

Gustav Landauer and the Bruderhof Communities

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THIS ARTICLE examines the ways in which the Bruderhof Communities have had links with the thought of the German socialist theorist Gustav Landauer (1870-1919). It will examine these links by considering both Eberhard Arnold (1883-1935),¹ a key figure in the foundation of the Communities, and other members of the Communities.

The Bruderhof will be used in this article as an inclusive term to cover the organization which started living in community in Sannerz, Germany, in 1920, and which has been known over the years by a number of names, such as Society of Brothers and Hutterian Society of Brothers. It continues its life in community to this day with eight communities in the eastern USA and southeast England.

This article will not provide a detailed historical account of the Bruderhof; a comprehensive account has been recently published by Prof. Yaacov Oved. There are, in addition, a number of useful historic accounts of specific periods of Bruderhof history.²

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1. For the life and work of Eberhard Arnold, see Hutterian Society of Brothers and John Howard Yoder, eds., *God's Revolution: The Witness of Eberhard Arnold* (Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1984).

2. See Emmy Arnold, *Torches Together*, second edition (Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1984) and Eberhard Arnold and Emmy Arnold, *Seeking for the Kingdom of God* (Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1974) for aspects of the pre-history of the Bruderhof and its history until the mid-1930s. See Merrill Mow, *Torches Rekindled* (Ulster Park, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1989) for the period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, with material on the period between the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s as well. From a different perspective, Roger Allain, *The Community That Failed* (San Francisco:

24 COMMUNAL SOCIETIES

Since 1920 the Bruderhof has continually lived and worked in a communal structure in which all goods and property are owned by the community, and in which all full members form a "Brotherhood" that takes decisions on the basis of unanimity. The basis for this type of organization is biblical and is especially rooted in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5: 1—7:28) and accounts of the early Christian community in Jerusalem given in the Acts of the Apostles (chapters 2 and 4). The importance of the Sermon on the Mount to the Bruderhof is made very clear in Eberhard Arnold's *Salt and Light* (1986).³

The Bruderhof encountered contemporary Anabaptism through the Hutterian Brethren in 1930 and 1931, when its leader Eberhard Arnold (1883-1935) visited the Hutterite colonies of North America. The visit initiated a relationship which has been of immense importance to the Bruderhof, although recently the links between the Bruderhof and the Hutterites were broken.⁴ However, it is clear that the Bruderhof originated and lived as a solitary community for some years before it encountered the Hutterites of North America. The Bruderhof emerged in the atmosphere of post-World War I Germany, and an idea of some aspects of the intellectual circumstances of its emergence can be obtained from the following quotation from Emmy Arnold (1884-1980), wife of Eberhard Arnold:

The whole situation, all this seeking and searching, brought us into contact with a great number of people. We began to have weekly open-house meetings in our own home as a result. When the number of those attending grew to 80 to 100 people, we began to hold these meetings twice weekly. Those who attended

Carrier Pigeon Press, 1992) is centered on the period between the mid-1930s and the early 1960s, written from the standpoint of one who left in the convulsions in the communities of 1961; it is a fictionalized account in which, while dates and places appear to be recorded accurately, the characters are not intended to be accurate portrayals of the people involved. This makes it a difficult source to utilize. Yaacov Oved's *Distant Brothers* (Ramat Efal: Yad Tabenkin, 1993), while concentrating on the history of relations between the Bruderhof and the Kibbutz, includes some interesting historical material. Benjamin Zablocki's *The Joyful Community* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971) also includes some historical material, although it is mainly a sociological examination and interpretation of aspects of the Bruderhof. A recently published survey by Yaacov Oved, *The Witness of the Brothers: A History of the Bruderhof* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Press, 1996), appeared too late to be used for this article.

3. Eberhard Arnold, *Salt and Light* (Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1986); for Bruderhof statements on community, see Eberhard Arnold, *Why We Live in Community*, revised edition (Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1976), and, in more detail, Hutterian Society of Brothers and Yoder, *God's Revolution*.

4. See Hutterian Brethren, eds., *Brothers Unite* (Ulster, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1988) for Arnold's trip to North America. For the current situation between the Bruderhof and the Hutterians from the Bruderhof standpoint, see J. Christoph Arnold, "An Open Letter from the Bruderhof," *The Plough* no. 41 (Winter 1995): 2-6.

were: members of the various branches of the youth movement, young people from Christian groups, anarchists, atheists, Quakers, Baptists, artists, and also representatives of the revivalist movement.⁵

So, in considering the trajectory of the Bruderhof, we need to bear in mind not only its stated affinity with Hutterian Anabaptism, but also the milieu from which it emerged in Germany, described above by Emmy Arnold. One of the key thinkers in that milieu had been the writer and social activist Gustav Landauer. In order to understand the significance of his impact on the Bruderhof, an examination of his life and work is first necessary.

Gustav Landauer

I love this man very much and consider him to be the best and deepest influence to come out of the present day world revolution.... [T]he memory of Gustav Landauer must not be allowed to fade. (Eberhard Arnold, 1920)⁶

Landauer has never been a particularly well-known figure in the English-speaking world, despite important statements by Martin Buber (1878-1965), the eminent philosopher and close friend of Landauer, who wrote *Paths in Utopia* (1958) and *Pointing the Way* (1958). Landauer had a substantial reputation in Germany, founded on his literary as well as his socio-political work. His ideas were also influential for the *Kibbutz* movement in Israel. Given Landauer's relative obscurity for readers of English, a brief resume of his life and work is in order.⁷

We can first consider his life chronologically. Landauer was born in Germany in 1870. He first became involved in radical politics in 1891, briefly being connected with the German Social Democratic party (SPD). However, by August 1892, he had linked up with the Union of Independent Socialists (UIS) and started writing for its journal, *Der Sozialist*. (He became its editor in 1893.) The UIS, which had left the SPD, contained two tendencies, one Marxist and the other anarchist. By late 1892 Landauer had thrown in his hand with the anarchists. He was

5. Emmy Arnold, *Torches Together*, 23-24.

6. Quoted in Eberhard Arnold, *The World Situation and Our Task* (Farmington, Pa.: Plough Publishing House, 1992), 6. Note that the quotation was added by the publishers in a footnote to the text.

7. Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958) and *Pointing the Way* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958). An interesting illustration of his influence upon the Kibbutz movement can be found in the book by Shlomo Avineeri, *Arlosoroff* (London: Peter Halban/Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1989), which deals with the socialist Zionist thinker and leader, Chaim Arlosoroff (1899-1933). Landauer is discussed specifically on pages 8-9, but it is worth considering his impact on the material discussed in Chapter 6, "Future Society."

26 COMMUNAL SOCIETIES

part of the anarchist delegation refused entry to the international Socialist conferences of 1893 and 1896.

In 1900 and 1901 Landauer participated in an organization called *Neue Gemeinschaft*, a discussion group of young intellectuals. The most significant aspect of this involvement was that in this group he first met Martin Buber. In 1902, however, this involvement fizzled out and he briefly moved to England.

In January 1907 his article "Volk und Land" was published and aroused some interest. Consequently, Landauer was invited to Berlin to lecture, and as a result an organization, the *Sozialistische Bund* (SB) was formed. (Its journal revived the title *Der Sozialist*.) For a number of years Landauer was active in trying to build this group.

Landauer opposed World War I from the start. Despite (or perhaps because of) his stand as one of the small number of intellectuals opposed to the war, his work was again starting to attract attention by late 1917.

On 14 November 1918 Kurt Eisner (1867-1919), the key figure in the post-war revolutionary events in Bavaria, invited Landauer to Munich, a call which Landauer heeded. Eisner had become the prime minister of Bavaria on 8 November 1918 through a process best recounted in Allan Mitchell's book, *Revolution in Bavaria, 1918-1919* (1965). Eisner was a leading figure in the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) in Bavaria. This party had split from the SPD during the war because of its opposition to the SPD's position on the war.⁸

On 7 April 1919 the *Räterepublik* (Council Republic) was declared in Munich, with an executive excluding both the SPD and the Communist party (KPD). Landauer became the commissioner for enlightenment and public instruction. This regime lasted until 13 April when it was replaced by a KPD-led *Räterepublik*, in which Landauer

8. This biographical sketch draws on Eugene Lunn, *Prophet of Community: The Romantic Socialism of Gustav Landauer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973; the Lunn biography is generally superior to that of Charles Maurer, *Call to Revolution: The Mystical Anarchism of Gustav Landauer* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1971). However, I feel that on two points this judgment needs to be qualified. First, Maurer is very useful on the relationship between Landauer's thought and that of his friend, Fritz Mauthner, as shown in his third chapter. Second, I feel that Maurer is slightly clearer on Landauer's concept of *Wahn* (a German term literally meaning "illusion," but, as Maurer notes, in Landauer's case bearing a secondary meaning of hope and expectation); he achieves this by focusing (on pages 92-93) on Landauer's text *Volk und Land*. Another relevant book is Ruth Link-Salinger (Hyman), *Gustav Landauer, Philosopher of Utopia* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing Co., 1977). This is a shorter book than the two mentioned above. It could, perhaps, best be seen as an essay in interpretation, rather than a biography. It stresses the importance of the "young" (i.e., pre-1900) Landauer; it also includes interesting commentary on material produced about Landauer after his death and has an excellent bibliography of Landauer's works.

took no part. In the confusion following the fall of the Communist *Räterepublik*, Landauer was taken prisoner and subsequently murdered by soldiers in the Stadelheim prison near Munich on 2 May 1919.⁹

Superficially, this short account of the life and death of a Jewish socialist and anarchist activist might suggest little that connects with the biblically-based Christian Bruderhof Communities. However, a brief examination of Landauer's thought will show that he was an unusual socialist and anarchist thinker. For instance, his article of 1901, "Anarchische Gedanken über den Anarchismus" ("Anarchic Considerations on Anarchism"), argued strongly against the violent so-called "propaganda of the deed" prevalent among a section of anarchists at the time. It showed a deep impact on Landauer of the work of Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910).

In 1911 Landauer's *Aufruf zum Sozialismus* ("Call to Socialism") appeared, which was the book which perhaps best sums up his approach. It combines a bitter attack on Marxism and a critique of capitalism as a period of degeneration, with an argument for a socialism based on the notion of Spirit, manifesting itself in the formation of rural socialist colonies or communities in the here and now.

Finally, given the obvious importance to the Bruderhof of their Christian beliefs, it is worth inquiring into Landauer's viewpoint on religion.¹⁰ If we look at such works as Landauer's *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, we can find material indicating criticism of institutional Christianity, along with material eulogizing Jesus Christ. Perhaps the best brief summary of the rather confused picture is that offered by Charles Maurer, who cites abundant material to make his point, stating:

Buber asserted in *Paths in Utopia* that Landauer only once used the word *religion* in a positive sense; Landauer "always eschewed all religious symbolism and all open avowals of religion." But Buber's desire to stress this point led him to say more than he meant, for it is precisely a renaissance of religion, a religion one could truly live, that Landauer envisioned.¹¹

Commentators have noted specific features of Landauer's religious

9. Allan Mitchell, *Revolution in Bavaria, 1918-1919: The Eisner Regime and the Soviet Republic* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965). This account is based upon Lunn, *Prophet of Community*.

10. In this discussion I am using the word "religion" in the everyday sense of the word. One could become involved in a discussion whether thinkers like Eberhard Arnold actually saw themselves as *religious* thinkers. See on this, material in Paul Bock, ed., *Signs of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984) and Vernard Eller, ed., *Thy Kingdom Come* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980) in regard to this question as it was considered by Leonard Ragaz and the Blumhardts.

11. Maurer, *Call to Revolution*, 196.

sensibility. Heinz-Joachim Heydorn has pointed to the centrality of Judaism in Landauer's thought.¹² Michael Lowy has noted the importance of Christian references in Landauer's work prior to 1908.¹³ All this should make it clear that while Landauer was profoundly concerned with religious questions, it is not easy to make a straightforward statement about his own religious beliefs. However, it is interesting in considering his impact on members of the Bruderhof to note a letter written to his cousin Hugo from Munich in the stormy days early in 1919: "I know about the Wuirttemberg Pietistic Colonies, which stem from farmer [Johann Michael] Hahn. I am convinced that like others that rest on religious foundations, even today they flourish and bloom; nevertheless I would think carefully before sending the children there. Have a look for yourself and test it out."¹⁴

Landauer and the Bruderhof

The links between Gustav Landauer and the Bruderhof Communities will now be considered. These links are of an intellectual nature; they are connections between the thought of Bruderhof members and that of Landauer. Landauer was dead by the time the Sannerz community was founded in 1920. There are no recorded instances of members of the Bruderhof members meeting Landauer.

Initially the intellectual links between Landauer and Eberhard Arnold will be examined, then those between Landauer and other Bruderhof members will be considered. Finally, the basis of the positive evaluation of Landauer by Eberhard Arnold and other members of the Bruderhof will be analyzed.

It will now be shown that Gustav Landauer was important intellectually to Eberhard Arnold. The testimony of Bruderhof veterans indicates this. Walter Hussy, in an interview, indicated that Eberhard Arnold was familiar with the writings of Gustav Landauer, and specifically with the *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, and, indeed, that he had started to read Landauer prior to World War I.¹⁵ Likewise, the late Georg Barth, who joined the Bruderhof in 1924, indicated that on his first visit to Sannerz he had had "a long conversation with Arnold,

12. Heinz-Joachim Heydorn, "Gustav Landauer," *Telos* 41 (1979): 129-49.

13. Michael Lowy, *Redemption and Utopia* (London: Athlone Press, 1992), 131.

14. Martin Buber, ed., *Gustav Landauer, Sein Lebensgang in Briefen* (Frankfurt/Main: Riitten & Loening Verlag, 1929), 2:365; the passage was translated by Roland Crump.

15. Walter Hussy, interview by Michael Tyldesley, Darvell Bruderhof, 5 April 1995. A copy of the interview is deposited in the Darvell Bruderhof Archives, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, United Kingdom, and copies are available to interested parties from the author.

mainly concerning Landauer's concepts and their influence on the Bruderhof's social vision."¹⁶

An examination of some of Eberhard Arnold's letters and writings for the year 1920 show that Barth and Hussy point us in the right direction. The correspondence shows that Eberhard Arnold valued Landauer's work highly and that he was aware of others who shared his interest in Landauer's message. (It should be borne in mind that the Bruderhof effectively started as a community in late June 1920, the year from which this material dates.)

A good starting point for considering this material is a document in Arnold's correspondence about the *Neuwerk* Publishing House, noted as having been handwritten for the Marburg conference, and also noted as the "New Appeal," dated August 1920 for September 1920.¹⁷ A section of this reads:

For this reason the *Innerschau-Bucherei* [Library of the Inner Vision] of the Neuwerk Publishing House permits those to speak to us who, with the eye of the spirit, have found the essential vision. Their affirmation of life is free of every false narrowness, free, too, from overestimation of theological and philosophical thought. They see from the inner heart what God does, and so recognize, too, what we should do and must do. So we are led by such men as Zinzendorf and Landauer, or such as the two Blumhardts and the Quakers, to deeds born out of the inner vision of faith.¹⁸

Eberhard Arnold clearly intended that his publishing house was going to publish something by Landauer. His intention was clarified in a letter to Pastor Karl Joseph Friedrich, dated 26 August 1920. This states bluntly: "One of our most important plans is the Gustav Landauer book."¹⁹ Arnold goes on to indicate what type of book he wished to produce:

Therefore, I am eager to have a short selection of decisive words from his letters and writings put together. The words should give an insight into Gustav Landauer's mystical inwardness, and show clearly his attitude to God and to Christ and to the spirit of community. Certainly his most decisive sayings must

16. Georg Barth, interview by Yaacov Oved, July 1990; see Yaacov Oved, *Distant Brothers*, 9.

17. This document, along with all other items of correspondence quoted from Eberhard Arnold in 1920, are English translations from the respective documents held at the Darvell Bruderhof Archive; notes such as those referred to above have presumably been added by the archivists.

18. Document regarding the Neuwerk Publishing House, August 1920, Darvell Archives, 3-4.

19. Eberhard Arnold to *Pfarrer* Karl Joseph Friedrich, 26 August 1920, Darvell Archives.

be chosen, to give a picture of the consequences reached by Landauer out of his mystical experience of community.²⁰

Arnold proceeded to note that he was not concerned with a complete works of Landauer. Martin Buber had indicated that this was in hand, and that the job would take three years. Rather, Arnold was intending to produce a selection of Landauer's significant sayings, in a book of about 100 pages. Having earlier noted Friedrich's interest in Landauer, Arnold offered him the job of compiling this book.²¹

This August 1920 material provides the context for a letter of 10 May 1920 to Otto Herpel, in which Arnold noted: "I was very glad about the exceptionally valuable information you have gathered for the Gustav Landauer project, and I am going to work on it right away."²²

Finally, in considering Arnold's correspondence of 1920, a letter of 14 August to Bernhard Jansa indicates the extent to which Arnold was aware of others who were interested in Landauer. Jansa had clearly inquired about Landauer's followers. Arnold replied:

I would advise you to apply to Ernst Friedrich, who, to be sure, has not grasped very deeply the religious element in Gustav Landauer. It is also important to get to know the Socialist Alliance which Gustav Landauer founded in 1908. You will best obtain local addresses through Paul Cassirer, Berlin. For further addresses one can name Martin Buber and Hans Ludwig Held.²³

This indicates that Arnold was aware of a variety of people who had been inspired by Landauer, including some with whom he obviously had disagreements regarding Landauer's work. (Cassirer was the publisher of the second edition of the *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*.)

If we now turn to Eberhard Arnold's journalism in 1920, an article he produced for the journal *Das neue Werk* called "Familienverband und Siedlungsleben" (translated as "Extended Households and Communal Life—Ways of Giving Oneself to Community"), is important for understanding the depth of Arnold's appreciation of Landauer. In this piece Arnold celebrates the increasing influence of Landauer in young socialist circles—both in the educated sections and the proletariat. He notes that in fact Landauer did not have during his lifetime as large a circle of friends gripped by his ideas as had now gathered around the core of his message:

This spiritual current which is so strong among the young people today has been described as anarchist communism, but anarchy must be understood

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Eberhard Arnold to Otto Herpel, 10 May 1920, Darvell Archives.

23. Eberhard Arnold to Bernhard Jansa, 14 August 1920, Darvell Archives.

solely in the sense of an order that is organic in its structure, an order based on free-willing associations. As this movement sees it, the longed for communist culture does not rest on some form of technology or on a certain method of satisfying men's needs, but rather on the spirit of justice.²⁴

Arnold noted that from this movement communal settlements have started to be built. In the movement there is a desire that the spirit of community should rule. The spirit this movement yearned for was the uniting spirit of common work, an active creative spirit of a love that welded men together. Significantly, Arnold went on to note that "There is no other movement with—at first glance—a non-Christian appearance, where there is so much talk about the spirit; no other movement where there is such a strong affirmation of life as constructive work for the coming time, as is the case with this group of communist anarchists."²⁵

These revolutionaries, in Arnold's view, recognized correctly that in the past what had been missing more than anything else was a spirit of community, to guarantee social unity and spiritual independence. Arnold went on to argue that this insight gave a deep sense of the decay characterizing the present—of the decline of civilization, which in part resulted from a uniting spirit being absent. (This argument is similar to one put forward by Landauer.)

Arnold then proceeded to discuss the difference between this current of Landauerian thought, with its stress on organic decentralization, and Marxist socialism, with its argument for organized centralization. Arnold indicated broad agreement with Landauer's views on the need to site communities in rural areas, while counseling that this alone was not enough. The Spirit needed to make the vision work could not be assured simply by going to the countryside. Side by side with work on the land had to go the building up of an inner culture concerned with the true interests of the Spirit. "*Land and spirit*—the new demand of this revolutionary movement is but the age-old prophetic proclamation of the truth which alone can assure a healthy future for mankind."²⁶

Arnold concluded the article by discussing other points. This article is remarkable for its illustration of the depth of Arnold's interest in Landauer and his ideas and the continuing impact of those ideas.

24. Eberhard Arnold, *Extended Households and Communal Life* (Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1974), 4.

25. *Ibid.*, 4-5.

26. *Ibid.*, 8-9.

Landauer and Other Members of the Bruderhof

Was Landauer's linkage with the Bruderhof simply confined to Eberhard Arnold's interest in his ideas? The answer to this question can be shown to be in the negative, and evidence can be produced to support this judgment. As was indicated earlier in looking at the phenomenon of the Bruderhof, the milieu from which it emerged is important, and Landauer was a key figure in that milieu. So, it is not really surprising that a number of members of the Bruderhof have indicated an awareness of Landauer and his ideas.

If we examine the two autobiographical works left by the late Hans Maier (1902-1992), we find references to Landauer. In his German-language work *Solange das Licht brennt* (1990), he refers to his participation in a radical Swiss youth group called the *Freischar*. He notes that the group often went to the educational evenings run by Leonhard Ragaz (1868-1948), the religious socialist, at his house. (Martin Buber was also an occasional attendee.) One of the writers whose work was considered there was Landauer.²⁷ Moreover, in a English-language work *Hans Meier Tells His Story to a Friend* (1979), Meier describes a commune he had belonged to prior to joining the Bruderhof called the *Werkhof*. He states: "We were all pacifists and nonpolitical Socialists (not belonging to a political party) in the direction of "A Call to Socialism" by Gustav Landauer, who also had an influence on the Jewish Youth Movement which led later partly to the third Aliya and the formation of the Kibbutzim in Palestine after World War I."²⁸ Furthermore, in an interview Walter Hussy indicated a keen awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the work of Landauer.²⁹ As already noted, Yaacov Oved has shown that the late Georg Barth was aware of Landauer's arguments; he also showed that the late Trudi Hussy has indicated Landauer's impact.³⁰

In some respects it is not surprising that the Bruderhof members mentioned can provide testimony to the impact of Landauer's ideas, given that they come from a specific generation and also a specific, German-speaking background. We could call this generation the "youth movement generation," in that they were touched by the phenomenon of the German (i.e., German-speaking) Youth Movement

27. Hans Meier, *Solange das Licht brennt: Lebensbericht eines Mitglieds der neuhutterischen Bruderhof-Gemeinschaft* (Norfolk, Conn.: Hutterian Brethren, Deer Spring Bruderhof/Bimbach: Bruderhof Gemeinschaft Michaelshof, 1990), 9.

28. Hans Meier, *Hans Meier Tells His Story to a Friend* (Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1979), 5.

29. Walter Hussy, interview by Michael Tyldesley, Darvell Bruderhof, 5 April 1995.

30. Oved, *Distant Brothers*, 9 (referring to endnote 6.)

of the first part of the twentieth century.³¹ (Lunn has documented Landauer's connections with this movement.)³² The importance of this movement in the early period of the Bruderhof can be seen in the following comment by Hardy Arnold (the eldest son of Eberhard Arnold) from 1938: "The community, when it started in Sannerz in 1920, was a centre of a large section of the German Youth Movement, the New Work Group (Neuwerk-Bewegung). ... Until the advent of National Socialism it was regarded as the settlement of the pacifist section of the Free German Youth Movement (Freideutscher Werk-Bund)."³³ It is possible to show, however, a continuing impact on Bruderhof members of Landauer, an impact which stretches in some ways beyond the Youth Movement generation.

In this respect the testimony of Peter Cavanna, an English member of the Bruderhof from Devon who joined the Bruderhof in 1941, is of some interest. Cavanna migrated to South America with the Bruderhof. In 1952, along with his wife, he went from the main site in Paraguay to be part of the small community in Uruguay. The community tried to make itself known, and following a talk to some law students at a university, a number of arts students (who had come along and listened) got into contact with the Bruderhof members. These students were, according to Cavanna, thrilled by what they had heard, and it transpired that they were quite involved in the anarchist movement. In the light of the quotations made from Eberhard Arnold's article from 1920, "Extended Households and Communal Life," which was very positive about the Landauer-oriented anarchist communist youth of the day, it is interesting to note Cavanna's comment that "one of our older members told me once Eberhard Arnold had said the people who we were closest to were the anarchists."³⁴

As a result of this contact, Cavanna pointed out that this group formed a community that exists to this present day, the *Comunidad del Sur*. Cavanna thought that it was from a member of this group that he first heard the name Landauer, and as a result read the *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, known in Spanish as *Invitation to Socialism*.

Cavanna mentioned this reading to Walter Hussy, who pointed out

31. See Walter Laquer, *Young Germany* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), for an interesting account of this movement; the Bruderhof is discussed on pages 118-20.

32. Lunn, *Prophet of Community*, 143-46, 249-52, 347-48.

33. E. H. C. (Hardy) Arnold, "The Cotswold Bruderhof—a Christian Community," in *Community in Britain* (West Byfleet: Community Service Committee, 1938), 25-26; the book was printed for the Community Service Committee at the Cotswold Bruderhof.

34. Peter Cavanna, interview by Michael Tyldesley, Darvell Bruderhof, 11 September 1993. A copy has been deposited with the Darvell Archives, and copies are available to interested parties from the author.

to him that Landauer had been of great significance to the Bruderhof. Cavanna reported in an interview that Landauer had touched his heart very much. He noted particularly the significance of Landauer's critical attitude toward Communism, at a very early stage in its history: "But I was particularly struck with his criticism of the social order and his insistence that there had to be a new spirit, because without spirit it is nothing."³⁵ Peter Cavanna's story shows that members of the Bruderhof from a very different background to that of the German Youth Movement generation could respond to Gustav Landauer's work and feel that it had significance for them.

Oved also provides us with some evidence that Landauer's views continued to be of importance to the Bruderhof. He examined the contents of *El Arado 7*, published in August 1958. (This was the Bruderhof's Spanish-language magazine at the time.) Oved's concern is focused on its section on "Encounter with the Kibbutz"; part of this was an article entitled "Humanismo o Fe?" ("Humanism or Faith?"). To quote from Oved's summary:

The Bruderhof member's reply was based on Martin Buber's book *Paths of Utopia [sic]*, which includes a chapter on Gustav Landauer's doctrine and in which "one may find the key to our doctrine as expressed by the unreligious Jewish philosopher. Gustav Landauer was one of the people who influenced our community." He refers to a number of Landauerian ideas that served as the cornerstone for the Bruderhof, for instance, the community as a union of people who act as living organism; people's need for internal renewal in order to renew their society; the community's unity as not being enforced externally, but as the result of a live, internal spirit that affects each individual; the spirit of brotherhood on which the Bruderhof's life is based and which enables Christians, Jews, and atheists to live together in one society. Then he asks the kibbutznik whether the kibbutz also aspires to an internal spirituality of brotherhood according to Landauer's doctrine.³⁶

Finally, in examining the links between the thought of Landauer and the thought of members of the Bruderhof it is important to note an article that appeared in the German-language journal of the Bruderhof, *Der Pflug*, for 1958. The article is attributed to Gustav Landauer and is called "Der Keil, der Vorwärts Drangt" ("The Wedge That Drives Forward"). This consists of extracts from the *Aufruf zum Sozialismus* (second edition of 1919), reprinted with the permission of its publisher Paul Cassirer, who, the editors noted, was now living in London. (This suggests that the Bruderhof had kept in contact with this member of the Landauer circle since 1920, when he was referred to in the letter by Eberhard Arnold, cited above.)

35. Ibid.

36. Oved, *Distant Brothers*, 39.

Aside from the inherent interest of the fact that the Bruderhof journal carried an article consisting of writing by Landauer, the importance of this piece is substantially enhanced by the "Introductory Remarks" of the editors. The archivists at Darvell Bruderhof (England) have indicated that they feel that the writer might well have been Hardy Arnold, the eldest son of Eberhard Arnold.

In these remarks, the editor(s) indicate their opinion that Landauer was "one of the great figures of human history."³⁷ They introduce Landauer briefly, stressing that few of his contemporaries understood him, but that among those who did his influence was great, and noting some of the key aspects of his work and life. (Most notable of these was his opposition to violence and also the fact that he "was devoted to Socialism of the Spirit and was equally against official (Marxist) Socialism.")³⁸ The hub of the editorial introduction, however, lies in the following:

Landauer is important to us for two reasons: firstly his testimony to the spirit which he saw intimately connected to the land. For him spirit was not what dwelt within men, but a force overwhelming men from above. Then also through his testimony to community. He contrasted the union of freewilling workers and hearers of the spirit with the atomic association [a literal translation of the word *Atomverband*] of the capitalist society and the impersonal collective of the communistic dictator-state.³⁹

This extract shows graphically, along with the other evidence from the mid-1950s, just how the Bruderhof at that state read Landauer.

Why Was Landauer Important?

The evidence of the previous sections indicates the reality of the intellectual links between the Bruderhof and Gustav Landauer. It is now appropriate to consider why these links existed. What was it in Landauer's message that was important to the Bruderhof members? It is possible to look at this question in two ways, practically and theoretically.

Considering the practical side first, we have the testimony of Emmy Arnold as to the influence of Landauer on the way in which Sannerz (the first Bruderhof community) was organized:

37. Gustav Landauer, "Der Keil, der Vorwärts Drangt," *Der Pflug*, no. 1 (1958), from "Vorbemerkung," 4. This article was translated into English by the author and his translation corrected by Ruth Land of the Darvell Archives.

38. *Ibid.*, 4.

39. *Ibid.*, 4.

But where to begin? In the city, or in the country? What is the best way to relieve the misery of the masses? The answer our working-class friends gave was, "Go into the country." From the start, it was clear to us that community life would have to be a life of unity in faith, and of community of property and work in voluntary poverty. Particularly the writings of Gustav Landauer turned us in this direction.⁴⁰

Landauer's ideas, therefore, seem to have contributed to the way in which Sannerz was planned. And we can note that certainly, at the time of writing the *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, Landauer would have agreed with Emmy Arnold's working-class friends in advising the nascent commune to site itself in the country. Lunn shows very clearly that from 1900 onwards Landauer was keen to see the construction of communities in rural areas.⁴¹ His preference for rural communities derived from a view that, to some extent at least, vestiges of communal forms and spirit might be found in the countryside.⁴²

What were the theoretical aspects of the link between Landauer and the Bruderhof? Two writers have suggested that there is a possible answer to this in Landauer's arguments for the construction of socialist communities in the here and now. Yaacov Oved has commented: "He [Eberhard Arnold] was impressed with Landauer's call to German youth to establish agricultural communes in which real togetherness would lead to productive and non-alienating work. The idea of small voluntary units that would eventually serve as a basis for changing society appealed to Eberhard Arnold and helped lead to the establishment of his communal settlement, Sannerz, in June 1920."⁴³

Arnold Pfeiffer has made a similar point in his article "Gemeinde und Sozialismus bei Eberhard Arnold": "The basic idea shared by Landauer and Arnold was that 'small socialist islands, working and living in the midst of the capitalist ocean, might be the seeds of a new world.' This conception, from the point of view of scientific Socialism, i.e., Marxism, is termed 'Utopian.' Utopian in this polemic sense is another way of saying 'unrealistic'" This line of argument is a perfectly reasonable and accurate one. However, one might pose the question as to whether this shared belief in the formation of communi-

40. Emmy Arnold, "Eberhard Arnold's Life and Work," in *Eberhard Arnold: A Testimony of Church Community from His Life and Writings* (Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1973), 11-12.

41. Lunn, *Prophet of Community*, 216ff.

42. Gustav Landauer, *For Socialism* (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1978), 136-37.

43. Oved, *Distant Brothers*, 8-9.

44. Arnold Pfeiffer, "Gemeinde und Sozialismus bei Eberhard Arnold," *Christ und Sozialist* 4, no. 4 (1975), 12, translated by Kathleen Hasenberg, with alteration of one word, "scientific."

ties in the here and now was the only way in which the ideas of the Bruderhof, and especially of Eberhard Arnold, were linked to those of Gustav Landauer at a theoretical level.

Spirit in Landauer and Arnold

It could be suggested that there was another way in which there was an intellectual link, and that this lay in the first of the "testimonies" cited above, namely Landauer's testimony to the spirit. That this aspect of Landauer's thought impressed itself on Bruderhof members can be seen in the following statement made by Walter Hussy in an interview: "I mean what was significant was that Landauer pointed out that the Spirit must come and overpower us. Always with a certain expression, almost like a slogan, Land and Spirit, or Spirit and Hands. These things in a spiritual life and practical life must come together into a union."⁴⁵

Eberhard Arnold's appreciation of this aspect of Landauer's thought can be seen in the following discussion of Landauer's views in the context of the movement of intentional communities or communes: "In this movement the Spirit was spoken of, with the result that people rebuked Gustav Landauer, 'You speak of the Spirit here, you speak too much of the Spirit!' Yet the only thing that matters is the Spirit! Gustav Landauer gave a testimony for the Spirit; the Spirit is Fellowship, it is the bond, it is the flame of the community of work! He was very careful, though, not to express this testimony in the traditional words of Christianity."⁴⁶

So, what was Landauer talking about when he discussed Spirit and its role? Why was this concept so important to him? To situate this aspect of Landauer's thought it is important to consider what, in an important sense, he was reacting against. As we say, Landauer had a very brief association with Marxism at the start of his socialist career. Subsequent to this, however, he was a resolute anti-Marxist, a fact made very clear in the *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, much of which is devoted to an attack on Marxism, very much the dominant tendency in the German Socialism of Landauer's day.

Landauer was crucially concerned to attack in the *Aufruf zum Sozialismus* what he saw as the central error of Marxism: "It claimed that socialism was being prepared in the institutions and catastrophic process of bourgeois society itself, while the struggle of the ever growing, ever more decisive and more revolutionary proletarian masses was a necessity, an historically predestined act to bring about

45. Walter Hussy, interview by Michael Tyldesley, Darvell Bruderhof, 5 April 1995.

46. Eberhard Arnold, *Various Movements and the Way of Unity in the Spirit* (Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1975), 62.

38 COMMUNAL SOCIETIES

socialism."⁴⁷ Early in his text Landauer had given his alternative vision: "Socialism is the tendency of will of united persons, to create something new for the sake of an ideal."⁴⁸ Landauer thus posed a radical alternative to the dominant, philosophically materialistic Marxist trend in Socialism.

In the preface to the second edition of the *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, written in early January 1919, in Munich, Landauer strikingly showed the extent to which the Spirit played a key role in his alternative to Marxism:

What has to be done is so clear and simple that every child understands it. The means are there; whoever looks around, sees it. The imperative of the spirit which leads the revolution can help us through great measures and undertakings. Submit to this spirit; petty interests must not hamper it. But its full implementation is impeded by heaps of rubble that have been piled upon the conditions and even the souls of the masses. One road is open, more open than ever, to help bring about revolution and the collapse of the present system; to begin on a small scale, and voluntarily, on all sides, *you* are called, you and your friends.⁴⁹

By contrast, in Marxism, according to Landauer, Spirit has been replaced by a ludicrous scientific superstition, originating in a previous travesty of Spirit (Hegelianism) and concocted by Karl Marx.⁵⁰

At this point, it should be noted that Eberhard Arnold also wrote and talked about the Spirit frequently, in a way that appears to be quite similar to Landauer. To give an example: "We must live in community because the Spirit of joy and love gives us such an urge to reach out to people that we want to be with them all the time. The sharing of a common life is possible only in this all-embracing spirit and in those things that belong to the Spirit: a deeper inner life, an ability to experience life more keenly, an intense excitement and stimulation, and a surrender to great experiences, which we of ourselves can never feel equal to."⁵¹

However, Arnold was very specific about the nature and identity of the Spirit that he was talking about: "The future unity of mankind, when God alone will rule, is ensured by the Spirit. For this Spirit is the coming Leader and Lord himself. The only thing we can hold onto here and now, the only thing we can already have of the great future when

47. Landauer, *For Socialism*, 99.

48. *Ibid.*, 31.

49. *Ibid.*, 23.

50. *Ibid.*, 46.

51. Arnold, *Why We Live in Community*, 9.

love and unity rule, is the Spirit. Faith in the Spirit is faith in the Church and faith in the Kingdom."⁵²

Quite clearly, Arnold worked within a self-consciously Christian frame of reference, and as we noted earlier, he was well aware that Landauer did not. Despite this difference, the overall thrust of Gustav Landauer's viewpoint and that of Eberhard Arnold, when we consider this question of Spirit, can be seen as being broadly similar. This is not an attempt to reduce Arnold to Landauer or Landauer to Arnold, an attempt that would be absurd given Arnold's clear statement of Landauer's unwillingness to utilize traditional Christian categories. Rather it is to suggest that there were fundamental congruences in the way in which these two thinkers saw the world, and that these congruences were at a level underlying the common advocacy of forming communities in the here and now. (These congruences were arguably evident to Arnold in at least one of the quotations given above.) For both, there was a Spirit urging this path to be chosen by humanity.

The State in Landauer and Arnold

An examination of the views of Landauer and Eberhard Arnold regarding the state illustrates the importance to both of the concept of the Spirit, and shows how both utilized it in analyzing the reality of the societies they confronted.

Landauer, as Lunn notes, was unusual in anarchist circles in seeing the state not as an institution imposed on society, but rather as a relationship between people that could be ended by contracting different relationships among people. In this view he was influenced by Tolstoy and Etienne La Boetie (1530-63).⁵³ Landauer saw the state as a surrogate for Spirit. Where there was Spirit, there was society. Where there was no Spirit, there was the state.⁵⁴ Accordingly, given the absence of Spirit in the age in which he was writing, Landauer felt that the state was a necessity for life in the here and now.⁵⁵ Clearly, Landauer was not happy with this situation, however the logic of his analysis dictated it.

For Arnold, government was God-given and to be obeyed, providing it did not overstep the boundaries laid down for it by God.⁵⁶

52. *Ibid.*, 18.

53. Lunn, *Prophet of Community*, 223-231.

54. Landauer, *For Socialism*, 42.

55. *Ibid.*, 44.

56. Hutterian Society and Yoder, *God's Revolution*, 184.

However, this did not mean that there could be such a thing as a Christian state.⁵⁷ Arnold asserted that Christ is the end of the law, quoting Romans 10:4. The taskmaster, he argued, was done away with. But, should one step outside the fellowship of Christ, then one is again subject to the power of governmental authority.⁵⁸

So, Arnold argued for respect of government, but noted: "Our calling, however, is a completely different one; it brings with it an order of society utterly different from anything that is possible in the State and the present social order."⁵⁹

By presenting these arguments one after the other, we can see that the similarities between the two arguments are striking, despite the use of rather different types of language. Both see the state in negative terms, despite Arnold's qualified willingness to respect it. The mechanisms of the state are not, on either view, the appropriate mechanisms for bringing about necessary changes in the social order. Neither advocated strategies of the conventional revolutionary (socialist or anarchist) type of overthrowing or capturing the state. (This point might be qualified in respect of the last few months of Landauer's life in Munich.) However, both acknowledge the state's necessity in the present situation, given the spiritual condition of humanity. Both saw an alternative, and, to the extent both involved the setting up of communities in the here and now, they were not dissimilar alternatives but ones that depended on changes in that spiritual condition.

Conclusion

In his book, *Distant Brothers*, Yaacov Oved stressed the importance of Gustav Landauer to the Bruderhof in its early days. He pointed in particular to the importance of Landauer to Eberhard Arnold, going so far so to argue that "Arnold had been introduced to Landauer's doctrine via his book *A Call to Socialism ...*, and its social vision impressed him to such an extent that he integrated it into his own religious credo."⁶⁰ Oved argues that Landauer's thought influenced the character of the Bruderhof in part, and that Landauer had a continuing significance for the Bruderhof.⁶¹ Oved supports these arguments with references to testimony from Bruderhof veterans such as Hans Meier, Georg Barth, and Trudi Hussy.

57. Ibid., 186.

58. Ibid., 187.

59. Ibid., 187.

60. Oved, *Distant Brothers*, 8.

61. Ibid., 8-9.

The material examined in this article provides support for the general line of Oved's argument, which was stated in fairly brief terms at the start of a work concerned with Bruderhof-Kibbutz relations. In particular, it has adduced evidence from the correspondence and journalism of Eberhard Arnold dating from 1920, the year in which the Bruderhof was started, which present interesting and relevant support to the view that Landauer was important to Arnold and Bruderhof.

It may then be asked, why does the Bruderhof mention Landauer so infrequently in its publications today, and usually only in connection with its relationship to the Kibbutz?⁶² The process of internationalization of the Bruderhof communities could provide a possible partial explanation. Certainly, it is unlikely that Landauer could have been a part of the intellectual background for English-speaking people who came into contact with the Bruderhof at, for instance, the Cotswold or Woodcrest Bruderhofs in the late 1930s or mid-1950s respectively.

By contrast, as has been shown, Landauer was an important figure in the German-speaking world of the first quarter of the twentieth century. This was especially true among those circles seeking a way forward which involved the formation of intentional communities, pacifism, spirituality, and a rejection of materialism, whether capitalist or Marxist.⁶³ Given this point, it would perhaps have been surprising had the German speakers who were involved in the Bruderhof in the 1920s not been interested in and aware of Landauer.

In concluding that Landauer was a significant figure for the early Bruderhof and Eberhard Arnold, this should not lead to the downplaying of the impact of other thinkers or trends of thought on the Bruderhof. Rather, it simply means that a comprehensive picture of the Bruderhof and its vision requires an appreciation of the significance of Gustav Landauer.

62. For recent examples, see Martin Johnson, "Review of *Distant Brothers*," *The Plough* no. 35 (Summer 1993): 19-20, and Sybil Sender, "Meeting Our Distant Brothers," *The Plough* no. 37 (Winter 1993-94): 13-15.

63. Laquer, *Young Germany*, 100-01, shows Landauer's influence in these directions on some sections of the German Youth Movement.

