

eral individualist notions of art as property, and were sometimes responsible for changes in the law and sometimes a complex re-evaluation of political positions. The supposed role of art and artifacts in bolstering the claims of national identity is shown to be far more convoluted than either contemporary nationalists or recent historians and museum specialists have supposed. Similarly, categorical understandings of gender, and to a much lesser degree, class, are shown to imbricate claims about art and property in a manner that belies easy social designations of cultural institutions. In her analysis Bailkin asks some fascinating and provocative questions, and complicates our understanding of culture and its relationship to politics. Indeed, she successfully adds the cultural realm to the story of the “crisis” of liberalism.

Arguably, however, one of the real strengths of her analysis — the demonstration of how the ambiguities of liberal claims about cultural property were debated outside of the realm of political theory — is also one of the book’s limitations. For Bailkin finds no way to connect the debates in the press and among the agents in her cases, with the ongoing refashioning of liberal ideas by intellectuals and political activists in other realms. The “new” liberal thinkers, Fabians, and even populist liberals are part of the backdrop, but are rarely if ever present in her narratives. So at times the book reads quite like Dangerfield in that all the challenges to the liberal conceptions of citizenship and cultural property seem to be coming from without, when clearly Liberal thinkers themselves were also trying to reformulate the liberal tradition from within. Still, if at the end of the book the reader is still left with nagging doubts that she has really answered all her own questions, they will nonetheless be impressed with Bailkin’s extremely sophisticated and coherent discussion.

Stephen Heathorn  
McMaster University

**Rudolf Rocker, *The London Years*, translated by Joseph Leftwich (Nottingham: Five Leaves Press; Edinburgh/Oakland: AK Press, 2005.**

London in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century was a breeding ground for politically based reform movements. While the country’s Liberals and Conservatives jockeyed for power at the parliamentary level, a hearty and disparate variety of radical groups emerged at street level. They organized and agitated, marched and demonstrated, sometimes even rioted, but in general laboured after the reform of everything from tax, landholding, and education. Radical socialists were among the most active groups in Britain’s Labour movement and the Jewish Anarchists, an offshoot of the Jewish Labour Movement,

were as vigorous a pressure group as any other. The effort to rally the Jewish working masses, though, barely registers in histories of Britain's otherwise lively tradition of popular politics — presumably because not enough of the movement's sources have been translated from Yiddish. As this happens, more needs to be written about Jewish Labour and its anarchist cognates in Britain, not to mention its contribution to the British Labour movement in general and its role in the history of libertarian socialism.

Historians will benefit, then, from the writings of Rudolf Rocker (1873-1958), the German anarchist who emigrated to Britain and who became a leading figure in the country's Jewish anarcho-socialist movement. *The London Years*, originally published in English in 1956 and now re-issued by AK Press, is a section of Rocker's autobiography covering the two decades he spent in London between 1895 and 1918. Rocker fled Germany in 1892 to dodge increasing police harassment. He arrived in London, after a two-year stopover in Paris, in search of employment and a cause and he found both after a casual stroll through London's East End ghetto, where he was inspired by the community of Jewish comrades. Though born a Catholic, he quickly decided to join the Jewish anarchist movement.

Rocker settled in the Jewish community; taught himself Yiddish; married Milly Witkop (1877-1953); befriended Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), the prominent Russian anarchist; and Max Nettlau (1865-1944), the eminent anarchist historian; and swiftly established himself as one of the most popular figures in the movement. By 1898, he was editor of *Dos Fraye Vort* (*The Free Word*), a Leeds-based Yiddish weekly; and soon thereafter he revived the London-based Yiddish weekly and doctrinaire socialist organ *Arbeiter Fraind* (*The Workers' Friend*), serving as editor and contributing writer. By 1900, he founded his own periodical, *Germinal*, a Yiddish monthly aimed at reaching a wide audience. Not just another anarchist propaganda sheet, *Germinal* set out to "acquaint its readers with all libertarian tendencies in modern literature and contemporary thought" (73).

Rocker's periodicals reflected the spirit in which he led the movement. In one of his most famous lines, Rocker maintained that he was an anarchist not because he believed anarchism was the final goal, but because there was no final goal. He perceived anarchism "only as a particular trend in the historic development towards freedom in all fields of human thought and action." For Rocker, "ideas of mutualism, collectivism or communism were subordinate to the great idea of educating people to be free and to think and work freely." All future economic schemes, he believed, should be designed to secure for human beings the results of their labour and "to aim at a social transformation of life that would make it possible for the individual to develop his [or her] natural capacities unrestrained by hard and fast rules and dogmas." While freedom, he insisted, could never be attained, "it must always be striven for" from genera-

tion to generation (73).

In a miserable twist, though, Rocker's work was cut short in 1914 when the British government arrested him for protesting against Britain's entry into the First World War. His papers were shut down, as was the Jubilee Street Institute, a thriving Jewish social club in the East End, he was separated from his family, and he remained interned as an "enemy alien" for the balance of the war. He was eventually deported back to Germany in 1918, which is where the narrative of *The London Years* ends. Although Rocker went on to become a leading figure in the German anarcho-socialist movement, before fleeing the country a second time when the Nazis came to power, his imprisonment in 1914 and eventual departure effectively ended the Jewish anarchist movement in Britain. It was, nonetheless, a thriving movement while it lasted: it altered the complexion of British Labour, and its ideas resonated in libertarian socialist movements throughout Europe and North America.

Rocker had an impeccable memory for his experiences during the time he was involved in the movement. So much so, however, that the book is more of an encyclopedic account of his London years than anything else: a step-by-step account of twenty-years worth of Rocker's steps as the movement's leading speaker, writer, and political prisoner. Missing, unfortunately, is much in the way of context or explanation of the man's ideas. Nor, at any point, does Rocker's narrative effectively capture the excitement of the movement during what was clearly its heyday under his own leadership. The book is, by and large, an anecdotal history of the Jewish anarchist movement, some of the key figures with whom Rocker worked or was friends, and the periodicals to which he contributed as writer and editor. Although obviously invaluable in this way, to find out the rest readers will have to consult his other writings.

And, as it turns out, Rocker was a prolific writer of books, pamphlets, and articles. To date, though, only a small handful of his writings have been published in English. But as long as readers can juggle *The London Years* in one hand, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism* (1938), his most accessible work, in the other, *Nationalism and Culture* (1937) in their lap, his essay in literary criticism *The Six* (1938) and his survey of *Pioneers of American Freedom* (1949) on the table in front of them, then they should get a decent sense of the man. In the meantime, more of his writings need to be translated and the synthetic history of Rocker's life, ideas, and movement awaits its author.

Matthew K. McKean  
Queen's University