The centers of anarchist activity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included Italy, Spain, France, and the United States. The German anarchist movement was small, even in comparison to other nations that were not major anarchist centers. Contemporaries and scholars had until recently mostly agreed on the cause: anarchism was simply unable to compete with German Social Democracy, whose explosive growth beginning in the 1870s reflected the organization and self-awareness of an advanced industrial proletariat. For Social Democrats and many scholars, even those of a non-Marxist stripe, this situation represented the inevitable triumph of mature, class-conscious socialism over the undisciplined and utopian impulses of prepolitical workers.1 Once socialism had developed into a mass movement, only the detritus of the lumpenproletariat, petit bourgeois reactionaries, and decadent elites embraced anarchism. In the late 1960s and 1970s German anarchism finally began to receive a modicum of scholarly attention.2 The small body of scholarship produced since has shown that a German anarchist movement (really, movements) did in fact exist throughout the era of the German Empire (1871-1918) among the handful of anarchists committed to "propaganda of the deed" active in the 1880s, within a circle of cultural and intellectual anarchists in the following decade, and in the form of anarcho-syndicalism after the turn of the century. Several German anarchist leaders, intellectuals, and artists also received scholarly attention as individual thinkers.3 This scholarship did much to illuminate the social and intellectual history of German anarchism, but did not significantly alter the conventional understanding of German anarchism as an atavistic expression of protest destined to be eclipsed by Social Democracy. And for most of the past thirty years, little scholarship has explored the German anarchist movement further.

Scholarship on anarchism outside of Germany has, however, flourished. Although this literature is far too diverse to summarize easily, I would like to draw attention to three aspects of it that help illuminate the approach I take in this article. First are works that have filled out our understanding of the development, growth, and decline of anarchist movements within particular national contexts, highlighting both their intellectual and social development, and crucially, not presuming their inevitable failure based on anarchism's backwardness or utopian folly. These works tend to focus on the writings and organizational activities of prominent theorists and leaders, with particular attention to the ideological and tactical debates, as well as ongoing contests with and persecution by state authorities, that shaped the movements.4 A second genre of anarchist scholarship that has been especially lively and fruitful includes biographies of major figures such as Peter Kropotkin, Elisée Reclus, and Carlo Tresca.5 Though each of these anarchist leaders followed a unique trajectory, what becomes clear from their biographies is the deeply transnational character of the anarchist milieu of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although not unique to this movement, the diasporic dimension of anarchist politics and culture was probably more extensive than for any other political movement of the era. Anarchist leaders were at various times hounded out of most European countries, moving often among those nations in which they were not being persecuted at a given time or settling in the least hostile abodes for revolutionaries, the United Kingdom and the United States. At the same time, the anarchists' profound distrust of national political institutions (such as parliaments and legal systems) left them less inclined than state-oriented socialists to anchor their thoughts and activities within a single national context. The transnational character of European and American anarchism has been a central feature not only of anarchist biographies but of much other recent scholarship on anarchism.6 A third, less developed, area of recent anarchist scholarship concerns culture, both the culture of the anarchist movement (as distinct from the activities of prominent
leaders and journalists) and the relationship of anarchists to the broader cultures in which they lived. For instance, Tom Goyens' Beer and Revolution, a study of the social and cultural practices of German-American anarchists in and around New York City, provides a rare window into the experience and mentality of a thriving anarchist subculture that has been described only dimly in those studies focused on movement leaders.

In this article, I want to situate the study of German-speaking (primarily German, but also Austrian) anarchism within the historiography of European and American anarchism. First, I will briefly describe German anarchists' participation in the same transnational circulation of ideas, propaganda, and people that has been illustrated so well in regard to other anarchists. German anarchists were part of an international anarchist culture, a fact to which scholars have not given much attention. At the same time, examining German anarchism with attention to the concerns of recent scholars of anarchism elsewhere promises to enhance our understanding of the German movement and its place in the history of German socialism. The central goal of this article is to explore the meaning of anarchism to German workers, and in so doing to highlight the complexity of the relationship among workers, anarchists, and Social Democrats, not only in Germany but throughout Europe and America. I argue that despite the modesty of scope of the formal German anarchist movement, its revolutionary rhetoric remained potent for a significant number of workers, including those who maintained a loyalty to German Social Democracy. The relationship between anarchism and Social Democracy is often seen as a zero-sum game and in organizational terms it may have been so. The German Social Democrats' extraordinary strength certainly created institution-building challenges for German anarchists, as the formation of the Italian Socialist Party contributed to the decline of Italian anarchism in the 1890s. But many workers who channeled their organizational energies into parliamentary socialism and trade unionism still found the anarchists' critiques of government, the bourgeoisie, and indeed organized socialism, resonant. Too often, historians of anarchism and socialism see the movements as largely distinct, rather than as interwoven elements within a broad radical counterculture. For organizational leaders and theorists, distinctions among such movements were usually (though not always) clear and at times matters for acrimonious public and private debate, but this was not always so for the rank and file. To understand the developments of these movements, and how they were lived and experienced by millions of people, it is vital to be alert to their interconnections.

Davide Turcato has recently drawn attention to Italian anarchists' construction of a transnational network in which "militants, resources, and ideas" all circulated, noting that Italian anarchist periodicals were transnational not only in the sense that they were "meant for distribution outside of their country of publication," but also because "their content was itself considerably transnational." Much the same could be said of the German anarchist movement. The life and public career of Germany's most famous anarchist, Johann Most, is emblematic in this regard. Most moved between Germany and Austria in his career as a Social Democrat, before spending time as an exile in London from 1879 to 1882, and finally settling in New York. Despite occasional financial challenges, Most's imprisonment in Britain and relocation to the United States, his newspaper Freiheit (Liberty), one of the longest-running anarchist periodicals in history, attracted a readership of German speakers in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and Austria for decades. Even during the era of the German Socialist Law (1878-90), when all socialistic activity was banned, thousands of copies of Freiheit reached Germany and
Austria each week, reaching a peak circulation of 4,500 for a few years in the mid-1880s. Though the German circulation of Freiheit declined in the late 1880s as Most struggled to maintain his long-distance smuggling operation, workers in Germany continued to read his paper and numerous pamphlets well into the next century.

Like Most, a number of German anarchists traveled the same itineraries of exile and partook in the nexus of international anarchist exchange, experienced both in anarchist exile communities (in London, New York, and Paterson, New Jersey, among others) and in an imagined community constructed through vigorous correspondence, international congresses, and meetings of international anarchist organizations. Rudolf Grossmann (who wrote under the pseudonym Pierre Ramus) was born in Vienna but became politically active in New York around the turn of the twentieth century, writing for Most's Freiheit as well as founding his own newspaper, after which he spent time in London before returning to Vienna to play a dominant role in the Austrian anarchist movement. His articles and pamphlets, published in London and Vienna, circulated to Germany and the United States as well, and he contributed to Emma Goldman's Mother Earth and other anarchist periodicals outside the German-speaking world. His correspondents included German anarchists such as Gustav Landauer and Erich Mühsam, but also the Russian émigrés Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, the Dutch anarchist Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, the Belgian Victor Dave, and the Italian Errico Malatesta. The Austrian anarchist Josef Peukert, a political rival of Most, was politically active in Germany and with the German Autonomie group in London, as well as in France, Switzerland, Austria, and the United States. As they crossed international borders, the English Channel, and the Atlantic Ocean, these anarchists frequently encountered each other in exile clubs, newspaper offices, saloons, lecture halls, and other spaces that made up the international anarchist culture.

Even those German anarchists who did not themselves move from country to country participated in the international literary community of anarchists in both periodicals and personal correspondence. Gustav Landauer and Raphael Friedeberg, both heterodox German Social Democrats who eventually embraced anarchism, remained for the most part active only in Germany (though Friedeberg eventually left for Switzerland after his expulsion from the German Social Democratic Party), but corresponded with Kropotkin, Domela Nieuwenhuis, Malatesta, and other anarchists across Europe and America. These examples illustrate that the German anarchists, though fewer in number than their compatriots of other nationalities, belonged to the same international networks as others and should be studied as part of this same anarchist culture.

If elements of the German anarchist experience look very much like those of the larger movements elsewhere, German (and Austrian) anarchist history was also profoundly marked by the unique elements of its national context, most strikingly the massive size, organization, and electoral success of Social Democracy, which led not only to institutional weakness among the anarchists but also to a dearth of the kind of robust anarchist theorization characteristic of thinkers like Kropotkin, Malatesta, and Reclus. Yet precisely because of these institutional and theoretical deficits, the examination of anarchism in Germany helps illuminate the movement's appeal to German workers committed institutionally to Social Democracy. And it is in this regard that the study of anarchism in Germany might suggest fruitful avenues of research into anarchism in the nations with vigorous and widespread anarchist movements. The rest of this
article is devoted to a tentative analysis of this appeal, what it reveals about some of the discontents of European workers with Social Democracy, and the blurring of the lines between these two movements among ordinary workers.

Though anarchist and Social Democratic leaders saw their ideologies as mutually exclusive, there is ample evidence that many workers did not experience the relationship between the movements in this way. Alf Lüdtke, pioneer of the German historical approach known as Alltagsgeschichte (history of everyday life), has drawn attention to the importance to German working-class identity of Eigensinn (obstinacy or self-will), often associated with the undisciplined side of working-class life. Despite repeated attempts, Social Democratic leaders never managed to stamp out the "rough culture" of drinking, brawling, and spontaneous resistance to oppression that they perceived to be inimical to the class-conscious behavior of an industrial labor army. Although Socialist politicians feared workers who did not properly understand the intricacies of socialist theory could be led astray by the anarchist will-o’-the-wisp, in fact German workers’ identity was multifaceted, taking different forms as workers strove both to achieve specific political goals and to assert their autonomy. Workers did not necessarily regard contrasting forms of self-assertion, such as reading anarchist newspapers and voting for Social Democrats, as contradictory. Each expressed a different dimension of the worker’s identity. As Lüdtke puts it, "Eigensinn could be practiced and experienced by pushing for discipline, by adopting a 'respectable' comportment—but also by physically fighting opponents and rivals. Even more, these very different ways of behaving might not have been perceived as antagonistic or reciprocally exclusive; either way, autonomous and self-determined behavior, at least its male version, was claimed and expressed." As the Socialists increasingly emphasized practical reform within existing German institutions over millenarian hopes, some workers turned to anarchist texts to articulate their fantasies of violent confrontation with their oppressors and to depict the world they hoped revolution would bring. Anarchists also spoke to workers' resentments against not only the wealthy and powerful of German society but also the perceived class system within Social Democracy, as party leaders set themselves up in positions of superiority over ordinary workers. Workers' frustrations with their leaders’ overly reformist rhetoric and arrogance did not in most cases translate into a full repudiation of Socialism. Rather, loyalty to Socialism and sympathy with some aspects of anarchist rhetoric existed side by side.

Any attempt to understand anarchism's appeal in the German Empire must be somewhat speculative because of the paucity of direct evidence from workers. Of the small number of workers' autobiographies that have come down to us from this era, almost all appeared under the imprimatur of the Social Democratic press and thus tended to conform to Socialist ideological expectations. Scattered police reports on radical activity get closest to the actual articulations of workers, but are subject to elisions and distortions owing to police spies' particular interests and audience. Anarchist newspapers and propagandistic pamphlets, which are the central sources I utilize here, offer clues about what arguments anarchists thought would resonate with workers' concerns, and we can deduce from how widely they were disseminated something about their level of popular success with German workers.

Two main aspects of the anarchist appeal in Imperial Germany emerge from these sources. Anarchists cast themselves as courageous revolutionaries committed to the total overthrow of existing social relations. Uncompromising in their convictions, they promised to fight for the
inauguration of a just new world using any means necessary. The archetype of this attitude was Johann Most, a popular Social Democratic publicist and Reichstag representative who turned to anarchism after he was expelled from the party in 1880. Most's rousing calls for violence in his newspaper Freiheit, which he published continuously from January 1879 until his death in 1906, and in numerous pamphlets, as well as his self-portrayal as an anti-authority trickster figure in his many prison memoirs proved popular with German workers. Against this heroic self-depiction, Most offered an image of Socialist leaders as cowards and hypocrites peddling timid reformism while seeking to stifle worker autonomy for their own political benefit. Later German anarchists, even those philosophically at odds with Most, adopted a similar style. Their combative rhetoric acknowledging workers' desperation and outrage at social injustice and their excoriation of Social Democrats for their bureaucratization and authoritarianism likely attracted readers to these anarchist publications, as these had been the center of Most's appeal during his Socialist days.

Anarchist historian Rudolf Rocker titled his biography of Most Life of a Rebel, concisely capturing both Most's self-conception and his appeal to German workers. A bookbinder by training, Most found his true vocation as a newspaper editor and agitator within the Eisenacher faction of the Social Democratic movement in the early 1870s. The Eisenachers (a group which included future party leaders August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht) did not share a single ideological perspective, but instead found common ground in their internationalism, rejection of parliamentary participation except for propaganda purposes, and espousal of a generally revolutionary ethos. Such amorphous revolutionism suited Most, who evinced little interest in theory but displayed preternatural skill at communicating with ordinary workers. From fall 1868 until early 1870, Most lived in Vienna, where he became a popular fixture in the workers' movement in which, according to anarchist scholar Max Nomad, "his humorous and satirical pieces, recited with inimitable cleverness, won him the admiration of all those who attended workers' festivals or other affairs . . . his sharp sarcastic remarks were always received with great applause." His arrest and trial for high treason in 1870 boosted Most's celebrity in the workers' movement. After serving one year in prison, he was amnestied and then expelled from the Habsburg Empire. He returned to the recently united German Empire, where he quickly rose to prominence as a leader with a fiery tongue.

Most's career as a Social Democratic agitator was multidimensional. The three Social Democratic papers that Most edited during the 1870s enjoyed enormous success. With Most at the helm after 1876, the Berliner Freie Presse saw its subscriptions increase from 2,000 to 18,000 in a single year, as Most unleashed a vituperative hailstorm against the enemies of socialism. Before he left Germany for good in 1878, Most landed in prison three times for his radical proclamations, such as lauding the Paris Commune of 1871 and denigrating Sedan Day, which marked the Prussian victory over France in the Franco-Prussian War. Most was also a popular speaker with an enthusiastic following. Even Social Democratic theorist Eduard Bernstein begrudgingly acknowledged that Most had in the 1870s "enjoyed an incredible popularity among the masses" due to "an uncommon literary gift" and called him an "undisciplined genius." In addition to editing newspapers and delivering speeches, Most published books of popular socialist songs, including an extremely popular song of his own, "The Working Men," whose first stanza ran: "Who digs the gold from earth? Who hammers brass and stone? Who weaves the cloth and silk? Who tills the wheat and vine? Who gives the rich his bread and lives therefore in
bitterest need? It is the working men, the proletariat."22 The emphasis on workers' productive power and capitalism's injustice articulated in this song formed the cornerstone of Most's political message. His popularity among workers won him election to the Reichstag in 1874 and reelection in 1877, though he lacked both interest and talent in being a parliamentarian.23

Though among the most radical and impudent of the Social Democratic leaders of the 1870s, Most was hardly alone. August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, the most prominent of the party's leaders, also delivered incendiary speeches, ran afoul of police, and did stints in prison. In an 1869 speech cited endlessly by antisocialists, Liebknecht had inveighed, "socialism is no longer a question of theory, but simply a question of power, which, like any other question of power, cannot be decided in parliament, but only in the streets, on the battlefield."24 In 1871, Bebel had championed the Paris Commune, proclaiming, "The struggle in Paris is only a minor outpost skirmish . . . and before many decades have passed, the battle cry of the Paris proletariat . . . will become the battle cry of the entire European proletariat."25

But the events of 1878 irrevocably altered the internal dynamics of German Social Democracy. Two failed assassination attempts against Kaiser Wilhelm, which Bismarck blamed without evidence on Social Democracy, created an atmosphere in which the chancellor was able to pass the Socialist Law, a measure banning all "social-democratic, socialistic, or communist endeavors" in the German Empire for two and a half years. When the Socialist Law came into effect on 21 October 1878, the party executive dissolved itself and urged other party organizations to do likewise, hoping that compliance with the law would soften the blow of police repression they knew would come and demonstrate to the German public their orderly and disciplined nature.26 Though arguably a sound political strategy, many Socialist radicals were taken aback by this sharp change of course. In anarchist historian Max Nettlau's partisan rendering, German Social Democracy "stood there in its powerlessness . . . and tried to save what could be saved, often in a not very dignified, or totally undignified, way, which provoked the rebellion of its most serious followers. So arose among many a social revolutionary mood which still lacked an intellectual [geistige] foundation."27

Most (who lost his Reichstag seat in a July 1878 election marked by antisocialist fervor) and Wilhelm Hasselmann, a Reichstag deputy representing a constituency of militant socialists, became the de facto spokesmen for the so-called social revolutionaries.28 Upon completing a six-month prison sentence in December 1878, Most found himself shunned by party members pursuing the moderate course mandated by the leadership. After failing to find work editing a party newspaper, he went into voluntary exile in London, where he began publishing Freiheit, originally conceived as a party paper but soon identified with the apostate Socialists gathered around Most. Hasselmann remained in Germany until summer 1880 as a dissident radical in the Social Democratic Reichstag delegation. After being expelled from the party in August 1880, both men began to move toward a theoretically unsophisticated anarchism as the best articulation of the revolutionary socialist spirit they believed the party leadership had betrayed.29

Despite his public and acrimonious split with the Social Democrats, Most remained popular with German workers for many years.30 As Socialist leaders adopted a restrained tone and emphasized the need for discipline and patience, Most called for revolutionary violence from the pages of Freiheit in articles with titles such as "Through Terrorism to Liberty," "Struggle with all
Means!,” and "The End Justifies the Means." Most crossed the line of British press tolerance with his article "Finally!" of 19 March 1881, which celebrated Tsar Alexander II's assassination and expressed Most's hope that it would inspire a wave of attentats against rulers across Europe. British authorities regarded the article as so inflammatory that they immediately arrested Most and sentenced him to a prison term of fifteen months, after which he and his paper relocated to the United States. There he continued his bellicose rhetoric, where "crowds turned out by the thousands to hear his rolling denunciations of authority, his promise to 'stamp on ruling heads.'" Allegedly, he once gave 300 speeches in a period of six months. It is hard to imagine that all of these eager listeners were committed anarchists.

Most's calls for violent revolution in particular sounded more poetical than practical. In an 1884 article praising Kaiser Wilhelm's would-be assassins of 1878, Most predicted that soon "dynamite will explode in the splendid, rubber-tired coaches of the aristocracy and the bourgeois as they pull up to the opera. Death will await them, both by day and by night, on all roads and footpaths and even in their homes." In "Murder against Murder," Most encouraged his readers to strike out: "Comrades of Freiheit, we say murder the murderers. Rescue mankind through blood, iron, poison, and dynamite." Numerous articles, such as "The Science and Practice of Explosives" and the notorious pamphlet Revolutionary War Science, detailed the manufacture and use of explosives, poison, and other weapons. Neither Most's repeated calls for acts of violence nor his denunciation of the ballot box met with much response from German or German-American workers; however, they continued to read his paper in substantial numbers. Each copy likely reached many readers, as socialist periodicals were routinely passed around and often read in groups at cafés and pubs. Encouraging these practices, anarchist papers and pamphlets frequently included on their title pages the exhortation, "Read and pass on!"

Most's adoption of anarchism by 1883 had no discernible effect on the content or popularity of Freiheit (which still bore the subtitle "Organ of the Revolutionary Socialists" on its masthead), whose circulation in Germany diminished only when Most's smuggling operation was broken up by police. Self-described anarchists could only have accounted for a small portion of Freiheit's German readership, as there were probably no more than a thousand German anarchists at any time during the 1880s. Workers affiliated with Social Democracy, not only running the risk of imprisonment under the Socialist Law but also flouting the prescriptive dictates of Socialist leaders, who routinely ridiculed Most in the pages of the official party paper, made up the bulk of Freiheit's audience. If the vast majority of Freiheit readers remained loyal Social Democrats unresponsive to Most's calls for violence in place of voting, why did they read the paper? Social Democratic leaders, who only begrudgingly admitted the popularity of Freiheit among workers (many insisted, implausibly, that the bulk of the subscriptions went to the police rather than workers), interpreted the success it enjoyed as the result of the political immaturity of a certain sector of the German proletariat. Though the newspaper's readers have left behind no accounts revealing their motives, it seems likely that Most's uncompromisingly incendiary speech, his articulation of ideas in working-class argot, and his rejection of Socialist moderation and bureaucratization proved popular because they resonated with many workers' sense of self. Not Most's political ideology (which was not only poorly defined but also changed significantly over time), but his role as a champion of resistance to persecution propelled his popularity. Always more folk hero than party man, Most expressed workers' fantasies of retribution for the wrongs they suffered daily and their hopes for a future of freedom and autonomy.
Radical Reichstag deputy and occasional newspaper editor Wilhelm Hasselmann followed a political arc similar to Most's. One of nine Social Democrats who held onto their Reichstag seats in the July 1878 elections, Hasselmann remained in Germany after the Socialist Law went into effect. However, he became a pariah among the Socialist deputation for his refusal to countenance the leadership's policy of restraint in the face of the antisocialist measure. As the other deputies sought to project a moderate face to the public, Hasselmann repeatedly condemned German society's injustices and threatened violent revolution. In a lengthy speech during the fall 1878 Socialist Law debate, he railed against the reigning order's destruction of workers' families through labor conditions that sent "body and soul to ruin" and declared that "the worker should not be sacrificed to the instrument of labor, he should not be acquired by capitalists as a kind of commodity, but should be master over the instrument of labor."38 But he did not stop at these protests against capitalism; he uttered a series of inflammatory statements that put Liebknecht's one-time derision of parliamentarism and Bebel's defense of the Commune to shame. Embracing conservatives' claims that socialism and the dominant society were at war, Hasselmann declared, "the battle is joined . . . If those on the side of the government wish that it come to acts of violence . . . then may the blood flow from that head who bears the responsibility for it being shed."39 For his part, he was ready for the conflict. "When the people are brought to despair, I know where I must stand . . . I will stand in the middle of the ranks of the people, and if necessary I will spill my blood on the field of honor!" After repeatedly being called to order by the Reichstag's president, who cautioned that he had "crossed the line of parliamentary discussion in this statement that approached a direct provocation to insurrection," Hasselmann ended his speech with a warning that Bismarck "should think again on 18 March 1848," the date that year's European revolutions swept into Berlin.40

After the Socialist Law passed, Hasselmann remained defiant, becoming increasingly frustrated with his party and hostile to parliamentarism. On 4 May 1880, during debate over the Socialist Law's renewal, Hasselmann delivered a speech that would be quoted by conservatives for decades as proof of socialism's true character. Proclaiming himself a "revolutionary socialist," he denounced the suffrage as meaningless under the conditions of the Socialist Law and avowed that the workers would soon "sober up from their illusions, and say: salvation lies in our strength and in our courage alone." He offered the acts of the "anarchists in Russia" and the "French workers who sacrificed themselves" (a reference to the Paris Communards) as a model for German workers. "I regret that from time to time before this rostrum some Socialists have made the Russian anarchists out to be a party alien to us. For my part, I accept this fellowship." Hasselmann's last words called for revolutionary action: "The idea has penetrated deep in the people's consciousness that the time for parliamentary chatter is over and the time of action is beginning."41 With this statement, he left the Reichstag building, never to return. Hasselmann soon immigrated to the United States, where he could finally speak freely. In "An Open Letter to the German Proletariat" published in Freiheit, Hasselmann called for revolution and denigrated universal suffrage as a muzzle on the workers, whom he asked rhetorically, "Is such a dog's life, such a slow starvation and decay not a fate a thousand times worse than the ball which strikes the freedom fighter on the barricade? Every person of courage must be imbued with burning rage to put an end to this tyranny. Death is better than the life of a slave."42

Most and Hasselmann saw revolutionary pronouncements of this kind as no more than an expression of the true spirit of Social Democracy that had thrived before 1878. When the men
declared themselves anarchists, nothing in the style or content of their rhetoric changed and their appeal to workers remained the same. Most continued to strike a chord with tens of thousands of workers with his sharp jabs at authority and demands for revolutionary change, and workers continued to sing his songs (now published in songbooks without authorial attribution). The radical workers of Hasselmann's electoral district, who had given him one of only a few Socialist first-round electoral victories while he was in the Reichstag, continued to express their enthusiasm for him long after he had been expelled from the party and left Germany.43

Most's critique of injustice was closely bound up with an irreverent mockery of figures of authority. His 1876 account of his year and a half in the "Bastille" of the Plötzensee fortress, which sold out its first run of 2,000 copies in a few weeks, described his struggle to improve the prison's miserable conditions for himself and the other inmates. Intertwined with passages depicting his struggle for justice were others painting him as a wily trickster. Most pilloried prison officials as buffoons and scoundrels whom he time and again bested. When he failed to get his inadequate provisions increased, he turned to other means: "Smuggling is a hateful word; but for those who pursue all legal means to improve their physical wellbeing and are blocked by bureaucracy there exists not only a right-albeit an unwritten one-but even the most emphatic duty to self-help at any price." He boasted of procuring meat, chocolate, cigarettes, and even socialist newspapers, all under the nose of his vindictive watchers.44 Tales of Most outfoxing the authorities also appeared in his other memoirs. After the Leipzig "police pasha" banned him from speaking at a gathering and ordered him to leave the city, workers throughout Saxony invited him to speak in their towns. To evade the ban issued by a frantic police official in another town, Most spoke at a gathering without being introduced until after he had finished. "The jubilation of those present was great," Most announced, "the disgrace of the police not small." After another speech, when the police tried to arrest him, Most slipped out a back exit and reached another town by foot in time to speak the same evening.45 Even as he suffered persecution for the cause, Most thumbed his nose at figures of authority.

Despite German workers' complete lack of enthusiasm for the handful of anarchist terrorist plots that took place on German soil in the 1880s, Most and other German anarchists sought to turn August Reinsdorf, planner of a failed attempt to blow up the Kaiser and other royals at the dedication of the nationalist Niederwald monument in 1883, into a martyr based on his dedication to improving the lot of German workers. Most's 1885 August Reinsdorf and Propaganda of the Deed quoted a letter in which the would-be assassin agonized about the plight of Germany's exploited workers, whose families starved while they struggled with low pay, work-related sickness, and oppression at the hands of the "miserable bourgeois band" who pushed them down "to the level of dogs," and concluded, "this must be brought to an end."46 In his final statement to the court that tried him for the Niederwald plot, Reinsdorf echoed the sentiment of Most's song "The Working Men": "The workers build the palaces and live in squalid huts . . . they create all the products of industry yet eat little and badly." Responding to the charge that "it is a horrible deed to blow a prince into the sky," the defendant asked, "Is it not more horrible that thousands must sacrifice themselves for a prince?" To the last, he expressed his unswerving commitment to the cause, telling his accusers, "If I have to lose my head, that matters not at all; I have at least done my duty as an anarchist . . . My motto is: Be true until death!"47 Max Schütte's 1902 account of Reinsdorf's acts, written long after German anarchists had rejected propaganda of the deed, likewise celebrated the man for his courage and sacrifice,
describing him as a fanatic "animated by a hot love of the people" that was matched only by "his passionate hatred of the rich and powerful," who had undertaken his act because "he expected the improvement of the situation only through violent revolution." Cheerfully Reinsdorf proclaimed, "If I had ten heads, I would lay them all on the block for the anarchist cause." 48 Embedded in both accounts was the message that anarchists were willing to suffer and die for a better future for workers.

The anarchists' justification of violent revolution rested on two propositions: that the current society, in which owners mercilessly exploited workers to the point of starvation, was fundamentally rotten; and that only violent revolution, not social reform, could bring about a just society. These claims played a large role in the anarchist propaganda of the 1890s and after. Sch. Janovski's pamphlet What the Anarchists Want (originally an article in the London-based, German-language anarchist newspaper Autonomie, established in 1884 as a rival to Freiheit) condemned a society that imprisons "a poor man who steals a loaf of bread from a bakery to still the hunger of his wife and child and leaves unpunished he who robs and sucks the blood of thousands of people." 49 Austrian-born anarchist Josef Peukert, also affiliated with Autonomie, decried the existing society as no more than "a society of legal murderers, throat-slitters, and bandits!" in his 1890 pamphlet, Justice in Anarchy. 50 Mina Kanewi's widely read 1892 dialogue Gretchen and Helene also condemned the current society's moral bankruptcy: "Murder, slavery, vice, and debauchery, that's what we've been offered under the mask of civilization." 51 Pseudonymous author Luigi (a nom de plume presumably inspired by Luigi Lucheni, who assassinated Empress Elisabeth of Austria in 1898) depicted the human toll of the established system in a pamphlet with the ironic title Down with the Anarchists!: "Go into the factories and workshops! Hollow-eyed, pallid-cheeked men and women, boys and girls toil from early morning until late at night, to earn just enough to resist for a span of time human-conquering death." 52 For the anarchists, the immorality and cruelty of the reigning system marked it as irredeemable.

Only a revolution that would sweep away the old society, they insisted, could remedy such manifest injustice. Peukert's Justice in Anarchy celebrated the "flame of rebellion" that would soon "burst into a single great conflagration, which will transform the vast ancient fortress of authority and private property into dust and ash." 53 Conrad Froehlich's pamphlet The Way to Liberty! proclaimed, "The only way a yoke has ever been cast off is through a revolution, through violence." In place of "requests and petitions," he recommended dynamite and petroleum, pitchforks and bayonets. 54 Janovski promised readers that the anarchists hate the rich "with every drop of our blood, and we shrink back from no means to exterminate our common enemies." He ended with the words, "Every day brings new fighters into our ranks. May the capitalists and the bloodsuckers tremble as we advance our project; misery will soon be at an end, and a time of happiness and satisfaction will reign over the whole world." 55 Anarchist prose of this sort, in the tradition of Most, offered angry and tired workers the hope of cleansing destruction and revolutionary renewal. Though the anarchists of the Autonomie group were Most's ideological rivals, this seemed not to concern those attracted to the revolutionary language in both, such as an anarchist arrested in Berlin in 1894 for attempting to send a letter bomb to a police official, who had in his apartment smuggled copies of both Freiheit and Autonomie.56 In fact, anarchist writings such as these closely resembled in tone the closing passage of the most popular socialist document of all time, the Communist Manifesto: "The
Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."57 As Marx and Engels had decades earlier, German anarchists gave vent to the anger against injustice that circulated within the workers' movement.

As they championed a revolution that would destroy the corrupt, old world, they also described the world they saw replacing it, something Marxist Social Democrats were frequently reluctant to do. Reinsdorf told the court in which he was tried that to make possible an anarchist society "in which every normal practical person can develop all of his abilities . . . no one must have an excessive workload imposed upon him; poverty and misery must disappear; every coercion must cease; all idiocy and superstition must be banished from the world."58 For Rudolf Rocker, anarchism meant "the practical possibility for each person to be able to fully unfold his naturally given powers, talents, and abilities."59 Froehlich, the enthusiast for violent revolution, declared, "We want the complete liberty of each individual and his right to the pleasures of life. It is not our ideal to get our fill of food like a pig in the stall; rather, we demand freedom from every bondage."60 These statements, all good proclamations of anarchist ideology to be sure, offered more than anything else a sense of hope to downtrodden workers. This was clearly Kanewi's intention in Gretchen and Helene, whose introduction invited, "O you legions of poor and disinherited who languish in silent desperation under the press of today's conditions, may these lines warm your hearts and senses, frozen by misery and disappointment, and may you awake to a new life with total confidence and energy."61 The anarchists' vision of a just and happy future could resonate with workers who lacked knowledge of or interest in anarchist theory.

This was all the more true because German Social Democratic leaders steadfastly refused to encourage socialist workers' utopian dreams. "It is strictly forbidden to Social Democrats to speak of a future state," derided, with some justice, an anonymous 1891 pamphlet from the German anarchist Autonomie group in London. "The Social Democrats do not want one to be concerned with the future, or even what lies just ahead for us. But the working class has nothing else but the future, and therefore has the right to know where one intends to lead it."62 Indeed, Socialist intellectuals constantly fretted that workers spent too much time reading utopian novels and adventure stories and not enough time on socialist theory. When they did read theory, what they liked best was the emotionally charged (like the Communist Manifesto) and the imaginative (such as August Bebel's Woman in the Past, Present, and Future).63

Central to the anarchists' appeals was an explicit contrast to Social Democracy, which they disparaged both for its reformist compromising and for its hostility to expressions of worker autonomy. Long before sociologist Robert Michels' famous critique of "oligarchical tendencies" in German Social Democracy, anarchists incisively decried the stultifying effects of Socialist bureaucratization and pragmatic politicking.64 Anarchists played to rank-and-file Socialists' frustration with both the party's focus on incremental change and the workers' powerlessness within the party hierarchy. Historian GeoffEley has observed that as socialist movements developed complex organizational structures, "politics in the conventional sense became removed from the participation of ordinary workers, complicating the connections with everyday life. Socialist leaders and union officials easily fortified themselves against the elemental democracies of the shopfloor and the street, especially when important gains . . . dictated
patience and the disciplined restraint of militancy." Anarchists' propaganda focused on this friction between workers and the bureaucratic institutions of party and trade union, linking their philosophical critique of authority to workers' daily discontents.

German anarchists condemned parliamentary activity for its alleged ineffectuality as well as its disconnection from workers' ordinary lives. In his memoirs, Most spoke witheringly of his time in the Reichstag, complaining about the myriad rules and procedures that constrained his ability to voice his views. In a humorous passage describing his first ten weeks as a Reichstag deputy, Most recounted his futile attempt to participate in debate, as he found himself repeatedly reprimanded for not speaking to the issue at hand or for speaking in ways not deemed "parliamentary." After hundreds of attempts, he at last made it to the speaker's rostrum, but no sooner had he begun to talk than he was cut off with the command "Speak to the day's agenda!"

At this point, commented Most, "my respect for parliamentarism went straight to the devil." This attitude was of course not so different from that expressed by Wilhelm Liebknecht in 1869. But after 1878, parliamentary activity lay at the heart of German Social Democratic politics. Most repeatedly derided his onetime comrades for their turgid theorizing and electoral maneuvering. In his biography of Reinsdorf, he praised the would-be assassin for his willingness to use violence to achieve his ideals, in marked contrast to the "petitioning, voting, parliamentarism, deal-making and the peaceful and lawful cowardice" of Social Democrats.

Unlike the Socialists, Most wrote in an 1889 essay, "the anarchists prepare for social revolution and use every means—speech, writing, or deed, whichever is more to the point—to accelerate revolutionary development." And indeed, he asked, "what socialist, without flushing with shame, maintains he is not a revolutionary? We say: none!" Hasselmann too scoffed at his former colleagues' commitment to parliamentarism and moderation, writing in Freiheit two months after his stormy exit from the Reichstag, "Now there are many beautiful talkers, German workers, who, when you ball your fist in fury, will say to you, 'Yes, the revolution will come; but above everything in the world remain quiet until then.' . . . But he who lulls you to sleep, German worker, is your worst enemy, because this priest of cowardice robs you of your manly courage. Never has a revolution been made without revolutionaries." Both future anarchists warned workers against the Socialists' loss of revolutionary will.

After the Socialist Law's expiration in 1890, the Social Democrats won a massive electoral victory, and many party leaders began arguing that Germany could peacefully grow into socialism without the need for revolution, and even Socialists who remained nominally committed to revolution argued that electoral activity and social reform within the current society provided the best means for preparing the workers for capitalism's eventual demise. Paul Frauböse, cofounder of the German Anarchist Federation in 1903, disparaged as "cheap, but poor consolation" the promises of the "so-called workers' representatives": "'Vote for us, we're the right men, we're the men of the people; when we one day have the majority, then all your wishes will be fulfilled.'" The Berlin anarchist poet and literary critic Gustav Landauer wrote, "the anarchists are not a political party, because they do not accept the basis of the current political system and disdain to bargain and haggle with it. We anarchists wish to be preachers and our goal is to revolutionize the spirit." Engaging in politics meant sacrificing the essence of revolution. Of the Socialists' 1893 Reichstag election campaign, Landauer wrote, "on this path we will never come to a free society, but only to social reforms, the strengthening of the state, the tightening of the yoke." Fellow Berlin anarchist Albert Auerbach argued in his 1892
pamphlet Against Petit-bourgeois Parliamentary Social Reform, For Revolutionary Social Democracy! that only two roads lay open to the German proletariat: "one points toward an improvement, the other toward an overthrow of the class state. Does the proletariat want to make a deal with the present society, or does it want to do away with it and put in its place the society of the free and equal?" Auerbach gloried in images of workers fighting shoulder to shoulder in battle on the "field of honor," not using the "wooden swords" Reichstag deputies wielded in mock combat. When Socialists used the phrase "political battle," one anarchist wryly commented, this "obviously does not mean 'revolution'" but merely "a fight with scraps of paper." Anarchists tried to appeal to workers' sense that the Social Democratic leaders had removed themselves from the authentic struggle by becoming immersed in day-to-day politics.

Anarchists regarded among the chief perils of parliamentary participation and social reformism their tendency to encourage passivity among workers. Rocker called Social Democrats' belief in socialism's inevitability "nothing other than a transfer of religious fatalism to the economic sphere," insisting that socialism "will not come to us because it must come to us through an unalterable natural law; it will come to us when people find the strong will and the necessary power to bring it to reality." In The Lie of Parliamentarism, Austrian anarchist Pierre Ramus, an influential figure in the early twentieth-century anarchist movement throughout German-speaking Europe, also criticized the Socialists' "economic fatalism" that led to passive waiting for revolution rather than action (a matter of contentious debate within the Social Democratic Party itself). Instead, he offered a model of workers' continual political engagement: "The anarchists are for practical reform and also for the daily class struggle. Indeed, the class struggle is not waged in parliament, through principled or unprincipled speeches by deputies in tails; it is fought in the arena of industry, in every factory, in every workshop, in every farmer's hut, where the waking proletarian has a sense of the possibility of a new, free life." By handing over their agency to professional representatives, workers inevitably became disconnected from the political struggle. These attacks on Social Democracy also contained frequent hints that Socialists were overly refined and lacking in masculinity. The reference to "deputies in tails" or another pamphlet's comment that Social Democracy's primary achievement had been "getting several overambitious dandies into parliament" painted a picture of party leaders lacking in the kind of "manly courage" Hasselmann praised. Anarchists contrasted the timid Socialist politician with the anarchist man of revolutionary action, who was more in tune with the rough-and-tumble working man.

Not only had Social Democratic leaders become too reformist, the anarchists claimed, they had replicated in the party the authoritarianism of Germany's current rulers. In a study of anarchism in Hamburg, Heidi Heinzerling noted that "anarchism's critical potential lay precisely in the refusal to conform to the increasing centralization of the structures of industrial society." This is indeed what we see in anarchists' criticisms of Socialist attempts to impose party discipline. Frauböse likened the Socialist leaders' "systematic disciplining and paternalism" to the practices of other elites, who had always taken the "greatest care to make out of the obedient child an obedient school pupil, an obedient apprentice, an obedient soldier, an obedient subject, for the maintenance of the existing order." Rocker made the same point: "Discipline was and is the most prominent slogan of their educational method, and using the same methods as the state uses to raise loyal subjects and good soldiers, they raise disciplined party members." Janovski claimed that the people's welfare could be entrusted "neither to the Bismarcks nor the Bebels,"
rhetorically conflating the head of the Social Democrats with the empire's conservative chancellor, but only to the anarchists, for "so long as a person has the well-being of his fellow men in his hands—whether in the form of deputized lawmakers or a Social Democratic people's state council—the lust for power, the selfishness, the ambition, and the like infirmities, will make even the best of men into tyrants over their neighbors." In a similar vein, he complained that the large Socialist-affiliated labor unions "create a miserable caricature of the current government. There are 'kings,' 'ministers,' 'generals,' and 'secretaries,' who as ringleaders exercise an unlimited power; what they say must be infallible and holy; they are very cautious that aside from their old and decaying ideas no new ones creep into their organization."83 To the anarchists, the Socialists' authoritarianism was rooted in a misguided theoretical hostility to individuality. Peukert reproved the Socialists for regarding the individual as "bad, evil, and anti-social, having no right to defend his human dignity with his own fist." The "authoritarian socialists," he concluded, "despite all their revolutionary phrases, wish not only to leave in place the essence of the old existing system of repression and bondage, but actually to bring the same to its highest unfolding."84 Luigi called Social Democracy's ultimate political goal "not liberty, but a more severe bondage."85

Anarchists vigorously opposed centralized, top-down organization, promoting worker self-assertion and spontaneity. They also argued that the Socialist veneration of discipline served to constrain workers' freedom and creativity. Auerbach's Against Petit-bourgeois-Parliamentary Social Reform warned the Social Democratic rank and file, "your great, your middling, your small leaders have devised an excellent means of closing your eyes and stopping your ears: frowning, they remind you of 'discipline,' to which you have allegedly sworn allegiance." Though the leadership held the party together "with iron clamps" throughout the Socialist Law era, "the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat here and there cried out against the violation by the Social Democratic 'authorities' . . . chiefly against the watering down of principles, against the flirtations with the bourgeoisie, against the desire for compromise of the Reichstag faction."87 By using the same term for Socialist leaders as that used for government officials (Behörden), Auerbach likened the institutions of the party to those of the state.

Anarchists charged that Social Democratic leaders' fetishization of order was connected to their distrust of ordinary workers and belief in their own superiority. "When is the People 'Ready' for Freedom?" Johann Most asked in an 1884 Freiheit article. "'Not for a long time' is how the complete scoundrels of the world have always answered." That the rulers of society would seek to put the masses in their place was hardly surprising. But "what is incomprehensible is the fact that people who make themselves out to be advocates of the proletariat also peddle door to door the fable of the people's 'unreadiness' and the resulting impossibility of their being allowed to take possession of their freedom." By contrast, anarchists "stoke the fire of revolution and inspire outrage in every way possible. The people have always been 'ready' for freedom; until now they lacked only the courage to seize it for themselves."88 Even those not planning to engage in immediate revolution could appreciate Most's respect for workers' self-will. Anarchists vowed to let workers lead their own revolution. Ramus, in his Anarchist Manifesto, declared, "We are the only ones who approach the proletarian without demagogic self-interest" or aspirations to "arbitrarily direct" the revolution, instead acting from "the clear knowledge of the individual's dignity and fierce displeasure at the yoke of exploitation and subjugation which is imposed on the proletarian man and woman."89
Anarchists sought to encourage and validate autonomous local action, exactly what many workers perceived to be threatened by Socialist and trade union bureaucrats. In The Lie of Parliamentarism, Ramus described the anarchists' goal as showing the "oppressed and exploited the way they can fight with their own power for their liberation, by awakening independent thought" and striving toward the "elimination of every authority and every domination."90 In an article for Emma Goldman's Mother Earth, he wrote, "before the proletariat will be able to triumph over the scourges of authority and exploitation, it will have first to overcome the ban of discipline and castiron centralism that is dominating the German working class under the form of 'Socialism,' viz., Social Democracy."91 Auerbach's pamphlet condemned Socialist leaders for branding rowdy May Day demonstrators "unclean elements," "fools," and "dreamers," suggesting that their real crime was that they had "become unexpectedly independent." Thankfully, averred Auerbach, German workers had "not yet placed their autonomy on the executioner's block of party executive committee discipline" and would continue to protest against the expectation that they perform like trained circus dogs. "We think that the center of gravity of the proletarian movement must be returned to where it belongs: in the proletarian masses!"92 Rocker maintained that the Socialist emphasis on party discipline "chokes off the creative initiative and the ability for independent action in the masses," whereas anarchists wished "to develop the masses' initiative."93 The tension between party discipline and worker autonomy had long bedeviled the Social Democrats, and these anarchist criticisms were echoed in the complaints of radical Socialists, in the early 1890s by a group known as the Jungen ("young ones"), many of whom, like Gustav Landauer, later converted to anarchism, and after the turn of the century by Social Democratic revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg, who strenuously advocated greater worker control over the Socialist movement.

Much evidence suggests that the anarchist characterization of Social Democratic leaders as wary of working-class self-assertion was not inaccurate. Regarding two prominent cases of independent workers' actions, Lüdtke observed, "socialist newspapers charged that 'disorderly' people, mostly casual laborers and unemployed, had taken over; once in command, these disorderly elements moved from demonstrating to ransacking and plundering, without any discipline." Anarchists would not have disagreed at all with Lüdtke's comment that "the self-willed politics of the unorganized were, quite simply, incomprehensible to those who deemed themselves the truly political leaders of the people."94 That workers had a strong commitment to their own autonomy is also revealed in Richard Evans's study of undercover police reports on Hamburg pub conversations. Whereas Socialist leaders pushed for discipline and moderation, "the workers continued to insist on the labour movement as their movement, to reject cooperation with the bourgeoisie, and to use an emphatic, sometimes violent language which was far removed from the polite circumlocutions of bourgeois society. Indeed, pub talk expressed a kind of masculine subjectivity, strong, pungent and assertive, which was discernible in the public rhetoric of Social Democrats only in a heavily diluted form, if at all."95 Anarchists gave voice to this aspect of workers' identity that Socialists failed to address.

Anarchists also hit a nerve in their attacks on party leaders' alleged sense of superiority over workers. In an 1894 article, Most charged that "the worm of ambition" had infected party leaders, who "consider themselves more and more to be 'big men,' whose calling it is to play a 'role' in public life," gradually abandoning their duty to represent their constituents. "It tickles a German parliamentarian to put 'Reichstag representative' after his name on his visiting cards."96
Luigi cautioned that "a new ruling class, a new leader caste is forming in socialism."97 Auerbach denounced the parliamentary leaders for imagining themselves "demigods" because they contended with powerful political opponents and could "ride first class from their home districts to Berlin." He took satisfaction that the revolutionary socialists' attacks on the party leadership after 1890 had made it "so that the gods of the party, who abide in their sanctum far from the lowly people, have had to come out of their sacred groves night after night into smoke-filled taverns to fight for the preservation of their authority."98 Ramus too criticized the Socialists representatives for abandoning their working-class constituents, seeking their own advantage within the system rather than struggling to overturn it.99

Workers did indeed feel dissatisfaction with their leaders for all of these faults enumerated by the anarchists. In the Hamburg pub conversations analyzed by Evans, many workers complained that party leaders had elevated themselves above the rank and file and were out of touch with the workers' concerns. The 1894 accusation from a worker that "Bebel has bought himself a country seat just with the pennies the workers have earned with their drops of sweat" was typical. "Nowadays the main thing for the Social Democratic leaders was the moneybox," other workers grumbled in 1895. Workers groused about the salaries paid to party officials, who had, they charged, become bourgeois. "Classes exist within the Party" remonstrated a disenchanted worker, "so that one can't call it a workers' Party at all any more." Some workers expressed a similar frustration with the unions: "The union leaders don't ask about your opinions," scoffed a disgruntled worker, "it's just a matter of joining and paying your sub."100 These reported remarks suggest that anarchist criticisms were in line with the grievances felt by many Socialist workers, even those with no particular affinity for anarchism.101

Though the information provided here on the reception of anarchist speeches, pamphlets, and articles is fragmentary and partly speculative, the evidence seems to suggest that anarchist rhetoric had an enduring, if circumscribed, appeal for German workers. Beyond the small circle of ideological adherents to anarchism lay a much larger pool of committed Social Democrats who nonetheless found themselves attracted by the style, and in some instances the substance, of anarchist agitation. Workers could articulate their frustrations with the demands of organized Social Democracy by reading anarchist newspapers and pamphlets, demonstrating rowdily in public, and otherwise behaving in ways that violated party dictates but expressed their experience of the world. As Socialists increasingly focused on the prosaic tasks of organizational life and theoretically abstruse analyses of capitalism, German anarchists spoke to those aspects of workers' lived experiences that Social Democracy neglected, including their desires for a revolutionary transformation of the social order.

Sympathy for anarchism did not arise from a crude, prepolitical sense of outrage at social injustice destined to be swept away by socialist class consciousness, but from deeply held concerns about the limitations of Social Democratic policy and the attitudes of party leaders. Yet, even as Socialists could never free themselves from the self-assertiveness, disorderliness, and revolutionism of the rank and file, anarchists never managed to present an effective political alternative to Social Democracy. Workers took what was meaningful from each, embracing moral outrage, a grand vision of a just socialist future, and resentments of party bureaucracy while also accepting as necessities parliamentary democracy and practical reformist politics. There is nothing to suggest that this situation was peculiar to Germany. The placing of national
anarchist figures and movements in a transnational context has been a vital contribution of recent scholarship on anarchism. Tracing the interpenetration of anarchism and socialism in the culture of European and American workers (and in fact situating both movements in a larger milieu of reformist, radical, utopian, and bohemian thought and practice) promises to broaden our understanding of both movements' development and the relationship between intellectual and political leaders and those they sought to lead.

Footnote

NOTES

1. Both Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels laid out this position on the relationship between socialism and anarchism, which was reiterated repeatedly by their followers. Two of the most famous examples are Engels's 1880 pamphlet, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, trans. Edward Aveling (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1910), and V. I. Lenin's 1920 "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder (New York: International Publishers, 1972). This general attitude appears in the scholarly literature too: E. J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries (New York: Norton, 1959). A more recent example is Michael Grüttner's Arbeitswelt an der Wasserkante: Sozialgeschichte der Hamburger Hafenarbeiter, 1886-1914 (Göttingen: Vandenhooce & Ruprecht, 1984), 48, which proposes that "anarchism or anarcho-syndicalism in many respects more truly corresponded to an elemental proletarian awareness than German Social Democracy." Grüttner goes on to trace the eventual replacement of this anarchistic perspective (evinced by workers' early hostility to machines) with a mature class-consciousness and allegiance to Social Democracy.

2. The most significant works of this era, and still the only monographs specifically on German anarchism, are Ulrich Linse, Organisierter Anarchismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich von 1871 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1969); Andrew R. Carlson, Anarchism in Germany, vol. 1, The Early Movement (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1972); Angela Vogel, Der deutsche Anarchismus (Berlin: Karin Kramer, 1977); and, more focused on Austria than Germany, Gerhard Botz et al., Im Schatten der Arbeiterbewegung: Zur Geschichte des Anarchismus in Österreich und Deutschland (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1977).


8. This argument about the decline of Italian anarchism in the 1890s is emphasized in Pernicone, Italian Anarchism, 282-92.


10. Carlson, Anarchism in Germany, 205, estimates that the weekly number of copies sent to Germany fluctuated between 400 and 1,000 in 1881. The anonymous Socialismus und Anarchismus in Europa und Nordamerika während der Jahre 1883 bis 1886, nach amtlichen Quellen (Berlin: Richard Wilhelmi, 1887), 38, reports the circulation at about 4,500 (including Austria) for the years 1883 to 1886.
11. For instance, an anarchist tried and convicted of sending a letter bomb to a police official in 1895 was found in possession of issues of Freiheit as well as anarchist papers published in Germany. Hugo Friedlaender, Interessante Kriminal-Prozesse von kulturhistorischer Bedeutung (Berlin: Hermann Barsdorf, 1911), 165, 180, 185-86.


22. The song's German lyrics are reprinted in full in John Most, Memoiren: Erlebtes, Erforschtes und Erdachtes (New York: John Most, 1903), 1:74. Most may also have authored another of the most popular socialist songs of the era, "Workers, All Awake!" See Lidtke, The Alternative Culture, 109, 116, on these two songs.


27. Max Nettlau, Anarchisten und Sozialrevolutionäre: Die historische Entwicklung des Anarchismus in den Jahren 1880-1886 (1931; reprt., Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Topos Verlag, 1984), 145-46. This result, Nettlau argued, was the direct consequence of the Social Democratic campaign against the "libertarian [freiheitlich] socialism of anarchism."

28. Most's account of the terrorization and threats against workers in his district during the 1878 election campaign is recounted in Memoiren, 3:78-79.

29. Goodrich, "On the Road to Wyden," offers the best account of the gradually widening gulf between Most and the party leaders.


32. Johann Most, "Endlich!" Freiheit, 19 March 1881.


34. "Hödel und Nobiling," Freiheit, 23 August 1884; "Mord contra Mord," Freiheit, 14 March 1885 (these two articles are quoted in Carlson, Anarchism in Germany, 254); "Die Wissenschaft und Praxis der Sprengstoffe," Freiheit, 11 June 1881; Revolutionäre Kriegswissenschaft: Ein Handbüchlein zur Anleitung betreffend Gebrauches und Herstellung von Nitro-Glycerin,
Dynamit, Schiessbaumwolle, Knallquecksilber, Bomben, Brandsätzen, Giften, u.s.w., u.s.w. (New York: Druck und Verlag des Internationalen Zeitungs-Vereins, 1885).

35. Freiheit's circulation rate, as Robert W. Goodrich, observed in "On the Road to Wyden," 90 n.56, related "more to logistical problems than to popularity." On the police destruction of Freiheit's smuggling operation, see Carlson, Anarchism in Germany, 236-37; and Lidtke, The Outlawed Party, 123-26.


37. Despite Marxist claims that anarchism attracted only members of the Lumpenproletariat, German anarchists came most often from the ranks of the independent educated trades like printing and bookbinding; see Linse, Organisierter Anarchismus. The Social Democratic charge that police subscriptions accounted for most of Freiheit's popularity was a wild exaggeration, though police agents did both subscribe to and at times even write for the anarchist paper.

38. Stenographische Berichte 4, Legislaturperiode 1, Session, 10 October 1878, 148, 151.

39. Stenographische Berichte 4, Legislaturperiode 1, Session, 10 October 1878, 145.

40. Stenographische Berichte 4, Legislaturperiode 1, Session, 10 October 1878, 150, 156-57.

41. Stenographische Berichte 4, Legislaturperiode 3, Session, 4 May 1880, 1167-68.


44. Most, Die Bastille am Plötzensee, 4, 8-9, 13-14, 25-26, 28-30.

45. Most, Memoiren, 3:8-9.


47. Most, August Reinsdorf, 72, 73, 76, 78.

49. Sch. Janovski, Was die Anarchisten wollen (London: n.p., 1891), 12, 13. This pamphlet was reprinted from an article of the same name in Autonomie, 29 January 1887. Similar language of stark polarity between the haves and have-nots can also be found in Paul Frauböse, Weckruf an Alle, die denken wollen (Berlin: Anarchistische Föderation Deutschlands, [1904]), 3.


51. Mina Kanewi, Gretchen und Helene: Zeitgemässe Plaudereien den Betrübten und Muthlosen gewidmet (London: Anarchistisch-Communistische Bibliothek, 1906), 48. This pamphlet was originally published as a series in Autonomie from 20 February to 14 May 1892. Despite being outlawed by the German government, it remained popular for years. See Friedlaender, Interessante Kriminal-Prozesse, 180.


55. Janovski, Was die Anarchisten wollen, 16, 22.

56. Friedlaender, Interessante Kriminal-Prozesse, 180.


58. Quoted in Most, August Reinsdorf, 70.

59. Rudolf Rocker, Sozialdemokratie und Anarchismus (Berlin: Der freie Arbeiter, [1919]), 6. According to a note in the text, the pamphlet was an excerpt from an 1899-1900 article series published in the London Arbeiterfreund.

60. Froehlich, Der Weg zur Freiheit!, 4.


63. From 1894 to 1900, the party's major theoretical paper, Die neue Zeit, published four long articles exploring the reading habits of German workers, which sought to answer the question, What is the German worker reading? Auguste Pfannkuche produced an entire book addressing

64. Robert Michels's classic account of SPD bureaucratization, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy (1911; reprt., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999), captures much of the thrust of the anarchist critique of state- and party-centered socialism. Turcato, "European Anarchism in the 1890s," 463, also draws attention to this critique of the antiorganizational anarchists.


67. Most, August Reinsdorf, 6.


70. Frauböse, Weckruf, 5.

71. Gustav Landauer, "Der Anarchismus in Deutschland," in Auch die Vergangenheit ist Zukunft: Essays zum Anarchismus, ed. Siegbert Wolf (Frankfurt: Luchterhand, 1989), 53-54. This article was originally published in 1895 in the eclectic cultural periodical Die Zukunft.


74. Die Irrlehren und Irrwege der Sozialdemokratie, 27.
75. Rocker, Sozialdemokratie und Anarchismus, 3.

76. Ramus, Das anarchistische Manifest (Berlin: M. Lehmann, [1907]), 11, 12. On internal Social Democratic concerns about the dangers of cultivating passivity, see Dieter Groh, Negative Integration und revolutionäre Attentismus: die deutsche Sozialdemokratie am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges (Frankfurt am Main: Propyläen, 1973).

77. Pierre Ramus, Die Lüge des Parlamentarismus (Brussels: Schouteten, 1911), unnumbered first page.

78. Die Irrlehren und Irrwege der Sozialdemokratie, 27.


81. Frauböse, Weckruf, 5, 11.

82. Rocker, Sozialdemokratie und Anarchismus, 7.

83. Janovski, Was die Anarchisten wollen, 23, 19.

84. Peukert, Gerechtigkeit in der Anarchie, 19; italics in original.

85. Luigi, Nieder mit den Anarchisten!, 15.

86. See Eley, Forging Democracy, 95-96, on the anarchists' defense of local control and direct democratic participation.

87. Auerbach, Wider die kleinbürgerlich-parlamentarische Sozialreform, 4, 7.

88. "Wann ist das Volk zur Freiheit 'reif'?" Freiheit, 15 November 1884, 1.

89. Ramus, Das anarchistische Manifest, 4-5.

90. Ramus, Die Lüge des Parlamentarismus, unnumbered page of preface.


92. Auerbach, Wider die kleinbürgerlich-parlamentarische Sozialreform, 10, 5, 16, 28.

94. Lüdtke, "Organization Order or Eigensinn?", 315-16.


97. Luigi, Nieder mit den Anarchisten!, 14.

98. Auerbach, Wider die kleinbürgerlich-parlamentarische Sozialreform, 7, 3.

99. Ramus, Die Lüge des Parlamentarismus, 8-10.

100. Evans, Proletarians and Politics, 137-39. The quotes are from reports of undercover political police officers who monitored working-class pubs from 1892 until the 1914. Evans compiled over 300 of the most compelling reports in Kneipengespräche im Kaiserreich: Die Stimmungsberichte der Hamburger Politischen Polizei, 1892-1914, ed. Richard J. Evans (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989).

101. Evans, Proletarians and Politics, 131-32, underscores Hamburg workers' antipathy toward anarchist attentatism in particular, which they considered politically immature, or, as one worker put it, "stupid." See also Evans, ed., Kneipengespräche, 369-72, 379, for examples of workers' appraisals of propaganda of the deed (largely abandoned by German anarchists by this time).

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