



# **Sewing Freedom: Philip Josephs, Transnationalism & Early New Zealand Anarchism**

*Jared Davidson*

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# Sewing Freedom: Philip Josephs, Transnationalism & Early New Zealand Anarchism

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*Sewing Freedom* is the first in-depth study of anarchism in New Zealand during the turbulent years of the early 20th century—a time of wildcat strikes, industrial warfare, and a radical working class counter-culture. Interweaving biography, cultural history, and an array of archival sources, this engaging account unravels the anarchist-cum-bomber stereotype by piecing together the life of Philip Josephs—a Latvian-born Jewish tailor, antimilitarist, and founder of the Wellington Freedom Group. Anarchists like Josephs not only existed in the ‘Workingman’s Paradise’ that was New Zealand, but were a lively part of its labour movement and the class struggle that swept through the country, imparting uncredited influence and ideas. *Sewing Freedom* places this neglected movement within the global anarchist upsurge, and unearths the colourful activities of New Zealand’s most radical advocates for social and economic change. Includes illustrations by Icky from Justseeds and a foreword by Barry Pateman (Kate Sharpley Library Archivist and Associate Editor at the Emma Goldman Papers).

“Davidson has produced much more than a soundly researched and very engaging biography... this is an excellent, wide-ranging contribution to our knowledge of the international (and indeed transnational) anarchist movement, and sweeps us along in a fascinating story that takes us from the pogroms in Russian Latvia, to the working-class slums of Victorian Glasgow, to the early struggles of the nascent labour movement in New Zealand.”—Dr David Berry, author of *A History of the French Anarchist Movement*

“Many millions of words have been written on New Zealand history. The labour movement does not feature prominently in this vast corpus; in fact, quite the contrary. And within this relatively sparse coverage, anarchism is almost invariably assigned at best a passing mention. We must be grateful for Davidson’s determination to restore an anarchist voice to the history of the outermost reach of the British Empire.”—Dr Richard Hill, Professor of New Zealand Studies & author of *Iron Hand in the Velvet Glove*

“A ground breaking tale of a rebel life, skillfully unearthed by Jared Davidson. A must read.”—Lucien van der Walt, co-author of *Black Flame*

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