Max Nettlau

German Anarchist, Historian, and Founder of the Anarchist Free Press

(1865 - 1944)

Description: In well-informed circles, Max Nettlau was known as the 'Herodotus of Anarchy', the first and greatest historian of the anarchist movement. (From: IISW Bio)

Tags: anarchist, historian, german, prussian, socialist, freedom press, biographer.

Quotes:

"...in order to keep the rich in idleness and luxury, all the workers must lead a life of perpetual misery and exploitation." (From: "An Anarchist Manifesto," by Max Nettlau, May 1st, 1895.)

"What does the State do? It protects the rich and their ill-gotten wealth; it suppresses the attempts of the workers to recover their rights, if these attempts are thought dangerous to the rich." (From: "An Anarchist Manifesto," by Max Nettlau, May 1st, 1895.)

"There can be no true humanity, no true self-respect, without self-reliance. No one can help you if you do not help yourselves. We do not promise to do anything for you, we do not want anything from you, we only appeal to you to co-operate with us to bring about a state of society which will make freedom, well-being possible for all." (From: "An Anarchist Manifesto," by Max Nettlau, May 1st, 1895.)

"Belief in and submission to authority is the root cause of all our misery." (From: "An Anarchist Manifesto," by Max Nettlau, May 1st, 1895.)

"Economic exploitation - the result of the monopolization of the land, raw materials and means of production by the capitalists and landlords - is at the bottom of the present misery." (From: "An Anarchist Manifesto," by Max Nettlau, May 1st, 1895.)

"It is evident that this [Capitalist] system, if to be destroyed at all, must be attacked by the workers themselves, as we cannot expect those who profit by it to cut their own throats, so to say." (From: "An Anarchist Manifesto," by Max Nettlau, May 1st, 1895.)

"We Anarchists are internationalists, we acknowledge no distinction of nationality or color. The workers of all countries suffer as we do here, and our comrades have everywhere to fight the same battle for freedom and justice." (From: "An Anarchist Manifesto," by Max Nettlau, May 1st, 1895.)

"One fact is certain: all so-called religions are the products of human ignorance, mere phantastical efforts of barbarous people to reason out matters which they could not possibly understand without some knowledge of science and scientific methods." (From: "An Anarchist Manifesto," by Max Nettlau, May 1st, 1895.)

"Religion is the most deadly enemy to human progress. It has always been used to poison the mind and deaden the judgment of the young, thus making grown up people accept all its absurdities because they
are familiarized with them in their youth." (From: "An Anarchist Manifesto," by Max Nettlau, May 1st, 1895.)
"Persecution is essential to authority and religion, and fatal to freedom; we should destroy the basis of our own hopes and ideals, if we were ever carried away by the spirit of persecution, bigotry and intolerance, which is so commonly raised against us." (From: "An Anarchist Manifesto," by Max Nettlau, May 1st, 1895.)

Biography:
Max Heinrich Hermann Reinhardt Nettlau (German: [ˈnɛtlau]; 30 April 1865 – 23 July 1944) was a German anarchist and historian. Although born in Neuwaldegg (today part of Vienna) and raised in Vienna, he lived there till the annexation to Nazi Germany in 1938. Max Nettlau retained his Prussian (later German) nationality throughout his life. A student of the Welsh language he spent time in London where he joined the Socialist League and met William Morris. While in London he met anarchists such as Errico Malatesta and Peter Kropotkin whom he remained in contact with for the rest of his life. He also helped to found Freedom Press for whom he wrote for many years.

In the 1890s realizing that a generation of socialist and anarchist militants from the mid-19th century was passing away and their archives of writings and correspondence being destroyed, he concentrated his effort and a recent modest inheritance from his father on acquiring and rescuing such collections from destruction. He also made many interviews of veteran militants for posterity. He wrote biographies of many famous anarchists, including Mikhail Bakunin, Élisée Reclus, and Errico Malatesta. He also wrote a seven volume history of anarchism.

His extensive collection or archives was sold to the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam in 1935. He lived continuously in Amsterdam from 1938 where he worked on cataloging the archive for the Institute. "The Nazis, apparently, were not aware of this fact", so he died there suddenly from stomach cancer in 1944, without ever being harassed.

From: Wikipedia.

Works:
Author of An Anarchist Manifesto (November 30, 1894)
Author of Are There New Fields For Anarchist Activity? (November 05, 1907)
Author of Bibliography of Latin American Anarchism (Incomplete) (November 30, 1925)
Author of Errico Malatesta (November 30, 1923)
Author of Panarchy: A Forgotten Idea of 1860 (November 30, 1908)
Author of Responsibility and Solidarity in the Labor Struggle (December 05, 1899)
Author of German Social Democracy & E. Bernstein (December 09, 1899)
Author of Authoritarian Communism and Libertarian Communism (November 30, 1927)
Author of After Six Years of Authoritarian Revolution (December 31, 1969)
Author of Anarchism: Communist or Individualist? Both (November 30, 1913)

Chronology:
April 30, 1865: Max Nettlau's Birth Day.
July 23, 1944: Max Nettlau's Death Day.

Links:
• Anarchy Archives: Max Nettlau
http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/nettlau/nettlau.html