

## Autobiography of August Spies

“Barbarians, savages, illiterate, ignorant Anarchists from Central Europe, men who cannot comprehend the spirit of our free American institutions,”—of these I am one. My name is August Vincent Theodore Spies, (pronounced Spees). I was born within the ruins of the old robbers castle Landeck, upon a high mountain’s peak (Landeckerberg), Central Germany, in 1855. My father was a forester (a government administrator of a forest district); the forest house was a government building, and served—only in a different form—the same purposes the old castle had served several centuries before. The noble Knight-hood of Highway robbery, the traces of which were still discernable to the remnants of the old castle, had passed away to make room for more genteel and less dangerous forms of plunder and robbery, as carried on in the modern dwelling under the present government. But while the people from old custom designate this and similar old ruins in the vicinity as “old Robber Castles,” they speak with great deference of the present government buildings, in which they themselves are daily and hourly fleeced; they would even, I believe, fight for the maintenance of these *lawful* institutions.

How greatly these “Barbarians” differ from the intelligent American people! Tell the Americans to fight for the maintenance of our commercial robbing posts and fleecing institutions—tell them to fight for the protection of the *lawful* enterprises of our Board of Trade men; Merchant princes, Railroad kings, and Factory lords—would they do it? Alas, more rapidly, I fear, than those “Barbarians from Central Europe, who cannot comprehend the spirit of our free American institutions.”

Viewed from a historic standpoint my birthplace is quite an interesting spot. And this is the only excuse I can offer for my selection of the place for said purpose. I admit I ought not have made the mistake, ought not have been born a *foreigner*, but little children, particularly unborn children, will make mistakes! However, I find no fault with such wise and intelligent men as Mr. Grinnell and *His* jury, for hanging men who were injudicious in the selection of their birthplace. Sins of this character deserve severe punishment; “society must protect itself against offenses of this kind.”

But speaking of castle Landeck. Follow me there, reader, on a bright and clear day. We make our way up the old tower. Take care, or you will stumble over the debris. That? Oh, that is a piece of an old torture rack; we found it in one of the subterranean walks, together with several pieces of old ugly weapons, once used to maintain *order* among the victims. . . . but why do you shudder? The policeman’s outfit of to-day is not quite so blunt and barbaric, it is true, but it is as effective and serves the same purpose. . . . So, now, take my hand, I’ll help you on top of the ruin. Look out for the bats. These winged lovers of darkness have great resemblance with kings, priests and masters in general; they dwell in the ruins of the “good old times,” and become quite noisy when you disturb them or expose them to the light; adders, too, made this place their favorable habitation in former years and rendered it very dangerous for any one to place his sacrilegious foot upon this feudal monument; we killed them. They were the companions of the bats and owls; their fate has given the latter much uneasiness, and tears were entertained that something terrible would happen—that the ghosts of the old

'noble knights' and 'noble dames' would come back and avenge the ruthless annihilation of the venerable reptiles, but nothing of the kind has transpired, I need hardly add that the work of renovation was greatly impeded by these venomous creatures; since their extermination we have made remarkable progress. . . . You smile! Oh, no, I am not speaking of those other reptiles you seem to think of. But here, we have reached the top. Great view, is it not! Over there, about thirty minutes walk from here, (west) you see another ruin like this; that is castle Dreieck, and over there an equal distance (southwest) you see another one, Wildeck. And now look down in the fertile valleys, the beautiful meadows and fields and flourishing villages! Of the latter you can count a dozen, all located around this mount; and do you know that all these villages and others which have been laid waste during the thirty years war<sup>27</sup> were tributary to the robbers who ruled over them in these three castles? Yes, the people in these villages worked all their lives from early dawn till late at night to fill the vaults of those noble knights, who in return had the kindness to maintain '*peace and order*' for them. Par example: If one of these toiling peasants expressed his dissatisfaction of the existing order of things, if he complained of the heavy and unbearable tasks placed upon him, 'law and order' demanded that he be placed upon one of those racks you have seen a relic of, to be tortured into obedience and submission. 'Society had to protect itself against this class of criminals.' The noble knights had their Grinnells, Bonfields and Pinkertons<sup>28</sup> as well as their descendants have them today; and while they were less civilized than their descendants of our time, they got along wonderfully well. To accomplish their beneficent objects, they did not even require the assistance of a Chicago jury.

Many of the peasants were put to an ignominious death. Some of them would persist in their folly that it could not be the object of society nor the intention of Providence to have a thousand good people kill themselves in a laborious life for the glory, enrichment and grandeur of a few ungrateful, vicious wretches. Such dangerous teachings were a menace to society, and their promulgators

were unceremoniously stamped out.

Not more than 200 feet from where we stand there is a perpendicular (chasm) hole of volcanic origin; it is about 8 feet in length and 3 in breadth; its depth has never been ascertained. The saying goes that scores of girls were cast into this terrible abyss by the valiant Knights during their reign of peace and good order! It is said that these benevolent "respectables" of ancient times kidnapped the pretty girls of the villages, carried them like birds of prey to their lofty abodes, and then when they got tired of them, or found "something better," disposed of them in this way. . . .

Oh, I see, you shake your heads incredulously! Have you never seen the dumping grounds of the modern knighthood in our large cities—a similar abyss? No? It is more frightful than the one I have told you about; its name is prostitution. . . . .

You don't believe the people would have borne all these outrages—? My friend, your rebellious spirit carries you away. The "orderly and good people" suffered these atrocities just as silently as our "law and order abiding workingmen" bear them today. I told you what happened to those who showed resistance!

My words make you sad, turn you pessimistic? Let me show you something else. Look through these two mounts; can you see a tower in the dim distance—yes? At the side of this tower are yet to be seen the ruins of the first chapel built in the realms of the old heathen, but free and liberty-loving Germans. It was founded by one of the apostles of St. Boniface, in the eighth century; his name was Lullus. With this chapel and others that soon followed the poison of Oriental servilism, the gospel of man's degradation, resignation and asceticism was first introduced. The old *Cherutker* and *Katten*, who had in mortal combat thrust the Roman eagle to the ground, were less successful in resisting the mind infecting poison of pestilential Rome; it came flowing in incessantly through the channels of the Christian church. It is true, the healthy and robust Germans were not an easy prey to the pessimistic belief of a debauched and dying race—(Rome) they never have been good Christians—but they became sufficiently infected to lose their consciousness and pride

of manhood for a while, to fall into the despairing vagaries of the Orient, and as a natural consequence into serfdom. If life had no value, why then aspire to liberty. . . ? Friend, the ruins of yonder chapel is the monument of an epoch that gave birth to such robberburgs as the one we stand upon. The people would have razed these roosts to the ground long before they did, if the priest had not stood between them and "Law and Order." The priest is an essential indivisible part of the despot and oppressor; he is the conciliatory link between them and their victims. . . .

These two ruins, once sacred as the pedestals of social order, are prophetic monuments. Man will so stand upon the ruins of the present order and will say as you say now—"was it possible. . . . !"

But now turn around—along this mountain chain, northeast, there, where the earth dips mistily into the horizon, the periphery of our view—do you see yonder gray spot, it looks like a small cloud? Yes? That's the Wartburg, you have heard of Wartburg. It was here, where Dr. Martinus Luther lived and worked, an instrument of the revolutionary forces; the revolutionary forces, my friend, that gradually had developed in these villages.<sup>29</sup>

It is our custom to attribute great movements to single individuals, as being their merit. This is always wrong and it was so with Luther. The Germanic race could not digest the Byzantinian philosophy as embodied in the Judaic and Christian teachings. The idea that this world was calculated to be simply a purgatory and our life a martyrdom was repulsive to them, was that servitude and despotism were growing from the seed of the new religion and developing, where once had been the habitation of liberty; developing at such a rate, that patience ceased to be a virtue. The rebellious spirit of the people, their animosity to the doctrine of self-abnegation, imposed upon them by the church, had been successfully calmed and suppressed by the priests for several centuries. But as the iniquities of the "nobility," and the domestic burdens of the people grew unbearable this spirit burst out in flames, and in Luther found a crystallization point.

From the Wartburg then the mighty wave of the reformation

rolled forth. It was the Occident struggling in self-preservation against the Orient. The love of liberty which had been lying spell-bound in the people's heart for generations, now flowed out in lucid streams; the magic spell was broken. . . . But the "nobility," while they wanted liberation from the despotism of the Roman Church, they liked the privileges the latter had given them; the patent to rob the peasants of their labor too well—they scorned the idea of the common people aspiring to economic freedom. Was not "spiritual liberty," a change of certain religious notions, enough for any common man? Luther soon became the tool of these cheating knaves, and wielded his pen in condemnation of the objects contended for by the people. He denounced the true and brave leaders of the people, the fearless Thomas Muenzer and his associates, worse than the Pope had denounced him shortly before.

And when the liberty-thirsty people finally took up their scythes and axes and forks, and drove the "noble Knights" from their robbers' roosts, it was Luther who brought about a vast conspiracy of the latter against the people.<sup>30</sup> It is characteristic that now all religious differences were set aside and all petty tyrants combined to subdue the people. Papist or Lutheran, all were instantly united in the crusade against labor. (America at this time presents an analogous spectacle: Republicans and Democrats "embrace each other as Nectar and Ambrosia," wherever labor rises for emancipation.)

Of course, the people were conspirators and incendiaries. Hear what Thomas Muenzer said: "Look you, the sediment of the soup of usury, theft and robbery are the Great, the masters, they take all creatures as their property, the fish in the water, the birds in the air; and the vegetation of the earth. And then they preach God's commandment to the poor; 'Thou shall not steal.' But this is not for themselves. They bone and scrape the poor farmer and mechanic until these have nothing left, then, when the latter put their hands on the sacred things, they are hanged. And Doctor Liar says, Amen! The masters do it themselves, that the poor man hates them. The cause of the rebellion they won't abolish, how then can things change to the better. And I say this, I am an incendiary—let it be so!" No,

these words were not spoken in Judge Gary's court! You make a mistake, reader, the language is not modern, it's 400 years old. . . . . And the man who used it was in the right. He interpreted the Gospel, saying that it did not merely promise blessings in heaven, but that it also commanded the equality and brotherhood among men on earth. The champions of law and order and Christendom chopped his head off.

The rebels were victorious at first, but against the united vassals of their oppressors they could not stand. At the foot of this mount they were defeated, down there, where you see that big rock, surrounded by magnificent oaks, the battle for freedom was fought and, alas, lost. No, it was not lost, it was merely interceded by a temporary victory of the enemy.

The spirit of the Reformation was the "eternal spirit of the chainless mind," and nothing could stay its progress. Gibbets, stakes, tortures, and dungeons were of no avail. On the contrary, the blood of the martyrs only intensified the flame of liberty, until it sprang from land to land, kindling everywhere the discontent of the oppressed in its irresistible triumphant course.

These ruins still bear evidence of its tremendous force! The most momentous thing accomplished by this rebellious and lawless spirit, however, was the openings of the *new world*. The reformation gave birth to the young giant, America; it gave England a Cromwell and France a Richelieu.<sup>31</sup> Its fermenting force drove the Huguenots from France and the Puritans from England. But for the reformation and the persecution of its adherents, these early settlers of the western hemisphere would have remained in France and England as good and law-abiding citizens. As dangerous elements, society had to protect itself against them, and they fled over the Atlantic rather than to suffer martyrdom at home for their "advanced ideas."

The reformation, my friend, which started right here, in the country where four centuries later the "Barbarian Anarchists" came from, "who cannot comprehend the spirit of American institutions," etc. . . . . broke down the feudal barriers, which impeded human progress. It was asserted in a thirty year's war, that laid the conti-

ment desolate, that the exercise of free thought and opinion as well as scientific investigation should no longer be suppressed because they conflicted with religious superstition and dogma generally believed in and sanctified by custom. The "good and law-abiding" people were fanatically opposed to those in favor of that imperative change, and oceans of blood had to be shed in consequence. The ruins you see here wherever you turn your eyes bear witness of the terrible war that is not yet ended—the war for human emancipation and freedom, economic, political and religious. Every one of these ruins is a milestone on the path of social progress. At our feet lies the historic *chaussee*, upon which Napoleon's victorious armies, much against the intention of their *grand empereur*, carried the seed of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" to the far east, and there opened a new perspective to the purblind eyes of the oppressed and down-trodden millions of our race. Aye, even now that seed is bringing forth good fruit. Russian dungeons, gibbets and Siberia bear witness.

Now, friend, before we retire from this retrospective view, look once more into the mirror of the past 1,000 years, observe closely the traces that lead from yonder chapel to this castle, from this castle to the Wartburg, from the Wartburg to the battlefield below here and to their ruins, and then follow them to England, France and America, follow them up to this day and then tell me, if you do not see the contours of the *future* reflected. . . . You do! . . .

I have dwelled at great length in describing my (barbarian) birth place, but in so doing I have traversed in a general way over the history of 1,000 years. The present status of society is but the result of the struggle of human kind during this and preceding periods—yes, struggle! "You cannot reform the world by the sprinkling of rose oil," said Mirabeau,<sup>32</sup> and history proves the correctness of this statement. In no age did the rulers and despoilers of our race relinquish their hold upon the throat of their victims, until forced so—by logic and argument? No. . . . Blood, the precious sap was ever the price of liberty.

My years of childhood were pleasant. I played and studied. How



different from the childhood of the offsprings of the average workingman in this “glorious, civilized and—according to Grinnell—enlightened country.” The children of the *proletaire* have no youth; the spring of life has no sunshine, no blossoms, no flowers for them! If there is a discernible object in their existence it is that of *serving* to make life happy and pleasant for those who tread upon them. In my native land children *must* attend school daily from the age of 6 to that of 14; every child in that “Barbarian country” is thus compelled to attend school for 8 years, and cannot therefore be “utilized and made to pay” by either their parents or factory lords. In this enlightened country the children of the wage-workers do not attend school in the average more than two years; they learn just enough to serve as a piece of organic machinery, and as such they are “let out” to benevolent and Christian employers in their tenderest years.<sup>33</sup> Their vitality, which is needed for their own bodily and intellectual development, is in such wise tapped from the innocents and turned into gold for our “law and order” loving, respectable citizens. They die from consumption before they attain their maturity, or resort to whiskey, thinking thereby to restore their lost vigor. If they escape early destruction, their career is generally terminated in one of those charitable or reformatory institutes known as the insane asylum, the penitentiary, or poorhouse.

But woe to the wretch who condemns this order of things! He is an “enemy of civilization,” and “society must protect itself against such criminals.” . . . There comes the star-spangled Mephisto, Bonfield, with his noble guards of “Liberty;” there comes the savior of the state, Grinnell, with the visage of a Sicilian brigand, there comes the hireling juror, and there comes the vast horde of social vultures. *Unisono* is the anathema. *Unisono* is the cry—“To the gallows!”

“Society” is saved, and “Liberty and order”—of the policeman’s club—triumph! *Selah!*

I do not intend to say that the condition of the wage-workers in Germany is better than in this country, but I will say that I never saw such real suffering from want as I have seen in this country.

And there is more protection for women and children in Germany than here.

(I was educated for a career in the government service forest branch.) As a child I had private tutors, and later visited the *Polytechnicum* in Cassel. At the age of seventeen my father died suddenly, leaving a large family in moderate circumstances. As I was the eldest one I did not feel justified in continuing my studies—they were expensive—and concluded to go to America, where I had and have now a number of well-to-do relatives. I arrived in New York in 1872 and upon the advice of my friends I learned the furniture business. The following year I came to Chicago, where I have resided ever since; though I may add that I have been away from the city occasionally for some time. Once, with the intention of settling in the country, I worked on a farm for a year. But seeing that the small farmers and renters were in a worse plight even than the city wage-workers, and that they were equally dependent, I returned to the city. I have also traveled over the Southern States to get acquainted with the country and people, and at another time, I joined an exploring expedition through Upper Canada, which failed.

When I arrived in this country I knew nothing of Socialism, except what I had seen in the newspapers, the “public teachers” (?), and from what I’d read I concluded that the Socialists were a lot of ignorant and lazy vagabonds “who wanted to divide up everything.” Having come but very little in contact with people who earned their living by honest labor in the old country, I was amazed and was shocked when I became acquainted with the condition of the wage-workers in the new world.

The factory, the ignominious regulations, the surveillance, the spy system, the servility and lack of manhood among the workers and the arrogant arbitrary behavior of the boss and his associates—all this made an impression upon me that I have never been able to divest myself of. At first I could not understand why the workers, among them many old men with bent backs, silently and without a sign of protest bore every insult the caprice of the foreman or boss would heap upon them. I was not then aware of the fact that the

opportunity to work was a privilege, a favor, and that it was in the power of those who were in the possession of the factories and instruments of labor to deny or grant this privilege. I did not then understand how difficult it was to find a purchaser for one's labor. I did not know then that there were thousands and thousands of idle human bodies in the market, ready to hire out upon most any conditions, actually begging for employment, I became conscious of this very soon, however, and I knew then why these people were so servile, why they suffered the humiliating dictates and capricious whims of their employers. Personally I had no great difficulty in "getting along." I had so many advantages over my co-workers. I would most likely have succeeded in becoming a respectable business man myself, if I had been possessed of that unscrupulous egotism which characterizes the successful business man, and if my aspirations had been that of the avaricious Hamster (the latter belongs to the family of rats, and his "pursuit in life" is to steal and accumulate; in some of their depositories the contents of whole granaries have often been found; their greatest delight seems to be possession, for they steal a great deal more than they can consume; in fact they steal, like most of our respectable citizens, regardless of their capacity of consumption). My philosophy has always been that the object of life can only consist in the enjoyment of life, and that the rational application of this principle is true morality.

I held that asceticism, as taught by the Church, was a crime against nature.

Now observing that the vast mass of the people were wasting their lives in drudgery, accompanied with want and misery, it was but natural for me to inquire into the causes. (I had up to that time never read a book, or even an impartial essay on Modern Socialism). Was this self-abnegation, this self-crucifixion of the people voluntary, or was it forced upon them, and if so, by whom?

About this time, while looking over my books in search of something, my attention was attracted by this passage from Aristotle:<sup>34</sup> "When, at some future age, every tool upon command, or by predestination, will perform its work as the art works of Daedalus did,

who moved by themselves, or like the three feet of Hephaestos, who went to their sacred work spontaneously, when thus the weaver shuttles will weave by themselves, then we will no longer require masters and slaves.”

Had this time, long ago anticipated by the great thinker, not come? Yes, it had. There were the machines. But master and slave still existed. The question arose in my mind, is their existence still necessary?

Antiporas, a Greek poet, who lived at the time of Cicero, had in a like manner greeted the invention of the water-mill (water power) as the emancipator of male and female slaves. “Oh, these heathens!” writes Karl Marx, after quoting the above; “they knew nothing of Political Economy and Christendom! They failed to conceive how nicely the machines could be employed to lengthen the hours of toil and to intensify the burdens of the slaves. They (the heathens) excused the slavery of *one* on the ground that it would afford the opportunity of human development to *another*. But to preach the slavery of the masses in order that a few rude and arrogant *parvenus* might become ‘eminent spinners,’ ‘extensive sausage makers’ and ‘influential shoe black dealers’—to do this they lacked the specific Christian organ.”<sup>35</sup>

I think it was in 1875, at the time the “Workingmen’s Party of Illinois,” was organized, when, upon the invitation of a friend, I visited the first meeting in which a lecture on Socialism was delivered. If viewed from a theoretical standpoint this lecture, delivered by a young mechanic, was not very impressive, but the substance. . . . I will simply say that this lecture gave me the *paspartout* to the many interrogation marks which had worried me for a number of years.

I procured every piece of literature I could get on the subject; whether it was adverse or friendly to Socialism made no difference. In the beginning I was a visionary, an enthusiast. I believed as so many righteous people do today that the truth only required to be expressed, the argument only to be made to enlist every good man and woman in the good cause of humanity. In my youthful enthu-

siasm I forgot to apply the experience of historical progress to this particular case. But to my great sorrow I soon became convinced that the bulk of humanity were automatons, incapable of thinking and reasoning, altogether unconscious of themselves, simply tools of custom—

For from the sordid is man made,  
Usage and custom he doth call his nurse.

—Goethe.<sup>36</sup>

But nothing could discourage me. The study of French, German and English economists and social scientists soon made me view things differently than I had seen them in my first enthusiasm. Buckle's "History of Civilization," Karl Marx' "Kapital," and Morgan's "Ancient Society"<sup>37</sup> have probably had the greatest influence over me of any—I now became an attentive observer of the various social phenomena myself. The last ten years have been very favorable for such investigation as I sought. I found my favorite teachers corroborated everywhere.

I think it was in 1877 when I first became a member of the Socialistic Labor Party. The events of that year, the brute force with which the whining and confiding wage slaves were met on all sides impressed upon me the necessity of *like* resistance. The latter required organization. Shortly afterwards I joined the "Lehr und Wehr Verein," an armed organization of the workingmen, numbering about 1,500 well-drilled members. As soon as our patricians saw that the *canaille* were arming for defence to repel such scandalous attacks in the future as had been made upon them in 1877, they at once commanded their law agents in Springfield to prohibit workingmen from bearing arms. The command was obeyed.

The workingmen also went into politics, independent politics. I served as a nominal candidate myself several times, but when the noble patricians and the political *augurs* saw that they were successful in electing a number of their candidates, a conspiracy was

organized to disfranchise them by fraudulent count and like methods. The workingmen thereupon left the ballot with disgust.

Although I have myself in past years advocated political action, I have never for an instant believed that thereby the social evils would be abolished or even that reforms, benefiting the workingmen, could thus be brought about,—I viewed “political action,” simply and solely as a good means of propaganda. Believing, as I do, that the economic body, is the organism of society, the substructure of all social, political, and moral institutions and operations, I cannot but rebel the idea that the foundation of society could be changed by alterations of it, or by a structure that rests upon it, and would tumble down the very minute the foundation was touched.

The economic emancipation in my opinion can be achieved through an economic struggle only, not through politics—although the latter may be one of the many forces of organization, necessary in the development of things to bring the final struggle to a focus. Indeed it looks so at the present time.

To enter into this question more thoroughly in a mere autobiography would lead us too far. But if your readers should desire to hear my views upon this subject, I shall gladly furnish you a special contribution.

As stated before, since my arrival in New York (1872 until 1879) I was engaged in the furniture business (upholstery). Being of a very independent disposition, I began to work for myself in 1876 by opening a small shop. In the same year my mother, three little brothers and one sister emigrated to this city, with whom I have lived ever since, and who were for some years dependent upon me. Nothing very eventful occurred during these years.

In the spring of 1880 the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, the German workmen’s organ, a paper which had been started in 1872 as a weekly, and which had since grown into an influential daily, was on the verge of bankruptcy. Mismanagement was the cause of it. I was called upon by the society to take the management, and shortly after was elected superintendent, and still later editor. The paper was saved, and has at this writing the largest circulation of any German paper

in this city. The German workmen are justly proud of their organ; it belongs to them as a class, and no one has a private interest in it. I hope our English-speaking friends may soon follow this example. An English daily workmen's paper, owned and controlled by the workmen is surely needed here.

The politicians tried to befriend themselves with me; looking for the support of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. And when they failed as they always did, they began to hate me. The worst thing they could say against me was—"he is a fanatic." So demoralized and degraded have the champions of "free government" (for them!) become that in their judgment a man that is not in the market, who is not for sale, must necessarily be a fanatic!

One of the members of the grand jury which indicted us has issued a *pronunciamento* to the effect that we were mercenaries, who made money out of the labor agitation, was Banker E.S. Dreyer.<sup>38</sup> This same man was treasurer of the Democratic campaign committee during the last presidential campaign, during which said committee offered me \$10,000 if I would agree to say nothing damaging of Cleveland. He certainly must have known this; and he must have also known that I morally "bounced" the man who made the offer (he happened to be a friend of mine) out of the office. This same man, Dreyer, about three years ago had sold a piece of property to the School Board for \$32,000. The property was located on the corner of Cass and Illinois streets. The common council was about to ratify the bargain when I learned that the same lots had shortly before been offered for sale for—I think—\$16,000. I made all the noise I could, an investigation proved the attempted "boodler," and the "job" was spoiled.

When I consider that such men as he have indicted and convicted me and my comrades for murder; when I consider that these are the men who raise the cry that we are "dangerous to society," I am reminded of the old dodge, "stop the thief!" But it is sad to reflect that the good people are so easily being led astray.

Among those whose wrath I have brought upon me are our governors, the good police. For years I have exposed their blackmailing

practices, their brutalities and general "pursuits." If their deeds and behavior could not bear the light, it was not my fault! When about eleven and a half years ago I had the desk sergeant of the West Chicago Avenue station arrested for brutally outraging a young girl while in the station, and nearly killing her (Martha Seidel), the star-spangled libertines of the city swore dire vengeance. They have got it now, they think.

That I have made myself generally obnoxious to the extortionists and fleecers during my management of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*—this I need hardly add. To conclude with: I am proud of the enemies, and no less of the friends I have made.

I have been a member of the "Ameri-Kanische Turner Bund" for a long number of years.<sup>39</sup> Two years ago I was elected a delegate to the national convention of this powerful organization, and succeeded in having a socialistic plank inserted in the platform.

I was also a member of the Knights of Labor once—about three years ago—but the Assembly to which I belonged dissolved, and I never since have renewed my membership, principally, because I never liked secrecy or ceremonies in an organization.<sup>40</sup> But I have frequently lectured in meetings of "Knights," when invited.

As an oral agitator among the wage-workers, I have been very active. I was a delegate to the congress of the Revolutionary Socialists, held in this city, in 1881, and also a delegate to the congress of the International Working People's Association, held in Pittsburgh, in 1883.

I have addressed meetings in most of the industrial cities in the states. During the strike in the Hocking Valley<sup>41</sup> I visited that locality and spoke to enthusiastic meetings, notwithstanding the good Pinkertons who threatened to kill me and who attended the meetings with Winchester rifles.

My connection with the meeting on the Haymarket, on May 4th, 1886, did not go beyond that of an invited speaker. I had been invited to address the meeting in German, but no English speakers being present I spoke in English. The meeting had been called by the representatives of a number of Trades Unions. Those present



were workingmen of all beliefs and views; they were not Anarchists, nor were the speeches anarchistic, they treated on the eight-hour question. Anarchism was not even referred to by anyone. But Anarchism was good enough to serve as a scape-goat for Bonfield. This fiend, in order to justify his murderous attack upon that meeting, said "they were Anarchists." "Anarchists! Oh, horror!" The stupid mass imagined that "Anarchists" must be something very bad, and they joined in the chorus with their enemies and fleecers: "Crucify! Crucify!"

*"Tis easy to astonish or appal*

*The vulgar mass which molds a horde of slaves."*

All the pertaining to this matter may be found in my speech before my hangman Gary and his worthy assistants.<sup>42</sup>

In the cause of humanity and light,

Yours,

*A. Spies.*

