For Community

The Communitarian Anarchism Of Gustav Landauer

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Biography

Gustav Landauer was born in Karlsruhe, Germany on April 7 1870 of bourgeois origin. At a very early age he came into conflict with both his teachers and parents, but in spite of this, excelled academically. Nevertheless, he dropped out of college after studying literature, philosophy and medicine. Landauer moved to Berlin, and for a short time was under the tutelage of Johann Most. (Later, in the opposite direction, the Tolstoyan anarchist, Benedikt Friedlander became a major influence.) From 1893 to 1899, Landauer edited *The Socialist*, which, in spite of its name, was an anarchist journal. Prison was to be his home in 1893, 1896, and 1899, each time for civil disobedience. When he attended the 1893 Congress of the Social Democratic International, August Bebel denounced him as a police agent. An attempt to enter the 1896 International Congress in London met with only limited success. (See Appendix for more information on the Congress) At this time he was under Kropotkin's influence *but by 1900 he had shifted toward a position much closer to Proudhon and Tolstoy, advocating passive resistance in the place of violence and looking toward the spread of cooperative enterprises as the really constructive way to social change.*[1]

In 1900 Landauer also joined the literary group, **Neue Gemeinschaft**, where he became friends with Martin Buber and the anarchist Erich Muhsam. Two years later he married and moved to England for a year, living next door to Peter Kropotkin. He was also friends with Max Nettlau and the novelist Constantin Brunner. About the same time, he edited Meister Eckhart's works, who along with Spinoza, had a great influence upon his thinking. Landauer became increasingly disillusioned with the left's sterility and dogmatism and began to move more toward communitarianism. The Socialist Federation was launched in 1908 to promote the development of communities and a year later *The Socialist* began publication again. In 1911 Landauer wrote his best known work, *For Socialism.* The Socialist Federation spread through Germany and Switzerland, with some twenty local organizations with meetings of up to 800 people. Landauer's anarchist opponents accused him of weakening the movement by siphoning militants away from the class struggle. But the attempt to create communities, free schools and cooperatives was cut short by the war. *The Socialist* ceased publication early in 1915, for obvious reasons.

Although active in opposition to the war, Landauer concentrated upon literature, writing plays and studies of Shakespeare, Hölderlin, Goethe and Strindberg. (He was fortunate to live long before PC and its "Dead European White Males" viciousness.) When the German Revolution broke out in late 1918, he was in Bavaria with his friend Kurt Eisner, who was leading the revolutionary movement. But Landauer became critical of his Eisner, wanting an out and out workers council republic and not just a left-wing version of social democracy. Only the workers councils seemed to offer hope for breaking with capitalism and the state.

Landauer joined the Bavarian Workers Council and had much support among the workers, leading a demonstration of 80,000 for a workers council republic. When the councils took over Munich, Landauer was put in charge of information. The Workers' Republic was of brief duration however, as a right-wing offensive allowed the Communists to take over. He was dismissed from his post. The Communist Republic was soon crushed by the proto-Nazi Freikorps. Landauer was arrested and placed in Stadelheim Prison. According to his friend Ernst Toller, "They dragged him into the prison courtyard. An officer struck him in the face. The men shouted, 'Dirty Bolshie! Let's finish him off!' A rain of blows from rifle butts descended on him. They trampled on him

[1] Woodcock, 407

until he was dead."[2] His last words were, "Go ahead and kill me! Be men!" The Junker aristocrat ultimately responsible for the crime, Major Baron von Gagern was never brought to trial.

While the mainstream anarchism movement, to say nothing of the left, has largely ignored Landauer's contributions, he was not without influence. His ideas were important to the German anarchist Erich Meusham, the economist, Silvio Gesell, the philosopher, Martin Buber, and the theologian, Eberhard Arnold. His thinking was important for the Christian communitarian Bruderhoff Movement and anarchist Kibbutzim in Isreal. Unfortunately, little of his work has been translated, so he is not well known outside of the German speaking world.

Landauer as Anarchist

He could be seen as following directly in the footsteps of Proudhon. Like the "father of anarchism" he was opposed to abstraction[3] and violence, emphasized regionalism, the creative forces and mutual aid. As with Proudhon, his individualism was **social** individualism. Or as Erich Mühsam put it, "...anarchy, the essence of which is characterized by Gustav Landauer as being social order founded upon a voluntary contract."[4] This viewpoint is echoed by another admirer, Eberhard Arnold, "...anarchy must here be understood solely in the sense of an order that is organic in its structure, an order based on free-willing associations."[5] As much could have been said of the Sage of Besancon. He was also familiar with, and appreciated Max Stirner, but as a "social individualist" he did not accept the Stirnerite form of individualism, feeling the individual "indissolvably bound" to both past and present humanity.[6] Other influences included the Tolstoyan, Benedikt Friedlander, Etienne LaBoetie and Kropotkin. Neitzsche, Goethe, Spinoza and Meister Eckhart were also important.[7] Landauer's world view can be seen as a synthesis of these thinkers built upon a foundation of Proudhonist anarchism.

The State

The following quote is probably the only bit of Landauer's writiing that is fairly well known, among anarchists, at least. "The State is a condition, a certain relationship among human beings, a mode of behavior, we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one and other... We are the State and continue to be the State until we have created the institutions that form a real community..."[8]

Note how he does not reify the State by turning it into an object above us and how he refuses to turn politicians into scapegoats, "**We** are the State..." But in spite of this fact, deep inside, we never really accept the State. It is imposed upon us, and in the contemporary world, at least, by

[2] ibid, 408

[3] Abstract thinking — one size fits all. Thus nationalism is abstract since it ignores regional differences. Another type is utopianism — someone dreams up a "perfect solution" to the world's problems — unlike Proudhon's or Landauer's anarchism which was rooted in the existing practice of mutual aid and the remaining aspects of community life.

[4] Muhsam, 30

[5] Arnold,

[6] Lunn, 153

[7] Landauer, 3

[8] Lunn, 226

ourselves. Community and State are two different entities. "The State is never established within the individual… never been voluntary… Once long ago there were communities… Today there is force, the letter of the law, and the State."[9] He went further than the usual anarchist concept of the State, "Landauer's step beyond Kropotkin consists primarily in his direct insight into the nature of the State. The State is not, as Kropotkin thinks, an institution which can be destroyed by a revolution."[10]

The end result of the replacement of free cooperation and its consciousness (the community) by the State is "social death."[11] This is very evident today with the destruction of community, the loss of voluntarism and solidarity — all replaced by statist systems and laws.

Martin Buber, using Landauer's conceptions, explains how the State "overdetermines" the amount of coercion in a society.

> People living together at a given time and in a given space are only to a certain degree capable, of their own free will, of living together rightly…the degree of incapacity for a voluntary right order determines the degree of legitimate compulsion. Nevertheless the de facto extent of the State always exceeds more or less — and mostly very much exceeds — the sort of State that would emerge from the degree of legitimate compulsion. This constant difference (which results in what I call "the excessive State") between the State in principle and the State in fact is explained by the historical circumstance that accumulated power does not abdicate except under necessity. It resists any adaptation to the increasing capacity for voluntary order so long as this increase fails to exert sufficiently vigorous pressure on the power accumulated… "We see," says Landauer, "how something dead to our spirit can exercise living power over our body."[12]

> There is only one way to overcome the power of the State according to Landauer and Buber. (The following is a paraphrase of Buber's statement.) "It is the growth of a real organic structure, for the union of persons and families into various communities and of communities into associations, and nothing else, that 'destroys' the State by displacing it… association without sufficient and sufficiently vital communal spirit does not set Community up in the place of the State — it bears the State in its own self and it cannot result in anything but State, i.e. power-politics and expansionism supported by bureaucracy."[13]

Violence and Social Change

As we saw above, Landauer did not believe in scapegoating and demonization, nor in spreading hatred and envy. The real enemy was not the bourgeoisie, but the present condition of the human spirit. This condition included abstract thinking, alienation, materialism and all round submissiveness. Without these, capitalism and the state could not survive.

[9] Landauer, 43
[10] Buber, 46
[11] Landauer, 7
[12] Buber, 47
[13] ibid, 47–8

Brutal acts could not give rise to a better world since "there can only be a more human future if there is a more humane present."[14] Abstraction, mechanistic thinking and cold blooded logic lies at the root of the terrorist mentality, not as is commonly thought, emotionalism. "They have accustomed themselves to living with concepts, no longer with men. There are two fixed, separate classes for them, who stand opposed to each other as enemies; they don't kill men, but the concept of exploiters, oppressors..."[15] "From force one can expect nothing, neither the force of the ruling class today nor that of the so-called revolutionaries who would perhaps attempt... through dictatorial decrees to command a socialist society, out of nothing, into existence."[16]

For Landauer, Tolstoy's non-violence "...is at the same time a means to achieve this goal, that all coercive domination collapses... when the slaves cease to exercise force..."[17] "Our solution is much more [than destruction]. First build up! In the future it will be apparent whether there still remains something that is worth destroying."[18] But even though he espoused non-violence, moderation, and building rather than destroying, he was a revolutionary, as we see in his leadership in the workers council movement in Bavaria. In fact, the life of Gustav Landauer (like that of Proudhon) shows how superficial is the view that moderation and non-violence are always non-revolutionary.

Martin Buber considered him to be a full-fledged revolutionary, though a non-violent one.

> Landauer said once of Walt Whitman, the poet of heroic democracy whom he translated, that, like Proudhon (with whom in Landauer's opinion he had many spiritual affinities), Whitman united the conservative and the revolutionary spirit — Individualism and Socialism. This can be said of Landauer too. What he has in mind is ultimately a revolutionary conservation: a revolutionary selection of those elements worthy to be conserved and fit for the renovation of the social being. Again and again Marxists have condemned his proposals for a socialist Colony as implying a withdrawal from the world of human exploitation and the ruthless battle against it... No reproach has ever been falser. Everything that Landauer thought and planned, said and wrote... was steeped in a great belief in revolution and the will for it... But that long-drawn struggle for freedom which he calls Revolution can only bear fruit when "we are seized by the spirit, not of revolution, but of regeneration." "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; that although it cannot come alive and remain living without a good deal of the latter it is nevertheless a peaceful structure, an organizing of new spirit for new spirit and nothing else."[19]

[14] Heydorn, 148
[15] Lunn, 136, 138
[16] ibid, 97
[17] Heydorn, 133
[18] Lunn, 98
[19] Buber, 50 — 52

The Alternative to Capitalism

Landauer's concept of socialism was definitely not marxist, nor even Bakuninist collectivism, owing more to Proudhon's mutualism. "The independent individual, who lets no one interfere in his business, for whom the house community of the family, with home and workplace, is his world, the autonomous local community, the country or group of communities, and so on, ever more broadly with more comprehensive groups that have an ever smaller number of duties… that alone is socialism." "That is the task of socialism, to arrange the exchange economy so that each one… works only for himself."[20]

It must be emphasized that Landauer's concept of capitalism was also more Proudhonist than Marxist. He was not opposed to exchange nor individual ownership. For Landauer capitalism was the perversion of exchange by privilege — ultimately backed and created by the State. Furthermore, the spirit of this capitalism was calculating and materialist to the exclusion of every other aspect of human existence.

Landauer believed that the existing socialist movement would be coopted by capitalism and the State and that the long-projected socialist revolution would not occur because of this adaptability. He criticized Marx's view that cooperation and socialization automatically grows out of capitalism, seeing it as wishful thinking.[21] According to H. J. Heydorn, Landauer saw that "capitalist society, represented by the existing state, adapts marvelously to the changing conditions, integrating the proletariat through the development of social legislation causing it to degenerate, rather than leading to socialist society. Rather it absorbs the socialists, making their ideology superfluous."[22]

One could not just take capitalism and transform it into socialism, "It has become impossible to transfer… capitalism directly, into the socialist exchange economy."[23] The only way to build socialism and to not get absorbed was to work outside the State through local, voluntary organizations.[24]

The strength of these organizations lay in the, until then unacknowledged fact, that workers had more power as consumers than as workers. Hence, he favored consumer co-ops as a means to harness this ability[25] and saw that "the cooperatives are a first step… toward socialism."[26] He also felt a need for credit unions, since consumer-producer associations would eventually have control over "considerable monetary capital."[27] "Nothing can prevent the united consumers from working for themselves with the aid of mutual credit, from building factories, workshops, houses for themselves, from acquiring land; nothing — if only they have a will and begin."[28]

Along with the voluntary economic associations would come the creation of new communities. "The basic form of socialist culture is the league of communities with independent economies and exchange system. Society is a society of societies."[29] These socialist communities were to

[20] Landauer, 126–7
[21] ibid, 58
[22] Heydorn, 145
[23] Landauer, 134
[24] Lunn, 191
[25] ibid, 98
[26] Landauer, 88
[27] ibid, 133
[28] Landauer in Buber , 55
[29] Landauer, 125

be cut off as much as possible from capitalist relations,[30] and most certainly it was the economic associations that would allow this to happen.

The development of community was a key to abolishing capitalism, as he believed "society can be capitalist only because the masses are without land."[31] This view, similar to that of Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Spence and the Agrarians, is that a land-less people are dependent upon the capitalists for their homes and food. A landed populace, however, does not pay rent and grows most of its own food and thus has a great deal of independence. If they have to work for someone else, it will be more on their terms rather than those of the employer. Thus, the power of contract between employer and employee is equalized. The land-less laborer, on the other hand, is driven by hunger and the need to pay rent, and is therefore in a position of inequality when it comes to making contracts with prospective employers. Competition works in the interest of the **landed** worker, the ability to exploit is minimized and businesses remain small, with no more power than any of the other economic actors.

One aspect of Landauer's thinking would shock today's leftist, perhaps earning this defender of workers councils condemnation as a "right-winger." Just what did he mean by "…the workers struggle in his role of producer harms the workers in their reality as customers" ?[32] What he is saying is, that if a group of workers through a strike, or whatever other means, are able to push up their wages, their increased incomes will be passed on to the rest of the working class in the form of higher prices. Thus, the wage gains are a form of subsidy, paid for by the working class as a whole. This was not an uncommon belief at the time among revolutionary socialists. The point these socialists were making, was their belief that economic action was of limited use in liberating the workers, and that only political action could bring this about. As an **anti-political**, Landauer of course, would not agree. For him, the creation of communities and mutualist economic alternatives was a superior strategy to both economic and political activism.

What both Landauer and the revolutionary socialists seemed to have be unaware of was **productivity**. If wages rise at the same rate as productivity, barring monopoly or any other forms of government meddling, there should be no rise in prices. In fact, real prices (ie., prices adjusted for inflation) on most items have fallen over the years, as productivity has outstripped wages. Where his concept is true however, is where wage rises are greater than productivity, or where industries are protected or subsidized by government. Under these circumstances, the total working population pays for the increased income of a minority of workers.

Landauer was not anti-work, but felt that free labor was essential to life. According to Eberhard Arnold,

> Gustav Landauer expects to find the salvation in work-true work that is filled, guided, and organized by a brotherly spirit free from greed; work as the deed of honest hands and as a witness to the rulership of a pure and truthful spirit. What he envisions as the fundamental character of the future is work as an expression of the spirit, as provision for men's needs, as cooperative action. Side by side with the joy one feels in comradeship and in showing consideration to one another, man's joy in his work is to bring it about that he experiences his work as the actual fulfillment of his life

[30] ibid, 138

[31] Lunn, 217

[32] Landauer, 85

and thus finds joy in living. “;Man needs to have joy in what he does; his soul must take an active part in the functioning of his body.”[33]

Society and Folk Consciousness

As he did with the State, Landauer rejected the reification of society. Society was not an abstract thing standing over the individual, but “a multiplicity of small inter-relations.”[34] Important among these “small inter-relations” were the “natural unions” or the real social units for a society without coercion. These were family, community and *volk*.[35] “My house, my front garden, my wife and children — my world! On this feeling, on this exclusive solidarity, this voluntary union, this small and natural community, all larger organisms arise.”[36] Landauer did not seek the victory of the proletariat over the capitalist class, but rather the emergence of a new organic *volk* out of the cities into the countryside where they would establish new communities.

What did Landauer mean by *volk*? Certainly not what the National Socialists meant, when they stole the term! Thus, “folk consciousness… an inner individual awareness of social ties that demand cooperative activity.” This folk consciousness is “the generic memory and historical essence of a people’s past ancestors embedded deeply in the common language as well as the psychic makeup of every individual formed in the cultural interaction of the group within its milieu.”[37]

Each *volk* is part of humanity and is a natural community of peace. This differentiates it from the State and from Nationalism[38] or “States are natural enemies, nations are not.”[39] A Volk is a culture and society growing from a region and is synonymous with **nation**. But, as we have seen, this is nation in the sense that Native Americans use the term and not of race or nation state. Furthermore, “Every nation is anarchistic, that is, without force, the conception of nation and force are completely irreconcilable.”[40] This latter statement would seem highly idealistic given the feuding endemic among tribal groups, but perhaps can be seen as an ideal type. Such an ideal concept is not utopian, for peaceful nations do exist. One good example of volk and nation in the Landauer sense, and one could list others, would be the Acadian communities of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. They have a common history, language and culture, have a large measure of self-government, but have no desire to create a State nor feel any hostility or chauvinism toward their non-Acadian neighbors.

In the same way that the State and nationalism create a false community, he thought international organizations and congresses were nothing more than an ersatz of the world community.[41] (He certainly would not like NATO, the WTO or the UN.)

[33] Arnold
[34] Heydorn, 146
[35] Lunn, 139
[36] ibid, 278
[37] Introduction to Landauer, 7, 8
[38] Lunn, 232
[39] ibid, 243
[40] ibid, 257
[41] Landauer, 113

Philosophy

One cannot understand Landauer without taking into account his Jewish background. (See Appendix) Unlike many Jewish radicals he did not reject or deny his culture and religion and his thought can be seen as a natural outgrowth of these influences. "The story of salvation and the purification of man, covenant as Bund or federation…stem…from the Jewish heritage." (For Landauer) "…the prophets of the Old Testament, with their relentless persistence, set a standard for all times."[42] "…rule by force is replaced by rule of the spirit as Isiah's prophesy is fulfilled… the belief that mankind is one in this spirit … is also Landauer's deepest belief."[43]

Landauer had a deep distrust of all one sided arguments and reductive rationalism. In this manner his philosophy mirrored his own complex being — one who was both German and Jew, or as he stated, "I accept the complex entity that I am."[44] He loved diversity and feared an abstract, undifferentiated socialist world, preferring instead a form of "reconciliation in diversity." "Mankind does not mean equality; rather it means the federation of various peoples and nations."[45] He favored holism, rather than a fragmented and manichean rationalism. For him, the true socialist "thinks holistically". "Spirit is the grasping of the whole in a living universal."[46] As Eugene Lunn states, "Only the emotional life of the family and the active participation afforded by local community involvement would ensure that one's commitment to nation and to humanity was rooted in immediate experience and not theory."[47] For Landauer, the value of science "lies not in its alleged exact explications of reality as such… scientific generalizations are valid *only* as tentative observations…"[48]

At a time when few, if any, socialists had any grasp of the depth of the psyche, Landauer was developing his psychology. As well as our every-day rationality, there was also a pre-rational, collective and ancient knowledge that existed below our daily consciousness.[49] "…if we withdraw from conceptual thoughts and sensate appearances and sink into our most hidden depths, we participate in the whole unending world. For this world lives in us, it is our origin, that is, it is continuously working in us, otherwise we cease to be what we are. The deepest part of our individual selves is that which is most universal."[50] This inward journey was what seemed to fascinate him most with mysticism, which explains his study of Meister Eckhart.

He saw the method by which we know the world was one of metaphor, which is in turn based upon culturally determined data. Dehumanization resulted from a reified rationalism and the loss of one inner subjectivity.[51] It must be emphasized that Landauer was not an irrationalist, but wished for a balance or synthesis of the rational and the deep, pre-rational contents of the psyche. To emphasize one factor over the other would give rise to one-sided (and therefore potentially harmful) individuals. (As the 20th Century with its Hitler and Stalin was to prove so forcefully.)

[42] Heydorn, 138
[43] ibid, 140
[44] ibid, 140
[45] ibid, 140
[46] Landauer, 45
[47] Lunn, 279
[48] Introduction to Landauer, 5
[49] Heydorn 144
[50] Lunn, 132
[51] Introduction to Landauer, 6

Landauer's philosophy of history ran contrary to that of his contemporaries. He did not believe in Progress and re-introduced the cyclical concept of classical society. "Europe and America [have been] declining… since the discovery of America."[52] Greece and Medieval Europe had "that common spirit, the interlinkage of the many associations… We are the people of the decline…"[53] However, this sense of decline was not absolute, as it was with the ancient Greeks, there was **technological** progress in the modern era. This sort of progress would continue until the "common spirit, voluntariness, and the social drive… will arise again… [thus] the holistic perspective… will emerge again."[54] The decline of which he spoke, was that of local, voluntary association. Its replacement by the State was not progress, but a step back into Bronze Age barbarism.

Marxism

In Landauer's day, few of Marx's works, other than the *Communist Manifesto* and the rather simplistic *Critique Of Political Economy*, were known. Important works such as the 1844 Manuscripts, *The German Ideology* and *Critique Of The Gotha Program* were not available. Thus, his critique of Marxism aimed more at the vulgar Orthodox Marxism of his day, than Marx's actual thought. Orthodox Marxism was exemplified by such crude beliefs as economic determinism and the reflection theory of knowledge. (By which ideas were a simple mirror reflection of so-called material reality.) As well, the proletariat was to be immizerized, capitalism was to collapse and the victory of socialism was inevitable. By the 1890's, such beliefs — in spite of their obvious failings — had become a necessary qualification for Marxists and "scientific socialism", if there ever was such a thing, had degenerated into a secular religious cult, where, aside from a few exceptional individuals, it has remained ever since. Landauer had little patience with such pseudo-scientific mumbo jumbo and devoted a considerable portion of his book, *For Socialism* to attacking Orthodox Marxism. He also took a few strips off the Master as well. Thus, an attack upon Marx's scientism, "the so-called historical laws of development which have the supposed force of natural laws… [and] the immeasurably foolish presumption that a science exists that can reveal… the future with certainty from the data and news of the past and the facts and conditions of the present."[55]

Landauer was a virtual anti-Marx. He differed from the Marxists both in theory and in practice. He was not in favor of nationalization of industry, but rather its conversion into cooperatives. Exchange was to be freed from the restrictions of capitalism and not abolished as in the Marxist utopia.[56] Farmers, artisans and small traders were not seen as the despised petty-bourgeoisie, but as a part of real, existing society. Hence, Landauer's concept of democracy was populist and not Marxist.[57] (By which the proletariat would rule over the other classes.) As we have seen, the class struggle and political action upon which Marx pinned his hopes, held no future for Landauer. It was a dead end.

As for Leninism, Landauer was prophetic at a time when many of his radical contemporaries were wallowing in self-delusion. He saw it as "a Robespierre principle" and a new form of slav-

[52] Landauer, 32
[53] ibid, 35, 38
[54] ibid, 103
[55] ibid, 48–49
[56] Heydorn, 135.
[57] Lunn, 276

ery.[58] "[Bolshevism] ...by working for a military regime... will be more horrible than anything the world has ever seen."[59]

Landauer Today

Community is even weaker than in 1910 and therefore needed more than ever. Alienation is greater in many cases, especially as people have become ever more cut off from nature and each other. Remaining folk cultures are under attack from the corporate world of Hollywood and MacDonalds. In spite of this, or perhaps because of this, a profound desire for place and roots exists. People are beginning to rediscover their cultural and historical backgrounds. Regional sentiments have become important and the nation state has begun to decline as these have grown. Nor in most cases, have the attempted cultural revivals and regionalisms resulted in chauvinism and xenophobia. (Like the Celtic Revival, Acadians, the New Southern Movement, Newfoundlanders, Melungians, Cajuns, English and French regionalism.)

The State has not proven to be a solution to any of the problems of alienation and community, but has made matters worse. In many instances, the State has been the direct cause of the decline of community and sociability. We have seen the deliberate herding of people into the cities, the destruction of the small farm, the centralization of schools and municipalities, the replacement of volunteers by bureaucrats and of mutual aid societies by state agencies. Only a return to mutual aid and genuine community can solve the problems created by statism and corporate capitalism.

Landauers "rivals" on the political and economic fronts have not fared well since his death. Political socialism either became welfare state bureaucratism or Stalinism, the worst tyranny ever known. Socialist parties are now either tiny sects or the other face of neo-conservatism. They are irrelevant as far as social change goes. Unions are also in decline, in no small measure due to their lack of social solidarity. They too, are largely irrelevant. Only the cooperative aspect is doing well, ever-expanding, with **one billion** people world wide as members of **formal cooperatives**. (This figure does not include the multitudes involved with informal types of mutual aid.) While coops have adopted many capitalistic ways, this is not the fault of mutual aid, but rather the desire of the membership. Any time they wish to change the direction of their coop or credit union, they can, for the fundamental principles of the cooperative movement are still in operation.

I have one criticism, the impossibility, at least in the developed world, of totally ignoring the State. Life would certainly be simpler if we could simply "contract other relationships" and not worry about what government might do to us. The State has far more authority than in Landauer's day. Literally thousands of regulations ensnare us. Even 50 years ago, most of these did not exist and people could live their daily lives outside of government. Try to live independently today and you might end up like the folks at Waco. It seems to me that we need some kind of **anti-political** movement to abolish these oppressive regulations and decentralize to the local community any powers that are left over and deemed necessary. Only when we are free of community and liberty destroying governmental powers will we be able to build lasting alternatives to corporate capitalism and the State.

Last but not least, Landauer's concept of the spiritual and his psychology are much more in tune with today than the simple-minded and reductionist materialism of the 19th Century.

[58] Heydorn, 135
[59] Lunn, 254

Appendix

Landauer And The Socialist International

> The last battle over admission to the Second International was fought at London in 1896; it was also the bitterest. This time the anarchists were strongly entrenched in the French and Dutch delegations, and many of their leaders had come to London with the intention of holding a parallel congress in the event of their expected expulsion from that of the Second International. They included Kropotkin, Malatesta, Nieuwenhuis, Landauer, Pietro Gori, Louise Michel, Elisee Reclus, and Jean Grave, as well as a strong syndicalist group from France headed by the anarchist leaders of the revolutionary wing of the Confederation General du Travail, such as Pelloutier, Tortelier, Pouget and Delesalle…The German chairman, Paul Singer, tried to close the question of admission without allowing the anarchists to speak. Keir Hardie, leader of the Independent Labour Party, who was the deputy chairman that day, protested that both sides should be given a full hearing before the vote was taken. Gustav Landauer, Malatesta, and Nieuwenhuis all spoke at length, and the last effectively summarized their contentions when he said: “;This Congress has been called as a general Socialist Congress. The invitations said nothing about anarchists and social democrats. They spoke only of socialists and trade unions. Nobody can deny that people like Kropotkin and Reclus and the whole anarchist communist movement stand on the socialist basis. If they are excluded, the purpose of the Congress has been misrepresented.” …The anarchists were finally expelled on the second day…However many anarchists were left as trade union delegates to carry on the dispute during the verification of mandates, so that in the end little time was left for debating the issues that the Congress had met to discuss. Despite the exclusion of the anarchists, anarchism had in fact dominated the London Congress of the Second International…the real triumph of the anarchists remained their success in turning the Congress of the Second International into a battleground over the issue of libertarian versus authoritarian socialism.

From *Anarchism* by George Woodcock pp. 246–248

Landauer And Christ

His Judaism was not chauvinistic in any way. He also appreciated other religions as well. Below is his view of Jesus.

> Jesus was a truly inexhaustible figure — so rich, so bountiful and generous, that quite apart from the significance He has for men’s spirit and life He was also a tremendous socialist. But take a Philistine and place him on the one hand before the living Jesus on the Cross, and on the other hand before some new machine designed to transport persons or goods: if he is honest and free of any cultural pretensions he will regard this crucified human being as totally useless and superfluous and will run after that machine. And yet, how immeasurably more have men been really moved by Jesus’ calm, tranquil, suffering greatness of heart and mind than by all the machines we

have for the purpose of moving people! And yet, where would our whole transport machinery be without this calm, tranquil, suffering great One on the Cross of mankind

Hakim Bey on the Munich Soviet

The Munich Soviet (or "Council Republic") of 1919 exhibited certain features of the TAZ even though — like most revolutions — its stated goals were not exactly "temporary." Gustav Landauer's participation as Minister of Culture along with Silvio Gesell as Minister of Economics & other anti-authoritarian & extreme libertarian socialists such as the poet/playwrights Erich Mühsam & Ernst Toller, & Ret Marut (the novelist B. Traven), gave the Soviet a distinct anarchist flavor. Landauer, who had spent years of isolation working on his grand synthesis of Nietzsche, Proudhon, Kropotkin, Stirner, Meister Eckhardt, the radical mystics, & the Romantic volk-philosophers, knew from the start that the Soviet was doomed; he hoped only that it would last long enough to be understood. Plans were launched to devote a large piece of Bavaria to an experiment in anarcho-socialist economy and community. Landauer drew up proposals for a Free School system and a People's Theater.

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