the United States was not entirely unique in its form of representative democracy, American anarchists' writings and actions often address their immediate political context. Nationally-specific conditions shape U.S. anarchists' theorization of and reaction to violent acts. In other words, while the form of U.S. government may not be neatly separated from its global context, the relationship between anarchists and violence I detail in this essay emerges from their efforts to navigate the immediate, the local, the specific.
2. Voltairine de Cleyre, "Anarchism" (1912), in *Exquisite Rebel: The Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre–Feminist, Anarchist, Genius*, ed. Sharon Presley and Crispin Sartwell (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 70.
3. Jesse S. Cohn, *Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation: Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, Politics* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2006), 21.
4. Mikhail Bakunin, "Representative Government and Universal Suffrage" (1870), in *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*, trans. and ed. Sam Dolgoff. (New York: Knopf, 1972). 220–21.
5. Brian Seitz, *The Trace of Political Representation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 157.
6. F. R. Ankersmit, *Political Representation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 106.
7. Anarchist rejections of representative democracy have varying form and scope. Some, for instance, reject U.S. representative democracy in favor of more direct forms of participatory democracy. Thus, I do not wish to suggest here that all anarchists categorically dismiss democracy and its frequently representational forms. Rather, I merely gesture toward the specific historical formation of American governance: anarchists grappled with how to challenge a form of government that imagines itself to rely fundamentally on representation, so the shape of their resistance coexists uncomfortably, at times, with their embrace of alternate—yet still in key ways "democratic"—forms of political organization and action.
8. Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 47.
9. Ibid., 85.
10. Cohn, *Anarchism,* 120.
11. Ibid., 21.
12. Ibid., 56.

13. Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 8–9.

14. Dan Colson, "Erasing Anarchism: Sacco and Vanzetti and the Logic of Representation," *American Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (December 2014): 944, 964.

15. In part, the ambivalence I outline in this essay evidences anarchists' preference to minimize the "representative" aspects of democracy. Many anarchists privilege immediate, participatory democracy as an affirmative value—not merely as reaction against U.S. government. In this respect, one might read the anarchist ambivalence as a positive assertion of alternate political values (a celebration of directness). Nevertheless, the mixture of American representative democracy power—as both a practice and an ideology—and the fundamental anarchist politics of negation (in both its etymology and its history, anarchism appears first as a reaction against the state) make this ambivalence's negative character resonate more strongly.

16. As a theory, direct action does not belong exclusively to anarchism. Many radical and democratic political philosophies theorize and advocate direct action as an addition or alternative to political action. Writing in 1912, William E. Trautman defined direct action from the Socialist perspective in nonviolent terms as "the withdrawal from the job, the suspension of operation, the withdrawal of efficiency [to curtail] the economic power of the capitalist class" (11). Trautman claimed that "violence, destruction of life [is] needless and useless" (37). For him, direct action did not imply violence; in fact, violence undermined legitimate direct action. See William E. Trautman, *Direct Action and Sabotage* (Pittsburgh: Socialist News Company, 1912).

17. They "reject[ed] states and all those systematic forms of inequality states make possible. They [did] not seek to pressure the government to institute reforms. Neither [did] they seek to seize state power for themselves. Rather, they wish[ed] to destroy that power, using means that [were]—so far as possible—consistent with their ends" (203). See David Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2009).

18. Unlike autocratic governments against which direct action had different methods and meanings, Goldman saw in the United States an ignorant, governing majority: "In politics, naught but quantity counts. In proportion to its increase, however, principles, ideals, justice, and uprightness are completely swamped by the array of numbers" (69). The "masses" hindered "the American struggle for liberty" and functioned as an "annihilator of individuality, of free initiative, of originality" (76, 78). American direct action stood in opposition to democratic government, which operated through voting and claimed to be the more or less direct realization of majority rule. See Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1969).

19. Voltairine de Cleyre, "Direct Action" (1912), *Exquisite Rebel: The Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre–Feminist, Anarchist, Genius*, ed. Sharon Presley and Crispin Sartwell (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 274.

20. Ibid., 275.

21. Caroline Cahm, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism, 1872–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 76.

22. Errico Malatesta and Carlo Cafiero, quoted in Cahm, *Kropotkin,* 78.

23. Carlo Cafiero, "Action" (1880), in *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas,* vol. I: From Anarchy to Anarchism (300 CE to 1939), ed. Robert Graham (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2005), 152.

24. Paul Brousse, "Propaganda by the Deed" (1877), in *Anarchism,* 151.

25. Cahm, *Kropotkin,* 103.

26. Ibid., 110.

27. For a thorough history of the international development of propaganda by deed as a theory, see "Propaganda by Deed: The Development of the Idea" and "Kropotkin and Propaganda by Deed," the third and fourth chapters of Caroline Cahm's *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism, 1872–1886*.

28. Candace Falk, "Forging Her Place: An Introduction," in *Made for America, 1890–1901,* ed. Candace Falk et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 6.

29. Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (1931), 2 vols. (New York: Dover, 1970), 9.

30. Ibid., 10. As with many drawn to anarchism in Haymarket's wake, Goldman was struck not so much by the explosion itself, but by its aftermath: the subsequent arrests and executions and the widespread sense that Albert Parsons, August Spies, and the other Haymarket defendants were not guilty of any real crime. Paul Avrich has called the Haymarket trial "one of the most unjust in the annals of American jurisprudence" (xi). For many, including Goldman, the executed men were martyrs. See Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

31. Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 454.

32. Falk, "Forging her Place," 15–16. Most moved to the United States after being arrested "for glrifying the killing of Tsar Alexander II . . . by . . . 'Nihilists'" (Max Nomad, *Apostles of Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1939], 273). He supported the use of dynamite to overthrow American government (Frederic Trautmann, *The Voice of Terror: A Biography of Johann Most* [Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1980], 155). He even published *Revolutionary War Science*, "a manual on the techniques as well as the dangers of explosives and revolutionary warfare" (Tom

Goyens, *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880–1914* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007], 99). Most's text included advice on "the acquisition of money and the purchase of explosives," the manufacture of effective bombs, and "hints about placing all kinds of deadly chemicals in various delicacies which were to be served at the dinners of the rich" (Nomad, *Apostles,* 287). Goldman described Most's reputation amongst the popular press: "the incarnation of satan, a wild beast run amuck, leaving chaos and destruction behind him . . . the synonym of dynamite and nitroglycerin, and of everything else that is dangerous, evil and vicious" (Emma Goldman, "Johann Most," in *Emma Goldman: Rebel!* Labadie Collection. University of Michigan Library, 19).

33. "Badly Advised" (1893), in *Made for America,* 145–46. Journalists may not have captured the nuances of her position, but it was not wholly inaccurate to claim that Goldman belonged "to the wildest school of Anarchists [who] maintain the right of individuals to seek vengeance for private or public wrongs" ("Berkman's Career Here" [1892], in *Made for America,* 100).

34. Emma Goldman, "Gaetano Bresci" (1901), in *Made for America,* 456.

35. Emma Goldman, quoted in "New York Anarchist Leaders Denounce the Murder of Austria's Empress" (1898), in *Made for America,* 347.

36. Falk, "Forging Her Place," 16. Falk argues that Goldman's "position on violence . . . was more complex than reported and was often misunderstood by the mainstream press" (70). Falk sees a distinction between Goldman's desire "to prove that all anarchists don't 'carry bombs in our coat pockets'" in the popular press with the "more nuanced, carefully crafted expression of her position" in anarchist periodicals, yet also contends that "Goldman's attitude about violence . . . was inconsistent" (70). I find unconvincing Falk's suggestion of a chronological shift or stark divide between Goldman's efforts to shape the public image of anarchism in mainstream newspapers while articulating her *real* views in anarchist periodicals.

37. Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 92.

38. Ibid.

39. Goldman echoed de Cleyre's frustration with the popular circumscription of direct action. De Cleyre lamented that direct action had become synonymous with "'Forcible Attacks on Life and Property'" ("Direct Action," 273). As a proponent of direct action she argued that nonforcible direct action was logically consonant with anarchism, yet violence was not: "it is not the business of Anarchists to preach wild and foolish acts, —acts of violence. For, truly, Anarchism has nothing in common with violence, and can never come about save through the conquest of man's minds" (297–98). She was angered, then, that violent acts directed against government—which, according to her, were caused by government's inherent violence—led to her theory being labeled as violent. See Voltairine de Cleyre, "Our Present Attitude," in *Exquisite Rebel*.

40. Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 86.

41. Ibid., 91–92.

42. Ibid., 91. Goldman wrote often on this theme: "As if an act of this kind can be measured by its usefulness, expediency, or practicability. We might as well ask ourselves of the usefulness of a cyclone, tornado, a violent thunderstorm, or the ceaseless fall of the Niagara waters. All these forces are the natural results of natural causes" (475). See Emma Goldman, "Tragedy at Buffalo" (1901), in *Made for America*.

43. Alvin F. Sampson, quoted in Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 83–86.

44. Alexander Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* (1912) (New York: Schocken, 1970), 7.

45. Alexander Berkman, *What Is Anarchism?* (1929/1937) (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2003), 140.

46. Alexander Berkman, "Down with the Anarchists!" *The Blast*, August 15, 1916 (New York: Greenwood Reprint, 1968), vol. 1 (17): 6.

47. Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 432.

48. Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, 6.

49. Shortly after the strike began, Frick announced "that [Carnegie Steel Company] would no longer negotiate with the Amalgamated Association" (77). From the outset, he had no intention of negotiating in good faith and planned to break the union through strong-arm tactics. See Samuel Schreiner, *Henry Clay Frick: The Gospel of Greed* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

50. Goldman, *Living My Life*, 85.

51. Ibid., 87.

52. Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, 35. Berkman described the attack in great detail: "With a quick motion I draw the revolver. As I raise the weapon, I see Frick clutch with both hands the arm of the chair, and attempt to rise. I aim at his head. . . . With a look of horror he quickly averts his face, as I pull the trigger. There is a flash, and the high-ceilinged room reverberates as with the booming of cannon. I hear a sharp, piercing cry, and see Frick on his knees, his head against the arm of the chair. . . . 'Dead?' I wonder. I must make sure . . . I take a few steps toward him, when suddenly the other man, whose presence I had quite forgotten, leaps upon me. . . . I would not hurt him: I have no business with him. Suddenly I hear the cry, 'Murder! Help!' My heart stands still as I realize that it is Frick shouting. . . . I hurl the stranger aside and fire at the

crawling figure of Frick. The man struck my hand,—I have missed! He grapples with me, and we wrestle across the room. . . . I thrust the revolver against his side and aim at Frick, cowering behind the chair. I pull the trigger. There is a click—but no explosion! . . . [S]uddenly something heavy strikes me on the back of the head. . . . I sink to the floor, vaguely conscious of the weapon slipping from my hands. . . . Painfully I strive to rise. . . . Not dead? . . . I crawl [toward Frick]. . . . I must get the dagger from my pocket—I have it! Repeatedly I strike with it at the legs of the man near the window. I hear Frick cry out in pain—there is much shouting and stamping—my arms are pulled and twisted, and I am lifted bodily from the floor" (33–35).

53. Ibid., 59.

54. Goldman, *Living My Life*, 99.

55. Ibid., 97.

56. Emma Goldman, quoted in *Made for America,* 119n2.

57. Goyens, *Beer and Revolution*, 131.

58. Nomad, *Apostles of Revolution*, 295.

59. Goldman, *Living My Life*, 105. The dispute climaxed as Goldman rose during one of Most's lectures and challenged him to prove his accusations against Berkman. She "then pulled out [a horse]whip and leaped towards him. Repeatedly [lashing] him across the face and neck, then [breaking] the whip over [her] knee and [throwing] the pieces at him" (105).

60. The majority of anarchists agreed with Most. Benjamin Tucker refused to "praise" Berkman, claiming "it would be comparatively easy to dispose of the Fricks, if it were not for the Berkmans. The latter are the hope of the former. The strength of the Fricks rests on violence; now it is to violence that the Berkmans appeal" (Benjamin Tucker, "Save Labor from Its Friends," *Liberty*, July 30, 1892. [Westport, CT: Greenwood Reprint, 1970], vol. 8 [49]: 2). *Egoism*—an important anarchist periodical—too distanced itself from Berkman: "As for Frick and Berkman, I have no use of either. . . . Berkman, electing himself where he is not nominated, punishes the tyrant and suffers the consequences of his acts himself, and of the two, is the most desirable citizen, although neither is desirable" ("My Teaspoon,—Stirring the Universe," *Egoism*, September 1892. Labadie Collection. University of Michigan Library, 2). Certainly others praised Berkman, including *Solidarity*, which depicted him as a Christ figure: "You, workmen, meditate this lesson. Berkman was your friend. He gave his life for you. . . . He stood alone taking on himself the whole burden of responsibility, as Christ is said to have taken on himself the sins of mankind" ("Sentenced!" *Solidarity*, October 8, 1892. Labadie Collection. University of Michigan Library, 1). Goldman, however, largely stood alone in her vociferous attacks on Most and her unrelenting defense of Berkman, and only her prominence allowed this dispute to be perceived as "the greatest scandal in the history of Anarchism" (Nomad, *Apostles of Revolution*, 295).

61. Goldman, *Living My Life*, 106.

62. Emma Goldman, "Attention!" (1892), in *Made for America,* 123.

63. Emma Goldman, "Submitted" (1892), in *Made for America,* 121.

64. Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, 67. Berkman added: "With the elimination of Frick, the responsibility for Homestead conditions would rest with Carnegie. To support his role as the friend of labor, he must needs terminate the sanguinary struggle. Such a development of affairs would have greatly advanced the Anarchist propaganda. However some may condemn my act, the workers could not be blind to the actual situation, and the practical effects of Frick's death. But his recovery . . . " (67).

65. Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, 58.

66. Ibid., 67.

67. Ibid., 50–51.

68. Ibid., 57.

69. Ibid., 59.

70. Ibid., 85.

71. Berkman conceptualized his own act as the creation of an "opportunity," rather than a consequential anarchist act in itself: "my comrades . . . will use the opportunity to the utmost to shed light on the questions involved" (59); and again, "[Frick] lives. Of course, it does not really matter. The opportunity for propaganda is there" (97). Berkman found failure only in the anarchist inability to propagandize through his act: "Oh, if labor would realize the significance of my deed, if the worker would understand my aims and motives, he could be aroused to strong protest, perhaps to active demand. . . . But when, when will the dullard realize things? When will he open his eyes? Blind to his own slavery and degradation, can I expect him to perceive the wrong suffered by others?" (122). Presumably, the worker would be no less ignorant if Frick had died. See Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*.

72. McKinley's "was the administration during which the United States made its diplomatic and military debut as a world power" (Kevin Phillips, *William McKinley* [New York: Times Books, 2003], 1). During McKinley's first term, the United States won the Spanish-American War and thus took control of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and (temporarily) Cuba, and it annexed Hawaii.

73. Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, 417.

74. Eric Rauchway, *Murdering McKinley: The Making of Theodore Roosevelt's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 3. Wesley A. Johns describes the shooting in greater detail: "The first shot sounded muffled like a small firecracker explosion. The President rose on his toes, clutching his chest, then started to pitch forward. A mushroom of smoke issued from the handkerchief [which Czolgosz used to conceal the gun]. Then came the second crackling report. For one long ghastly second no one moved. The long line froze. Those surrounding the President, so gay and confident a moment before, stood transfixed like the incredulous witnesses to a hideous dream. Smoke was still pluming from the assassin's revolver. . . . Pale and grim, the assassin crouched before the President. There were no histrionics. No historic utterance fell from his lips. . . . Czolgosz was grimly silent and efficient. . . . He steadied his revolver at a 45 degree angle, ready to pump a third shot into the President's helpless body [but two men] acted almost simultaneously [bringing] the assassin crashing to the floor [while at] the same moment [a bystander] swung his giant fist connecting solidly with the assassin's skull" (94) See Wesley A. Johns, *The Man Who Shot McKinley* (South Brunswick, NJ: A. S. Barnes, 1970).

77. Rauchway, *Murdering McKinley,* 19.

76. Johns, *The Man Who Shot McKinley*, 123. At that moment, McKinley was still alive, and no one yet knew why Czolgoz had shot him. McKinley died early on September 14. Czolgosz was convicted and sentenced within two weeks of McKinley's death. On October 29 he was executed.

77. Paul Avrich, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 133–34.

78. Avrich, *An American Anarchist,* 134.

79. During the next two decades, acts of violence occurring around labor unrest were almost always attributed to anarchists. The Washington Square bomb in 1906, the *L.A. Times* explosion in 1910, and the San Francisco Preparedness Day bomb in 1916 all circulated around anarchists, even though none were linked conclusively to the movement.

80. Goldman, "Johann Most," 34.

81. Ibid.

82. Johns, *The Man Who Shot McKinley*, 35. Czolgosz also sought out anarchists, asking "naive questions about the existence of secret revolutionary societies" (Max Baginski, "Leon Czolgosz," *Mother Earth*, October 1906: 4). These queries led those in the movement "not [to] take him seriously," and then to print a warning in *Free Society* five days before the assassination suggesting that Czolgosz was a spy (Johns, *The Man Who Shot McKinley*, 41–42).

83. Falk, "Forging Her Place," 76. Police nationwide sought Goldman's arrest, and within a week she was taken into custody in Chicago and questioned for five days before the Chief of Police became convinced of her innocence: "'Unless you're a very clever actress, you are certainly innocent. I think you are innocent, and I am going to do my part to help you out'" (Goldman, *Living My Life*, 302). Investigators in Buffalo were unable to gather any grounds for extradition, and eventually Goldman was released without charge.

84. Falk, "Forging Her Place," 76.

85. Goldman, "Tragedy at Buffalo," 476.

86. Goldman, *Living My Life*, 312.

87. Emma Goldman to Walter Channing, October 18, 1902, in *Making Speech Free, 1902–1909*. ed. Candace Falk et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 95.

88. Ibid.

89. Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 89.

90. Goldman, "Tragedy at Buffalo," 477.

91. When Johann Most repudiated Berkman's *attentat*, Goldman was furious, but when Berkman questioned Czolgosz's attack on McKinley, she was heartbroken: "How can I forget your stand on Czolgosz's act? It was a greater blow to me than anything that happened during that terrible period. It affected me more than Most's stand on your act. After all, Most had only talked about violence. You had used it and went to prison for it. You had known the agony of repudiation, condemnation, and isolation. That you could sit down and cold-bloodedly analyze an act of violence nine years after your own, actually implying that your act was more important, was the most terrible thing I had yet experienced" (107). Nearly three decades after McKinley's assassination, Goldman considered Berkman's response hypocritical, but his refusal to endorse Czolgosz's *attentat* was another instantiation of the anarchist ambivalence. And Goldman's frustration with Berkman arose more from the ambivalence than it did from an endorsement of the act, because, as she claimed, "[a]cts of violence, except as demonstrations of a sensitive soul, have proven utterly useless" (107). She defended Czolgosz, but not the attack, and expressed disgust with Berkman because he focused exclusively on violence (leaving Czolgosz's "sensitive soul" out of the question). She insisted that "to say that a political act is less valuable [is] nonsense" (107). See Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, November 23, 1928, in *Life of An Anarchist: The Alexander Berkman Reader,* ed. Gene Fellner (New York: Seven Stories, 1992).

92. Alexander Berkman to Emma Goldman, November 1928, in *Life of an Anarchist: The Alexander Berkman Reader,* ed. Gene Fellner (New York: Seven Stories, 1992), 109.

93. John William Ward, "Violence, Anarchy, and Alexander Berkman," in *Riot, Rout, and Tumult: Readings in American Social and Political Violence,* ed. Roger Lane and John J. Turner (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1978), 258.

94. Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, 416-17.

95. Alexander Berkman, quoted in Falk, *Made for America,* 132–133n3.