

**BARBARA KUON*****Gustav Landauer, a common individual***

How does a revolution take place? According to Gustav Landauer, waiting for a sufficiently advanced level of technological development to trigger a disruption of social relations is not the answer. Nor is it a question of unleashing revolutionary violence in a relentless struggle against bourgeoisie and conservatism. On the contrary, each project of a social revolution ought to be preceded by an individual revolution, which would be accomplished as a self-transformation of the individual into a collective self (or as “common individual” as Jean-Paul Sartre would put it).

Both an anarchist and an atheist, Landauer reminds us - as does Carl Schmidt but in a quite different manner - that all political notions are theological notions. To become a socialist means “closing one’s eyes” (according to the old mystical project which was resuscitated to become the “Gesamtkunstwerk” project, that is the “total work of art project”). This project implies blocking the discriminating sense - sight - in order to create a synaesthetic perception which would allow society to integrate the individual as well as allow the individual to integrate society. So Landauer concludes: when we are most individualistic, we are at the same time the most common (“Unser Allerindividuellstes ist unser Allerallgemeinstes.”)

In the face of this growing individualism (or “narcissism”) that keeps on dissolving family or social and traditional relations as well as diminishing the power of communist or socialist parties, the analysis of Gustav Landauer’s philosophical and revolutionary project - enriched by Oscar Wilde’s reflection on the link between the artist and socialism - enables us to conceive the seemingly unlikely conjunction of sharp individualism and social equality.

**PHILIPP VALENTINI*****Practicing loneliness and the rhythm of collective life***

The mystical practice of loneliness paves the way to the establishment of autonomous political communities and to new paths to build common worlds – which is what makes Landauer’s *Durch Absonderung zur Gemeinschaft* (1900) such a great work.

The power that emanates from this withdrawal within oneself sets the individual free from dead norms which keep conditioning our psyche through our senses.

This belief is also to be found in the Sufism practiced by the School of Ibn ‘Arabi (1165-1240), who is still today nicknamed “the greatest of the Sufi masters”. The concept of “tafrīd” refers to the process of loneliness through which the Sufi separates the absolute from what has to do with the succession and the order of its manifestations. When the Sufi reaches this state of loneliness, he establishes a political community, not always visible and physical, but a community accomplished in invisible worlds – and more especially in that of the imagination, between the intellectual ideas and the sensible things. Michel Chodkiewicz writes on the subject: “When a being is firmly established in these stages, when the laws of change (*talwm*) are no longer operative for him and he swims in the oceans of unicity and the secret of solitude (*tafrtd*), then he is a *walī*, a deputy of the prophets and truly pure among the pure.” (translation from Liadain Sherrad)

The resemblance between Master Eckhart (who inspired Landauer) and Ibn ‘Arabi is to be found in the neoplatonism as practiced by Proclus (rather than the one practiced by Plotinus):

the identification of the one aspiring to know the Ineffable One to his own primary unity establishes the order of succession of its cosmological and ontological derivatives.

This intervention will therefore focus on the following issue: *In the midst of this post-proclusian school of thought, how can we conceive the passage from the practice of loneliness to the weaving of new common worlds, so that this passage should reveal the effects of life itself?*

Landauer's text itself tackles the underlying question of the relation between the cause and the effect: this relation must be interrogated so as to call it either a living or a mortiferous one: *"Es gibt keine toten Naturgesetze; es gibt keine Trennung zwischen Ursache und Wirkung: diese beiden müssen aneinander grenzen; Ursache-Wirkung ist ein Fließen von Einem zum Anderen; und wenn das vielleicht um ein Winziges bereicherte Andere wieder zum Einem zurückströmt."*

## FRANCK LEMONDE

### ***History, mysticism and politics in Charles Péguy's and Gustav Landauer's works***

These two philosophers were men who used to write in journals and their works were at first presented in the form of articles linked to the most current news. In both authors' works, their thoughts are not expressed in a unified system of isolated works but in a proliferation of small interventions.

Rather than presenting analogies between two stabilised "visions of the world", I would like to highlight the common tone of their writings first through their commitment to the libertarian margins of socialism - what I have called the politics of two antipolitics - then through their critical conception of history and finally through their complex relationship to mysticism which is - as I'll show later on - inseparable from their revolutionary ideal.

## PASCALE ROURE

### ***"Sprachkritik ist Sauerteig". Fritz Mauthner's critique of language and its interpretation by Gustav Landauer***

Gustav Landauer (1870-1919) was not only for almost thirty years a friend of Fritz Mauthner's (1849-1923), as shown by their correspondence,<sup>1</sup> and the enthusiast reader of his writings. He contributed to the "*Sprachkritik*"<sup>2</sup> and interpreted it politically, especially in the work entitled *Skepsis und Mystik. Versuche im Anschluss an Mauthners Sprachkritik* [Scepticism and Mysticism. Essays following Mauthner's critique of language], a work which also introduced – with the publication in the same year of a translation of Master Eckhart's

<sup>1</sup> *Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner, Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, Hanna Delf/Julius H. Schoeps (dir.), München: C.H. Beck 1994

<sup>2</sup> Landauer especially contributed to the preparatory work for the republication of the three volumes of the *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* [Contributions to a critique of language], which were first published in 1901-1902 by the publisher Cotta.

writings<sup>3</sup> – an alternative to the nationalistic political exploitation and to the “racist Germanisation”<sup>4</sup> of this figure of German mystic.

Landauer introduces the critical analysis of language as the prolongation and the outcome of the historicizing critiques of reason, and raises the question of the meaning of engaging in a history of reason – or more precisely of *several* forms of rationality (*Vernünftigkeit*), as well as the history of the ways of writing its history – or rather in *the* histories<sup>5</sup>. The revolutionary potential of the critique of language is thus based on an anarchistic conception of historical temporality which, in both Mauthner’s and Landauer’s work, firmly stands against a progressive and teleological conception of history. This conception of history would serve, in Mauthner, as a starting point for a large-scale offensive against the scientific and racist drifts of the sciences of language – especially those that can be found in the popularized forms of knowledge spread by the press at the time, in which the typologies of comparative linguistics and the speculations about the origin of languages could serve as a pretext for the organization into a hierarchy of the peoples interpreted as races. If the political and moral dimension of the Mauthnerian critique remains implicit and bound to the denunciation of scientific ideologies extended to all the fields of knowledge used by the dominant culture, it mattered to Landauer to clarify this dimension and to replace moral and politics at the centre of the critique. His reading of the Mauthnerian critique, understood as radical negativity and pure destruction, thus explicitly asserts the dialectic demand for reconstruction, creation or action: the critique of language is a “ferment”, a catalyst for the revolution. This presentation of the intellectual exchanges between the two men and this confrontation between the Mauthnerian critique of language and its interpretation by Landauer also aims at rectifying the given picture of Fritz Mauthner, often caricatural, especially regarding his own political stance.

## PATRICK MARCOLINI

### ***Farewell to the revolution? About a political lesson of the dialogue between Buber and Landauer***

Today, when we speak of Buber’s work, it is most of the time to study his important role in the Zionist movement or his works on Hasidism, which are at a crossroads between philosophy, spirituality and literature and which gave him the status of a major intellectual of his time, as he became the spokesman of the greatest thinkers not only in Germany but all around the world. The issue is that this anchor in Jewish history and culture ended up obscuring the proper social and political parts of his work. Therefore, even if he was granted a chair of Judaism and Jewish ethics at the University of Frankfurt from 1923 to 1933, he actually occupied a chair of *Social philosophy* at the University of Jerusalem for thirteen years from 1938 until his retirement in 1951. This interest in practical and theoretical questions regarding how human beings live in society, starting in the 1900s after his participation in Georg Simmel’s private seminars, finally resulted in 1947 with the publication of his essay *Utopia and Socialism* in Hebrew, which acts as a synthesis of sociological thoughts as well as

<sup>3</sup> Gustav Landauer, *Meister Eckharts mystische Schriften*, Berlin : Schnabel 1903.

<sup>4</sup> See Egbert Brieskorn, “Landauer und der Mathematik Hausdorff”, in : *Gustav Landauer im Gespräch. Symposium zum 125. Geburtstag*, Hanna DELF/Gert Mattenklott (dir.), Tübingen: Niemeyer 1997, p.105-128, p. 116 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Gustav Landauer, *Skepsis und Mystik. Versuche im Anschluss an Mauthners Sprachkritik*, Berlin: Fontane 6 Co 1903. Augmented second edition, Köln: Marcan-Block Verlag 1923, p.3.

convictions that some could be tempted to call “political”, if he had not turned the “political” into precisely what was a principle contradicting the modes of collective organisation that he deemed to be defended. Yet, Martin Buber’s social philosophy, which deserves more attention than a mere anecdote, was highly influenced by the life and works of his friend Gustav Landauer.

## **SEBASTIAN KUNZE**

### ***Gustav Landauer and Zionism: New Observations and Findings***

My proposed paper aims at reconstructing Gustav Landauer’s relationship to Zionism. As we already know, Landauer held talks in front of Zionist groups and published articles such as „Sozialismus und Judentum“ (1912) in Zionist newspapers as in *Selbstwehr*. His famous „Sind das Ketzergedanken?“ (1913) appeared in an explicit cultural-Zionist volume along with its main protagonist. Moreover, in this essay Landauer deals with Martin Buber’s *Three Speeches on Judaism* (1911), which Buber held in Prag in the years 1909–1911. If carefully read, Landauer’s articles not only approach Buber’s *Speeches* but also deals with them critically. Landauer reflects on Zionism and Judaism in a conversation with Buber’s *Speeches* and we can trace as well as observe a shift in Landauer’s approach to Buber’s text.

In addition to this specific discussion, my paper presents Landauer’s contact with the Zionist movement and also institutions. Besides the exchange of letters with Nahum Goldmann we know about, Landauer was approached by the *Jewish National Fund* in 1916. A recently discovered exchange of letters with the *Jewish National Fund* adds to Landauer’s direct contacts with the Zionist movement as well as to his reception in it. This reception was broadly examined, and I aim at gaining new insights to their connection and Landauer’s impact, especially on the Kibbutz Movement as part of the Zionist enterprise.

With an analysis of Landauer’s reception within the Kibbutz Movement and the Movement core values, I develop an Idea of regaining Kibbutz values on mutual help, justice and freedom, which were lost in the course of privatization and capitalization in most of the Kibbutzim.

The paper is twofold, by explaining Landauer’s meaning to a part of the Zionist Movement and the Kibbutzim in its early years, I will access early values and targets of the Zionist and Kibbutz Movement, two potentially emancipatory projects. With this recollection, I try to draft a way to an, again, emancipatory potential of the Kibbutzim as a just community. This is, in my opinion, a renewal of the past for the future in the sense of Gustav Landauer.

## **JEAN-CHRISTOPHE ANGAUT**

### ***Landauer, a critic of Marxism***

The critique of Marxism is one of the most striking aspects of the social and political thinking of Landauer. This contribution is at first a reminder of the historical and ideological context of this critique. It aims then at showing that this critique consists in pointing out three problematical aspects of Marxism; scientism, the use of the historical dialectic, and the overvaluation of the proletariat and the sphere of production. Landauer’s socialism can therefore be considered as an anti-Marxism, and it is possible to specify his critique of Marxism, particularly its relationship to the one suggested by the revisionists of the time.

**MAURICE SCHUHMAN*****Nietzsche reception by Gustav Landauer in the context of anarchistic discourse***

At the end of the 19th century, the reading and reception of Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy was fashionable – especially among the German anarchists. Authors and theorists such as Erich Mühsam ("Die Wüste"), Theodor Plivier ("Anarchie!") and Rudolf Rocker, who translated *Also sprach Zarathustra* in Yiddish, or Rudolf Steiner, are good examples of that. In this context, I aim to analyse and discuss how Gustav Landauer reads Nietzsche. This analysis will rely on his short journalistic texts "Ein kleiner Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte Friedrich Nietzsches" (1893), "Friedrich Nietzsche und das neue Volk" (1900) and on Landauer's only novel: *Der Todesprediger* (1893), which was inspired by his reading of *Also sprach Zarathustra*, but also on his letters and diaries. Nietzsche's reception by Gustav Landauer can be read as an example of the anarchistic reception of Nietzsche generally speaking.

**JAN ROLLETSCHKE*****Philosopher in Anarchism, Anarchist in Philosophy. On Gustav Landauer's Spinoza Reception***

After his *Call for Socialism* (1911) was released, Gustav Landauer frankly conceded that he had "not yet published a coherent account of his thought". Also later he was never in a situation that allowed him to write his "philosophical book".

During his lifetime, Landauer was nevertheless considered to be the "most outstanding representative of anarchism in Germany" (Constantin Brunner), and a representative of anarchism in theory for that. As far as Landauer himself is concerned, it was a theory that knows only practice and thought, which makes theory an aspect of practice from the beginning. Nevertheless, his thinking – and therefore his practice – has had difficulties to arrive and even be properly perceived.

It is true that Landauer was above all a practitioner. His texts were interventions. For the most part they had a distinctly appellative and affective spin. But it is also true, as Ernst Simon already pointed out in 1921, that a systematic "Einheitsbezug" reigns everywhere "in Landauer's writing and doing". Although Landauer never systematically expounded his philosophy, this philosophy is active in a practically fashion in each and every statement he made: "the fundamental view is pounding and breathing in all of his essays, speeches, critiques, and always at the core."

In language, Landauer's practice was part of socialism, nineteenth-century philosophy, and literature. We ourselves will not, we will not easily – and never as naturally, as Landauer did – belong to this literature again. Nevertheless, today we have the impression that Landauer is very close to us. In another concrete language, under different circumstances, he speaks out about things that concern us: his descriptions and prognoses, the direction of his initiatives, the urgency of his statements.

It is possible that Landauer's historical practice will be discerned in France more readily than in Germany, since the philosophy that ever more clearly steered his initiatives informs a significant part of French theory today: the philosophy of Benedict de Spinoza. What we encounter in Landauer's work is, in a decisive way, a combination of Spinozism and anarchy.

**JOHANN THUN*****“the old in a new form”. Gustav Landauer and revolutionary Romanticism***

Gustav Landauer's thinking can be understood as a process oscillating between two poles: “beginning” (“Beginnen”) and “tradition” (“Tradition”). While the first concept is easily linked to a form of avant-garde anarchism that aspires to a complete break with the past and to a radically new start, the reference to “tradition” seems to be in contradiction with it. However, attentively reading Landauer's texts enables the reader to observe that the author himself tried to solve this contradiction. Landauer relies here on a positive notion of “tradition” based on his specific reception of Romanticism that strives to protect some of the postulates of this school of thought from a conservative or reactionary appropriation. It is possible - by relying on the text *Call to socialism* published for the first time in 1911 - to show that the so-called “past” always bears a utopian promise: “The new society we want to prepare, whose cornerstone we are about to lay, will not be a return to any old structures. It will be the old in a new form, a culture with the means discovered by civilization in these recent centuries.”<sup>6</sup>

The idea of the “old in a new form” seems to correspond to the conception of Romanticism such as Michael Löwy presented it in many of his works. Löwy sees in the Romantic movement a vision of the world that goes beyond the limits of its time. It can be characterised as a revolutionary critic of modernity marked by capitalism and technical advances that looks towards the future.<sup>7</sup> This theory also rests on Landauer's philosophy.<sup>8</sup> I would like in my essay to outline the main features of Landauer's reception of Romanticism and observe if Löwy's theory helps to understand it and finally question whether Landauer's romantic concept could be updated today.

**HANNA DELF VON WOLZOGEN*****Revolution in Letters. Gustav Landauer as writer und editor of letters.***

In 1918 Landauer published the two volumes *Briefe aus der französischen Revolution* as part of a documentation about men in revolutionary times. Landauer is regarded as one of the great writers of letters in 19./20. century German literature. Since 1914 Landauer himself refused any public comment, so letters became the only medium of communication ...

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<sup>6</sup> „Die heutige Gesellschaft, die wir bereiten wollen, wird nicht eine Rückkehr zu irgendwelchen alten Gebilden sein, sondern das Alte in neuer Gestalt, eine Kultur mit den Mitteln der in diesem Jahrhundert neu erwachsenen Zivilisation.“ Gustav Landauer: *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*. Verlag Cassirer, Berlin 1919, p. 102. (Translation by David J. Parent, from <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/gustav-landauer-call-to-socialism#toc9>)

<sup>7</sup> «Let us note right away, very briefly, the crux of our conception of the Romantic movement: Romanticism represents a critique of modernity, that is, of modern capitalist civilization, in the name of values and ideals drawn from the past (the precapitalist, premodern past). » *Romanticism against the tide of modernity*, Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre ; translated by Catherine Porter. Révolte et mélancolie. 1st U.S. ed. Durham : Duke University Press, 2001, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Michael Löwy : «Der romantische Messianismus Gustav Landauers » In : Hanna Delf / Gert Mattenklott (Dir.): *Gustav Landauer im Gespräch*. Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 1997, pp. 91-105.

**ANATOLE LUCET*****Digital perspectives for a rediscovery of Landauer's corpus***

Gustav Landauer distinguished himself with a philosophical project resolutely a-systematic. Anarchist even in his discourse, he endeavoured to find the word that would manage to describe the world – and change it – without imprisoning it into a system of objective laws. This thinker of the community was a resolute adversary of the scientific socialism for which advocated the socialists of his time; it is partly on this basis that he formulated a thought which made any attempt to systematize it difficult both because of its form and its content.

In order to recover the definitions that make his thought coherent, it is necessary to immerse oneself in the abundance of his small writings: close to a thousand articles, and twice that number of letters. This refusal to express explicitly and definitively the meaning of some crucial notions requires on the part of the interpreter the development of a fitting methodology. It is indeed about recovering, from more than thirty years of writing, the meaning of the key-concepts of this author's thought.

Resorting to statistical text analysis can be a solution not only to trace the use of a concept throughout the different stages of its writing activity, but also to synthesize definitions when they are missing.

This presentation will be the occasion to expose, using the *Gustav Landauer online bibliography* and the digital possibilities to explore the author's corpus, a new way to comprehend the richness of this philosophical work.

**LOU MARIN*****“Gustav Landauer's posterity within the German-speaking anarchistic activism”***

My intervention will focus on Gustav Landauer's posterity within not only the anarchist movement, but also the mass movement in Germany. There has been an ongoing favourable response to his writings and to his spiritual legacy in Germany that is still visible today.

(1) Through his friend Martin Buber who advocated within the movement of cultural Zionism for a binational federation in Palestine, Gustav Landauer's ideas were picked up by Jewish settlers who prepared to emigrate from 1920s Germany to the Middle East. Both Landauer and Buber's influence in the Kibbutz movement were important and contributed to the supremacy of libertarian thinking that eventually led many Kibbutz to speak against the foundation of the Israeli State in 1948.

(2) Outside of the anarcho-syndicalist syndicate the FAUD (Free Worker's Union of Germany) in the 1920s, a current promoting the “beginning” of agricultural and theoretical work on the land emerged, including projects for rural colonization. Some colonies – such as “Free Land” near Dusseldorf – leaned explicitly on Gustav Landauer's legacy, as a marble plaque in honour of Landauer commemorates.

(3) Within the non-violent anarchist movement of Graswurzelrevolution, Landauer's thesis had an important influence in the alternative, anti-militarist, and antinuclear mass movements, and in the self-management projects of the 70s, 80s, and 90s, as they advocated both for non-violence and for the principle of workshops ran by alternative-left-winged craftsmen and for the principle of self-management, including the A Project by Horst Stowasser.

(4) The groups and initiatives opposing the GDR (German Democratic Republic) from within often relied on the spiritual legacy of Gustav Landauer. Their clandestine debates – whether held in private or within the protected spaces of the Protestant Church – contributed to the fall

of the Berlin Wall in 89-90. The meeting place at Eberswalde was particularly influenced by Landauer's thinking.

Several recent initiatives are working towards the building of a memorial devoted to Gustav Landauer, in Munich and in Berlin.

#### **DOMINIQUE MIETHING AND CHRISTIAN BARTOLF**

##### ***Gustav Landauer and the Revolutionary Principle of Non-Violent Non-Cooperation***

A distinct strand in the history of ideas and activism for social change challenges a problem known as "voluntary servitude," a notion put forth by Étienne de La Boétie: any tyrant can be toppled, any unjust system can be overcome, if only people deliberately withdraw their support, that is, if they apply the nonviolent non-cooperation principle. This concept extends well into the twentieth century, beginning with Leo Tolstoy's public statements in favour of the Russian Revolution in 1905, followed by Gustav Landauer's *Die Revolution* (1907). Landauer also refers to La Boétie to highlight religious thinkers and groups—e.g. Petr Chelčický and the Doukhobors, whose practical spirituality had already influenced Tolstoy. Nonviolent non-cooperation ultimately found practical expression in Kurt Eisner's organising efforts for the Bavarian Revolution of 1918 and in Landauer's leading role in the Munich Council Republic of April 1919.

#### **GIANFRANCO RAGONA**

##### ***From classical anarchism to 'post-classical' anarchism: Gustav Landauer, a thinker of the transition***

During his short life, less than fifty years, Landauer had an important role in German and international anarchism. His thinking, deep and broad, was to last through time with a strength that he could not have imagined himself: Landauer's political thinking takes anarchism out of its "classical" sphere, establishing the basis for the transition towards what we nowadays call (for lack of anything better) the "post-classical" era.