

# Emma Goldman, the Famous Anarchist

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Men stone the prophets still, and persecute those sent to them to point the upward way! In prison oft, this female St. Paul, an exile now and outcast from her own, living in Berlin even on sufferance from six months' permission to six months, and no asylum, no place of rest in the wide world, if this be denied her; yet courageous still, and uncomplaining, full, indeed, of joyous energy and pregnant with plans of work.

Think of it. She might be rotten to the teeth with self-indulgence, one foul infectious sore, leprous or syphilitic, and men would take her to their pity, nurses would wait on her by night and day, doctors would minister to her with all their skill; but try to teach and guide mankind, be brave and true, hearken only to the God-given inspiration of your soul, live resolutely to the highest in you, and men will treat you as they treat a mad dog and, in their fear and hate, drive you from pillar to post, hound you through the world, to punish and torture and kill.

"What harm have I done?" cries the victim.

"None; you have tried to do us good—to Calvary with you."

As she comes towards me in the hall of the hotel, I scan her with curious sympathy, reverence even. Clearly not for ornament, this unpretentious, quick-moving little person; her hat "looks as if it had been stuffed in her pocket," I tell her, laughing; "my head," she counters, smiling, "is made for a rope, not for a hat." Very short, some inches less than five feet high; but strongly built, and carrying herself sturdily. No one would take her for a Jewess, this Gretchen, with her grey-blue eyes, brown hair, and undetermined features. She is very short-sighted, too, and has to wear glasses at all times. Her unprepossessing appearance, I imagine, must have had its influence in strengthening her character. But she would not have it. "In youth," she said, "my fair skin and eyes brought me more suitors than I knew what to do with, and even now," she added, "I manage to get all the love I want."

One notices at once that she has a pleasant voice of good range, and is wholly free of any affectation or mannerism. She is herself alone, as greatness can afford to be. In a little while you remark that her eyes always meet yours openly, and if you get her to talk of her experiences in Soviet Russia, or in American prisons, she will astonish you with the width and depth of her knowledge and the uncanny impartiality that shines through all she says. Verily those who live with truth have their reward: their words carry conviction.

"A most remarkable woman," you catch yourself saying at the end of an hour; and when you have known her for fifteen years, as I have, you will understand why I write of George Eliot,

Emma Goldman, and Olive Schreiner as the three greatest women I have ever met. Two out of the three are Jewesses; and, if I added three more heroines to my list, the proportion would not be altered, for I would name Sarah Bernhardt, Miss Schuster, and Christine Rossetti. And why should I hesitate to confess it: the greatest of them all, in my opinion, is Emma Goldman.

I know many well-meaning people will hold up their hands at this, and pedantic critics will wonder whether I have the right to compare a mere agitator and journalist with an artist like George Eliot. "What has Miss Goldman done," they will ask, "that can be compared with 'Silas Marner' or 'The Mill on the Floss'?"

Well, I have the advantage of having known and admired George Eliot; yet I am sure that she who always called herself Mrs. Lewis was far inferior to 'Emma Goldman in courage, and there is no page in George Eliot that for sublimity can compare with Emma Goldman's confession of how she lost her sympathy with Bolshevism and the Russian revolutionaries. In due course I will put it before my readers, and they shall judge. Here I can only say that the love of truth and high loyalty to the ideal revealed in this change of attitude puts Emma Goldman among the heroic leaders and guides of humanity for ever.

She is now fifty-three years of age, having been born in 1869 in Kovno, on the German-Russian border—a product of the best in Germany, Russia, and Jewry. I have been deeply interested in her ever since we first met in New York—in 1909, I think; my book, "The Bomb," having given her the wish to know me. "The trial of the Chicago Anarchists," she confessed, "was the decisive influence in my life: that made me an Anarchist, a revolutionist; and your book is the Bible of that movement."

I asked her what were the earlier formative influences of her life, and she was good enough to write them down for me herself; so I have nothing to do but transcribe her notes, for it will be well for all of us to follow the growth of a great character, and study its development.

"At the age of six my father carried me, comfortably seated astride his shoulders, to an election meeting. It was in the Baltic village of ---, where we lived. For years my father had been in charge of the Government stage, there being no railroad in our part of the country at that time. The position was decided by election. Father had always been victorious in the electoral contests.

"The town hall was thick and ill-smelling with smoke from bad tobacco. The peasants were drunk. Barrels of vodka supplied an endless stream. It was a vile, brutal scene, the peasants gesticulating, screaming, and swearing as only Russian peasants can. Presently the results of the votes were announced. My father was defeated. Hooting, yelling, and jeering followed him out of the hall. On the way out, I asked him why the other man had been chosen. "Because we are Jews, dear child, and the other man gave more vodka." I was puzzled: 'Jews'? and 'more vodka'?

"Years later, when I attended the first election meeting in America, this scene in the Baltic village came back in a flash. Again I saw that drink or bribery decided the issue. The mass of men, debased and brutalised, had no conception of faithful service and unselfish work. I think it was this election experience which saved me from putting any trust in politics—social democratic politics included. I had looked behind the scenes, so could never be deceived by the Punch and Judy show which beguiles and misleads the stupid public. — "Another episode of a graver character made me see militarism in all its naked savagery. My father kept an inn, where the military officials and doctors would gather annually to draft the young peasants of our neighbourhood. Strapping boys, often the mainstay of the whole family and needed on the land, came as sheep to the slaughter and were put in the military yoke and sent out, sometimes never to return. Their unfortunate mothers would go down into the very dust to lick the boots of the drafting commis-

sioners, begging them to release their sons. When that failed, the peasant women would turn to my mother for help. She must see the *Barina* (masters), give them honey, butter, money—in fact, anything—only to leave their sons on the land. Often my mother would succeed. She was a very beautiful woman, vivacious, and a born diplomat. Then the peasant women would fairly prostrate themselves before her. But more often mother would fail. Then the heart-broken mothers would tear their hair, beat their breasts, and fill the air with their complaints and lamentations. Frantically they would hold on to their boys, covering their faces with wild, passionate kisses, while the officers would order the soldiers to use the knout in order to separate mother and child.

“Then there was the brutality of the officers to the soldiers. I remember especially a frail orderly who was polishing the boots of his superior. For some reason he incurred the displeasure of the officer, who, without a word, rushed at the boy and whipped him across the face, bringing forth a stream of blood. My sister Helena, eight years older than I, and usually a very timid girl, threw herself on the officer and pounded his chest with her small fists. The affair came near landing our whole family in prison, and possibly causing a pogrom against the Jews. Fortunately, the Colonel had known my father for some time, and smoothed matters over. But the heart-breaking scenes of drafting and the brutality of the officers had a decisive effect upon my sympathies; they marked the beginning of my hatred of militarism and my struggle against it as an inhuman institution.

“Another deep impression of my childhood was in a different field. My mother, very German, had a perfect obsession for German nurse-girls for our ‘culture.’ These girls were never permitted to remain with us for very long. The Baltic nobility, depleted in station but not in sensuality, were hot after our nurse-girls, and soon the human—all too human—result would take place. Then, in moral indignation, mother would send the girl away, and rush off to Königsberg for another importation. One girl had wound herself around my heart. Amalia was her name. She was a lovely creature, and could tell the most marvellous Maerchen. One evening I saw my adored Amalia in tears. What had happened? ‘Ach, Ich muss fort.’ I flew to mother. ‘Mutter, liebe Mutter, why must Amalia go away?’ Mother was scandalised. ‘Amalia ist ein schlechtes Madchen, und muss weg, sonst wirst du auch schlecht.’ (Amalia is a bad girl, and must go, otherwise she’ll make you bad too.) I begged and pleaded with mother, but she was obdurate. That night I slept with my arms around Amalia’s neck. The next morning I stole into mother’s room while she was at breakfast, emptied her purse of part of its contents, and dashed off with it to Amalia.

“The injustice and harshness shown Amalia cured me, as soon as I could understand what had happened, of the stupid morality which confines motherhood in the straight-jacket of legitimacy. A friend of mine used to say, ‘There is no morality in the belly.’ I believe he was right. I cannot remember ever having had a moral attitude towards life and love. I remember an episode when I was eight years of age. My sister was sixteen and desperately in love with a Gentile. She almost died of longing for the man, but she would not even see him. As a Jewess, she could not marry him, and the idea of love justifying itself never entered her head. Her arguments against her love were Greek to my child’s fancy. In my romantic vision, love stood out clear and radiant: religion, marriage, parents—what could they have to do with love? I could not understand it then, and I have never understood it since. Evidently I was born deficient in what the Puritans call the moral sense. I have no morality in my belly.

“That is the more remarkable because my childhood and adolescence were completely obsessed by so-called German morality: the Marlit, Lindau, Gartenlaube morality. Indeed, I was so very German that I wept bitter tears when my people decided to remove to St. Petersburg. We were living in Königsberg at that time, where I had attended school for six years, and where I had been

spoon-fed on German sentimental and patriotic literature, not to speak of the hatred inculcated against Russia—the country of those terrible “barbarians” and dreadful Nihilists | No, I wanted to remain in Germany, continue my studies; medicine was then my dream. One year in Russia changed my very being and the whole course of my life.

“We arrived in the winter of 1881, the historic year in the Russian revolutionary life. Tsar Alexander had just fallen, and the blackest reaction followed. Every breath of life was suppressed, yet the passionate youthful desire for ideals could not be stifled. The air was hot with it; secret reading circles and discussion clubs were everywhere. My spirit caught the white flame of Russian idealism; Marlit and the Gartenlaube were abandoned for Tchernyshevsky, Turgeniev, and Gontcharoff. The good German Queen Louisa, once my ideal, was given up in favour of Sophia Perovskaya and Jessie Helfman. I was too young to understand and grasp the theories that carried Russia’s youth onward. But my soul became imbued with the humanitarian ideas everywhere in the air. Added to this was the hatred and the persecution of the Jews, which I could not help but see, and which stirred me profoundly. Judith became my ideal, instead of the Gretchen or Louise. I too, would become a Judith, and avenge the cruel wrongs of my race.

“All these vague dreams and ideals were soon to be crystallised into one overpowering purpose. In 1886, with my sister Helena, I went to America—free, glorious America, as I solemnly believed it to be. I still remember the ecstasy that took possession of me as we passed the Statue of Liberty. So must my forebears have felt when they were permitted to enter the Holy of Holies. Soon, however, there was a rude awakening. The sordid grind, the drabness of factory life in Rochester, and then the trial of the Chicago Anarchists— which I followed with bated breath—made me see America in a new and blinding light. Night after night, at the end of ten hours of exhausting work in a clothing shop, for \$2.50 per week, I would bury myself in the papers and spell out, word for word, the story of the Haymarket trial.

“Then I learned of the existence of a Socialist Club in Rochester. I went there to have the dreadful story explained to me. I found quite another version of the facts than that told in the daily American press. I was given German Socialist and Anarchist papers which related the whole ghastly conspiracy against labour and against the Chicago Anarchists. Lingg, Parsons, Spies, and the others became my heroes, and when the fatal day arrived—that Black Friday, November 11, 1887— I promised myself to take up the ideas of the men done to death there and carry them to the four corners of the earth until the end of my life.

“That very day an event happened which strengthened me in my determination. A relative came to visit my mother. I was too numb with the terrible strain of the weeks before the execution and the horror of that morning. I paid no attention at first to the conversation of my elders. Suddenly I heard the relative say: “Them Anarchist criminals were hanged at last!” I was stabbed to the quick: blind with fury, I snatched up a glass filled with water and dashed it in the woman’s face. The glass fell to the ground, and my agony found relief in hysterical weeping. That was my baptism in the Anarchist creed.

“Two years later, in 1889, when I was just twenty, I entered the Anarchist movement; took the thorny road that leads up the long hill to Calvary.”

The girl-child, it appears from these outpourings, is the mother of the mature woman. In her hatred of coercion and force, her sympathy with all forms of suffering, her understanding of poverty and its soul-searing humiliations, her intense enthusiasm for ideals, and above all, her heroic personal courage, that child is essentially Emma Goldman, the Anarchist of to-day. I shall

now give some of her later experiences in the United States, just to show how this woman's soul was steeled time and again by injustice and by punishment, till it reached the heroic temper.

Soon after she took the decisive step and became an Anarchist, inspiring influences crowded Emma Goldman's life. First of all, she became the friend of John Most, the notorious Communist lecturer. His impassioned eloquence and tireless energy, together with the persecution he had endured for the cause, combined to excite her enthusiasm. At this time in New York, too, she met Alexander Berkman, the Anarchist, whose friendship has played an important part in her mature life.

The murder of the innocent Chicago Anarchists failed to satisfy the growing power of the greedy capitalists of Wall Street. In 1892 came the great strike of the steel-workers in Pittsburg. Everyone in America has read of the Homestead struggle; the defeat of the Pinkertons and their detective forces; the calling out of the Militia; and the final suppression of the strikers. Stirred to the soul by the pitiless vengeance exercised even on the families of the workmen, Alexander Berkman resolved to sacrifice himself to the cause. He went to Pittsburg and shot Frick, the Gessler of the struggle, in his own office. Fortunately for him, none of his three shots proved fatal, yet the youth of twenty-two was sentenced to twenty-two years in prison. Seven years was the utmost penalty for such a crime as Berkman's, but capitalism was mad with fear, and the judge was not ashamed to discover and punish five offences in this one crime, and the "kept" press of America was even more incensed than its pay-masters, and wrote of Anarchists as devils and idiots combined. Berkman's act was condemned even by Most and his followers among the German and Jewish Anarchists.

The police used every effort to implicate Emma Goldman in Berkman's act; it was only the fact that she was hundreds of miles away, in New York, that saved her from arrest and the outrageous torture of the "third degree." But for months Emma Goldman, because she had been Berkman's friend, could find no decent lodging in New York City; for some time she had to sleep in the parks in the open, and at length she was glad to get a room on Third Street, in a house occupied exclusively by prostitutes. No wonder her health broke under the strain, and for some time she had to give up her work as a lecturer and take refuge with her beloved sister Helena in the family home at Rochester.

But soon she was again called to the front. There was a great strike of cloakmakers in New York, and a monster demonstration of the unemployed took place in Union Square. Emma Goldman was one of the invited speakers. She delivered an impassioned speech, pictured the sordid misery of the wage-slave's life, and roused the wild applause of the crowd by quoting the famous words used a little while before in London by Cardinal Manning: "Necessity knows no law, and the starving man has a natural right to a share of his neighbours' bread."

The capitalist press began to scream its protest. If these Socialists and Anarchists were allowed to preach robbery, the wage-slave might awaken to the misery of his servitude. The Chief of Police of New York, one Byrnes, procured a court order for the arrest of Emma Goldman. In October, 1893, she was tried in New York on the charge of inciting to riot. The "intelligent" jury would not accept the testimony of the twelve witnesses for the defence, preferring the evidence of the single detective, Jacobs. Emma Goldman was convicted and sentenced to one year in the Penitentiary.

Since the foundation of the Republic, she was the first woman—Mrs. Surratt excepted—to be imprisoned for a purely political offence.

Her whole year in prison was spent in studying English and in reading Whitman, Thoreau, and Emerson; it is characteristic of her that she still prefers Thoreau.

In August, 1894, she left Blackwell's Island and returned to New York, a woman of twenty-five now, intellectually mature, passionately determined to devote all her energies and give her life, if need be, to the uplifting of the poor and the emancipation of the ignorant. She found herself welcomed at once and acclaimed by the best heads as a leader in the Liberation War of Humanity.

In 1895 she went for a lecture tour in England and Scotland and afterwards to Vienna, where she entered the Allgemein Krankenhaus, to prepare herself as midwife and nurse and study social conditions. In this year she mastered modern literature, and learned to know Hauptmann and Ibsen, Nietzsche and Shaw, as few know them.

In 1897 she undertook her first great lecture tour in America, crossing the continent. Again in 1899 another great tour, and at the close of the year she visited the International Anarchist Conference in Paris.

When the Boer War broke out, she was drawn to England to protest, and several of her meetings were broken up by patriotic mobs. But the visit was made ever memorable to her because she met in London Tom Mann and the sisters Rossetti, the daughters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, then publishers of the Anarchist review, *The Torch*. She also became a friend of Prince Kropotkin and Louise Michel.

But such periods of peaceful development in Emma Goldman's life were dovetailed in, so to speak, as breathing spaces in the long conflict. In September, 1900, President McKinley was shot by Leon Czolgosz at Buffalo. At once a campaign of slander and persecution was begun against Emma Goldman as the foremost Anarchist in the country. She was arrested in Chicago, kept in close confinement for several weeks, and subjected to the fiercest kind of cross-examination and even personal injury. A policeman threw two young men, who had been badly clubbed by his fellows, into the Black Maria, and when Emma told him he had no right to use violence to handcuffed prisoners, he struck her in the mouth and knocked out one of her front teeth!

All the efforts of the police failed; she had no sort of connection with Czolgosz; but the brutal violence of the police and the insults and libels of the "kept" press had left her bruised and sick at heart. For the first time, she says, she realised the bestial stupidity and ignorant prejudice of the average American, and for the first time she saw that enlightenment would not come in her lifetime, if ever; and for months the sad understanding of human savagery depressed her almost to despair. But the courage in her was like that of Milton:

"Never to submit nor yield,  
And what is else not to be overcome!"

She published an article on Czolgosz, in which she tried to explain his deed: *tout comprendre est tout pardonner*, she pleaded; but, though the ordinary Frenchman knows that perfect understanding involves forgiveness, governing America has not yet reached that height.

The rage of persecution broke out afresh. Once more Emma Goldman was unable to find lodgings, and was hounded like a wild beast. She had to take the name of "Miss Smith," and earn her living by practising her profession of nurse on the quiet.

Fortunately, about this time Paul Orlenoff and Madame Nazimova came to New York to acquaint the American public with Russian dramatic art, and "Miss Smith" was selected as manager of the enterprise. She succeeded in raising funds and in introducing the Russian artists to the theatre-goers of New York and Chicago.

The weekly Anarchist publication, *Free Society*, had had to suspend publication because of the nation-wide fury that swept America after the death of McKinley. But Orlenoff and Nazimova

gave a benefit performance, and handed the proceeds to Emma Goldman, who therewith, in March 1906, brought out the first number of *Mother Earth*, which she has continued uninterruptedly up to her imprisonment in 1917.

In May of this same year Alexander Berkman was released after fourteen years in his prison-hell. No one can say what the renewal of friendship meant to both; henceforth they were practically inseparable. Of course, the breakdown of the Russian Revolution in 1905 had driven many of the Russian Anarchists to America, notably Tchaikovsky and Madame Breshkovskaya: they were welcomed and helped by Miss Goldman.

In 1907 she took part in the second Anarchist Conference in Amsterdam, and, with Max Bajinski, published a sort of defence of Anarchist ideas, which I shall give later.

But now Miss Goldman, when nearing forty, was destined to meet the man who could be lieutenant and press-agent and business representative all in one, and so helped her to achieve nation-wide notoriety, if not fame. Again I let her tell her own story.

“In March, 1908, I was booked to deliver fourteen lectures in Chicago. Two days before my arrival, a young Russian boy, who had been brutally clubbed by the police during the unemployed demonstrations of that year, went to the house of the Chief of Police, evidently with the intention of taking his life. The son of the Chief riddled the boy with fourteen bullets the moment he opened the door.

“I had never in my life seen the boy. I certainly knew nothing of his plans. Yet my meetings were immediately suppressed and my name was, as usual, connected with the attempt upon the life of the Chief. Not only that, but when I arrived in Chicago I found the station full of detectives, who from that moment, and for weeks after, never let me out of their sight.

“The whole city was, as usually, terrorised, and no hall-keeper could be induced to rent his place for my lectures; not even the Socialists, who, as a matter of fact, were more violent in their attacks upon the Anarchists than the kept press. At the last moment a man came to the fore, offering a store which he was using for the Hobo Welfare Association. I could speak there, he said. That man was Dr. Ben Reitman, who had played an important part in the unemployed activities in Chicago, and who had himself been clubbed by the police. But the Chicago authorities were determined that I should not speak in Chicago. They sent men from the Building and Fire Department to Dr. Reitman’s hall, to declare it unsafe.

“We decided upon another method to test the right of free speech. A radical organisation arranged a social meeting. My name was nowhere mentioned as speaker. On the evening of the affair, I managed to slip out of the back entrance of the house where I lived, which was carefully watched by detectives; I got safely to the hall and to the front of the platform. After someone played a violin solo, I got on the platform and began to speak. Immediately the police, who lined the hall, rushed to the platform, dragged me off by force, almost tearing my clothes off my back, and threw me out into the street. That ended the attempt at free speech on my visit in 1908.

“The violence of the police, however, had some good results. It aroused tremendous interest in Anarchist ideas and in my work. It brought the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* to the front. I was offered the columns of that paper for a series of articles, which I promptly accepted, thereby reaching vast numbers of people I could not possibly have reached by my lectures.

“Up to that time, my work had to be carried on along limited lines, mostly through the assistance of small Anarchist groups, who had no possibilities and perhaps were not efficient enough to make my lectures widely known in the different communities. But after my experience in

Chicago, Ben Reitman became my manager, and from that time dates the tremendous success of the work we did all over the country until I was deported from America.

“After the Chicago experience, I went to Winnipeg, Canada. On the way back to America I was held up at the border, taken off the train, and questioned about my citizenship. I gave the necessary information, and was permitted to go on. But this experience had some serious and wholly unexpected results which I may relate here.

“In 1909 the Federal authorities sent two detectives to Rochester, New York (my home town); these men worked for months, succeeded in bribing the parents of the man to whom I had been married, perhaps also terrorised them; but, in any event, the old people went on the witness stand and testified that their son, on taking out his citizen’s papers, had not been five years in the country, and was not 21 years of age himself. Goldman, my husband, was absent, no one knew where, yet he was thus disfranchised; needless to say, that was done, not to strike him, but in due time to get rid of me.

“In 1909, after the murder of Francesco Ferrer, I went to Philadelphia to speak. I found the hall surrounded by police on horseback and foot, and the entrance barred to me, although the audience was permitted to attend. The next day, at the suggestion of some Single Tax friends of mine, we carried the action of the police into court.

“Of course, the court decided against me, and, for a long time after that, free speech was abolished in Philadelphia.

“The same year I came to San Francisco, California, for a series of eight lectures. All went well the first evening. On my arrival at the hall the next evening, I found it surrounded by police. Two detectives presented me with a warrant, ordering my arrest. In the patrol wagon I found my manager and William Buwaldo, the soldier who had received five years’ military prison for shaking hands with me the year before. His sentence had been commuted by Roosevelt. He had just come out of prison, and we had dinner together before going to the hall. Eight charges of conspiracy were preferred against Reitman and myself, and we were held under \$16,000 bail, which friends promptly furnished. It took six weeks before we could get to trial. The trial was, of course, a farce, and we were acquitted. But I lost valuable time and considerable money, without getting the least redress from the authorities.

“However, the advertisement which our arrest gave us helped tremendously with my meetings in Portland and Seattle. I never had had such large audiences before. At the last moment, I was arrested in Seattle, held overnight without excuse, and then set free. We then went to Everett, Washington.

“In the next eight or ten years, as my popularity grew, the persecution of the police increased. After the world-war began, the people became more violent even than the police. Two or three incidents will tell the story of the next ten years of my work.

“I had real fun once at Ann Arbor, Michigan. When I arrived there I found a Bedlam. Five hundred students, with whistles, bells, horns, and every other imaginable device to make noise, howled and screamed and insisted they would not permit me to speak. There was only one other woman save myself who had ventured into the hall. It looked very threatening. Some of the students suggested that we call the police, to which I did not consent. I decided to pull through the meeting, or to die in the attempt. When I began to speak, the students howled like wolves. I then told them that it was a contest of endurance; that I happened to come from a race which owed its survival to endurance, and that I had all the patience in the world to wait until they should have had their fill of noise. That seemed to have affected them, because they let me go on,



with only occasional interruptions. Before I was half through they became intensely interested, and when I finished they gave the College yell for Emma Goldman. From that time I had won the heart of the students, and of Ann Arbor, which I revisited several times a year.

“Between 1910 and 1914 I carried on my work, published *Mother Earth*, and prepared a series of lectures on the drama for publication, without much interruption. But in the summer of that year new trouble began. It was during the free speech fight of the I.W.W. in San Diego, and while I lectured in Los Angeles, that groups of the boys came back to Los Angeles, after they had been cruelly beaten, tarred and feathered, and rushed out of the city. They were in a terrible condition. It was also during that time that one of the boys, Mikolechek, was riddled by bullets by the Vigilantes, and other I.W.W. boys by the hundreds were put into prison. I therefore decided to throw in my lot with them, to go to San Diego, and to take a hand in the fight. I chose as my subject,

“The Enemy of the People,’ which seemed to me very appropriate to the San Diego situation. I went there with Ben Reitman. On our arrival we found a mob of a thousand people. I had no idea that they came to ‘welcome’ me. We quietly pushed through and went to the auto-‘bus of the Grand Hotel. I must have been recognised, because a wild rush for the ‘bus was made. Well-dressed women stood up in their automobiles and screamed:

“‘Turn her over to us; we’ll tear her rotten tongue out of her; we’ll tear her to pieces.’

“Fortunately, the driver retained his presence of mind. He dashed along the street like mad, so we managed to escape the wild mob for the moment. Arriving in the hotel, we were rushed up to the top floor, and locked in rooms. We knew it was dangerous to communicate with any of our friends, and there was no way of getting in touch with anybody, so we simply waited on events. At seven o’clock in the evening the manager of the hotel came to my room to say that the Police Chief wanted to see me. Accompanied by Reitman, I went down to the office, but there found seven men standing about in a circle. I was told that the Chief and the State Attorney were in the next room, and that they wanted to see me, and *not Reitman*. When I reached the room, I found a lot of officials; one of them pointed to the street, black with people, and then said:

“‘We have no way of controlling the mob, so, if you value your life, you will have to get out of town.’

“I asked the man to let me address the audience from the window; that I was sure I could pacify it. But he would not have it. I then said that I would not leave the city, and that I wished to go back to my room. There was no interference. On the way to the elevator, I passed the room where I had left Reitman. It was empty. I demanded to know what had become of him; but no one would give me information. I paced my own room until two in the morning, trying to decide what to do, when again the manager of the hotel came to me. He assured me that Reitman was safe and now on the way to Los Angeles. He said that he had given me protection as long as he could, but if I remained I would jeopardise his life, as the Vigilantes had threatened him if I did not leave town. Of course, I decided to go. At the station I had an encounter with some of the Vigilantes, and would probably have lost my life if the railway men had not come to my rescue. They almost carried me to the compartment of the train, locked the doors, and stood guard in front of it.

“When I came to Los Angeles, there was no Reitman. But during the day I received a long-distance telephone that he would arrive in the evening. He had to be taken off the train on a stretcher. He was in a terrible condition, bruised all over, and with the tar and feathers still sticking to him. We then heard his story:

“As soon as I left the room, it appeared, the seven men threw themselves on Reitman, gagged and bound him, dragged him out through the back entrance into a waiting automobile, with seven occupants. On the outskirts of the city there was another automobile, also with seven occupants. Reitman was driven thirty miles out of San Diego, was then stripped, terribly beaten, the letters I.W.W. burned on his back with a lighted cigar, then he was subjected to appalling humiliations, finally tarred and feathered, and told never to return to San Diego. The men said to him:

“You think we are working men; we are bankers, lawyers, doctors, American patriots; we will teach you damned foreigners.”

“That closed the first San Diego experience. “And worse was to come. Early in 1916 I was arrested for birth-control activities. I had lectured on birth-control for many years; in fact, was the first woman in America to treat the subject before large audiences; but I had never discussed methods publicly. In 1916. I decided to go to the limit. I was arrested, placed under bail, and held for trial for disseminating knowledge on birth-control. I conducted my own trial, but was convicted, of course, and given either \$100 fine, or two weeks in the Queen’s County jail. I preferred the latter. I needed the rest badly; besides I had to prepare a number of lectures on the war and on some literary subjects. The jail was the best place to work in.

“After my release, I went on my annual tour, which took me to California. San Francisco was always a very good field for my work. The first week of this visit was record-breaking; then, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, a bomb was thrown in the Preparedness Parade. Immediately Alexander Berkman’s and my name were connected with the act. Berkman, who had lived in San Francisco for a year, and was publishing *The Blast*, had his place raided, and was “grilled” for hours as to the bomb; needless to say, neither he nor I knew anything about it.

“I continued for three weeks longer after the explosion, but my meetings were attended mostly by detectives.

“The strain and the anxiety affected my health. I left San Francisco, determined to take a vacation—the first in many years. I went to Provincetown, Mass., where my niece had a cottage. But the situation in San Francisco, and the condition of the arrested people—Mooney and the others—necessitated immediate action. No San Francisco lawyer would take their case at the time. I was bombarded by letters and telegrams to go to New York to secure an attorney for Mooney. There was nothing else to do but to give up the vacation and again throw myself into work. It was a terrible year, and we all expected that Mooney and the others would lose their lives. Indeed, they came near doing so; that they remained alive is due, to a large extent, to the incessant activities of Alexander Berkman, who travelled up and down the land, knocking at every labour organisation, arousing the liberal and radical elements, and making of the Mooney case an international affair.

“My work grew steadily more difficult, more dangerous.

“In 1917, when there was talk of America’s entering the war, we organised a Non-Conscription League. That was on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May; on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup>, just after Wilson had declared war on Germany, the League held its first large meeting. In June, *Mother Earth* magazine came out with a cartoon portraying democracy as a corpse. *Mother Earth* declared itself against registration, conscription, and the war. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, the eve of registration, we had a large meeting in the Bronx. For blocks the people crowded to get into the hall. The police came out with machine guns, searchlights, and every other means to create a riot; but the people kept perfect self-restraint. The only rioters were drunken sailors and soldiers. Then, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, we had another meeting on the East Side. There were no serious disturbances anywhere, but there were large crowds who

hated America's entry into the war, and who were enthusiastic about those who had the courage to give voice to their opposition.

"The 15<sup>th</sup> of June, fourteen detectives came to the office of *Mother Earth* and *The Blast* (which, by the way, had been removed to New York). Both places were raided, most of our literature, manuscripts and documents confiscated, and Berkman and I were arrested. The rest everyone knows. What I have written here gives merely the bare facts of the difficult life I have led for many years. In fact, I can say that for twenty years I never knew, until the last minute before getting on the platform, whether my meeting would take place or whether I should be dragged off to prison. But, as I have often said, if you have a sense of humour, you can survive everything. Besides, the art of an agitator of unpopular ideas consists in the ability to accept the station-house or a hotel with the same grace.

"Nietzsche said that 'the criterion of love is the power of endurance.' If so, America deserves my passionate love, for it has made me endure a thousand hells, but it has also given me what is best and finest in America —men and women of ideas, of character, and of a passionate devotion to the struggle for liberty; so I have no complaints to make." Thus ends Miss Goldman's story.

Now, what are the dangerous ideas which so-called free America punishes with imprisonments and torturings and banishment, though its very Constitution pledges its judges and its people never to interfere with freedom of speech or of the press or of public meeting? Miss Goldman is in favour of birth-control; but birthcontrol is preached by the State in Denmark, and can be advocated in any European country except Great Britain, without let or hindrance.

She speaks against militarism, too, and Government; but throughout Christendom that is allowed, save in the Benighted States.

The truth seems to be that she speaks very simply and plainly, in language understood of the people, and has the popular gift of getting large and enthusiastic audiences. Here is the gist of what she says:

"The State is not an organism, but an arbitrary institution cunningly imposed on the masses. The schools, too, are barracks where the child is drilled into submission to various social and moral spooks and thus fitted to continue our system of exploitation and oppression..." An organism in the true sense cannot be composed of nonentities, but of self-conscious intelligent individualities." On reading this I ventured to question Miss Goldman and tried to find out exactly what she understands as Anarchy, and how the co-operative Commonwealth of the future can be made to function.

Her ideal, it seems to me, is based on the assumption that the majority of individuals constituting the State are intelligent and reasonable. One would have thought that her experiences at San Diego alone would have been sufficient to convince her of the absolute falsity of this premise. She herself tells how bankers, lawyers, doctors, and business men turned fiends and torturers when excited by the herd-sentiment. She would be the last person to expect sweet reasonableness from the many: but the fault in her reasoning only throws into clearer light her dauntless courage and noble idealism.

I then asked Miss Goldman for an account of her activities in the United States after 1917, when she and Berkman were again sentenced to prison. She was tried in New York. At the outset Miss Goldman said to her judge: "For the first time, the accusation against me is true. I advised the people not to register; I begged them not to engage as soldiers: I am against all war, and hate all conscription." A Jewish judge, Mayer, to his eternal disgrace, gave her the maximum penalty of two years, though she protested that she did not believe in trying to overthrow the Government

by force, but by persuasion. She has told herself what she suffered in prison, though blessed with a most intelligent and humane warder. The under-warder, however, was a woman who took pleasure in punishing, and did her best to make the prison into a hell. But Miss Goldman's courage and selfcontrol brought her safely through.

The one reward of the heroic soul is that the tasks grow harder, the thorny, upward way ever more arduous to the end. At long last Emma Goldman was to be tried as with fire. After serving two years in prison, Emma was deported, with Alexander Berkman and some 247 Anarchists, in the crazy leaky *Buford* to Russia. She went, she tells us, full of enthusiasm: she had admired the Soviets from a distance; they were the embodiment of the Russian Revolution, she believed; all the idealism of the Russian character had come to power in them; surely now they would establish a Communist Commonwealth, the Kingdom of Man upon Earth.

For nearly two years her friends in the United States heard nothing of much value from her; rumours, it is true, of discontent, but nothing precise or positive. Then with infinite difficulty she and Berkman got out of Russia, and at once the first authentic picture of the Soviet Government came to us; and, to our surprise, it held an absolute condemnation of Lenin and his methods. Her articles on the Soviet rulers constitute perhaps the noblest act of Emma Goldman's heroic life. Two points stand out for ever undeniable in her tremendous indictment of the Soviet leaders she had defended time and again, and praised when it was disastrous to her to praise them.

Lenin, she declares, destroyed the co-operative movement in Russia and shut up its 15,000 shops; Lenin invented the infamous Tcheka, and gave it more power than the secret police of the Tsar to torture, imprison, exile, and murder without form of law or the formality even of a hearing. Lenin, the pinchbeck Robespierre, went even further in tyrannical misuse of power than any Tsar or even than the capitalist despotism of the United States. In November, 1921, the Tcheka began to deport native-born Russians, chiefly the *intelligentzia*, and make outcasts of Russia's noblest. The whole story is the most impressive account yet written of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet despots.

Naturally Miss Goldman begins with the massacre of the revolutionary Russian sailors at Kronstadt, the very men who put Lenin in power, "the heart and hands," as Trotzky called them, of the Revolution. When they ventured to take sides with the Petrograd proletariat and to ask for free elections, Trotzky led the Red Army against them and slaughtered 18,000 of his most convinced and honest supporters.

One would have thought that the mere publication of these facts, the reverence they show for the truth, as she sees it, at all costs, would have reinstated Miss Goldman in the eyes of the American authorities. But, alas ! these men take their orders from Wall Street, and money has no entrails of pity, but only of greed.

Will England too be obdurate, or will she, the old home of individual freedom, honour herself by affording an asylum to the greatest woman of this time—a second and greater St. Paul—or is Emma Goldman going to her crucifixion? Who shall say?

When I read her this, she laughed: "You may call me a female Paul," she said, "but Saint Paul was a Puritan, and at any rate I am not so foolish as that."

Thank God there is no trace of folly in her, or prudery; she has warmed both hands at the fire of life, and, in spite of having spent herself in the service of her fellows, she has had a full, warm, pulsing life of her own.

What a life she has lived!—a life of change, adventure, and constant danger; a life of astonishing vicissitudes, all gilded with love. Emma Goldman makes no scruple of confessing it: she tells you

that all her life she has loved love, and she boasts with sufficient justification that, though she may have changed her lovers, they are all faithful to her still, after twenty or thirty years. And all the while she has been learning; she now knows Russian, as well as English, German, and French, and is versed in their literatures: Emma Goldman is probably the best-read woman I have ever met, and though persecuted as few have ever been persecuted, she remains kindly, tolerant, full of excuses even for her tormentors. In a letter to me from prison in 1919 she gave her real faith: "In our age there is nothing so useless as a spirit of white-heat with a vision of a glorious future, a spirit which cannot and will not accept an inglorious present. But my ideal is ever real to me. What, then, does prison matter? What do all the other follies and stupidities of those who have power matter? I have four months still to pass in my cell, then to the larger prison, which does not give much more breathing-space to the soul."

I have told her life of struggle and insult in the States at perhaps undue length because I wished Americans to realise how far they have deserted the ideal of individual liberty established in the Constitution by Washington and Jefferson and consecrated by Lincoln. Under Wilson the American Republic sank lower in despotic violence than any tyranny yet known among men. And it has not recovered since the war: in this year 1923 Upton Sinclair was arrested and thrown into prison for reading a part of the Constitution on a vacant plot of land. A short time ago an innocent Italian threw himself from the 14<sup>th</sup> story of the Municipal Building in New York to escape the tortures of the infamous "third degree" inflicted on him by American policemen.

The chief difference between the tyranny of Wilson and that of Lenin is that the one uses violence to prevent wrong from being righted and the other uses violence in a wild attempt to right the wrong.

Emma Goldman has been savagely maltreated by both to her eternal honour !

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Frank Harris  
Emma Goldman, the Famous Anarchist  
1923

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