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# **An elucidation of Landauer’s concept of antipolitics**

***Introduction: Landauer, chief editor of* Der Sozialist**

In the September 1, 1910 issue of *Der Sozialist*, its editor-in-chief Gustav Landauer[[1]](#footnote-2) incorporated a short presentation and partial translation of the essay *On Voluntary Servitude* [*Discours de la servitude volontaire*],written around 1550 by Michel de Montaigne’s close friend, Étienne de La Boétie (1530–1563).[[2]](#footnote-3) Although his was not the first German translation of the essay­—which had appeared more than a century prior, in 1793, in the journal *Der Deutsche Merkur*, authored by the political philosopher Johann Benjamin Ehrard (1766–1826)—Landauer imparted a new topicality to this provocative essay, deeply rooted in his notion of antipolitics which the following pages aims at clarifying. As the editor-in-chief of *Der Sozialist*, Landauer was probably behind the editorial decision to insert his translation of La Boétie in a smaller font at the bottom of pages 2 to 5, below three main articles printed in a larger font as the core of the newspaper: Friedrich von Sallet’s 1843 article on popular sovereignty (*Volkssouveränität*), Proudhon’s 1849 article *Les Malthusiens*, also translated by Landauer, and a critical article on the Tsar’s visit to the Kaiser in early September 1910.

The meeting of the two monarchs was an attempt to reach a *détente* between the two neighboring empires and their conflicting interests.[[3]](#footnote-4) Yet, from the perspective of *Der Sozialist*, this visit was a disgrace:

In our last edition, we expressed our protest against the visit of the Russian Tsar in Germany. Things happened as we predicted: the working and oppressed people in Germany, who followed with great enthusiasm the [1905] revolution, have now forgotten the blood shed by their brothers. A few true socialists might shout themselves hoarse, but heir call will not be loud enough to awaken the sleeping masses. The great political parties decided to remain silent for whatever reason …[[4]](#footnote-5)

The editorialist [maybe Landauer] continues his article by expressing deep sorrow about the workers’ apathy, and dreaming about a “huge march led by the working class in Giessen, Wiesbaden, Mainz, Offenbach, Hanau und Frankfurt, to greet the Tsar in its own way.”[[5]](#footnote-6) How was it possible that Nicolai II, “a svelte young man, whose kind bourgeois appearance would betray only a mediocre functionary,”[[6]](#footnote-7) could rule over such an “immense empire?” Moreover, how could it be that “the world could build up expectations for this young Tsar, when for more than a century, it had been raising hopes for the new Tsars”[[7]](#footnote-8) in vain?

Part of the answer to these harsh questions can be found in the opening article of the journal issue, *On Popular Sovereignty*.There, the political essayist Friedrich von Sallet (1812–1843)[[8]](#footnote-9) explains: “The people, the mass of the population, stands in terms of number and force in a relation of overwhelming superiority to the few powerholders and their little flock of favorites. The people can doubtlessly impose its will, as soon as it wants to … If the people endures political servitude, it bears it only because it wants to …”[[9]](#footnote-10) As the essayist phrased it, “who else could be a servant, but a free man?” With the progressive enlightenment of the people, the existing domination would “last only for a short transitional phase; then the exiting order will be overturned, while the new order, proceeding from the awakened popular will, shall be built.”[[10]](#footnote-11)

Yet, if almost seventy years after these words, in 1910, Kaiser Wilhelm II and Tsar Nicolai II could still rule over the destiny of Central and Eastern Europe, this was partly because the awakening of the popular will envisioned by Friedrich von Sallet had been curtailed by an inhumane policy of the elites, which this same issue of *Der* *Sozialist* addresses critically in publishing a new translation of Proudhon’s *Les Malthusiens*:

Dr. Malthus, an economist, an Englishman, once wrote the following words:

“A man who is born into a world already occupied, his family unable to support him, and society not requiring his labor, such a man, I say, has not the least legal right to claim any nourishment whatever; he is really one too many on the earth. At the great banquet of Nature there is no plate laid for him. Nature commands him to take himself away, and she will not be slow to put her order into execution.”

As a consequence of this great principle, Malthus recommends, with the most terrible threats, for every man who has neither labor nor income upon which to live to take himself away, or at any rate to have no more children.[[11]](#footnote-12)

By propagating a widely accepted scientific discourse advocating for the “extinction” of the poor as a natural and beneficial necessity, the 19th-century elites had been successful in delaying the natural emancipation of the workers. This dubious “success” was due to a treason committed by the “educated” elites as described by Proudhon: instead of contributing to the awakening of popular sovereignty, said elites depicted the people as a mass of “too many,” of useless individuals rightly destined to perish.

If we consider the editorial composition of this issue of *Der Sozialist* as a whole, it seems that Landauer and his co-editors found a creative way to critically address the visit of the Tsar to the Kaiser. They shrewdly chose not to publish their harsh chronicle on the first page, and instead had it preceded by two essays on popular sovereignty and the Malthusian ideology of the elites—­­which both made plain the historical absurdity and danger of monarchies. Printed after these two devastating critiques of 19th-century conservative politics, the report on the meeting of the two monarchs, Nicolai II and Wilhelm II, fully develops the lessons to be drawn from these two essays for the present. It vividly portrays the objective link between political apathy, the illusion of reformatory monarchs and the violent crushing of workers’ aspirations and revolutions.

Beyond their astute strategy for avoiding political censorship, the editors of *Der Sozialist* added another imaginative layer of explanation and criticism to this outdated rule of the monarchs by publishing below the abovementioned articles a forgotten masterpiece of early modern political philosophy:

*On Voluntary Servitude* (*Von der freiwilligen Knechtschaft)*

A tract by Étienne de La Boétie, translated by Gustav Landauer

[…] This work was composed … more than 360 years ago. It circulated in manuscripts already during the life of its author, who chose to conceal his authorship. … It was probably well known to the revolutionary republicans, often called the Monarchomachs, who in the next centuries in England, Holland and France, fought against absolutism … The publisher of this tract gave him the excellent title of *Contr’un*—a formula which cannot be translated into German. A literal rendering of it would be: the Anti-Monos, Monos meaning the One, the Monarch, against whom the author fought such a systematic battle.[[12]](#footnote-13)

By disseminating the story and text of La Boétie’s *Contr’un*, a source of inspiration for so many revolutionaries in Western Europe, Landauer and his colleagues not only hoped to rekindle the anti-monarchic spark among their readers; they also aspired to deliver a more anarchist lesson encapsulated in the first words of La Boétie’s *Discours*.

“I don’t see any good in having several lords;

Let no more than one be master, let only one alone be king.”

That is what Ulysses, speaking in public, said in Homer. If he had said nothing more than

“I see no good in having several lords,” it would have been well spoken.[[13]](#footnote-14)

If the Tsar and the Kaiser could run their world, this meant not only that Russians and Germans had not gotten rid of their monarchs. More fundamentally, it meant that they were still voluntary servants of one or several lords, and that a deeper liberation from the psychological need for rulers was necessary to prevent the illusory deliverance of passing from the hands of one lord to those of many. This deeper liberation from the rule of the one or the many is at the heart of Landauer’s notion of *Antipolitik*, to whose elucidation the following pages are devoted. For this purpose, I will juxtapose Landauer’s central texts on this notion with several sources that constitute, in my view, its philosophical background. With reference to La Boétie, Hobbes, Nietzsche, Proudhon, Aristotle and Marx, I hope to clarify the concept of antipolitics by pointing at direct formative influences, but also at its construction in opposition to major works of political philosophy.

**I *The hidden psychological background of political transference***

*La Boétie and Landauer: two secret geniuses of modernity?*

At the end of his short presentation of La Boétie’s life and work in the issue of *Der Sozialist* discussed above, Landauer invites his readers to learn “more about the context of this unique publication [*On Voluntary Servitude*]”in his book *Die Revolution*, published three years prior in 1907. In doing so, Landauer refers to a central discussion on modernity in the book – a period that he delimits conventionally as beginning around 1500, but which he defines in the following original way:

[…] the millennium between the year 500 and the year 1500 was defined by one single tendency, namely ordered multiplicity, fed by a common spirit that united everything … the era from the year 1500 until now (and beyond) is an era without a common spirit. It is an era defined by a lack of spirit. It is hence an era of violence; an era where spirit is present only in certain individuals; an era of individualism, and hence of atomized individuals as well as uprooted and dissolved masses; an era of personalism, and hence individual melancholic and ingenious spirits; an era without truth (like any era without spirit); an era of decadence, and hence transition; and an era of human beings without any heart, without integrity, without courage, without tolerance.[[14]](#footnote-15)

Landauer hesitates in his characterization of modernity. He defines it primarily as a theological and political period of the retreat of the *Geist,* understood as the end of the “mythical force of Christianity” and its capacity to produce a total organization of social activities. This turns women and men towards atomization, massification and loss of substance. Another facet of this retreat is for Landauer the individual quest for a new common spirit, which expresses itself in religious and political revolutions:

Spirit never disappears entirely. If it no longer manifests itself among the people, it appears as an abundant and exhausting force in some lonely individuals. … Our centuries are marked by a desire for freedom and by attempts to attain it. This is what we usually mean when we speak of revolution. All surrogates of spirit are oppressive. Utopia struggles against a specific form of transition. Wise and courageous individuals, full of spirit and soul, lead a struggle that substitutes one form of transition for another, and so forth, until the period has run its time and a new common spirit takes shape, born from the desires and distresses of individuals […] this is our way: to see a common spirit disappear, and to go through a period of violence and rage—a period of distressed masses and a few ingenious individuals—until we reach a new common spirit. It is now the time to document this way, or, in other words, our revolution.[[15]](#footnote-16)

Modernity has been torn between the nostalgia for a stable common spirit—a return to the era before the community lost its spiritual bond—and the thirst for constant change and revolutions led by inspired individuals. This tension is illustrated by Landauer through the opposition of two historical figures: Martin Luther (1483–1546), “a symbol for the lack of spirit among people and for times of demise”[[16]](#footnote-17) and Petr Chelčický (c.1390–c.1460), “the Christian anarchist.”[[17]](#footnote-18)Chelčický and his followers aimed “to revive a society in which life was based on the holiness of each individual and the common spirit of a Christian community.” But “it was too late,”[[18]](#footnote-19) concludes Landauer. Luther “realized with a cruel sharpness the still subterranean evolution of his century: the separation of life from faith and its substitution of spirit by organized violence.”[[19]](#footnote-20) The failure of the revival of the Christian spirit coupled with its retreat into the private realm created the conditions for a further substitution of its manifestation in the medieval communal organization by the modern political dissymmetry between the absolute ruler and his subjects. Facing this new tyranny, “political revolution has beset people’s minds in rapid succession: first in the Netherlands, then in Scotland, France, and England.”[[20]](#footnote-21) Revisiting the period of the Wars of Religion and political revolutions of the 16th and 17th centuries, Landauer deploys an impressive wealth of literary and historical knowledge on radical political thinkers and Monarchomachs like John Ponet (c.1514–1556), François Hotman (1524–1590), George Buchanan (1506–1582), Hubert Languet (1518–1581) and Juan de Mariana (1536–1624). For Landauer, the political revolution advanced by these thinkers and their followers in Western Europe was proof of the following rule: “what dies *as spirit* remains as an *opinion*, a *conviction*.”[[21]](#footnote-22) The retreat of the common Christian spirit into the private sphere left a void within Western societies that was soon to be filled by the confrontation of two historical phenomena: state building and revolutionary utopias.

At the heart of this vision of early modernity encompassing both the privatization of faith and the struggle between the absolute ruler and the Monarchomach, Landauer places the forgotten figure of La Boétie:

Let us go back sixty years to meet a man [La Boétie] … who conceptualized this revolution, gave it a psychology and its classical expression. ... In the era of individualism, the genius precedes events. His work often remains ineffective for an extended period, appearing to be dead. Yet, it remains alive for a very long period, and waits for others to apply its ideas practically; men of great and strong spirit, even if they are not necessarily inspired by such a visionary and fateful solitude.[[22]](#footnote-23)

Did Landauer identify with this portrait of La Boétie as the hidden genius of early modernity and consider himself the hidden genius of the 20th century? Whatever the answer to this psychological question, it is nevertheless certain that Landauer developed major aspects of his antipoliticsin the subsequent pages he wrote on La Boétie.

*A new colossus*

Combining translation, paraphrase and summary, Landauer reveals to his German readers the content of La Boétie’s *Discours*. Aiming to present his and La Boétie’s antipolitical views, Landauer raises the question: “What can be done against the servitude that has come over humanity?”[[23]](#footnote-24) The answer is given with a translated passage:

Be resolved no longer to serve; and you will find yourselves free. I do not want you to push or to shake him [Monarch], but only to no longer support him, and you will see him, like a great colossus, of which the base been removed, collapse of his own weight and break.[[24]](#footnote-25)

The use of the term “colossus” by La Boétie and Landauer should command our attention. In an article written in 1932 on the meaning of the Greek term κολοσσός,[[25]](#footnote-26) the famous linguist Emile Benveniste (1902–1976) explains that the word originally designated “a substitute” or “a double” of the deceased, meant to perpetuate his presence after death in the form of a stone statue in his likeness. This stone figure constituted, at first, a kind of promise of individual immortality, but soon became a human figuration of the divine as well, which could bestow protection on the citizens of the polis. The most famous example is the *Colossus of Rhodes*, the bronze statue erected by the people of Rhodes for the god Helios after their victory over Cyprus at the beginning of the 3rd century BCE. In the second chapter of the Book of Daniel*,* however,Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the collapse of the composite statue hints at the transient nature of empires and kingdoms, rising and falling in succession. The gigantic statue of the colossus expresses, on the one hand, the individual and collective longing for immortality, as if stones could overcome death, while, on the other hand, betraying a human anxiety about the transience of life and of political power.

In the excerpt of *On Voluntary Servitude* translated by Landauer, La Boétie develops the notion of the colossus further beyond its classical understanding, i.e., beyond man’s projection into eternity through a stone substitute. He adds that the voluntary servitude of subjects or citizens builds another kind of colossus: the political dissymmetry between the ruler and the ruled. Impressed by La Boétie’s theory, and infused with the desire to pass it on to his German readers, Landauer translates another very suggestive passage, preceding it with a few words of commentary:

The tyrant’s power comes from the voluntary servitude of humanity. “From where does he take so many eyes with which to surveil you, unless you lend them to him? How does he have so many hands with which to strike you, unless he receives them from you? How can he have any power over you except through your agreement? What could he do to you if you were not serving as fences for the thief who steals from you, accomplices of the murderer who kills you, and traitors of yourselves?”[[26]](#footnote-27)

The political augmentation that produces the “colossal” dissymmetry between the ruler and his subjects is defined by La Boétie as the subjects’ betrayal of himself or herself. This terminology points to the psychological background of political modernity, understood as the separation or transcendence of political power from society and individuals. Such separation was only made possible by a renunciation of more reciprocal and communal human relationships which, according to Landauer, defined the Christian spirit of the Middle Ages, viewed as a “totality of autonomies [*Gesamtheit von Selbständigkeiten*] – forms that were interrelated and organized without ever creating a social pyramid or total power.”[[27]](#footnote-28) In translating La Boétie, Landauer sought to grasp in a novel way the dismantling of the “social priority of the Middle Ages” and the replacement of the medieval “*society of societies*”[[28]](#footnote-29) with a modern projection unto the new ruler and an emergent state authority.

*A new insight into the Leviathan*

This moment of political separation is famously described by Hobbes as the “Generation of the great Leviathan.”

The only way to erect such a common power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners, and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort, as that by their own industry, and by the fruits of the earth, they may nourish themselves and live contentedly; is, to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their person; and every one to own, and acknowledge himself to be author of whatsoever he that so beareth their person, shall act, or cause to be acted, in those things which concern the common peace and safety; and therein to submit their wills, every one to his will, and their judgments, to his judgment.[[29]](#footnote-30)

“Be resolved no longer to serve; and you will find yourselves free,” wrote La Boétie a hundred years before Hobbes’ *magnum opus* (1651). Landauer’s choice to translate this extract from *On Voluntary servitude* in his own book *Die Revolution* was not incidental: two hundred fifty-six years after the *Leviathan*, the German-Jewish anarchist intended to deliver a message on his notion of antipolitics. About 40 years after the unified Wilhelmine Reich was founded as an attempt to centralize the mosaic of social and political entities inherited from the Middle Ages, Laundauer aimed to challenge his readers’ understanding of the political transition from the medieval to the modern period. In echoing and disseminating in translation La Boétie’s call to “no longer serve,” he perhaps hoped that subjects could halt the “generation of the great Leviathan”—that is, the transference of power that gave rise to modern states—and cause the political colossus to collapse. Yet more probably, he wanted to reverse the arrow of time or progress, by first pointing at the destruction of the medieval forms of association implied by the “Generation of the great Leviathan.” Indeed, Hobbes precedes his description of the constitution of a political sovereign by rejecting “the joining together of a small number of men,” the spontaneous sociability of “living creatures” or the idea of a voluntary covenant between men as the basis of social organization.[[30]](#footnote-31) All these features constituted, according to Landauer, the spirit of social associations in the medieval period. By unearthing the figure and work of La Boétie, Landauer intended to expose the unprecedented step-up in submission responsible for the establishment of modern political sovereignty and its obverse erasure of the less hierarchical medieval forms of association. La Boétie’s model of voluntary servitude serves Landauer as a source of psychological insight into the Leviathan—into the reasons behind the transition from medieval society to the modern state. This insight played an important role in Landauer’s attraction to La Boétie and the desire to translate him into German and disseminate his thought as an antidote to political modernity.

*The reabsorption of modern political transference*

Three years after publishing *Die Revolution*, which gave such prominence to La Boétie, Landauer translated the entire *Discours*, whose first part appeared in the abovementioned 1910 issue of *Der Sozialist*. As an astute editor, he decided to place a translation of the following passage from La Boétie below the report on the *Visit of the Tsar*:

If we see, not a hundred, not a thousand men, but a hundred provinces, a thousand cities, a million people not attack one who is alone, who behaves with everyone as with a serf and a slave, what shall we call it? Is it cowardice?[[31]](#footnote-32)

In juxtaposing the monarchs’ meeting with La Boétie’s vivid description of the subjects’ cowardice, Landauer hoped to educate his readers on the psychological sources of modern domination, but also to contribute to the future collapse of the colossus. However, Landauer’s vision of this collapse was not identical to the political project of the Monarchomachs and their later revolutionary followers. “Conspiracies to chase away or kill a tyrant,” he wrote, “can be enormously dangerous when conceived by men who are after fame and glory, and hence prone to reproducing tyranny.”[[32]](#footnote-33) If political revolution presents itself as a remedy to unjust power, in Landauer’s antipolitical view, however, it often serves to extend and perfect the existing order into ever more abstract forms of statehood. Political revolution is neither the end of nor the solution to the modern articulation of voluntary servitude and political projection unto the sovereign, since “tyranny ]…[ is not an external evil, but an internal flaw.” [*nicht ein Übel draußen ist, sondern ein Mangel im Innern*][[33]](#footnote-34) The fall of the colossus will only proceed from the suspension of individual transference of power to the ruler, from the reabsorption of the political transcendence of the State back into its immanent psychological background, the individuals:

… When the tyrant is not given anything and is no longer obeyed, he ends up naked, without force nor power: he ends up being nothing. He shares the fate of a root that is left without water and nourishment: it turns into a dry, dead piece of wood.[[34]](#footnote-35)

For Landauer, La Boétie anticipated—and even surpassed—all later revolutionary thought. The *Discours* is the key, the microcosm of true revolution. One need only “change a few words in La Boétie’s text” [*braucht man wenige Worte bei Boétie zu verändern*]:

The message is: It is *in you*! It is not outside. It *is you*. Humans shall not be united by domination, but as brothers *without domination*: *an-archy*. [*die Menschen sollten nicht durch Herrschaft gebunden sein, sondern als Brüder verbunden. Ohne Herrschaft; An-archie*.][[35]](#footnote-36)

Revolution is only spirit in a negative form, a search for spirit in the age of State and Empire. Only an understanding of revolution in La Boétie’s terms can bring political modernity to its necessary point of psychological regression, following Landauer’s antipolitical motto: *without domination—with spirit*! The suspension, the re-absorption of modern political transference will create, according to Landauer, the conditions in which the psyche will cease to project itself into political colossi and return to its individual and social immanence, as in the Medieval Christian era.

In a passage of the *Discours* not quoted by Landauer in *Die Revolution*, La Boétie defines the possible goal of the undoing of tyranny: “There is nothing a human should hold more dear than the restoration of his own natural right, to change himself from a beast of burden back to a man, so to speak.”[[36]](#footnote-37) If, for La Boétie, the “undoing” of tyranny consists in ceasing to magnify the power of the ruler to colossal dimensions, and in going back from a pathological political state to a state of nature and humanity, Landauer defines the finality of his antipolitical regression from the modern state not in terms of nature, but in terms of the resurgence of a spiritual bond.

**II *Regeneration of the spirit***

*The spiritual conversion of anarchist antipolitics*

The term and notion of *Antipolitik* appears in Landauer’s early anarchist articles in the 1890s. It designates a critical positioning vis-à-vis the organization of the workers’ movement into parties and syndicates. In the July 1897 article “A Few Words on Anarchism,” Landauer declares: “We [anarchists] do not consider ourselves to be a party.”[[37]](#footnote-38) For him, “the party is only an abstract and authoritarian concept, not a psychic reality,” furthermore it “is from the beginning the child of unreason, dependence and unphysiognomy.”[[38]](#footnote-39) The division of society into political parties results from the early modern evolution of medieval societies towards state administration. The projection of the immanent medieval governance unto a modern transcendent entity was accompanied by a retreat of the spirit into the individual (the genius). This evolution prompted the elaboration, by individual thinkers, of theoretical concepts of an utopian society that could be implemented by the abstract entity of the state. Immanent and organic community was replaced by an idealization of society which reduced its “psychic” reality, its internal rationality, its independence and beauty to a partial principle (liberalism, nationalism, socialism, etc.). In order to reshape society according to the chosen principle, the genius must gain the state’s approval for his cause by mobilizing as many people as possible into the relevant “party.” Nineteenth- and twentieth-century politics is thus a struggle between parties to determine which partial principle—uprooted from its premodern communal context—should be imposed by the state apparatus and its agents onto the individuals forming a people—now divested of their agency and reduced to a “mass.” Following this critique of political parties, Landauer defines the antipolitics he recommends that anarchists adopt with an ingenious play on words: “We have no political aspirations; rather we have aspirations against politics.” [*wir haben vielmehr Bestrebungen gegen die Politik*][[39]](#footnote-40)

Yet in a February 1898 article entitled “The Poet as Procurator,” Landauer adopts a more nuanced approach to antipolitics. There he writes: “I should keep silence on the Dreyfus affair, first as a Jew, second as a German, and third as an *Antipolitiker*.”[[40]](#footnote-41) After having ironized against “the fiery, excited and fanatic way in which international Jewry [*die internazionale Judenschaft*] sided with the Jewish officer Dreyfus from the beginning,”[[41]](#footnote-42) Landauer presents the antipolitical stance he may have adopted:

... the *Antipolitiker* in me could say: why should this affair concern you? Isn’t it a dirty private affair of the ruling class? Should I agitate myself for an officer of the general staff, who would be ready, like all his fellow officers, to engineer plans to annihilate the proletariat? And who are those who speak for him [Dreyfus]? Are they not, except for men of honor like Clémenceau and Zola, politicians of the worst kind?[[42]](#footnote-43)

Yet in the body of the article, Landauer distances himself from the antipolitical attitude of many French anarchists, and concludes his paper by translating the final lines of Zola’s *J’accuse*, published three weeks prior by the *Aurore* in Paris:

As for the people I am accusing, I do not know them …  To me they are mere entities, agents of harm to society.  The action I am taking is no more than a revolutionary measure to hasten the explosion of truth and justice.[[43]](#footnote-44)

Landauer eventually identifies with Zola’s action aiming to shed light on the state’s injustice and calling to release one of its victims.[[44]](#footnote-45) A few years later, in a 1901 article entitled “Anarchist Thoughts on Anarchism,” Landauer sharpens his critical understanding of anarchist antipolitics:

Political parties carry out positive political action; therefore anarchists, as individuals, should accomplish a positive antipolitics, and do negative politics. [*so müssen also die Anarchisten als Einzelne, positive Antipolitik, negative Politik treiben*] This line of thought lies behind the political action of anarchists, the propaganda of action, of individual terrorism.[[45]](#footnote-46)

Acknowledging the “fundamental error of revolutionary anarchists, in which I shared for too long,” Landauer declares that the “ideal of non-violence” cannot be achieved “by the means of violence.”[[46]](#footnote-47) Moreover, he insists that “anarchy is not an affair of the future, but of the present.” Renouncing the projection into a political future and therefore rejecting also the necessary technology of means it presupposes, Landauer defines the antipolitcal dimension of anarchy in spiritual terms. Anarchy is a “fundamental disposition in every thinking man,” “an urge to give a new birth to oneself.”

This highest moment should come for everyone: a moment in which, to use Nietzsche’s words, the person recreates in himself the original chaos, in which he allows the drama of his drives and most urging interiority to appear before himself, as before a spectator, and then observes which of his personalities should reign in himself, which is his true self— the one whom he differentiates from the traditions and heritages of the world of his ancestors—what the world should be to him and what he should be to the world.[[47]](#footnote-48)

Here Landauer refers to the fifth section of *Zarathustra’s Prologue* (1886), where in a moment of conflict and misunderstanding with the people, Zarathustra reveals to his audience that he sees the present moment as a last window of opportunity: “The time approaches when human beings no longer launch the arrow of their longing beyond the human.”[[48]](#footnote-49) The time of the last human being is drawing nearer, “the one [the last human being] who can no longer have contempt for himself.” Still, it is not too late yet; therefore Zarathustra enjoins the people: “One must still have chaos in oneself in order to give birth to a dancing star. I say to you: you still have chaos in you.”[[49]](#footnote-50) In Landauer’s writing, this last chance for humans to “set themselves a goal” reaching beyond their all-absorbing humanity turns into the necessity of a mystical and psychological conversion of anarchism.[[50]](#footnote-51) Instead of committing acts of terror, anarchists should psycholigically “kill” themselves in a “mystical death which through a deep immersion in oneself would lead to rebirth.”[[51]](#footnote-52) Nietzsche’s Zarathustra calls for transcending man by rediscovering one’s “chaos” and there, the drive to go beyond humanity and its modern self-enclosure. Fifteen years later, Landauer asks anarchists to turn their weapons against their own ego. “Only he who went though his own humanity [*durch seinen eigenen Menschen durch gekrochen*] and waded in his own blood, helps to create a new world, without attempting on others’ life.”[[52]](#footnote-53) Landauer replaces the virility of anarchist action and attack with a feminine image of immersing oneself in one’s psychological chaos and giving birth to a new self for a new world. Even if Landauer immediately adds that there is no “renouncement of action,” the actions he proposes to anarchist readers are outside the general scope of political action: “cooperatives of villages, consumers or apartments,” “public gardens and libraries,” “new schools.”[[53]](#footnote-54) This is where, as he believed, the mystical union of reborn individuals with the world could happen—and not in mobilization nor the projection of change onto the transcendence of the state apparatus, nor through individual terror. “He who awakens the world flowed in himself to a new life […], the world will be to him like himself, and he will love it like himself.”[[54]](#footnote-55) In this renewed intimacy between man and world, anarchy reaches its true spiritual definition and its psychological conversion, harmonizing the Nietzschean individual rebirth with revolutionary aspirations.

*In dialogue with Nietzsche*

Landauer’s spiritual notion of antipoliticscan be further illuminated by Nietzsche’s chapter entitled “What the Germans Lack”in *Twilight of the Idols*,published in 1889.[[55]](#footnote-56) In the fourth section of this chapter, we read:

Even a rapid estimate shows that it is not only obvious that German culture is declining […] In the end, no one can spend more than he has: that is true of an individual, it is true of a people. If one spends oneself for power, for power politics, for economics, world trade, parliamentarianism, and military interests — if one spends in the direction the quantum of understanding, seriousness, will, and self- overcoming which one represents, then it will be lacking for the other direction. Culture and the state — one should not deceive one-self about this — are antagonists: "Kultur-Staat" is merely a modern idea. One lives off the other, one thrives at the expense of the other. All great ages of culture are ages of political decline: what is great culturally has always been unpolitical, even anti-political.[[56]](#footnote-57)

Nietzsche defines his critical attitude toward the new Bismarckian Reich in antipolitical terms, by establishing an opposition between State—the Germans’ new passion, seen as swallowing all former spiritual aspirations and achievements—and *Kultur.* The genius, “an explosive material in whom tremendous energy has been accumulated,” bursts forth into a “great destiny”[[57]](#footnote-58) without requiring any political mediation. Such “will to life” has been alienated by the *Reich*,which submitted it “to a brutal breaking-in with the aim of making, in the least possible time, numberless young men to be fit to be utilized […] in the state service.”[[58]](#footnote-59) For Nietzsche, the growing intrusion of the political realm into every sector of human activity, especially culture, results in the decadence of the German spirit: “*Deutschland Deutschland über alles* was, I fear, the end of German philosophy.”[[59]](#footnote-60) Antipolitics meant for Nietzsche the necessity to recover a certain *Pathos der Distanz* and therefore to resist the “displacement of the center of gravity” toward the state resulting from the establishment of the Wilhelmine Reich.

Starting from 1871, subjects of thought and debate are being dominated by the Reich and its “news,” making it almost impossible to maintain the mental distance necessary for the spontaneous development of the spirit.

All unspirituality, all vulgar commonness, depend on the inability to resist a stimulus: one must react, one follows every impulse. In many cases, such a compulsion is already pathology, decline, a symptom of exhaustion — almost everything that unphilosophical crudity designates with the word "vice" is merely this physiological inability not to react.[[60]](#footnote-61)

The decadence of the German Spirit consists in a political hyper-sensitivity to the news which destroys the possibility of spiritual unfolding by forcing the individual to “stand with all doors open, to prostrate oneself submissively before every petty fact, to be ever itching to mingle with, plunge into other people and other things.”[[61]](#footnote-62) In contrast, spirit and culture begin with “habituating the eye to repose, to patience, to letting things come to it; learning to defer judgement …”[[62]](#footnote-63) The opposition between the slow temporality of the spirit and the rapidity of political connectedness, between a self-centered freedom and political alienation, is at the core of Nietzsche’s project to “*sound out idols*” – to render audible the silent projection of our “metaphysics of language” into entities like being, cause, ego, free will, and state. “I fear we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar …”[[63]](#footnote-64) In the end, Nietzsche’s antipoliticsconsist not only in sounding out the tyranny of metaphysical entities over life, but in restoring the “innocence of becoming” (*Unschuld des Werdens*).[[64]](#footnote-65)

Landauer often paints his antipolitical aspirations in veiled Nietzschean colors of spiritual regeneration. In his 1909 article entitled *Zur Geschichte des Wortes “Anarchie*,*”* Landauer distinguishes between two forms of anarchy. The first one “wants to reach through the external anarchy of disorder, the revolution, an order free of domination.” The second one “emphasizes more or less exclusively the inner anarchy, the inner unshackling as a way toward community.”[[65]](#footnote-66) This second form was associated by Landauer with Nietzsche’s understanding of the antipolitical nature of spirit and culture.

*Zarathustra’s* famous chapter “On the New Idol”(*Vom neuen Götzen*) depicts provocatively the death of peoples in “the coldest of all cold monsters,” and the demise of plural collective life forms in the common lie of the state. “Everything about [the state] is false; it bites with stolen teeth, this biting dog.”[[66]](#footnote-67) Creatively developing Nietzsche’s critique of idols, Landauer sketches a historical evolution from the *Ancient Regime* monarchy, based on voluntary servitude, to abstract modern states, based on a new type of servile transfer of peoples’ spontaneous social organization.

The transition from monarchic domination to state domination gave birth to two contradictory revolutionary trends: nation state building on the one hand, and state dissolution in society on the other. The anarchist inversion of state building for Landauer corresponds to the resurgence of an immanent spirit, understood as a psychological and social principle—both individual and collective.

… we will eventually reach a point when state and society – or the surrogate of community in the form of authoritarian power, on the one hand, and the true spiritual union [*Geistesbund*] on the other – will be separated, and only one of them will prevail. In the meantime, however, they coexist in confusion. Their eventual separation will not be abstract but real – it will be brought on by destruction and by the creative spirit. For Étienne de La Boétie, retreat and passive resistance against *the one* were still directed against the king – in the future, *the one* will be the state. Then it will also become obvious that it is not a particular form of the state that causes oppression. What causes oppression is self-coercion, self-denial, and the worst of all emotions: mistrust, not only towards others but also towards oneself. All this is engrained in the notion of the state itself; a notion that replaces spirit, inner sovereignty, and life with domination, external control, and death.[[67]](#footnote-68)

Landauer uses a strange and particularly powerful formulation in German, *das Schmutzigste des Unsaubern*, the dirtiest of the unclean, to designate the psycho-social degeneration which accounts for modern state building: self-coercion and self-denial. Landauer echoes here Nietzsche’s vitalist critique of the State, especially the opposition between state and life. ‘State I call it, where all are drinkers of poison, the good and the bad; state, where all lose themselves, the good and the bad; state, where the slow suicide of everyone is called— “life.”’[[68]](#footnote-69) The revolutionary antipolitics envisioned by Landauer seeks to end the pathological psychological projection of men’s and women’s inner spiritual and relational principle onto a state apparatus. “There, where the state ends,” writes Nietzsche, “only there begins the human being who is not superfluous.”[[69]](#footnote-70) For Landauer, a psychological empowerment of individuals and communities proceeding from the future dissolution of the state will correspond to the regeneration of spirit, not in Zarathustra’s sense of “the rainbow and the bridges of the overman,”[[70]](#footnote-71) but rather in the sense of a renewed psychological, social and economic life, whose basic principles I would now like to briefly outline.

**III *Communitarianism***

*Back to the Grundform of society*

Landauer’s notion of antipoliticshas been characterized up to this pointas an undoing of colossi or idols, an interruption of political externalization coinciding with a regeneration of the immanent spirit of individuals and nations. This articulation of depoliticization and spiritualization delineates a regressive notion of salvation, rolling the building of modern states and their atomized individuals back to the *Grundform* of society.

No world statistic and no world republic can help us. *Salvation can come only from the rebirth of peoples out of the spirit of community!* [*die Wiedergeburt der Völker aus dem Geist der Gemeinde*]

The basic form of socialist culture [*die Grundform der sozialistischen Kultur*] is the league of communities, with independent economies and exchange systems. Our human prosperity, our existence, now depends on whether the unity of the individual and that of the family, which are the only natural groups that have survived, will be intensified back to the unity of community [*sich wieder steigert zur Einheit der Gemeinde*], the basic form of every society.[[71]](#footnote-72)

This passage of Landauer’s 1911 *Call to Socialism* illuminates the link between salvation, the rebirth of the spirit, and a return to the basic structure of society. This basic structure is defined, in antipolitical terms, as the *Bund der selbständing wirtschaffenden Gemeinde*—the economic bond securing the self-sufficiency of the small community. For Landauer, a retrogression from centuries of state and empire building to the self-sufficient unit of economic activity is to liberate the spirit from its modern urge to alienate itself in transcendent and expansionist political and capitalistic forms. It would accomplish therefore a sort of terrestrial salvation, regenerating human spirit in its fundamental form, the free and immanent drive responsible for the association of individuals. The renewed experience of social bonding at its original level is the core of the spiritual salvation envisioned in Landauer’s anarchism. The individual retrieves from the undoing of political alienation the sense of his own agency in binding individuals together. Experiencing this bond directly inside one’s self again rather than projecting it onto an abstract entity—this is the antipolitical fantasy of salvation.

*Family*

In the following lines, Landauer defines this basic form of society, a social organization reflecting individual bonding, using two interrelated models. The first model is that of the *oikonomia* or the family household:

The independent individual [*der selbständige Einzelne*], who lets no one interfere in his business; for whom the house community of the family [*die Hausgemeinschaft der Familie*], with home and work-place, is his world; the autonomous local community; the county or group of communities, and so on, ever more broadly with the more comprehensive groups that have an ever smaller number of duties — that is what a society looks like, that alone is socialism, which is worth working for, which can save us from our misery. Futile and wrong are the attempts to further expand in states and federations of states the coercive system of government [*Zwangsregiment*] that is today a surrogate for the absent free-spirited unity, and to extend their sphere still further into the field of economics than had previously happened.[[72]](#footnote-73)

In contrast to the political drive of externalization, which separates labour from decision making, and therefore transfers most of the deliberations and decisions into a higher political sphere separated from the realm of production, the model of the family reclaimed here by Landauer seeks to conflate production and thought within the economic capacity of the family to sustain and guide itself. Such a conflation limits the necessity for any transfer of authority and expertise to another entity, except in the service of exchange and free association. By elaborating the principles delineated by Proudhon aiming at abolishing the distinction between “political and social constitution,” and at completely identifying “government with society,”[[73]](#footnote-74) Landauer adopts a regressive stance, resorbing political transcandence and separateness into the family *oikonomia* and a limited range of associations.

Landauer’s belief in a redemptive resorption into the family unit is best exemplified in the debate on marriage and women’s rights held with his anarchist friend Erich Mühsam (1878–1934) on the pages of *Der Sozialist* in autumn 1910. Expressing his discontent with Landauer’s rejection of “matriarchy” as “filth,” Mühsam makes his argument using Rahel von Varnhagen’s words “children should have only mothers.” Moreover, he thus defends the right of women “to have their children from the father or the fathers they themselves have chosen.”[[74]](#footnote-75) In the next issue of *Der Sozialist*, Landauer offers in response a long article on “marriage” (Ehe).[[75]](#footnote-76) There, he expands on the reasons for his rejection of new forms of legal protection for pregnant working women (*Mutterschutz*), female communism, and novel sexual ethics, describing these not only as a destruction of fatherhood, but as a new “religion” “fallen upon men with demonic compulsion.”[[76]](#footnote-77) The “demonic” impulse in these new forms of sexual relations and family organization for him manifests as a belief in the capacity of a “concept of the mind” (*Geistgestalt*) to “replace what Nature herself has already created as an eternal necessity: love.”[[77]](#footnote-78)

… true society is grounded on the structure of marriage. In marriage reigns and manifests itself what is both human finality and nature’s power: the vehement and incoercible drive of the sexes toward one another, the memory and desire of a man toward a woman, and of a woman toward a man.

Since our spirit is memory and since nothing in ourselves, in our memory, is so strong as the memory of nature, no wonder that it goes with us differently than with animals in whom the memory of sex always awakens and then disappears … The human being keeps at all times and places the memory of sex and therefore transposes his own eroticism to all …[[78]](#footnote-79)

Marriage, which for Landauer remains indissociably linked with love, is the primal articulation of nature’s drives within human consciousness—a Spinozan moment of perfect coextension of nature’s force with human thoughts and feelings, which reaches far beyond sexual attraction and reproduction and transforms the entire human and natural environment according to human love’s erotic tension and search for harmony. Love and marriage are the matrix of all later associations. Moreover, “the common housing, the working and caring of husband and wife for each other and their children”[[79]](#footnote-80) constitutes the prototype of all free social bonds, providing the antidote to the political separation between the sphere of production and reproduction and that of deliberation and decision. An antipolitcal regression to the natural and free generativity of family is supposed to reshape and regenerate the entire society based on love, replacing state coercion with man’s and woman’s spontaneous concerns for each other’s needs.

*Community*

After the family, the second model developed by Landauer is the community.

A natural unity can be attained by us men only where we are in local proximity, in real contact. In the family, the uniting spirit, the union of several persons for a common task, and for a common purpose, has too narrow and scanty a form for communal life [*Mitleben*]. The family is concerned only with private interests. We need a natural core of the common spirit for public life *[einen natürlichen Kern des Gemeingeistes für das öffentliche Leben*] so that public life will no longer be filled and led exclusively by the state and its coldness as till now, but by a warmth akin to family affection [*die der Familienliebe verwandt ist*]. This core of all genuine communal life is the local community, the economic community [*Wirtschaftsgemeinde*], whose essence no one can imagine who seeks to judge it, for instance, by what today calls itself “community.”[[80]](#footnote-81)

This model of the community, which reads both as a correction and a development of the first model of the family *oikonomia*, becomes intelligible only when contrasted with the first section in book I of Aristotle’s *Politics*. Indeed, Landauer outlines the above model after harshly criticizing the “*Polizeisozialismus*” of the Social Democrats, which “would seal the ruin of our people, and would hold together the fully scattered atoms by a mechanically ironed ring.” By using this mechanical image in which the atoms are held together not by inherent affinities but by an external force, Landauer aims to convey the incapacity of the state to create natural and generative bonds between individuals. His claim of the state’s incapacity to integrate and develop natural social relationships clashes with the opening phrase of Aristotle’s *Politics*: “Every state is as we see a sort of partnership.” [πασαν πόλιν ορωμεν κοινωνίαν τινα ουσαν][[81]](#footnote-82) Aristotle spans the range of possible partnerships or communities from those aimed “at some good” [αγαθου τινος] to the one that “aims at the most supreme of all goods.” [του κυριωτατου παντων][[82]](#footnote-83) Therefore, the method of investigation chosen by Aristotle is to study the “natural process of development of the community from its beginning” [εξ αρχης τα πράγματα φυόμενα] to its full-fledged form in the polis.

The partnership [κοινωνία] therefore that comes about the in course of nature for everyday purposes is the house [οικός] ...

On the other hand, the primary partnership made up of several households for the satisfaction of not mere daily needs is the village. The village according to the most natural account seems to be a colony from a household, formed of those whom some people speak of as “fellow-nurslings,” sons and sons’ sons ...

The partnership finally composed of several villages is the city-state; it has at last attained the limit of virtually complete self-sufficiency, and thus, while it comes into existence for the sake of life, it exists for good life. Hence every city-state exists by nature, inasmuch as the first partnerships so exist; for the city-state is the end of the other partnerships, and nature is an end, since that which each thing is when its growth is completed we speak of as being the nature of each thing, for instance of a man, a horse, a household …[[83]](#footnote-84)

Aristotle describes the historical evolution toward the polis as a natural development which unfolds the *telos* already present in the first partnership, the family, and which becomes more visible in the village and is then fully realized in the *polis*. Landauer too is forced to acknowledge that “the family is concerned only with private interests” and that therefore an expansion from the familial to the communal structure is necessary to give rise to “the common spirit for public life.” Yet, in sharp contrast to Aritstotle, he is not interested in making the necessary passage from family to community, and its corollary clarification of the common good, an anticipation of the state and a justification of its necessity. Moreover, Aristotle makes clear that “the special property of man in distinction from the other animals, that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities” is fully exercised only in the city-state.[[84]](#footnote-85) The natural growth toward the city thus corresponds to the development of the intellectual and social capacity to discern the common good within a specific political sphere.

While aware of the Aristotelian three-stage development of family to village and to polis, Landauer seeks to attain the common interest of public life without resorting to the Aristotelian solution of continuity between “life” [ζην] and the “good life” [ευ ζην], and without the supplementary institution of a political realm of decisions and deliberations beyond the economic activity of subsistence. By affirming “we need a natural core of the common spirit for public life,” Landauer hopes to retrograde the full-fledged Aristotelian political notion of the “good life” [ευ ζην] back into the less developed setting ofthe common spirit unifying the members of the community in their different labors and interactions. In contrast to the Aristotelian distinction between private care for the family’s and community’s vital needs and the public and general deliberation over the “good life” [ευ ζην] by the male citizens of the polis, Landauer’s notion of *Gemeingeist* attempts to re-unify the labor for material needs and the intellectual capacity of the community to understand its common interest. Thus Landauer’s antipolitical notion of the community was meant to pose a fierce challenge to the political age in which he was living: he asked his readers and comrades to un-cross the political Rubicon of the separation between the private and political realms, promising it was still possible to reabsorb politics into economy, to retrogress into the small-scale *oikonomia* ofthe village, even to renounce political deliberation in favor of a spontaneous and homogeneous approach to the common good, according to a psychosocial intuitive capacity to identify one’s individual and communal interest. Landauer believed thus that he could replace the “coldness of the state” and its rival parties “by a warmth akin to family affection” which resorbs political conflicts into family affairs, ultimately solved in the common care for each other and community subsistence.

*The economy of politics*

While Landauer’s dreamed-of resolution of political division into a past and future of communitarian subsistence work and care for each other (*zusammenwirtschaften und zusammensorgen*) arguably constitutes one pole of socialist antipolitics, the other is best substantiated by the following passage from Marx’s 1857–1858 *Grundrisse*:

The absolute working-out of [human] creative potentialities [*das absolute Herausarbeiten seiner schöpferischen Anlagen*], with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not measured on a *predetermined* yardstick? Where he [man] does not reproduce himself in one specificity, but produces his totality? Strives not to remain something that he has become, but is in the absolute movement of becoming [*in der absoluten Bewegung des Werdens*]? In bourgeois economics – an in the epoch of production to which it corresponds – this complete working-out of the human content appears as a complete emptying-out [*erscheint diese völlige Herausarbeitung des menschlischen Innern als völlige Entleerung*], this universal objectification as total alienation [*diese universelle Vergegenständlichung als totale Entfremdung*], and the tearing-down of all limited, one-sided aims as sacrifice of the human end-in-itself to an entirely external end [*die Niederreißung aller bestimmten einseitigen Zwecke als Aufopferung des Selbstzweck unter einen ganz äußeren Zweck*]. This why the childish world of antiquity on the one side loftier. On the other side, it really is loftier in all matters where closed shapes, forms and given limits are sought for. It is satisfaction from a limited standpoint; while the modern give no satisfaction; or, where it appears satisfied with itself, it is vulgar.[[85]](#footnote-86)

Capitalism is unique in its capacity to mobilize and transform all historical assets and all human dispositions into a totality of economic development. Each capitalistic totality relies on the dissymmetry between the objective alienation of all conditions of production and the living labour of the worker. As a consequence, capitalism necessarily creates a nostalgia for earlier forms of social and economic organization, if only because of their reassuring limitedness. The socialism of Proudhon and Landauer was a nostalgia of this kind for Marx. But Marx’s patronizing attitude relies on another antipolitical economic fantasy—the fantasy that the total alienation and objectivation of man in capitalism will dialectically lead the way to a rational and social attainment of this economical totality in scientific socialism, reducing politics to a technology of seizing power (evolution or revolution) and to a scientific administration of population and production. In Landauer’s words,

[t]he capitalist production process … does not lead to socialism by virtue of its own further development and immanent laws; not through the workers’ struggle in their role as producers can it be transformed decisively in favor of labor, but only if the workers stop playing their role as capitalist producers.[[86]](#footnote-87)

Marx and Landauer mark the two opposing poles of socialism: the resorption of human alienation into the psychological and natural realm of the family vs. the culmination of capitalist alienation in a progressively emerging socialist order. Landauer’s antipolitics and Marx’s strong limitation of politics are two sides of the same coin: the socialist prioritization of economy.

**Conclusion: the virtue of regression as part of the cure**

In an article published a few years after Landauer’s death entitled “Kinderanalysen mit Erwachsenen” (“Child Analysis in the Analysis of Adults,” 1931), psychoanalyst Sandor Ferenczi defends the utility of regression as part of the analytic cure:

When you consider that […] most pathogenic shocks take place in childhood, you will not be surprised that the patient, in the attempt to uncover the origin of his illness, suddenly lapses into a childish or childlike attitude [*plötzlich ins Kindische oder Kindliche verfällt*]. Here, however, several important questions arise, which I had in fact to put to myself. Is there any advantage in letting the patient sink into the primitive state of the child and act freely in this condition?[[87]](#footnote-88) [*in die kindliche Primitivität sinken* und *ihn in diesem Zustande frei agieren läßt*]

In contrast to Freud’s own view and practice, Ferenczi believed “that the cathartic result of being submerged for a time in neurosis and childhood [*das kathartische Resultat dieses Untertauchens in Neurose und Kindheit*] has ultimately an invigorating effect.”[[88]](#footnote-89) Similarly, as opposed to Marx and his followers, Landauer thought that there could be a cathartic effect to the anti-political regression from the modern state and capitalism to “a joyful life in a just economy” [*freudiges Leben in gerechter Wirtschaft*], i.e., in a “socialist village.”[[89]](#footnote-90)

As Nietzsche put it so bluntly, antipolitics wants “to make of physiology the mistress who decides all other questions.”[[90]](#footnote-91) It is a cure—a violent return to vital normality, coming after men have lost the spirit that inhabits them and binds together society, and developed instead a political and capitalist surrogate, as Landauer would phrase it. It is a cure, but a cure to what? Following Ferenczi’s essay, we could say that antipolitics strove to be a cure for the traumatic, modern split of the self between “a suffering, a brutally destroyed part, and a part which […] knows everything but feels nothing.”[[91]](#footnote-92) Returning to La Boétie’s formula, “be resolved no longer to serve; and you will find yourselves free,” which encapsulates Landauer’s psychological understanding of modernity, we could conclude in the following way: antipolitics sought to be a cure for the repressed traumas that are responsible for the modern transcendence of politics and capitalism, for the modern psychological split between the servant and the ruler, and for the frightening playing out of this traumatic split in the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

1. On the role of Landauer in *Der Sozialist*, see Rita Steininger, *Gustav Landauer: ein Kämpfer für Freiheit und Menschlichkeit*, Munich: Volk Verlag, 2020, pp. 25–28. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. On the *Discours de la servitude volontaire*, see *Simone Goyard-Fabre,* “Introduction,” in Étienne De La Boétie, *Discours de la servitude volontaire,* Paris: Flammarion, 1983, pp. 17–127. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. See Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London: Penguin Book, pp. 167, 188–190; Giles MacDonogh, *The Last Kaiser: The Life of Wilhelm II*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2003, pp. 319–350. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. *Der Sozialist,* September 1 1910, p. 6. All translations of Landauer’s texts are mine unless stated otherwise. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. *Ibid.*, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Friedrich von Sallet was born on April 20th 1812 in Neiße. Theodor Paur wrote a first *Lebens- und Bildungsgeschichte* of Sallet in a volume compiled by some of his friends and dedicated to him immediately after his early death on February 21, 1843 in Reichau due to an “incurable breast decease” (*Leben und Wirken Friedrich von Sallet’s nebst Mittheilungen aus dem literarischen Nachlasse desselben, herausgegeben von einigen Freunden des Dichters*, Verlag von August Schulz, Breslau 1844). See also: Th. Paur, “Biographisches Vorwort”, in: Friedrich von Sallet, *Sämmtliche Schriften*, vol. 1, Breslau: August Schulz, 1848. At only about 12 years of age, Sallet had already undergone his primary induction into the armed forces, in whose charges he would remain until 1838. Paur further emphasizes Sallet’s later, yet eager studies of Hegel’s writings. Sallet’s collected writings were published in five volumes (Breslau 1845–1848), comprising a wide diversity of literary genres. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. *Ibid.*, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. *Der Sozialist,* September 1, 1910, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. *Der Sozialist,* September 1, 1910, p. 130. The English translation has been taken from the May 31, 1884 issue of *Liberty*, p. 7. The translator is Benjamin R. Tucker. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. *Der Sozialist,* September 1, 1910, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Translation taken from David Lewis Schaefer, *Freedom Over Servitude, Montaigne, La Boétie, and On Voluntary Servitude*, Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1998, p. 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Gustav Landauer, *The Revolution*, in Id., *Revolution and Other Writings*, translated and edited by Gabriel Kuhn, Oakland: PM Press 2010, p. 135 (with a few slight changes). For the original German text, see Gustav Landauer, *Die Revolution*, Frankfort: Rutten and Loening, 1907, pp. 51–52. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. *Ibid*., p. 136. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., pp. 52–53. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. *Ibid*., p. 137. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. *Ibid*., p. 137. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. *Ibid*., p. 139. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. *Ibid*., p. 142. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. *Ibid*., p. 145. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. *Ibid*., p. 146. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. *Ibid*., p. 155. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. *Ibid*., p. 158. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Translation taken from David Lewis Schaefer, *Freedom Over Servitude, Montaigne, La Boétie, and On Voluntary Servitude*, Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1998, pp. 196–197. Landauer’s translation into German is very accurate and elegant: “Soyez résolus de ne servir plus, et vous voilà libres. Je ne veux pas que vous le poussiez ou l’ébranliez, mais seulement ne le soutenez plus, et vous le verrez, comme un grand colosse à qui on a dérobé sa base, de son poids même fondre en bas et se rompre.” (Étienne De La Boétie, *Discours de la servitude volontaire, chronologie, introduction, bibliographie et notes Simone Goyard-Fabre*, Paris: Flammarion, 1983, p. 139) “Sei entschlossen, keine Knechte mehr zu sein, und ihr seid frei. Ich will nicht, daß ihr den Tyrannen verjagt oder ihn vom Throne werfet; stützt ihn nur nicht; ihr sollt sehen wie er, wie ein riesiger Koloß den man die Unterlage nimmt, in seiner eigenen Schwere zusammenbricht und zertrümmert.” (Landauer, *Die Revolution*, p. 89) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Emile Benveniste, “Le sens du mot κολοσσός et les noms grecs de la statue,” *Revue Philologique* 58 (1932): pp. 118–135. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. “Nein, seine Macht [des Tyrannen] kommt von der freiwilligen Knechtschaft der Menschen. ‚Woher nimmt er so vielen Augen, euch zu bewachen, wenn ihr sie ihm nicht leiht? Wieso hat er so viele Hände, euch zu treffen, wenn er sie nicht von euch erhält? Woher hat er überhaupt Macht über euch, wenn er nicht im Einverständnis mit euch wäre? Was könnte er euch tun, wenn ihr nicht der Hehler des Diebes wäret, der euch beraubt, der Helfer des Mörders, der euch tötet, und Verräter an euch selbst.‘“ (Landauer, *Die Revolution*, pp. 85–86) The reader may appreciate Landauer’s elegant translation of the original: “D’où a-t-il pris tant d’yeux, pour vous surveiller, si vous ne les lui avez pas prêtés? Comment peut-il avoir tant de mains pour vous attraper, s’il ne les a pas reçues de vous ? […] Comment a-t-il aucun pouvoir sur vous que par vous ? […] Que pourrait-il vous faire, si vous n’étiez point le receleur du brigand, qui vous vole, le receleur du meurtrier, qui vous tue, et si vous n’étiez pas traîtres à vous-même ?” (La Boétie, *Discours de la servitude volontaire,* pp.138-139) [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. *Ibid*., p. 131. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. *Ibid*., p. 131. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, revised student edition, edited by R. Tuck*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. See *ibid.,* pp. 118­–120. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Schaefer, *Freedom Over Servitude*, p. 193 (with slight changes). “Wenn man aber sieht, wie nicht hundert, nicht tausend, sondern hundert Landschaften, tausend Städte, eine Million Menschen sich eines einzigen nicht erwehren, der alle miteinander so behandelt, daß sie Leibeigene und Sklaven sind, wie können wir das nennen? Ist das Feigheit?” [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. *Ibid*., p. 159. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. *Ibid*., p. 159. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. *Ibid*., p. 159. “... et si on leur baille rien, si on ne leur obéit point, sans combattre, sans frapper, ils demeurent nus et défaits et ne sont plus rien, sinon que comme la racine, n’ayant plus d’humeur ou aliment, la branche devient sèche et morte.” (La Boétie, *Discours de la servitude volontaire,* p. 137) To appreciate Landauer’s elegant translation: „Wenn man den Tyrannen nichts mehr gibt und ihnen nicht mehr gehorcht, dann stehen sie ohne Kampf und ohne Schlag nackt und entblößt da und sind nichts mehr; wie eine Wurzel, die keine Feuchtigkeit und Nahrung mehr findet, ein trockenes totes Stück Holz wird.“ (*Die Revolution*, pp. 89–90). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. *Ibid*., p. 159. For the original German text, see *Ibid*., p. 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Schaefer, *Freedom Over Servitude*, p. 195 For the original text, see La Boétie, *Discours de la servitude volontaire,* pp.136–137. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Landauer, *Ausgewählte Schriften,* vol. 2, p. 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. Landauer, *Ausgewählte Schriften,* vol. 1, p. 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. *Ibid.*, p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. Landauer did not content himself with enthusiastic praise of Zola’s courage. He wrote himself an *Appeal to public opinion* for another case of injustice, Albert Ziethen, who was wrongly accused of the murder of his wife. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. *Neue Generation* 37 (1901), p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. *Ibid.*, p. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. *Ibid.*, p. 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra A Book for all and None,* edited by Adrian Del Caro and Robert B. Pippin, trans. A. Del Caro, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 9. For the original German text, see Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke Kritische Studienausgabe,* edited by Giogio Colli und Mazzino Montinari, vol. 4, Berlin and New York: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1988, p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. *Ibid.* For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. On this aspect, see Gustav Landauer, *Ausgewähle Schriften, Skepsis un Mystik*, vol. 7, Lich: Verlag Edition AV, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. *Neue Generation* 37 (1901): 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. The influence of Nietzsche on Landauer’s life and thought can be sensed reading his letters and diaries. See Christoph Knüppel (ed.), *Gustav Landauer, Briefe und Tagebücher 1884-1900*, Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, New York: Penguin Books, 1968, p. 62–63. For the original German text, see Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke Kritische Studienausgabe,* edited by Giogio Colli und Mazzino Montinari, vol. 5, Berlin and New York: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1988, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. *Ibid.,* p. 97. For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, p. 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. *Ibid.*, p. 64. For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. *Ibid.*, p. 60. For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, p. 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. *Ibid.*, p. 65. For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, p. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. *Ibid.* For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, p. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. *Ibid.* For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. *Ibid.*, p. 38. For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, p. 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. *Ibid.*, p. 54. For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. Landauer, *Ausgewählte Schriften,* vol. 2, p. 77–78. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 35. For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings*, p.173. For the original German text, see *Die Revolution,* p. 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 35. For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, p. 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. *Ibid.*, p. 36. For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, p. 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. *Ibid.* For the original German text, see Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, p. 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. Gustav Landauer, *For socialism*, translated by David J. Parent, St Louis: Telos Press, 1978, p. 125. For the original German text, see Gustav Landauer, *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, Berlin: Paul Cassirer: 1919, p. 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. *Ibid.*, p. 126. For the original German text, see Landauer, *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. Pierre-Joseph, *Les confessions d’un révolutionnaire*, Paris: Garnier, 1851, p. 212–213. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. Erich Mühsam, “Frauenrecht,” in *Der Sozialist* September 15, 1910, p. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. Gustav Landauer, “Von der Ehe,” in *Der Sozialist* October 1, 1910, p. 146–151. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. *Ibid.*, p. 149. For more nuanced appreciation of Landauer’s approach of femininity, see his march 19, 1913 letter to Buber, Martin Buber (ed.), *Gustav Landauer Sein Lebensgang in Briefen,* Frankfurt a. M.: Rütten und Loening Verlag, 1929, vol. 1, 434-436. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
77. *Ibid.*, p. 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
78. *Ibid.*, p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
79. *Ibid.*, p. 149. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
80. Landauer, *For Socialism*, p. 126. For the original German text, see Landauer, *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, p. 131–132. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
81. Aristotle, *Politics*,trans. H. Rackham, London and Cambridge Mss.: Harvard University Pres, 1959, p. 2–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
82. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
83. *Ibid.*, p. 7–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
84. *Ibid*., p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
85. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus, New York: Random house, 1973, p.488. For the original German text, see Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* *[Rohentwurf] 1857–1858*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1974, p. 387–388. [following the 1939 edition of the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Instituts in Moscow] [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
86. Landauer, *For Socialism*, p. 124. For the original German text, see Landauer, *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, p. 128–129. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
87. Sándor Ferenczi, *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-analysis,* trans. Eric Moscbacher, London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1955, p. 131. For the original German text, see Sándor Ferenczi, “Kinderanalysen mit Erwachsenen,” *Intenationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalysis* 17 (1931): 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
88. *Ibid.*, p. 141. For the original German text, see Ferenczi, “Kinderanalysen mit Erwachsenen,” p. 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
89. Gustav Landauer, *Beginnen Aufsätze über Sozialismus*, Köln: Marcan Block, 1924, p. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
90. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe, Nachgelassene Fragmente 1887–1889,* vol. 13, Berlin and New York: Deutsche Taschenbuch-De Gruzter, 1999, p. 638. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
91. Ferenczi, *Final Contributions*, p. 135. For the original German text, see Ferenczi, “Kinderanalysen mit Erwachsenen,” p. 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)