

Marie Goldsmith

Scientific Luminary, Anarchist Militant

Søren Hough

July 14, 2023

Contents

Bibliography	11
------------------------	----

Marie Isidorovna Goldsmith experienced the long, unyielding arm of the Russian State as a child. She watched as her parents, dedicated socialist revolutionaries in the Narodnik movement, were unjustly exiled and shuttled from town to town as political prisoners. Isidor, Goldsmith's father, wrote in vivid terms years later about life in exile with his wife and daughter: "Two or three times a week exiles are obliged to present themselves at the police office to write their signatures in a special book. Besides this, in order to prevent escapes, the police daily come to their houses. The chief of the district has the right to imprison an exile without assigning any reason for so doing."¹ While we do not have any firsthand account of what the eight-year-old Goldsmith thought of the experience, these formative years watching her stoic and ideologically committed parents suffer at the hands of a vast, largely irrational, and intrinsically violent system called the State likely influenced her later turn to anarchism.

Goldsmith was born in Saint Petersburg on July 7, 1871.² She was presented with role models of educational excellence at an early age. Isidor was a qualified lawyer who had studied at Saint Petersburg University and who put his intellectual curiosity and university training to use in the world of publishing and law, frequently arguing on behalf of the disadvantaged.³ Her mother, Sophie, was even more impressive in this regard: she spent the first few years of Goldsmith's life at university to become a physician before earning her PhD in botany at the University of Zurich on August 2, 1876, in absentia.⁴ It is perhaps not a surprise that Goldsmith herself would eventually earn her Licentiate and Doctorate in biology from the Faculté des sciences de Paris a few decades later.⁵

Throughout Sophie's educational pursuits and Isidor's work in the press, the two spent much of their time networking and propagandizing on behalf of their radical beliefs. For Isidor, this took the form of two publications: *Znanie* (*Knowledge*, 1870–1877) and *Slovo* (*Word*, 1878). These Positivist organs were strictly dedicated to materialist, scientific, and socialist ideas and published interviews with influential thinkers like Karl Marx and Peter Lavrov.⁶ Many of these articles were in direct conflict with the views of the strictly Orthodox Christian regime of the Tsars. The papers were accused of spreading the ideas of thinkers like Darwin, whose "theory had not been satisfactorily proved" but which Goldsmith and his colleagues saw as crucial to the study of not just biology, but of social sciences more broadly.⁷

As a result, both *Znanie* and *Slovo* faced repeated censure from government officials. Isidor often found himself having to appeal these decisions through convoluted arguments that framed this or that scientific idea as complementary — rather than contradictory — to the views of the Russian Orthodox establishment.⁸ Yet despite implementing his lawyerly skills in defense of his

¹ Goldsmith, "Why I Left Russia," 897.

² Numerous secondary sources give different years and locations for Goldsmith's birthplace and date. One rumor even suggests she was born in a prison in Pinega, Arkhangelsk, which is contradicted by Isidor's own account of their exile. However, our investigation of numerous primary sources — including educational degrees, naturalization documents, and death announcements — confirm that Marie Goldsmith was born in 1871 in Saint Petersburg (GARF ф.Р5969 оп.1 д.1; "Naturalization decree"; "Death Certificate").

³ "Goldsmith, Isidor Albertovich," 290–291.

⁴ University of Zurich, "Annual Reports," 17.

⁵ A Licentiate is analogous to a Bachelor's degree; (GARF ф.Р5969 оп.1 д.1).

⁶ Goldsmith, "Why I Left Russia," 886.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 883, 888.

⁸ Goldsmith, "Why I Left Russia," 886.

contributors, both publications were frequently forced to cease production and were eventually shuttered for good.

Sophie was no less committed to revolutionary activity. Her and Isidor's mutual acquaintance, the Russian novelist Ieronim Ieronimovich Yasinsky, even went so far as to describe Sophie as "the ideal of unselfish revolutionary enthusiasm."⁹ She attended the University of Zurich alongside numerous fellow radicals, including Olga Spiridonovna Lubatovich and Maria Dmitrievna Subbotina.¹⁰ In this cradle of socialist thought, Sophie was drawn to Peter Lavrov, one of the populist founders of the Narodnik movement with whom Isidor was in contact for written collaboration.¹¹ Sophie was so ensconced in the world of radical activism that she had the privilege of sitting in on potentially the only meeting Lavrov ever had with the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, two heavyweight revolutionary intellectuals.¹²

In later years, Marie Goldsmith would carry on these connections. For example, Goldsmith's prolific work as a translator included publishing Lavrov's *Lettres Historiques* in French in 1903. In 1916, she was bequeathed some of Bakunin's key unpublished manuscripts by her friend James Guillaume when he died.¹³ She also remained close to Bakunin's nephew, Aleksey Ilyich Bakunin. Indeed, it was Emilia Nikolaevna Bakunina (née Lopatina), Aleksey's wife, who acted as nurse to Marie and her mother in the final moments of their lives.¹⁴

Sophie and Isidor fled the Tsarist regime in June 1884 with Marie in tow, landing variously in Finland, Switzerland, and other countries before finally settling in Paris, France.¹⁵ This city, with little interruption, became Marie's home for the remainder of her life. Not long after the Goldsmiths arrived in France, her father was arrested for fraud, served out his sentence in Mazas Prison, and ultimately passed away.¹⁶ The exact cause and year of his death remains unclear, but Isidor did face a series of chronic health issues including chest pains and rheumatism.¹⁷ Sophie faced even greater medical hurdles. We do not know what illness or condition she suffered from specifically, barring what she describes in early letters as neuralgia, eye pain, and stomach troubles.¹⁸ Whatever her condition, she was unable to provide for Marie once Isidor was gone.

While the Goldsmiths had come from some means in Russia, particularly Sophie who was born to the wealthy Androsov family, abroad they lived in harsh poverty. The situation only compounded following Isidor's death and Sophie's illness which kept her from work. It was therefore early in Marie's life when she joked that she had to become "a man" in order "to support her mother financially and spiritually."¹⁹ Thus began the caring dynamic that inverted their mother-daughter relationship and held fast through to the end of their lives.

⁹ Yasinsky, "Novel of My Life," 363–367.

¹⁰ Ovechkina, "Women's Political Exile," 38.

¹¹ The Narodniks were an early socialist movement in Russia led by the intelligentsia. Ideological leaders of the Narodnik movement, each with their own strategies and theories of revolution, included Peter Lavrov, Nikolay Chernyshevsky, and Mikhail Bakunin. In general, Narodniks believed in spreading propaganda among the peasant classes (Pipes, "Narodnichestvo").

¹² Guillaume, "The International," 80–81.

¹³ Buttier, "James Guillaume and Marie Goldsmith."

¹⁴ Maximoff, "Maria Isidorovna Goldsmith."

¹⁵ Goldsmith, "Why I Left Russia," 903; "Goldsmith, Isidor Albertovich," 290–291.

¹⁶ "Goldsmith, Isidor Albertovich," 290–291; GARF ф.Р5969 оп.1 д.163.

¹⁷ GARF ф.Р5969 оп.1 д.152.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Maximoff, "Maria Isidorovna Goldsmith."

Goldsmith went on to study biology at the Sorbonne, following in the footsteps of her highly educated mother, graduating with a Licentiate in 1894.²⁰ She soon found herself in the supportive presence of the noted evolutionary biologist Yves Delage, himself a medical doctor with a PhD whose work was deeply influential on Goldsmith. She quickly became Delage's star pupil, a mentee he would not only teach but collaborate with throughout the remainder of his career. Delage and Goldsmith would write three scientific books together to international acclaim, as well as numerous articles in their domain of evolutionary biology.²¹ The first of these books, *The Theories of Evolution* (1909), was published before Goldsmith had even finished her doctoral studies on the psychological reactions of fish in 1915. Goldsmith was moreover appointed Editorial Secretary of the zoological section of Delage's academic journal, *L'année biologique*, a prized position that gave Goldsmith even more influence and scientific prestige.

Goldsmith's scientific reputation was far-reaching. She published her research regularly and, according to a flattering profile in the mainstream paper *Paris-soir*, was a "scientist to whom all the foreign countries have offered to come and give lectures."²² The article goes on to describe Goldsmith's mind as "limpid" because "nothing but scientific or filial thoughts pass through it."²³ She maintained ongoing communication with scientists in France, Russia, and elsewhere, including Nobel Prize-winner Charles Richet; evolutionary psychologist Nadezhda Ladygina-Kohts; the psychologist Wagner Vladimir Aleksandrovich; Swiss naturalists Arnold Pictet and Arnold Lang; and the sociologist Maksim Kovalevsky. Goldsmith even acted as a scientific consultant for the memoirs of Georges Clemenceau, two-time Prime Minister of France. As the Russian anarchist Grigory Maximoff puts it, Clemenceau "turned to no one else but her for advice and explanations on biology."²⁴

Goldsmith's position as Delage's protege did not earn her many friends in her department. Other students were jealous of her mentor's perceived favoritism. Goldsmith's friends Marc Pierrot and Maximoff, as well as the historian Jean Maitron, suggest that after Delage's death in October 1920, her peers seized upon both Goldsmith's status as an unnaturalized Russian emigrée and her demure, humble-to-a-fault manner to undercut her otherwise extremely promising academic career.²⁵ For her part, Goldsmith did not receive French naturalization until 1924, almost a decade after receiving her doctorate.²⁶ This made it difficult to find steady work, particularly once Delage had passed away, although she kept up her research and teaching positions at institutions such as the École Pratique des Hautes-Études and the Laboratoire de Psychologie de la Sorbonne.²⁷

There were other reasons for her career difficulties. Chief among these was her all-encompassing caring relationship with her mother. In a moving obituary, Maximoff notes that Goldsmith was offered multiple "lucrative" positions at universities and other academic

²⁰ GARF ф.Р5969 оп.1 д.1.

²¹ Goldsmith and Delage collaborated on *Les Théories de l'Évolution* (1909), *La parthénogénèse naturelle et expérimentale* (1913), and *Le mendélisme et le mécanisme cytologique de l'hérédité* (1919). Of note, Kropotkin (privately) and Maximoff (publicly) acknowledged that *Théories* was primarily Goldsmith's work.

²² "Biologist with a Big Heart."

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Maximoff, "Maria Isidorovna Goldsmith."

²⁵ Pierrot, "Marie Goldsmith"; Maximoff, "Maria Isidorovna Goldsmith"; Maitron, "Étudiants Socialistes Révolutionnaires Internationalistes."

²⁶ "Naturalization decree."

²⁷ Piéron, "Personalalia," 882; Piéron, "Nécrologie," 907.

institutions around the world, including the Carnegie Institution or Rockefeller Institute in the United States, based on her well-known, robust scientific output.²⁸ However, she turned down these offers in favor of remaining close to her mother.²⁹ The furthest she seems to have been willing to go was the Station biologique de Roscoff, a marine biological research institute on the northern coast of Brittany in France. Roscoff was under Delage's directorship and was where she conducted much of her research on fish and other aquatic animals.

But there was another side to Goldsmith. As she worked her way through the ranks of the academic world, she never let go of her deep suspicion, even hatred, of the oppression of the State, and her overflowing love for liberty and justice. These were the ideas which brought her to anarchism sometime in the 1890s. It is not clear when Goldsmith decided to embrace anarchism or precisely how it happened. According to one obituary published in the New York paper *Freedom*, she attended a lecture series by the anarchist Saul Yanovksy.³⁰ In other accounts it was meeting anarchist communist theorist Peter Kropotkin at a conference in 1896 which piqued her interest in libertarian socialism.³¹ Just as well, however, the ideological push may have come from within her family; after all, Mikhail Bakunin himself was directly influential on the Narodnik movement, and the Goldsmiths had myriad lifelong connections to the Bakunin family.

Whatever the origin of her ideological turn was, Goldsmith became a full-throated proponent of anarchism. She jumped headfirst into discussions about both theory and practice. In 1891, Goldsmith had joined a small socialist student group called the Étudiants Socialistes Révolutionnaires Internationalistes (ESRI) which was made up of radicals of various strongly-held beliefs and socialist tendencies. By 1897, she and her peer Léon Rémy had pivoted the group to take on an exclusively anarchist position on electoralism and other key issues.³² The ESRI published multiple pamphlets over the following few years on issues as varied as the position of women in anarchist communism and the utility — or lack thereof — of Zionism as an antidote to antisemitism. Fellow ESRI member Pierrot recalls that Goldsmith was particularly influential in directing the writing of these later pamphlets.³³ These pamphlets, signed communally “ESRI” so as not to give any particular author credit, also offer some of our only insights into what Goldsmith may have thought about topics like feminism and Zionism. In later years, Goldsmith would steer clear of these ideas almost entirely for reasons that remain obscure in the historical record, preferring to focus instead on economic issues, the organization of the anarchist community, and the self-liberation of workers.

Although the ESRI dissolved in 1900, Goldsmith remained an ardent propagandist for anarchist ideals. She soon began to write for anarchist periodicals in France and around the world. Perhaps the most notable of these outlets was *Les Temps Nouveaux* (LTN), a paper started by the French anarchist Jean Grave.³⁴ LTN was one of the leading anarchist papers of its time, successor to the legendary publications *Le Révolté* and *La Révolte* first published at the dawn of anarchism in the Swiss Jura mountains. Goldsmith published prolifically in the journal, writing in elegant French about contemporary labor movements, anarchist theory, and heated debates among her

²⁸ Maximoff, “Maria Isidorovna Goldsmith.”

²⁹ Maximoff, “Maria Isidorovna Goldsmith”; “Biologist with a Big Heart.”

³⁰ G-R. “Maria Goldshmid.”

³¹ Pierrot, “Marie Goldsmith.”

³² Maitron, “Étudiants Socialistes Révolutionnaires Internationalistes”; Pierrot, “Marie Goldsmith.”

³³ Pierrot, “Marie Goldsmith.”

³⁴ LTN would eventually be succeeded by *Plus Loin*.

fellow socialists. She eventually joined the editorial board of *LTN* and its successor, *Plus Loin*. Goldsmith also wrote for the long-running New York-based Yiddish anarchist periodical, *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* (*FAS*), under the editorship of Yanovsky, as well as for the Chicago-based Russian anarchist paper, *Dielo Trouda*. To list all of her affiliate publications here would be impossible, but suffice it to say her work was read across innumerable languages and borders, often republished between publications to ensure her words were read in all corners.

Out of the public eye, Goldsmith maintained extensive correspondence with some of the most well-known anarchists of her time. To take one example, she was in written communication with her personal acquaintance Emma Goldman for at least three decades. Other noted correspondents included French anarchists James Guillaume and Émile Pouget; the Russian anarchist Alexander Ge; and the Dutch anarcho-syndicalist Christiaan Cornelissen. Most famously, Goldsmith was Kropotkin's most prolific correspondent, barring his own brother, with over 350 letters exchanged between 1897 and 1917.³⁵ Their bond was deep and spanned political, scientific, and even personal interests. Kropotkin thought so highly of Goldsmith that he entrusted her with the completion and translation of the second volume of *Mutual Aid* in the event of his death: "If I can't finish the last pages myself, you write them in French, and Sanya Schapiro and Sasha will translate them into English. You know the subject better than I do, you will get into my train of thought and you will be able to do it."³⁶ While Kropotkin did ultimately complete that work, he died before publishing his follow-up to his other major effort, *Ethics*. He left Goldsmith with the task of translating what he had written and with writing a preface.³⁷ According to Maximoff, "She was the only one he considered capable of this work, both in scientific training and in spirit."³⁸

Goldsmith's home in Paris, which she shared with her mother even in adulthood, became a hotspot for anarchist activity. Both Marie and Sophie held court as their peers discussed radical ideas; their home at 2 rue Marie Rose became a hub of Russian anarchist emigré activity in Paris.³⁹ Sophie's willing engagement in both these discussions and in written correspondences with the likes of the Kropotkins imply that she, too, had been won over to the anarchist cause (or, indeed, she was won over first and brought Marie along with her). Together, the two radical scientists, mother and daughter, ensured a strong anarchist influence in the immigrant socialist milieu in Paris.

Alongside the Russian emigré community, Goldsmith also maintained a persistent relationship with Jewish anarchists both in France and abroad. Goldsmith's Jewish heritage is often misreported; her father, Isidor, was born to a prominent secular Jewish family. However, he and his siblings were all baptized and converted to Lutheranism at a young age.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, it is highly unlikely that Sophie, coming from the well-known and landed Russian Androsov family, had any Jewish connection. Therefore, according to traditional matrilineal descent laws in Judaism, Goldsmith was not Jewish.

³⁵ Bakounine, "Unpublished Letters," 419.

³⁶ Confino & Rubinstein, "Kropotkin the Scholar," 284.

³⁷ Lyubina, "Russian Women," 444.

³⁸ Maximoff, "Maria Isidorovna Goldsmith."

³⁹ It so happens that Vladimir Lenin lived at 4 rue Marie Rose from 1909–1911. It is unclear whether Sophie or Marie were acquainted with Lenin, but one can imagine that they would have crossed paths. This seems almost certain given that Lenin's lover, Inès Armand, also lived at 2 rue Marie Rose; (GARF ф.Р5969 оп.1 д.1, "Death Certificate").

⁴⁰ Isidor himself was baptized at 9 years old on June 20, 1852 ("Duplicates of Lutheran Metric Books").

However, this is not to suggest that Goldsmith (or her father) neglected their Jewish heritage.⁴¹ In fact, we have clues that she may have felt a connection to the Jewish diaspora. One telling obituary in the New York-based *Freedom* alludes to this: “Due to certain circumstances, Maria took an interest in the Jewish anarchist movement in France and although she never studied Jewish as a language, she seldom missed an important meeting, gathering or affair arranged by the Jewish anarchists in Paris.”⁴² Another, published in *FAS* by Abraham Frumkin, points out that “it is interesting that the very first expression of her anarchist reasoning, just like the beginning of her activism for anarchism, occurred in connection with the Jewish anarchist movement.”⁴³ A letter from Goldsmith herself states that she went out of her way to attend a Jewish anarchist meeting in Whitechapel during a congress in London.⁴⁴

Then there is Goldsmith’s decades-long record of publishing in the Yiddish press. Goldsmith herself never learned Yiddish (her father’s family spoke German at home). Nevertheless, she wrote for a variety of notable journals: predominantly *FAS*, as mentioned, but also *Fraye Gezelshaft*, *Der Arbeter Fraynd*, *Frayhayt*, and, briefly, *Forverts*.⁴⁵ Goldsmith’s choice of these particular papers, written in a language she could not understand without assistance, suggests she had a particular interest in the Jewish community. Reflecting this point, after Goldsmith’s death, the prominent Jewish anarchist poet Sholem Schwarzbard wrote a touching obituary for Goldsmith in the pages of *FAS* which is interleaved with suggestive religious Hebrew and Yiddish terminology.⁴⁶ For now, however, the evidence that indicates Goldsmith retained a Jewish identity remains circumstantial.

While Goldsmith seems to have tried in some sense to keep her research career and political activism separate, most obviously through the use of pseudonyms when writing for the anarchist press, her science was not wholly devoid of her political convictions. Goldsmith, like her mentor Yves Delage and comrade Peter Kropotkin, was a staunch Darwinist and Lamarckian. For Goldsmith, science showed so evidently what she knew to be true morally: that the path toward evolutionary survival came through cooperation, just as Darwin articulated extensively in *The Descent of Man* (1871). For Goldsmith, like Kropotkin, science was not only compatible with anarchism but a map toward its realization. The scholar G.I. Lyubina cites Goldsmith making this point directly, stating that “Biology, in its essence, is perhaps the most liberating science for the human mind” and that it illustrates “the struggle between the forces of darkness and the forces of light.”⁴⁷

Goldsmith was even so brazen as to blend the scientific and political out in the open. Her first book printed with Delage, *The Theories of Evolution*, was published ostensibly as a purely scientific text, yet it begins with overt commentary rebutting religious notions around the emergence of life on Earth.⁴⁸ Emphasizing its political character, this introduction was republished in the anarchist *LTN* in August 1911 under their real names.⁴⁹ Perhaps even more boldly, the authors give a

⁴¹ According to my correspondences with a descendant of the Goldsmith family, even after conversion to Lutheranism, Isidor and his siblings “all certainly never forgot their Jewish ancestry.”

⁴² Note that the term “Jewish” in this case refers to Yiddish; G-R. “Maria Goldshmid.”

⁴³ F., “Comrade M. Korn Dead.”

⁴⁴ GARF ф.Р5969 оп.1 д.152.

⁴⁵ Rublyov, “Our newspaper,” 115; Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 214.

⁴⁶ Schwarzbard, “Maria Siderovna Goldshmid.”

⁴⁷ Lyubina, “Russian Women,” 437.

⁴⁸ Delage & Goldsmith, “Theories of Evolution,” 5–11.

⁴⁹ Delage & Goldsmith, “Evolution.”

prime spot at the conclusion of the volume to an extensive discussion of Kropotkin's ideas about mutual aid.⁵⁰ Then there is its translation: when *Theories* was set for an English edition, they chose to work with André Tridon, a militant socialist, psychiatrist, and IWW member. Despite its unorthodox nature, the book was well-received internationally; *The New York Times* referred to *Theories* as a comprehensive — if “terse” — discussion of competing ideas in evolutionary biology.⁵¹

But perhaps most strikingly, Goldsmith and Delage co-authored a two-part article in an overtly anarchist magazine published in Portugal called *A Sementeira*.⁵² The article, titled “Darwinism,” is light on anarchist ideas, but nevertheless stands out for being printed under their full names in a non-scientific political outlet. The piece again emphasizes the importance of cooperation in evolutionary thought, attempting to synthesize Lamarck and Darwin and rebutting the later inventions of “vulgarizers” like Herbert Spencer (“survival of the fittest”) and Thomas Henry Huxley (“the struggle for existence”).⁵³ These later theorists, Goldsmith and Delage argue, badly twist Darwin's words to support a hierarchical and viciously competitive societal structure that rejects “social solidarity” with “the sick, the infirm, the old.”⁵⁴ By way of counterexample, the authors cite Darwin in *The Descent of Man* when he refers to “the social instincts lead an animal to take pleasure in the society of its fellows, to feel a certain amount of sympathy with them, and to perform various services for them.”⁵⁵

Goldsmith's anarchism had a clear orientation throughout her life. On one hand, she was a staunch believer in the methods of revolutionary syndicalism, which she argued was intrinsically and necessarily anarchistic in orientation. As she states in her 1920 political tract, *Revolutionary Syndicalism and Anarchism: Struggle with Capital and Power*, “The only difference is that anarchism also includes a number of philosophical, ethical, historical, and other views, whereas syndicalism is a purely practical movement. But only one theory is compatible with these practical views, and that is the anarchist theory.”⁵⁶ Her commitment to syndicalist concepts like the general strike remained central to her praxis.

On the other hand, Goldsmith firmly believed in communism as the natural conclusion of anarchist thought. In her famous essay “On Organization,” read at the London Congress of Communist Anarchists in 1906, she states, “...the free, highly developed person cannot put up with social oppression, cannot live in a slave society. If they are satisfied that they, personally, are superior to those around them, this development is one-sided: the best human feelings — justice, sympathy, solidarity — are undeveloped in that person. This is why the desire for the full development of the human person leads us to recognize the fullest form of social solidarity. We are communists not in spite of the fact that we are anarchists, but precisely because of this.”⁵⁷ She would elaborate on these economic ideas in later essays as she explored notions of expropriation and worker ownership.

⁵⁰ Delage & Goldsmith, “Theories of Evolution,” 347–351.

⁵¹ “Evolution Theories.”

⁵² Delage & Goldsmith, “Darwinism”; Delage & Goldsmith, “Darwinism (Conclusion).”

⁵³ *Ibid*; *Ibid*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*; *Ibid*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*; *Ibid*.

⁵⁶ Korn, *Revolutionary Syndicalism*. Forthcoming English translation from the Marie Goldsmith Project.

⁵⁷ Korn, “On Organization.”

Goldsmith was also unafraid to push back against her fellow anarchists — even those she considered friends. Most famously, she supported the signatories of the Manifesto of the Sixteen, the infamous declaration of anarchist support for the Entente in World War I. This immediately put her in a minority camp at odds with everyone from Errico Malatesta to Rudolf Rocker. Although she never signed the Manifesto herself, she was excoriated in print alongside Kropotkin and other “defencists” by figures like Ge. Ge, who served as an editor alongside Goldsmith at *Rabochiy Mir*, devoted an entire chapter of his 1917 book *The Way to Victory* to his critique. In it, he called Goldsmith “Joan of Arc of the Third Republic” and accused her of being so in love with the French Republic that she had confused the idea of “equality before the law” for anarchism.⁵⁸ Despite these attacks, Goldsmith defended her and Kropotkin’s position on the war as ideologically consistent for years afterward.⁵⁹

To take another example, Goldsmith counted among her close associates the Ukrainian anarchist Nestor Makhno, famous for leading the Black Army to hold the Free Territory of Ukraine following the Russian revolution.⁶⁰ Goldsmith even helped Makhno with the translation of the second and third volumes of his memoirs.⁶¹ Yet in 1926, when Makhno and Peter Arshinov released *The Platform* — their new formulation of anarchist organization — Goldsmith was quick to respond.

Goldsmith followed up the release of *The Platform* with a scathing letter alleging that Arshinov and his peers supported the tyranny of the majority.⁶² This forced the Platformists to defend their ideas in an additional article directly addressing her critiques.⁶³ This did not settle the matter, however, and Goldsmith would go on to criticize the Platform (and its counterpart, synthesisism) in the pages of *Plus Loin* for years to come, forcing Arshinov to repeatedly defend his views.⁶⁴ The conflict reached its height when Arshinov finally abandoned anarchism wholesale in 1931. He wrote in his farewell essay “Anarchism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat” that Marie Goldsmith was one of the “anarchist theorists” (including Errico Malatesta and others) who had spuriously dismissed *The Platform* on a “democratic-decadent” basis.⁶⁵ Makhno, it should be noted, never abandoned anarchism or *The Platform* and does not seem to have taken the ordeal personally.

The intense connection between Marie and her mother was never clearer than in their last moments together in January 1933. When her mother finally passed away of illness and old age, Marie was quick to follow: she took poison and died at Hôpital Cochin, a hospital for the poor, two days later on January 11 at 61 years of age.⁶⁶ She only left a short note behind: “I am going after her. Please bury us together. We have two places next to my father in Ivry Cemetery. I hand

⁵⁸ Ge, *The Way to Victory*, 49–56.

⁵⁹ Korn, “His Attitude Toward the War”; Isidine, *About the Manifesto*.

⁶⁰ The anarchist Ida Mett discusses in her book *Memories of Nestor Makhno* that she implored Makhno to ask one of her “friends,” like Goldsmith, to help him concentrate and refine his memoirs (Mett, “Memories,” 17).

⁶¹ Skirda, “Anarchy’s Cossack.”

⁶² Group of Russian Anarchists Abroad, “Questions and Answers.”

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Isidine, “Organization and Party”; Isidine, “Organization and Party (Continued)”; Arshinov, “A Reply to Maria Isidine.”

⁶⁵ Arshinov, “Anarchism and the Dictatorship.”

⁶⁶ Cochin was the very same “Hospital X” where George Orwell stayed in in 1929 and later described in his 1946 essay, “How the Poor Die”; Schwarzbard, “Maria Siderovna Goldshmid.”

over and leave everything to A. Schapiro and E. Bakunina. Please feed the birds and put them in good hands.”⁶⁷

Many obituaries about the Goldsmiths were published around the world in the months that followed, from scientific journals to the anarchist press. Makhno himself beautifully eulogized Marie, likening her to Kropotkin, Élisée Reclus, and Varlaam Cherkezov as one of the “titans of anarchism.”⁶⁸ Anarchist luminaries like Goldman, Berkman, and Mollie Steimer expressed profound grief at her passing in private letters.⁶⁹ Expressions of mourning were immediately followed by repeated calls to raise funds to publish Goldsmith’s collected works. Berkman and Maximoff asked their international comrades to organize and donate toward this cause.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, their efforts seem to have gone in vain.

Goldsmith’s legacy has been both celebrated and forcibly silenced since her passing. In the scientific realm, Goldsmith’s work, in particular her 1914 thesis, is still cited in twenty-first century studies on animal perception. Meanwhile, an arrest report on the anarchist Francesco Ghezzi dated September 15, 1938, details how the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) directed the burning of thirty-two of his books. Among them were anarchist mainstays Max Stirner’s *The Ego and Its Own*, Mikhail Bakunin’s *The State and Anarchism*, Kropotkin’s *Mutual Aid: a Factor of Evolution*, and Marie Goldsmith’s *Revolutionary Syndicalism and Anarchism: Struggle with Capital and Power*.⁷¹

Bibliography

- A., P. “Elements Old and New in Anarchism : A Reply to Maria Isidine.” *Дело Труда* [*Dielo Trouda*], November-December 1927.
- Arshinov, Peter. “Старое И Новое В Анархизме (По Поводу Статьи М. Корн) [Anarchism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (On the Article by M. Korn)]” доклад Конференции анархо-комм. Групп Сев. Америки и Канады [Report of the Conference of the Anarcho-Comm. Groups of North America and Canada]. October 1931.
- Avrich, Paul. *Anarchist Portraits*. United States: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Bakounine, Tatiana. “Lettres inédites de Pierre Kropotkine à Marie Goldsmith [Unpublished Letters from Pierre Kropotkin to Marie Goldsmith].” *Le Monde slave* [*The Slavic World*], (January 1934). gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4226431m.
- Berkman, Alexander. “(Addressed to ‘Comrades Mratchny and [Mark] Holtz’).” February 15, 1933. Mark Mrachnyi Papers, 1922–1940. University of Michigan Special Collections Research Center, Ann Arbor. findingaids.lib.umich.edu/catalog/umich-scl-mrachnyi.
- Berkman, Alexander. “Correspondents Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatique, Paris- Steimer, Mollie.” February 13, 1933. Alexander Berkman Papers, #59. International

⁶⁷ Marie and Sophie would ultimately be buried in Cimetière parisien de Thiais and not Cimetière parisien d’Ivry with Isidor; (Maximoff, “Maria Isidorovna Goldsmith.”)

⁶⁸ Makhno, “Over the Grave.”

⁶⁹ Berkman, “Correspondents Société”; Goldman, “Tom [Keell],” Steimer, “Correspondents Société”; Goldman, “Letters sent.”

⁷⁰ Maximoff, “Maria Isidorovna Goldsmith”; Berkman, “Steimer, Mollie”; Berkman, “Comrades Mratchny and [Mark] Holtz.”

⁷¹ Dolzhanskaya, “Francesco Ghezzi.”

- Goldman, Emma. "Letters sent and received. Partly also to Emmy Eckstein. March 1932-February 1933." January 18, 1933. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. hdl.handle.net/10622/E8ACB8E1-70EA-48A0-A8FA-1F07A95A83A3?locatt=view:level1</verbatim>.
- Goldsmith, Isidor. "Why I Left Russia." *The Nineteenth Century* 17, no. 95. (May 1885): 883–904. hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433115515565.
- "Гольдсмит, Исидор Альбертович [Goldsmith, Isidor Albertovich]." *Деятели революционного движения в России : биобиблиографический словарь : от предшественников декабристов до падения царизма* [*The leaders of the revolutionary movement in Russia: a biobibliographical dictionary: from the predecessors of the Decembrists to the fall of tsarism*], edited by V. Vilensky-Sibiriyakov. Russia: Издательство Всесоюзного общества политических каторжан и ссыльно-поселенцев [Publishing house of the All-Union Society of Political Convicts and Exile-Prisoners], 1929.
- G-R., A. "In Memoriam: Maria Goldshmid (M. Korn)." *Freedom*, February 4, 1933.
- Group of Russian Anarchists Abroad. "Организационная Платформа (Вопросы И Ответы) [Organizational Platform (Questions And Answers)]." *Дело Труда* [*Dielo Trouda*], November 1926.
- Guillaume, James. *L'Internationale: Documents et Souvenirs* [*The International: Documents and Souvenirs (1864–1878)*]. France: Ancienne Librairie Tresse & Stock, 1909.
- Isidine, M. "À propos du Manifeste des seize [About the Manifesto of the Sixteen]." *Plus Loin* [*Further*], November 1928.
- Isidine, M. "Organisation et parti [Organization and Party]." *Plus Loin* [*Further*], March 1928.
- Isidine, M. "Organisation et parti (Suite) [Organization and Party (Continued)]." *Plus Loin* [*Further*], April 1928.
- Korn, M. "On Organization" in *Русская революция и анархизм : Докл., чит. на Съезде коммунистов-анархистов в окт. 1906 г.* [*The Russian Revolution and Anarchism : Paper read at the Congress of Communist-Anarchists in October 1906*], edited by P. Kropotkin. United Kingdom: Хлеб И Воля [Bread and Freedom], 1907.
- Korn, M. "א. א. קראפּאָטקין – זײַן שטעלונג צו דער מלחמה – פֿרייע אַרבעטער שטימע" [*P. A. Kropotkin – His Attitude Towards the War*]. *פֿרייע אַרבעטער שטימע* [*Frayer Arbeter Shtime*], February 24, 1922.
- Korn, M. *Революционный синдикализм и анархизм : Борьба с капиталом и властью* [*Revolutionary Syndicalism and Anarchism: Struggle with Capital and Power*]. Russia: Голос Труда [The Voice of Labor], 1920.
- Lyubina, G. I. "Русские Женщины В Интерьере Московского Музея (Судьба Музея П.А. Кропоткина) [Russian Women in the Interior of the Moscow Museum (The Fate of the Kropotkin Museum)]" in *Москва научная* [*Moscow Scientific*], edited by E. A. Belyaev and S. S. Ilizarov, 434–451. Russia: Янус-К [Janus-K], 1997:.
- Maitron, Jean. "Le groupe des Etudiants Socialistes Révolutionnaires Internationalistes de Paris (1892–1902) [The Paris group of Socialist Revolutionary Internationalist Students (1892–1902)]." *Le Mouvement social* [*The Social Movement*], no. 46 (January–March 1964): 3–26. gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6125454g.
- Makhno, Nestor. "Over the Fresh Grave of Comrade N. Rogdaev." January 21, 1933. Accessed May 28, 2023. www.katesharpleylibrary.net/547f4n.
- Maximoff, Grigory. "Maria Isidorovna Goldsmith (M. Korn)." *Дело Труда* [*Dielo Trouda*], March–April 1933.

- Mett, Ida. *Souvenirs sur Nestor Makhno* [*Memories of Nestor Makhno*]. France: Éditions Allia [Allia Publishing], 1983.
- Ovechkina, Svetlana Yurievna. “Женская политическая ссылка в Архангельской губернии [Women’s Political Exile in Arkhangelsk Province].” Thesis. 2005.
- Piéron, Henri. “Nécrologie.” *L’année psychologique* 33, (1933): 905–920. www.persee.fr/doc/psy_0003-5033_1932_num_33_1_5249.
- Piéron, Henri. “Personalia.” *L’année psychologique* 27, (1926): 880–888. doi.org/10.3406/psy.1926.6403.
- Pierrot, Marc. “Marie Goldsmith.” *Plus Loin* [*Further*], March 1933.
- Pipes, Richard. “Narodnichestvo: A Semantic Inquiry.” *Slavic Review* 23, no. 3 (1964): 441–58. doi.org/10.2307/2492683.
- “Россия, дубликаты Лютеранских метрических книг, 1833–1885 [Russia, duplicates of Lutheran metric books, 1833–1885].” 1852: Births, marriages, deaths (828-14/72). Family-Search. Russian State Historical Archive, St. Petersburg. www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-DY6S-1YL.
- <class name=“mark”>Rublyov, D. “«Газета наша сделала невероятные успехи».</class> Письма Ш.-Й. Яновского М. И. Гольдсмит в 1899–1925 гг [‘Our newspaper has made incredible progress.’ Letters from Sh.-Y. Yanowski to M. I. Goldsmith in 1899–1925].” *Цайтшрифт Журнал* [*Tsaytshrift Magazine*] 10, no. 5 (2016): 110–155.
- Schwarzbard, S. “מאריא סידעראווא גאלדשמיד (מ. קארן) [Maria Siderovna Goldshmid (M. Korn)].” אַרבעטער שטימע פֿרייע [*Fraye Arbeter Shtime*], January 27, 1933.
- Skirda, Alexandre. *Anarchy’s Cossack: The Struggle for Free Soviets in the Ukraine 1917–1921*. United States: AK Press, 2004.
- Steimer, Mollie. “Correspondents Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatique, Paris-Steimer, Mollie.” January 5, 1933. Alexander Berkman Papers, #59. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. hdl.handle.net/10622/1DFA0636-165B-410F-87E4-9205D6B46E1B?locatt=view:level1</verbatim>.
- University of Zurich. “Transkription im Rahmen des Projekts Jahresberichte der Universität Zürich seit 1833 online. [Transcription as Part of the Project Annual Reports of the University of Zurich since 1833 online].” April 1876–1877. State Archives of Zurich. suche.staatsarchiv.djktzh.ch/detail.aspx?ID=3711364</verbatim>.
- Yasinsky, Ieronim Ieronimovich. *Роман моей жизни. Книга воспоминаний*. <class name=“mark”>Том I</class> [*The Novel of My Life. Book of Memories. Volume I*]. Russia: Новое литературное обозрение [New Literary Review], 2010.

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)
Anti-Copyright



Søren Hough
Marie Goldsmith
Scientific Luminary, Anarchist Militant
July 14, 2023

Marie Goldsmith Project. This article was originally published in *Black Flag* Vol. 3 No. 2.

usa.anarchistlibraries.net