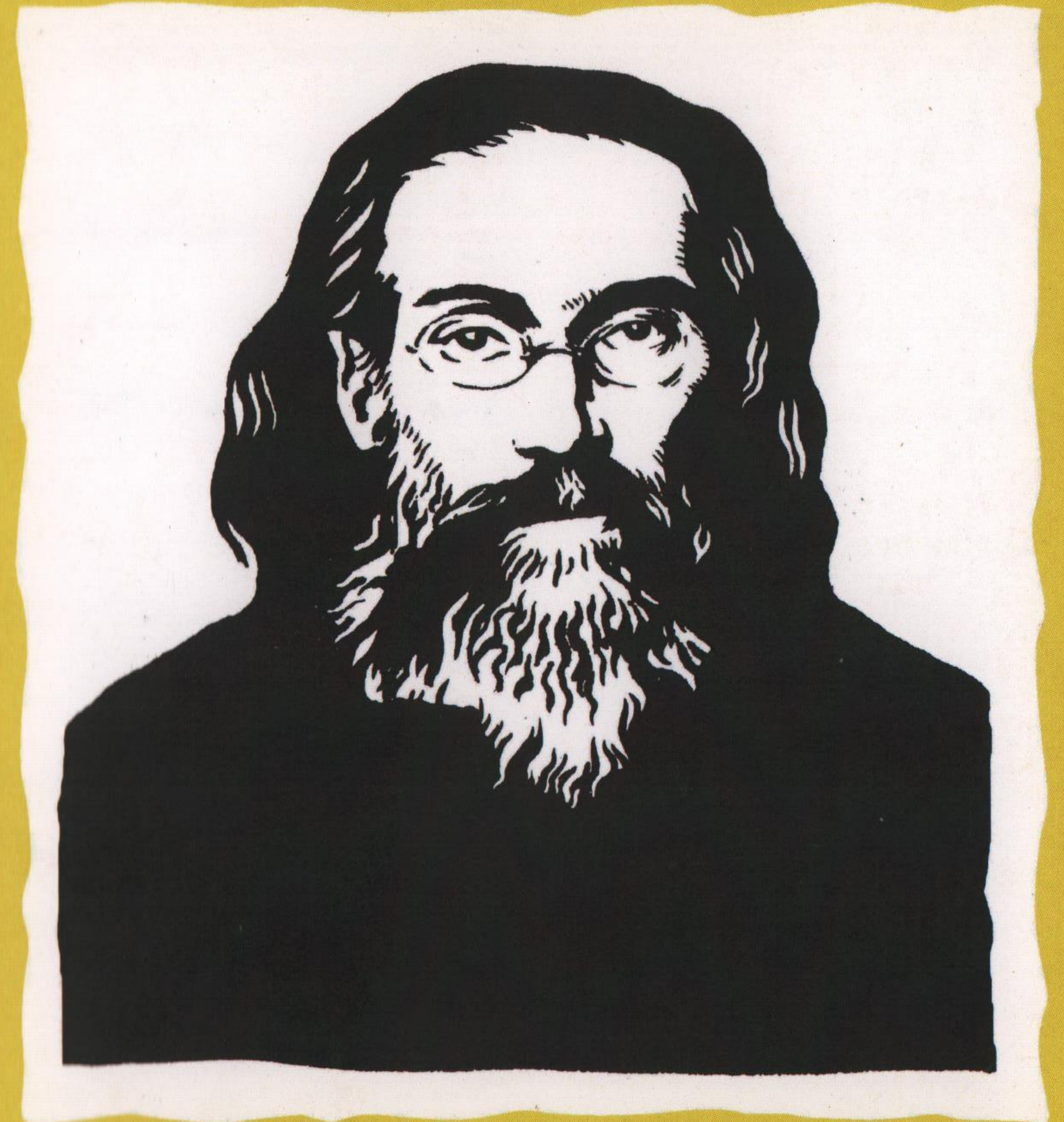


11910  
L

# Gustav Landauer



Anarchism in Germany  
and other essays

A Barbary Coast Collective Publication



## Table of Contents

Gustav Landauer, by C.W. ....	5
Anarchism in Germany. ....	14
Walt Whitman. ....	21
Youth Suicide. ....	28
Titanic's Message. ....	32
Social Democracy in Germany. ....	36

Translated by Stephen Bender and Gabriel Kuhn  
For more work by Herr Bender, visit [www.americanidealism.com](http://www.americanidealism.com)  
Edited by Chris Dunlap

Barbary Coast Collective  
c/o Bound Together Books  
1369 Haight Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117

[antinomos1@yahoo.com](mailto:antinomos1@yahoo.com)

Special thanks to: Hugh D'Andrade for design expertise; Joey Cain, literary sleuth; and special thanks to Barry Pateman.

“One can throw away a chair and destroy a pane of glass; but those are idle talkers and credulous idolators of words who regard the state as such a thing or as a fetish that one can smash in order to destroy it. The State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behavior; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another—One day it will be realized that socialism is not the invention of anything new but the discovery of something actually present, of something that has grown... We are the state, and we shall continue to be the state until we have created the institutions that form a real community and society of men.”

—Gustave Landauer

“Schwache Statismänner, Schwacheres Volk!”

*Der Sozialist*, June, 1910



## Gustav Landauer

by C.W. First Published in *Anarchy* #54 (Vol 5 No 8), 1965.

Very little of Gustav Landauer's thought is accessible to the English reader, except as paraphrased in the writings of Martin Buber. Yet Erich Fromm, in his book *The Sane Society* calls Landauer "one of the last great representatives of anarchist thought," Rudolf Rocker described him as "a spiritual giant," and Ernst Toller called him "one of the finest men, the greatest spirits," of the German revolution.

Landauer was born on April 7, 1870, in a middle-class Jewish family in Karlsruhe and became as a student a member of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). He was refused admittance to the school of medicine at Freiburg University because he had served a prison sentence for political activity. He was one of the group known as the Jungen ("The Youth") who were expelled from the party in 1891, and who started a weekly paper in Berlin, *Der Sozialist* which, beginning as a dissident Marxist organ, became under Landauer's editorship, a vehicle for anarchist ideas. This was the period when the SPD was seeking to impose its rigid parliamentary socialism on the whole European labor movement, and when an international congress was convened at Zurich in 1893, the anarchists, who had been expelled from the earlier Brussels Congress, returned to the attack. Explaining their intervention, Rocker, in his book *The London Years*, remarks that:

"Had the congresses of the Second International not concealed their true nature and acknowledged themselves for what they were, international conferences of parliamentary socialism and of Social Democratic Parties, the anarchists would have been the last to want to be represented. But as long as they called themselves

International Socialist Labor Congresses it would be wrong to deny them admission. For the anarchists too were after all, socialists, for they opposed economic monopoly, and worked for a co-operative form of human labor, aiming to satisfy the needs of all and not the profits of the few. Nor could it be disputed that the great majority of the anarchists in the different countries belonged to the working class."

At Zurich on the first day, the Germans who had been expelled from the SPD appeared and demanded admission, with the unexpected support of the British trade union delegation. Bebel, the SPD leader attacked them abusively and got a motion carried limiting membership to trade unions and to parties and groups who accepted political action. "There was incredible commotion; Werner and Landauer were hustled from the room shouting 'We protest!' "and on the following day 15 other delegates including Rosa Luxemburg were excluded. They were joined by Amilcare Cipriani who resigned his mandate saying, "I go with those you have banished; with the victims of your intolerance and brutality."

In 1896 the International Socialist Labor Congress was held in London at the Queen's Hall, and there were many anarchists among the 750 delegates, including Landauer and Malatesta (who had come armed with mandates from trade unions in Spain, France, and Italy). Once again the SPD sought to exclude the anarchists.

"The Germans tried to steamroller the congress on this question so ruthlessly that it infuriated a great many delegates. The chairman on the second day was Paul Singer, a member of the Reichstag. He tried to stop the discussion, and said he would take the vote on the question. But Keir Hardie of the ILP (Independent Labor Party), who was deputy chairman of the session, got up and making himself heard above the uproar, told Singer that people didn't conduct meetings like that in England. Before the vote was taken both sides must be given a hearing. So Malatesta and Landauer were allowed to speak."

Landauer addressed a report to the congress (which was published as a pamphlet by Freedom Press), attacking the SPD in terms which its subsequent history showed to be correct. Only in Germany, he declared, could such a severely disciplined and pattern-cut labor party exist, exploiting in the most shameful way the imperialist and military spirit, the dependence and obedience of the masses "as the basis upon which an extremely strict party rule could be constructed, strong enough to crush on every occasion the rising germs of freedom and revolt."

"I, as a German revolutionist and anarchist, consider it my duty today, as three years ago at Zurich, to tear off this painted mask and solemnly declare that the apparent splendor of the labor movement in Germany is but skin-deep, whilst in reality the number of those who fully and conscientiously go in for a total regeneration of human society, who struggle to realize a free socialist society, is infinitely smaller than the number of Social Democratic voters. The laws (at the elaboration of which the Social Democratic deputies work with great assiduity in parliament and in the

various committees) merely strengthen the State and the power of the police—the German, Prussian, monarchist and capitalist State of today—and it becomes more and more a question whether our Social Democracy thinks that some mere finishing touches applied to our centralized, tutelary, ceaselessly interfering police state, are all that is necessary to transform the German Empire into the famous State of the future.”

He appealed to the delegates to allow the anarchist cause to be heard:

“What we fight is State socialism, leveling from above, bureaucracy; what we advocate is free association and union, the absence of authority, mind freed from all fetters, independence and well-being of all. Before all others it is we who preach tolerance for all—whether we think their opinions right or wrong—we do not wish to crush them by force or otherwise. In the same way we claim tolerance towards us, and where revolutionary socialists, where working men of all countries meet, we want to be among them and to say what we have got to say: If our ideas are wrong, let those who know better teach us better.” (G. Landauer: *Social Democracy in Germany*, Freedom Press 1896).

But the anarchists were expelled. A protest meeting was addressed by Kropotkin, Louise Michel, Elisee Reclus, Landauer, and Malatesta, and among non-anarchists, by Tom Mann and Keir Hardie, who declared that:

“No one could prophesy whether the socialism of the future would shape itself in the image of the social democrats or of the anarchists. The crime of the anarchists in the eyes of the congress majority appeared to be that they were the minority. If they agreed with that attitude then the socialist movement as a whole had no right to exist, because it represented a minority.”

Around this time Landauer was beset with a problem that always faces anarchist editors. He had made *Der Sozialist* a paper of a high intellectual standard but with little propaganda appeal and this caused continual argument. In the end he agreed to publish also a propaganda paper *Der Arme Konrad* edited by Albert Weidner, who, says Rucker, “did his best, but it did not satisfy Landauer’s opponents. They started a new larger paper, and Landauer’s *Sozialist* slowly died. The new paper was poorly edited and badly written, and it was little consolation to plead that it was produced entirely by ordinary working men. For Landauer it was a tragedy. It deprived him of a valuable activity, for which he was supremely fitted, and in which he rendered splendid service.”

In 1901 he edited with Max Nettlau, a volume of selections from Bakunin. “I have loved and admired Bakunin,” he wrote, “from the first day I came across him, for there are few dissertations written as vividly as his—perhaps that is why they are as fragmentary as life itself.” But in fact it was Proudhon and Kropotkin who influenced him more. In 1905, echoing Kropotkin’s views on the integration of agriculture and industry, he wrote:

“The socialist village, with workshops and village factories, with fields and meadows and gardens—you proletarians of the big cities, accustom yourselves to this thought, strange and odd as it may seem at first, for that is the only beginning of true socialism, the only one that is left to us.”

And two years later he declared that:

“It will be recognized sooner or later that, as the greatest of all socialists—Proudhon—has declared in incomparable words, albeit forgotten today, social revolution bears no resemblance at all to political revolution.”

This was in his essay *Die Revolution*, written at the request of Martin Buber, who, forty years later was to bring Landauer’s ideas back into circulation in *Paths in Utopia*. In Buber’s view, Landauer’s step beyond Kropotkin consists in his insight into the nature of the State, which is not, as Kropotkin thought, an institution which can be destroyed by a revolution, but rather, Landauer says:

“The State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behavior; we destroy it by contracting other relationships by behaving differently—One day it will be realized that socialism is not the invention of anything new but the discovery of something actually present, of something that has grown.”

He wants to displace the State by uncovering, bringing to the surface, the ancient communal institutions of society, and the instinctive mutual aid which, rather than State organization, makes social life possible—preserving, renewing, and expanding them, “releasing the spirit that lies captive behind the State.”

“We want to bring the co-operatives, which are socialist form without socialist content, and the trade unions, which are valor without avail, to socialist, to great experiments.” All true socialism, he says, is relative and never absolute. “Communism goes in search of the Absolute and can naturally find no beginning but that of the word. For the only absolute things, detached from all reality, are words.”

“Everything comes in time, and every time after the revolution is a time before the revolution for all those whose lives have not got bogged in some great moment of the past.”

Everything that Landauer thought and planned and said and wrote, declares Buber, was steeped in a great belief in revolution and will for it. But the struggle for revolution, Landauer insists, can only bear fruit when “we are seized by the spirit, not of revolution, but of regeneration.” For the strength of revolution lies in rebellion and negation; it cannot solve social problems by political means. Studying the meaning of the French Revolution, he observed that:

“When a revolution ultimately gets into the terrible situation that this one did, with enemies all round it inside and out, then the forces of negation and destruction that still live on are bound to turn inwards and against themselves, fanaticism and passion turn to distrust and soon to bloodthirstiness, or at least to an indifference to the added terrors of killing, and before long killing becomes the sole possible means

for the rulers of the day to keep themselves provisionally in power.”

And ten years later, he wrote of the same events:

“Thus it happened that the most fervent representatives of the revolution thought and believed in their finest hours—no matter to what strange shores they were ultimately flung by the raging winds—that they were leading mankind to a rebirth; but somehow this birth miscarried and they got in each others way and blamed each other because the revolution had allied itself to war, to violence, to dictatorship and authoritarian oppression—in a word to politics.”

Soon afterwards Landauer was to find himself the victim of such a situation, a revolution wrecked in violence and politics.

In the German elections of 1912, the SPD became the largest single party in the Reichstag, and in the following year the Social Democrats without exception voted for the Rearmament Bill. On the eve of the First World War the Socialist International met in Brussels and Jean Jaures put his faith in the strength of the SPD. “Don’t worry,” he said to a friend, “four million German socialists will rise like one man and execute the Kaiser if he wants to start a war.” But Landauer had no such optimistic hopes, writing in July 1914:

“Let us be under no illusions as to the situation in all countries today. When it comes to the point, the only thing that these revolutionary agitations have served is the nationalist-capitalist aggrandizement we call imperialism; even when originally tintured with socialism they were all too easily led by some Napoleon or Cavour or Bismark into the mainstream of politics, because all these insurrections were in fact only a means of political revolution or nationalistic war but could never be a means of socialist transformation, for the sufficient reason that the socialists are romantics who always and inevitably make use of the means of their enemies.”

On August 4 the Socialists unanimously voted the government’s war credits. “The SPD, loyal to its reformist past, bound the destiny of German labor to that of the German Reich.” Opposition to the war, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg did not begin until 1916. In the following year, Ernst Toller, who had been profoundly influenced by Landauer’s *For Socialism*, went secretly to see him at Krumbach. Toller described the visit in his autobiography *I Was a German*:

“I couldn’t understand why, at a time when everybody was waiting for the voice of truth, this ardent revolutionary kept silent. But when I put this question to him he said: ‘All my life I have worked for the downfall of this social system, this society founded on lies and betrayals, on this beggaring and suppression of human beings; and I know now that this downfall is imminent—perhaps tomorrow, perhaps in a year’s time. And I have the right to reserve my strength until that moment. When the hour strikes I shall be ready.’”

On November 9, 1918 with defeat in the field, mutiny in the Navy, hunger at home, and soldiers’ and workers’ councils being formed everywhere, the chancellor,

Prince Max von Baden, handed over his office to Karl Ebert, the leader of the Social Democrats, who had told him two days earlier, “Unless the Kaiser abdicates, social revolution is inevitable. But I will have none of it. I hate it like sin.” And at a time when dynasties were falling, the High Command decamping, and the people rising Scheidemann and Noske, sought at all costs to preserve the militarism of the officer corps, the feudalism of the Junkers and the capitalism of the industrial magnates.

In Munich on November 7, soldiers and workers deposed the government and proclaimed the Republic of Bavaria, and the Independent Socialist Kurt Eisner formed a cabinet. Of the role of Erich Muehsam, and of Landauer who had come to Munich at the beginning of the revolution, Willy Fritzenkotter, writing on “The Council-Republic of Munich” in *Freedom* (26/9/53) described the events:

“The first action of the two anarchists was to organize the ‘Revolutionary Workshop Organization.’ These councils were to be organized in every city, and form (in connection with the sailors’ and farmers’ councils’) the administration of every city and village. All these councils in the country were to elect representatives and send them to a ‘Council Congress’ in Munich. According to the plan of Muehsam and Landauer these councils and congress should work on a federative basis, and not be centralized. Against this revolutionary movement Eisner and Auer worked in conjunction with the reactionary forces. They were for a parliamentary election. The parliament they aimed at making the real law-maker in Bavaria, forcing the ‘workers’ councils’ into insignificance.”

“Eisner had Muehsam and 11 other revolutionaries arrested on January 10, 1919 because he feared they would frustrate the election for Parliament which should take place on January 12. Yet Muehsam and his comrades were on the next day liberated from prison by the ‘Workers’ Council’ which forced Eisner to set them free.”

Eisner was assassinated in February by a Bavarian aristocrat, and his place was taken by Johann Hoffmann, a Social Democrat who began negotiations with Berlin. “But the workers of Munich were not amenable to this, and on the night of April 6-7 they proclaimed a Soviet Republic. It was acclaimed with cries of *Los vom Reich*.” Hoffmann’s government fled to Bamberg in North Bavaria. Ruth Fischer gives this account of the Council Republic (in her book *Stalin and German Communism*):

“Erich Muehsam proposed to the Munich Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council that they proclaim a socialist republic. This proposal was adopted by 234 votes to 70 with the Spartacists voting against it. The first Bavarian council government has always been depicted as a half-crazy adventure of literati and intellectuals. All of them later proved to be serious militants, who suffered loyally for the cause they had adopted.

“At the head of this group was Gustav Landauer, a cultured humanitarian anarchist. He visualized socialism as an anti-autocratic co-operative. Landauer was

an outspoken individualist, a defender of socialist morality, an opponent of terror and violence against the class enemy. Erich Muehsam, the other anarchist writer in the cabinet, had a following among intellectuals and young workers. Ernst Toller, the third writer in the government, was in 1919 a young man uncertain of his politics. He also was what the Germans call an ethical socialist."

The Communists condemned what they called this "pseudo-soviet" and demanded the resignation of the Central Council, and the Social Democrats, with the aid of the monarchist garrison arrested several members of the Council on April 13 and took them to North Bavaria. Communist troops then defeated the garrison, and the Revolutionary Council formed a new Soviet Cabinet. Then Noske's army of 100,000 men commanded by Gen. von Oven moved on Bavaria.

Rudolf Coser, in *The Failure of a Revolution* says:

"His army was not to crush a handful of men; it was to crush any idea that the substance of the German State could be changed in any way whatever—what was to be done to them was to serve as a warning to all the millions of Germans who wanted to eliminate militarism by different means."

"The revolutionary councils realized the hopelessness of fighting against Noske's army and declared their solidarity with the survivors of the first soviet government and were negotiating with Hoffmann in order to avert a catastrophe and forestall the Prussian invasion."

About 700 people were butchered by Noske's army, among them Landauer. A workman who was arrested with him described his death:

"Amid shouts of 'Landauer! Landauer!' an escort of Bavarian and Württemberger infantry brought him out into the passage outside the door of the examination room. An officer struck him in the face, the men shouted 'Dirty Bolshi! Let's finish him off!' and a rain of blows from rifle-butts drove him out into the yard. He said to the soldiers round him: 'I've not betrayed you. You don't know yourselves how terribly you've been betrayed.' Freiherr von Gagern went up to him and beat him with a heavy truncheon until he sank in a heap on the ground. He struggled up again and tried to speak, but one of the men shot him through the head. He was still breathing and the fellow said: 'That blasted carrion has nine lives; he can't even die like a gentleman.'"

"Then a sergeant in the Life Guards shouted out: 'Pull off his coat!' They pulled it off, and laid him on his stomach. 'Stand back there, and we'll finish him off properly!' one of them cried, and shot him in the back. Landauer still moved convulsively, so they trampled on him till he was dead; then stripped the body and threw it into the wash-house."

Toller and Muehsam were each imprisoned in a fortress for five years. In 1934 Muehsam was killed by the Nazis in Oranienberg concentration camp.

In 1933 the Nazis dug up Landauer's remains and sent them to the Jewish community in Munich. Some years ago Mrs. Adama van Scheltem's of Amsterdam told me how in 1939 she visited Landauer's daughter and son-in-law, living in fear in a Rhineland town, to get his papers and manuscripts which she smuggled across the frontier for the International Institute for Social History.

Gustav Landauer failed, said the philosopher Fritz Mauthner, "because he was no politician, and yet was driven by his passionate compassion for the people, to be active politically; too proud to join a Party, not narrow enough to form a Party round his own name." Landauer failed, but was not the failure of the political socialists more ignominious? In the struggle for the soul of the socialist movement in the 1890's, like that between Marx and Bakunin in the First International in the seventies, his forebodings on the nature of German Social Democracy were ignored, but were shown to be correct in every detail by the events of 1914, by the crushing of the revolutionary hopes of 1918, and by the final collapse before the Nazis. Is his vision of "a society of equalitarian exchange based on regional communities, rural communities which combine agriculture with industry" any more ridiculous than the vision of a society of machine-minders and bureaucrats which is all the "realistic" socialists can offer?

But what are we to say of the Munich Council Republic? Was it in fact "the embodiment of impractical romantic anarchism" that James Joll calls it in his book on *The Second International*? From the fragmentary and contradictory accounts that are all one can find, it is hard to come to any firm conclusions, but a number of points are worth making. It is variously referred to as the Bavarian Soviet Republic and the Bavarian Council Republic (Bayrische Räterepublik). This in itself has no significance. Soviet is the Russian word for council, and the slogan "All Power to the Soviets," usurped by the Bolsheviks to gain support for an exactly opposite policy, had a wide currency in the years immediately after the Russian Revolution. The Communists were opposed to the Räterepublik. Why then did they form a "Second Soviet Cabinet" to succeed it? "Very simply, the Communists could not resist the drive of the Munich workers, who, irritated after the garrison coup, wanted to defend Munich," explains Ruth Fischer.

Was the Landauer cabinet a government? This is a matter of nomenclature. It was the "soviet" installed by the Bavarian Central Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. Fritzenkotter regards the Council Republic as lasting for six months, i.e. the whole period from the abdication to the suppression by the German Army and the Freikorps. For him the term is synonymous with the period of the effective existence of the worker's councils. Landauer regarded the task of revolution as "the setting up of society 'outside' and 'alongside' the State."

Was there any chance of success? Mrs. Fischer, as an ex-communist, deprecates the communist attitude that it was simply an "adventurist folly." She points out that

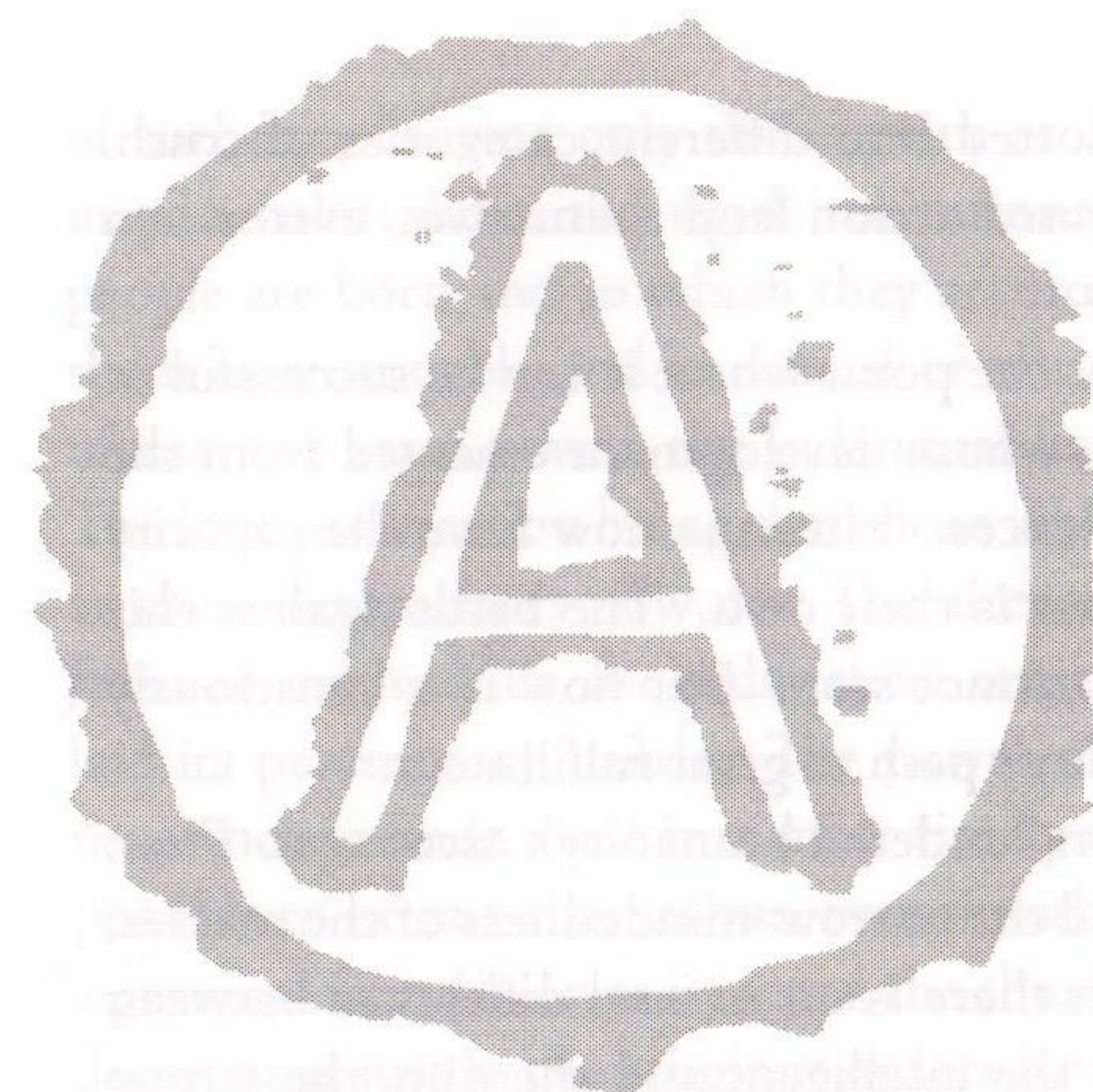
it took place in the context of general unrest in Germany, especially in neighboring Saxony, and of the setting up of Bela Kun's Hungarian Soviet Republic. Moreover, Bavaria had only been incorporated in the German Empire in 1871, and had a strong separatist tradition. It was widely thought that "Berlin would not dare invade Bavaria." In Bavaria, unlike most of Germany, peasant's councils had been formed at the end of the war. Rudolf Coser says:

"The majority of them were non-revolutionary. Nevertheless they supported the revolution because they feared Bavaria would become a battleground after the defection of Austria, and because they regarded the war as a private business between monarchs. After the war was over, the Bavarian peasants' councils remained important; they wanted to have a say in the administration of their country. However, although one of their leaders was in the soviet government they blockaded the capital; no victuals were delivered to Munich."

The Council Republic failed because not enough people supported it, because it failed to win over the peasantry, and to win over the returning soldiers from the reactionary Freikorps, because it failed to alienate people from their allegiance to political parties and political violence, and because German Social Democracy itself was so deeply wedded to German reaction. "Socialism," Landauer had written years before, "is possible and impossible at all times; it is impossible when people either don't will it or only supposedly will it, but are not capable of doing it."

This is the sense in which the Council Republic was doomed to failure.

In his "Recollections of a Death," reprinted in *Pointing the Way*, Martin Buber concludes: "Landauer fought in the revolution against the revolution for the sake of the revolution. The revolution will not thank him for it. But those will thank him for it who have fought as he fought and perhaps some day those will thank him for whose sake he fought."



## Anarchism in Germany [1895]

Why do so many of today's skeptics and rebels, these humanists and futurists, among whom I count myself, identify themselves as anarchists? Why do these apostles of enlightenment who wish not only to cultivate a new consciousness but also to create a new social form, have the closest ties to the most radical group which advocates relentless class war? What are the characteristics of Anarchism in Germany? In particular, is it a working class movement; and will it remain so? I've decided to answer these particular questions here. Not in order to propagandize for Anarchism; both the publishers and the readers of *Die Zukunft*, a publication with a different agenda, have the right to oppose any such attempt. I do not consider it my calling to play gatecrasher or to sow the seeds of dissention. My sole purpose is to dispel false impressions and to provide an accurate picture of the ideas held by the better part of German anarchists.

The conscious, willful, methodical formation of a personal stake and collective fate of both smaller and larger communities is a major attribute of the *Kultur Mensch*. This virtue manifests itself in humanity's fight, first against the humbling and oppressive force of nature and then against humanity's self-obstructive qualities and bad faith. History to this point has been comprised of two things: first, the countless, isolated events of an unconscious, stifling, and deterministic evolution, for which, just as for all other natural phenomena, the so-called laws of nature can be construed. Second, there are the conscious actions of individuals or communities, often resulting in effects bearing little relation to their original intent. Unquestionably, the various



of phenomena on the spectrum can be slotted into different categories of truth. Thus, the phenomena of desire and motivated action lend themselves, even when less certain, to the establishment of axioms.

I'll state here: civilization has arrived at the point where it can be successful in overcoming these so-called laws of nature, whose development emerged from the general aggregation of many small coincidences. Humans now have the capacity to freely and independently create a life that is their own. The battle against this hostile environment has not stopped and cannot stop. But now it is consciously waged against the one foe that bars humanity's path to great fulfillment.

In the past, two internally related factors hindered humanity's ascension. First, a lack of consciousness, a certain torpor, and the narrow-mindedness of the masses, as opposed to smaller groups, even though there is no natural difference between the two. Certainly, nature produces both the intelligent and the dim, the strong and the weak. The contention that the neglected masses are essentially populated by dolts, while the smart and strong reside only among the fortunate few, however, would not occur to any honest person. Second, Humanity has been oppressed not because disunited people struggled against a natural and hostile environment, but rather because they fought and oppressed one another. To be sure, it has been the tiny privileged elite, who have used every physical and spiritual means at their disposal—using the ignorance of the great mass of people, to keep them gagged and oppressed—right up to the present day.

Anarchism's lone objective is to reach a point at which the belligerence of some humans against humanity, in whatever form, comes to a halt. And with this end point in mind, people must transcend themselves in the spirit of brother and sisterhood, so that each individual, drawing on natural ability, can develop freely.

*Homo homini lupus*—man is a wolf to man. That was, as a practical matter, mankind's motto in the 1800 years that passed since Jesus spoke the words: love your neighbor as you love yourself. Anarchism isn't interested in postulating a God, or setting up another inflexible moral code, since we despise all coercion. Once the events of history and advances in technology have been analyzed once and tested again, Anarchism seeks just one thing: the forging of alliances among all those advocating a common interest when one needs to wrest concessions from nature by engaging in difficult, daily struggle. And when interests among people diverge, individuals will simply follow their own discretion; and it is again the union of various confederations that will protect the individual from the harmful actions of any individuals. It should be guarded against, however, that these confederations take on disproportionate power. It is in this sense that we call ourselves anarchists: we are for the benefit of the multitude because we detest all violence which deprives the enjoyment and autonomy as a result of deeply seeded cultural factors.

We repudiate, above all, the colossal image that impresses the delusive stamp

of authority, leaving only the imprint of docile adoration behind. We are talking in particular about the rigid institutions of long historical standing, into which people are born and to which they accommodate themselves, whether they regard them as reasonable and beneficial or not. Especially when it comes to the organs of coercive state power, the individual has ultimately but one choice: submission. The lone justification being that those who came before acquiesced in the same way as their descendants now do. The alternative is to radically depart from the *terra firma* of received life, for today there remains hardly a corner where the state hasn't laid its peremptory hands. The power of the church, admittedly still monstrous, nevertheless finds itself in a most timely state of decay. Thus, many are finding it possible to extract themselves, even if with difficulty. The state, resting on the same legitimate foundation as its sister, the church, namely the blind faith in authority, will decompose just as the religious orders have. Currently, humanity's real redemption lies not in compulsion and spiritual tutelage, were it even with the best intentions, but rather in freedom.

On the basis of state-imposed servitude, reinforced by the blind faith the masses devote to musty traditionalists and other remnants of a bygone era—above all to dynasties and patriarchies—the oppressive system of privileged private wealth rests. No world traditions, not even those with the weight of millennia behind them, can make justify before anarchists the custom that so few are able to lay real claim to ownership of land. Those who enjoy the fruits of its bounty play no actual role in harvesting it, yet they deny its yield to their toiling fellow man. No earthly power or widespread prejudice will deter anarchists from the conviction that the deprived and destitute must name what is theirs, that which is due the last and most wretched among them: land on which to stand, to stroll, to rest, and to work. He who complacently enjoys custody of inherited "rights" and privilege, (a custody secured only by enclosure behind high walls) reposing on moneybags, has once and for all alms to pay. These alms are paid to the oppressive regime, and its armed footsoldiers—deployed as they are against the 'enemy within'—whose continued power is secured by the dull patience and dissolute will of the masses. All this while enormous masses of people—who have the same talents and needs as the oppressors themselves—must eke out a pittance for such necessities as the clothing on their backs.

Anarchists do not even claim, however, that the majority of oppressed people today even consider themselves victims. It may also be the case that among our own ranks, compassion and love are not necessarily the right words to describe our deepest motives. As for my animating force, it lies in the repugnance at the humanity that encircles us, a rage at the indolence of the rich who blithely build their happiness on the ruins of the joyless existence of the dehumanized multitude. My rage dissipates not one iota when I consider the extent of the squalor to which

the oppressed are subjected. As they emerged from the mother's womb, the haves and the have-nots are as distinguishable as one egg is from another. And then, at the end of their miserable lives, spent as it is among the outcasts of society: slogging, these skeletons—the shadow remaining from an exhausting struggle for life—have scarcely enough money to bury their kin with dignity.

This assessment of our time and our future ideal of lives lived fully through free association is agreed upon by many among Germany's educated classes; yet they remain too remote to feel a true solidarity with us. The basis for this essentially rests on two elements. First on the incorrect, if also explainable, condemnation of the anarchist party (there is no anarchist party) and its tactics (there are no specifically anarchist tactics). Second, it depends on the widespread dispersion of general despair and skepticism with respect to the prospect of any such future ever emerging out of our present. To these men, Schopenhauer provides solace during their sleepless nights. Their daily work is the amelioration of the suffering which meets their eyes; they see it as just hopeless social reform that comprises a drop in the ocean. These skeptics, at least those of consequence, do not claim that they and those equally-privileged are actually superior from the standpoint of spirituality or morality. Certainly they concede—and we are of completely like mind here—that today in some districts material conditions are so squalid that some are born deprived of a healthy start to life. Fortunately, this perspective today remains an exception to the rule. By nature and with respect to their innate talent, however, the proletarian cultural world remains poor. Yet we think that both this degradation on the one hand and the pampered privilege on the other have begun to enter the flesh and blood of mankind; in fact they have begun to enter the sphere of the body and soul, whose qualities will be inherited by the coming generation. We contend that no language can be loud and decisive enough for the uplifting of our compatriots, so that they may be incited out of their engrained daily drudgery. A renewed social form must be spurred on, through the transcendence of the present spiritual inertia, in pursuit of energetic action, designed to break barriers, and to prepare new ground for our seed. *That* is the propaganda of the deed, as I understand it. Everything else is passion, despair, or a great misconception. It hasn't a thing to do with killing people; rather, it regards the rejuvenation of human spirit and will along with the productive energies unleashed by large communities.

Large-scale communities, I say. For, it is a great mistake, one not even overcome by the usually insightful Professor Stammler, who derives anarchist theory from the writings of Proudhon and Stirner—that anarchism means individualism and therefore stands, when so misunderstood, in opposition to socialism. Certainly, socialism for us means something quite different from the "abolition of the private ownership of the means of production." Our socialism doesn't speak even of collective

property, since behind it hides nothing other than the domination of a bureaucratic cabal. No, we speak rather of, to use Benedikt Friedländer's delightful expression, the "ownerlessness of nature's bounty." This means, once people have recognized their real interests, they will develop strong alliances that will guarantee everyone a share of the Earth's plenty. And when individuals or groups claim the means of production for their own purposes, then those remaining shall receive equitable compensation. I note here that Bruno Wille expands on this line of argument in his *Philosophy of Freedom*. One of the first, in contrast to the obscurantism of earlier and some present day anarcho-communists, to soberly espouse the ideas of anarchism, was indeed Benedikt Friedländer, in his rather suggestive pamphlet *Free Socialism Contra Marxist State Servitude*. This clearheaded thrust, recognizable in Paul Kampffmeyer's earlier pamphlet, *The Meaning of Unions*, represents, as I see it, the principle of the young anarchist tendency, on which Eugen Dühring and Henry George have exercised particularly strong influence, and not only here in Germany. Friedländer's pamphlet, even though it comes off as most modest and lacking in presumption, seems to me of much greater significance than, for instance, the works of Mackay, as referred to by Professor Stammler, as they are heavy on imprecision and pretension. Moreover, the Communist Kropotkin has the merit of having freed Anarchism from cliché by his detailed vision of a free society.

I have no misgivings in saying that strong organizations will exist in anarchist society too, just as I am certain that some already existing organizations will "grow into" Anarchism. Indeed, this terminology is suitable here—by that I mean, the organizations of real producers, namely, the workers. I allude in passing to the exceedingly suggestive state in which our language exists with respect to the words producer and worker. The worker isn't a producer *per se*, for where then do the proceeds of his work collect? And the producer is often no worker because—where is his work? I absolutely include among the ranks of the workers, whose unification shall be the basis for creating a free society, the leading lights of science, those experienced in exchanging goods, be they today called engineers, directors, salespeople, railroad bureaucrats or whatever else.

Of course, it absolutely doesn't occur to us to construct an artifice of historical development, by which—as a matter of material necessity—the working class, to one extent or another, is called by Providence to take for itself the role of the present day ruling class, to say nothing of the founding of the dictatorship of the proletariat. I have no hesitation in clarifying that class struggle fails to have this meaning for me. I am in no way of the opinion that once an individual has passed a certain threshold of wealth, that he then becomes an irredeemable reprobate, undeserving of any place in the coming society. It is, obviously, no more a scandal to have been born a bourgeois than a proletarian. More to the point, we anarchists are ready to regard anyone, regardless of their social class of origin, who considers our

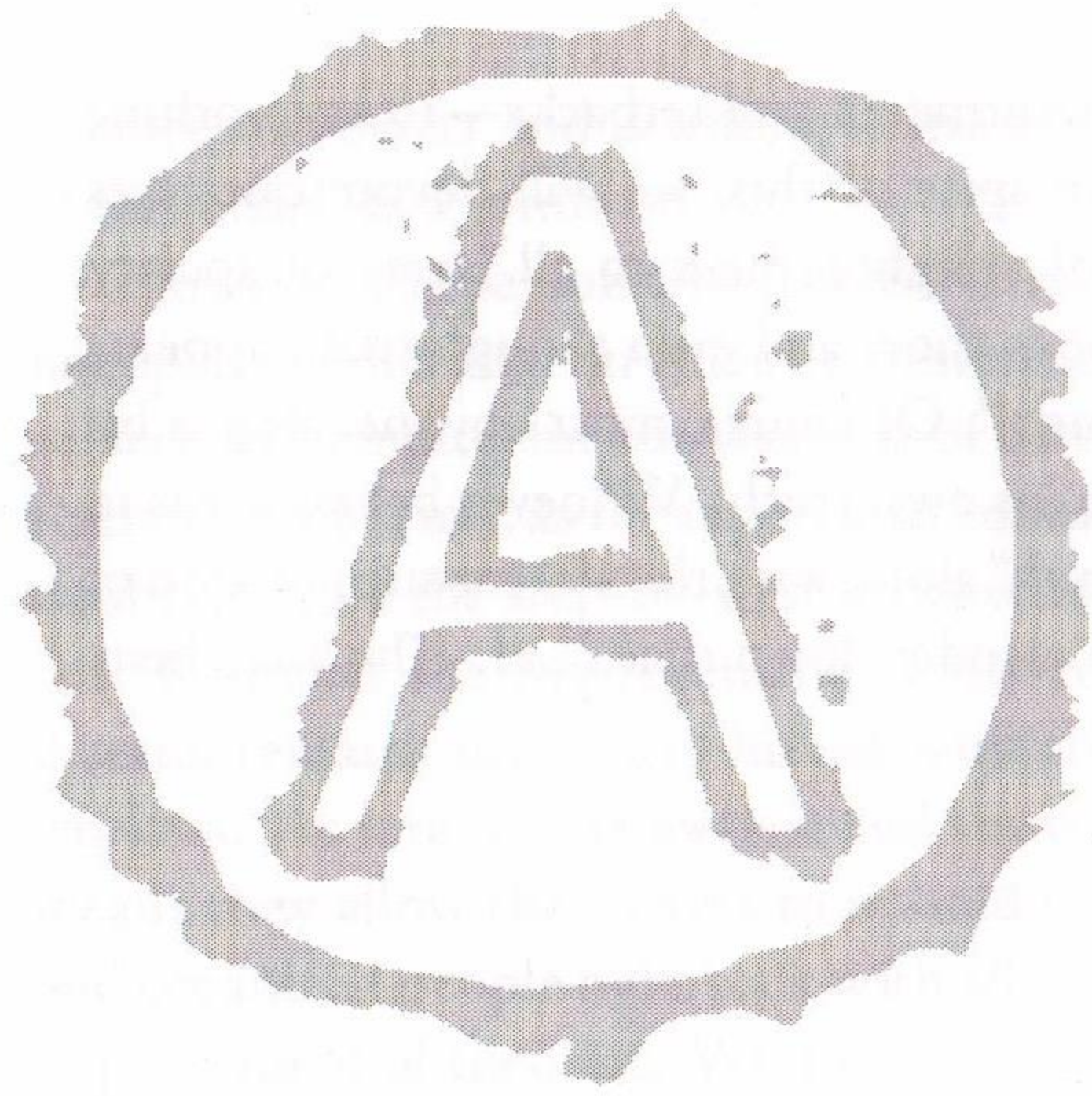
perspective correct and is willing to live a life that comports with the consequences of this belief, as a comrade.

However, the person who has recognized the truth in Anarchism, will certainly not spend all his time in clubs or conventions disputing which method the future society will employ for the washing of dishes or the efficacious cleaning of boots. Rather, this person, as far as personal courage and station in life allow, will without doubt demand the step-by-step improvement of his life's condition. Insight alone tells him that the improvement of his economic lot, as present circumstances dictate, remains intimately linked with the success of vigorous mass actions by workers. As long as the owners and the powerful have at their disposal all of the means they allow themselves to uphold the wretched conditions of today, so too will organized people fight back with all allowable methods for the comprehensive improvement of their lot. We don't preach class war but we acknowledge that it is often forced on the persons who desire an improvement in their condition. It isn't a matter of the destruction of modern culture, it's rather a matter of a vast army of those previously locked out, and who have by now acquired an appetite to also sit at the table and feast.

Those barely keeping their heads above water, to say nothing of the jobless and down-trodden are not well served by talk of revolution and future paradise. That's why relentless class struggle remains self-evident for those whose only recourse for the betterment of their life station, in today's society, is the determination of solidarity and the energy of engagement. And not to be misunderstood, I do not necessarily hold any particular enmity for many among the bourgeoisie. Just as Mr. von Egidy saw fit to call out: "all of us are among the guilty," so too could the bourgeoisie, product of millennia as they are, declare, "No one is guilty!" However, this won't be true much longer. With respect to our ghastly inheritance, we retain the right of checking its inventory, and so shall the demand ring ever more imperatively: to shunt aside the old plundering order, while salvaging what we can from the debris of the now obsolescent rot. This is the gauntlet that Anarchism throws down. The lower orders of society will never—in light of recent and mounting evidence of injustice—be brought so low as to accept a cease-fire in striving for the formation of a society which does everyone justice and therefore deserves the title 'just.'

Anarchists do not comprise a political party, since our scorn for the state forecloses our treading on the same ground with it and especially since we despise bargaining and haggling. We Anarchists want to be preachers: a revolution of spirit is, for us, the first order. What end can come from the obstinacy of today's elite when they repress the aspirations and desires of the masses of our people? We shall not abdicate responsibility, rather, we will quietly take it on, safe in the knowledge that future generations will thank us for helping them respect themselves once again. The consciousness that we will not only not see the culmination of our

victory, but rather will suffer fresh disappointments and setbacks—to say nothing of persecution—will not hold us back. In spite of this, we will devote ourselves to our life's work and to the expansion of enlightenment to all layers of society. We think, along with Schopenhauer: "Life is short and even though truth appears remote, the truth lives long: so tell the truth!" Of course, most anyone, after a bit of honest and courageous study, can name his own truth. Whoever believes it is in order to demand the imposition of "his Truth" along with the violent suppression of those with a divergent belief, may wish to wander down that road. The anarchists will walk down theirs.



## Walt Whitman

It seems the figure cut by the poet Walt Whitman and all of his writings on the United States of America want to respond to the words of Goethe. "America, you've got it better than our old continent / Lacking ruined castles and basalts!" And the response the United States wanted to yell across the ocean was a loud: yes indeed, so it is! Whitman himself has spoken with reverence of the many poets of the disunited states of Europe, while respectfully consigning them to the past era of feudalism. His lone exception is Goethe, who through his unique stature remains a king without a domain, a poet without a nation. America is for Whitman the realm of the future, the unfinished, much less fully-grown, overarching community of peoples.

It would be a petty detail, something perhaps approaching political jealousy, in criticizing the poet's standpoint as representing an air of dangerous and exaggerated arrogance. For, in order to understand Whitman's personal sensibility and that which he had for his people, one must disregard the art of politics, as it lies many stories lower than the heights of the poet's imaginative cultural observations. Whitman senses—even if he doesn't express it exactly so—that his people are a new beginning, that they are barbarian, derived from a mix of people all of whom contribute their slice of history. One recalls how the Germanic tribes, already in the times of Arminius, who had even taken his name from the Roman *gens* Arminia (what was his actual name? certainly not Hermann but perhaps Sigfried?), how deeply familiar these tribes were with the great Greco-Roman culture. Especially once the new mythology of Christianity overcame them, they commenced with

a completely new, seemingly primitive culture. So does Whitman, who senses in himself the great wild nature, stunted by no convention of any kind, see in Americans, a new, emergent people made of barbarians and beginners. And he wants to help create the new art which must light the way for all great peoples. His sensibility is much more a feeling for his people than for himself; therefore one should not be deceived by the mystical 'myself' of his verse. He has clearly sensed and said that he is merely a first, small step, a harbinger of a Periclean era in America. And he has always meant that America's proper mission is to be a few steps ahead, but that all peoples of the world will eventually walk down this path.

Which path? He asks just that in his "Drum-Taps," which reverberated during the Civil War.

Be not dishearten'd, affection shall solve the problems of freedom yet,  
 Those who love each other shall become invincible...  
 (Were you looking to be held together by lawyers?  
 Or by an agreement on a paper? Or by arms?  
 Nay, nor the world, nor any living thing, will so cohere.)

His 'democracy' is that of free, active people, who leave behind all of the strictures of class society, who, dispelling the longstanding specters of history each on his own stratum, each in his trade, each with whatever machinery, each man lives freely. Like Proudhon, with whom Whitman shared a common intellectual bond, he forged both a conservative and revolutionary spirit, individualism and socialism. The love between people, for the development of this spirit and for his artistic vision, isn't some general, blurry love of humanity. Rather, it shall be the kind of abiding love we find in the family. It shall bind people together, men with men, women with women and, of course, men with women, in new social groups. It is in the context of this love that feelings of solidarity, as reflected in Whitman's most beautiful and searching poems, converge with his dreams of new life and social forms. It is a fruitless endeavor, smacking of fashionable pseudo-scientific psychology, to regard these feelings of brotherhood as something perverse, pathological, or even degenerate. We must learn again that personalities and momentous times are also sentimental; and that it is in times of weakness and among dissolute generations that people shrink from the giving of unreserved and fervent feelings for one's loved ones, intimate friends, or the sea, the landscape, the cosmos. This cosmic love and exuberance of feeling was most peculiar to him and it was out of this chaos and unfathomable fervor that his new people would arise. One finds parallels here with the spiritual world and conventions of that artistic people, the Greeks. While Whitman's perception was peculiar, to construe the constitution of his nature as pathological could only be the work of the dilettantes of pseudo-scientific psychology.

Resident in the nature of visionary imagination, all feeling and in all creation is eroticism. Had Whitman, as Faust had, taken on the translation of the Book of John, his first sentence would have had to be: "In the beginning, there was feeling." He accentuated, quite consciously, that feeling, and with it poetics, was the beginning of all life and all mankind, for he knew on which flank Americans were most vulnerable. "What American humanity is most in danger of," he said, "is an overwhelming prosperity, 'business' worldliness, materialism: what is most lacking... is a fervid and glowing nationality and patriotism, cohering all parts into one. Who may fend that danger and fill that lack in the future, but a class of loftiest poets?" He maintained that only a great people can have great poets but in the beginning it has to be poetry that creates a great people, thus bestowing "artistic character, spirituality, dignity."\*

The poet, then, that Whitman, with his self-conscious mission, wanted to be was simultaneously a priest, a prophet, and a creator. That he exercised, and continues to exercise, an extraordinary influence on the spirit of his fellow Americans is certain. What the future holds, whether such an audacious proclamation will be realized, whether this will and imagination can be fulfilled to help create a vibrant reality, remains an open question. This much is clear, that he is America's greatest poet and that he is a self-consciously powerful lyricist for the rest of us. And that he has given lyricism a new form comprising a colossal new range of subjects which encompass all elements of the spiritual and temporal world.

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars...

In this spirit, he named his first book of poetry "Leaves of Grass" (1855). For the next 30 years, he compiled his entire poetical work in continuously updated editions of his book.

Whitman, born on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, 1819, as the son of a carpenter in the state of New York, lived a quintessentially American life until fairly late the poet in him broke free. He attended elementary school, worked then for attorney, then for a doctor, became printer's apprentice, and at the age of 19, a teacher. Subsequently he founded a weekly publication, traveled extensively as a typesetter and journalist, finally becoming, like his father, a carpenter in Brooklyn. Prior to that time, he had already published a variety of essays as well as novellas and novels. During his time as a carpenter, less as a direct consequence of the physical labor, rather as a matter of his leisurely attitude, (he was frequently complained of in the family regarding the frequency of his strolls and was called a layabout) he was overcome by the New. All at once, a new spirit, a new form, and so with this sense of infinite vistas came the infinite material. Later, during the Civil War, he volunteered as a nurse for three years, during which time he demonstrated the love and suggestive

strength of his person—all of his pictures show his inner self was reflected in his physical appearance—through both his conversation and his empathetic, silent attendance. For a good stretch he held a minor government post where he couldn't avoid reprimand for the sake of his poetry. In 1873 he suffered his first stroke, but retained his strong and prodigious spirit. He lived from the output of his writings as well as the support of his circle, which grew and grew around him. He died in Camden, New Jersey on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March, 1892.

It was not before the age of 30 that Whitman grew into his poetic craft. What he wrote before bore scant resemblance to the essence that eventually emerged. He was one who bloomed gradually until his substance burst forth with unrestrained suddenness. The forward to his 1855 work unified the ripeness of a well-grounded man with the passion of a youth. "The most affluent man is he that confronts all the shows he sees by equivalents out of the stronger wealth of himself." This is his first discovery—only later will we find the influence of Hegel and Fichte, as indicated by Bertz in an otherwise tedious book—Emerson had already left his imprint: namely, that the individual, in his spirit, embodies the entire world as the world is nothing more than an unending bounty of microcosms, a pluralistic and innumerable tally of 'identities' emerging from the conscious interconnections in the stream of life. That which he presents to Americans as the religion of the universal spirit is a new form of the eternal teachings of the philosophers and mystics from India via the Christian mythology through the magicians of the Renaissance and further to Berkeley and Fichte, right to the present day. Against this, today's so-called monism bears only a passing resemblance to this realization. Related to Whitman's teachings is only the non-renunciatory, but joyful and vibrant magical pantheism as it was developed in the Renaissance under the influence of Nicholas of Cusa, Paracelsus, Agrippa von Nettesheim, and comparable figures. The superstition of these thinkers should not disrupt our comparison because that was the origin of their natural 'science,' just as Whitman indulges in the natural 'science' and technique of our day. Yes, one finds overtones in even the form of those Renaissance wizards—with whom Whitman would scarcely have been acquainted. In that spirit did Agrippa von Nettesheim conjure the powerful motto of his book "Of the Scientist's Conceit," which is, in terms of spirit and form, essentially Whitmanesque.

Among Gods no one remains unpunished by Momus  
 Among heroes Hercules hunts all monsters  
 Among demons rages the king of the underworld Pluto against the shades  
 Among philosophers Democritus laughs at everything  
 While Heraclitus weeps about all  
 Pyrrho knows nothing of anything  
 And Aristotle claims to know all  
 Denouncing all is Diogenes

Nothing escapes Agrippa. (Whitman's 'Myself'). He scorns, knows, knows not, weeps, laughs, rages, punishes all: even the philosopher, the daemon, the hero, Gods, and the entire earth.

Whitman undoubtedly stands in close proximity with the age-old Indian poets, who by no means identified the feeling that the "I" is a World Identity with pessimism or escapism. In America his poems were received as an amalgam of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *New York Herald*. Quite amusing, and quite false. For the *Bhagavad-Gita* entirely encompasses in itself that which was here attributed to the *New York Herald*. Namely, it catalogues and collects the world's tangible realities and the Indian poet offers images that are every bit as modern as the world of technology, nature, and culture that Whitman appropriates in his work.

When reading his poems, nothing is more evident than the feeling of authenticity, the complete absence of some sort of Alexandrian overtone. While Whitman was well-read, he was hardly a pedant; he simply reflected that which was already within himself. That's why the parting words to the reader in "Leaves of Grass" ring so true.

Comrade, this is no book,  
Who touches this touches a man,

As is every authentic artist, Whitman was fully aware of the dimensions of his creation. The best of what might be said about him either critically or aesthetically, he says himself. The significance of his poetry lies in its 'suggestiveness,' the evocative power of an orchestral conductor who feeds the eyes, not the ears. It is an apparition that floats before us, providing the atmospheric for the theme or idea in which our own experience will further develop. He is a poet of extraordinary sensuousness and perspicacity; he appears to ponder exclusively through the senses. The abstractions inherent in his inner experience preserve this concrete character. Even when he wishes to express the inexpressible or to explain it, nearly to the point of stammering, an inward contemplation cries forth from the very first stanza.

There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but I know  
it is in me.

In this way he instantly creates for us a sense of vibrant life experience. Such a graspable tally of individual realities, all belonging to a greater whole, can act as a poem, even without an expression of how the experience feels, just as long as these realities remain filled by strong sensuality. I want to give an example which I have on occasion used to trick some friends. Quite a few people might take this poem as one of Whitman's, as indicated by the title *Night at Camp*

Attention! The sentry before the tent  
Attention! The infantry scout  
Attention! When the patrol arrived  
The back and forth of the sentry  
The clatter of the saber against spurs  
They baying of the distant hounds  
The growling of nearby hounds  
The crowing of roosters  
The pawing (or) shuffling of horses  
The snorting of horses  
The hacking of the chaff  
The singing, discussing and quarreling of the people  
The thunder of canons  
The lowing of cattle  
The braying of donkeys

These apparent verses are Goethe's. They aren't verses however, they are rather more an attempt, on the occasion of the siege of Mainz, to record and exactly differentiate among those provocative and manifold noises, both near and far. I'm familiar with more than a few 'impressionistic' or 'modern' poems that are worse than Goethe's catalogue of tones.

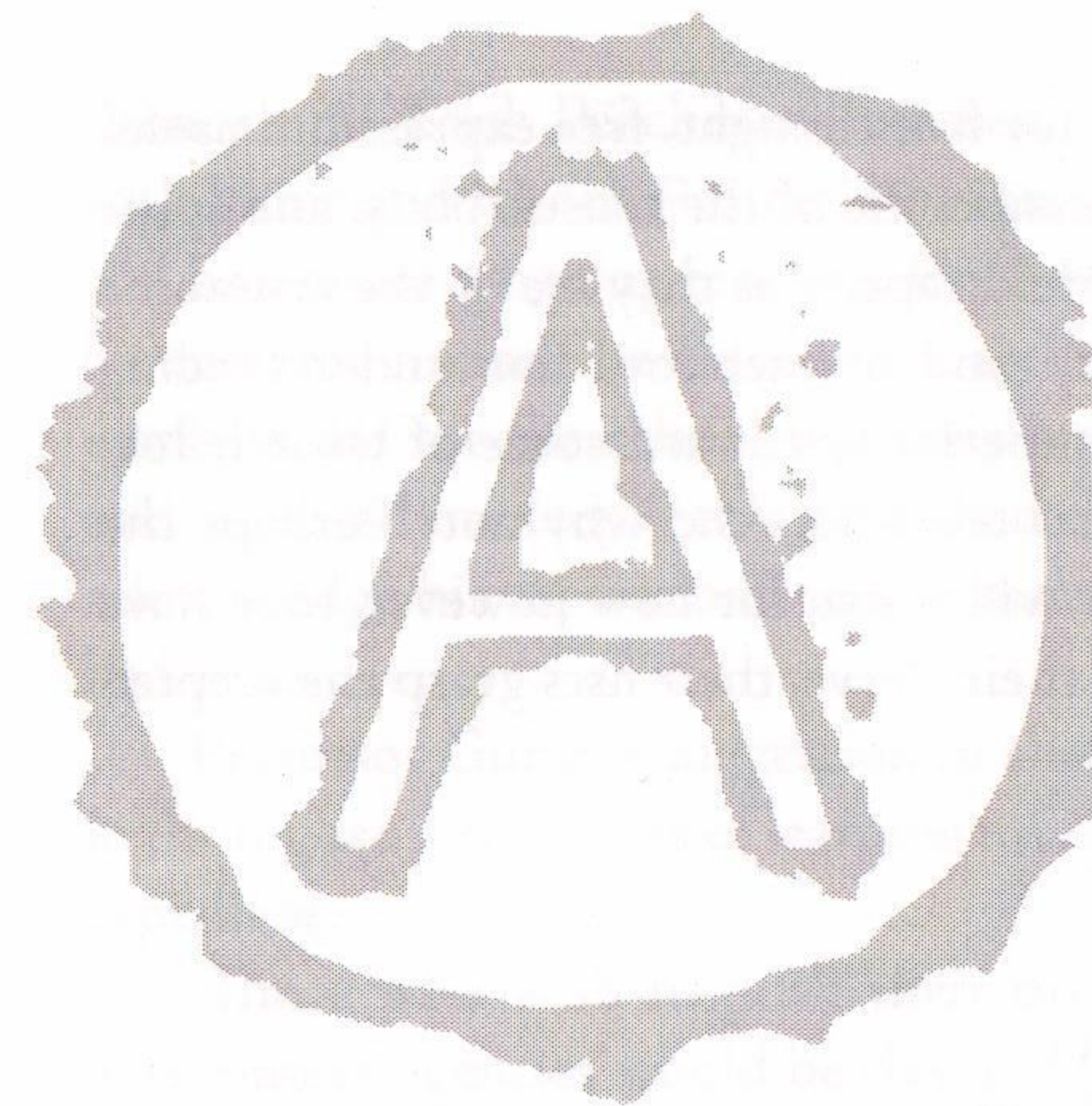
Since his poetical sensitivity, his rhythmic radiance, and his powers of observation are always present, there is hardly anything on this earth which in Whitman's hand isn't transformed into poetry. And he does not rely on inherited literary conventions; rather, his truly Homeric depths are filled with the New and the Novel. But is not this fellowship of realization and sensibility, this consciousness of all the world's affairs, simply the same as that which he wishes to draw out of humanity: love? For he who wanders 100 meters without love, wanders already in his death robe in his own funeral.

Whitman's form is not simply passionate improvisation, it is rather a starkly rhythmic joining as little as an impressionist painting, leaving an instantaneous apprehension is done by brush strokes. But the only laws of tempo which Whitman's form obeys are not the laws of any poetical tradition. The bases for this form should not be objectively and restrainedly depicted, but rather understood in all the reality of experience. This form acts as a powerful, dislocating departure based on actual

experience. This experience is more than a scant, isolated 'I.' It is much more one that derives everything that is out there from its own universality.

During the time of his caring for those wounded at the front, Whitman one day wrote in his diary. "It is curious: when I am present at the most appalling scenes, deaths, operations, sickening wounds (perhaps full of maggots), I keep cool and do not give out or budge, although my sympathies are very much excited; but often, hours afterward, perhaps, when I am at home or out walking alone, I feel sick and actually tremble when I recall the case before me." He wrote that passage so simply in order to describe a fact, not to transform it into an image. Yet, this passage can illustrate his whole nature and the entirety and greatness of his character as a poet. Because when moving experiences return with even greater force, when memories storm in with the full weight of experience, it is a sign of his imagination which has visionary dimension. That is a sign of his sometimes visionary capacity for imagination—just as his conduct during the war indicated unshakable seriousness, and his inherent courage, his love of humanity.

\* As quoted in Walter Grunzweig's translation in the work *Walt Whitman & the World* edited by Gay Wilson Allen and Ed Folsom (University of Iowa Press: 1995)



## Youth's Suicide (1911)

Nothing in our time—not the crises of the poor, privation, hunger or homelessness—is so terrible and ominous as the ever-increasing rate of youth suicide. It's bad enough that young people are compelled—thanks to the church-inspired moral platitudes of their parents, teachers, of their entire *milieu*, which envelops beautiful and natural things in a haze of self-satisfied deceit—to pursue, in a stark and dreadful way, sexual gratification by way of a prostitute, where many contract syphilis and choose to die as a result of the desperation, the illness, and supposed sin. This is dismal enough. Even some among those who avoid infection from their sexual experiences, whether by virtue of heredity or inurement, nevertheless fall so sick and weaken so that they can no longer bear life. The most gruesome reality is that more and more youth settle on suicide, not because they are physically or mentally ill, not because they are incapable of meeting the demands made of them at school, but rather because they are too talented, too unique.

Let me be clear. There exists a distinction between sickness and health; and as for sickness, there are those who bear a measure of responsibility. There also exists, however, the norm and deviation from the norm. The school system sets up certain standards that must be attained. Parents send their insufficiently proficient children to the academic schools with the expectation of particular societal benefits and associated status. The child is incapable of fulfilling the prescribed role, falls ill, becomes despondent and commits suicide. Against these children a crime has been committed: by the society, by the parents, and by the teachers.

However, others stray from the norm in other respects. In the later grades, they

outgrow the school experience; they yearn for free thought, free expression, useful endeavors, and the pursuance of an inexpressible life of the senses, body, and spirit through love, art, achievement, and work. Held captive as they are by the gruesome dullards who administer their prison, they find neither love nor understanding nor freedom. They do exhibit feelings of superiority toward some of their fellow students and later particularly towards their teachers. And why not? Perhaps the sense of their own talent and individuality will wane; for now however, they have the genius of youth, their heart is worn on their sleeve, their fists grasp the scepter, and the world is theirs.

Young Siegfried was a proud boy  
From his father's castle descended he  
Resting in father's house was not his fate to be  
Rather wander out and about in the world did he

Just as other bygone heroes went striking  
Those forest and field dwelling dragons and giants

At 8 or 9 they've already memorized it, but no one ever bothers to explain what it means; no one encourages their right to wildness and boundlessness. For us adults, freedom means order and self-discipline, for youth, at least for a time, it is allowed to mean something else, even if it means passion and impetuosity. How all that, often at home and always at school, is brought low and dissolved by the murky backwash of insipid Philistinism!

Ludwig Gurlitt, one who has frequently written about the crisis of the schools, with robust words and an energetic air, has now published in the Berliner Tagesblatt of April 4 the gripping letters written by friends of three gymnasium students who had shortly before killed themselves in Leipzig. Here are a few passages: 'I am certain that Friedrich Hammer would still be living today had he not faced the prospect of setting foot inside that school again, as the thought of returning to school was the final straw in precipitating his act. Everyone knows the kind of strain involved when one has to resume this enforced work. He too was coerced, as his own readings drove him to grasp for different values...' Werner Naundorf was and remained the personified opposition to the humanistic *Gymnasium*...what he wanted was meaningful work that challenged him, even if to the point of exhaustion. For him, this related to issues of the national economy...what he hated was the frittering away of time, which the school required him to endure. He was active in the Social Democratic movement, more attracted to its ideals than to its practical consequences, since they challenged his privileged self...he realized that at the core of the maelstrom of terminology to which we are subject lay a reactionary spirit. He yearned for useful work and as a result became fully alienated from the school

curriculum.' Erich Pöschmann seemed to me a victim of the dilemmas that come with home and school. Protest! His family was conservative, the school reactionary, and he a thoroughgoing modern. Erich worked in school only in order to please his parents; for himself he delved into art history. He wanted to be an architect. The work he did for the school was only a concession to its authority. As he himself said, it hurt him deeply that he lacked the strength necessary to make his parents acknowledge his aspirations and to make known to the school his contempt as he had to us.'

Professor Gurlitt's suggestion to shorten by one year the duration of schooling in the higher institutions of learning misses the target; it is a shabby, inconsequential expedient.

Those who wish to push their proposals on professors, school boards, and government agencies would be clever to demand specific measures. However, from such overtures, I await nothing decisive. To be clear, the worst of this situation is not that it is as it is, but that it causes the effects it causes. The worst of the students suffering is caused by the state of our society.

Said differently, in other eras, among other peoples the response to such oppression would be resistance; the consequence of sterile tyranny would not be sickness, infirmity, and meek escapism, but rather virile rebellion.

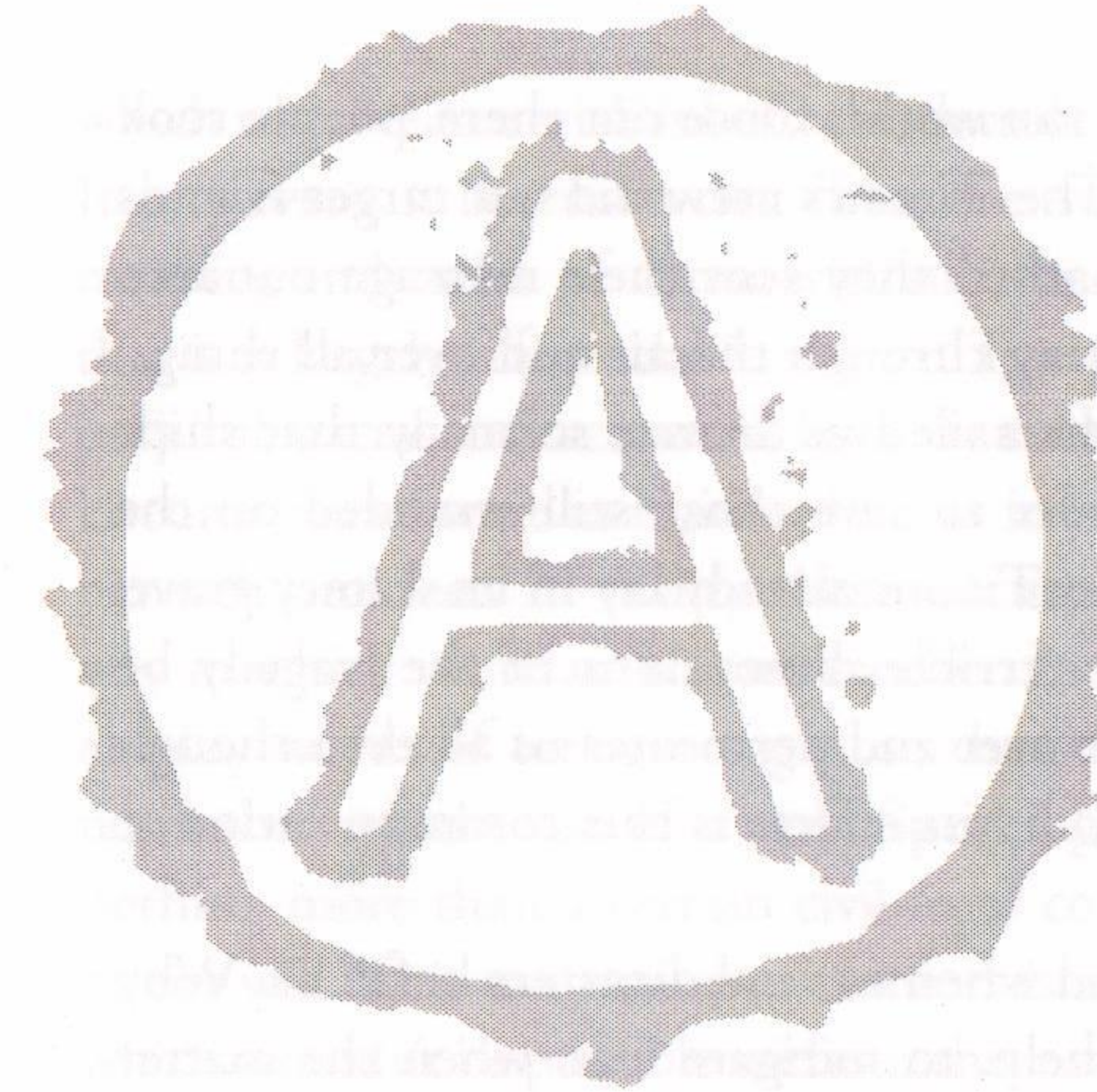
In the writings of the schoolmates of the dead, one thing turns up repeatedly, it is that which we recognize all too well in this young generation: an illusory maturity and objective self-awareness, a certain tone of self-centered melancholy reminiscent of a coquettish pose. We know this stagnant youthless youth, whose numbers continue to climb. These young people are not only the product of reactionary schooling, but also modern literature. The schools could well be less miserable than they are, if only those artists and novelists, who were products of them, didn't remain so alienated from the people and public affairs.

Where are those who were once in these schools, over whom a shudder still runs when they recall their school days? Where are they when the time comes to fight against this school system and that which sustains it? Where are they when the time comes to create something new? Where are they when the time comes to bring joy to the young generation in these schools?

Students, artists, writers, working men and women must join together and devote themselves to the young men and women, in word and deed, in conduct and in friendship. Parents, even the best among them, are not enough; youths require comrades and alliances. I'm not demanding the foundation of the 1001<sup>st</sup> club or reform group, but rather solidarity with the youth so that they can escape their individual torment and can therefore elevate themselves into participation in public life. No government and no police force can hinder our sparking a strong youth



movement. Not only do young people need the public sphere to help them in their struggle to grow up and to draw on the exhilaration of life, but it is also the public sphere that needs youth and its wild and great exuberance. How else to leave behind the swamp of reaction, the scheming and empty quarrels of rudderless political parties, and the languishing state of these evermore artful and artificial weaklings, so that we may regain our original briskness and healthy daring.



## The Titanic's Message [1912]

New materials are discovered; new technologies are invented. Whether from the perspective of faith, medical superstition, or economic interest, each new material advance prompts the same question: 'Which sickness will it remedy?' With each new technological advance, the militarists from the Minister of War to the armchair general ask: 'How does it further the art of war on the sea, the land, and in the air?'

With respect to life's basic requirements, its protection and preservation, man is resigned to expect almost everything from the treasures of nature or the wonders of God, but little from his own strength. Were there a recovery or an emergence from this weakness, due to nothing but pure strength, it would be considered a miracle.

Yet the lethal strength of man reveals itself in the use of primitive tools, even his bare hands. Every slap, each assault, and the deathblow teach him further.

This is not the place, nor is it my intention, to discuss the causes of the nameless disaster that befell the *Titanic* on its maiden voyage. Neither will the focus be diverted to the misuse of technology nor for the sake of competition or the pursuit of records. We ponder neither the dead nor those responsible for their deaths but rather the survivors and their seemingly miraculous rescue due to recent technological innovations. The sense of urgency that overcame us after hearing the first, false word that all had been rescued shall not vanish. This gratitude shall not lose its blessed strength only because the misused technology killed so many. The rescue of hundreds through the wireless telegraph should give us a signal. We must now reflect on how the methods we employ, even if sometimes unintentionally, to ease, beautify, and save life, might be used to better effect.

Silently, the *Titanic's* SOS flew around the world. Once out there, people took note by experiencing the image as it was. The *Titanic's* crew did not target friends or summon the responsible authorities. Rather, they sent their message out into the ether, where it rounded the globe, floating through the air and over all things. Wherever the mute call registered, strangers sailed in droves; so many that ships from far and wide hurriedly arrived in order to save those still stranded on the open sea. Most of them arrived too late; the *Titanic* already lay in its watery grave. Neither should the minor details nor the terrible dimensions of the tragedy be discussed. The noblest thing, which washes over and permeates us all even though it is incomprehensible and only understood by its effects is this communication at lightning speed by humanity.

We always seem prepared to lend a hand when natural disasters befall us. Why then do we lack this same willingness to help, to mitigate loss, when the matter of righting the damage wrought by some men on others presents itself? Why are we so lacking in spirit and sense that we adapt our labor-saving and labor-easing technological advances to a system in which each savings results in unemployment and all its horrible consequences? Why have we created a system in which nearly every advance in efficiency is transformed into economic competition among the sexes, when not the outright exploitation of child labor? Why are we such technological geniuses, but such helpless economic bunglers?

When that significant disaster the Lisbon earthquake struck, the earth's master rose in the form of Voltaire, gazed heavenward asking: 'Why?' He found among the heavens, the theologians, and teleologists no answers and hence grew accustomed to inquiring further. Why does it rain in the ocean while so many lands are parched? Why do we exist? Why does anything exist? Within these many questions were other questions that he and his time could not recognize that were for someone else and of a different character. Why do we always lament our misfortunes and yet perpetuate them all the same?

The matter of truth in the world is another question; so is the question of human conduct. We cannot alter the essence of the world, but we can change ourselves, as it is commonly said; it would be better to say that we are something quite different from the way we present ourselves, how we behave, and how we view ourselves.

Do we not also want to apply, as Voltaire did to Leibnitzian optimism, occasioned by that natural catastrophe, a serious, searching reevaluation of our own indolent routines, the way we waste and misuse our strength? Should we not do so while the *Titanic's* SOS still quavers in the air bearing a message reaching the remotest of stars, a message that they don't understand which we definitely should: the healing and life-affirming strength of our spirit.

The *Titanic's* message came into being, by virtue of man's learned ability to use the air waves in the service of communication. Philosophers teach us that everything,

which we label 'material,' is better understood in terms of movement, force, or relations. In any event, it is certain that there are many things to which our language ascribes meaning indicative of a material substance, where simple contemplation indicates that it is largely referential in nature. The conditions or circumstances in our private, political, social, and economic lives are such relations; we speak and behave as if these 'circumstances' were as rigid as fate, as immutable as a meteor or the trembling earth beneath our feet. In reality these circumstances are convenient shorthand for the way in which we relate to one another. In order to make it yet more comfortable we employ words of foreign origin, so that we might better obscure the source of the noun through the use of a verb. Speaking then of the state, we regard this word as nothing more than a certain civil-legal construction, existing only at the discretion of our will. This concession to comfort is a great sign of our common understanding, which wouldn't be possible without this materialization of the fluidity and spirituality of relations. Yet, it is a curse for the attainment of knowledge, because we mistake a mere representation for reality; and so it is a major curse for the type of understanding necessary for the establishment of just human relations in society. This rhetorical complacency then becomes a lethargy of the heart. Jakob Wassermann in his 'Kaspar Hauser,' provides an example of the hard-heartedness with which people degrade one another in the private sphere. At the very worst, this numbness of relations then spreads throughout society. We consider, as just stated, the representation of relations as an entity or substance. If for example we remind ourselves that money is nothing but a blank mirage, an alluring representation, then we would understand that it is nothing but a binding specter, just as much as capital and credit are.

Technology has outgrown us, literally: the discoveries and innovations have embedded in them far more knowledge and understanding than our minds are capable of absorbing. There are old myths which grow rigid, mere anecdotes, or dried out illusions until a poet infuses them with a deep resonance so that we come to believe that it was always embodied. As Goethe did with the legend of Iphigenia, Kleist the story of Amphitryon, and Schelling and Hegel the trinity, they made it live again. And so must the strength of spirit, fantasy, passion, and the poetic vision envelop our technology, which has become a monstrous myth

...Here Fall the Sacrificial Ones  
Neither Broken, Blank, nor Lame  
But Silent Fodder all the Same...

that can only be delivered from its stagnation and be given its true meaning. We will not, in spite of all the censorious talk, indulge in censorship. We will not, in spite of the critique of language, abolish words, and we will not, in spite of our criticism of society, abolish the traditions of millennia. In the same way,

we will not do away with new discoveries, which hold a blessing in them even though they often only provoke a curse. But, as the Jews celebrate Jubilee and the Greeks their Seisachtheia, we languish in this increasingly withered time awaiting a rejuvenation of spirit. We await the rebirth of age-old, authentic relations between people, relations which are today largely oppressive; we await the time when the state will become humanity's public life; we await the time when technology will become the tool of mutual aid and the alleviation of hardship and the beautification of life.

The *Titanic's* message is only one of the many indicators that humankind is evolving. Humanity hasn't yet fully arrived, though it is alive in the Becoming. There is little about which we can speak with such probability, with such certainty, as that which is reserved for our time and no other before it, namely, the emerging reality of humanity's ties and common bonds. The coming together of the planet's peoples was brought into being as a realistic possibility by technology, just as it was brought into being as a spiritual imperative by Jesus of Nazareth. Humanity's reality, this collective sum of the planet's dwellers, was constructed by technology just as Jesus of Nazareth challenged and sought to construct our spirituality. When that spiritual demand was there the realistic possibility was lacking; now that the realistic possibility exists, must the spiritual demand be lacking? It will be lacking as long as a concept of humanity does not live in peoples, in communities, in the hearts and minds of individuals.

As the news of the disaster and the SOS of the *Titanic* raced around the world, humanity at the same time read the news of the precipitous American diplomatic cable to Mexico. They read that the revolutionary General Orozco threatened to shoot his North American prisoners, and that the commander of the regular troops responded by threatening also to shoot his prisoners without hesitation. A repetition of the terrible events which engaged Versailles and the Paris Commune, where each side tried to force the other to give in, executing prisoners and hostages, a reciprocal attempt to force the other's hand towards humanitarianism through inhuman acts. And just to multiply the inhumanity, the interference of the U.S., which claims to work on the grounds of international law and humanitarianism, derives only from a violent desire to conquer—a political reason with yet another reason behind it: the financial interest of a few billionaires.

Spirit has created the means for humanity. The means to avoid all of this have always been there. We need add nothing elaborate, we need only find again that which cannot be lost in ourselves, it is that which we are *essentially*: the bond and the truthful life of the spirit. Living unjustly is living falsely; the false life is living death. That we must go on, courageously and passionately, to live life, the humane life, that is the message the *Titanic* leaves us.



## Social Democracy in Germany

*Published by Freedom Press in 1896 at 127 Ossulston st., Euston Road, London, W.C.*

This report, addressed to the London International Congress, has for its chief aim, to give to the non-German Socialists of other countries a concise picture of the German labor movement as seen by us Anarchists, situated as we are in the midst of the labor movement, but outside the Social Democratic Party.

In no other country has a single party, an isolated sect, managed to such a degree to pass for the unique and only legitimate representative of the proletariat as this happens in Germany. Everywhere else, before all in the two countries where, in my opinion, Socialism and the evolution towards socialization are most advanced, in France and England, different currents exist side by side, not always peaceful yet recognizing each others right of existence. All efforts made in France, England, Italy, Spain, Holland, to represent the Marxist theories or in general a party formed after the model of intolerant and despotic German Social-Democracy as the sole rightful theory or party, have hitherto led to miserable failure and shall always fail, thanks to the political maturity and the free temper of these peoples. Only in Germany such a severely disciplined and pattern-cut labor party exists—huge masses went to dance to the tune played by the upper regions of the party government. To understand this we must remember that Germany enjoys the doubtful honor of being the home of monarchism and militarism. This imperialist and military spirit, this dependence and obedience of the masses exists, we are sorry to say, also in the poorest classes of the people, which are socially, politically and economically oppressed to the utmost—and the German Social Democratic party in the most shameful way used

this reactionary tendency of an oppressed people, this dependence of the masses, as the basis upon which an extremely strict party rule could be constructed, strong enough to crush on every occasion the rising germs of freedom and revolt.

The leaders of German Social Democracy (clever stage-managers and journalists as they are) contrived in a very clever way to show up their party before the eyes of other countries and to represent the German labor movement as the strongest movement on the face of the globe. I, as a German revolutionist and Anarchist, consider it my duty today, as three years ago at Zurich, to tear off this painted mask and solemnly declare, that the apparent splendor of the labor movement in Germany is but skin-deep, whilst in reality the number of those who fully and conscientiously go in for a total regeneration of human society, who struggle to realize a free Socialist society, is infinitely smaller than the number of Social Democratic voters.

Voters—this is the word which, on the surface, creates such an impression upon people of other countries; whilst it has become the true curse of the German labor movement. By the tactics of Social Democracy in that country, concentrating all political interests in parliamentarism, all independent action of the proletariat, all educational work, the struggle for ideas, and, above all, the economic struggle, have been relegated to the background. The chief aims of Social Democracy consist in catering for votes; and an electioneering contest is only used to induce the uneducated masses, by all the tricks of demagogues, to vote (secretly) for the Social Democratic candidate. Genuine Socialist propaganda, agitation against private property and all exploitation and oppression, is out of the question at the time of elections; nothing else is talked of save the reform of taxation, and other projects by which the poorer classes, the laborer or the artisan, the peasant or the petty official, may be benefited within the present bourgeois society by means of laws and the State. These laws (at the elaboration of which the Social Democratic deputies work with great assiduity in parliament and in the various committees) merely strengthen the State and the power of the police—the German, Prussian, monarchist and capitalist State of today—and it becomes more and more a question whether our Social Democracy thinks that some mere finishing touches applied to our centralized, tutelary, ceaselessly interfering police-state, are all that is necessary to transform the German Empire into the famous State of the future.

For not only at election times when the blind passions of the uneducated masses are played upon, the Social Democratic party denies the principles of Socialism, but it also takes part in parliamentary work entirely from the standpoint of bourgeois society. Nor is this even denied any longer. Often enough lately, Social Democratic leaders declared that in Parliament they content themselves with making merely Radical (bourgeois) Democratic demands; and that they do not dream of preaching the ideas of Socialism to deaf ears. If so, the question may be asked: "Why, then, do those gentlemen cast pearls before swine? Why do they not rather address those

who long for words of emancipation and of inspiration—the men and women of the oppressed classes?"

From the many materials at my disposal, which, if occasion offers, I am quite willing to place before the Congress, I shall only quote one quite recent example. For years, already—in fact since the foundation of the new German Empire, the propertied classes of Germany have urged the adoption of a uniform code of civil law, that is, a modification of the laws relating to private property, business relations, convictions, marriage, the family, etc... There was never a better opportunity offered (for the Social Democrats in Parliament) to expose and to shake the real foundations of bourgeois society. Against the German Empire, the Empire of the rich, the universal reign of freedom and justice ought to have been proclaimed; against the ridiculous attempt to put together once more the laws relating to private property, on the eve of a new time when the exploited masses shall make an end to private property, Socialism ought to have been put forward. And what great, new vivifying and fertile ideas might not have been uttered on marriage and the family! Had it not become necessary to say before all that marriage, free union and the family are not in the least any concern of the State, and are only matters concerning each individual for himself? But what did the Social-Democrats do? Nothing of the kind. Nothing was said on the foundation of modern society, no word spoken against private property as such, not a syllable uttered against the impudence of wanting to regulate private affairs by Statute Law, not a single word of principle, in short, no Socialist ideas were brought forward on this unique occasion. It must not be supposed, however, that the Social Democratic deputies kept silent altogether. Oh no, on the contrary they overflowed with shallow loquacity; endeavoring to tinker and patch up this poor bill of the rich classes whom blindness had struck. For hours they wrangled with the bourgeois lawyers on greater facilities for divorce, the wife's property, etc... It was a lawyers quarrel, but in no way a struggle between two opposed sets of ideas; between the rotten and doomed past, and the young, rising future. Coming times and Socialism have no place or vote in Parliament—this was proved once more on this occasion; and men who by their past ought to be Socialists, give up Socialism when once in Parliament, and become bourgeois reformers and participants of State power.

On various occasions during the last three years the German Social-Democrats proved that they decline to rouse the spirit of revolt slumbering in the masses and make it properly conscious of itself. On the contrary they did all to prevent powerful demonstrations of the oppressed masses, and to calumniate the acts of individuals, on the advisability of which everyone may have his own opinion, but which may at least be understood, and, owing to the murderous system under which we all suffer, excused. Vaillant and Henry, who doubtless stood up courageously for their acts, have been tried by the *Vorwärts* (the central organ of German Social-Democracy)

with greater severity and bitterness than by their bloodthirsty bourgeois judges. Dozens of times the *Vorwärts* called them madmen, fools, lunatics—although it is a matter of fact that however passionate and ready to use extreme means they have been, they were Socialists clearly conscious of their ideas, and in no way of unhinged minds. But hatred of Anarchists and fear that such acts of violence may jeopardize their own party, deprives such men of all feelings of justice, good faith, and even their right mind. Why does not the *Vorwärts* call the men of violence in the ranks of the government, the army and the ruling classes, lunatics? Why are its poisoned arrows only used against the unhappy men from the ranks of the oppressed, whom overflowing pity or extreme provocation, or cold, reasoning hatred drive to oppose illegal violence to legal violence? Never did the German Social-Democratic party of order doubt the sound reason of President Carnot, who signed so many death-warrants, nor that of Bismark or Moltke; but Caserio is called by the *Vorwärts* an "epileptic attacked by religious-anarchist mania." This is trimming and cowardly mendacity deserving of the sharpest castigation.

And how did the Social-Democratic party act on the occasion of the anniversary of the Franco-German war? In the beginning they sided with the general attitude of protest of the working classes. But after the well known speech of the Emperor, calling all who did not participate in this celebration "a mob unworthy of the name of Germans" and committing high-treason, the Social-Democratic party at once sounded a quick retreat. Mr. Auer, member of the party executive, delivered a speech refuting successfully all those aspersions. He explained that, if properly treated, Social Democrats were quite open to be loyal to the Crown, that they took part in the war with enthusiasm, that a restitution of Alsace and Lorraine to France was out of the question; the German workers had fought and died for the unity of the Empire; his words were "and strange would be the attitude of working-men to oppose the formation of a national State." He emphatically rejects the reproach of enmity against the Empire, and declares on his part that those are the real enemies of the Empire—who are opposed to manhood suffrage. He talked like a candidate for a place in the cabinet and not as the mouthpiece of an oppressed and mortally insulted class of producers.

And what was the attitude of German Social Democrats towards the May Day Demonstration? At the Zurich International Congress the strict cessation of all work on that day had been resolved. But, a few months after, the Cologne Conference of the German party almost unanimously declared the impossibility of such action under the present economic conditions; and it was resolved that only those workers should leave work on that day who could do so "without damaging the interests of the workers." All this is cowardly humbug. The economic situation in Germany is identical with that of Austria—and what would be impossible in Germany *has been possible* in Austria? The reason of this lamentable attitude only

lies in the so-called Social-Democratic voters and the May Day demonstrators; for the result would be a plain proof that though there exist many voters, these are by no means energetic and active Socialists. Besides this, the leaders are afraid, in general, of all independent action of the masses. Could not these masses see that independent action and organization is the right thing for them to do in all matters, and that it is of small use for them to have "representatives" in parliament? All that is done from below is repulsive to Social Democrats, who expect to solve the social problem from above—the committee room, the parliamentary platform, by means of the machinery of legislation.

I will not enter into fuller details in this report, which owing to want of time to elaborate a longer one must be a short one. But this one fact must be added: that the same aversion to any movements of the masses holds good with regard to STRIKES. Not only is the cessation of work on May Day not carried out; not only is the General Strike continually treated as a ridiculous idea, and in Auer's words a "general stupidity" (General blodsiun); whilst nearly all sections of the French workers are partisans of the General Strike—but in all larger strikes of single trades it becomes apparent that the Social-Democratic leaders are extremely displeased with them and will make an end of them as soon as possible. This was seen in a most conspicuous and odious way during the great strike in the tailoring trades in the spring of 1896, at Berlin and in other towns. As usual on such occasions, when it was essential to rouse the masses and prepare the strike, none of the leading Social Democrats were to be seen. But to this we are already used in Germany: in parliament, at the discussion of the most paltry and insignificant bills, these gentlemen are always in their places; but in the midst of independent economic struggles of the working classes they will mostly be looked for in vain. But on the occasion of the tailor's strike they were beforehand in the ranks of those who by all sorts of dark hints tried to discourage the strike and frustrate it. In this they did not succeed; the strike of the wretchedly paid women and men began and reached a height of passion, and dimensions unforeseen by everybody. More than 20,000 were on strike in Berlin, and their numbers were increasing daily. Suddenly the strike came to an end—the Social-Democratic strike leaders had concluded peace with the employers without consulting the strikers themselves. Of the essential items of the modest demands of the workers none were granted. At this juncture some Berlin Anarchists intervened, a leaflet was issued urging on the workers to remain on strike and not to throw up the struggle at a time when the movement was still increasing. And indeed, more than half of those present at fourteen large meetings resolved to remain on strike. Then the *Vorwärts* inaugurated a whole system of lying reports, and throwing suspicion and insults, so that it became impossible to keep together any longer the inexperienced and unorganized masses—mostly women. It was a general stampede, arranged and ordered by the German Social-Democracy.

Truly this was an occasion to learn to despise mankind thoroughly for those who, at that time, had to undergo these miserable insults simply for having advocated from good reasons the continuation of the strike, had their optimism and hope not been inexhaustible. Persons who in this way make use of their authority to the detriment of class struggle, have full reason to provide with passionate fanaticism for the non-admission to the International Congress of those who are willing to post them to an international pillory. It is because the Social Democrats are afraid of us German Anarchists, that they fight with such an odious intolerance against the admission of German delegates who stand outside of the ranks of Social-Democracy.

In conclusion, It becomes necessary to supplement this rapidly sketched, pitiful picture by some less gloomy touches. In spite of all tutelage and discipline, the spirit of the masses which comes to the front in spite of everything, is not unsatisfactory. Notwithstanding all Social-Democratic vilifications, the German workers begin to give up their fanatical intolerance against us Anarchists and other independent sections. In most of the industrial centers we are not interfered with, but listened to with manifest interest; revolutionary sentiment and ideas, never quite to be crushed in an oppressed class, begin to stir with new vigor. Doubt as to the value of parliamentarism begins to spread everywhere; it becomes manifest that education of the masses themselves is what is wanted, and that the masses themselves must struggle economically and organize new economic associations if they are to win Socialism. Economic struggles, demands for higher wages, and strikes have become more vigorous and frequent during the past year. Also the general interest in workingmen's productive associations on a co-operative basis is increasing—though meeting with the distrust of many in the Anarchist camp. The opinions of German Anarchists on this question are divided; still it must be mentioned that Anarchists were among the first to recommend this economic self-help, this solidary amalgamation of the interests of consumers as a means of emancipation, as a nucleus for the socialization of all wealth—in opposition to State Socialism and participation in government and parliament. In doing so we pointed out, the English Co-operative societies and the successful Belgian Associations. We are met by the sneers of the German Social-Democratic party; as a conservative party execrating all innovations they tell us that the situation of our country is different from those above-mentioned. This is an easy way to prove a point and shelve the matter, it is true; but we intend to show—also to our still reluctant friends—that also in Germany a strong co-operative movement can exist side by side with the Trade-Unionist movement, and that both shall be the main foundations of free, anti-statist, and anti-governmental Socialism.

We could also point out some other signs of the advent of a more free and lively spirit in Germany. They embrace not only—and not even in the first place—the working class, but ever increasing parts of the middle classes who thoroughly and

finally reject all prejudices and advocate the regeneration of human society. These efforts which are beginning to center around Von Egidy, a former lieutenant-colonel, are not to be underrated. Men who were formerly deeply imbrued with all the prejudices of religion, monarchism, militarism, capitalism—men of science, artists, soldiers, and priests, begin to emancipate themselves from the miserable present, the deathbed of intellects, and to work hand in hand with us for free thought and action, for a leveling of the political, social, and economic contrasts. I could but desire that a man of the brilliant energy of M. Von Egidy was present in London; our foreign friends would easily come to the conclusion that his manner of thinking and acting is in many respects much more advanced than the tactics of German Social Democracy, who, eager for domination as they are, sneer at the rise of any other movement besides their own.

So it becomes evident also in Germany—in spite of the oppression of all free currents from two different camps—that the old is rotten and ready to tumble down, and that something new, grand, magnificent, is about to be realized by the united efforts of mankind—hitherto for the greater part so much repressed: the free life of the individual on the basis of the interest of all, of solidarity, of Socialism. We Anarchists in Germany feel ourselves one and all as Socialists; and those who maintain that we are not Socialists, tell lies. What we fight is State Socialism, leveling from above, bureaucracy; what we advocate is free association and union, the absence of authority, mind freed from all fetters, independence and well-being of all. Before all others it is we who preach *tolerance* for all—whether we think their opinions to be right or wrong—we do not want to crush them by force or otherwise. In the same way we claim tolerance towards us, and where Revolutionary Socialists, where workingmen of all countries meet, we want to be among them and to say what we have got to say; we are men with the same intellectual capacities as all others. If our ideas are wrong let those who know better teach us better; but if we are right, if, which is our inmost conviction, the road to progress lies under the sign of Anarchy, then we shall convince you sooner or later of the truth of our ideas—if only you will listen to us, whether you be eager for conviction or not. And even if you deafen your ears against us, others shall come to listen to us and to understand us, and the logic of facts shall in the end carry with us also those who now resist.

“...The realization of socialism is always possible if a sufficient number of people want it. The realization depends not on the technological state of things, although socialism when realized will of course look differently and develop differently according to the state of technics; it depends on people and their spirit.... Socialism is possible and impossible at all times; it is possible when the right people are there to will it and to do it; it is impossible when people either don't will it or only supposedly will it, but are not capable of doing it.”

—Gustave Landauer

“For Socialism”, quoted in Martin Buber,  
*Paths in Utopia*, trans. R.F.C. Hull