

DE GRUYTER  
OLDENBOURG

*Frank Jacob*

# EMMA GOLDMAN AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

FROM ADMIRATION TO FRUSTRATION



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**Emma Goldman and the Russian Revolution**



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For Emma,  
whose ideas will be important  
as long as there is no equality and no freedom for all.



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# 1 Introduction

Revolution is the negation of the existing, a violent protest against man's inhumanity to man with all the thousand and one slaveries it involves. It is the destroyer of dominant values upon which a complex system of injustice, oppression, and wrong has been built up by ignorance and brutality. It is the herald of NEW VALUES, ushering in a transformation of the basic relations of man to man, and of man to society. It is not a mere reformer, patching up some social evils; not a mere changer of forms and institutions; not only a re-distributor of social well-being. It is all that, yet more, much more. It is, first and foremost, the TRANS-VALUATOR, the bearer of new values. It is the great TEACHER of the NEW ETHICS, inspiring man with a new concept of life and its manifestations in social relationships. It is the mental and spiritual regenerator.<sup>1</sup>

Emma Goldman (1869–1940) was a true believer in the power of revolutions to create a new world as well as a new society and thereby, regardless of being an anarchist, in a way followed the basic consideration of Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) that “the right for revolution is [...] the only true ‘historical right’”<sup>2</sup> for everyone. Although she might have disagreed that a revolution, according to Engels, was the base for this right and at the same time needed a modern state for it to be expressed. For many of her early biographers, Goldman was a “challenging rebel,”<sup>3</sup> even a “rebel in paradise,”<sup>4</sup> because she contested a state, namely the United States, that for many resembled the values of liberty much more than Goldman's country of origin, i.e. Czarist Russia. However, the famous female anarchist's life, to quote American Women's Studies scholar Loretta Kensing, “spanned many important moments of social upheaval in the United States” and as an “anarchist, a radical, a Jewish immigrant escaping the increasing repression of Czarist Russia, she rose to be one of the most infamous figures of her times.”<sup>5</sup> Due to her steady political activism, or radicalism depending on

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1 Emma Goldman, *My Further Disillusionment in Russia* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1924), <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emma-goldman-my-further-disillusionment-in-russia>.

2 Friedrich Engels, “Einleitung zu Karl Marx, Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich 1848 bis 1850 (1895),” in *Marx-Engels-Werke*, vol. 22 (Berlin: Dietz, 1956-), 524, cited in Manfred Kossok, “Im Gehäuse der selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit oder Umgang mit der Geschichte,” in Manfred Kossok, *Sozialismus an der Peripherie: Späte Schriften*, ed. Jörn Schütrumpf (Berlin: Dietz, 2016), 80. All translations from German, if not stated otherwise, are my own.

3 Joseph Ishill, *Emma Goldman: A Challenging Rebel* (Berkeley Heights, NJ: Oriole Press, 1957).

4 Richard Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982 [1961]).

5 Loretta Kensing, “Radical Lessons: Thoughts on Emma Goldman, Chaos, Grief, and Political Violence Post-9/11/01,” *Feminist Teacher* 20, no. 1 (2009): 52.

one's perspective, Goldman, almost 60 years after Allen Guttman's evaluation, still ranks among "the most famous of American radicals."<sup>6</sup> In contrast to the radical image often attached to Goldman by her political enemies, British journalist Henry W. Nevins (1856–1941) introduced her at "Foyle's twenty-ninth literary luncheon" in London on 1 March 1933 as a "real champion of freedom" and "a woman who has devoted all her life, amidst terrible suffering, indignities and loss to the cause of freedom and freedom alone."<sup>7</sup> The image of Emma Goldman was ambivalent, to say the least, during her life, and it has remained ambivalent until today.

Very often, she was referred to as a "Queen of the Anarchists"<sup>8</sup> or the "most dangerous anarchist in America,"<sup>9</sup> while some characterized her as a "cultural radical"<sup>10</sup> or simply "a born refusenik."<sup>11</sup> Hailed by feminist historians like Alice Wexler and Clare Hemmings as "one of the most respected members of an international radical movement"<sup>12</sup> as well as "the larger-than-life anarchist activist and political thinker"<sup>13</sup> within the history of American radicalism in general, and American anarchism in particular, her contemporaries like the German anarchist Rudolf Rocker (1873–1958)<sup>14</sup> also claimed her to be "without any doubt one of the most outstanding and curious personalities"<sup>15</sup> of her time. Eventually,

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6 Allen Guttman, "Jewish Radicals, Jewish Writers," *The American Scholar* 32, no. 4 (1963): 563.

7 Emma Goldman, "An Anarchist Looks at Life," text of a speech by Emma Goldman, held at Foyle's twenty-ninth literary luncheon (London, UK), March 1, 1933, Emma Goldman Papers, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam (henceforth EGP-IISH), No. 191, 3.

8 Shari Rabin, "'The Advent of a Western Jewess': Rachel Frank and Jewish Female Celebrity in 1890s America," in "Gender and Jewish Identity," special issue, *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues* 22 (2011): 121; Andrea Rich and Arthur L. Smith, *Rhetoric of Revolution* (Durham, NC: Moore, 1979), 60.

9 Kathy E. Ferguson, *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 21.

10 Robert Wolfe, *Remember to Dream: A History of Jewish Radicalism* (New York: Jewish Radical Education Project, 1994), 11.

11 Vivian Gornick, *Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 3.

12 Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), xv.

13 Clare Hemmings, *Considering Emma Goldman: Feminist Political Ambivalence and the Imaginative Archive* (Durham, NC/London: Duke University Press, 2018), 1.

14 On Rocker's life and work, see William J. Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals 1875–1914* (London: Five Leaves, 2004 [1975]), 229–310; Mina Graur, *An Anarchist "Rabbi": The Life and Teachings of Rudolf Rocker* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Peter Wienand, *Der "geborene" Rebell: Rudolf Rocker Leben und Werk* (Berlin: KKV, 1981).

15 Rudolf Rocker, "Zum Geleit," in Emma Goldman, *Die Ursachen des Niederganges der russischen Revolution* (Berlin: Der Syndikalist, 1922), 3.

as Alice Wexler correctly evaluates, Goldman’s “name became a household word, synonymous with everything subversive and demonic, but also symbolic of the ‘new woman’ and of the radical labor movement”<sup>16</sup> and she is consequently remembered today, although not as intensely as she probably deserves, as “one of the most influential and self-revealing radical activists in the United States.”<sup>17</sup> The fact that she lived an extraordinarily and often intriguing as well as eventful life, however, at the same time led to the fact, as sociologists Jeffrey Shantz and Dana M. Williams highlighted a few years ago, that “[m]ost of the academic work on Emma Goldman has focused overwhelmingly on her life and personal biography.”<sup>18</sup> At the same time, the famous anarchist’s political ideas, besides those in relation to feminism, have often been treated rather superficially by scholars discussing her biography from a specific angle.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, one can only agree with Donna M. Kowal’s assessment that there have been “many vivid characterizations of Goldman”<sup>20</sup> that linked her life to the events that caused her radical existence, as, to quote Jewish Studies scholar Gerald Sorin, “she was in her politics a product of the rapid economic dislocations in late nineteenth-century Russia, virulent Russian antisemitism, and her own proletarianization.”<sup>21</sup> Since Richard Drinnon’s biography, *Rebel in Paradise*, was published in 1961, many scholars from different disciplines have dealt with Emma Goldman from different perspectives, and sources that cover parts

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**16** Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile: From the Russian Revolution to the Spanish Civil War* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 1.

**17** David Porter, “Introduction: Emma Goldman’s Life and Involvement with Spain,” in *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, i. e. Porter, 3rd. ed. (New Paltz, NY: Common-ground Press, 1985 [1983]), 1.

**18** Jeffrey Shantz and Dana M. Williams, *Anarchy and Society: Reflections on Anarchist Sociology* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 51.

**19** For a brief biographical sketch of Goldman’s life and work, see Bonnie Haaland, *Emma Goldman: Sexuality and the Impurity of the State* (Montréal/New York/London: Black Rose Books, 1993), ix–xvi. Also see Shantz and Williams, *Anarchy and Society*, 51–69, to name just one example, for a discussion of the relevance of her work for sociology. That Goldman’s life has been interpreted in different ways is also highlighted in Jason Wehling, “Anarchy in Interpretation: The Life of Emma Goldman,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman*, ed. Penny A. Weiss and Loretta Kensinger (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 21–23.

**20** Donna M. Kowal, *Tongue of Fire: Emma Goldman, Public Womanhood, and the Sex Question* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2016), xii.

**21** Gerald Sorin, *The Prophetic Minority: American Jewish Immigrant Radicals, 1880–1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 8.

of her life, whether in the United States<sup>22</sup> or in relation to the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939),<sup>23</sup> have been edited and published as well. One angle from which Goldman’s life has been investigated in particular is a feminist one, and the works by Alice Wexler,<sup>24</sup> Candace Falk,<sup>25</sup> Bonnie Haaland,<sup>26</sup> Lori Jo Marso,<sup>27</sup> and Kathy E. Ferguson<sup>28</sup> stand out with regard to this specific approach.<sup>29</sup> Goldman was, of course, not only a kind of proto-feminist in the modern sense of the word, but in many ways also “constantly challenged the political and social status quo.”<sup>30</sup> Therefore, she was not only dedicated to the “woman question” within American society but very much also “dedicated ... to public agitation aimed at curing many of the evils of society.”<sup>31</sup> While the anarchist circles of New York City and, later, revolutionary Russia and post-WWI Europe became her home, her “colorful career,”<sup>32</sup> especially with regard to her thinking, was never limited to a single aspect or a single misery of modern societies.<sup>33</sup>

Due to her permanent criticism, Goldman was perceived as an “arch revolutionary, both frightening and fascinating”<sup>34</sup> by the people in America who read about her activities. For the public, she was eventually only “Red Emma, that fearsome figure excoriated in the newspapers and conjured up to make small

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**22** Candace Falk, ed., *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003–2012).

**23** David Porter, ed., *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, 3rd ed. (New Paltz, NY: Commonground Press, 1985 [1983]).

**24** Wexler, *Emma Goldman*.

**25** Candace Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990 [1984]).

**26** Haaland, *Emma Goldman*.

**27** Lori Jo Marso, “A Feminist Search for Love: Emma Goldman on the Politics of Marriage, Love, Sexuality, and the Feminine,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman*, ed. Penny A. Weiss and Loretta Kensinger (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 71–89.

**28** Kathy E. Ferguson, “Gender and Genre in Emma Goldman,” *Signs* 36, no. 3 (2011): 733–757. Also see Ferguson, *Emma Goldman*.

**29** For a discussion of Emma Goldman as an early anarcho-feminist, see Frank Jacob, “Anarchismus, Ehe und Sex: Emma Goldman (1869–1940) als Anarcho-Feministin,” in *Geschlecht und Klassenkampf: Die “Frauenfrage” aus deutscher und internationaler Perspektive im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Vincent Streichhahn and Frank Jacob (Berlin: Metropol, 2020), forthcoming. On anarcho-feminism, see Donna M. Kowal, “Anarcho-Feminism,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 265–279.

**30** Marso, “A Feminist Search for Love,” 71.

**31** Rich and Smith, *Rhetoric of Revolution*, 61.

**32** *Ibid.*

**33** Ferguson, *Emma Goldman*, 1.

**34** Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 1.

children behave,”<sup>35</sup> although Goldman would not have considered herself or her ideas as something to fear if one were longing for a better future for all. She was a charismatic and very intelligent woman who evoked admiration by her speeches.<sup>36</sup> It was consequently not surprising that, to quote Wexler once more, “[t]he young intellectuals adored her, bohemian artists flocked to her lectures, rebellious women worshipped her, and radical workers considered her their god, though she never joined a union or anything larger than her own small group.”<sup>37</sup> She was able to persuade Wobblies of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)<sup>38</sup> to become involved in birth control protests,<sup>39</sup> and her repeated arrests over the years always secured her some prominence among the American radicals and, even more so, within the American public mind.<sup>40</sup> Regardless of her radical image, Emma Goldman’s radical ideas and her love for anarchism as well as her wish to reform the United States and eventually the whole world, something that was probably only possible through a revolution, were the result of her own experiences, which she described at the luncheon in March 1933 mentioned above:

Naturally, life presents itself in different forms to different ages. Between the age of eight and twelve I dreamed of becoming a Judith. I longed to avenge the sufferings of my people, the Jews, to cut off the head of their Holofernos. When I was fourteen I wanted to study medicine, so as to be able to help my fellow-beings. When I was fifteen I suffered from unrequited love, and I wanted to commit suicide in a romantic way by drinking a lot of vinegar. I thought that would make me look ethereal and interesting, very pale and poetic when in my grave, but at sixteen I decided on a more exalted death. I wanted to dance myself to death. ... Then came America, America with its huge factories, the pedaling of a machine for ten hours a day at two dollars fifty a week. It was followed by the greatest event in my life, which made me what I am. It was the tragedy of Chicago, in 1887, when five of the

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**35** Don Herzog, “Romantic Anarchism and Pedestrian Liberalism,” *Political Theory* 35, no. 3 (2007): 313.

**36** Isidore Wisotsky Autobiographical Typescript, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, TAM.071, 57.

**37** Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 1.

**38** See, among others, Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969).

**39** Paul Buhle, “A Comic Celebration: The 100th Anniversary of the IWW,” *New Labor Forum* 14, no. 1 (2005): 122.

**40** Rochelle Gurstein, “Emma Goldman and the Tragedy of Modern Love,” *Salmagundi* 135/136 (2002): 68. This publicity seems to have lasted until today, as several biographers have continued to keep Goldman’s image alive, at least among leftist intellectuals in the United States. Chris Dodge, “Emma Goldman, Thoreau, and Anarchists,” *The Thoreau Society Bulletin* 248 (2004): 4.

noblest men were judicially murdered by the State of Illinois. ... The death of those Chicago martyrs was my spiritual birth: their ideal became the motive of my entire life.<sup>41</sup>

Goldman's political awakening, the source of her radicalism, and the moment that would define her further life was the Haymarket Tragedy in 1886.<sup>42</sup> This "crime against the US working class" awakened the radical spirit of the young Emma Goldman, who would then turn to anarchism as a possible cure for the misery of the working class and eventually all children, women, and men around the world. Anarchism retrospectively seemed to be a natural choice for Goldman, as it "is a releasing and liberating force because it teaches people to rely on their own possibilities, teaches them faith in liberty, and inspires men and women to strive for a state of social life where every one shall be free and secure."<sup>43</sup> While agitating among the American workers, Goldman, however, did "not address [her]self only to the workers," and saw no reason to excuse herself for this: "I address myself to the upper classes as well, for indeed they need enlightenment even more than the workers. Life itself teaches the masses, and it is a strict, effective teacher."<sup>44</sup>

It is really surprising that although Goldman has received quite a lot attention and multiple biographers have attempted to take a look at her life,<sup>45</sup> whether in America or abroad, or as a feminist, an anarchist, or an exiled migrant,<sup>46</sup> these works very often solely try to explain Goldman's ideas and efforts as consequences of her personal experiences. This often tends to undermine her standing as an intellectual of her time, whose thoughts were not only the consequence of steady emotional self-reflection but actually based on very accurate observations of her time. Instead of focusing on the known sources and the even better known anecdotes, her political writings, considerations, and reflections related to events of her time should be taken more seriously. Goldman criticized the shortcomings of her time in many ways,<sup>47</sup> but so far, as Shantz and Williams emphasized and as it has already been mentioned above, "real attention has [only] been given to Goldman's work in the context of feminist theory and women's his-

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41 Goldman, "An Anarchist Looks at Life," 4–5.

42 Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

43 Goldman, "An Anarchist Looks at Life," 5.

44 *Ibid.*, 7.

45 A short survey of these biographies can also be found in Haaland, *Emma Goldman*, xvi–xvii.

46 Wehling also correctly argues that all these identities overlapped with or were related to Goldman's anarchism. Wehling, "Anarchy in Interpretation," 19.

47 Herzog, "Romantic Anarchism," 314.

tory.”<sup>48</sup> And this is really not surprising at all, due to “her many passionate love affairs, often with younger men. To radical feminists, Goldman’s free-wheeling, politically engaged life, this appeared to be one long enactment of their own creed.”<sup>49</sup> Especially since the 1970s and the rise of the feminist movement in the United States, there has been “almost a cult of personality”<sup>50</sup> that has worshipped Goldman as an early voice for women’s liberation. For the famous anarchist, especially due to her personal experiences as a trained nurse who had worked for the poorest of the poor in the spatial context of a radical metropolis like New York City,<sup>51</sup> her “feminist” ideas were linked to anarchism and the future revolutionary potential of the masses, and it is therefore not surprising that she became a figurehead of US feminism and “an iconic figure who symbolized the spirit of rebellion and provides a role model for contemporary liberal feminism.”<sup>52</sup> Until today, “feminists march in brigades under her name,”<sup>53</sup> identifying her as one of their sisters,<sup>54</sup> and Goldman’s works on marriage, love, and sexuality seem to be as relevant today as in the times they were originally written.<sup>55</sup> However, what historian Oz Frankel called Goldman’s “unique position in American politics and culture”<sup>56</sup> is determined by many other aspects as well that deserve closer attention and closer examination.

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**48** Shantz and Williams, *Anarchy and Society*, 51. Also see Robin Hazard Ray, “No License to Serve: Prohibition, Anarchists, and the Italian-American Widows of Barre, Vermont, 1900–1920,” *Italian Americana* 29, no. 1 (2011): 11.

**49** Gurstein, “Emma Goldman and the Tragedy of Modern Love,” 68.

**50** Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 1. Also see Ferguson, *Emma Goldman*, 1 and Alix Kates Shulman, ed., *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982 [1972]), 3–19.

**51** Gerald L. Marriner, “The Feminist Revolt: The Emergence of the New Woman in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 1, no. 2 (1974): 129. On the impact of New York City on the radicalism within immigrant communities, see Frank Jacob, “Radical Trinity: Anarchist, Jew, or New Yorker?” in *Jewish Radicalisms: Historical Perspectives on a Phenomenon of Global Modernity*, ed. Frank Jacob and Sebastian Kunze (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 153–180.

**52** M. Kowal, *Tongue of Fire*, xiv. Also see Gurstein, “Emma Goldman and the Tragedy of Modern Love,” 67.

**53** Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 1.

**54** Betsy Auleta and Bobbie Goldstone, “happy birthday, emma,” *Off Our Backs* 1, no. 8: *Emma Goldman: June 27, 1869–May 14, 1940* (1970): 2.

**55** Marso, “A Feminist Search for Love,” 73–78.

**56** Oz Frankel, “Whatever Happened to ‘Red Emma’? Emma Goldman, from Alien Rebel to American Icon,” *The Journal of American History* 83, no. 3 (1996): 903.

Goldman herself claimed that she “worked out a variant of leftism that was at once breathtakingly radical, wholly practical, and exuberantly libertarian,”<sup>57</sup> or, in other words, an eclectic form of radicalism. For the American upper class, she became in the meantime the “incarnation of all evil,”<sup>58</sup> as the famous anarchist missed no opportunity to criticize it for its many and diverse moral shortcomings. She consequently used diverse anarchist interpretations in “her outspoken attacks on government, big business, and war,”<sup>59</sup> and at the same time hoped to awaken the revolutionary spirit of the majority of the common and suppressed American people. During her decades-long struggle, Goldman consequently came into conflict—and not only in the United States—with state authorities, who felt threatened by her agitation and steady criticism.<sup>60</sup> Goldman’s rejection of the state as a regulatory and controlling force that coordinated human relationships and lives could hardly surprise anyone, as “[a]narchism is a political concept and social movement associated with future or here and now politico-social projects without the state.”<sup>61</sup> Of course, there were different “schools” or “interpretations” of anarchism,<sup>62</sup> but they were all based on the “rejection [...] of the state as an organising principle.”<sup>63</sup> The state was considered an element that naturally and purely by its existence created a hierarchy between those who rule and those who are ruled, which is why Goldman and all the other anarchists shared “a robust notion of anti-hierarchy [a]s the *sine qua non* of [their] anarchism.”<sup>64</sup> Regardless of the shared theoretical base and the fact that Goldman very often exchanged ideas with Alexander Berkman (1870–1936)—not only one of her many lovers but someone who had influenced her in her early years as a radical mind<sup>65</sup> and who, together with the “queen of anarchists,” would become a victim of America’s first “Red Scare” in the aftermath of the Russian October Revolution<sup>66</sup>—the famous female anarchist was

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57 Herzog, “Romantic Anarchism,” 313.

58 Rocker, “Zum Geleit,” 6.

59 Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 1.

60 Kensinger, “Radical Lessons,” 53.

61 Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams, “Introduction,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 1.

62 *Ibid.*, 2.

63 *Ibid.*, 1.

64 Randall Amster, “Anti-Hierarchy,” in *Anarchism: A Conceptual Approach*, ed. Benjamin Franks, Nathan Jun and Leonard Williams (London/New York: Routledge, 2018), 15.

65 Ferguson, *Emma Goldman*, 13.

66 Peter Glassgold, “Introduction, The Life and Death of Mother Earth,” in *Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman’s Mother Earth*, ed. Peter Glassgold (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2012 [2001]), xvii.

never a blind follower of the ideas of others. Goldman continuously reflected on her political standing and her anarchist ideas, especially in abstraction to the events of her life and which surrounded her in different national and political settings.

Her view on the Russian Revolutions of 1917 in particular changed as a consequence of her personal experiences, the acquisition of what German scholars Simone Lässig and Swen Steinberg called “migrant knowledge,”<sup>67</sup> based on which Goldman tried to persuade representatives of the international Left in general, and international anarchism in particular, to see Bolshevism as a perversion of the ideals of the Russian Revolution.<sup>68</sup> Together with Berkman, Goldman was “[s]hipped out of the United States as a pariah”<sup>69</sup> in December 1919 and invited to join the revolutionary efforts in Soviet Russia. Although Goldman was “a revolutionary”<sup>70</sup> by heart, and although she believed in the power of the Russian Revolution to change the world as much as she believed in the Bolsheviks at first, “she was not prepared for the devastation all around her”<sup>71</sup> in the months to come. Of all the sufferings she had to experience in her life, according to Rudolf Rocker, her time in Bolshevik Russia ranked among the most bitter ones.<sup>72</sup> According to Wexler, it were the “dislocations and losses”<sup>73</sup> that characterized her life after 1919, but the political force that dominated her existence, that forced her to resist, and that made her criticize it against all the odds was Bolshevism, the political movement that had led the Russian Revolution and, under Vladimir I. Lenin’s (1870–1924) leadership, had corrupted the revolutionary process that had begun in February 1917 and which Goldman had hoped to sup-

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67 Simone Lässig and Swen Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move: New Approaches toward a History of Migrant Knowledge,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 43, no. 3 (2017): 313–346.

68 On her and Berkman’s experiences in Soviet Russia and their struggle against Bolshevism in the years after their stay there, see Frank Jacob, “From Aspiration to Frustration: Emma Goldman’s Perception of the Russian Revolution,” *American Communist History* 17, no. 2 (2018): 185–199; Frank Jacob, “Anarchism and the Perversion of the Russian Revolution: The Accounts of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman,” *Diacronie* 33, no. 1 (2018): <https://doi.org/10.4000/diacronie.7405>; Frank Jacob, “Der Anarchismus und die Russische Revolution – Emma Goldman und Alexander Berkman im Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus,” *Ne znam: Zeitschrift für Anarchismusforschung* 7 (2018): 3–66. For a detailed discussion of Berkman’s experiences, see Bini Adamczak, *Der schönste Tag im Leben des Alexander Berkman: Vom womöglichen Gelingen der Russischen Revolution* (Münster: Edition Assemblage, 2017).

69 Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 21. Only once would Goldman be allowed to visit the US afterwards due to a lecture tour. *Ibid.*, 2.

70 Rich and Smith, *Rhetoric of Revolution*, 61.

71 Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 21.

72 Rocker, “Zum Geleit,” 7.

73 Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 3.

port after her deportation from the United States.<sup>74</sup> After her escape from Soviet Russia, in Berlin, Goldman wrote about her experiences while being “assailed and threatened from both right and left for her ideas and actions since leaving”<sup>75</sup> the land of the revolution. Her works on Bolshevik Russia<sup>76</sup> are probably “Goldman’s most important contribution to the theory of revolution,”<sup>77</sup> yet while they have often been named and sometimes cited, they have not been taken into consideration as more than descriptions of post-revolutionary Russia by a Russian-American anarchist intellectual. Like many intellectuals of the international Left, Goldman had high hopes for the Russian Revolution in February 1917, an event that would change the world. And like many others, she was initially unwilling to accept that this chance for a better future would be corrupted by a political minority, claiming the “dictatorship of the proletariat” while establishing a Bolshevik party regime under Lenin’s personal leadership.

The Russian Revolutions of 1917 and their impact can probably not be over-emphasized with regard to the “age of extremes”<sup>78</sup> that began as a consequence thereof or with regard to the history of the international Left ever since.<sup>79</sup> Immediately after the events in 1917, discussions about them began, and the history of the Russian Revolution and its story, as American historian Mark. D. Steinberg correctly emphasized, “has been told and interpreted in as many ways as

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74 For a detailed analysis of this corruption, see Frank Jacob, *1917: Die korrumpierte Revolution* (Marburg: Büchner, 2020).

75 Berenice A. Carroll, “Emma Goldman and the Theory of Revolution,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman*, ed. Penny A. Weiss and Loretta Kensinger (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 138.

76 Goldman published two books on the Russian Revolution, in addition to many articles and lectures, in which she described the corruption of the revolutionary ideals by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Kowal, *Tongue of Fire*, xiii. On the history of the two books on Goldman’s “Disillusionment in Russia,” see Carroll, “Emma Goldman and the Theory of Revolution,” 141–146. Many reviewers and scholars “failed to recognize that a large part of the text was missing,” because Doubleday had accidentally only published twelve chapters of the work, and many of them considered Goldman’s work “as simply a partisan anarchist diatribe.” *Ibid.*, 145–146.

77 Carroll, “Emma Goldman and the Theory of Revolution,” 138.

78 Eric Hobsbawm, *Das Zeitalter der Extreme: Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, 5th ed. (Munich: DTV, 2002), 90–91. Also see Julia Franke and Kristiane Janeke, “Einführung,” in *1917 Revolution. Russland und Europa*, ed. Deutsches Historisches Museum (Dresden: Sandstein, 2017), 11.

79 Horst Klein, “Austromarxistische Reflexionen zur russischen Oktoberrevolution,” in *Die Russische Revolution 1917: Wegweiser oder Sackgasse?*, ed. Wladislaw Hedeler, Horst Schützler and Sonja Striegnitz (Berlin: Dietz, 1997), 114.

there are of telling and interpreting history itself.”<sup>80</sup> It sometimes therefore seems as though everything that could have been said about the revolution has already been said.<sup>81</sup> While events like the Russian Revolution claim to tear apart the bond of history itself because their actors long for a redefinition of the existent world, revolutionaries often struggle to bring their utopian ideals and the post-revolutionary realities together, and they especially seem hardly able to accept the latter if they contradict the former.<sup>82</sup> Revolutions thereby appear like volcanic eruptions, natural forces that destroy even the initial believers in revolutionary change, as they often seem, due to their process, to turn against the revolutionaries of the first hours at some point during the process.<sup>83</sup> With regard to the case of the Russian Revolution, the first supposedly successful attempt to establish a truly socialist state in the year 1917 triggered the hopes and dreams of many international radicals, among them Emma Goldman.<sup>84</sup> Regardless of the fact that its history and interpretation have lost their appeal 100 years after the events, especially in Russia,<sup>85</sup> a closer look at its perception during the century since 1917 in different historical contexts offers a better understanding.<sup>86</sup> The narratives with regard to the historical events are legion, and they, as well as the theories about the revolutionary processes related to Russia in 1917, also regularly followed political agendas of all kinds. At the same time, the Russian Revolution offered different possibilities for scientific interpretations as well.<sup>87</sup>

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**80** Mark D. Steinberg, *The Russian Revolution 1905–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

**81** Karl Schlögel, “De profundis, ein Jahrhundert danach gelesen,” in *De profundis: Vom Scheitern der russischen Revolution*, ed. Ulrich Schmid (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2017), 10.

**82** Il’ja Kalinin, “Antirevolutionäre Revolutionserinnerungspolitik: Russlands Regime und der Geist der Revolution,” *Osteuropa* 67, nos. 6–8 (2017): 7.

**83** Schlögel, “De profundis,” 14.

**84** Franke and Janeke, “Einführung,” 11.

**85** Dietrich Beyrau, *Krieg und Revolution: Russische Erfahrungen* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2017), 9.

**86** Frank Jacob and Riccardo Altieri, eds., *Die Wahrnehmung der Russischen Revolutionen 1917: Zwischen utopischen Träumen und erschütterter Ablehnung* (Berlin: Metropol, 2019). For a long term perspective of the perception of the revolution, see Jan C. Behrends, Nikolaus Katzer, and Thomas Lindenberger, eds., *100 Jahre Roter Oktober: Zur Weltgeschichte der Russischen Revolution* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2017).

**87** Jan Kusber, “Was nach hundert Jahren bleibt: Der Rote Oktober 1917 und Russland,” in “Das Jahr 1917 und die Zeitgeschichte,” special issue, *Historische Mitteilungen der Ranke-Gesellschaft* 29 (2017): 16; Ronald Grigor Suny, “Toward a Social History of the October Revolution,” *American Historical Review* 88 (1983): 31–52.

Regardless of all these considerations, for many contemporary observers, including Goldman, the Russian Revolution was a success, a success of socialism that could eventually lead to freedom and equality for all.<sup>88</sup> According to Karl Kautsky (1854–1938), the Bolsheviki had succeeded as being the first in world history to fulfill socialism while ruling a large territory, a former empire. This made their initial success in the name of the revolution highly appealing for many radicals of that time.<sup>89</sup> Some looked to Russia as a model for the future,<sup>90</sup> like Goldman initially did, while others, especially the US government, feared the revolution and its global impact and therefore not only intervened abroad<sup>91</sup> but also sent its own radicals away when they were deported to post-revolutionary Russia. The revolution was longed for by anarchists, communists, and socialists for years, and they were enthusiastic when the news about the events in Russia spread.<sup>92</sup> Yet the initial admiration would turn into frustration, and not only in Goldman's case, very quickly. At the same time, the different political interest groups participated in different processes, as there was not *one* single revolution that took place, and these groups in their totality fueled the revolutionary process. In each part of the old Czarist Empire, different social or national groups also experienced their own revolutions, which were tied to very diverse revolutionary aims and ambitions.<sup>93</sup> Due to this, many different ambitions, anticipations, and aims were followed by the representatives and followers of these interest groups at the same time.<sup>94</sup> Due to the hopes and dreams of radicals around the globe who had been stimulated by the events in Russia, the capitalist world was shaken and gripped by the fear that similar revolutionary processes could begin and threaten their own existence.<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, many radicals

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**88** Bini Adamczak, *Beziehungswise Revolution: 1917, 1968 und kommende* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2017), 13.

**89** Karl Kautsky, *Demokratie oder Diktatur*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Paul Cassirer, 1918).

**90** Christoph Jünke, "Zur Einführung in die Geschichte der Russischen Revolution," in *Roter Oktober 1917: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Russischen Revolution*, ed. Bernd Hüttner and Christoph Jünke (Berlin: RLS, 2017), 4.

**91** Donald E. Davis and Eugene P. Trani, eds., *The First Cold War: The Legacy of Woodrow Wilson in U.S.-Soviet Relations* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002); Robert L. Willett, *Russian Sideshow: America's Undeclared War, 1918–1920* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2003).

**92** Schlögel, "De profundis," 15.

**93** Martin Aust, *Die Russische Revolution: Vom Zarenreich zum Sowjetimperium* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2017), 15.

**94** See, among others, Leonid Luks, *Totalitäre Versuchungen: Russische Exilidenker über die Ursachen der russischen Revolution und über den Charakter der europäischen Krise des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: LIT, 2017).

**95** Otto Bauer, *Bolschewismus oder Sozialdemokratie?* (Vienna: Volksbuchhandlung, 1920), 5.

were so overwhelmed with joy about the revolution per se that they did not realize that it had been corrupted and that they would eventually be threatened by the new post-revolutionary order themselves.<sup>96</sup> The history of the revolution consequently turned into a history of violence,<sup>97</sup> even though it had initially aimed at ending the violence, especially represented by the mass slaughter of the First World War.<sup>98</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that the anarchist movement was also cheerful when news about the revolutionary events in Russia began to spread across Europe and reached the shores of the “New World.” With regard to its genesis, “anarchism came into being as a distinct and coherent revolutionary movement”<sup>99</sup> and was pretty much shaped by a Europe that had been formed by the French Revolution and its multiple impacts.<sup>100</sup> It is therefore hardly surprising that “[t]he French Revolution offered the anarchists a model in which to build their own revolutionary movement,”<sup>101</sup> and the revolution thus became an essential part of anarchist theory, which was often based on the (assumed) “model of spontaneous, leaderless masses using revolutionary violence to achieve a social and economic revolution” that in many ways “influenced [the anarchists’] general understanding of the Revolution and its major accomplishments.”<sup>102</sup> However, the anarchists “rejected the Terror as a means to secure the Revolution. [...] Not because it utilised political violence to achieve its goals, but because it was political violence organised and directed by a centralised state. Anarchists routinely denied the ability to create social revolution through such a state.”<sup>103</sup> Naturally, and in contrast to Lenin, the anarchists were therefore not interested in establishing a different centralized state in the aftermath of the initial upheaval of the masses, but in using the revolutionary turn to establish a rule by the masses without the interference of any state structure. The anarchist “core concept of revolution developed from the start in explicit opposition to statist

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**96** Alexander Blok, “Stichija u kul'tura,” in *Sobranie sočinenji v šesti tomach*, vol. 4 (Leningrad: 'Chudozestvennaja literatura', Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1982), 124, cited in Schlögel, “De profundis,” 15.

**97** Aust, *Die Russische Revolution*, 15. Also see Alexander Blok, “Der Zusammenbruch des Humanismus,” in *Lyrik und Prosa* (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1982), 321–345, which is partly cited in Schlögel, “De profundis,” 16.

**98** Aust, *Die Russische Revolution*, 18.

**99** C. Alexander McKinley, “The French Revolution and 1848,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 307.

**100** *Ibid.*, 311.

**101** *Ibid.*

**102** *Ibid.*, 312.

**103** *Ibid.*, 313.

forms,”<sup>104</sup> and while anarchism often demands more rather than less organization, it demands it on the basic level without any authoritarian element of hierarchical rule.<sup>105</sup>

Regardless of these theoretical differences that separated anarchism from Lenin’s Bolshevism, many anarchists believed in the Russian Revolution and supported it, although they were eventually bitterly disappointed about its corruption. The German anarchist Augustin Souchy (1892–1984) described the revolutionary events of 1917 as a “great passion ... that swept us all away,”<sup>106</sup> and Rudolf Rocker claimed that “the Russian Revolution has redeemed Europe from the terrible spell of a horrible hypnosis.”<sup>107</sup> Regardless of this initial joy over the Russian Revolution, the relationship between anarchists and Bolshevism since 1917 was never easy to begin with.<sup>108</sup> Many anarchists, e.g. in Spain,<sup>109</sup> left the theoretical and ideological struggles between anarchism and Marxism aside and were simply happy that an autocratic regime had ultimately been brought down by a revolutionary mass movement. During the further course of the revolution, many anarchists were actually actively involved and tried to intervene with regard to the revolutionary development as well.<sup>110</sup> This was also made possible by the ambivalence of the Bolsheviks, who instrumentalized anarchist support when necessary and fought against the anarchists when they were assumed to pose a dangerous alternative to Lenin’s course. In the early months after the events in October, however, the intellectual struggle about the Russian Revolution was more like a “beating among the blind,”<sup>111</sup> as accurate in-

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**104** Uri Gordon, “Revolution,” in *Anarchism: A Conceptual Approach*, ed. Benjamin Franks, Nathan Jun and Leonard Williams (London/New York: Routledge, 2018), 87.

**105** Amster, “Anti-Hierarchy,” 24.

**106** Augustin Souchy, *Vorsicht Anarchist! Ein Leben für die Freiheit: Politische Erinnerungen*, (Reutlingen: Trotzdem Verlag, 1982), 22, cited in Philippe Kellermann, “Die Stellungnahmen des deutschen Anarchismus und Anarchosyndikalismus zu russischer Revolution und Bolschewismus im Jahr 1919,” in *Anarchismus und russische Revolution*, ed. Philippe Kellermann (Berlin: Dietz, 2017), 320.

**107** R.[udolf] R.[ocker], “Kropotkins Botschaft und die Lage in Russland,” in: *Der freie Arbeiter* 13 (1920) 31, cited in *ibid.*

**108** Philippe Kellermann, “Vorwort,” in *Anarchismus und russische Revolution*, ed. Philippe Kellermann (Berlin: Dietz, 2017), 7.

**109** Martin Baxmeyer, “Der Bericht des Uhrmachers: Die Kritik des spanischen Anarchosyndikalisten Ángel Pestaña an der bolschewistischen Revolution in ‘Siebzig Tage in Russland: Was ich sah’ (1924) und in ‘Siebzig Tage in Russland: Was ich denke’ (1925),” in *Anarchismus und russische Revolution*, ed. Philippe Kellermann (Berlin: Dietz, 2017), 251.

**110** Kellermann, “Vorwort,” 7–8.

**111** Baxmeyer, “Der Bericht des Uhrmachers,” 254.

formation related to the developments in post-revolutionary Russia was not always available.

It is consequently not surprising that Emma Goldman also supported the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks while she herself became a victim of the US government, whose representatives seemed to harass her not only because of her involvement in anti-war protests but also because they feared similar revolutionary upheavals in the United States. Even when she was deported, she could, no matter how much she might have hated to be thrown out of her “home” country of choice, at least hope to be sent to Russia to support the revolutionary cause.<sup>112</sup> However, she was not unshakably devoted to this cause, and she began to critically perceive the events in Russia she came to witness in the months after her deportation.<sup>113</sup> Goldman’s initial admiration for the powerful revolutionary forces represented by the Russian people in February 1917 turned into frustration with the Bolshevik corruption of the revolutionary process once she realized what the post-revolutionary realities in Lenin’s Soviet Russia looked like.<sup>114</sup> The present book will deal with this process of reflection in more detail. It will show how Goldman’s view and perception of the Russian Revolution changed between 1917 and 1921 and how the famous anarchist turned into a fierce anti-Bolshevik who tried to persuade the international Left that the corruption of the revolutionary process by Lenin had destroyed the ambitious attempt of the February Revolution and the Russian people that initiated it to create a better world.

Therefore, after the second chapter, which will provide a reflection on the many identities of Emma Goldman in the American context, her perceptions of the Russian Revolution at different stages of her life will be discussed, namely during her time in the United States immediately following the February Revolution (chapter 3), during her trial and deportation (chapter 4), during her time in Russia while she attempted to work for the success of the revolution (chapter 5), and during her time in Europe when she wrote multiple works that attempted to reflect upon the failure of the revolution (chapter 6) and tried to enlighten the international Left about the wrongdoings of Lenin and the corruption of the Russian Revolution (chapter 7). It will be shown that Goldman did not simply follow the lead of her anarchist comrades, no matter if they supported or criticized the events in Russia, but that she reflected on the events in a very critical way and

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**112** Marshall S. Shatz, “Review: Wexler, Emma Goldman in Exile,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 83, nos. 3–4 (1993): 458.

**113** Herzog, “Romantic Anarchism,” 315.

**114** Harold J. Goldberg, “Goldman and Berkman View the Bolshevik Regime,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 53, no. 131 (1975): 272.

eventually considered it her personal obligation to renounce her initial admiration for Lenin and the Bolsheviks and to present a more nuanced and critical evaluation of the Russian matter once she had the possibility to actually witness the consequences of Red October in 1917.

All in all, the present study therefore offers a more theoretically nuanced perspective on Goldman's anti-Bolshevism and her criticism of the October Revolution than previous studies. It is an analysis of an important intellectual history of an individual process of change from admiration to frustration about the events of 1917 that is both representative of many others yet also specific due to Goldman's personal experiences of deportation, hope for revolutionary change, and bitter disappointment about the results of the revolutionary dream in Soviet Russia. It also shows which networks and means Goldman was trying to use to enlighten those who had not been in post-revolutionary Russia for as long as she and Berkman had lived there and who did not have accurate access to important information that seemed so necessary to fully understand what had actually happened to the revolutionary dream of February 1917. Goldman was of course very often depressed, especially since she had had to leave the United States, because she often felt alone in her fight against Bolshevism, but to explain her anti-Leninist position simply as a consequence of her emotional sadness between 1919 and 1921 would deny the intellectual Goldman the tribute she deserves. The present study therefore intends to highlight Goldman's reflective thought process about the Russian Revolution from 1917 to the mid-1920s. It consequently offers a detailed and close reading of the famous anarchist that goes beyond purely biographical narratives and hopefully stimulates further research on Emma Goldman's intellectualism, which has the scope for and moreover deserves many more studies to come.

## 2 Emma Goldman's Identity: Anarchist, Anarcha-Feminist, Publicist, and Revolutionary

Emma Goldman was not only what American Studies scholar Marian J. Morton called “a woman without a country”<sup>1</sup> or a woman who lived an “intense and fast-paced”<sup>2</sup> life, she was also an activist, dedicating her life, especially her years in the United States,<sup>3</sup> to the fight for equality in all possible senses of the word. In addition, Goldman was one of the many Jewish immigrants who reached the shores of the “New World” and dedicated her life to a form of politically left radicalism, i.e. anarchism, which was particularly attractive and convincing for them, as they had suffered greatly from economic exploitation and social ostracism.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, these women and men not only turned towards radical thoughts, but they also abandoned their Jewish heritage and cut off their ties to their religious tradition.<sup>5</sup> Goldman, however, like many others, kept this identity, and, as Gerald Sorin remarks, “her commitment to anarchism did not divert her from speaking and writing, openly and frequently, about the particular burdens Jews face in a world in which antisemitism was a living enemy.”<sup>6</sup> Naturally, Goldman’s personal experiences impacted on her political life, often directing it towards a specific direction, or, as Viviann Gornick put it, “[r]adical politics for her was, in fact, the history of one’s own hurt, thwarted, humiliated feelings at the hands of institutionalized authority.”<sup>7</sup> For Goldman, anarchism would therefore be more of a “protean experience ... a posture, an attitude, a frame of mind and spirit”<sup>8</sup> that she continuously linked to the problems of her time, which in a way reflected her own problems with the American state

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1 Marian J. Morton, *Emma Goldman and the American Left: “Nowhere at Home”* (New York: Twayne, 1992), viii.

2 Wexler, *Emma Goldman*, xv.

3 Claire Goldstene, *The Struggle for America’s Promise: Equal Opportunity at the Dawn of Corporate Capital* (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 2014), 69–98.

4 This interrelationship between Jewishness and political radicalism is discussed in more detail in Sebastian Kunze and Frank Jacob, “Introduction: Thoughts on Jewish Radicalism as a Phenomenon of Global Modernity,” in *Jewish Radicalisms: Historical Perspectives on a Phenomenon of Global Modernity*, ed. Frank Jacob and Sebastian Kunze (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 1–20.

5 Guttman, “Jewish Radicals, Jewish Writers,” 563.

6 Sorin, *The Prophetic Minority*, 8. Sorin consequently further remarks that Goldman’s “faith in anarchism, with its emphasis on universalism, did not result from and was not dependent on a casting off of Jewish identity.” Ibid.

7 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 4.

8 Ibid.

and its society, the two things she regularly struggled with.<sup>9</sup> One can also argue, as Kathy E. Ferguson correctly did, that Goldman was as much a product of the United States' public mind, especially since the latter was threatened by the radicalism she represented. The famous anarchist "was largely a product of the dominant intersecting systems of criminal, medical, and media technologies; her presence in public life was construed primarily within the discourses of danger they generated."<sup>10</sup>

Goldman was somebody who continuously attacked the existent order, and thereby often accepted the danger her speeches and writings would impose on her personal life. Her "anarchist parrhesia"<sup>11</sup> steadily "combined frontal assault with carefully calculated rhetorical arts and tactical silences,"<sup>12</sup> but this strategy would also lead the authorities to consider Goldman as one of the most dangerous radicals in the country. In particular, the head of the General Intelligence Division of the Department of Justice, the young J. Edgar Hoover (1895–1972), had developed a personal hatred for Goldman and would later not only prepare a legal move against her and Alexander Berkman<sup>13</sup> but also cooperate with Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer (1872–1936) to get rid of her to make America a safer place. However, it was not only Hoover and the US authorities Goldman had to worry about; during her life, she would also be observed by the governments of several other countries, including Britain, Germany, and even the Soviet Union.<sup>14</sup> Even beyond her steady fight against governments around the world, Goldman's life is, in a way, outstanding. The famous anarchist also tried to present this life in her autobiography *Living My Life* (1931), which Candace Falk referred to as a "passionate memoir of a great woman in the history of America's radicalism."<sup>15</sup> Although "the autobiography stops short of serious self-criticism" and often leaves out critical self-reflection because Goldman "wanted to be seen

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<sup>9</sup> For a good survey of Goldman's main struggles during her American years, see *ibid.*, 6–91.

<sup>10</sup> Kathy E. Ferguson, "Discourses of Danger: Locating Emma Goldman," *Political Theory* 36, no. 5 (2008): 737.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 738. Ferguson here refers to Foucault, who identified parrhesia as "a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself)." Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), 19.

<sup>12</sup> Ferguson, "Discourses of Danger," 738.

<sup>13</sup> For the information Hoover had collected on the anarchists, see FBI File on Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman Archives, IISH, ARCH01724.

<sup>14</sup> Ferguson, "Discourses of Danger," 739.

<sup>15</sup> Candace Falk, "Introduction," in Emma Goldman, *Living My Life: An Autobiography* (Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith, 1982 [1931]), vii.

as a great example whose bravery and consistency would inspire others,”<sup>16</sup> it is an important historical document that provides a deep insight into American history at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century in general, and of the American as well as international anarchist movements in particular. Regardless of the lack of self-criticism by Goldman, the autobiography truly describes the genesis and experiences of “[one] of the century’s most renowned cultural and political leaders,”<sup>17</sup> who nevertheless united multiple different identities in one life. From the early 1890s, Goldman was a public figure and a well-known radical, and in the early 1900s she would lecture in many US cities, where the anarchist not only talked about her political ideas but also discussed topics like “free love, the drama, birth control, patriotism, militarism, women’s emancipation, education, and free speech.”<sup>18</sup>

Considering these multiple perspectives of Goldman’s activity, it is hardly sufficient to simply consider her to be an anarchist. American historian Ann Uhry Abrams highlighted this complexity of the famous anarchist by referring to her as “the prototypical moral and political renegade, intense, outspoken and intolerant.”<sup>19</sup> In fact, Goldman seemed to be “an omnipresent spokeswoman, organizer, and supporter”<sup>20</sup> who would stand up against any form of injustice, fight against any sign of inequality, and demand freedom for women, workers, and humanity as a whole. The present chapter will try to link these different identities while discussing Goldman’s political development until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Her radicalism was the result of a conglomerate of sources that needs to be understood as such. One source for her radicalism is not enough, and Goldman surely deserves multiple emblems of radical activism. She was not only an immigrant, an anarchist, a feminist, or a revolutionary. She was all that at once, although some of these identities might have been more obvious than others at different moments of her life. However, to understand Goldman means to understand and to accept this complexity of her different identities. Before we can discuss the revolutionary Goldman in more detail, therefore, it is important to approach her other identities first, as they will be helpful for a better understanding of the anarchist’s theoretical interpretation of an anticipated revolution that would eventually, or at least supposedly, free the whole of hu-

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

<sup>17</sup> Ann Uhry Abrams, “The Ferrer Center: New York’s Unique Meeting of Anarchism and the Arts,” *New York History* 59, no. 3 (1978): 306.

<sup>18</sup> Falk, “Introduction,” vii.

<sup>19</sup> Abrams, “The Ferrer Center,” 309.

<sup>20</sup> Auleta and Goldstone, “happy birthday, emma,” 2.

manity from suppression, injustice, and inequality, i.e. the things that bothered the anarchist intellectual the most.

Goldman was born in the Russian Empire in 1869—in Kovno, present-day Kaunas in Lithuania—as an “unwanted child of a poor Jewish family”<sup>21</sup> and “suffered severe beatings from her father as a young child.”<sup>22</sup> When she later emigrated, she did it in part because she broke with an orthodox Jewish life, her parents and the Russian Empire, maybe even because the later radical, “[e]ven as a young girl, ... manifested a rebellious and sturdy nature.”<sup>23</sup> When the family moved to St. Petersburg in 1882, Goldman not only got in contact with contemporary Russian literature but also with radical thoughts for the first time, as the populist and nihilist movements criticized the Czarist order, often using violence as their means as well.<sup>24</sup> In the United States, the young emigrant hoped to find a new life, only determined by American values, especially liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.<sup>25</sup> She was accompanied by her sister Helena (1860–1920), with whom the later anarchist started her life in the US garment industry, where so many Jewish-Russian immigrants ended up after having crossed the Atlantic. In 1887, she married Jacob Kershner, also a Jewish immigrant, who lived in Rochester, New York. After two years, however, Goldman left him and settled in New York City, where she would be further radicalized due to her experiences in the needle trade of the US metropolis.<sup>26</sup> There, her early identity as an anar-

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21 Rich and Smith, *Rhetoric of Revolution*, 61.

22 Sorin, *The Prophetic Minority*, 38. On Goldman's childhood, see also Wexler, *Emma Goldman*, 3–19.

23 Rich and Smith, *Rhetoric of Revolution*, 62. See also Kowal, “Anarcha-Feminism,” 273.

24 Auleta and Goldstone, “happy birthday, emma,” 2; Edward de Grazia, “The Haymarket Bomb,” *Law and Literature* 18, no. 3 (2006): 291; Morton, *Emma Goldman*, 1–14; Rich and Smith, *Rhetoric of Revolution*, 61–62. On Russian populism and nihilism, see Christopher Ely, *Underground Petersburg: Radical Populism, Urban Space and the Tactics of Subversion in Reform-Era Russia* (DeKalb: NIU Press, 2016); Derek Offord, *The Russian Revolutionary Movement in the 1880s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Philip Pomper, *The Russian Revolutionary Intelligentsia* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970); Adam B. Ulam, *In the Name of the People: Prophets and Conspirators in Prerevolutionary Russia* (New York: Viking Press, 1977); Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in 19th Century Russia* (London: Phoenix, 2001); Astrid Von Borcke, “Violence and Terror in Russian Revolutionary Populism: The Narodnaya Volya, 1879–83,” in *Social Protest, Violence and Terror in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century Europe*, ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld and Wolfgang J. Mommsen (New York/London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1982), 48–62.

25 Auleta and Goldstone, “happy birthday, emma,” 2.

26 Kowal, “Anarcha-Feminism,” 274; Bill Lynskey, “‘I Shall Speak in Philadelphia’: Emma Goldman and the Free Speech League,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 133, no. 2 (2009): 173.

chist and a well-known lecturer was developed by her contact with Alexander Berkman, who would not only initially become Goldman's lover, but would also remain her lifelong friend and companion in later years. She shared an "enthusiasm for social justice"<sup>27</sup> with Berkman, and this would also lead her into the anarchist world of "Radical Gotham"<sup>28</sup> of the 1880s, where radical German,<sup>29</sup> Italian,<sup>30</sup> and Jewish-Russian<sup>31</sup> milieus would provide quite a broad sphere of radical experiences and activism alike.

It was especially the anarchists, whom Goldman got in contact with very quickly, who were the ones who pointed the finger at the hypocrisy of the American dream, which was only achievable for those who exploited their fellow immigrants. The anarchists, as historian Blaine McKinley put it, were women and men who were "[l]iving and thinking beyond convention, they offered a unique viewpoint on their times and experienced tensions that illuminated American society. Uncomfortable with the present, they remained torn between the simpler past and the possible future."<sup>32</sup> As mentioned above, many of these anarchists belonged to the radical immigrant communities of New York City, but there were also "Americans who had roots in abolitionism, free thought, and the labor movement, and who [like their immigrant comrades] were troubled by the economic inequalities, centralized power, and mass society they saw arising

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27 William O. Reichert, "Toward a New Understanding of Anarchism," *The Western Political Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1967): 861.

28 Tom Goyens, ed., *Radical Gotham: Anarchism in New York City from Schwab's Saloon to Occupy Wall Street* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2017).

29 Tom Goyens, *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880–1914* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Tom Goyens, "Johann Most and the German Anarchists," in *Radical Gotham: Anarchism in New York City from Schwab's Saloon to Occupy Wall Street*, ed. Tom Goyens (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 12–32.

30 Philip Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer, eds., *The Lost World of Italian-American Radicalism* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003); Marcella Bencivenni, *Italian Immigrant Radical Culture: The Idealism of the Soversivi in the United States, 1890–1940* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

31 Steven Cassedy, *To the Other Shore: The Russian Jewish Intellectuals Who Came to America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Kenyon Zimmer, *Immigrants against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Kenyon Zimmer, "Saul Yanovsky and Yiddish Anarchism on the Lower East Side," in *Radical Gotham: Anarchism in New York City from Schwab's Saloon to Occupy Wall Street*, ed. Tom Goyens (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 33–53.

32 Blaine McKinley, "'The Quagmires of Necessity': American Anarchists and Dilemmas of Vocation," *American Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (1982): 503–504. See also Blaine McKinley, "Anarchist Jeremiahs: American Anarchists and American History," *The Journal of American Culture* 6, no. 2 (1983): 75–84.

at the expense of local self-sufficiency and personal initiative.”<sup>33</sup> The anarchist movement in its US and urban context was consequently international, and the languages of radicalism there ranged from German, Italian and Russian to Yiddish, and Goldman would later lecture in three of them, besides addressing audiences in English as well. Anarchists came from all kinds of professions, and next to wage laborers, there were those who were active in the skilled trades, such as printing, or professions like medicine or law. Others found their way into sales and commissions jobs, and a relatively limited minority “made their living through proselytizing for anarchism.”<sup>34</sup> Goldman would eventually become one of the latter, although it was a long time before she was eventually able to live off her radicalism, and this only for a few years before her activities made the US authorities deport her from her country of choice.

## The Anarchist

Like many of her comrades, Goldman had hoped to find a better life in the US,<sup>35</sup> but the garment industry opened her eyes. In the American factories, workers were steadily exploited and were only just able to stay alive. This injustice and systematic inequality sparked Goldman's resistance against capitalism and the state, which the female immigrant experienced as “be[ing] everywhere and at all times an instrument of oppression and psychological trauma.”<sup>36</sup> What Candace Falk called Goldman's “political birth”<sup>37</sup> eventually followed in 1887 in the aftermath of the Haymarket Tragedy. It was her “strong emotional reaction to the execution of the Haymarket anarchists”<sup>38</sup> that made her look for political alternatives to a state that would murder its own people. In 1889, almost two years after the events, Goldman still could not sleep due to thinking about this tragedy, and she describes her feelings in more detail in her autobiography.

That night I could not sleep. Again I lived through the events of 1887. Twenty-one months had passed since the Black Friday of November 11, when the Chicago men had suffered their martyrdom, yet every detail stood out clear before my vision and affected me as if it had happened but yesterday. My sister Helena and I had become interested in the fate of the men during the period of their trial. The reports in the Rochester newspapers irritat-

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<sup>33</sup> McKinley, “The Quagmires of Necessity,” 504.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 505.

<sup>35</sup> Martha Solomon, *Emma Goldman* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 3.

<sup>36</sup> Ray, “No License to Serve,” 11.

<sup>37</sup> Falk, “Introduction,” vii.

<sup>38</sup> Solomon, *Emma Goldman*, 1.

ed, confused, and upset us by their evident prejudice. The violence of the press, the bitter denunciation of the accused, the attacks on all foreigners, turned our sympathies to the Haymarket victims.<sup>39</sup>

This experience came in combination with a life that for Russian-Jewish immigrants was hardly different from their life under the yoke of the Czar.<sup>40</sup> For any of these immigrants, the realities of capitalist exploitation in the United States were as severe as their previous life in Russia had been, and as Goldman emphasized, “There [in Russia] [the immigrant] must work like a galley slave whether he will or no. Here he is free—free to starve, free to be robbed and swindled on every hand. But the moment he seeks to organize labor, or assert his rights or strike for the defense of his dearest interests he is no longer free, but is apprehended and thrown in prison.”<sup>41</sup>

The Haymarket Tragedy evoked Goldman’s interest not only in the victims’ stories but also in the political ideas they represented. In New York, she then began to become active in the anarchist circles around the German immigrant Johann Most (1846–1906), who would mentor her during her first anarchist activities.<sup>42</sup> Most, the editor of the German anarchist paper *Die Freiheit*, was referred to by the *Pittsburgh Post* as “the king bee of anarchists”<sup>43</sup> on New York City’s Lower East Side. The German immigrant and well-known anarchist “could electrify audiences with his fiery oratory,”<sup>44</sup> and he almost naturally became Goldman’s idol. At the same time, he realized the latter’s talent and encouraged her to speak in public. Not long after, the young woman was one of “the newly converted who became enthusiastic proclaimers of the anarchist world-

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<sup>39</sup> Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (New York: Knopf, 1931), ch. 1. Accessed December 17, 2018. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emma-goldman-living-my-life>.

<sup>40</sup> “A Woman Anarchist,” *Pittsburgh Leader*, November 22, 1896, in *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, vol. 1: *Made for America, 1890–1901*, ed. Candace Falk et al. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 243–244.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>42</sup> Kowal, “Anarcha-Feminism,” 274; Rocker, “Zum Geleit,” 3–4; Solomon, *Emma Goldman*, 4–8. In Chapter 1 in *Living My Life*, Goldman wrote that she intentionally met with Most, whose German paper *Die Freiheit* she had read and whose articles about the events in Chicago must have inspired her: “My mind was made up. I would go to New York, to Johann Most. He would help me prepare myself for my new task.”

<sup>43</sup> “Goldman’s Cry Against Society,” *Pittsburgh Post*, November 27, 1896, in *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, vol. 1: *Made for America, 1890–1901*, ed. Candace Falk et al. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 250. Also see Kowal, “Anarcha-Feminism,” 274.

<sup>44</sup> Lynskey, “I Shall Speak in Philadelphia,” 174.

view.”<sup>45</sup> The talented young woman soon “enjoyed a notoriety unequalled by any other woman in American public life,”<sup>46</sup> a status constantly kept alive by Goldman’s involvement in acts of anarchist protest and the reports by the American press that kept her image vivid for the American public. She became involved, politically and emotionally, with Alexander Berkman,<sup>47</sup> who in 1892 attempted, with two other young anarchists, to assassinate the industrialist Henry Clay Frick (1849–1919),<sup>48</sup> the man responsible for the use of violence against workers who struck at the Carnegie Steel Mills in Homestead, Pennsylvania during the Homestead Strike earlier that year.<sup>49</sup> Berkman’s attempt failed, and he was sent to prison for the following 14 years, although he had originally been sentenced to 22.<sup>50</sup> For Goldman, the motivation for the assassination was Berkman’s “belief that if the capitalists used Winchester rifles and bayonets on workingmen they should be answered with dynamite.”<sup>51</sup> At the same time, Frick had aroused Goldman’s anger, especially because of his “dictum to the workers: he would rather see them dead than concede to their demands, and he threatened to import Pinkerton detectives. The brutal bluntness of the account, the inhumanity of Frick towards the evicted mother, inflamed my mind. Indignation swept my whole being.”<sup>52</sup> Her struggle against industrialists like Frick was consequently more than natural and a consequence of Goldman’s “strong social instinct” and her wish for a better, less exploitative world. The anarchist Goldman, however, was not in favor of violent methods, but considered them to be an expression of society’s inequalities, or, as William O. Reichert formulated it, “Social violence, she argued, will naturally disappear at the point at which men have

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45 Rocker, “Zum Geleit,” 4. On Most’s influence and relationship with Goldman, see also de Grazia, “The Haymarket Bomb,” 296; Rabin, “The Advent of a Western Jewess,” 121; Reichert, “Toward a New Understanding of Anarchism,” 861;

46 Wexler, *Emma Goldman*, xv.

47 Guttman, “Jewish Radicals,” 564.

48 Ferguson, “Discourses of Danger,” 744. On Frick, see Kenneth Warren, *Triumphant Capitalism: Henry Clay Frick and the Industrial Transformation of America* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996); Quentin R. Skrabec, *Henry Clay Frick: The Life of the Perfect Capitalist* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010).

49 Paul Krause, *The Battle for Homestead, 1890–1892: Politics, Culture, and Steel* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992).

50 Alexander Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* (New York: Mother Earth, 1912). Released from prison in 1906, Berkman would join forces with Goldman again in their anarchist struggle for a better society. See Alexander Berkman, “A Greeting,” *Mother Earth* 1, no. 4 (1906). Accessed September 1, 2020. [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/goldman/ME/mev1n4.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/goldman/ME/mev1n4.html).

51 “Goldman’s Cry Against Society,” 249.

52 Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 8.

learned to understand and accommodate themselves to one another within a dynamic society which truly values human freedom.”<sup>53</sup> While Goldman had not been involved in the assassination attempt in 1892, it would not be long before she shared Berkman’s fate, and she was sentenced too in 1893.

Due to one of her speeches on New York’s Union Square on 21 August 1893, which, according to Rudolf Rocker, led to an anti-anarchist and anti-Goldman campaign in the city’s capitalist press,<sup>54</sup> she was arrested and sentenced and had to spend one year at Blackwell’s Island Penitentiary,<sup>55</sup> because it was argued that she had motivated workers to react violently against their capitalist exploitation.<sup>56</sup> She had heard about the place from Most, who had also spent some time there before, but when Goldman actually arrived, the reality was something of a shock, regardless of how much she had thought herself to be prepared to go to prison for her convictions: “I knew from what Most had related to me about Blackwell’s Island that the prison was old and damp, the cells small, without light or water. I was therefore prepared for what was awaiting me. But the moment the door was locked on me, I began to experience a feeling of suffocation. In the dark I groped for something to sit on and found a narrow iron cot. Sudden exhaustion overpowered me and I fell asleep.”<sup>57</sup> Regardless of the hardships, Goldman survived, and the prison sentence as well as her related experiences “only enhanced her celebrity.”<sup>58</sup> When Goldman left prison in 1894, around 2,800 people had gathered in New York to give her a warm welcome. She had become a celebrity and, as such, she could tour the country and attract many people to her lectures.<sup>59</sup> The lectures were, in many American cities that had smaller anarchist groups, events that energized the discourse as well as awareness about anarchist ideas, while Goldman was able to use her popularity to spread her views on anarchism and other topics. The famous anarchist was, however, not only perceived as such, but her public image was built on her identity as a Jewish immigrant woman as well.

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53 Reichert, “Toward a New Understanding of Anarchism,” 862.

54 Rocker, “Zum Geleit,” 5.

55 Goldman describes her experiences there in *Living My Life*, ch. 12. The anarchist Philip Grosser (1890 – 1933), who would be sentenced to prison and spent time at Blackwell’s Island Penitentiary during the First World War, would later refer to it as “Uncle Sam’s Devil’s Island.” Philip Grosser, *Uncle Sam’s Devil’s Island: Experiences of a Conscientious Objector in America during the World War* (Boston, MA: Excelsior Press, 1933).

56 Lynskey, “I Shall Speak in Philadelphia,” 175.

57 Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 12.

58 Lynskey, “I Shall Speak in Philadelphia,” 175.

59 Rabin, “The Advent of a Western Jewess,” 122.

The journalists that met her or interviewed her were always surprised that Goldman matched existent stereotypes about her so little. The “petite, blonde, good looking woman, to whom a pair of spectacles give a professional look”<sup>60</sup> was surprisingly nice and did not “look like a Russian Nihilist who will be sent to Siberia if she ever crosses the frontier of her native land.”<sup>61</sup> Another reporter described her in the following way: she had “quite a pretty head ... crowned with soft brown hair, combed with a band and brushed to one side. Her eyes are the honest blue, her complexion clear and white. Her nose though rather broad and of a Teutonic type, was well formed. She is short of stature, with a well-rounded figure. Her whole type is more German than Russian.”<sup>62</sup> The newspaper people Goldman met for the first time would regularly be surprised that the “queen of anarchists” was “in every sense a womanly looking woman, with masculine mind and courage.”<sup>63</sup> The “short and rather good-looking young woman, whose deep grey eyes and gold eyeglasses give her a decided air of intellectuality and finesse,”<sup>64</sup> consequently often surprised her interviewers in many ways. This surprise was a consequence of Goldman's mismatch with common stereotypes of her time. Kathy E. Ferguson highlighted correctly that, in the late 1800s and early 1900s,

[p]ublic expectations of large, masculinized, uncontrolled females, tastelessly attired, merged with anti Semitic presumptions about “dirty Jews” and nativist prejudices against “unwashed foreigners.” Over and over, reporters were surprised that she was not hideous, and took care to reassure readers that she was small (4 feet, 10 1/2 inches, according to her Philadelphia police report), attractive, intelligent, well-dressed, soft-spoken, earnest.<sup>65</sup>

Considering these stereotypes, however, the steady reports about Goldman's personality, character, and appearance did not seem to confirm “the aura of menace”<sup>66</sup> that surrounded her. The female anarchist became a well-known figure in the United States, and it was her fame that would eventually link her to anarchist acts that she was not even personally involved in.

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<sup>60</sup> “Goldman's Cry Against Society,” 247.

<sup>61</sup> Emma Goldman, “What Is There in Anarchy for Woman?” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Sunday Magazine*, October 14, 1897: 9, in *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, vol. 1: *Made for America, 1890–1901*, ed. Candace Falk et al. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 289.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>64</sup> “A Woman Anarchist,” 243.

<sup>65</sup> Ferguson, “Discourses of Danger,” 740.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 743.

It was the assassination of US President William McKinley (1843–1901) that provoked a strong anti-anarchist reaction by the state, and Goldman, who by then had replaced Most as the figurehead of the American anarchists, became one of *the* state enemies. Leon Czolgosz (1873–1901), McKinley’s Polish-American anarchist assassin who was executed in late October 1901, said, according to an article in the *New York Times*, that he had killed the president because McKinley was an enemy of the “good working people.”<sup>67</sup> Earlier, the young anarchist had claimed to be a disciple of Goldman, although the two had only briefly met when she gave one of her speeches.<sup>68</sup> The assassination, however, led to a public outcry that amalgamated the foreignness of immigrant communities and political radicalism and accused the state of not treating dangerous individuals like Goldman properly. Consequently, the government tried to use all legal possibilities at hand to contain the spread of anarchist ideas in the future, and anarchism as such became an emblematic turn that evoked ideas of dynamite and violence.<sup>69</sup> There had actually been two different types of anarchists: some more philosophical, others rather violent, especially with regard to the idea of the so-called “propaganda of the deed,”<sup>70</sup> a concept within the anarchist movement that was intensely discussed but also led to numerous assassinations between the mid-1860s and early 1930s. The US government and public had obviously been unaware of a real menace that did not just threaten European monarchs: “While many Americans considered anarchism a foreign problem and the United States immune from the litany of anarchist assassinations of European leaders and monarchs in the 1890s, President McKinley’s assassination pulled the United States into existing international efforts and the global conversation about how to combat anarchist violence.”<sup>71</sup> And, regardless of the fact that the majority of anarchists were philosophical rather than violent, after 1901, anarchists would always be subject to general suspicions of planning an assassination or building a bomb to attempt one. In addition, the press contin-

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<sup>67</sup> “Assassin Czolgosz Is Executed at Auburn,” *New York Times*, October 30, 1901. See also Scott Miller, *The President and the Assassin: McKinley, Terror, and Empire at the Dawn of the American Century* (New York: Random House, 2011).

<sup>68</sup> Julia Rose Kraut, “Global Anti-Anarchism: The Origins of Ideological Deportation and the Suppression of Expression,” *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 19, no. 1 (2012): 170.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>70</sup> For the European perspective, see Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, *Den Staat herausfordern: Attentate in Europa im späten 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 2019), 151–155. For the discourse within the anarchist movement, see Mitchell Abidor, *Death to Bourgeois Society: The Propagandists of the Deed* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016); Philippe Kellermann, ed., *Propaganda der Tat: Standpunkte und Debatten (1877–1929)* (Münster: Unrast Verlag, 2016).

<sup>71</sup> Kraut, “Global Anti-Anarchism,” 171.

ued to consider anarchism a foreign problem and, in the case of Czolgosz, who was born in Detroit, Michigan, the newspapers continued to emphasize the immigrant identity of his Polish parents.<sup>72</sup> McKinley's violent death marked the beginning of a serious conflict between the US state and the anarchists who lived within its borders. Existent laws were applied to raid anarchist meetings, intervene in lectures, and prohibit the circulation of anarchist publications, like journals or pamphlets.<sup>73</sup> Goldman, as mentioned before, considered violence as an act taken by suffering people who had no other way to express or protest against their own misery.<sup>74</sup> Goldman's text "What I Believe" (1908)<sup>75</sup> seems to offer some insight into her views on anarchism and society. It will therefore be taken into closer consideration here in order to better understand Goldman and to go beyond her public perception of an anarchist in the United States.

According to Goldman, anarchism "is a conspicuous protest of the most militant type. It is so absolutely uncompromising, insisting and permeating a force as to overcome the most stubborn assault and to withstand the criticism of those who really constitute the last trumpets of a decaying age." The future belonged to anarchism, or more accurately, to an anarchist society in which the state would no longer control the people, but in which they would organize themselves. In such a society, the famous anarchist continues, there would be no place for property, which "means dominion over things and the denial to others of the use of those things." The existence of property, in combination with the commodification of human labor, "condemns millions of people to be mere non-entities, living corpses without originality or power of initiative, human machines of flesh and blood, who pile up mountains of wealth for others and pay for it with a gray, dull and wretched existence for themselves." Goldman consequently argues that "real wealth, social wealth" could not be achieved as long the lives of human beings needed to be exploited to create it. She consequently believed that "[a]narchism is the only philosophy that can and will do away with this humiliating and degrading situation." Only true freedom would give humanity the possibility to evolve, to develop, and to outgrow the evils of exploitation, especially with regard to work. According to Goldman, only "a society based on voluntary co-operation of productive groups, communities and societies loosely federated together, eventually developing into a free communism, actuated by a

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72 Ibid., 174–175.

73 Ibid., 176.

74 Reichert, "Toward a New Understanding of Anarchism," 861.

75 Emma Goldman, "What I Believe," *New York World*, July 19, 1908. Accessed September 1, 2020. [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist\\_archives/goldman/whatibelieve.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/whatibelieve.html). The following quotes are taken from this text as well.

solidarity of interests” could be the solution to the problems of a capitalist world. Her idea of communism, i.e. “free communism,” relates to the non-existence of a state or party that determined people’s lives. This idea was even strengthened by her Russian experiences, due to which she learned how a communist state could corrupt the ideas of communism and freedom at the same time. It is also no wonder that Goldman disagreed with the course of the Russian Revolution from October 1917, considering that she had already declared in 1908 that

I believe government, organised authority, or the State is necessary only to maintain or protect property and monopoly. It has proven efficient in that function only. ... I therefore believe, with my fellow Anarchists, that the statutory regulations, legislative enactments, constitutional provisions, are invasive. They never yet induced man to do anything he could and would not do by virtue of his intellect or temperament, nor prevented anything that man was impelled to do by the same dictates. ... I believe—indeed, I know—that whatever is fine and beautiful in the human expresses and asserts itself in spite of government, and not because of it.

A free development, an unhindered advance of humanity, could consequently only exist if a state or government did not. Anarchism, the absence of government, needed to be achieved first, as it would then be able to “ensure the widest and greatest scope for unhampered human development, the cornerstone of true social progress and harmony.”

However, it was not only the government that Goldman identified as an antipode of anarchism. Anarchists were “the only true advocates of peace, the only people who call a halt to the growing tendency of militarism, which is fast making of this erstwhile free country an imperialistic and despotic power,” and this would lead to conflict with a government that was willing to act along militaristic lines. The conflict that would later be responsible for Goldman’s deportation was actually one that was based on her criticism of the economy of war, which she and Berkman had identified, criticized, and began to explicitly address in public. Six years before the war in Europe began, Goldman had clearly attacked those who were in favor of war to prove national greatness:

The military spirit is the most merciless, heartless and brutal in existence. It fosters an institution for which there is not even a pretense of justification. The soldier, to quote Tolstoi, is a professional man-killer. He does not kill for the love of it, like a savage, or in a passion, like a homicide. He is a cold-blooded, mechanical, obedient tool of his military superiors. He is ready to cut throats or scuttle a ship at the command of his ranking officer, without knowing or, perhaps, caring how, why or wherefore. ... I believe that militarism will cease when the liberty-loving spirits of the world say to their masters: “Go and do your own killing. We have sacrificed ourselves and our loved ones long enough fighting your battles. In return you have made parasites and criminals of us in times of peace and brutalized us in times of war. You have separated us from our brothers and have made of the world a human

slaughterhouse. No, we will not do your killing or fight for the country that you have stolen from us.”

As a lecturer, Goldman also needed to be able to address people and to make them aware of the things she criticized with regard to the current state of American society or of the world at large. She consequently also emphasized the importance of free speech and a free press. It is almost ironic that these were two things the authorities would take away from her first in 1917 before they went to take away her right to live in the United States.

Next to the state, Goldman also criticized the church, which, as “an organized institution ... has always been a stumbling block to progress,” and which “has turned religion into a nightmare that oppresses the human soul and holds the mind in bondage.” One’s actual life would be held in bondage by marriage, which Goldman considered from a female perspective to be “the life of a parasite, a dependent, helpless servant, while it furnishes the man the right of a chattel mortgage over a human life.”<sup>76</sup> In her text “What I Believe,” the famous anarchist eventually also discussed the role of violence. She begins by highlighting that anarchism per se was everything but violent: “I believe that Anarchism is the only *philosophy of peace*, the only theory of the social relationship that *values human life above everything else*. I know that some Anarchists have committed acts of violence, but it is the *terrible economic inequality and great political injustice* that prompt such acts, not Anarchism.”<sup>77</sup> The anarchist assassins were, in addition, not acting for personal gain, but represented with their actions “a conscious protest against some repressive, arbitrary, tyrannical measure from above.” For Goldman, it was not the supposedly violent nature of anarchism or of those like Berkman who had tried to assassinate a representative of the ruling class, but rather “the unbearable economic and political pressure, the suffering and despair of their fellow men, women and children prompted the acts, and not the philosophy of Anarchism.” Furthermore, the famous anarchist did not believe in such acts but in revolution by the people, as “the most powerful weapon, is the conscious, intelligent, organized, economic protest of the masses through direct action and the general strike.”<sup>78</sup> Goldman also contradicted the assump-

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<sup>76</sup> Goldman’s view on marriage will be discussed in some more detail later. See the part on her feminist identity in the present chapter.

<sup>77</sup> My emphasis.

<sup>78</sup> The American socialist Daniel DeLeon (1852–1914) wrote important texts on the general strike as a political weapon, and Goldman seems to have been familiar with these writings as well. Daniel DeLeon, “What Means This Strike?” (1898). Accessed September 1, 2020. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/deleon/works/1898/980211.htm>. For a study of his life and work, see

tion that anarchist ideas would only lead to chaos. In contrast to many common beliefs, she highlighted that anarchism was oriented towards order, although a different kind of it:

The general contention that Anarchists are opposed to organization, and hence stand for chaos, is absolutely groundless. True, we do not believe in the compulsory, arbitrary side of organization that would compel people of antagonistic tastes and interests into a body and hold them there by coercion. Organization as the result of natural blending of common interests, brought about through voluntary adhesion, Anarchists do not only not oppose, but believe in as the only possible basis of social life. ... Indeed, only Anarchism makes non-authoritarian organization a reality, since it abolishes the existing antagonism between individuals and classes.

In particular, since anarchists were also longing for a classless society, they were willing to support the Russian Revolution in later years, and Goldman was no exception. Her dream was the achievement of a better world, which, for her, like for many others, was based on the idea of the abolition of social classes. Regardless of her political ideas, which would be congruent with many other anarchists, her identity as a woman is also important, since, as Donna M. Kowal correctly highlights, “Goldman’s approach to anarchism emphasised the economic and psychosocial necessity of emancipating women, which she believed could only be accomplished through anarchism’s ability to transcend artificial differences and class divisions between women and men.”<sup>79</sup> It is consequently necessary to look at another identity of Emma Goldman here as well, namely her anarcha-feminist one.<sup>80</sup>

## The Anarcha-Feminist

When the “priestess of anarchy,” as Goldman was called by a reporter, was asked by the latter what anarchism could promise to women, she made it plain and simple: “More to woman than to anyone else—everything which she has not—

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L. Glen Seretan, *Daniel DeLeon: The Odyssey of an American Marxist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

<sup>79</sup> Kowal, “Anarcha-Feminism,” 274.

<sup>80</sup> Kowal defined anarcha-feminism, a label that did not yet exist in Goldman’s own times, as “a distinct, albeit loosely formed, ‘school of thought’ that was reflected in the transnational activism of anarchist women, especially in Europe and the United States. Anarchist women tended to interpret the anarchist critique of authority through the lens of their experiences as women, especially constraints resulting from sexual double standards and the gendered division of labor.” *Ibid.*, 265.

freedom and equality.”<sup>81</sup> As mentioned before, it was hardly surprising that Goldman was revered by the feminist movement in the United States, especially since the famous anarchist had “argued that free love and access to birth control were necessary to empower women to live productive, creative, and healthy lives.”<sup>82</sup> Goldman, who had worked as a nurse in the poorer parts of New York City during her first years as a lecturer, could refer to actual problems, especially the ones of women.<sup>83</sup> Like many other anarcho-feminists, Goldman linked anarchist theories to these problems and argued on behalf of “an alternative model of womanhood.”<sup>84</sup> Combining anarchist and feminist ideas, anarcho-feminists provoked criticism from male anarchists, who obviously had an anti-authoritarian idea of anarchism but would not argue on behalf of women’s liberation,<sup>85</sup> something that can be observed in early representatives of socialism or social democracy in different national contexts as well.<sup>86</sup> Although united by their criticism of female suppression, there were different ideas or forms of anarcho-feminism, and with regard to their personal experiences, arguments, and methods, these women were quite different.<sup>87</sup> Yet they all, in their own ways, criticized the gender and sexuality norms as they existed in around 1900 in the United States, as well as other countries.

In the case of the theoretical base of the female activists, including Goldman, “anarchism’s anti-authoritarian and autonomous ethos ought to, and often has, extended to gender hierarchy and domination and sexual normativity, considering how freedom is restricted by these phenomena.”<sup>88</sup> British gender and sexuality scholar Lucy Nicholas further highlights this anarchist dichotomy between public and private space when she writes that “[t]here was support for decentralisation of state power, but reification of essential, that is naturalised and therefore inevitable, gendered power within the family structure, reifying

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**81** Goldman, “What Is There in Anarchy for Woman?,” 289.

**82** Kowal, “Anarcho-Feminism,” 274.

**83** Solomon, *Emma Goldman*, 16–19.

**84** Kowal, “Anarcho-Feminism,” 266.

**85** Lucy Nicholas, “Gender and Sexuality,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 605.

**86** For Germany and the US respectively, see Vincent Streichhahn, “Zur ‘Frauenfrage’ und Sozialdemokratie im deutschen Kaiserreich: Zwischen Antifeminismus und Emanzipation” and Jowan A. Mohammed, “Mary Hunter Austin und die Forderungen nach einer Veränderung der Geschlechterrollen in den USA, 1914–1918,” both forthcoming in *Geschlecht und Klassenkampf: Die “Frauenfrage” aus deutscher und internationaler Perspektive im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Vincent Streichhahn and Frank Jacob (Berlin: Metropolis, 2020).

**87** Kowal, “Anarcho-Feminism,” 267, 275.

**88** Nicholas, “Gender and Sexuality,” 603.

the public/private divide that so many feminist thinkers have identified as a key mode through which women's experience has been depoliticised and non-public domination ignored."<sup>89</sup> The consequence was a rejection of hierarchy in any form, and anarchists like Goldman not only demanded the end of marriage as it existed but also full sexual freedom for all. They demanded freedom for women in every sense of the word and thereby challenged not only the state but also existent social and family structures. This made them appear radical among their male comrades as well and, at the same time, made them very attractive for the feminists of later generations.<sup>90</sup>

Goldman therefore particularly criticized the "feminization of poverty"<sup>91</sup> and demanded full self-control, including birth control, for women, whom she not only considered victims of capitalist exploitation by the upper classes but also victims of their own families. Together with other female anarchists like Voltairine de Cleyre (1866–1912),<sup>92</sup> she argued that true freedom could be achieved if it existed for women and men alike. Some of the female anarchists considered monogamy as a form of suppression as well and demanded sexual freedom, something that probably went too far for many of their male comrades, who were not as radical as these women after all.<sup>93</sup> Goldman was all in for change, and she traveled across the country and gave lectures on topics like "Birth Control" or "The Right of the Child Not To Be Born." In many regions of the US, this was thought of as rather scandalous, and Goldman, the well-known radical anarchist woman, was not considered a welcome guest by all men and women of the cities she planned to lecture in.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 605.

<sup>90</sup> Kowal, "Anarcha-Feminism," 275–276.

<sup>91</sup> Lori Marso, "The Perversions of Bored Liberals: Response to Herzog," *Political Theory* 36, no. 1 (2008): 127.

<sup>92</sup> On her life and work, as well as some selected writings, see Eugenia C. DeLamotte, *Gates of Freedom: Voltairine de Cleyre and the Revolution of the Mind* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004). Goldman also wrote a text she probably used for lectures about de Cleyre in later years. See Emma Goldman, "Voltairine de Cleyre," n.d., EGP-IISH, no. 271. The two anarchists were, however, often not very fond of each other, to say the least. De Cleyre, for example, complained about Goldman's lectures for women of the upper (middle) class. See Voltairine de Cleyre to Saul Yanovsky, October 18, 1910, Joseph Ishill Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Voltairine de Cleyre to Joseph Cohen, October 26, 1910, 1, Joseph Cohen Papers, Bund Archives of the Jewish Labor Movement, YIVO Archives, New York. Both cited in McKinley, "The Quagmires of Necessity," 519.

<sup>93</sup> Nicholas, "Gender and Sexuality," 610–611.

<sup>94</sup> Marriner, "The Feminist Revolt," 130.

With regard to her anarchy-feminism, Goldman borrowed thoughts and ideas from an even older generation of feminists, such as when she lectured about “Mary Wollstonecraft, the Pioneer of Modern Womanhood” in 1911.<sup>95</sup> Alice Wexler, who edited and commented on this important lecture on the English philosopher and women’s rights activist Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797),<sup>96</sup> argues that “Goldman’s portrait of Wollstonecraft is significant as the most revealing short self-portrait she ever wrote.” As Wexler continues her evaluation, she points out that the lecture shows many things that are typical of the famous female anarchist, as “Goldman expressed some of her most characteristic and contradictory attitudes: a blend of idealism and elitism; equal respect for intellect and for passion; deep concern for the welfare of the masses, but contempt for ‘the mass’ and ‘the majority’; commitment to freedom, but a tendency to appeal to ‘fate’; scorn for wealth and power, but an admiration for heroes.”<sup>97</sup> The lecture provides a glimpse of greatness. Goldman would not only argue for Wollstonecraft due to her past activism but also claim the same for herself, although I disagree with Wexler’s assessment that “Goldman’s anarchism was founded less on an identification with the masses than on a sense of identity with the great rebels and martyrs of the past.”<sup>98</sup> Of course, Goldman liked herself a lot and her rather uncritical autobiography shows that quite clearly, but as a revolutionary anarchist, Goldman was not one of those who demanded leadership for the masses, as that in itself would be against her anarchist ideas, which have been lined out above. With regard to her hope for revolution in particular, Goldman needed the masses, and she knew that. That she was flattered by the success of her lectures on great figures of the past at the same time, and the applause and financial appreciation she received in return from her sometimes upper-class audiences, is not enough to claim that Goldman’s whole vision of anarchism would have been self-centered. And, as this present chapter tries to highlight, Goldman had many different identities that overlapped, although one of them might have dominated from time to time.

Nevertheless, some elements of Goldman’s lecture about Wollstonecraft could definitely be autobiographical reflections as well, such as when she says that

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<sup>95</sup> Emma Goldman, “On Mary Wollstonecraft,” ed. and intro. Alice Wexler, *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 1 (1981): 114–121.

<sup>96</sup> On her life and impact see, among others, Janet Todd, *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000).

<sup>97</sup> Goldman, “On Mary Wollstonecraft,” 113.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

“Mary Wollstonecraft came into the World at a time when her sex was in chattel slavery: owned by the father while at home and passed on as a commodity to her husband when married. ... The family soon found itself in dire want, but how were middle-class girls to earn their own living with every avenue closed to them? They had but one calling, that was marriage. ... Her intellect saw the degradation of her sex, and her soul—always at white heat against every wrong—rebelled against the slavery of half of the human race. She determined to stand on her own feet.”<sup>99</sup>

The visionary women’s rights activist was, in the lecture’s representation, consequently not only a “pioneer of modern womanhood” but, like Goldman herself, also a “tragic romantic heroine.”<sup>100</sup> These two often contradictory and conflicting images also seem to run through Goldman’s personal life, as she often struggled to live the ideals she demanded of herself and of society. Too often, Goldman seemed to lose her ideals in personal love relationships, a fact for which she probably criticized herself the most. It is, however, dangerous to explain all political ideas and thoughts that Goldman brought to paper in one way or another just by the emotional level of the author at the time the text was written. The personal level was only one important level for Goldman’s views, and in her anarcha-feminist writings it was maybe one of the more decisive ones. If, however, we take a closer look at her theoretical works of anarchism, revolution, etc., it would underemphasize Goldman’s intellectual capacity to explain her views solely as personal and emotional reactions.

Other authors, such as Candace Falk, have also remarked that “Goldman’s reticence to qualify her personal and sexual radicalism reflected a strategic choice to avoid discrediting her ideas with ‘her own personal failure to live out her vision of an open relationship.’”<sup>101</sup> In particular, her relationship with her manager Ben Reitman (1879–1942)<sup>102</sup> between 1908 and 1918, which Falk assessed as “probably the central sexual relationship in her life, tested her self-confidence and tempted her to abandon her political work.”<sup>103</sup> Reitman exploited Goldman’s popularity and tended to spend money on luxurious hotels during her lecture tours, something the latter was criticized for by other anarchists. Due to her love for her manager, however, Goldman tended to look the other way and

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**99** Ibid., 115.

**100** Ibid., 125.

**101** Ferguson, “Gender and Genre,” 734. Ferguson refers to Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, 155 in her text.

**102** On Reitman’s life and work, see Roger A. Bruns, *The Damndest Radical: The Life and World of Ben Reitman, Chicago’s Celebrated Social Reformer, Hobo King, and Whorehouse Physician* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

**103** Falk, “Introduction,” viii.

let Reitman continue his spending out of her pocket. She had, in this context, not lived up to the radical ideals she publicly claimed necessary to change society as a whole, and thereby opened up many possibilities for her critics to attack her as a hypocrite.<sup>104</sup> Yet Goldman herself describes the struggle between emotion and reason that befell her with regard to Reitman in *Living My Life*:

I again found letters from Ben beseeching me to let him come. I struggled against it for a time, but in the end a strange dream decided the issue. I dreamed that Ben was bending over me, his face close to mine, his hands on my chest. Flames were shooting from his finger-tips and slowly enveloping my body. I made no attempt to escape them. I strained towards them, craving to be consumed by their fire. When I awoke, my heart kept whispering to my rebellious brain that a great passion often inspired high thoughts and fine deeds.<sup>105</sup>

The other anarchists surrounding Goldman, including Berkman, were critical of Reitman, who did not seem to be interested in anarchist ideals but rather in the successful woman he could probably control. However, Goldman pushed such thoughts away and let her desires gain the upper hand: "He was from another world; moreover, he was impetuous and not always tactful. Clashes would surely follow, and I already had had to face far too many. I found it difficult to decide, but my need of Ben, of what his primitive nature could yield, was compelling. I resolved to have him; let the rest take care of itself."<sup>106</sup> This should not be read as an accusation, especially since radicals like Goldman were only human, after all, and also have the right to get involved in toxic relationships.

Hence, Reitman, who exploited Goldman in many ways and would eventually turn against her, as will be shown later, also suffered due to his relationship with her and his role as her manager, especially from anti-Goldman and anti-anarchist violence when he visited San Diego during the Free Speech Fight in 1912:

Dr. Ben Reitman, a big, husky fellow, the manager of Goldman, came to San Diego to help in the free speech fight. On the evening of his arrival, the vigilantees kidnapped him from his hotel room and drove him out in a car followed by other vigilantees to a deserted hideaway. They beat him up, undressed him, poured tar on his naked body. With a lighted cigar, they burned the letters I.W.W. on his body, then rubbed sagebrush on him. They knocked him out, twisted his testicles, forced him to kiss the American flag and sing the "Star Spangled Banner." After that, the vigilantees lined up and made him run the gauntlet, each of them giving him a blow or a kick. In this condition, he was left in the field.<sup>107</sup>

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**104** Ferguson, "Gender and Genre," 734–735.

**105** Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 32.

**106** *Ibid.*, ch. 33.

**107** Wisotsky Autobiographical Typescript, 83–84. Also see: Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 38. On the San Diego Free Speech Fight, see Grace L. Miller, "The I.W.W. Free Speech Fight: San

For her critics, nevertheless, Goldman's emotional engagement and dependency were displayed as weaknesses, as the famous anarchist obviously was not managing to live up to the ideals she always claimed to be necessary to achieve total equality and the freedom of women within American society.<sup>108</sup> In a letter to Berkman that Goldman wrote on 4 September 1925, the latter explained this dilemma in retrospect:

The tragedy of all of us modern women ... is a fact that we are removed only by a very short period from our traditions, the traditions of being loved, cared for, protected, secured, and above all, the time when women could look forward to an old age of children, a home and someone to brighten their lives. ... The modern woman cannot be the wife and mother in the old sense, and the new medium has not yet been devised, I mean the way of being wife, mother, friend and yet retain one's complete freedom. Will it ever?<sup>109</sup>

Regardless of Goldman's failure to achieve a true change of the female role in her own relationship, the famous anarchist continued to demand such a change, which would have to be based on sexual freedom as well. As feminist scholar Clare Hemmings pointed out, "Goldman's centring of sexual freedom at the heart of revolutionary vision and practice is part of a long tradition of sexual politics, one that struggles to make sense of how productive and reproductive labour come together, and to identify the difference between sexual freedom and capitalist opportunity."<sup>110</sup> There is no doubt that Goldman shocked many of her contemporaries with her views on sexual freedom, but she also must have felt the pressure in her personal relationships to bend her strong convictions if she was interested in experiencing a contemporary and actual but not utopian relationship, and Goldman must have been disappointed about that. Her time was obviously not ready for women who would freely and openly express their desires as well as their thoughts about sexual pleasure.<sup>111</sup>

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Diego, 1912," *Southern California Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (1972): 211–238; Rosalie Shanks, "The I.W.W. Free Speech Movement: San Diego, 1912," *Journal of San Diego History* 19, no.1 (1973): 25–33. For a list of IWW activities and strikes in 1912, see Michael Hanley, "IWW Yearbook 1912," *IWW History Project*. Accessed September 1, 2020. <https://depts.washington.edu/iww/yearbook1912.shtml>.

**108** Ferguson, "Gender and Genre," 735.

**109** Letter to Alexander Berkman, September 4, 1925, in *Nowhere at Home: Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman*, ed. Richard Drinnon and Anna Maria Drinnon (New York: Schocker, 1975), 131–133, cited in Ferguson, "Gender and Genre," 736.

**110** Clare Hemmings, "Sexual Freedom and the Promise of Revolution: Emma Goldman's Passion," *Feminist Review* 106 (2014): 44.

**111** *Ibid.*, 45–46.

For Goldman, these freedoms were essential necessities for a change of society and an end of the exploitation of women, whose status of exploited laborer was intensified by the exploitation they experienced as wives and mothers.<sup>112</sup> Goldman also warned the suffragists that suffrage alone would not change the situation in which many women suffered, and she highlighted that the political change needed to be accompanied by a social change as well, especially since “the achievement of suffrage would [only] lead to a strengthening of the state in its role in structuring and legally enforcing class oppression.”<sup>113</sup> Eventually, the granting of the right to vote would change little with regard to the suppressive environment for women, and it took many more years before the voices that demanded true equality were heard, although this equality has still not been achieved yet.<sup>114</sup> Considering this, Goldman's voice is even more important, as, quite early on, she criticized what Hemmings called “the twin fantasies of protection and social mobility through marriage.”<sup>115</sup> For Goldman, marriage represented the misery of all women, as it only offered “sorrow, misery, [and] humiliation”<sup>116</sup> and would represent the private side of women's exploitation by a capitalist society. Women were, as Goldman's argument continued, considered a private commodity that could be sexually exploited by the husband, and their workforce was not only exploited in the American capitalist system, which was based on the sheer number of female workers, but also within their families, a space where women had to work numerous unpaid hours, often left alone by their husbands. Marriage was consequently often nothing more than “an economic arrangement, an insurance pact.”<sup>117</sup> Being married would create dependencies for women they could never escape from, as, once married, “women have nowhere to go, are trapped in their dependency, parasitism and pettiness, and cling desperately to the scant rewards of corruption.”<sup>118</sup> Like men, according to Goldman's view, women “groan under the iron yoke of our marriage institu-

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112 Emma Goldman, “The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation,” *Mother Earth* 1, no. 1 (1906): 9–18.

113 Christine Cricket Keating, “Toward an Emancipatory Citizenship,” *Women's Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 3/4 (2015): 295.

114 Marriner, “The Feminist Revolt,” 132.

115 Clare Hemmings, “In the Mood for Revolution: Emma Goldman's Passion,” *New Literary History* 43, no. 3 (2012): 527.

116 Emma Goldman, “Marriage,” *Firebrand*, July 18, 1897: 2, in *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, vol. 1: *Made for America, 1890–1901*, ed. Candace Falk et al. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 269–273.

117 Emma Goldman, *Marriage and Love* (New York: Mother Earth, 1911), 4, cited in Hemmings, “Sexual Freedom,” 49.

118 Hemmings, “Sexual Freedom,” 50.

tion, and there seems to be no relief, no way out of it.” Social change needed to end this institution, because “marriage relations, are the foundation of private property, ergo, the foundation of our cruel and inhuman system.” Marriage would establish total male control over women, “not only over her body, but also over her actions, her wishes; in fact, over her whole life.” Society consequently had to overcome the traditional role models and abolish them, and at the same time abolish the institutionalization of these role models, i. e. marriage, because

the boy is taught to be intelligent, bright, clever, strong, athletic, independent and self-reliant; to develop his natural faculties, to follow his passions and desires. The girl has been taught to dress, to stand before the looking glass and admire herself, to control her emotions, her passions, her wishes, to hide her mental defects and to combine what little intelligence and ability she has on one point, and that is, the quickest and best way to angle a husband, to get profitably married.<sup>119</sup>

Marriage is consequently detached from emotions like love, as the institution of marriage is considered as an insurance policy for the exploited class, albeit only for the men of this class:

Both, the man and the girl, marry for the same purpose, with the only exception that the man is not expected to give up his individuality, his name, his independence, whereas the girl has to sell herself, body and soul, for the pleasure of being someone’s wife; hence they do not stand on equal terms, and where there is no equality there can be no harmony. The consequence is that shortly after the first few months, or to make all allowance possible, after the first year, both come to the conclusion that marriage is a failure.<sup>120</sup>

The woman is ultimately nothing more than “the slave of her husband and her children” and is exploited day by day, as “[s]he should take her part in the business world the same as the man” as well but is paid less in comparison, since she is not paid at all for her work at home: “The woman, instead of being the household queen, told about in story books, is the servant, the mistress, and the slave of both husband and children. She loses her own individuality entirely, even her name she is not allowed to keep.”<sup>121</sup> Goldman directed such criticism to her chauvinist anarchist comrades as well, and highlighted during her speeches that “[w]oman cannot without equal opportunity ever rise to equality with him

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**119** Goldman, “Marriage,” 269.

**120** *Ibid.*, 271.

**121** Goldman, “What Is There in Anarchy for Woman?” 291.

[man], and hence women are slaves to society as a consequence, and intensified under the marriage code."<sup>122</sup>

Goldman could observe that her remarks and critical demands changed little. Suffrage was granted to women in the US after the First World War, but true equality was not really achieved. During her lectures in the later years of her career, Goldman would consequently talk about the "Tragedy of the Modern Woman."<sup>123</sup> In retrospect, she argued that "[w]oman's rights sponsors faithfully promised that woman's political and economic equality with man would abolish war, prostitution, crime and all other evils in the world," but the reality proved "that woman in politics is by no means better than man and her right of suffrage has helped her as little as it did most men to overcome outworn political, social, or moral values."<sup>124</sup> Women, unfortunately, as Goldman continues her assessment, have "to a large extent remained fettered by her tradition."<sup>125</sup> She might have also critically reflected on her own faults in her romantic relationships, such as with Reitman, when she later declares that when the modern woman "loves the man, she turns him into a god and surrounds him with a sacred hallow. In her blind idolization she fails to see that her deity is but human, all too human. The poor fool knows only too well that he is far from the hero imagined by his mother, wife, daughter, or mistress."<sup>126</sup> At the same time, although "[e]mancipation has brought woman economic equality with man," female labor was not considered to be equally valuable, and women "are neither met with the same confidence as their male colleagues, nor receive equal remuneration."<sup>127</sup> Due to this inequality, many girls and young women still dream of escaping labor exploitation through marriage. With regard to this continuing trend, which Goldman had criticized multiple times in the past, she again asks in her reflection: "As to the great mass of working girls and women, how much independence is gained if the narrowness and lack of freedom of the home is exchanged for the narrowness and lack of freedom of the factory, sweat-shop, department store, or office?"<sup>128</sup> Being free but exploited seems still less attractive than being enslaved and solely exploited by a husband. Con-

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122 Emma Goldman, "The New Woman," *Free Society*, February 13, 1898: 2, in *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, vol. 1: *Made for America, 1890–1901*, ed. Candace Falk et al. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 322.

123 Emma Goldman, "The Tragedy of the Modern Woman," n.d., EGP-IISH, no. 266.

124 *Ibid.*, 1.

125 *Ibid.*, 1–2.

126 *Ibid.*, 3.

127 *Ibid.*, 12.

128 *Ibid.*, 13<sup>1/2</sup>.

sequently, women are not really free, and the “highly praised independence is, after all, but a slow process of dulling and stifling woman’s nature, her low need, and her mother instinct.”<sup>129</sup> True freedom is consequently often sacrificed to match the expectations of a society that was in a way based on these exploitative methods. And the movements that fought against women’s exploitation? Goldman criticized the halfheartedness of many representatives of these movements when she argued that “[e]very movement that aims at the destruction of existing institutions and the replacement thereof with something more advanced, more perfect had followers who in theory stand for the most radical ideas, but who, nevertheless, in their every-day practice, are like the average philistine, feigning respectability and clamoring for the good opinion of their opponents. The suffragist and feminist movements made no exception.”<sup>130</sup> The tragedy of the modern woman, however, is very much related to the unwillingness of the modern man to let her be truly free. The latter “still wants woman as his housekeeper and caretaker of his home and his children,”<sup>131</sup> and the modern woman “lacks [the] courage to be inwardly free. Even with herself she is not frank.”<sup>132</sup> She is held back by “sentimental considerations” and “still has too many gods,”<sup>133</sup> and “foolish women pave the way for men’s career as they deny themselves while supporting the man.”<sup>134</sup> This was supposed to be a consequence of the fact that “woman has not yet learned to march to victory regardless of the defeat of those in her way. Hence she has not reached greatness.”<sup>135</sup> The self-sacrifice of women for their families and husbands, who obviously did not appreciate such a sacrifice enough, meant that the development of the modern woman was sabotaged and freedom, in every sense of the word, consequently seemed to be far away. At the same time, those women, probably including Goldman herself, who had advanced and achieved something were less attractive to men, because “the higher the mental development of woman, the less possible it is for her to meet a congenial mate who will see in her, not only sex, but also the human being, the friend, the comrade and strong individuality, who cannot and ought not lose a single trait of her character.”<sup>136</sup> In addition, the existent form of institutionalized relationships, i.e. marriage, is not based on

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129 *Ibid.*, 14.

130 *Ibid.*, 18<sup>1/2</sup>.

131 *Ibid.*, 22.

132 *Ibid.*, 29.

133 *Ibid.*, 30.

134 *Ibid.*, 30–31.

135 *Ibid.*, 31.

136 *Ibid.*, 33.

love and therefore most perceptions of marriage are wrong because, as Goldman argued, “it is not love, but a transaction that never fails to lay stress on a plus and a minus.”<sup>137</sup> The famous anarchist therefore concluded that woman needed to achieve true emancipation and claimed that “her freedom will reach as far as her love for it and her will to achieve her freedom.”<sup>138</sup> Only if women accepted the reality, i.e. that they were suppressed, and demanded an uncontested freedom for themselves could they become emancipated. To achieve a successful emancipation, however, the modern woman would “have to do away with the absurd notion of the conflict of the sexes, or that man and woman represent two antagonistic worlds,” although “in a social sense woman will only become truly free when man will become free. There is no merit in being the equal of slaves in a slave society.”<sup>139</sup> To achieve such freedom, the modern woman would also have to fight for her sexual liberation.

Goldman, who had been in contact with famous thinkers and advocates for the freedom and liberation of human sexuality, such as Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935),<sup>140</sup> also lectured on “The Element of Sex in Life,”<sup>141</sup> highlighting the role of unexcused sexual pleasure. Goldman argued in this text that “[i]t is ... indispensable to recognize this much-maligned sex impulse as the great psychological motive force of humanity.”<sup>142</sup> Sex, she said, in a way self-critically, “is woven into every fabric of human life and lays its finger on every custom. To the debit side of the sex account we must charge many silly stupidities and some of the foulest injustices which go to make the thing we call human culture the amazing and variegated mosaic that it is.”<sup>143</sup> At the same time, it can liberate the female sex, although society considers it “disgraceful for nice girls.”<sup>144</sup> However, the sex taboo, as it existed in modern societies, especially for women, also prevented happy relationships, as “[m]ost men are brought up to believe that woman must be taken and not give herself gladly and joyously in love and passion.”<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, the sex taboos of Goldman's time prevented married peo-

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137 *Ibid.*, 36<sup>1/2</sup>

138 *Ibid.*, 40.

139 *Ibid.*, 41.

140 Magnus Hirschfeld to Emma Goldman, Paris, November 24, 1933, EGP-IISH, no. 98. On Hirschfeld's life and work, see Manfred Herzer, *Magnus Hirschfeld und seine Zeit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).

141 Emma Goldman, “The Element of Sex in Life,” n.d., EGP-IISH, no. 213.

142 *Ibid.*, 5.

143 *Ibid.*, 7–8.

144 *Ibid.*, 21.

145 *Ibid.*, 24.

ple from actually addressing their sexual needs, further sabotaging a form of relationship that consequently could never be based on true love and emotion:

Take frigidity in some women largely due to the deadening effect of the sex taboo. Such women cannot even if they try desperately respond to the sex urge in the man. In fact, the very thought of the sexual embrace to such women is torture. Even if the man lacks refinement and imposes his needs on his wife he will find no satisfaction. In the end he seeks gratification elsewhere. There is quite a percentage of married men among the clientele of prostitution. Sex is more powerful than all decisions. The man will grow indifferent and in the end insist on divorce.<sup>146</sup>

True equality and its achievement therefore needed sexual liberation and the end of taboos that did not really help anybody. Goldman, with regard to this issue, almost naturally made the following demand: “Let us get rid of the mock modesty so prevalent on the surface of polite society, let us liberate sex from falsehood and degradation.”<sup>147</sup>

Even today, Goldman’s demands seem to be utopian, as the tragedy for the modern woman she described continued and sexual liberation has not yet been fully achieved for all. And that despite Goldman’s dream not really being extraordinary. As Kathy E. Ferguson described, Goldman “wanted a world without jealousy, insecurity, or possessiveness, and she fought those feelings in herself, with limited success.” Her “elevated expectations for the transformative power of love is a mirror image of her intense desire for revolution as a transvaluation of values. Her passion for her individual lovers intertwined with her passion for radical political change.” Nevertheless, and regardless of her personal emotional disappointments, Goldman never let frustration change her anarchist ideals, and for her “[t]he parallel between love and revolution in both her ideas and her actions holds a stronger promise for radical feminist interventions than do the inconsistencies between what she practiced and what she preached.”<sup>148</sup>

When discussing Goldman’s anarcha-feminist views, it is also important that she highlighted not only the role of women for revolutionary success but also her considerations about female sexuality “within the means of production and the exploitation of surplus labour.”<sup>149</sup> She went beyond a purely economic perspective to identify the negative influence of capitalism for the exploited class, but incorporated social and sexual aspects into her anarchist narrative that would ultimately demand a revolution that was based on true freedom, i.e. a freedom

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**146** *Ibid.*, 26–27.

**147** *Ibid.*, 50.

**148** Ferguson, “Gender and Genre,” 751.

**149** Hemmings, “Sexual Freedom,” 50.

that would not only change the income of the workers but truly free every aspect of human life and the relationships the latter would be expressed by. Sexual freedom<sup>150</sup> and birth control<sup>151</sup> seemed to be necessary preconditions to actually better the lives of women, whose equality on paper might have been achieved by political changes like the granting of women's suffrage, but whose lives would never become better if these changes did not impact the social side of female life as well. Sexuality, according to Goldman, was an essential aspect of change and, as Clare Hemmings correctly emphasized, "a productive site of revolutionary transformation, as well as co-optation."<sup>152</sup> This also means that Goldman never thought revolutionary processes to be solely political, but considered them as transformative in every sense of the word, especially with regard to the liberation of the modern woman. It was and still is important to understand, when one studies Goldman's anarchy-feminist texts today, that sexual freedom possesses a "methodological capacity to disrupt the unequal division of labour at the heart of re/production, since once women withdraw their reproductive, commercial and affective labour, the cogs of capitalism, militarism and religious ideology will grind to a halt."<sup>153</sup> To better understand the revolutionary Goldman, one consequently has to be aware that her "anarchist vision of a revolution" was fundamentally based on "women's sexual emancipation,"<sup>154</sup> the latter consequently being one of the core elements, alongside freedom in the truest sense of the word, of her revolutionary considerations. How could a revolution succeed if the revolutionaries had no passion and love for it? Anecdotally speaking, Goldman was not interested in a revolution when she was not allowed to dance while changing the world:

At the dances I was one of the most untiring and gayest. One evening a cousin of Sasha, a young boy, took me aside. With a grave face, as if he were about to announce the death of a dear comrade, he whispered to me that it did not behoove an agitator to dance. Certainly not with such reckless abandon, anyway. It was undignified for one who was on the way to become a force in the anarchist movement. My frivolity would only hurt the Cause. I grew

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**150** Referring to the American poet Walt Whitman (1819–1892), Goldman praised "the beauty and wholesomeness of sex ... freed from the rags and tatters of hypocrisy." Emma Goldman, "Walt Whitman (1916)," in *The Emma Goldman Papers: A Microfilm Edition*, ed. Candace Falk with Ronald J. Zboray et al., reel 54 (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1990), 2, cited in Ferguson, "Gender and Genre," 747.

**151** Emma Goldman, "The Social Aspects of Birth Control," *Mother Earth* 11, no. 2 (1916): 468–475.

**152** Hemmings, "Sexual Freedom," 51.

**153** *Ibid.*, 51–52.

**154** *Ibid.*, 56; see also 44.

furious at the impudent interference of the boy. I told him to mind his own business, I was tired of having the Cause constantly thrown into my face. I did not believe that a Cause which stood for a beautiful ideal, for anarchism, for release and freedom from conventions and prejudice, should demand the denial of life and joy. I insisted that our Cause could not expect me to become a nun and that the movement should not be turned into a cloister. If it meant that, I did not want it. “I want freedom, the right to self-expression, everybody’s right to beautiful, radiant things.” Anarchism meant that to me, and I would live it in spite of the whole world—prisons, persecution, everything. Yes, even in spite of the condemnation of my own closest comrades I would live my beautiful ideal.<sup>155</sup>

Goldman therefore pays attention not only to gender roles and sexual freedom but also passion as an essential revolutionary force. She believed, like other anarchists, to quote Hemmings once more, “that revolution will be brought about through labour interventions (strikes, education of the masses), but also through individual and collective practices in everyday life that can inaugurate a different set of values, and from which the vision of a better world might arise.”<sup>156</sup> In contrast to her male comrades, however, Goldman was more sensitive to incorporating female perspectives into her idea for a revolution, which was naturally a “sexual and gendered revolution” that would focus on otherwise “lost voices.”<sup>157</sup> To understand the revolutionary Goldman, one consequently has to understand the anarchy-feminist. However, Goldman was also a publicist for some years of her life, trying to actively participate in and influence anarchist debates about revolution and the future it was supposed to bring.

## The Publicist

In contrast to Volrairie de Cleyre, who disliked her work as a teacher but never felt it to be convenient to live off the anarchist movement, Goldman, who had worked in the factories and as a nurse—she had even studied midwifery and nursing in Vienna in 1895/96—eventually tried to become a “professional anarchist” who could live off lectures and publications. When Goldman had a choice to continue nursing in the poor parts of New York City or to fully dedicate her energy to the anarchist cause, she chose the latter. At this point, it has to be emphasized that Goldman never became rich, and all the money she had she invested in the publication of anarchist ideas—not only her own but also those of oth-

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<sup>155</sup> Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 5.

<sup>156</sup> Hemmings, “Sexual Freedom,” 49.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

ers. She used her fame to leave part-time anarchism, which she practiced between 1892 and 1906, behind and founded *Mother Earth*, her own anarchist journal that would provide a melting pot for all kinds of ideas and thoughts related to anarchism.<sup>158</sup> In 1905, however, Goldman had borrowed money from some friends and had initially opened a parlor for facial and scalp massages, which would serve the growing middle-class demand for such services. The business ran well and Goldman earned some money, continuing her anarchist work on the side. She could repay some of her debts and even made sufficient money to accumulate capital. When she had the opportunity to create *Mother Earth*, however, she left the opportunity to become rich as a business owner behind without hesitation. Goldman was a revolutionary mind, not a capitalist.<sup>159</sup>

For herself, the step to get active as a publicist ended her double life. From 1906 onwards, Goldman was a professional anarchist. And she used her position quite well to support Alexander Berkman too, who was released from prison in the same year and worked with Goldman on her monthly journal. She also continued to lecture, and although many anarchists would do that for free, the famous anarchist “regularly charged an admission in order to sustain not only *Mother Earth*, but also Goldman herself, her editor, Alexander Berkman, and, at least at times, her manager and lover, Ben Reitman.”<sup>160</sup> For such practices, she was criticized by other anarchists like de Cleyre, who argued that Goldman lived not for but rather off the anarchist movement.<sup>161</sup> Although she never actually used large sums of the money she collected for her own luxury but instead helped many anarchists with her income, such accusations must have bothered Goldman. However, the income she generated was important, as she highlights in *Living My Life* about the time immediately after *Mother Earth* was launched: “My tours had become the main source of revenue for the magazine, for the publication of our literature and the other expenses involved.”<sup>162</sup>

From a financial perspective, Goldman's lectures and works on drama and Russian literature were especially successful.<sup>163</sup> She was also involved in theater performances in many parts of the United States and, as part of her idea that education would spread revolutionary consciousness, she lectured on the impor-

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158 McKinley, “The Quagmires of Necessity,” 512, 516.

159 Ibid., 517.

160 Ibid.

161 Ibid., 519.

162 Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 33.

163 Emma Goldmann, *The Social Significance of Modern Drama* (Boston, MA: R.G. Badger, 1914). In particular, her lectures on Russian dramatists, such as Leo Tolstoy or Maxim Gorky, were quite successful. See Ferguson, “Gender and Genre,” 738.

tance of theater for the masses, including the promotion of Yiddish playwrights, such as Sholem Asch (1880–1957),<sup>164</sup> among American and later British audiences.<sup>165</sup> Goldman considered *Mother Earth* to be more than just a political publication—she envisioned it as work that would provide a broad cultural discussion, and her own “celebration of freedom in the arts, politics, work, education, and sexual life were very much a part of the pre-World War I modernist rebellion of bohemians, radicals, and artists.”<sup>166</sup> In the column “The Avant Garde,” modernist ideas were presented to a wider public and stimulated discourses in many different fields. Although Kathy E. Ferguson argued that “for Goldman, as for others in her generation of radicals, modernism was not a primary source of her energies,”<sup>167</sup> one has to highlight that Goldman’s mind seemed quite open to new ideas, although she loved the Russian literary classics, and that she was open-minded enough to discuss her own mistakes, something that is especially visible with regard to her writings about the Russian Revolution.

In addition, Goldman often herself did differentiate between her anarchist ideas and her own preferences with regard to modern drama. The audiences for both were as different as they could be. As mentioned before, she also was aware that the latter would finance her and Berkman’s publicist activities, whether this was Goldman’s *Mother Earth* or other projects.<sup>168</sup> Considering that many anarchists, however, were poor workers, there was almost no alternative to this practical method. Goldman, in a way, was relying on her attraction to the bourgeois middle class, whose representatives visited her lectures on drama, to pay for the publications that were supposed to awaken the working class. All in all, and like many other revolutionaries, Goldman realized that she needed to rely on capitalist means to work towards her revolutionary aims. She was consequently sometimes eager to make the most out of her lecture series financially.<sup>169</sup> One could, however, also add that Goldman enjoyed the attention she received from well-situated middle-class women during her lectures.

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**164** On his life and work, see Joseph Sherman, “Asch, Sholem,” *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*. Accessed September 1, 2020. [https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Asch\\_Sholem](https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Asch_Sholem).

**165** Ferguson, “Gender and Genre,” 739.

**166** *Ibid.*, 743.

**167** *Ibid.*, 743–744. Ferguson later admits that “Goldman was quite modern in her political vision but not in her aesthetic practices. While she often made alliances with modernists, her head and her heart were grounded in romantic realism.” *Ibid.*, 744.

**168** McKinley, “The Quagmires of Necessity,” 518.

**169** Emma Goldman to Ben Reitman, March 18 [no year] and December 18, 1909, Ben Reitman Papers, Manuscript Collection of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle Library, cited in *ibid.*

However, as mentioned before, this does not provide sufficient reason to condemn her activities as such. Again, it becomes clear that Emma Goldman had many different identities and was interested in many eclectic things at the same time, although she never lost her focus on a possible revolution in the future. In a way, Goldman was successful in re-exploiting the bourgeoisie to finance this revolution, or, as Blaine McKinley described it,

Anarchists have often been viewed as hopelessly impractical dreamers. While certainly idealistic, the anarchists also had a pragmatic streak that enabled them to deal with capitalistic society, however much they despised it. Indeed, Emma Goldman's understanding of the promotional techniques required to market anarchism in a bourgeois society made her America's most successful anarchist agitator. Yet Goldman was more successful than most anarchists, or most American dissidents generally, in unifying her work with her life and with her goals.<sup>170</sup>

The financing of *Mother Earth*<sup>171</sup> was actually one of these goals. According to Goldman's aims, "[t]he magazine was to be a forum for anarchism of every school and variety."<sup>172</sup> *Mother Earth* was an important melting pot, a nodal point of the American anarchist movements and its different representatives, be they readers or writers, editors or printers, artists or other bohemians, etc. It provided a platform for different protest movements as well, no matter if they addressed or reacted to capitalist exploitation, imperialist wars, or the treatment of political prisoners.<sup>173</sup> *Mother Earth* was published for 12 years, and during this time, "it was an essential part of the action"<sup>174</sup> and a front for the US anarchist movement.

For Berkman, whom Goldman supported in many ways after his release from prison in 1906, the journal provided a possibility to return to the anarchist movement outside the prison walls and to become an active part of the movement again. After his 14 years behind bars, Goldman happily announced: "One buried alive for fourteen years will emerge from his tomb."<sup>175</sup> The cause of Berkman's and Goldman's activism had not changed, however, and so the former could simply join forces with the latter again to achieve the aim they had been fighting for

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170 *Ibid.*, 522.

171 On the history of *Mother Earth*, see Solomon, *Emma Goldman*, 21–23.

172 Glassgold, "Introduction," xvii.

173 Kathy E. Ferguson, "Assemblages of Anarchists: Political Aesthetics in *Mother Earth*," *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 4, no. 2 (2014): 172.

174 Glassgold, "Introduction," xvii.

175 E.[mma] G.[oldman], "Alexander Berkman," *Mother Earth* 1, no. 3 (1906): 22–24. Accessed September 1, 2020. [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/27262/27262-h/27262-h.htm#Page\\_22](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/27262/27262-h/27262-h.htm#Page_22).

since the early 1890s. With regard to this, the article in *Mother Earth* on Berkman's release from prison also declared:

In looking over the events of 1892 and the causes that led up to the act of Alexander Berkman, one beholds Mammon seated upon a throne built of human bodies, without a trace of sympathy on its Gorgon brow for the creatures it controls. These victims, bent and worn, with the reflex of the glow of the steel and iron furnaces in their haggard faces, carry their sacrificial offerings to the ever-insatiable monster, capitalism. In its greed, however, it reaches out for more; it neither sees the gleam of hate in the sunken eyes of its slaves, nor can it hear the murmurs of discontent and rebellion coming forth from their heaving breasts. Yet, discontent continues until one day it raises its mighty voice and demands to be heard: Human conditions! higher pay! fewer hours in the inferno at Homestead, the stronghold of the "philanthropist" Carnegie!<sup>176</sup>

In contrast to the US steel tycoon, Berkman was really the one who cared for the well-being of the masses and was described by his former lover, Goldman, as "[a] youth with a vision of a grand and beautiful world based upon freedom and harmony, and with boundless sympathy for the suffering of the masses. One whose deep, sensitive nature could not endure the barbarisms of our times. Such was the personality of the man who staked his life as a protest against tyranny and iniquity."<sup>177</sup> Since nothing about these facts had changed, it seemed more than natural that the famous anarchist who had just been released from prison would continue his important work by supporting Goldman's newly established journal.

Berkman himself described the moment he left the prison as "a moment of supreme joy when I felt the heavy chains, that had bound me so long, give way with the final clang of the iron doors behind me and I suddenly found myself transported, as it were, from the dreary night of my prison-existence into the warm sunshine of the living day."<sup>178</sup> Between 1906 and 1918, *Mother Earth* was published in New York City, bringing together many names of the anarchist movement there. Many of those involved also worked on other publications, e.g. *The Blast* or *The Modern School*. The subscriber list—around 2,000 individuals or organizations in total—of *Mother Earth* also mentioned other publications all around the globe, which is why the impact of the journal should not be under-emphasized, although it was very often not financially self-supporting.<sup>179</sup> The different readers of *Mother Earth* included "anarchists, feminists, trade union-

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid. Goldman here makes a reference to the steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919).

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Berkman, "A Greeting."

<sup>179</sup> Ferguson, "Assemblages of Anarchists," 173–174.

ists, civil libertarians, and progressives of various alignments, not to mention persistent eavesdroppers from various state surveillance agencies.”<sup>180</sup> Goldman, who had read and seen anarchist publications from different national contexts, followed the French magazine *L'Humanite Nouvelle*<sup>181</sup> when she created her journal, and the issues of *Mother Earth* provide a deep and detailed insight into anarchism and progressive political thought in early 20th century America.<sup>182</sup>

After six years of *Mother Earth's* existence and a lot of work invested in it by Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, they published an assessment, which shall be quoted here in some detail because it highlights that although *Mother Earth* was an important anarchist publication, the “success” story of the journal was quite ambivalent:

Viewed from the dominant standpoint of success ... Mother Earth has failed. Our circulation is still far from the fifty-thousand mark; our subscribers, too, do not represent the multitudes. Nor is our financial rating such that we need feel any anxiety lest a Wall Street panic break our bank. Again, Mother Earth has lost in averdupois; it began as a heavy-weight of sixty-four pages, but is now reduced to the lightweight class. But since when do Anarchists measure success by quantity? Are numbers, weight, or following the true criterion of success? Should not the latter consist, first of all, in adherence to the chosen purpose, no matter at what cost? Indeed, the only success of any value has been the failure of men and women who struggled, suffered, and bled for an ideal, rather than give up, or be silenced. Mother EARTH is such a success. Without a party to back her, with little or no support from her own ranks, and consistently refusing to be gagged by a profitable advertising department, she has bravely weathered the strain of five years, stormy enough to have broken many a strong spirit. She has created an atmosphere for herself which few Anarchist publications in America have been able to equal. She has gathered around her a coterie of men and women who are among the best in the country, and, finally, she has acted as a leaven of thought in quarters least expected by those who are ready with advice, yet unable to help. ... As to the original *raison d'etre* of MOTHER EARTH, it was, first of all, to create a medium for the free expression of our ideas, a medium bold, defiant, and unafraid. That she has proved to the fullest, for neither friend nor foe has been able to gag her. Secondly, MOTHER EARTH was to serve as a gathering point, as it were, for those, who, struggling to free themselves from the absurdities of the Old, had not yet reached firm footing. Suspended between heaven and hell, they have found in MOTHER EARTH the anchor of life. Thirdly, to infuse new blood into Anarchism, which – in America – had then been run-

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**180** *Ibid.*, 174.

**181** *L'Humanite Nouvelle: The Revue Internationale—Sciences, Lettres Et Arts* was published in France between 1897 and 1903 by the French socialist-anarchist Augustin Hamon (1862–1945). His other works include *Psychologie de l'anarchiste-socialiste* (Paris: Stock, 1895).

**182** For a detailed discussion, see Craig Monk, “Emma Goldman, Mother Earth, and the Little Magazine Impulse in Modern America,” in “*The Only Efficient Instrument*”: *American Women Writers and the Periodical, 1837–1916*, ed. Aleta Fainsod Cane and Susan Alves (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2001), 113–125.

ning at low ebb for quite some time. All these purposes, it may be said impartially, the magazine has served faithfully and well.<sup>183</sup>

It is almost ironic from an anarchist perspective that Goldman had invested all her energy in a project that would eventually be “killed by the wartime postal censorship”<sup>184</sup> during the First World War in August 1917. The *Mother Earth Bulletin*, which replaced *Mother Earth*, eventually ceased being published in April 1918. Due to Goldman’s and Berkman’s criticism of the US government during the war, they had become a target of anti-anarchist suppression and, once deported, they could not continue their own publication activities in the United States. The forced end of her identity as an anarchist publicist would then, however, turn Goldman into a full revolutionary, although her hopes that she had tied to the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviki would be so tremendously disappointed shortly after. Goldman, nevertheless, had already been a revolutionary before 1917.

## The Revolutionary

Emma Goldman was a passionate revolutionary who hoped that the spark of revolution would set the masses on fire and lead to a movement that would wash away all the capitalist perversions US society was suffering from. She combined anarchist theory, feminist necessities, and publicist means to achieve this goal, yet she seemed to have been unable to really challenge the state and its government, as the authorities hit back quite hard and determinedly pushed Goldman out of their way. She was the most notorious and probably one of the best-known anarchists in the world. That the US authorities joined the global anarchist craze in the early 1900s after McKinley’s assassination even increased Goldman’s global fame.<sup>185</sup> Using her famous position, Goldman not only tried to form a strong anarchist movement that would prepare the revolution in the United States,

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**183** Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, “Our Sixth Birthday,” *Mother Earth* 6, no. 1 (1911). Accessed September 1, 2020. [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/goldman/ME/mev6n1.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/goldman/ME/mev6n1.html).

**184** Glassgold, “Introduction,” xvii.

**185** See, for example, the evaluation of Kurt Eisner—a socialist German journalist and later Bavarian Prime Minister—in 1902 in “Sonntagsplauderei,” *Unterhaltungsblatt des Vorwärts* 33, February 16, 1902: 130–131, in Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (BArch-SAPMO), NY 4060/34, Ausarbeitungen von K.E., Artikel/Sonntagsplaudereien, 221–222.

but she also sought “to precipitate and model a revolutionary mood for the women of her time.”<sup>186</sup> It was the First World War that would eventually turn the tide, as Goldman criticized the government at a time when the latter was interested in inner stability and would not accept critical voices against the war, especially since the Russian Revolution had shown how the masses could react due to the pressure the war had put on the Czarist Empire. Berkman, Goldman, and other anarchists fell prey to the first Red Scare that was stimulated by the Russian Revolution during the war. Goldman, as Martha Solomon has highlighted, “was already a controversial figure, but her outspoken opposition to war and the draft excited further public outrage against her.”<sup>187</sup> Goldman's criticism against the First World War was, however, not surprising, as she not only “felt that war further enslaved workers as it enriched masters,”<sup>188</sup> but she, like many other left intellectuals, was shocked by the fact that the international workers' movement had lost its internationalist ideals and had turned into a nationalist vicarious agent of its imperialist governments.<sup>189</sup>

During the war, as well as in the years before, Goldman had always fought for free speech and against the attempts of the government to repress critical voices, especially since, as Vivian Gornick formulated so well, “the right to think and speak freely had always been the first article of faith nailed to Emma Goldman's front door.”<sup>190</sup> The famous anarchist was involved in the activities of the Free Speech League, which was founded in 1902, and protested against the Criminal Anarchy Act of the same year, which prohibited anarchist expressions, be they oral or written, made them illegal, and threatened felons with up to ten years in prison or a fine of up to \$5,000.<sup>191</sup> As anarchism was considered a foreign problem by the American public, the law also allowed for foreign radicals to be deported, although only 20 anarchists fell victim to the law between 1904 and 1916, including the English-born anarchist John Turner (1865–1934), who was the first to be “thrown out” of the US.<sup>192</sup> Regardless of the law, anarchists con-

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**186** Hemmings, “In the Mood for Revolution,” 528.

**187** Solomon, *Emma Goldman*, 28.

**188** *Ibid.*

**189** For a survey of the protests by left intellectuals, see Frank Jacob and Riccardo Altieri, eds., *Krieg und Frieden im Spiegel des Sozialismus 1914–1918* (Berlin: Metropol, 2018).

**190** Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 2.

**191** Kraut, “Global Anti-Anarchism,” 177–178.

**192** *Ibid.*, 181–186. See also Sidney Fine, “Anarchism and the Assassination of McKinley,” *The American Historical Review* 60, no. 4 (1955): 777–799. Goldman later commented on Turner's fate as follows: “Turner was given the honour of being the first to fall under the ban of the Federal Anti-Anarchist Law passed by Congress on March 3, 1903. Its main section reads: ‘No person who disbelieves in or who is opposed to all organized governments, or who is a member of or affili-

tinued their work, and Goldman hoped that the masses would eventually realize that anarchism offered them a better life; the only thing that needed to be destroyed was the state. Although the police did everything possible to restrict Goldman from speaking about such ideas, the charismatic anarchist woman continued her work as a speaker and later as a publicist.<sup>193</sup> Together with the Free Speech League in 1908/9, Goldman fought back against the police and the governmental authorities, demanding that freedom of speech be protected, even for anarchists.<sup>194</sup>

“Red Emma,” as the more conservative press would call Goldman, “made this diminutive, slightly stout and now middle-aged, chain-smoking Russian immigrant appear to be a threat to the social order. To many of her detractors, ‘Red Emma’ was synonymous with bomb throwing, political assassination, and free love.”<sup>195</sup> In the years leading up to the First World War, Goldman worked with the Free Speech League, the IWW, and many other labor unions or organizations to contest the state’s attempt to prevent people from using their right to speak their mind freely and to express ideas, especially those related to anarchism and revolution. Goldman, like others, challenged the state’s strategies in all possible forms, including “in a vocal libertarian press, on the streets, and in the courts.”<sup>196</sup> Due to her central position within these Free Speech Fights in the early 20th century,<sup>197</sup> Goldman even intensified her image as a radical anarchist—which was not only due to her more than 40 arrests between the 1890s and 1919<sup>198</sup>—who was almost notoriously challenging the state and its authorities, demanding an end to capitalist exploitation, the freedom of women and their sexuality, as well as the beginning of a world revolution on American soil. In terms of the latter, observations of the events in Russia in March 1917 seemed to be promising, and since revolutions were often “the result of crisis

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ated with any organization entertaining or teaching such disbelief in or opposition to all governments ... shall be permitted to enter the United States.’ John Turner, well known in his own country, respected by thinking people and having access to every European land, was now to be victimized by a statute conceived in panic and sponsored by the darkest elements in the United States. When I announced to the audience that John Turner had been arrested and would be deported, the meeting unanimously resolved that if our friend had to go, it should not be without a fight.” *Living My Life*, ch. 27.

**193** Lynskey, “I Shall Speak in Philadelphia,” 167.

**194** *Ibid.*, 187–190.

**195** *Ibid.*, 168.

**196** *Ibid.*

**197** Philip S. Foner, ed., “*Fellow Workers and Friends*”: *I.W.W. Free-Speech Fights as Told by Participants* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981).

**198** Lynskey, “I Shall Speak in Philadelphia,” 172.

conditions and insurrections, revolution embraces confrontation with the old order,"<sup>199</sup> it was not only the anarchists who had identified the political potential that the conflict between the government and anti-war activists in the United States provided. The revolutionary hopes of American radicals were also stimulated by the Russian Revolution, which was initially perceived as an important event in world history that could actually prove that capitalism could be replaced by a better society, and it was also admired by Goldman, whose "romantic commitment to an impossibly utopian ideal,"<sup>200</sup> as Lori J. Marso quite negatively described it, was responsible for an initially rather uncritical view of the Russian events.

The US government, on the other hand, feared the Russian example gaining domestic support and consequently needed to contain any revolutionary potential, which forced it to counter the anarchist activities of Goldman and her circle in particular. With hundreds of radicals sent abroad, partially destroyed networks, and the rise of communism after 1917, the anarchist movement lost much of its influence and steadily declined after 1918.<sup>201</sup> Although Goldman had hoped for a revolution on US soil, her deportation left her no other choice than to hope to become a part of the post-revolutionary effort to build a new society in Russia, but the realities of Lenin's political order "nearly broke her heart."<sup>202</sup> As a revolutionary, Goldman would be disappointed in many ways, or, to cite Kathy E. Ferguson once more, "she loved her revolutions in the same extraordinary way she loved her partners, they disappointed her in the same devastating way, and in that same stubborn way she reconsidered her experience while refusing to surrender her ideal of what could be."<sup>203</sup> Regardless of her eventual disappointment, Goldman admired the Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution at first, as she believed that her dream of revolutionary change had come true. Russia's masses had forced the Czar out of power, and they now had the possibility to build a new world from scratch, to forge a new society. Her admiration was enough for her to finally accept her fate, i.e. to be deported from the shores of the country she had had such high hopes for since she arrived in the 1880s. But the Russian realities would soon turn admiration into frustra-

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**199** Dana M. Williams, "Tactics: Conceptions of Social Change, Revolution, and Anarchist Organisation," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Cham: Palgrave Macmillann, 2019), 108.

**200** Marso, "The Perversions of Bored Liberals," 123–124.

**201** McKinley, "The Quagmires of Necessity," 512.

**202** Ferguson, "Gender and Genre," 752. See also Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2005), 198.

**203** Ferguson, "Gender and Genre," 753.

tion. This transformative process shall now be taken into closer consideration, and Goldman's change from an enthusiastic revolutionary to a fierce anti-Bolshevist will be described and analyzed in more detail.



### 3 Early Perceptions of the Russian Revolution

The First World War was an event of transnational and global scope that changed the lives of human beings in all parts of the world, and even had an impact on things one would consider rather unrelated to war.<sup>1</sup> In many countries, no matter if they participated in the war effort on the side of the Central Powers or the Entente, or if they simply observed the war as neutral states, the war caused economic or social developments, but at the same time stimulated massive protest movements around the globe too.<sup>2</sup> Many of those who protested against the war, including Emma Goldman, would be sent to prison, and Adam Hochschild emphasized that some of humanity's best had to spend part of the war years behind prison bars.<sup>3</sup> From an anarchist perspective, especially after the events of February 1917 in Russia, it was clear that the First World War had “turned its belligerents into revolutionaries.”<sup>4</sup> Anarchism as such had been a global movement from its beginning, especially since many anarchists often crossed, or better had to cross, national borders as they were forced into exile by their home states' authorities. It was consequently hardly surprising that many anarchists were also directly or indirectly involved in the Russian Revolution and the efforts to build up a new world after February 1917.<sup>5</sup>

The role of the soviets—the workers', peasants', and soldiers' councils—was something that especially spurred anarchist ambitions for revolutionary efforts and stimulated their hopes, even if the Bolsheviki represented Marxist doctrine rather than traditional anarchism.<sup>6</sup> This form of organization from below match-

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1 Frank Jacob, Jeffrey Shaw and Timothy Demy, eds., *War and the Humanities: The Cultural Impact of the First World War* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2018).

2 For a broader survey of the global protest movements, see Marcel Bois and Frank Jacob, eds., *Zeiten des Aufruhrs (1916–1921): Globale Proteste, Streiks und Revolutionen gegen den Ersten Weltkrieg und seine Auswirkungen* (Berlin: Metropol, 2020).

3 Adam Hochschild, *Der Große Krieg: Der Untergang des alten Europa im Erstem Weltkrieg 1914–1918* (Frankfurt am Main et al.: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 2013), 14.

4 Anthony D'Agostino, “Anarchism and Marxism in the Russian Revolution,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 422.

5 *Ibid.*, 409.

6 Anthony D'Agostino argued that despite the early “schism,” “[t]he intellectual history of the two doctrines, anarchism and Marxism, while it contains two stories, really should be understood historically as one.” *Ibid.*, 411. On the named “schism,” see Wolfgang Eckhardt, *The First Socialist Schism: Bakunin vs. Marx in the International Working Men's Association* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016).

ed the ideas of anarchism, or anarcho-syndicalism, to be more precise, quite well.<sup>7</sup> It is consequently ironic in retrospect that the Bolsheviks used this support, and the anarchists' naivety, with regard to "the soviet as an institution around which to reorient all their conceptions about social organisation,"<sup>8</sup> and after the former had achieved power, they crushed the anarchist opposition and anarchism as such in Soviet Russia. Goldman was a witness of this process, and her initial admiration for the Bolsheviks turned into frustration and the ideals she had attached to the revolution were fully corrupted by Lenin and his followers. Her story, therefore, very much resembles that of many anarchists, and it was probably only her international fame that saved her from simply becoming another nameless victim of the anti-anarchist crusade by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. It is one of the tragedies of anarchism that the failed revolutions of the past, the initial success of that of October 1917 and Lenin's argument to act on behalf of the proletariat, whose dictatorship should have been established by using the soviets as all-powerful workers' representative organs within the post-revolutionary order, blinded many, who, however, also did not want to see the reality too clearly at this point. For many anarchists, as well as other representatives of the international Left during the First World War, a Bolshevik revolution seemed better than no revolution at all.

The Revolution of 1848, as the famous British historian A.J.P. Taylor (1906–1990) remarked, was for all revolutionary enthusiasts a "turning point that failed to turn,"<sup>9</sup> and although it stimulated political reforms on the local level, the revolutionary dreams for a better society were not fulfilled at all.<sup>10</sup> Regardless of the failed attempt, the Paris Commune in 1871 offered Karl Marx and other revolutionaries another possibility to preach a chance for a better future, and due to this experience, as Anthony D'Agostino has emphasized, "had Marx not endorsed the Commune, Marxism would have faded away 'in the remote byways' of the labour movement. Marx remained enough of an anarchist to make Lenin a Marxist revolutionary in 1917."<sup>11</sup> A kind of conciliation between anarchism and Marxism took place in the aftermath of the February Revolution in

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7 On this relationship, see Ralf Burnicki, *Anarchie als Direktdemokratie: Selbstverwaltung, Anti-staatlichkeit—Eine Einführung in den Gegenstand der Anarchie* (Moers: Syndikat, 1998).

8 D'Agostino, "Anarchism and Marxism," 423.

9 A. J. P. Taylor, *The Course of German History* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1962), 68.

10 For local perspectives in the German context see, among others, Karsten Ruppert, "Die politischen Vereine der Pfalz in der Revolution von 1848/49," in *Die Pfalz und die Revolution 1848/49*, vol. 1, ed. Hans Fenske, Joachim Kermann, and Karl Schererm (Kaiserslautern: Institut für pfälzische Geschichte und Volkskunde, 2000), 57–242.

11 D'Agostino, "Anarchism and Marxism," 417.

Russia and anarchist exiles from all around the world, e.g. Bill Shatov from the United States,<sup>12</sup> would return to Russian soil to help to drive the revolution forward. Alexander Kerenski (1881–1970), while corrupting the Provisionary Government, hoped to win the war to secure his position, since Lenin and the “Bolsheviks were the only party in the Petrograd Soviet that was steadfastly opposed to the war and willing to take power in order to make a separate peace with Germany and Austria. Lenin’s people proclaimed this every day to all who would listen.”<sup>13</sup> The anarchists, who also wanted peace, could consequently only oppose Kerenski and would turn towards Lenin’s Bolsheviks as a more natural and at least partially acceptable ally. In addition, Lenin had provided his views in *The State and Revolution* (1918)<sup>14</sup> and referred to Engels when claiming that the rule of the state should be abolished by revolution and replaced by a dictatorship of the proletariat:

[T]he state is a “special coercive force.” Engels gives this splendid and extremely profound definition here with the utmost lucidity. And from it follows that the “special coercive force” for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, of millions of working people by handfuls of the rich, must be replaced by a “special coercive force” for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (*the dictatorship of the proletariat*). This is precisely what is meant by “*abolition of the state as state*.” This is precisely the “act” of taking possession of the means of production in the name of society. And it is self-evident that such a replacement of one (bourgeois) “special force” by another (proletarian) “special force” cannot possibly take place in the form of “withering away.”<sup>15</sup>

The idea that Lenin had the same ambitions as the anarchists, that he was the only one who actually wanted to end the war, and that the Bolsheviks were the only ones who could defend the revolution and its ideals, e.g. against the military that had tried to end it during the Kornilov coup, made the support for Bolshevism acceptable for many anarchists. However, the longer Lenin’s lead-

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12 Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, trans. Peter Sedgwick (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2002), 84–85.

13 D’Agostino, “Anarchism and Marxism,” 424.

14 Lenin wrote the text in August and September 1917.

15 Vladimir I. Lenin, “The State and Revolution” (1918). Accessed May 20, 2020, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/>, ch. 1, my emphasis. On the problematic phrase “dictatorship of the proletariat,” see Wilfried Nippel, “Diktatur des Proletariats: Versuch einer Historisierung,” *Zyklus* 5 (2019): 71–130; Mike Schmeitzner, “Lenin und die Diktatur des Proletariats – Begriff, Konzeption, Ermöglichung,” *Totalitarismus und Demokratie* 14 (2017): 17–69. On Engels and his interpretation of revolution as a historical force, see Frank Jacob, “Friedrich Engels and Revolution Theory: The Legacy of a Revolutionary Life,” *Engels @ 200*, ed. Frank Jacob (Marburg: Büchner, 2020) (forthcoming).

ership lasted after Red October, the clearer it was that many had followed a lost dream. To better understand Goldman's position and her criticism of Lenin and the Bolsheviks after 1922 better, it seems important to reflect upon the anarchist perspective on the revolutionary events in more depth here.

## Anarchism and the Russian Revolution

As mentioned earlier, the First World War was a watershed for the international labor movement in general and the anarchist movement in particular. As Franco Bertolucci has emphasized, it was not only in the Italian case that "the anarchists were waiting for the war to end up in revolution like for the Messiah."<sup>16</sup> Especially since the war had led to a break within the internationalism of the Left in many countries, the revolution was longed for by many anarchists who hoped that the war, through such a revolution, would at least lead to the creation of a better world. In addition, theories like Lenin's imperialism theory<sup>17</sup> had predicted that imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism would cause war and revolution. The international anarchists were particularly shocked when Pyotr Kropotkin (1842–1921)<sup>18</sup> declared his support for the Russian war effort.<sup>19</sup> Due to their hopes and shocks, the anarchists eventually felt relieved by the events in Czarist Russia, where the workers had ended the autocratic regime of Nicholas II (1868–1918), and by mid-1917 it seemed that only Lenin would be able to drive the revolution further, especially since many observers believed that Kerenski was only interested in continuing his rule and turning it into a full dictatorship at the earliest possible moment.<sup>20</sup> The attraction of Bolshevism for anarchists

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**16** Franco Bertolucci, "Im Osten geht die Sonne der Zukunft auf: Die russische Revolution aus Sicht der italienischen Anarchisten 1917–1922," in *Anarchismus und russische Revolution*, ed. Philippe Kellermann (Berlin: Dietz, 2017), 189.

**17** Vladimir I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (1917), in *Lenin's Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963), 667–766. Accessed May 20, 2020, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/>.

**18** On his life and work, see Caroline Cahm, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism 1872–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

**19** Werner Portmann, "Leninistische Bluttransfusion für anarchistische Adern: Die Wirkung der 'Oktoberrevolution' auf den Anarchismus in der Schweiz," in *Anarchismus und russische Revolution*, ed. Philippe Kellermann (Berlin: Dietz, 2017), 297. For Goldman's view on Kropotkin's position, see *Living My Life*, ch. 43.

**20** Bertolucci, "Im Osten geht die Sonne der Zukunft auf," 202 provides some insight, e.g. for an evaluation of the Italian anarchist Luigi Fabbri (1877–1935). Fabbri would later also criticize the Bolshevik order and those anarchists who had supported Lenin during his rise to power, espe-

was generally related to two things: 1) they wanted the war to end and, since his April Theses, Lenin seemed to be the only one who would actually do exactly that, if in power, and 2) the Social Democrats were seen as collaborators of the European states, making the war possible in the first place, which was why they could not be trusted. In addition, Lenin had argued for a strong position of the soviets, which would hold all the power needed to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>21</sup> Bertolucci highlights, when considering these basic misconceptions of Lenin and his political aims, that there was almost no libertarian Russian or Italian that did not misunderstand Lenin's theoretical approach.<sup>22</sup> This might also have been a consequence of the fact that their utopian hopes and dreams seemed to actually come true, which is why they did not question the details too much. It was important to drive the revolution further, even if that meant acting shoulder to shoulder with a dedicated Marxist party. The anarchists were simply waiting for the revolution to eventually lead the way to the utopian ideals for which they had been waiting for years. This time, the revolution promised to reach the classless society and, in contrast to those of 1848 and 1871, to be successful with regard to its defense against a conservative counter-revolution.

In the Russian context, the anarchist movement not only had to deal with its suppression by the Czar, which led many of its members to seek refuge in exile in Western Europe or the United States, but also suffered from an internal split that was intensified by the First World War.<sup>23</sup> Between 1917 and 1922, the anarchists were consequently one of the most active political forces within the revolutionary movement and participated in the fight against Kerenski, backed the second revolutionary coup in October, and fought against the Whites in the early Russian Civil War before they became victims of Lenin's power themselves.<sup>24</sup> The anarchist movement was in some way revived by the February Revolution, and it grew from 220 members in six groups before the First World War to 40,000 in

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cially Victor Serge (1890–1947). See Luigi Fabbri, "Revolution and Dictatorship: On One Anarchist Who Has Forgotten His Principles" (1921). Accessed May 20, 2020, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/luigi-fabbri-revolution-and-dictatorship>.

<sup>21</sup> Bertolucci, "Im Osten geht die Sonne der Zukunft auf," 209–211.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>23</sup> Mitchell Abidor, "Victor Serge und der Anarchismus: Die russischen Jahre," in *Anarchismus und russische Revolution*, ed. Philippe Kellermann (Berlin: Dietz, 2017), 128. For a detailed discussion of anarchism in Russia, see Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967). On their role during the Russian Revolution, see Paul Avrich, ed., *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973).

<sup>24</sup> Dimitri Rublew, "Die politische Position der Anarchisten in der russischen Revolution 1917–1918," in *Anarchismus und russische Revolution*, ed. Philippe Kellermann (Berlin: Dietz, 2017), 11.

23 cities in 1917.<sup>25</sup> For the anarchist organizations, the war and the revolutionary developments consequently provided some gains. This, however, should not be overemphasized, as the degree of the party's organization within Russia remained rather marginal, not counting more than 1.2 to 1.5 percent, and party members were very much a minority in the countryside.<sup>26</sup> While the anarchist movement did grow in size, in 1917, it still remained dynamic and diverse, combining different types of anarchism. Anarcho-communists, anarcho-syndicalists, individual anarchists, and many other sub-categories existed within each of these major directions that were the consequence of decades of theoretical struggles. When they had to decide if the Bolsheviki should be supported or not, existent trench wars within the anarchist movement intensified.<sup>27</sup> In Russia, the diverse groups included the Moscow Federation of Anarchist Groups, the Petrograd Federation of Anarchist Groups, the Organization of the Anarchists of Kronstadt, and the Kiev Association of Free Anarchists, among others. A conference in Khar'kov in July 1917 showed that the anarcho-communists dominated the movement at that time, as many groups had been established in several Russian cities.<sup>28</sup> While quite a lot of regional anarchist organizations existed in revolutionary Russia, the movement as a whole was dominated by those in Petrograd and Moscow.

A national structure of the anarchist movement was not created before spring 1918, when the All-Russian Federation of Anarcho-Communists was established during the Fourth All-Russian Congress. In December of the same year, the Congress of the Anarcho-Communists decided to apply the federation's structural order nationwide. The organizational questions therefore had been discussed and solved by the end of 1918, but many anarchists had begun to comply with the political course of the Bolsheviks around Lenin much earlier. In Petrograd, the anarchists, represented by Jossif Bleichman, had already signaled their support for the Bolshevik cause in March 1917 while demanding to remove monarchists from the government, the inclusion of anarchists into the Petrograd soviet, and the assurance of a free press. The anarchists in Moscow demanded

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25 Abidor, "Victor Serge," 129. See also Lutz Häfner, "Nur im Kampf wirst Du Dein Recht erlangen! Sozialisten-Revolutionäre (Maximalisten) und Linke Sozialisten-Revolutionäre in der russischen Revolution 1917/18: Ideologische Grundlagen, Organisation und Handeln," in *Anarchismus und russische Revolution*, ed. Philippe Kellermann (Berlin: Dietz, 2017), 103.

26 Ibid.

27 Abidor, "Victor Serge," 129. See also Victor Serge, "Les Tendances Nouvelles de l'Anarchisme Russe," *Bulletin Communiste* 48/49 (1921): 808, cited in *ibid.*, and Rublew, "Die politische Position," 12.

28 Ibid., 12–13.

even less for their support, and the Moscow Federation of Anarchist Groups declared a “temporary neutrality.”<sup>29</sup> The fear of a counter-revolution led the anarchists to forget about their dislike for Marxism and Lenin’s reinterpretations of Marx that still demanded state rule. Nevertheless, the anarchists were not willing to sacrifice the bud of revolution before the flower of the classless society could open its blossoms. In July 1917 the anarchists, during their conference in Kharkov, had also made clear that the war had to end—although some anarcho-communists, like Kropotkin, would still demand a defense of Russian territory and not a peace at all costs—and that the further revolutionary process should long for the establishment of an anarcho-communist, i.e. classless, society.<sup>30</sup>

Many anarchists did oppose any cooperation with the state government after February 1917, especially since that would have been against anti-statism, which has remained one of the core concepts of anarchism until today. However, participation in the soviets was considered reasonable and recommended by the meeting in Kharkov, and it was argued that the workers’ councils could turn into powerful organizations in the post-revolutionary order. Regardless of the agreements, the anarchist movement eventually split into two main directions, namely a syndicalist one and one that was more insurrectionist. Both, however, would demand the end of the provisional government.<sup>31</sup> The insurrectionists believed that the masses, after a spontaneous upheaval, would pave the way to anarchist communism, and within this specific anarchist direction, the two Gordin brothers, Abba (1887–1964) and Wolf, led a kind of pan-anarchist group. The revolutionary struggle had to be fought as an anarchist struggle against the major suppressions of the time. Pan-anarchism, according to the Gordins, was, however, not only anarchist and did not only demand the absence of power and control, but was also communist, as it requested everything for all, pedist, i.e. against the suppression of children through education, national-cosmopolitan, in the sense that it demanded freedom for all nationalities, and, finally, geniatropist, demanding freedom for women.<sup>32</sup> According to the Gordins, a multi-step process would eventually lead to anarchism. In the first step, new political rights needed to be secured, including the right for workers to strike as well as the right to leave the state to establish an independent workers’ collective. In a second step, these collectives would help to create actual anarchism and abolish

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 15–17. On Kropotkin’s anarcho-communism, see Michael Lausberg, *Kropotkins Philosophie des kommunistischen Anarchismus* (Münster: Unrast Verlag, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Rublew, “Die politische Position,” 18–21.

<sup>32</sup> Brothers Gordin, “Basics of Pan-Anarchism,” *Besnatschalije* 1, October 25, 1917, cited in *ibid.*, 21–22.

the state after experimental autonomous zones without any state interference had been established and worked for a while. These experiments should eventually become an existent reality for all through a social revolution.<sup>33</sup>

In contrast to the Gordins' ideas, anarcho-syndicalists demanded to use workers' organizations to prepare the class struggle that was lying ahead. The revolutionary events, however, made it hard to remain along theoretical lines, and the realities demanded a decision with regard to the anarchist support for Bolshevism, which naturally resembled something, i.e. a Marxist party, that many anarchists would traditionally neglect. Nevertheless, there were anarchist voices that demanded more pragmatism in 1917.<sup>34</sup> Others, like the anarcho-syndicalist Lev Fischelev (aka Maxim Rajevski, 1880 – 1931), were against such support, as they criticized the idea that a small party minority like the Bolsheviki could represent a rule of the proletariat and the masses it represented. He argued that they would instead establish a dictatorship of the minority, and therefore act against the interest of the revolutionary masses.<sup>35</sup> The Bolshevik attempt and strategy to act as an avant-garde of the revolution,<sup>36</sup> which after October 1917 would lead to a post-revolutionary party regime, was something that, at least in Russia, was realized and criticized by some anarchists early on and at a time when American anarchists had barely any information about what had actually happened across the Atlantic. Before October 1917 and the following corruption of the revolution, however, many anarchists in Russia would support the Bolshevik fight against the Provisional Government as well. Regardless of the support, some anarchists began to criticize Lenin early on for his political aims. According to the Gordins, "Lenin would without any doubt turn as fast into an unscrupulous dictator like Kerenski, since in what regard is one better than the other? Kerenski once announced in all his rallies that he would never use force against the people, not even if it were necessary. ... Lenin, as it seems to us, will not even make such a promise."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>34</sup> See "Resolution of the Anarchists in Chita," *Kommuna* 4–5 (September 1917), cited in *ibid.*, 24.

<sup>35</sup> Maxim Rajewski, "The New Motto of the Bolsheviks," *Golos Truda* 2, August 18, 1917, cited in *ibid.* On Lev Fischelev, see Dmitri Rublew, "Lew Fischelew (Maxim Rajewskij): Die Biografie und Ideen eines vergessenen Theoretikers des russischen Anarchismus des beginnenden zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts," *Ne Znam: Zeitschrift für Anarchismusforschung* 6 (2017): 3–29.

<sup>36</sup> Johannes Wörle, "Die Avantgarde als Keimzelle der Revolution: Vladimir I. Lenin," in *Sozial-revolutionärer Terrorismus: Theorie, Ideologie, Fallbeispiele, Zukunftsszenarien*, ed. Alexander Straßner (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009), 77–85.

<sup>37</sup> Gordin Brothers, "Nothing Forgotten and Nothing Learned," *Anarchija* 11, October 22, 1917, cited in Rublew, "Die politische Position," 27.

Red October, however, was greeted by anarcho-communists and anarcho-syndicalists alike, as they hoped that this step was necessary to fulfill the revolutionary necessities on the way to the establishment of a classless society. Many anarchists of different directions of the movement consequently also became part of the Revolutionary Military Committee of Petrograd.<sup>38</sup> In addition, prominent anarchists would call for support in the fight against the internal and external counter-revolutions. Only a revolution that was defended against the reactionary and anti-revolutionary forces in Russia and abroad could eventually fulfill the anarchists' ideals. An anarchist majority also agreed upon the participation within the organizations of the revolutionary process to ideologically secure the latter from within. After October 1917, however, there were also struggles about the role of the soviets and whether these were turning into organizations of rule instead of workers' solidarity and participation.<sup>39</sup> When the authoritarian tendencies of Bolshevik rule continued to increase and when Lenin and his followers began to limit the freedom of the press, restrict political gatherings and suppress other political parties, the time for a break up of the alliance of the revolutionary Left seemed to have come, especially since the Bolsheviks clearly showed that they were not interested in true equality but in power when they declared that the vote of a worker should be worth five times that of a peasant.<sup>40</sup>

In the spring of 1918, the Bolsheviks also had to worry about the erosion of their proletarian power base, as the Mensheviks as well as the Social Revolutionaries were able to gain more and more votes. Lenin's reaction was violent, and bayonets as well as the manipulation of elections helped the Bolshevik party stay in power. Those who supported other political alternatives were called counter-revolutionaries, saboteurs, or worse, and the new secret police, the Cheka, would deal with these dissidents.<sup>41</sup> The first violent clashes with the anarchists followed in April 1918, and the anarchists now had to choose whom to support in the Civil War, a choice that actually seemed to create a dilemma for many of them and one which Paul Avrich described so well: "Which side were they to support? As staunch libertarians, they held no brief for the dictatorial policies of Lenin's government, but the prospect of a White victory seemed even worse. Active opposition to the Soviet regime might tip the balance in favor of the counterrevolutionaries."<sup>42</sup> Regardless of this dilemma, the anarchists, who, as described above, had already been divided into so many different sub-groups,

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 27–29.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 32, 38–39.

<sup>40</sup> Häfner, "Nur im Kampf," 120–121.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Avrich, "Russian Anarchists and the Civil War," *The Russian Review* 27, no. 3 (1968): 296.

did not follow a single strategy; different anarchists would choose different positions, “ranging from active resistance to the Bolsheviks through passive neutrality to eager collaboration.”<sup>43</sup> However, many anarchists would support the Bolshevik party under Lenin’s leadership during the following years and thereby dug their own graves. Considering that the diversity of opinions among the anarchists in Soviet Russia was so broad, it is easy to understand why many international anarchists were actively in favor of Bolshevism once the news of Red October spread around the world. Lacking information about the political developments in Russia but observing the many capitalist and interventionist reactions of state governments around the globe, the anarchists, including Goldman, would naturally support the Russian experiment, even if such support was grounded on utopian hopes rather than on actual knowledge. This early perception of the Russian Revolution among international anarchists shall therefore be taken into closer consideration before Goldman’s views are analyzed in more detail.

## The International Anarchists and the Russian Revolution

A problem for many anarchists was the term “dictatorship of the proletariat,” which was understood and interpreted in many different ways. When Lenin claimed to establish it, anarchists initially seemed to believe that he was going to strengthen the role of the soviets as some kind of syndicalist organization that would prepare the transition to a classless society.<sup>44</sup> Karl Roche (1862–1931), a German syndicalist, declared in February 1919 enthusiastically that “[f]rom the Russian ember furnace rose two stars, which will lighten the firmament of human struggle: Lenin, Trotsky. In a large and shattered empire will they realize socialism.”<sup>45</sup> The rule of a Bolshevik-led Marxist state was considered a necessary evil that would dissolve itself after the successful defense and implementation of the revolution. For the moment, the struggle against the counter-revolutionary forces in Russia demanded this state-related centralization of power, but it was, according to the early anarchist narrative, no more than Lenin acting according to the realities of the post-revolutionary period.<sup>46</sup> Others, like Victor Serge, who supported the Bolsheviks, argued that the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Kellermann, “Die Stellungnahmen,” 323.

<sup>45</sup> Karl Roche, “Over 10 Million Voices but No Vote!” *Der Syndikalist* 1, no. 8 (1919), cited in *ibid.*, 327.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.

anarchists were simply still living in a dream, not accepting that the revolution had to deal with the realities as they existed and not a utopia that so many had dreamt of before. Serge accepted the impact of the anarchists, who in some way could suppress the most negative tendencies of Bolshevik rule for a while.<sup>47</sup> With regard to the “dictatorship of the proletariat,” however, Serge claimed that “as the expression of rule by an organized class, it leads to the dictatorship of a party, changes the soviet system into a bureaucratic, police, and primitive apparatus, and is therefore unacceptable for anarcho-syndicalists.”<sup>48</sup> For Serge, like for many others, however, the destruction of the Russian Revolution by the Whites, i.e. the reactionary counter-revolution, seemed to be more dangerous than supporting the Bolsheviks, who often violated anarchist ideas. Serge and the Bolsheviks’ supporters could therefore be considered the revolutionary pragmatists of the post-revolutionary period.

Within the global anarchist movement, there existed three different positions that can be identified: one could be an active supporter, a neutral observer, or an oppositional resistant.<sup>49</sup> In the case of Goldman, one could argue that she was all three, not at the same time, but successively. She was an active supporter in the US, a neutral observer in Soviet Russia, and an oppositional resistant to Bolshevism during her exile years after 1922. What made it difficult for the anarchists to choose a clear position towards Bolshevism was the latter’s ambivalent relationship with the former. In what almost looks like a form of “reluctant dance,” alliances with anarchists were broken up, anarchists killed, new alliances forged, and anarchist positions even adopted by the Bolsheviks when considered necessary. Until 1921, many anarchists consequently tried to find a *modus vivendi* with Lenin’s party and the new post-revolutionary course.<sup>50</sup> During these developments, the most tragic anarchists were probably those who believed that Lenin and his Bolsheviks were actually interested in the ideals of the revolution that began in February 1917.

The international discussion about the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the anarchist position towards it was also influenced by famous Russian anarchists who demanded support for Bolshevism to protect the revolution from its enemies. The already-mentioned Kropotkin would demand at least a temporary or partial support for Lenin. The argument was clear: one could of course not just accept the course of the Bolsheviks totally unquestioned or without criticism, but in a moment of danger, when international interventions were trying

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<sup>47</sup> Abidor, “Victor Serge,” 130.

<sup>48</sup> Serge, “Tendances nouvelles,” 812, cited in *ibid.*, 131.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

to suppress the success of the revolution, there was no time for theoretical disputes. The aim of the revolution needed to be protected against its enemy, and therefore Kropotkin requested support for Lenin's Bolshevik party.<sup>51</sup> Goldman and Berkman would request the same when they initially arrived in Russia, ignoring the signs that already showed that Lenin was not applying his control mechanisms temporarily. However, the support of Lenin's course by famous anarchists like Bill Shatov (1887–1938), Ilya Solomonovich Bleichmann (1874–1921), or Efim Yartchuk (1882/6–1937) also let members of the international anarchist community believe in a chance for a peaceful coexistence of the two political ideas and the eventual fulfillment of the old revolutionary dream.<sup>52</sup>

From an international viewpoint on Russia, there were also signs that emphasized that the cooperation between Bolshevism and anarchism was working quite well. When the anarcho-communists opted for joining the soviets in winter 1918, the support and acceptance of the new order seemed quite obvious, and when some of the former joined the All-Russian Central Executive Committee later, although highlighting that this was only a result of the wish to implement and protect anarchist ideas in this political organ, it was hard to criticize Bolshevism openly—although some Russian anarchists protested vehemently—without criticizing its anarcho-communist supporters.<sup>53</sup> However, as soon as more detailed information became known, it was hard to unreflectively support Lenin's course. An article in *Golos Truda*—the anarchist paper that was founded in New York in 1911 and published in Petrograd between 1917 and 1919—from 28 January 1918 argued that the “Bolsheviki have turned their back to Marxism, without approaching anarchism ... [and] in reality they force the masses ... to listen to that which the center says.”<sup>54</sup> Lenin's measures to centralize the Bolshevik-led post-revolutionary state were also criticized, especially by anarchists, who feared that the revolution would end in a new state power exploiting the masses. Yet regardless of such critical voices, the alliance seemed to hold between October 1917 and winter 1918. Voline (1882–1945),<sup>55</sup> another well-known anarchist, announced it plain and simple: “For us, only one thing is important: the rescue and the victory of the revolution ... We all have to rise like one man to defend the revolution, take

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51 Peter Kropotkin, “An die Arbeiter der westlichen Welt,” in Peter Kropotkin, *Eroberung des Brotes und andere Schriften* (Munich: Hanser, 1973), 281–287.

52 For some detail on Shatov, see Avrich, “Russian Anarchists and the Civil War,” 296–297.

53 Rublew, “Die politische Position,” 40.

54 *Golos Truda*, January 28, 1918, cited in *ibid.*, 42.

55 Born as Vsevolod Mikhailovich Eikhenbaum, Voline would later also publish his view of the revolution in *La révolution inconnue (1917–1921): Documentation inédite sur la Révolution russe* (Paris: Les Amis de Voline, 1947).

up the rifle and advance into the last battle.”<sup>56</sup> The anarchists armed themselves and also requested establishing armed resistance against the German army in occupied territories as well as against the international military intervention that threatened the revolution.<sup>57</sup>

When Lenin approved the Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk,<sup>58</sup> which allowed the German army to occupy large parts of former Russian territory, he gave in to the Germans’ imperialist claims to gain a break to restructure his own rule. Many anarchists, and other representatives of the Left, considered this to be treason against the international socialist and workers’ movement. In early April 1918, the Cheka began to act against the anarchists, who believed this to have been a rupture of the anarchist-Bolshevist union. Some even demanded an open fight against Bolshevism, and the calls for “direct action” and terror started to gain some ground.<sup>59</sup> Regardless of the change of position, the anarchists at the same time did not want to cooperate with other anti-Bolshevist groups and therefore did not stand a chance against the political antagonist. More and more anarchists were taken into custody, tortured or simply shot by the Cheka. This kind of terror was criticized from all directions, and sometimes even by anarchists who still wanted to support the Bolsheviki. When the first All-Russian Conference of Anarcho-Syndicalists met in late August to mid-September 1918, they passed a resolution that declared the Bolsheviki to be the “party of stagnation and reaction.” However, only a resolution of a minority would demand a fight for the social revolution and against the Bolsheviki and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The assassination attempt on Lenin in August 1918,<sup>60</sup> at the same time, was declared by the anarchist majority to be an act of the counter-revolution. Only a minority pointed out that the assassination plan was the consequence of Lenin’s politics and the Bolshevik methods of dealing with their political antagonists. Regardless of the ratio between the majority and the minority at the conference, the anarchist movement seemed to be in danger of a fundamental split, and the inactivity with regard to their unified resis-

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56 Voline, “For the Revolution!” *Golos Truda*, February 20, 1918, cited in Rublew, “Die politische Position,” 45.

57 For related documents, see James Bunyan, ed., *Intervention, Civil War, and Communism in Russia, April-December, 1918* (New York: Octagon Books, 1976 [1936]).

58 For a detailed discussion, see Yuri Felshtinsky, *Lenin, Trotsky, Germany and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk: The Collapse of the World Revolution, November 1917-November 1918* (Milford, CT: Russell, 2012).

59 Rublew, “Die politische Position,” 46–48.

60 See Martin Sixsmith, “Fanny Kaplan’s Attempt to Kill Lenin,” in *Was Revolution Inevitable? Turning Points of the Russian Revolution*, ed. Tony Brenton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 178–199.

tance gave the Bolsheviks sufficient time to prepare themselves for the part of the civil war that would be fought in the near future.<sup>61</sup>

Similar struggles were fought in the international anarchist movement in multiple national contexts. There were those still dreaming, believing that the end would justify Lenin's radical policy, and those who had already stopped dreaming, seeing the dictatorship of the proletariat for what it actually was, namely a Bolshevik party regime under Lenin's leadership. The speed with which anarchists could actually give up dreaming would be responsible for their own survival, but also for the position within their own political movement or within the international Left. The German anarchists would criticize the Russian Revolution also with regard to their own "failed" revolution between November 1918 and May 1919. One anonymous anarchist who had just left the German Communist Party (KPD) wrote the following in *Der Syndikalist* with regard to Russia in September 1919: "Every criticism, every heretical view is ... violently suppressed. Marxism does not simply lead to socialism, but to state capitalism."<sup>62</sup> Augustin Souchy (1892–1984), a famous German anarchist, also highlighted in 1919 that it was not easy to judge the events in Soviet Russia at a time when the Bolsheviks had to fight against so many enemies. However, a new dictatorship that would stimulate the increase of violence would not be the best possibility to achieve freedom for all. The Bolsheviks had only replaced the former dictatorial rulers and were now using the same violent means to remain in that position of power.<sup>63</sup> The discourse about Bolshevism within German anarchist circles consequently replicated the discourse that had taken place in Russia before. Anti-Bolshevism, however, had already poisoned the German Revolution, and the fear that radical revolutionaries would demand to follow the Russian example made the reaction of the counter-revolution in Germany quite violent.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Rublew, "Die politische Position," 58–59.

<sup>62</sup> K.J., "Warum trat ich aus der K.P.D., Ortsgruppe Erfurt aus?" *Der Syndikalist* 1 (1919): 42, cited in Kellermann, "Die Stellungnahmen," 340.

<sup>63</sup> Augustin Souchy, "Zentralismus und Sozialismus [I]," *Der freie Arbeiter* 12 (1919): 13, cited in *ibid.*, 348.

<sup>64</sup> Mark Jones, *Am Anfang war Gewalt: Die deutsche Revolution 1918/19 und der Beginn der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2016). For a local perspective and the role of anti-Bolshevist fears, see Frank Jacob, *Revolution und Räterepublik in Unterfranken: Eine landesgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Verlauf und Folgen der Revolution von 1918/19 an der bayerischen Peripherie* (Würzburg: K&N, 2019).

Yet other countries in Europe would go through similar discourses about Red October. In Italy,<sup>65</sup> the already-mentioned Luigi Fabbri criticized the events after late 1917 based on two points: 1) that the unity of social revolution and political freedom no longer existed in Lenin's Russia, and 2) that the development towards authoritarian rule seemed inevitable, especially since one party had placed itself on top of the new political order, which was in addition a state, something anarchists did not like very much in general, to say the least.<sup>66</sup> When the open conflict between anarchists and Bolsheviks in Russia began in April 1918, it was the end of a dream. The Russian Revolution that was supposed to unite all revolutionaries in an epic struggle to gain freedom for all and to establish a classless society had been betrayed by the Bolsheviks, who now openly fought against other ideas and those revolutionaries who represented them.<sup>67</sup> The split between the two revolutionary groups would run deeper in the years to come, and in 1921 Errico Malatesta (1853–1932) described the difference between anarchism and Bolshevism as follows: “The Communist Party’s concept of communism is authoritarian as well as dictatorial and stands in fundamental opposition to anarchism. Anarchism stands for freedom, for free organization, and for experimenting with the social forms that the workers want. The other [Bolshevism, F.J.] means putting on the ideas and methods of a specific school of thought: in the interest of a party or a clique.”<sup>68</sup> The conflict early on was also waged with regard to the idea of the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” In April 1919, the anarchist Francesco Porcelli wrote that this idea, for an anarchist, could never mean “a dictatorship of the people” as this would simply be “nonsense.” In reality, the “dictatorship of the proletariat” means a “delegation of power” to some individuals, who would rule in the best interests of the people. It is basically nothing more than “the return of an old idea: the masses, because they are unable to forge their own happiness, put themselves into the hands of some chosen men.” However, the working class can only free itself, if it were really interested in leading a revolution to true freedom, because the chosen men will eventually begin to abuse their power to rule the people in the name of revolution.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> For a more detailed study of the Italian discourse, see Antonio Senta, *Gli anarchici e la rivoluzione russa (1917–1922)* (Milan: Mimesis, 2019).

<sup>66</sup> Bertolucci, “Im Osten geht die Sonne der Zukunft auf,” 215.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>68</sup> Errico Malatesta, “Communismo e anarchismo,” *Umanità nova*, August 31, 1921, cited in *ibid.*, 231.

<sup>69</sup> F[rancesco] P[orcelli], “Anarchia e dittatura,” *Il Risveglio*, April 5, 1919, cited in *ibid.*, 232–233.

However, considering Lenin's writings and actions after February 1917, these facts could hardly have been surprising, especially since the leader of the Bolsheviks clearly followed his own agenda, or, as Malatesta admitted in a letter to Fabbri on 30 July 1919, "The Bolsheviks are simply Marxists, and they have honestly and consequently remained Marxists." And, as Malatesta continues, "Lenin and Trotsky are, of course, true revolutionaries, according to their own interpretation of revolution, and they will not betray it."<sup>70</sup> Prophetically, the old anarchist would add that Lenin and Trotsky would, like Maximilien de Robespierre (1758–1794) during the French Revolution, pave the way for those who would kill the revolution and with it their predecessors.<sup>71</sup> Fabbri acknowledged the "dictatorship of a political party" and argued against the belief that this was a necessary stage of the revolution that needed to be passed to reach a truly free new social order. Like Goldman, who in 1922 would also join the critics of Bolshevik Russia, he pointed to the "authoritarian degeneration" of the revolutionary process that had begun in February 1917.<sup>72</sup> For Fabbri, and for Goldman later as well, the role of the Bolshevik party was essential in the failure of the revolution in Russia as it turned against the principles of freedom and instead installed a dictatorial state that, by its pure existence, would violate the revolution and its original aims.<sup>73</sup>

In Spain, the anarcho-syndicalist Ángel Pestaña (1886–1937) was important within the national anarchist discourse about the Russian Revolution. His report *70 Days in Russia: What I Saw* (1924)<sup>74</sup> offered an "almost complete panorama of the social and political realities"<sup>75</sup> in Bolshevik Russia and would disillusion many anarchists who had seen post-revolutionary Russia as the utopia they had dreamt of for so long. Pestaña was shocked and disillusioned by corruption, a higher level of bureaucracy than in Czarist Russia, the non-existent interest of the workers in the revolutionary process, as well as party functionaries who were abusing their position, extracting the resources of the country to secure their own life in luxury, while political enemies were suppressed in a society that was not only flooded with propaganda but also ordered according to new hier-

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<sup>70</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 237.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 237–238.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 239–240.

<sup>73</sup> Luigi Fabbri, "Lenin e l'esperienza russa," *Pensiero e Volontà*, February 15, 1924, cited in *ibid.*, 249.

<sup>74</sup> Ángel Pestaña, *Setenta días en Rusia: Lo que yo viví* (Barcelona: Tipografía Cosmos, 2013 [1924]).

<sup>75</sup> Baxmeyer, "Der Bericht des Uhrmachers," 269.

archies.<sup>76</sup> In contrast to Goldman and Berkman, who would be allowed to move through the country freely and also speak to ordinary people without needing a translator, Pestaña could not move as freely through the country, but his 70 days in Soviet Russia were obviously enough to awaken him and to let him see the corruption of the revolutionary ideals by the Bolshevik party.

While a majority of the population was suffering from hunger and cold, the Bolsheviks treated themselves and their international guests in Moscow quite well. As long as one did not ask critical questions, one could actually enjoy a visit to Soviet Russia, just as one could probably enjoy it today in the times of Putin, without asking critical questions about political freedom. The lack of the latter was particularly shocking for Pestaña.<sup>77</sup> He would argue when reporting about his Russian experience in 1921 that “a revolution cannot be the work of a party. A party does not make a revolution. A party does not accomplish anything but a coup d’état. And a coup d’état is not a revolution.”<sup>78</sup> The Bolsheviks were therefore not the gravediggers of capitalism, a role Marx had assigned to the proletariat, but the gravediggers of the revolution. The Russian Revolution had been corrupted, and the takeover of the Bolsheviks in October 1917 was, according to Pestaña, nothing more than a “schism of power, a changing of the guard, a coup, and a fundamentally counter-revolutionary act.”<sup>79</sup> He also offered a characterization of Lenin, who “dreams of a methodical, ordered, and uniform organization for Russia, which offers and rules everything. It would leave nothing to accidental circumstances or to spontaneous and fruitful initiatives of the individual. Every citizen must know, hour by hour, day by day, what he has to do and how he has to think.”<sup>80</sup> Pestaña would outline to the Spanish anarchists that Lenin no longer cared for the ideals of the revolution but was solely interested in the power held by his party. A new Bolshevik regime consequently ruled Russia, and this insight led to countless expressions of criticism against the Bolshevik system in its post-revolutionary context. In contrast to Goldman, Pestaña was able to persuade the anarchists in his personal environment after his return from Russia, while the former had problems in achieving this, especially since

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 271–272.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>78</sup> Ángel Pestaña, “Memoria que al Comité de la C.N. del T. presenta de sue gestión en el II. Congreso de la Tercera Internacional el delegado Ángel Pestaña” (1921), in Ángel Pestaña, *Trayectoria sindicalista*, prólogo de Antonio Elorza (Madrid: Ediciones Tebas, 1974), 473, cited in *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 282–283.

<sup>80</sup> Cited in Ángel María de Lera, *Ángel Pestaña: Retrato de un anarquista* (Barcelona: Argos Vergara, 1978), 157.

she had to remain in exile once she had escaped from Russia. Nevertheless, Goldman shared the hopes so many others had expressed for the Russian Revolution as well. Her initial reactions to the revolutionary events in her country of origin clearly emphasize this and should therefore be taken into closer consideration.

## Goldman and Early Perceptions of the Russian Revolution

Goldman and Berkman had been US radicals through and through, but both kept themselves informed about Russia, which they considered to be less free than the United States, and therefore also tried to support the radicals and revolutionaries there, hoping to combine the revolutionary movements of the “Old World” and the “New World.” However, as historian Dimitri von Mohrenschildt pointed out,

[a]t the turn of the century the United States was indisputably the richest, and in many respects, the most advanced country in the world. There seemed no limit to the unprecedented industrial expansion of the thirty years following the Civil War. The big railway, oil, and steel empires were already consolidated, or in the process of consolidation. Foreigners who visited America agreed that the standard of living in this country was higher than elsewhere.<sup>81</sup>

However, capitalism and the economic success described here needed exploitation, and radical ideas were able to gain ground, especially among poor immigrants. They highlighted that not all people agreed with the social order of the United States, and especially radicals like Goldman “were appalled by the conditions in the factories, by the ever-increasing slums of the big cities, by the treatment of the Negro in the deep South, and above all, by the growing power of the trusts which threatened, they thought, the well-being, the very existence, of the small business man, the shopkeeper, the worker.”<sup>82</sup> In the years leading up to the First World War, the tension between the capitalist myth of the United States as the country of fortune and the harsh realities of exploitation in the factories would lead to multiple clashes between the government and those who protested against the prohibition of free speech, the existent social order, as well as the divide between rich upper class and exploited working class.

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<sup>81</sup> Dimitri von Mohrenschildt, “Reformers and Radicals in Pre-World War I America,” *The Russian Review* 17, no. 2 (1958): 128.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

The reality of the First World War, although the United States did not join the conflict before 1917, made many radicals turn against the war as well, in some way as a natural continuation of the anti-state agenda they had previously expressed in other forms of protest or political radicalism. Goldman was no exception, and she turned as fiercely against the war and the related exploitation of the common Americans as the famous anarchist had fought against the existent order in many different ways before.<sup>83</sup> What von Mohrenschildt called a “stronger and more violent brand of social protest-anarchism”<sup>84</sup> became visible, and the authorities feared the anarchists as they presented a menace to inner stability, especially in the war years of 1917–1918. Goldman, within the different varieties of the American anarchists, presented some kind of international anarchism that linked US radicals with those in other countries, especially Russia, quite well. One center for anarchist activities in the United States in general, and New York in particular, was the Ferrar School, housed at 63 West 107th Street, which was founded in 1910 and brought together political radicals and, at the same time, writers and artists. Goldman lectured there on Russian drama, and met other important intellectuals of her time at the school, including the journalists Lincoln Steffens (1866–1936) and Hutchins Hapgood (1869–1944).<sup>85</sup>

The radical elements in New York City and other parts of the United States became targets of the US government’s course against “enemies of the state,” and the harsh methods even got worse after the Russian Revolution, as those in power began to fear the influence of the import of foreign ideas to US shores. Since anarchism had been considered a foreign problem before, it was no surprise that anarchists like Goldman made those in government circles particularly nervous. The organization of the No-Conscription League by Goldman as well as other anarchists, or intellectuals like the famous art historian Carl Zigrosser (1891–1975) in 1916 and his protest against conscription, intensified the struggle between radical elements that protested against the US involvement in the war and the country’s government.<sup>86</sup> The Russian Revolution eventually brought

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**83** Sarah Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: V&R, 2014), 336, note 256.

**84** Von Mohrenschildt, “Reformers and Radicals,” 132.

**85** *Ibid.*, 133. Goldman also lectured at the Modern School, which had existed since 1911 and, according to Francis M. Naumann and Paul Avrich, was “a center of social radicalism, adult education, and experimentation in the arts. Anarchism, socialism, syndicalism, birth control, free love, Cubism, Futurism, psychoanalysis, feminism, direct action—all were subjects intensely discussed at the school.” Francis M. Naumann and Paul Avrich, “Adolf Wolff: ‘Poet, Sculptor and Revolutionist, but Mostly Revolutionist,’” *The Art Bulletin* 67, no. 3 (1985): 487.

**86** Allan Antliff, “Carl Zigrosser and the Modern School: Nietzsche, Art, and Anarchism,” *Archives of American Art Journal* 34, no. 4 (1994): 20–21.

the struggle to a climax, since America's first Red Scare was directly related to the events in Russia, and Goldman, due to her advocacy for the revolutionaries in Soviet Russia, including the Bolsheviki, made her a special target of the state power in the United States, although Goldman had actually been involved with the Russian revolutionary movement since the early 1900s.

She had been active as a friend of Russian freedom, i.e. a member of "an American group [by that name, which] had been doing admirable work in enlightening the country about the nature of Russian absolutism."<sup>87</sup> Very early on after the beginning of her anarchist career, Goldman was eager to support the revolutionary cause in her home country, and argued in *Living My Life* that when, as an anarchist lecturer, "I had greater access to the American mind, I determined to use whatever ability I possessed to plead the heroic cause of Russian Revolution."<sup>88</sup> She would also recall some of these efforts of the early 1900s in her autobiography when she wrote the following:

My efforts, together with the other activities in behalf of Russia, received very considerable support by the arrival in New York of two Russians, members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party [S. R.], Rosenbaum<sup>89</sup> and Nikolaev.<sup>90</sup> They came unannounced and unheralded, but the work they accomplished was of far-reaching consequences and paved the way for the visits of a number of distinguished leaders of the Russian libertarian struggle. Within a few weeks after his arrival Rosenbaum succeeded in welding together the militant elements of the East Side into a section of the S. R. Although aware that this party did not agree with our ideas of a non-governmental society, I became a member of the group. It was their work in Russia that attracted me and compelled me to help in the labours of the newly formed society. Our spirits were greatly raised by the news of the approaching visit of Catherine Breshkovskaya,<sup>91</sup> affectionately called Babushka, the Grandmother of the Russian Revolution.<sup>92</sup>

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**87** Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 28.

**88** *Ibid.*

**89** Menahem Mendel Rosenbaum (1868/9–1954) was a Socialist Revolutionary and also involved in the smuggling of Russian revolutionary pamphlets from Switzerland into the Czarist Empire. See Menahem Mendel Rosenbaum, *Erinerungen fun a sotsyalist-revolutsyoner*, vol. 1 (New York: Dr. Kh. Zhitlovski-farlag, 1921).

**90** I was unable to conclusively identify this person.

**91** Yekaterina Konstantinovna Breshko-Breshkovskaya (1844–1934) was a major figure in the Russian revolutionary movement and visited the United States in 1905 to gather financial support for it. For a more detailed study of her US tour, see Alison Rowley, "Russian Revolutionary as American Celebrity: A Case Study of Yekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaya," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Women and Gender in Twentieth-Century Russia and the Soviet Union*, ed. Melanie Ilic (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 7–23.

**92** Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 28.

The Russian visit in 1905 and the tour by Breshkovskaya were supposed to raise not only money but also awareness about the revolution in the Czarist Empire. Goldman's apartment at 210 East 13th Street became a highly frequented meeting point in 1905, and the anarchist worked as a liaison between the Russians on the one hand and the Friends of Russian Freedom on the other.<sup>93</sup>

The intellectual and leader of the New Yorker Jewish workers movement Chaim Zhitlovsky (1865–1943) was also one of those whom Goldman got in touch with during these revolutionary days of 1905, and she made him aware of the fact that she had decided that her revolutionary identity, not her Jewish identity, was the more important one.

Zhitlovsky had come to America with Babushka. A Socialist Revolutionist, he was also an ardent Judaist. He never tired urging upon me that as a Jewish daughter I should devote myself to the cause of the Jews. I would say to him that I had been told the same thing before. A young scientist I had met in Chicago, a friend of Max Baginski, had pleaded with me to take up the Jewish cause. I repeated to Zhitlovsky what I had related to the other: that at the age of eight I used to dream of becoming a Judith and visioned myself in the act of cutting off Holofernes' head to avenge the wrongs of my people. But since I had become aware that social injustice is not confined to my own race, I had decided that there were too many heads for one Judith to cut off.<sup>94</sup>

Goldman was really happy about the events in Russia, which had been stimulated by the Russo-Japanese War<sup>95</sup> and the defeats of the Czarist army and navy that had further increased the pressure on the people, whose revolutionary potential eventually erupted after the events on Bloody Sunday in January 1905.<sup>96</sup> She, like many other radicals who also shared a Russian immigrant identity, was “carried ... to ecstatic heights. The many tremendous events that had happened since the massacre in front of the Winter Palace had kept us in far-away America in constant tension.”<sup>97</sup> And the visit and tour by Breshkovskaya seemed to have proven that there was not only interest in the Russian revolutionary movement in the United States, but a lot of revolutionary potential as such. “Babushka,” the grandmother of the Russian Revolution, had also inspired Goldman, who later

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93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 On the global impact of the war, see Frank Jacob, *The Russo-Japanese War and Its Shaping of the Twentieth Century* (London/New York: Routledge, 2018).

96 Workers, led by the orthodox priest Georgy Apollonovich Gapon (1870–1906), had marched to the Czar's winter palace in St. Petersburg to demand his support against the violation of workers' rights, but troops killed some of the protesters. George Gapon, *The Story of My Life* (New York: Dutton, 1906), 178–179.

97 Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 29.

wrote: “Ten minutes in her presence made me feel as if I had known her all my life; her simplicity, the tenderness of her voice, and her gestures, all affected me like the balm of a spring day. ... The hours with Babushka were among the richest and most precious experiences of my propaganda life.”<sup>98</sup> The latter had also highlighted during her speeches that the United States, “a country where idealism is considered a crime, a rebel an outcast, and money the only god,”<sup>99</sup> needed a revolution as much as Russia, and Goldman believed that she could awaken the revolutionary spirit of the American workers, of the country’s masses as well.

Goldman might have been inspired by the revolutionary developments in 1905, but the results were rather limited and neither ended the autocratic rule nor caused many actual social changes in Russia. The events of 1917, however, seemed to be much more promising, although they would also lead to an intensification of the struggle between radicals and the state in the United States. For Goldman, however, the results of February 1917 already resembled pure joy: “The hated Romanovs were at last hurled from their throne, the Tsar and his cohorts shorn of power. It was not the result of a political *coup d’état*; the great achievement was accomplished by the rebellion of the entire people.” It must have really been inspiring for a radical mind that “the Russian masses had risen to demand their heritage and to proclaim to the whole world that autocracy and tyranny were for ever at an end in their country.”<sup>100</sup> The revolution had ended a life of exile and suppression for many Russian radicals and intellectuals abroad, who were now willing, in contrast to Goldman one would have to emphasize here,<sup>101</sup> to return to Russia to build the new world, something that had been only a utopia for so long. The same was true for those whose voices had been violently silenced for many years: “The imprisoned and exiled martyrs who had struggled to free Russia were now being resurrected, and some of their dreams realized. They were returning from the icy wastes of Siberia, from dungeons and banishment. They were coming back to unite with the people and to help them build a new Russia, economically and socially.”<sup>102</sup> In New York

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**98** Ibid., ch. 28.

**99** Ibid.

**100** Ibid., ch. 45.

**101** Goldman was cheerful for those who left for Russia, but only supported their preparations and did not seem to have the intention to actually follow them herself: “A contingent of Russian exiles and refugees was preparing to leave for their native land, and we helped to equip its members with provisions, clothing, and money. Most of them were anarchists, and all of them were eager to participate in the upbuilding of their country on a foundation of human brotherhood and equality.” Ibid.

**102** Ibid.

City, she would also have the opportunity to meet one of the decisive figures of the Russian Revolution, especially after October 1917, who was also familiar with Goldman and her work; Leon Trotsky, whose appearance and acquaintance the famous anarchist later described as follows:

I happened to be in the city when an announcement was made of a farewell meeting which he [Trotsky] was to address before leaving for Russia. I attended the gathering. After several rather dull speakers Trotsky was introduced. A man of medium height, with haggard cheeks, reddish hair, and straggling red beard stepped briskly forward. His speech, first in Russian and then in German, was powerful and electrifying. I did not agree with his political attitude; he was a Menshevik (Social Democrat), and as such far removed from us. But his analysis of the causes of the war was brilliant, his denunciation of the ineffective Provisional Government in Russia scathing, and his presentation of the conditions that led up to the Revolution illuminating. He closed his two hours' talk with an eloquent tribute to the working masses of his native land. The audience was roused to a high pitch of enthusiasm, and Sasha and I heartily joined in the ovation given the speaker. We fully shared his profound faith in the future of Russia.<sup>103</sup>

The fact that anarchists like Goldman and Berkman could actually support Russian party politicians who would argue for a Marxist-oriented, state-based development of the revolutionary process was really more than surprising, but as Goldman herself explained, the First World War “was producing strange bedfellows.”<sup>104</sup>

Regardless of these feelings, Goldman was very enthusiastic about the events in Russia, whose role as a leading revolutionary sphere was clear to everyone who had seen or heard what had happened there, as “it was Russia to shed the first ray of hope upon an otherwise hopeless world.”<sup>105</sup> Goldman accurately described the feelings many shared, even when the first news about the Bolshevik coup in October 1917 was received: “The October Revolution was the culmination of passionate dreams and longings, the bursting of the people’s wrath against the party that it had trusted and that had failed.”<sup>106</sup> Kerenski and the Provisional Government had failed to address the wishes of the masses for peace, and now Lenin had taken control, announced the “dictatorship of the proletariat,” and demanded all power for the soviets. He seemed to be so in line with anarchist dreams that it was hard to believe that he could be a Marxist. Negative voices about Russia were clearly the result of the stupidity of the Amer-

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103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid., ch. 47.

106 Ibid.

ican press, which was “never able to see beneath the surface, denounced the October upheaval as German propaganda, and its protagonists, Lenin, Trotsky, and their co-workers, as the Kaiser’s hirelings. For months the scribes fabricated fantastic inventions about Bolsheviki Russia.”<sup>107</sup> Goldman and Berkman, in contrast, “[i]n the columns of the *Mother Earth Bulletin*, from the platform, and by every other means ... defended the Bolsheviki against calumny and slander.” Goldman took up the fight with anti-Bolshevist forces in the United States, even though Lenin and his followers “were Marxists and therefore governmentalsists,” but “they had repudiated war and had the wisdom to stress the fact that political freedom without corresponding economic equality is an empty boast.”<sup>108</sup>

The Russian Revolution and the rise of the Bolsheviks in particular had intensified what the *New York Tribune* had called Goldman’s and Berkman’s “chronic feud with society.”<sup>109</sup> Goldman, who had protested against the US government and its participation in the war, now also openly sided with a foreign revolution and declared her will to replicate it on American soil. Due to her acts, her publication *Mother Earth* was censored by the Postmaster General due to the Trading With the Enemy Act.<sup>110</sup> The consequence was the publication’s continuation as the *Mother Earth Bulletin*, which was supposed to act “as a means of keeping in touch with our friends and subscribers, and for the purpose of keeping them posted about our movements and activities.”<sup>111</sup> Goldman and Berkman had used *Mother Earth* to praise the Russian Revolution and the related events in 1917, hoping for an awakening of the American people who would, *ex oriente lux*, realize that the true power and means to achieve change had been lying in their own hands the whole time. Berkman wrote about the revolutionary events of 1917 that “[n]ever since the dawn of time has the world been pregnant with the mighty spirit that is now rocking Russia in the throes of a new birth – a new life, a new humanity, a new earth. It is the Messiah come, the Social Revolution.”<sup>112</sup> He also defended the Bolsheviki, who were, according to his early view on the events, “the real pioneers of the

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107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

109 “Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, Anarchists,” *New York Tribune*, June 24, 1917, 2.

110 Emma Goldman, “Freedom of Criticism and Opinion,” *Mother Earth Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (1917). Accessed November 11, 2017, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist\\_archives/goldman/ME/mebv1n1.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/ME/mebv1n1.html).

111 Ibid.

112 A.[lexander] B.[erkman], “Russia and Elsewhere,” *Mother Earth Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (1917). Accessed November 11, 2017, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist\\_archives/goldman/ME/mebv1n1.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/ME/mebv1n1.html).

Social Revolution. If journalistic assassination at long distance were effective, the Bolsheviki would all be dead by now. They are persistently misrepresented in the American press as the scum of the earth, criminals, Anarchists, a mere handful of malcontents who should be given the shortest shrift."<sup>113</sup> With the end of the Provisional Power and the Bolshevik takeover, Goldman also believed that the revolution had entered its decisive phase, in which Lenin would establish a truly equal and classless society. In the *Mother Earth Bulletin*, the Bolsheviki were consequently praised as if they were doing the anarchists' work:

The Boylsheviki are now in power in Russia. It is to be expected, of course, that all the conservative and reactionary elements will combine against them. For the program and the will to do of the Boylsheviki threaten every vested interest, every established and prosperous wrong. Whatever the immediate outcome of the Boylsheviki revolution, the raising of the Maximalist banner is itself the greatest and grandest event of these eventful days. The unbiased and clear-sighted future historian will hail it as the most significant phase of the Russian Revolution, the most inspiring moment of our whole civilization. It is rich with the promise of a true Social Revolution, the first joyous glimpse of which shall nevermore permit the people of Russia to bow to autocracy and capitalism.<sup>114</sup>

The next issue would emphasize that the Russian Revolution belonged to the masses of people in Russia who had realized "the great dream, cherished by [themselves] for so long."<sup>115</sup> It had been "[c]oming from the very depths of the Russian soul and spirit,"<sup>116</sup> and Goldman, at least considering her early perspective on the Russian Revolution, believed that Lenin would act according to the wishes of the people. The Provisional Government, in contrast, had not been a true expression of the revolutionary spirit, because "[f]rom the very first day of their appearance, [it] proclaim[ed] the end of the revolution. They [its members] take possession of power; but power, like all gods, can tolerate no other god beside it. Starting from this autocratic premise, the provisional government in Russia inevitably became reactionary, a new despotism, ready to strangle the revolution before it had made a decisive step."<sup>117</sup> In this early article of hers, Goldman also pointed to the fact that most revolutions of the past had failed because they never changed more than the government, which means who ruled

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113 Ibid.

114 "The Boylsheviki Spirit and History," *Mother Earth Bulletin* 1, no. 2 (1917). Accessed November 11, 2017, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist\\_archives/goldman/ME/mebv1n2.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/ME/mebv1n2.html).

115 Emma Goldman, "The Russian Revolution," *Mother Earth Bulletin* 1, no. 3 (1917). Accessed November 11, 2017, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist\\_archives/goldman/ME/mebulv1n3.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/ME/mebulv1n3.html).

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

the people, and falsely assumed that the Bolsheviks were not solely interested in power and in ruling the masses. The latter, in Goldman's false interpretation of what she thought she knew about the Russian Revolution, were finally living their dream and had paved the way for the liberation of all who were suppressed around the globe:

In the midst of the confusion and horrors of war, the Russian Revolution raises in its mighty arm the torch to illumine the horizon for all the peoples of the world. What irony that the light of real liberty and justice should emanate from a people who until very recently were considered the most primitive, uneducated and uncultured, a half-Asiatic race. Yet it is well for the Russian Revolution that her people have remained primitive. That is why they can face life and life's problems in a simple, unspoiled, and uncorrupted state of mind, with true feeling and sound judgment. After all, true intelligence is primitive because it originates within man. It is not brought about through external, mechanical methods of education. It is well for the Revolution that her people are uncultured, uneducated. That means not yet drilled into blind obedience, into automata, into cringing slaves. It were desirable that the peoples of other countries had remained as primitive and uneducated. They would have the courage for independent thinking and the seal of independent revolutionary action.<sup>118</sup>

Goldman would continue her defense of the Bolsheviks in Russia until she was eventually sentenced to prison for violating the US conscription act in 1917. That this would also end her public advocacy of the Russian Revolution was probably something the governmental and judicial authorities would have appreciated. Before this, however, she tried to defend the Russian developments and the new leaders of the Eastern European country: "The Bolsheviks, like all revolutionary movements, have faced three characteristic stages. First, calumny, misrepresentation, hatred, opposition, and persecution. After that came ridicule, scoffing, and cheap deriding of the movement. Finally, in the third stage, recognition though stunted and grudging."<sup>119</sup> Goldman still argued that the Bolsheviks solely represented the will of the people. Her steady pointing to the Russian example for a successful revolution made the menace to the American capitalist system she presented even more pressing. The Bolsheviks, the famous anarchist argued, "have struck like lightning into the hearts and minds of the masses everywhere; yes, even the hitherto so contented and self-satisfied American workers."<sup>120</sup> In contrast, she considered the American press and its so-called journal-

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**118** Ibid.

**119** Emma Goldman, "The Great Hope," *Mother Earth Bulletin* 1, no. 4 (1917). Accessed November 11, 2017, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist\\_archives/goldman/ME/mebulv1n4.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/ME/mebulv1n4.html).

**120** Ibid.

ism to be “the worst poison mixer and scurrilous falsifier of great ideals.”<sup>121</sup> The intensification of her fight against the existent order of the United States, represented by these journalists as well, was probably the reason why, after Red October in Russia, Goldman hoped so much for the awakening of the consciousness of the American working class, whose women and men only had to look east for revolutionary enlightenment: “The flames lighted by the Russian people will illumine the horizon and point the path of the peoples everywhere back to the Internationale, back to a deeper and better understanding of economic and social freedom.”<sup>122</sup>

Before she had to face her prison sentence in Jefferson City, Missouri in 1918,<sup>123</sup> she wrote a short reflection about the Russian Revolution of 1917, namely the short pamphlet *The Truth About the Bolsheviki*<sup>124</sup> with which “Goldman sought to spread the ‘good news’ about Russia and its new Bolshevik leaders, a premature enthusiasm she would later regret.”<sup>125</sup> Again, Goldman praised the “Boylsheviki in Russia in appreciation of their glorious work and their inspiration in awakening Boylshevism in America” and argued that the Russian Revolution had finally brought anarchists and Marxists back together to fight, side by side, for a better world. Her view on Lenin and his followers at this early stage of Goldman’s reflection about the revolutionary process in Russia was obviously clouded by ignorance and the honest wish to believe that this revolution would achieve what many generations had hoped for ever since the failed revolutions in 1789, 1848, and 1871. With more information at hand, Goldman would hardly have written the following about Lenin and his party:

The Boylsheviki have no imperialistic designs. They have libertarian plans, and those that understand the principles of liberty do not want to annex other peoples and other countries. Indeed, the true libertarian does not want even to annex other individuals, for he knows that so long as a single nation, people or individual is enslaved, he too is in danger. That is why the Boylsheviki demand a peace without annexations and without indemnities. They do not feel ethically called upon to live up to the obligations incurred by the Tsar, the Kaiser or other imperialistic gentlemen. ... The Boylsheviki are translating into reality the very things many people have been dreaming about, hoping for, planning and discussing

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121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

123 See Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, *A Fragment of the Prison Experiences of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman in the State Prison at Jefferson City, Mo., and the U.S. Penitentiary at Atlanta, Ga., February, 1918-October, 1919* (New York: S. Comyn, 1919).

124 Emma Goldman, *The Truth About the Bolsheviki* (New York: Mother Earth, 1918). Accessed October 30, 2017, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist\\_archives/goldman/truthaboutbol.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/truthaboutbol.html).

125 Solomon, *Emma Goldman*, 30.

in private and public. They are building a new social order which is to come out of the chaos and conflicts now confronting them.<sup>126</sup>

Goldman truly believed at this time, i.e. the months between March 1917 and February 1918, that the Russian Revolution was just the start of a larger global awakening of workers who would take their fate into their own hands and, inspired by anarchist ideas, drive the revolution forward until nothing of the old order remained. With “light hearts,” she and Berkman would go to prison as they assumed they would “return to our work in due time.”<sup>127</sup> While on her way to prison, Goldman encouraged her anarchist followers to “spread my Bolsheviki pamphlet in tribute to their great courage and marvelous vision and for the enlightenment of the American people. ... Long live the Boylsheviki! May their flames spread over the world and redeem humanity from its bondage!”<sup>128</sup> It were probably such remarks that made the authorities use her prison sentence to prepare an even larger blow against Goldman, who was to be ripped out of the American state like a cancer, because the danger she represented and the menace—although more felt than real—she embodied for the US government was so fierce that her deportation, together with those of Berkman and other radicals of the “Russian type,” seemed to be the only way to fulfill this necessary and anti-revolutionary precaution. Goldman’s open support for the Bolsheviki might have stimulated this decision, especially since the Palmer Raids would target all those who were considered evil enough to bring dangerous ideas from Russia to the United States. While the next chapter will provide more information about the trial and deportation of Goldman and Berkman, the present one has shown that Goldman’s initial support for the Russian Revolution and Lenin’s Bolshevism was a rather unreflected and uninformed action by somebody who had already spent around 30 years preparing an actual revolution of the American working class and was hoping that this revolutionary potential would spread from Soviet Russia and find its way to the shores of the United States, where Goldman was waiting to fulfill this revolutionary dream, spearheading American radicals as the “anarchist queen,” a role assigned to her for so many years.

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**126** Goldman, *The Truth*.

**127** Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, “Farewell, Friends and Comrades!” *Mother Earth Bulletin* 1, no. 4 (1917). Accessed November 11, 2017, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist\\_archives/goldman/ME/mebulv1n4.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/ME/mebulv1n4.html).

**128** Emma Goldman, “On the Way to Golgatha,” *Mother Earth Bulletin* 1, no. 5 (1917). Accessed November 11, 2017, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist\\_archives/goldman/ME/mebv1n5.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/ME/mebv1n5.html).

## 4 Trial and Deportation

When the US government decided to enter the First World War on the side of the Allied Powers, as Alix Shulman remarked, “the country went mad with patriotism,”<sup>1</sup> and the conflict between the anarchists and American society intensified. Those who were openly against the war were considered traitors, pacifists went to jail, like in the famous case of the socialist Eugene V. Debs (1855–1926), and a “German spy hunt became a radical witch hunt.”<sup>2</sup> In addition, and as had been usual before, anarchism as a special form of radicalism was considered to be an alien problem, and again, the state would do everything possible to get rid of those whom they considered foreign radicals.<sup>3</sup> Goldman and Berkman fit such a profile quite well, and the young J. Edgar Hoover seemed to be obsessed with their case and worked steadily to compile a file with relevant documents he wanted to use against them.<sup>4</sup> That Goldman and Berkman were eventually sentenced and consequently deported to Soviet Russia was rather unsurprising, but it nevertheless, as Vivian Gornick assessed quite well, “ranks among the more egregious events in the history of political repression in the United States masquerading as protection of the democracy.”<sup>5</sup> Already in May 1915, Goldman and Berkman, together with Bill Shatov and some other radicals, issued a first anti-war manifesto and made it clear that they would not follow the defencist view many European radicals of the Left had accepted.<sup>6</sup> While the anarchists

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1 Alix Shulman, *To the Barricades: The Anarchist Life of Emma Goldman* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1971), 188. For a still highly recommended study of the impact of the First World War on US society, see David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*, 25th anniversary edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). For a broader perspective on anarchism during the war, see Matthew S. Adams and Ruth Kinna, eds., *Anarchism, 1914–18: Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), especially chs. 8 and 9.

2 Shulman, *To the Barricades*, 189. What this “German spy hunt” as well as anti-German feelings could mean for public life in the United States is well described, for concert music, in Michael J. Pfeifer, “100 Percent Americanism in the Concert Hall: The Minneapolis Symphony in the Great War,” in *War and the Humanities: The Cultural Impact of the First World War*, ed. Frank Jacob, Jeffrey Shaw and Timothy Demy (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2018), 147–160.

3 Shulman, *To the Barricades*, 192.

4 Paul Avrich and Karen Avrich, *Sasha and Emma: The Anarchist Odyssey of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 291.

5 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 92.

6 In the US, however, some radicals, e.g. those running the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, a Yiddish weekly paper in New York City, also adopted a supportive position towards the war. For a more detailed discussion, see Ross J. Wilson, *New York and the First World War: Shaping an American City* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 42.

“claimed that the war only served to benefit the rich, and they linked conscription to other means by which elites denied the autonomy of working people,”<sup>7</sup> public opinion, however, was still very much perceiving such radicals and their statements in relation to the headlines of the late 19th century about the acts of terrorist violence related to the “propaganda of the deed,” although Goldman, as mentioned before, considered violence to be a response to social misery and not a political tool or weapon.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to the European contexts, the Left in the United States, whether it be the Socialist Party, the anarchists, or the IWW, “remained outspokenly opposed to the war.”<sup>9</sup> It is consequently no surprise, considering the struggles radicals like Goldman had fought in the previous years, that “the decades-long struggle between American radicals and vigilante patriotism reached fever pitch”<sup>10</sup> during the war. Especially in New York City, a radical milieu existed during those years that would combine different protest movements in a common struggle against the war, not only mobilizing anarchists like Goldman but also “feminists who linked war with masculine personality traits,”<sup>11</sup> to name just one of the multiple other protest groups. When the discourse about preparedness for a possible joining of the United States began, Goldman would take up the fight against such opinions quite early in *Mother Earth*, where she published “Preparedness, the Road to Universal Slaughter”<sup>12</sup> in 1915.

In this article, the famous anarchist argued that “[t]he human mind seems to be conscious of but one thing, murderous speculation. Our whole civilization, our entire culture is concentrated in the mad demand for the most perfected weapons of slaughter.” She identified the political economy of the First World War and hoped to awaken the workers, who needed to understand that the war effort would only serve the US government and those it represented, i.e. the members of the “privileged class; the class which robs and exploits the masses, and controls their lives from the cradle to the grave.” The workers would gain nothing from the war, and the support of an imperialist and capitalist state that

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7 Andrew Cornell, *Unruly Equality: U.S. Anarchism in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 56.

8 D. Novak, “Anarchism and Individual Terrorism,” *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science / Revue canadienne d’Economie et de Science politique* 20, no. 2 (1954): 176, 179.

9 Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 57.

10 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 93.

11 Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 57.

12 Emma Goldman, “Preparedness, the Road to Universal Slaughter,” *Mother Earth* 10, no. 10 (1915). Accessed September 1, 2020. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emma-goldman-preparedness-the-road-to-universal-slaughter>. The following quotes are taken from this article.

had already gained from the mass slaughter on the European battlefields could not be continued, especially not if the workers were supposed to regain control over their own lives, their work, and eventually their freedom. Goldman consequently emphasized that “America grows fat on the manufacture of munitions and war loans to the Allies to help crush Prussians [and] the same cry is now being raised in America which, if carried into national action, would build up an American militarism far more terrible than German or Prussian militarism could ever be, and that because nowhere in the world has capitalism become so brazen in its greed and nowhere is the state so ready to kneel at the feet of capital.” She also pointed the finger at US President Woodrow Wilson, “the historian, the college professor,” who nevertheless was an agent of capitalism and only served “the big interests, to add to those who are growing phenomenally rich by the manufacture of military supplies.” War, as Goldman’s bottom line clearly emphasized, could not be waged “with equals; you cannot have militarism with free born men; you must have slaves, automatons, machines, obedient disciplined creatures, who will move, act, shoot and kill at the command of their superiors.” The war would consequently suppress freedom in the United States, a view that could almost be considered prophetic when one considers Goldman’s own fate up to 1919. In 1915, she had already clearly defined the most pressing issue of her time, namely militarism. Related to this tremendous problem of her time, she argued that

Militarism consumes the strongest and most productive elements of each nation. Militarism swallows the largest part of the national revenue. Almost nothing is spent on education, art, literature and science compared with the amount devoted to militarism in times of peace, while in times of war everything else is set at naught; all life stagnates, all effort is curtailed; the very sweat and blood of the masses are used to feed this insatiable monster—militarism.<sup>13</sup>

Those who demanded military preparedness or supported the state to achieve it would only help to lead the United States directly into the war; they would pave the way to death and destruction. In addition, the famous anarchist emphasized that there was only one group who could probably gain from the war hysteria in its global context: “This group interest embraces all those engaged in the manufacture and sale of munition and in military equipment for personal gain and profit. For instance, the family Krupp, which owns the largest cannon munition plant in the world; its sinister influence in Germany, and in fact in many other countries, extends to the press, the school, the church and to statesmen of high-

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

est rank.” For Goldman, it was more than clear that the First World War had been created by an “international murder trust” whose representatives were now just cashing in while the lives of ordinary young men were sacrificed in the trenches for the gods of mammon. The anti-war agenda of Goldman was therefore patently obvious, but the situation would become more serious for such criticism in the following years, and even in 1916, it was “a particularly dangerous year to become [or to be] an anarchist.”<sup>14</sup>

The First World War was initially something the US government seemed to want to avoid, but the discussions became more heated during 1915 when the German submarine U-20 attacked and sunk the RMS Lusitania on 7 May, a British ocean liner that also had 128 American citizens on board.<sup>15</sup> Regardless of such events that stirred up anti-German feelings and voices that demanded the US enter the war, the anarchists of the country remained predominantly anti-war protesters and pacifists. Their hopes that the war would cause a revolution that would bring social change did not seem to have been for nothing, and their “hopes were greatly magnified by the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917, leading some anarchists ... to go all out when choosing how to respond, tactically, to conscription, press censorship, and police repression of their activities.”<sup>16</sup> Many anarchists began to make an effort in spreading criticism against the new conscription law that would provide sufficient soldiers for the United States to participate in the war efforts of the Allied Powers, but at the same time, the supporters of anarchist ideas would point to the events in Russia and demand a revolutionary movement to take action on American ground as well. Goldman realized that Wilson and the US government were not really interested in a true “Crusade for Democracy,” but were rather getting involved to secure the interests of big businesses and their capitalist demands. She almost naturally gave up her work related to other topics, like birth control, and began a serious struggle against the war: “To Emma and her friends, Wilson’s advocacy of conscription was the ultimate affront to the individual conscience.”<sup>17</sup> Together with Berkman, Eleanor Fitzgerald and Leonard Abbott, Goldman consequently organized the No-Conscription League in early May 1917. A meeting at the Harlem River Casino, at 126th Street and 2nd Avenue on the following night, was, according to the *New York Times*, the scene of “a wild anti-conscription demonstration, in the course of which the Government of the United States was denounced and

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14 Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 54.

15 Erik Larson, *Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania* (New York: Random House, 2015).

16 Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 54.

17 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 186.

referred to as a tool of the capitalist classes.” Goldman, as the report mentions, “[u]rge[d] workers to follow Russia’s lead” and demanded that young men should resist being conscripted. She also “was the one who predicted a nationwide strike to embarrass the Government and denounced the authorities in Washington as being on par with the old powers in Russia.”<sup>18</sup> With this first large meeting, the No-Conscription League, which soon “became the nerve center of the resistance to the draft,”<sup>19</sup> had shown that it was willing to take up the fight against the state and its position towards the war. Again, it was Emma Goldman, whom the *New York Times* referred to as the “anarchist agitator,”<sup>20</sup> who would challenge the US state and government, but this time her call for revolution was considered too dangerous for there to be no repercussions.

Anarchists in support of the Russian Revolution, who would protest against the later intervention of the United States and other international forces<sup>21</sup>—including Japan, where the government also feared the spread of communism<sup>22</sup>—, were arrested and received sentences as high as 15 years.<sup>23</sup> In the US, the years between 1917 and 1921 witnessed the first Red Scare the country would go through, and the anarchists were the victims of the first hour. What scared the government was the fulfillment of a long awaited prophecy, and therefore, as Andrew Cornell correctly remarked, the fulfillment of “the anarchists’ prophecies of wartime revolution; they were also elated to learn that Russian workers had established workplace and citywide soviets ... that shared the self-managing ethos of anarcho-syndicalism.”<sup>24</sup> US anarchists like Goldman and Berkman believed that the revolution in Russia would solely be the start and that the American workers’ movement would soon join the revolutionary chant and begin to stand up against their exploitation by the upper class. They consequently

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**18** “Anarchists Demand Strike to End War,” *The New York Times*, May 19, 1917, 11.

**19** Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 186.

**20** “Upper East Side Cool To Draft Adherents,” *The New York Times*, May 31, 1917, 2.

**21** For a review of some relevant works, see Michael Jabara Carley, “Review Article: Allied Intervention and the Russian Civil War, 1917–1922,” *The International History Review* 11, no. 4 (1989): 689–700. For documents with a rather more pro-Bolshevik perspective, see Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, ed., *Weltenwende—wir waren dabei. Erinnerungen deutscher Teilnehmer an der Grossen Sozialistischen Oktoberrevolution und an den Kämpfen gegen Intervention und Konterrevolutionäre 1917–1920* (Berlin: Dietz, 1962).

**22** Tatiana Linkhoeva, *Revolution Goes East: Imperial Japan and Soviet Communism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020) provides an outstanding analysis of the impact of the Russian Revolution in Japan. For a shorter introduction, see her article “The Russian Revolution and the Emergence of Japanese anticommunism,” *Revolutionary Russia* 31, no. 2 (2018): 261–278.

**23** Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 94.

**24** Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 59.

urged the workers to look to Russia and to accept that the dream had become a reality. Others, including Violine and Bill Shatov, who had been active in the Union of Russian Workers, had returned to Russia to help drive the revolution forward.<sup>25</sup> However, no matter if they went to Russia or not, the American radicals, like many others around the globe, believed that the events in the Russian capital of February 1917 were only the start of the world revolution, the final struggle for the future of mankind.

Congress, in the meantime, began to react with legal measures to contain possible criticism of the war and the menace of revolution, stimulated by the events in Russia. A new conscription law was passed in May 1917, demanding that young men register for the army. As a reaction to this law, Goldman and her anarchist comrades had founded the above-mentioned No-Conscription League and began to urge people not to register, although such acts were considered illegal—due to the new Selective Service Act and already-existent anti-conspiracy laws—and gave the authorities the necessary pretext to get rid of the anarchists. Only one day after the new law had passed, Goldman and Berkman spoke at the first mass meeting of the No-Conscription League. This, according to the Selective Service Act, could have been considered a felony, as the law said that objecting to conscription was prohibited. The government, however, also passed the Espionage Act one month later in 1917 and the Sedition Act in 1918, as the perceived menace by radical forces in the United States had been additionally strengthened by the Russian Revolution.<sup>26</sup> Eventually, the government did not consider it sufficient to contain anarchist ideas by sending famous anarchists like Goldman or Berkman to jail—they wanted to force them out of the country to get rid of any revolutionary voices on US soil. The Espionage Act “prohibited organized resistance to the war”<sup>27</sup> and “broadly defined sedition to include any sort of open dissent from government policy,”<sup>28</sup> thereby turning the No-Conscription League into an illegal venture.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the Postmaster General received the power to censor publications by banning them from the mail so that the regular dissemination of radical journals, like *Mother Earth*, was no longer possible. Men like Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and the young Bureau of Investigation agent J. Edgar Hoover used these new legal tools to their maxi-

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>26</sup> Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 93–94.

<sup>27</sup> Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 59.

<sup>28</sup> Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 93.

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed discussion of the work of the No-Conscription League and the legal issues it caused for Goldman, see Erika J. Pribanic-Smith and Jared Schroeder, *Emma Goldman's No-Conscription League and the First Amendment* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

imum extent to contain every form of anti-state protest in relation to the First World War and the Russian Revolution.<sup>30</sup>

It is consequently not surprising that on the day the Espionage Act took effect, Goldman and Berkman were arrested for their roles in the No-Conscription League.<sup>31</sup> The scene of the US marshal and 12 policemen escorting the famous female anarchist, who had changed into a royal purple dress and grabbed a copy of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) by James Joyce (1882–1941), has been described in every Goldman biography, but it shows that she was well prepared to go to prison for her ideals if necessary, but I think one can assume that Goldman never expected to be deported as a foreign radical in the aftermath of her trial as well. The high bail of \$25,000, however, already showed that the authorities would try to make Goldman's life really hard, although she and her attorney Harry Weinberger (1888–1944)<sup>32</sup> were able to raise the money—Agnes Inglis (1870–1952) also helped with a large amount of money. Although it was obvious, to quote Richard Drinnon's evaluation, that “the war between Emma and the government [got] entangled in the larger war to save the world for democracy,”<sup>33</sup> the former did not yet seem to realize what was at stake for her. Like Berkman, she defended herself in court, and the two anarchists were aware from the start that the trial would be more of a show trial than an actual trial; however, both underestimated the will of the legal authorities to end the anarchist problem in the United States once and for all. That is why the Goldman and Berkman trials were only the tip of the iceberg, as there were close to 1,500 people who were put on trial for violating the new laws, and two-thirds of them were ultimately convicted.<sup>34</sup> The legal authorities, represented by Palmer, targeted any kind of leftist political activism in the so-called Palmer Raids, which is why not only anarchists but also wobblies of the IWW, like Bill Haywood, were arrested and brought to trial. Haywood, however, escaped and left for Soviet Russia, where he would later get involved with the Kuzbass Autonomous Industrial Colony.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, Goldman was not

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30 Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 59–60

31 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 188–189; Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 96.

32 Weinberger's documents related to the legal issues during the Red Scare that also involved the defense of Goldman can be found in the Harry Weinberger Papers (MS 553), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, Box 2, Folders 12–19.

33 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 189.

34 Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 62. Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 93, in contrast, speaks of 4,000–10,000 arrests but less than 600 trials between 1917 and 1921.

35 For a more detailed discussion of this colony, see Frank Jacob, “Transatlantic Workers' Solidarity: The Kuzbass Autonomous Industrial Colony (1920–1926),” in *Transatlantic Radicalism*:

only a special target for Hoover, who seemed to be personally obsessed with her case, but for many others as well. Francis Caffey, a New Yorker district attorney, remarked the following with regard to her role as a key figure of American radicalism in general and the anarchist movement in particular: “Emma Goldman is a woman of great ability and of personal magnetism, and her persuasive powers are such to make her an exceedingly dangerous woman.”<sup>36</sup>

The *New York Times* reported on the events of Goldman’s and Berkman’s arrests and highlighted that the government had begun to end all anarchy in the United States.<sup>37</sup> The article explained that “[t]he Federal authorities, backed by the full power of the New York Police Department, are determined to put an end to anarchy in New York: Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, the anarchist leaders arrested late Friday afternoon, were held in \$25,000 bail each to wait the action of the Federal Grand Jury, which on Tuesday is expected to begin an investigation of the *entire anarchist situation* in the Southern District of New York.”<sup>38</sup> Although the impression is given that the two anarchists were standing trial for being exactly that, they were “charged with having entered into a conspiracy to obstruct the enforcement of the selective draft law.”<sup>39</sup> Goldman and Berkman were accused of being “principals in a nation-wide conspiracy against the Government.” At the same time, it was argued that “[m]any of these anarchists are out and out German sympathizers, while all of them are anti-American.”<sup>40</sup> As the police had found a card index in the *Mother Earth* office containing the names of the subscribers of the journal, they could, in the aftermath, arrest many more anarchists nationwide as, figuratively speaking, they had been presented with their targets on a silver plate.

In contrast to many others, Goldman could get the money for her bail together, although the court did not allow Weinberger to use anything else—e. g. stock or real estate—for the bail payment but cash.<sup>41</sup> Although she was allowed to move freely again, Goldman did not risk another speech at a mass meeting at Madison Square Garden on 23 June 1917. Consequently, as the *New York Times* reported, “The great anarchist meeting ... failed to materialize. Great was the dis-

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*Socialist and Anarchist Exchanges in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Frank Jacob and Mario Kefler (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2021), forthcoming.

<sup>36</sup> Candace Falk, ed., *Emma Goldman: A Guide to Her Life and Documentary Sources* (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1995), 15, cited in Ferguson, “Discourses of Danger,” 739.

<sup>37</sup> “Government to End All Anarchy Here,” *The New York Times*, June 17, 1917, 7.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, my emphasis.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> “Emma Goldman Out On Bail,” *The New York Times*, June 22, 1917, 14.

appointment of the men and women who follow the red flag, about 3,000 of whom ... stood about four hours waiting for Emma Goldman ... and other agitators, whose coming had been announced, but who left Madison Square off their schedule yesterday.” Goldman had no other choice, and “for once the woman anarchist leader, who generally keeps her speaking appointments, disappointed her perspiring and noisy cohorts.” Instead of playing even more into the hands of the court, Goldman had other business, namely being “downtown trying to get bail for Alexander Berkman ... waiting trial, with herself, for conspiracy to obstruct the military laws of the country.”<sup>42</sup> The trial itself would arouse quite some interest—“The courtroom was packed both at the morning and afternoon sessions, while fully 500 followers, each wearing a red rose, were turned away by United States Deputy Marshals,” reported the *New York Times*—as many press representatives and friends wanted to witness the event for which Goldman “discarded her favorite purple robe and appeared in plain black gown.”<sup>43</sup> The initial questioning of possible jury members took quite some time, as Berkman wanted to make sure that the jury would not be genuinely anti-anarchist before the trial began. In addition, he wanted to exclude those who did not like Russians, seeing as both he and Goldman were born abroad.<sup>44</sup>

The trial eventually opened on 2 July 1917, and the two anarchists defended themselves without the support of a lawyer.<sup>45</sup> Since they were charged for their involvement with the No-Conscription League, their previous activities since early May were, of course, central to the trial, although both had criticized the government during the war since 1914, not only as founding members of the league. On 31 May 1917, Berkman, to name another example of his criticism, had written a letter to the Secretary of the US Treasury<sup>46</sup> demanding information about the Liberty Bonds to support the Allied war effort.<sup>47</sup> In this letter, which will be quoted here in some more detail, Berkman put his criticism of the state in writing and made clear the extent to which he considered this form of war loans to be against the American values of liberty and democracy:

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42 “Leaders Disappoint Anarchist Hordes,” *New York Times*, June 24, 1917, 8.

43 “Reds Are Defiant, Can Get No Delay,” *New York Times*, June 28, 1917, 5.

44 “Anarchists Delay Trial,” *New York Times*, June 30, 1917, 13.

45 “Resume Anarchists’ Trial,” *New York Times*, July 3, 1917.

46 Alexander Berkman to Mr. Wm. C. McAdoo, Secretary of the U.S. Treasury, New York, May 31, 1917, Alexander Berkman Papers, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York City, NY (henceforth ABP-TAM), Box 1, Folder 1.

47 For a study of these war loans, see James J. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front: War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006).

This brand of liberty means the shackling of human conscience, human will, human thought and human action accordingly, and the enslavement of the individual to the autocratic power of one man. [...] This brand of liberty means license to imprison and deprive of liberty without due process of law our best citizens because they happen to be of German or Irish extraction. Means license to murder, wholesale murder; and we have set forth to debauch the flower of the manhood of our Republic by teaching them to become murderers and sending them three thousand miles across the seas to murder their best friends and be murdered [...]. This brand of liberty means liberty to abandon all the great safeguards of the Republic under the Constitution; the obstruction of the administration of justice, the exposition of the Republic to invasions from without and convulsions from within, and the utter ultimate destruction of every landmark that has, under God, guided us to our present glorious destiny. [...] This new brand of democracy represented by Woodrow Wilson and the present Congress, and for which they are strangely and sadly contending, in no sense represents the will of the people of the American Republic.<sup>48</sup>

Similar aspects had been stressed in a serial letter by Berkman, which was supposed to recruit members for Goldman's and his No-Conscription League. The letter of late May 1917 stated that the two anarchists were "sure that [the addressees] are interested in the anti-war agitation" and consequently "we [Goldman and Berkman] appeal to you [the addressees] for moral and financial support to enable us to carry on an effective campaign by means of meetings ... manifestos and, above all, through the channels of MOTHER EARTH and THE BLAST. We consider this campaign of the utmost importance at the present time, and we feel confident that you will not withhold from us your immediate generous support."<sup>49</sup> Goldman and Berkman had therefore not only declared their own position, they had also tried to persuade other people to join the fight against conscription, albeit mostly in an indirect form, i. e. by donations that would finance the anarchists' publications and meetings to arouse public interest and to form a critical mass of anti-war protesters in the United States, although with a clear focus on New York City.

On 4 June 1917, a mass meeting was held at Hunts Point Palace, and Berkman would speak there about the value of liberty: "There is no greater boon in the world than liberty. There is nothing greater in the whole universe than freedom of conscience, freedom of opinion and freedom of action, in short liberty. But it is we [sic!] who are fighting for liberty, and no one else, not those who oppose us. We have been fighting for liberty for many years, and even for

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<sup>48</sup> Alexander Berkman to Mr. Wm. C. McAdoo, 2–3.

<sup>49</sup> Alexander Berkman, No-Conscription League, Serial Letter No. 1, New York, May 25, 1917, ABP-TAM, Box 1, Folder 7.

the liberty of those who oppose us.”<sup>50</sup> He also openly criticized conscription, an act that, only a few days later, would become illegal, despite it having led to the trial in the first place. The bedrock of American anarchism plainly said: “Conscription in a free country means the cemetery of liberty, and if conscription is the cemetery then registration is the undertaker. (Great applause and cheers and boos, and something thrown at the speaker that looked like a lemon.) ... Those who want to register should certainly register, but those who know what liberty means, and I am sure there are thousands in this country, they will not register.”<sup>51</sup> Goldman would take over after a while and express her thoughts about the current situation in the United States, and she pointed out that more than 20,000 people were outside who also wanted to express their criticism of war, conscription, and militarism in general, as had been presented by the former two.<sup>52</sup> Her view about the United States was relatively negative, considering how much she would later miss it: “I actually believed that this was the promised land, the land that rests upon freedom, upon opportunity, upon happiness, upon recognition [sic!] of the importance and the value of the young generation. ... I have come to the conclusion that when the law for conscription was passed in the United States the Funeral March of 500,000 American youths is going to be celebrated tomorrow, on Registration Day.”<sup>53</sup> Goldman did not see any purpose in camouflaging her anti-conscription attitude: “I am here frankly and openly telling you that I will continue to work against Conscription.”<sup>54</sup>

Regardless of such statements, Goldman also emphasized that it was not her wish to force anyone to change their personal decisions, and she remarked that “the only reason that prevents me telling you men of conscriptable age not to register is because I am an Anarchist, and I do not believe in force morally or otherwise to induce you to do anything that is against your conscience.”<sup>55</sup> She further described the war as a senseless slaughtering of ordinary men who believed they were fighting for democracy, and made the audience aware of the

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50 Stenographer’s Minutes of Meeting of No-Conscription League, Hunts Point Palace, New York, June 4, 1917, ABP-TAM, Box 1, Folder 12, 17.

51 *Ibid.*, 19.

52 *Ibid.*, 22–23.

53 *Ibid.*, 24.

54 *Ibid.*, 26. Goldman even addressed the authorities and their stenographers directly: “We are told that you have stenographers here to take down what we say, this is not the first time we are having stenographers at our meeting. And I have always said things that everybody can hear, and what is more important I want the police and the soldiers to hear what I have to say. It will do them good.” *Ibid.*

55 *Ibid.*, 27.

fact that “for every idealist they kill thousands will rise and they will not cease to rise until the same thing happens in America that has happened in Russia.”<sup>56</sup> The famous anarchist thereby predicted a revolution for the United States, similar to the one that had shaken and ended the Czarist Empire, because, as Goldman continued, “today the whole civilized world, including the United States Government, is trembling in its boots before The Council of Workmen and Soldiers who are standing for liberty.”<sup>57</sup> With regard to her own position within this conflict, Goldman said: “My ideals will live long after I am dead.”<sup>58</sup> It was the ideals of freedom and free speech that the anarchist fought for, principles that were more important than any individual, and its curtailing by the American government would eventually only provoke revolutionary ideals, with their Russian origin, to spread across the American territory as well. Goldman warned the audience:

Don't shout hurrah for Emma Goldman or Alexander Berkman, because they are mere incidents in the history of the world. It is better to shout hurrah for the principles of liberty. That is better than one Alexander Berkman or one Emma Goldman, or one hundred thousand Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldmans. They will go, but the principle of freedom, the principle of self profession, the principle of self emancipation, the principle of social revolution will live. ... My friends, we are grateful to the Government for having passed the Conscription Bill for it will teach the American people that American Liberty has been buried and is dead and is a corpse, and that only our voice is going to raise it up and revive it again, until the American people and all the people living in America will unite in one great mass and will throw out capitalism and Government by militarism.<sup>59</sup>

During the speech in Forward Hall on 14 June 1917 that had also been organized by the No-Conscription League, Berkman repeated some of the pressing problems in relation to the new conscription law and emphasized that if soldiers “knew their real interests they would know they are really being used to advance and multiply the profits of the bosses who are at the same time the bosses of the workers, who are at the same time the bosses of the militia and of the army and of everything else. If they realized their true interest, the soldiers, the police and the militia, they would know they ought to make common cause with the workmen not with the bosses.”<sup>60</sup> In contrast to the lies related to the war policy of

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 27–28.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 30, 32.

<sup>60</sup> Stenographer's Minutes of Alexander Berkman's Speech in Forward Hall, New York, June 14, 1917, ABP-TAM, Box 1, Folder 12, 1.

the government, Berkman demanded “real liberty,” such as would be expressed in “discussion and in free speech.”<sup>61</sup> Democracy could only exist if people were actually allowed to speak up, to protest without any fear of repercussions, to use the freedom that was granted to everyone in the United States. Almost prophetically with regard to his and Goldman’s fate, Berkman added: “I personally do not believe that a workman or a man who stands for real liberty, an anarchist, can receive justice in any court of the United States. I don’t believe it. I speak from personal experience. I have had enough of it and I know I will have more. I know there is no justice for a working man.”<sup>62</sup>

For the before-mentioned demonstration at Madison Square Garden on 23 June 1917, at which Goldman could not participate as she was just out of prison on bail trying to gather money to get Berkman out as well, a flyer had at least been produced that not only listed the two anarchists as speakers but also requested the defense of American liberty against an authoritarian government: “NOW is the time to protest: Later it will be too late. If hundreds of thousands of you raise your voice NOW, you will force the government to listen to you, and they will know that you have the courage of manhood and womanhood, and that you cannot be treated as the Czar used to treat his submissive subjects. The people of Russia, your own brothers and sisters, brought the mighty Czar off his high throne. Are you going to submit to Czarism in America?”<sup>63</sup> This request seemed to have come too late, as the representatives of “American Czarism” had already begun to prepare a counter-action against the voices of criticism and revolution. Goldman and Berkman could not only not speak at the demonstration at Madison Square Garden, it was also clear that their voices and reasoning would meet rather deaf ears in court, where a law case was built that could hardly be described as anything other than a “farce.”<sup>64</sup>

It would become clear quite fast that the trial was not simply about the work of the No-Conscription League but also about Goldman and Berkman being anarchist terrorists who needed to be in jail in a time like 1917. Their role in the protests against the government was too dangerous, as was their possible influence on the revolutionary minds of the American workers. Consequently, the No-Conscription League was very often not at the center of the arguments or legal state-

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**61** *Ibid.*, 2.

**62** *Ibid.*, 13.

**63** Flyer “Labor and War,” Demonstration Madison Square, Saturday, June 23, 1917, ABP-TAM, Box 1, Folder 7.

**64** Telegram by Carl Newlander to Leon Malmed, New York, July 3, 1917, Papers of Leon Malmed and Emma Goldman, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (henceforth LMP), MC 332; M-88, Folder 22.

ments. The two anarchists instead “devoted most of their day in court ... to an effort to prove that neither has ever counseled violence during the more than twenty years that they have directed the anarchistic agitation in the United States. Miss Goldman also tried to prove that she talks so fast, when on the rostrum, that it is almost impossible for the most expert of stenographers to record correctly what she says.”<sup>65</sup> The *New York Times* also quoted some of the records about Goldman’s speeches in the Bronx, according to which “Miss Goldman said ... that she would rather die the death of a lion than live the life of a dog, and that ... the United States is more in need of ‘real democracy’ than is Germany.”<sup>66</sup> She attacked Wilson as well and said that “we will not be conscripted. We will fight conscription with our every power. There will be so many people who refuse to register that there will not be jails enough to hold them. This Government will realize very soon what it is up against.”<sup>67</sup> It is in a way ironic that it did not need that many jails, as the sentences against Goldman and Berkman would scare people away from open protests, but the famous female anarchist, as usual, had made a statement that expressed her opinion clearly and strongly, no matter what the consequences would be.

The defense eventually closed,<sup>68</sup> and Berkman took the opportunity to address the jury and the legal representatives of the state in Goldman’s and his names. In the closing speech, Berkman again reflected upon the trial and its real aim when he stated that “we stand here indicted for a charge never mentioned in the indictment itself. We stand here accused of being anarchists. A vain accusation! We are anarchists, and I for one am proud of being an anarchist, and I am sure I may say the same for my co-defendant Miss Goldman.”<sup>69</sup> This, as Berkman continued, was the only thing that could have been proved by the trial. Besides the anarchist identity of the accused, there was nothing to prove: “I believe it is absolutely demonstrated here that the District Attorney has no case. I believe that it is absolutely demonstrated here that he did not begin to prove a conspiracy. They did not prove any overt acts.”<sup>70</sup> At the same time, the two anarchists would not bow their heads or bend their knees in front of the representatives of the US state, which is why Berkman, obviously in accordance with Goldman, added: “I am not arguing to keep myself from

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<sup>65</sup> “Anarchists Deny Urging Violence,” *The New York Times*, July 4, 1917, 5.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> “Anarchists Close Their Defense,” *New York Times*, July 7, 1917, 10.

<sup>69</sup> Alexander Berkman’s Closing Speech, *U.S. v Goldman and Berkman*, 1917, ABP-TAM, Box 1, Folder 15, 4.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

going to prison. I am not afraid of prison. I am willing to suffer for my ideas in prison if necessary. Life is dear, but not so dear that I should be at liberty without self respect. I would rather be in prison with my ideals, with my convictions, true to myself than be outside with my soul damned in my own estimation. So I am not pleading to save ourselves from prison.”<sup>71</sup> Finally, the trial, from the anarchists’ perspective, was only about one thing, one simple question: whether freedom existed in the United States or not.<sup>72</sup>

Harold A. Content would reply to this speech on 9 July 1917, when he addressed the jury as the prosecuting attorney. The legal prosecutor acknowledged the rhetoric skills of the two anarchists, and Goldman in particular, when he stated that “unfortunately I am sadly lacking in that eloquence of words that had distinguished Miss Goldman’s oration. I am paid to talk for a living, but I am sure that if Miss Goldman wanted to accept a position in the government service she could secure the finest kind of position by reason of her oratorical gifts.”<sup>73</sup> Content, however, also identified the two anarchists as the key figures of the No-Conscription League when he emphasized to the jury that “I say to you that from the evidence you have heard you are safe in saying that the No-Conscription League might just as well have been termed ‘Goldman, Berkman & Company, dealers in all sorts and orders of disorder.’”<sup>74</sup> Goldman and Berkman, the prosecutor continued to argue, “really are the No-Conscription League,” and he eventually reminded the jury members that “[t]he government is your government, in which you participate through your duly constituted representatives. And this case is of prime importance to that government. Will you by your verdict say that people like these can go forth again, defy our laws, desecrate the Stars and Stripes, make fun of the national anthem and do that with impunity? Urge people willfully to set themselves above the provisions of a definite law?”<sup>75</sup> It was no surprise that the jury would respond positively to such arguments, especially when one considers the sheer amount of charges brought forward against the anarchists.<sup>76</sup> Goldman replied to them that the court’s unwillingness to defer the sentence for a few days in order that she and Berkman could take care of their personal business made it obvious and “proves that the court is prejudiced

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71 *Ibid.*, 57.

72 Berkman asked: “The question here is, have we got free speech and liberty of expression in this country, or not?” *Ibid.*, 58.

73 Address of Harold A. Content to the Jury, July 9, 1917, U.S. v Goldman and Berkman, ABP-TAM, Box 1, Folder 14, 2.

74 *Ibid.*, 9.

75 *Ibid.*, 60–61.

76 *Ibid.*, 62–89.

because we are anarchists; because we were frank and because we stood by our opinions, and because we are going to stand by our opinions.”<sup>77</sup> Regardless of such remarks, the jury would eventually present their verdict, and a sentence<sup>78</sup> that did not really surprise the two anarchists was announced:

It has undoubtedly been a source of regret to the gentlemen of the jury, as it has been to the court and possibly to those who have set in the courtroom for these many days, that the extraordinary ability displayed by the defendants has not been utilized in support of law and order. The magnetic power of one of the defendants [Goldman, F.J.], if thus utilized, might have been of great service, in forms legitimately advocated, for the betterment of conditions as the world goes on. That power might have been of tremendous service, and more especially among the millions of humbler people who come to our country in an aspiration for liberty. ... [W]hen I [Judge Julius Marshuetz Mayer (1865–1925)] impose this sentence I am imposing it on the one hand with regret that these abilities were not better used. I impose it on the other hand with profound conviction that I am speaking for organized law, for the kind of liberty that we know and we understand, who have been privileged to live in this country that we believe is a true democracy.<sup>79</sup>

Both anarchists were to face the maximum sentence, namely two years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.<sup>80</sup> At the same time, Judge Mayer referred the conviction record of Goldman and Berkman to “the commissioner of labor ... in order to determine in due course whether or not either or both of the defendants are subject to the provisions as to deportation provided in that act.”<sup>81</sup> Goldman eventually and ironically expressed her thanks to the court: “I wish to thank the court for the marvelous fair trial we have received. I hope history will record the fairness. ... Thank you very much.”<sup>82</sup>

At the same time that the two anarchists had to go to jail again, the press continued to report on Goldman as “the true type of American anarchist,” and the *New York Times* highlighted for its readers that “[t]he history of anarchy in Europe, as well as in this country, shows that it takes but a few anarchists to make a lot of trouble.”<sup>83</sup> Goldman at the same time tried not to lose faith that the near future would prove her prediction of a world revolution correct, and wrote to her friend and anarchist Leon Malmé on 7 August 1917 about how im-

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77 *Ibid.*, 87.

78 *Ibid.*, 90–95.

79 *Ibid.*, 90, 93.

80 *Ibid.*, 93.

81 *Ibid.*

82 *Ibid.*, 95.

83 “Anarchists, in Russia and Elsewhere, Always Disorganized,” *The New York Times*, July 15, 1917, 53.

portant it was for the “old guard” of American anarchism not to give up hope: “Now is the time. You must not lose courage no matter what happens. As a matter of fact, Anarchism was never proven with greater force than at the present moment when all the institutions resting upon the State collapsed so utterly.”<sup>84</sup> Berkman, still in jail in New York before his later transfer to Atlanta, Georgia, wrote a letter to Malmed as well, in which he also tried to be positive about the current situation while hoping for a better future: “You bet, I will face whatever comes with the same spirit that has sustained me through the past. ... They can’t conquer the spirit of Liberty and some day this country will repeat the performance of Loving Russia.”<sup>85</sup> Berkman also argued for the necessity to make their case known, as “[p]ublicity is very necessary. The enemy is afraid of the light and of the exposing of their frame ups to the public. See what you can do *to help* in this matter.”<sup>86</sup> However, just a month later, the hope for a revolutionary change that would prevent Goldman from going to prison dematerialized, and the famous anarchist remarked in a letter to Malmed on 18 September 1917 that “our ideal which is now also bleeding and crushed by the judges that lie”<sup>87</sup> seemed unable to take hold among the masses. Before she eventually went to jail, Goldman tried at least once more to reach the masses and to awaken their revolutionary spirit by pointing to Russia as an example for the United States: “I have decided to go on a short tour ... partly to enlighten the American public as to who the Boylsheviki [sic!] really are and what their example will mean to the world.”<sup>88</sup>

Goldman’s attempts to fight against her sentence legally failed as her hopes for an American revolution also had. The Supreme Court confirmed the maximum sentence for Goldman and Berkman,<sup>89</sup> and both stood “convicted of conspiracy to obstruct the draft law, and are under sentence of two years in the Federal Penitentiary, in addition to a fine, in each case, of \$10,000.”<sup>90</sup> Eventually, while reading “wonderful news from Russia”<sup>91</sup> in early February, Goldman was brought to Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City after she had been taken into custody by the US marshal. Stella Comyn, Goldman’s niece, described

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**84** Emma Goldman to Leon Malmed, August 7, 1917, LMP, Folder 22.

**85** Alexander Berkman to Leon Malmed, n.d. [1917], LMP, Folder 22.

**86** *Ibid.* Emphasis in original.

**87** Emma Goldman to Leon Malmed, September 18, 1917, LMP, Folder 22.

**88** Serial letter, Emma Goldman, December 18, 1917, LMP, Folder 22.

**89** “Supreme Court Affirms Sentence on Emma Goldman,” *The New York Times*, January 15, 1918, 10.

**90** “Berkman and Goldman Going Back to Prison,” *The New York Times*, February 3, 1918, 6

**91** Emma Goldman to Leon Malmed, January 31, 1918, LMP, Folder 22.

the scene in a letter to Leon Malmed as follows: “I saw her later at the train in charge of her jailers, who were guarding her. The woman deputy was a decent sort, so I think she made the journey in a little comfort. The Marshal as a last indignity sent her to the station in a patrol wagon through 5th Ave.”<sup>92</sup> Regardless of the fact that the two famous anarchists would be behind prison bars for quite some time, the menace of their future in the United States had not ended yet, especially since the authorities wanted to use this break in their anti-state agitation to hammer the final nails into their coffins and get rid of these two dangerous minds once and for all.

The legal authorities tried to bring Berkman to trial in San Francisco for the bombing of the Preparedness Day Parade on 22 July 1916 by Tom Mooney and Warren Billings. There was no evidence that the latter two had had any contact with Berkman, who had accidentally spent time in the city during the bombing. Goldman, who had been free on bail during this time, organized a campaign by the Lower East Side unions, especially the United Hebrew Trades, to prevent Berkman from being tried in California in 1917, and was successful in preventing this.<sup>93</sup> Two legal acts, namely the Immigration Act of 1917 and the Alien Exclusion Act of 1918, would also be used by the US government to get rid of dangerous elements like Goldman and Berkman. The former allowed it to deport immigrants who supported anarchist ideas or any other form of anti-state radicalism. This possibility was used intensely during and after the Russian Revolution, as the authorities feared attempts to replicate such anti-state actions on American soil. While the Immigration Act allowed it to take citizenship rights away from people who conspired against the US state, the Alien Exclusion Act allowed it to deport people who were considered dangerous, and Hoover and Palmer would consequently apply these two laws in their fight against foreign radicalism in the United States.<sup>94</sup> Goldman and Berkman were not the only anarchists who would be targeted under the cover of these new laws; many others would be accused, sentenced, brought to Ellis Island, and eventually deported. The Palmer Raids, however, really began in mid-1919 after two attempted bombings in Washington D.C. in May and June, due to which, to quote Andrew Cornell again, “Attorney General Palmer began preparing for a massive, nationwide roundup of radicals, beginning with the Union of Russian Workers ... [as] the URW seemed

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<sup>92</sup> Stella Comyn to Leon Malmed, New York, February 5, 1918, LMP, Folder 22.

<sup>93</sup> Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 99.

<sup>94</sup> Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 62; Shulman, *To the Barricades*, 192.

to mark the exact political location where the anarchist bombers, Wobbly general-strike organizers, and Russian Bolsheviks intersected.”<sup>95</sup>

It consequently strengthened the case against her when Goldman, in early 1918, gave supportive lectures and published supportive articles and pamphlets on what Candace Falk referred to as “her most recent inspiration, the Bolsheviks.”<sup>96</sup> There had, however, already been some critical voices that accused Bolshevism in Russia of developing an agenda that rather threatened the revolutionary ideals. When Catherine Breshkovskaya, who in the past had inspired the revolutionary hopes of Goldman, “had taken a bitter stand against Emma’s new great hope—the Bolshevik Revolution,”<sup>97</sup> the latter broke off from her former idol, stubbornly believing that Bolshevism offered the cure to the sins of capitalism. Goldman was therefore making the same mistakes as those she was attempting to persuade of the evils of Bolshevism after her experiences in Soviet Russia. Yet such support was quite dangerous in the late 1910s, and many radical intellectuals got targeted due to their positive attitudes towards Lenin and the radicalization of the Russian Revolution. The New York newspaper *The Sun* commented on Palmer’s efforts on 6 January 1918 when it stated that the latter had to deal with “every type of red disturber in the city of New York”<sup>98</sup> since the war began four years before. The newspaper article also described the first radicals who were sacked by the new laws and Palmer’s work in a rather negative way: “our well known Jack-in-the-box Alexander Berkman, who bobs up in every kind of radical movement that promises financial returns; the shrewd Emma Goldman, who for many years has made anarchy a well paying profession.”<sup>99</sup> The efforts of the two anarchists to support the Russian Revolution from abroad were also not omitted, although the supposedly non-existent rigidity of the state was criticized: “Emma held many meetings where she did much talking. She said the same things at each to the audience, and Berkman was her ever present satellite. The authorities gave her plenty of latitude, for they believed that Emma could do no harm anyway, and they did not wish to give her an opportunity to play the martyr.”<sup>100</sup> The public image of Berkman and Goldman would be kept negative, which is why the two anarchists were also accused of selling anarchism, which they considered a method of income rather than an ideal: “If an anarchist cannot capitalise his radicalism he has very little use

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95 Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 71.

96 Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, 169.

97 *Ibid.*, 172.

98 “Bolsheviki Here Are Antyhing But American in Spirit,” *The Sun*, January 6, 1918, 8.

99 *Ibid.*

100 *Ibid.*

for it.”<sup>101</sup> Goldman and Berkman were consequently referred to and characterized as “American Bolsheviki” and some kind of wannabe revolutionaries:

These radicals have been erroneously alluded to as the American Bolsheviki. They are not American. The majority of these people come from eastern Europe. Many of them boast that had they remained in Russia under the old regime they would have been put to death. ... [T]he Government of the United States has protected everyone who sought refuge on these shores. It has been able to do this because the American people were ever ready to uphold their Government. ... The Bolsheviki of New York pride themselves upon their radicalism. Little would-be Marats of West Side tea parties boast of their defiance of custom.<sup>102</sup>

The previously mentioned meeting between Berkman, Goldman, and Trotsky was also taken up by the press to stress the close ties the two anarchists, who were called “Trotsky’s closest associates in New York,”<sup>103</sup> supposedly had with the Bolsheviki in Soviet Russia. In short, nobody, besides the radical friends of the two anarchists, was sad to see them in jail again. While Berkman was brought to Atlanta to spend his jail time there, Goldman arrived in Jefferson City.<sup>104</sup>

Her months in the Missouri State Penitentiary were not easy for the famous anarchist.<sup>105</sup> While Goldman had spoken about the possibility that she and Berkman would return to Soviet Russia to support the Bolsheviki, this was out of the question for a while. From her cell, however, she criticized those who began to argue against the Bolshevik party around Lenin. Instead, “Goldman expressed horror” and “was becoming disillusioned with America and losing faith in American radicalism.”<sup>106</sup> This mood might have been strengthened by Goldman’s prison experience in 1918, when, to quote Vivian Gornick, “in the Missouri penitentiary for women, prisoners survived under conditions of permanent low-grade sadism. Routinely, and for the most arbitrary of reasons, they were deprived of food or exercise, went untreated when ill, were forced into illegal and demeaning

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**101** Ibid.

**102** Ibid.

**103** “Berkman Sponsor for Trotsky Here,” *New York Times*, January 22, 1919, 3. They had only organized the previously mentioned meeting in March 1917 and met Trotsky only there. For the public, however, this incident must have been enough to declare the anarchists as Bolshevik enemies of the American state.

**104** “Emma Goldman Again in Stripes,” *New York Times*, February 7, 1918: 22.

**105** Richard Drinnon and Anna Maria Drinnon, eds., *Nowhere at Home: Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), 4–8 offers some of her letters from prison in an edited form.

**106** Anthony Ashbolt, “Love and Hate in European Eyes: Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman on America,” *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 22, no. 1 (2003): 4.

labor, were beaten when deemed disobedient, and were thrown into solitary confinement at the drop of a retort.”<sup>107</sup> On the brighter side, Goldman hoped that her time in prison could help her to get out of her toxic relationship with Ben Reitman, who, in the meantime, had got married and founded his own little family, and would not waste almost any thoughts on Goldman’s fate.<sup>108</sup>

Since the prisons, as a consequence of the governmental raids, were filled with radicals of all kinds and with all sorts of aims, Goldman found something to turn her activism to when she, from her prison cell, established a League for the Amnesty of Political Prisoners.<sup>109</sup> Goldman suggested “that a demand for the release of all those made prisoner in connection with the war be pressed upon the general peace conference.”<sup>110</sup> However, probably unsurprisingly, this was ignored by the authorities. What made her sad was that her nephew David, her sister Helena’s son, had fallen in the war in Europe. What she had tried to prevent with her protest had eventually hurt her own family as well.<sup>111</sup> Most of her days, however, Goldman simply spent sewing jackets—with a daily quota of 36 jackets—while she could befriend a few fellow radical women during her months in jail, with whom she would discuss radicalist ideas.<sup>112</sup> Regardless of being sent away from the center of political radicalism in wartime America, i.e. New York City, Goldman was, nevertheless, not uninformed: “Alone in her cell she read with alarm of the new American heresy hunt. Breathlessly she read reports of the New Russia. Each night she would transport herself from Missouri to Russia, where in her imagination she helped build the revolution.”<sup>113</sup> She would write accordingly to Leon Malmed on 17 July 1919 and almost wishfully declared that “real birth begins when one becomes conscious of the possibilities of one’s life and all that one would like to do.”<sup>114</sup> More self-critical than in her later autobiography, she seemed to reflect about her previous life and the efforts she had undertaken to make the United States a better place, an aim that eventually sent her to jail again. She confessed that “I cannot say that I have fulfilled all of my desires, but that is perhaps because I have tried to aim high.”<sup>115</sup>

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107 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 102.

108 Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, 170–171.

109 “League is Formed to Seek Freedom of War Resisters,” *New York Tribune*, April 8, 1918: 5.

110 *Ibid.*

111 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 293.

112 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 103–104.

113 Shulman, *To the Barricades*, 194.

114 Emma Goldman to Leon Malmed, Jefferson City, MO, July 17, 1919, LMP, Folder 24, 1.

115 *Ibid.*

Malmed had sent her a care package that Goldman had shared with her prison friends Kate Richards O'Hare (1876–1948)<sup>116</sup> and “Dynamite Girl” Ella Antolina (1899–1984).<sup>117</sup> Regardless of the existence of this trio, Goldman remarked that she “spent many lonely months, starved o[f] intellectual and spiritual companionship. Added to that was considerable physical indisposition which made my life and the work very tiring indeed.”<sup>118</sup> Two things dominated her mind in the last months of her prison stay, namely the Russian Revolution and the condition of Alexander Berkman, who was still in Atlanta. She worried about the position of the Bolsheviks, who were attacked from internal and external counter-revolutionaries at the same time: “our wonderful Russia, how the forces are working to crush her completely, but she will rise out of her prostrate position, she was, she is, and she will be. Here again the price is terrible, but all great and wonderful things seem to be baptised in blood and tears.”<sup>119</sup> Goldman would be released before the end of the two years due to good behavior, but Hoover and Palmer, who had prepared her deportation in accordance with the new legal options, would not grant her a chance to catch her breath before they came back for her. On 12 September 1919, 15 days before she would be released from the penitentiary, she received her deportation papers.<sup>120</sup> While the two anarchists were still in prison, the state would make sure that their next legal charge was awaiting them the moment they stepped through the prison door.

The *New York Times* reported on this governmental coup on 19 September 1919: “When the terms of the two agitators expire late this month they will be rearrested, and, after an examination, it is expected that further warrants will be issued for their deportation. The immigration authorities are proceeding on the grounds that both are aliens, there being some question as to their citizen-

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**116** Sally M. Miller, *From Prairie to Prison: The Life of Social Activist Kate Richards O'Hare* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1993).

**117** *Ibid.*, 167–169.

**118** Emma Goldman to Leon Malmed, Jefferson City, MO, July 17, 1919, LMP, Folder 24, 1–2.

**119** *Ibid.*, 3. On Berkman's fate, Goldman wrote the following in the same letter: “For months now he has been kept in solitary confinement, being deprived of even the few privileges which that terrible prison grants. But even now he can write only twice a month, all incoming and outgoing mail being very severely censored. Imagine even the NATION being kept out. No food of any kind from outside except on Christmas when he was remembered by many, many comrades. Amidst it all our boy is truly heroic, his letters are perfect poems of hope and faith and enthusiasm. His spirit can not be daunted. Compared with his life, mine has been a picnic. At least I am permitted to have mail, can write three times a week, can buy food once a week and can receive anything outside of dope, cigarettes and liquor, three things which I do not mis[s] greatly.”

**120** Avrigh and Avrigh, *Sasha and Emma*, 292; Shulman, *To the Barricades*, 194.

ship.”<sup>121</sup> Goldman had not only “been connected for many years with radical and anarchist propaganda in the United States,” but the authorities were obviously sure that they could make a case against her: “Charles A. Lich, Deputy Inspector of the St. Louis Immigration Office ... was confident of proving two points essential to deportation, namely, that Miss Goldman is an alien and that she is an anarchist, and therefore an undesirable alien.”<sup>122</sup> The release of the famous anarchist was consequently followed by her immediate arrest in order for her to be deported from the United States. Paul and Karen Avrich evaluated her situation in late September 1917 quite well, saying that “[b]ack in New York City, Emma found her life’s work in ruins.”<sup>123</sup> Although Berkman was released from prison on 1 October 1919 as well, all the two could now do was try to prevent their deportation from the United States, since both of them faced the same charges. Interestingly, Berkman had also not given up his hope for a revolutionary movement in the United States that would try to achieve what the Russian Revolution had achieved in the previous months. In a statement on his release, he argued that “[t]he steelworkers’ strike is merely one of the symptoms of the social revolutionary process that may in the near future culminate in revolution.”<sup>124</sup> Obviously, “[t]he working masses are not satisfied any more with empty political democracy and they demand a share in the products of their industry, the opportunity to live, to enjoy life,” which means that they longed for those things that only a revolution would effectively grant them. As the Russian Revolution in February 1917 had been related to strikes in the Russian metropolis, so would the new American revolution be related to the steelworkers’ strike, and “[i]ndustrial slavery, perhaps more acute in the United States than anywhere else, is on its death bed.”<sup>125</sup> Berkman was consequently full of hope when he left prison: “I feel, I am convinced, that the future belongs to us—to us who strove to regenerate society, to abolish poverty, misery, wars and crime by doing away with the cause of these evils.”<sup>126</sup>

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121 “Plan Deportation of Emma Goldman,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1919: 11.

122 *Ibid.*

123 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 293.

124 Statement by Alexander Berkman, on his release from the United State penitentiary, at Atlanta, Georgia, October 1, 1919, Alexander Berkman Papers, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (henceforth ABP-IISH), No. 117, 1. Berkman here refers to the steelworker strike that began in late September 1919. For an older but still readable and useful introduction, see David Brody, *Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1965).

125 Statement by Alexander Berkman, on his release from the United State penitentiary, at Atlanta, Georgia, October 1, 1919, 1.

126 *Ibid.*, 4.

Back in New York, he and Goldman met Russian anarchist Mollie Steimer (1897–1980), among others, with whom the two anarchists could discuss “with concern the mounting persecution of anarchists and socialists in Russia who disagreed with the Bolshevik government. But they decided to wait and see.”<sup>127</sup> Regardless of the reports from Soviet Russia that seemed to confirm that Lenin had already corrupted the revolution and its ideals, the two anarchists were not willing to give up their support for the revolutionary cause, especially since they believed that these developments were a necessary evil to protect the revolution from its many enemies. In addition, they had not had a lot of time to deal with these questions, since the deportation hearings were now demanding their full attention.<sup>128</sup> During her Federal hearing with regard to her deportation, Goldman protested immediately that “[a]t the very outset of this hearing I wish to register my protest against these star chamber proceedings, whose very spirit is nothing less than a revival of the ancient days of the Spanish Inquisition or the more recently defunct Third Degree system of Czarist Russia.”<sup>129</sup> All of the deportation charges, according to Goldman, represented nothing more than “a denial of the insistent claim on the part of the Government that in this country we have free speech and free press.” She instead requested from the authorities that were supposed to decide her fate, that “if I am not charged with any specific offense or act, if—as I have reason to believe—this is purely an inquiry into my social and political opinions, then I protest still more vigorously against these proceedings, as utterly tyrannical and diametrically opposed to the fundamental guarantees of a true democracy.”<sup>130</sup> The *New York Times* reported on the following day that Goldman “assert[ed that] she is a citizen” and that the methods now applied in the United States would be the same Czarist Russia had internalized with the establishment of a “system of banishment and exile.”<sup>131</sup> Goldman would base her defense on the fact that she considered herself an American citizen due to her marriage to Jacob Kerschner in 1887 and consequently did not see any legal

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**127** Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 300.

**128** On the hearings, see Shulman, *To the Barricades*, 194–195.

**129** Statement by Emma Goldman at the Federal Hearing on Deportation, October 27, 1919, in EGP-IISH, No. 303.

**130** *Ibid.*

**131** “Deportation Defied by Emma Goldman,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1919, 32. Considering the success of George Kennan the Elder’s (1845–1924) books about the Russian exile system in the 1890s, one can assume that a wider public would clearly have understood such a comparison. George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*, 2 vols. (New York: Century Company, 1891). For short biographical introduction to Kennan’s life and work, see Frank Jacob, *George Kennan on the Spanish-American War: A Critical Edition of “Cuba and the Cubans”* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 1–44.

ground based on which she could be deported by the authorities. However, the legal prosecution for the case would present material to prove that Kershner's citizenship had been annulled for fraud in 1909, which meant that Goldman herself could no longer be considered or treated as a legal citizen.<sup>132</sup>

On 1 November 1919, Goldman and Berkman sent a circular letter to all their friends and fellow anarchists, in which they declared that they were back, although with an insecure future: "We say it freely and frankly, with utmost conviction, that both of us are entering again upon the remaining sentences of our lives, with our spirits unbroken, entirely unrepentant—indeed, with a will unembittered by the acid of the prison test, but rather purified and made stronger, with our minds happily unimpaired by the terrible experience of the last two years, our hearts youthful with the joy of life, of work, of social effort."<sup>133</sup> The two anarchists wanted to show their strength and explain that they remained unbroken by the authorities, although "we are on the hob again. Locks and bars and dungeons may stifle the voice, but no power on earth can paralyze our inherent love of liberty."<sup>134</sup> They also pointed in their circular to the current situation, in which many anarchists were facing deportation, but Goldman and Berkman were not yet willing to accept this as their fate: "Deportation of so-called aliens is fast becoming an established American institution, and if allowed to remain unchallenged by the liberal minded spirits of the country, this imperialistic system of stifling the voice of social protest will become rooted in American life. Deportation is but the first step that will inevitably lead to its ultimate, the complete suppression of popular discontent and free speech by the system of expelling even the native protestants and rebels."<sup>135</sup> Consequently, Goldman and Berkman intended "to fight this new symptom of American Prussianism with our utmost efforts."<sup>136</sup>

Goldman was probably too optimistic to think that she could oppose this decision and assumed that the US authorities would not dare to really send her abroad. When she gave a speech at a Testimonial Dinner for Kate Richards O'Hare on 17 November, Goldman would joke that "[t]he Missouri State Penitentiary was not my first governmental home, and I hope it is not going to be my last

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**132** Ibid.

**133** Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, Circular, New York, November 1, 1919, ABP-IISH, No. 119, 1.

**134** Ibid.

**135** Ibid.

**136** Ibid., 2.

governmental home,”<sup>137</sup> but she would not have dreamed that she would soon be deported from Ellis Island. On the same day, a *Special to The New York Times* had declared that Palmer had sent an inquiry to the US Senate “asking what steps the Department of Justice had taken toward the deportation of the anarchists, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman.”<sup>138</sup> In this report, doubts about Goldman’s legal status were also raised, because, as it stated further, “[t]he Government is prepared to prove that there is no record to be found in Monroe County of her marriage to Kershner, and that the alleged ceremony was performed by a ‘Shochet,’<sup>139</sup> a man who slaughters cattle for ‘kosher’ meat and under the laws of New York is not authorized to perform the marriage ceremony.”<sup>140</sup> For Berkman, deportation was almost certain at this point, as he did not claim citizenship and could consequently just be deported as somebody considered a dangerous foreign alien. Goldman’s case would, in contrast, need some more attention before the “queen of American anarchists” could also be deported. After the Bureau of Immigration recommended Berkman’s deportation on 25 November 1919, the two anarchists decided to go on a last “brief and bittersweet lecture tour”<sup>141</sup> in the United States together and visited New York, Detroit, and Chicago, where they always remained under governmental surveillance. The Department of Labor had finally issued their orders for deportation, and they had to go to Ellis Island on 5 December 1919 to surrender themselves for their deportation.<sup>142</sup> During this last tour, Goldman, even before knowing her final verdict, sent a letter to Malmed from Chicago on 29 November in which she confessed her true feelings about the current situation and the loss represented by Berkman’s deportation:

Well, our boy’s days in America are numbered. In fact, we expect a demand for him almost any hour. ... You can well imagine how I feel about it. There is one thing we must do and that is to begin equipping S[asha] [i.e. Alexander Berkman] with all he needs to face life in a famine-stricken country. With shoes in Russia costing hundreds of roubles and no food to be had for love or money, it is necessary to send him away with a lot of things which will endure the journey and which he will be able to use when he gets to his destination. ... I would like to have a trunk-full of canned goods. I want you to help me with that, since you can get everything at cost price. ... I am enclosing a list of things that I want A[llexander]

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**137** Address of Emma Goldman, Kate Richards O’Hare Testimonial Dinner, New York, November 17, 1919, ABP-TAM, Box 1, Folder 4, 2.

**138** “Anarchists’ Record Given to Senate,” *Special to The New York Times*, November 17, 1919: 6.

**139** A ritual slaughterer.

**140** “Anarchists’ Record Given to Senate,” 6.

**141** Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 294.

**142** *Ibid.*

B[erkman] to have and you can add whatever you think will stand a sea voyage. While he may not be shipped out within the next week, ... we should be ready. Some of our comrades here are going to rig him out with a couple of suits and possibly an extra overcoat. ... If we cannot save him from being immediately deported, we ought at least to make his trip as comfortable and joyous as we can.<sup>143</sup>

It is interesting to note that while Goldman had often previously declared that she would not have a problem with being deported to Soviet Russia, the cradle of revolution, she seemed frightened of the realities Berkman would have to face. Her ideas about Soviet Russia were consequently already much more nuanced than they had been during 1917 and early 1918. Too much had happened in the meantime and too much new information had arrived that now demanded a more realistic perspective on life in the revolutionary utopia across the Atlantic Ocean. On the other hand, she also felt, in a way, that she was obliged to go with Berkman, with whom she had fought for a better world for so many years.

In her letter to Malmed, she also referred to her own case, stating that “[o]f course, I may begin the fight on the grounds of citizenship, but frankly I am not going into it with much eagerness. I feel that I ought to go with Berkman when he is deported. It seems so cruel to have stood in the same terrible battle for thirty years and then to have him shoved out alone when he is really too ill for a long journey.”<sup>144</sup> Regardless of her hopes of possibly staying in the United States, the famous anarchist was also realistic about her chances: “Then, too, I haven’t much hope for the success of my fight. In fact, I know that in the end I will have to go.”<sup>145</sup> On 3 December, in the knowledge that she would be deported as well, she again wrote to Malmed and argued that she needed to get some of her belongings before she could go to Ellis Island, which “is now as horrid as a prison as Atlanta and Jefferson City,”<sup>146</sup> and probably to Soviet Russia from there. She had to be ready for the cold and the different demands of the Russian weather and told Malmed about the things she needed: “I must get some time to get my clothes for Russia. My coat is wonderful but I discovered it is not even warm enough for Chicago climate, let alone for Russia, so I will have to get very warm underwear, a good sweater, a warm bath-robe, and a lot of other woolen things and shoes—things that can not be gotten for any amount of money.”<sup>147</sup> Once on Ellis Island, however, there was maybe one last chance to avoid the

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**143** Emma Goldman to Leon Malmed, Chicago, November 29, 1919, LMP, Folder 25, 1.

**144** *Ibid.*, 2.

**145** *Ibid.*

**146** Emma Goldman to Leon Malmed, Chicago, December 3, 1919, LMP, Folder 25, 1.

**147** *Ibid.*, 2.

worst, and when the deportation hearings were held there on 8 December, Judge Julius M. Mayer listened to the arguments of Harry Weinberger, Goldman's lawyer who attempted to prove her citizenship and "worked doggedly, pursuing every legal avenue and opportunity to prevent the deportation."<sup>148</sup> In addition, the lawyer argued that the two anarchists could not be deported to a nation state that the United States had not yet officially recognized.<sup>149</sup> The court, however, deemed the deportation legal and, with regard to the existent laws, "constitutional for two reasons: first, the court of original jurisdiction, unless clearly and firmly convinced to the contrary, will always hold an Act of Congress constitutional,"<sup>150</sup> and second, that "[t]he Court holds that at any time the Congress of the United States, in dealing with aliens, may pass any act that it deems proper with respect to the deportation of aliens provided that no provision of the Constitution is violated, and that the act in question in no manner can be construed as applied to these relators as an ex post facto piece of legislation."<sup>151</sup> With regard to Weinberger's claim for the US government not being able to send Goldman and Berkman to Soviet Russia, the court's representatives claimed that no inquiry about that issue needed to be taken into consideration to reach a decision. Weinberger really tried to play every possible card when it came to trying to prevent Goldman's deportation. With regard to Goldman's marriage and naturalization to US citizen status, the following arguments were exchanged:

Weinberger: It is our additional contention in reference to Miss Goldman that Miss Goldman is a citizen by virtue of her marriage to one Jacob A. Kershner. ... Miss Goldman is concerned that the Government refused us time to prove her citizenship ... it is our contention that Miss Goldman is a citizen of the United States.

[...]

Weinberger: Emma Goldman married the said Jacob Kershner I believe [in] the year 1887.

The Court: Does the record say where?

Mr. Weinberger: In the City of Rochester.

The Court: And is the exact date given or just the year?

Mr. Weinberger: February, 1887. I do not think we have the exact date.

The Court: Was the marriage—

Mr. Weinberger: By a rabbi.

The Court: Was it recorded in any way?

Mr. Weinberger: I do not believe so.<sup>152</sup>

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**148** Avrigh and Avrigh, *Sasha and Emma*, 295.

**149** Deportation Hearings of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, Stenographer's Minutes, December 8, 1919, ABP-TAM, Box 1, Folder 3, 19.

**150** *Ibid.*, 21.

**151** *Ibid.*

**152** *Ibid.*, 28, 30.

The legal prosecutors were ultimately not convinced by the presented documents or statements and declared that

the Court views both of these defendants as enemies of the United States of America, and of its peace and comfort. The defendant Berkman has a criminal record that began with his attempt to assassinate Mr. Frick. At the beginning of the war, both of these defendants sought to injure the United States by preventing the carrying out of the Selective Service Draft Law. They were convicted, and their conviction was sustained. They did everything they could to destroy the welfare, the stability and the integrity of this Government.<sup>153</sup>

Without an option for bail, the two anarchists were now at the end of the road and could only wait for their insecure future as part of those radicals who fell victim to the first American Red Scare. Both of them, who had supported the Russian Revolution in the United States, would soon be able to help to build a new world in Soviet Russia. Both probably knew quite well that it would be a different life in the future as they would probably have no chance of coming back, at least not in the near future. The only thing they could do at that moment in time was hope that their destination would actually be Soviet Russia, as it was not yet clear where they were actually going to end up.

Berkman and Goldman sent a letter to their friends on 9 December that stated: “This may be our last letter to you. The expected has happened: the Federal Government had ordered both of us deported. ... If Emma Goldman can be deprived of her citizenship and deported, every other citizen of foreign birth is in similar danger.”<sup>154</sup> On Ellis Island, they were not the only anarchists or Left radicals that were waiting for their deportation, since many others had been brought there before to wait for the first transport to be sent out.<sup>155</sup> Goldman and Berkman did not remain passive there but prepared the handwritten journal *Ellis Island Anarchist Weekly*, which would give the anarchists a stimulus and something to work on.<sup>156</sup> The *New York Times* reported on 18 December that Goldman was “glad to leave,” “anxious to get to Soviet Russia at as early a date as possible,” and that she planned to establish “The Russian Friends of American Freedom” after her arrival there. Sarcastically, and probably disappointed about her treatment, she stated that “the passage of the so-called anar-

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**153** *Ibid.*, 68.

**154** Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman to Leon Malmed, Serial Letter [New York], December 9, 1919, LMP, Folder 25, 1.

**155** Letter from Margaret Roy to a friend on the outside, Ellis Island, NY, July 12, 1919, ABP-TAM, Box 1, Folder 2.

**156** This journal can be found in the Joseph A. Labadie Collection, Special Collections Research Center, Hatcher Graduate Library at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

chist bills and other espionage bills will make it necessary for Americans to get help from the outside to recover their lost liberties.”<sup>157</sup> On 21 December, 248<sup>158</sup> radicals, among whom were three women—along with Goldman, Ethel Bernstein<sup>159</sup> and Dora Lipkin<sup>160</sup> were also to be deported—, were sent on the USAT Buford, a “barely seaworthy relic of the Spanish-American War,”<sup>161</sup> a ship that would be known as the “Soviet Ark”<sup>162</sup> to the radicals, to an as yet unknown destination.<sup>163</sup> The process of ensuring that nobody would escape was personally overseen by J. Edgar Hoover, who at 5 a.m. “visited the ship, eager to be present for Berkman and Goldman’s expulsion.”<sup>164</sup>

The night before, Berkman and Goldman had finished their last written message to the American people before they were sent away from the country they wanted to make a better place. In their text, “Deportation: Its Meaning and Menace—Last Message to the People of America,”<sup>165</sup> both emphasized the impact of the war and the tension it created between those who protested against the war and those who profited from it. They argued that just a few voices could be heard speaking against the First World War in the United States:

But these voices of sanity and judgement were lost in the storm of unlocked war passions. The brave men and women that dared to speak in [sic!] behalf of peace and humanity, that

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**157** “Red Leaders Here Face Time in Jail,” *New York Times*, December 18, 1919: 17.

**158** The number often varies in the literature. While Berkman speaks of 248 men and three women in his first letters from the ship, some texts refer to 248 radicals including Goldman, others to 248 radicals and Goldman. Since Berkman in a later letter refers to 245, probably male political refugees (see below), I use 248 radicals as the total number here. This seems to be correct as 248 radicals are spoken of in total again in Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman to Comrades, On Board the U.S. Transport Buford, January 10, 1920, in *Letters from Berkman, U.S. Transport Buford, January 3–13, 1920, ABP-IISH, No. 127, 9.*

**159** Bernstein would also have no luck later in the Soviet Union, where she became a victim of Stalin and had to spend ten years in a Siberian prison camp after her husband had been killed during the Stalinist purges. Avruch, *Anarchist Voices*, 342.

**160** Donna R. Gabaccia, *Foreign Relations: American Immigration in Global Perspective* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 150.

**161** Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 105–106.

**162** Kowal, *Tongue of Fire*, ix.

**163** Avruch and Avruch, *Sasha and Emma*, 296–297; Cornell, *Unruly Equality*, 74. On the journey of the USAT Buford, see Torrie Hester, *Deportation: The Origins of U.S. Policy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 121–124.

**164** Avruch and Avruch, *Sasha and Emma*, 297. Also see J. Edgar Hoover, “Memorandum for Mr. Creighton,” U.S. Department of Justice (August 23, 1919), 2, cited in Ferguson, “Discourses of Danger,” 735.

**165** Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, *Deportation: Its Meaning and Menace—Last Message to the People of America*, Ellis Island, NY, December 1919, ABP-IISH, No. 126.

had the surpassing integrity of remaining true to themselves and their ideals, w[ith] the courage of facing danger and death for conscience sake—these, the truest friends of Man, had to bear the cross of Golgotha ... as the lovers of humanity have done all through the centuries of human prayers.<sup>166</sup>

Goldman and Berkman therefore highlighted that “[l]iberty is dead, and white terror on top dominates the country [and] [f]ree speech is a thing of the past.”<sup>167</sup> At the same time, they realized that it was not solely their protest against conscription that had caused their deportation but also the fear of the American elites that the Russian Revolution would reach US shores as well: “Revolution is stalking across Europe. Its spectre is threatening America. ... Revolutions begin in the heart and in the mind. Action follows in due course. Political and industrial institutions, bereft of the people’s faith in them, are doomed. ... America is on the threshold of the Social Revolution.”<sup>168</sup> The elites of the United States were consequently in danger and therefore frightened that the radical elements within the country would replicate the example set in Soviet Russia.

The two anarchists nevertheless argued that “Bolsheviki ways and Soviet ideas must gain no foothold in America”<sup>169</sup> because the measures they had taken in Soviet Russia, e.g. the provision of land to the peasants and the liberation of the workers from capitalism, were unmatched in history. With regard to the Americans’ paranoid fear of Bolshevism and the liberation of the workers, Goldman and Berkman noted: “That such things should threaten the rich men of this free country is intolerable. Nothing must be left undone to prevent such a calamity. It would be terrible to be put on a level with the common laborer.”<sup>170</sup> That the United States would redirect their propaganda machine from an anti-German direction to anti-Bolshevism one was frightening, as “the servile tools of capitalism and imperialism combine to paint Russia, Soviet Russia, in colors of blood and infamy [and] [t]he direct result of this poison propaganda is now culminating in *American pogroms* against Russians, Bolsheviki, communists, radicals, and progressives in general.”<sup>171</sup> Deportation had turned into a weapon of the state to get rid of those who freely expressed their mind and criticized the government, while “[p]atriotic profiteers and political hooli-

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166 *Ibid.*, 6.

167 *Ibid.*, 13.

168 *ibid.*, 20–22.

169 *Ibid.*, 27.

170 *Ibid.*, 26.

171 *Ibid.*, 28. Emphasis in original.

gans are united in the cry for the ‘Americanization’ of the foreigner in the United States. He is to be ‘naturalized,’ intellectually sterilized and immunized to Bolshevism, so that he may properly appreciate the glorious spirit of American democracy.”<sup>172</sup> Goldman’s case<sup>173</sup> was a warning to those who intended to rely on their right to free speech to criticize the state. The two anarchists ultimately warned the people of America not to be blinded by the messages of the press but to start to emancipate themselves instead.<sup>174</sup>

Goldman and Berkman had clearly identified their own deportation as the use of an anti-libertarian weapon by the US state, and their ambivalent experience that was shared by many radicals, namely that the United States “could be both the promised land and hell-hole of exploitation and excess,”<sup>175</sup> had finally reached its most negative point.<sup>176</sup> Goldman, who had immigrated from Russia to the “New World” to find a better life, had radicalized there and fought for about three decades to achieve a better society in which freedom would be available for all. Eventually, Goldman was expelled from the country she had had so many hopes for and was on her way to an unknown destination. Of course, the deportation hearings in particular must have been tough for the anarchist, as she could clearly sense that the US authorities were willing to do whatever was necessary to get rid of her. While her autobiography would put much emphasis on highlighting her American identity,<sup>177</sup> as Vivian Gornick put it, “a pained love of America took her by surprise,” and the deportation order that sealed her fate must have felt like “a knife in the heart.”<sup>178</sup> Berkman, however, who had thought before about returning to Russia, to the country of “the origins of his revolutionary dreams and hopes,”<sup>179</sup> did not have as many problems as Goldman with the deportation. He was even quite surprised that Goldman was suffering so much, considering that they might be allowed to go to Russia and support the revolution, about which Berkman had been so happy since its beginning.<sup>180</sup> When they left US shores, both anarchists were committed to continuing to support Lenin and his followers, although Goldman was sad to do that in a different geographical context.

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172 Ibid., 50.

173 Ibid., 51–56.

174 Ibid., 62–67.

175 Ashbolt, “Love and Hate in European Eyes,” 1.

176 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 296.

177 Ashbolt, “Love and Hate in European Eyes,” 2.

178 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 101.

179 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 298.

180 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 231; Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 101.

Initially, however, the radicals did not even know where the USAT Buford was heading, and Berkman therefore called it a “Mystery Ship,” confessing to Eleanor Fitzgerald in a letter dated 3 January 1920 that “[t]he anxiety is terrible.”<sup>181</sup> The captain of the ship would claim that he had sealed orders and consequently was not allowed to talk about specifics of the journey, including the final destination.<sup>182</sup> The ship was “an old leaky tub,”<sup>183</sup> and while the three women shared one cabin and received reasonable food,<sup>184</sup> they were not allowed to see the men that shared the remaining three cabins, with 48 occupying Berkman’s one.<sup>185</sup> Berkman hoped, according to his letter of 7 January 1920, that they would eventually get to Russia, but many got sick and had stomach problems.<sup>186</sup> Three days later, Goldman and Berkman sent a letter to their American comrades with some information they were then able to share: “After 20 days of anxiety ... we have, at last, found out—unofficially—where we are bound. It is to be Libau [modern Liepāja, Latvia] ... and there we will be turned over to Soviet Russia.”<sup>187</sup> While the destination provided some hope, they added that “the treatment of the men is simply harrowing. Cattle are placed in no worse quarters than the cabins assigned to the 245 political refugees. ... Thus has the great United States Government treated the men against whom no crime was charged, but who were merely accused of entertaining ideals of human brotherhood. Not even at the height of the war did America treat actual alien enemies with such utter barbarity.”<sup>188</sup> But this treatment would end, and the radicals would be able to help Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who had been under steady pressure in the last years: “Faint in body, yet strong in spirit, Russia defies the world of greed and sham, and holds her own against the combined power of the international conspiracy of murder and robbery. Russia, the incarnation of a flaming ideal, the inspiration of the New Day.”<sup>189</sup> Goldman and Berkman also reminded their American friends that their “deportation mark[ed] the final fall of American Czardom. The mystery trip on the U.S. Transport Buford of the finest 248 political refugees from America may yet prove to be the leaven to quicken the spirit and waken the energies of

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**181** Letters from Berkman, U.S. Transport Buford, January 3–13, 1920, ABP-IISH, No. 127.

**182** Alexander Berkman, “The Log of the Transport Buford,” *The Liberator* (April 1920), 9–12, ABP-IISH, No. 127.

**183** *Ibid.*, 9.

**184** Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 51.

**185** Berkman, “The Log of the Transport Buford,” 9.

**186** Letters from Berkman, U.S. Transport Buford, January 3–13, 1920, ABP-IISH, No. 127.

**187** Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman to Comrades, On Board the U.S. Transport Buford, January 10, 1920, in *ibid.*, 1.

**188** *Ibid.*, 2, 6. The text seems to refer only to the 245 male political refugees here.

**189** *Ibid.*, 9.

the American people for the coming Social Revolution.”<sup>190</sup> They consequently hoped that they would not only be able to help to protect the Russian Revolution against their enemies but also to awaken the American proletariat that would, due to the deportation of the two radicals, realize that only another revolution could turn the tide in the United States and create a better place and future for all. Considering the high hopes for their future in Soviet Russia, the reality would also surprise the American press, especially since one of the most radical minds they had been in touch with during the previous decades now argued that the Bolsheviks had betrayed the revolution. The utopia of Soviet Russia had turned out to be worse than the United States. The *New York Times* reported on the “Failure of Sovietism in Russia” on 27 March 1921 and referenced Goldman, who by then had turned into an anti-Bolshevist: “Liberty there is none; an anti-Socialist might have replied that there never will be any under socialism; but they go further and report that there is no longer Bolshevism, socialism, or Soviet rule, that the Soviet Government does not exist and that there is instead a tyranny patterned after the Czar and consisting of some five men who rule the land irresponsibly after their own fashion.”<sup>191</sup> Considering her speeches and writings about Soviet Russia and the Bolsheviks between 1917 and 1919, the American public may really have been surprised that “[o]ne of our most vociferous radicals, who spent much time when in this country extolling the regime of Soviet Russia, was deported to her new Utopia of the Bolsheviks, and now she is out with a book in which she denounces Bolshevism and all its works.” Her book *My Disillusionment in Russia* was also referred to as “the most sweeping indictment of Bolshevism ever received on this side of the water,”<sup>192</sup> which naturally raises a number of questions about what happened to Goldman in Russia. What had she seen there? Why would she turn against Lenin and Bolshevism? The following chapter will discuss the experiences of Goldman in Soviet Russia and thereby answer these questions to explain how a supporter of the Russian Revolution and Bolshevism like Goldman could turn into probably the fiercest enemy of Lenin and his Bolshevik followers. It will thereby also highlight that the realities of revolutionary processes can hardly be compared with the idealist and often utopian imaginations about the power of revolutions to create a better world for all people alike. Goldman would experience something many revolutionaries both before and after her would go through: a process that turned unquestionable admiration into pure frustration.

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<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>191</sup> “The Failure of Sovietism in Russia,” *New York Times*, March 27, 1921: BRM 3.

<sup>192</sup> Emma Goldman’s Blue Days in Red Russia, *The Literary Digest* for December 15, 1923, 34–36, EGP-IISH, No. 303, 34.

## 5 Arrival and Life in Russia

On 10 October 1929, Emma Goldman wrote a letter to Arthur L. Ross—a lawyer and since 1924 her legal representative in the United States<sup>1</sup>—in which she confessed that her deportation from the United States had destroyed her life and that “the misery that has been mine since” was almost unbearable.<sup>2</sup> Goldman, who was forced to leave the country she loved, hoped, like many other revolutionaries that went to Soviet Russia, to find a new world, a utopia that had become true and of which she had dreamed for so long.<sup>3</sup> Her experiences between late January 1920 and late December 1921<sup>4</sup> are important to understand why Goldman turned from a pro-Bolshevist supporter into an anti-Bolshevist critic who would relentlessly try to persuade the international Left, and especially anarchists outside of Russia, that the revolution had failed and that Lenin had created nothing more than a new system of exploitation and suppression, a perversion of Marxism and a violation of all the dreams of the international workers’ movement. Yet at the time Goldman and Berkman were deported, they felt at least some joy about the possibility of working with other revolutionary minds to forge a new and better society in Soviet Russia. Berkman would later express this feeling in *The Russian Tragedy* (1922), also highlighting the Russian-American dichotomy, as follows:

It was two years ago. A democratic government, “the freest on earth,” had deported me—together with 248 other politicals—from the country I had lived in over thirty years. I had protested emphatically against the moral wrong perpetrated by *an alleged democracy* in resorting to methods it had so vehemently condemned on the part of the Tsarist autocracy. I branded deportation of politicals as an outrage on the most fundamental rights of man, and I fought it as a matter of principle. ... Russia! I was going to the country that had swept Tsardom off the map, I was to behold the land of the Social Revolution! Could there be greater joy to one who in his very childhood had been a rebel against tyranny, whose youth’s unformed dreams had visioned *human brotherhood and happiness*, whose entire life was devoted to the Social Revolution?!<sup>5</sup>

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1 Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 72.

2 Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, October 10, 1929, Emma Goldman Papers, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, TAM 0.12 (henceforth EGP-TAM), Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925 – Dec. 23, 1929.

3 Abidor, “Abidor, Victor Serge,” 159.

4 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 291–302; Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, 183–196; Shulman, *To the Barricades*, 203–213; Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 57–91.

5 Alexander Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy: A Review and An Outlook* (Berlin: Der Syndikalist, 1922), 6–7. Accessed May 20, 2020, [https://ia800808.us.archive.org/27/items/al\\_Alexander\\_](https://ia800808.us.archive.org/27/items/al_Alexander_)

However, this enthusiasm, which was partly shared by Goldman—who, according to Vivian Gornick’s overemphasis on the famous anarchist’s anticipation of her days in Soviet Russia, “was intensely excited at the thought of joining the Russian Revolution”<sup>6</sup>—, disappeared very fast, and the two anarchists became bitterly disappointed by the post-revolutionary realities and the system that Lenin had erected while corrupting the ideas and ideals of February 1917. According to Berkman, “Russia seemed to reflect the Revolution as a frightful perversion. It was an appalling caricature of the new life, the world’s hope.”<sup>7</sup> Yet in January 1920, their feelings might still have been more enthusiastic, and Goldman and Berkman were, to quote Gornick once more in this context, “more than ready to have bourgeois American rejection undone by revolutionary Russian welcome.”<sup>8</sup> In a way, the two anarchists were, maybe due to their recent experiences of their harsh treatment by the US government and deportation, not willing, as Berkman later admitted, “to be convinced that the Revolution in Russia had become a mirage, a dangerous deception. Long and hard I struggled against this conviction. Yet proofs were accumulating, and each day brought more damning testimony. Against my will, against my hopes, against the holy fire of admiration and enthusiasm for Russia which burned within me, I was convinced—convinced that the Russian Revolution had been done to death.”<sup>9</sup> Considering the high hopes and numerous reactions of joy the news about the February Revolution had caused in New York’s Lower East Side—where “[i]n the cafés, in the synagogues, on street corners, the immigrant world was erupting in a round-the-clock party”<sup>10</sup> with Goldman and Berkman at its radical center—one can get an idea of the tragedy, the anger, and the frustration the two anarchists must have felt when their dream of a revolution collapsed, to be solely replaced by a perverted Marxist party regime.

Even in October 1917, when the Bolsheviks had taken over in Petrograd (modern Saint Petersburg), the joy about the events was unbroken—not only among left intellectuals and radicals but also among members of the German Army Supreme Command like Erich Ludendorff (1865–1937), who, in accordance with a plan hatched by the German Foreign Office, tried to use the Bolshevik

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Berkman\_The\_Russian\_Tragedy\_A\_Review\_and\_An\_Outlook\_a4/Alexander\_Berkman\_The\_Russian\_Tragedy\_A\_Review\_and\_An\_Outlook\_\_a4.pdf. My emphasis.

6 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 106.

7 Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, 8.

8 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 108.

9 Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, 8.

10 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 106.

takeover to end the war on the Eastern Front.<sup>11</sup> Of course, Goldman and Berkman had heard news and reports from Russia between the events of the October Revolution and their deportation in December 1919, but all in all they were still willing to support the revolution. For Goldman, all doubts had to be repressed, especially since the Bolshevik policy seemed to be a consequence of the fact that the revolution was endangered by internal and external enemies alike.

After four weeks on board the USAT Buford, the radicals who had been deported from the United States arrived in Terijoki, Finland. The group was then transported by train to the Russian border, which they would cross on 19 January 1920 close to the town of Beloostrov.<sup>12</sup> There, they “were given what might be termed an official reception just outside of this village,” and, according to the *New York Times*, “[i]n the crowd that greeted Alexander Berkman, Emma Goldman and their comrades was Zorien, member of the All-Soviet Executive Committee, who, after a brief conference with Berkman, agreed to permit the whole party to enter Bolshevik Russia.”<sup>13</sup> Their arrival had been of no surprise since European anarchist newspapers and journals, like the Norwegian *Alarm*, the organ of the Norwegian Syndicalist Federation, to name just one example, had reported on Goldman’s and the other radicals’ fate before they arrived in Finland.<sup>14</sup> Once in Soviet Russia, the radicals were therefore met by a committee that represented the Bolshevik government, who “greeted them warmly and welcomed them to the People’s State.”<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the struggle between anarchists and Bolsheviks had already broken out, and Goldman and Berkman consequently arrived at a time when the future of the revolution was already being contested and the fight for its theoretical interpretation had begun. Many anarchist groups had already declared open resistance, and the radicals who had just arrived seemed to be obliged to choose their side within the Russian Civil War that the Bolsheviks were not only waging against the counter-revolution from within and without but also against former political allies who criticized too openly their transformation of the political system into a party-based bureaucratic state that declared that it solely followed Marxist ideals but, in reality, ruled even more autocratically than the Czar had ever done before.

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11 Holger H. Herwig, “German Policy in the Eastern Baltic Sea in 1918: Expansion or Anti-Bolshevik Crusade?” *Slavic Review* 32, no. 2 (1973): 339.

12 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 302; Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, 7; Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 106.

13 “Bolsheviks Admit All Deported Reds,” *New York Times*, January 21, 1920: 17.

14 “Fra skråvældets land,” *Alarm*, January 17, 1920: 1.

15 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 106.

Regardless of the fact that there were anarchists, like Goldman and Berkman, who accepted the measures of the Bolshevik leadership for too long, there were also those who actively confronted Lenin and his followers. The Briansk Federation of Anarchists demanded that the “social vampires” should be removed from the Kremlin, and an underground anarchist organization—appropriately called the Underground Anarchists—had played a role in the bombing of the Communist Party committee headquarters in Moscow on 25 September 1919. At the same time, the Bakunin Partisans of Ekaterinoslav addressed attempts from the right and the left to establish a suppressive rule with the same dynamite.<sup>16</sup> While the fanatical anarchists considered violence and terror as suitable means to protect the ideals of the revolution, some of the less radical ones at least attempted to confront the Bolsheviks with their own sins and, as Paul Avrich described it, followed a different path: “Renouncing violent action, the milder anarchists armed themselves with nothing more lethal than pen and ink and mounted a verbal attack on the Soviet dictatorship. A major theme of their criticism was that the Bolshevik Revolution had merely substituted ‘state capitalism’ for private capitalism, that one big owner had taken the place of many small ones, so that the peasants and workers now found themselves under the heel of a ‘new class of administrators.’”<sup>17</sup> Already in April 1919, there were severe clashes between anarchists and the Cheka in Moscow, but the Bolsheviks had not announced a clear position on anarchism yet and would vacillate between support and suppression depending on the situation and its necessities.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, the anarchists failed to gain the support of the masses, who needed to rise again to protect the initial aims of the February Revolution against Bolshevik corruption. The anarchists in Soviet Russia, in contrast to other countries like Spain, to name just one example, had no strong relations with the workers’ unions and seemed rather inexperienced with regard to cooperation with these working-class organizations.<sup>19</sup>

An exception with regard to the popular support the anarchist movement could gain was the Machno Movement in Ukraine, which presented one of the largest, most solid, and most long-living protest movements against Bolshevik rule during the Russian Civil War. Nestor Machno (1888–1934) led the movement and had initiated a radical agrarian reform in the territory he controlled even be-

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<sup>16</sup> Avrich, “Russian Anarchists,” 298.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>18</sup> Abidor, “Victor Serge,” 133–135.

<sup>19</sup> Rublew, “Die politische Position,” 64–65.

fore the Bolsheviks had taken power in urban Soviet Russia.<sup>20</sup> In Machno's territory, political pluralism was not suppressed, although the anarchists were the politically dominant force there. The leader of this specific anarchist movement accepted the council system as an organizational base for Soviet Russia's future, but he did not trust the Bolsheviks and their claim when they demanded all political power for the soviets.<sup>21</sup> Machno tried to offer an anarchist alternative and announced his intention to follow an anarcho-communist idea that was based on the theoretical reflections of Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876) and Pyotr Kropotkin (1842–1921). Militarily, Machno was able to defend his position and, at the same time, countered Trotsky's attempt to reorganize his troops according to the regular organizational structure of the Red Army. Trotsky had realized the danger of the continuing existence of Machno's forces and his movement, which was considered as a state within the state. Initially, the Bolsheviks needed Machno and his troops to defend the new order against its enemies and therefore granted him a special status.<sup>22</sup> Once the Bolsheviks had gained the upper hand, however, they began to crush the Machno Movement as well, especially since a powerful counterweight in Ukraine would have contested Lenin's demand for absolute power and control.<sup>23</sup>

When Goldman and Berkman arrived in January 1920, they may have witnessed a lot of conflicts between the anarchists and Bolsheviks in Soviet Russia, although the two deportees might not have had all the necessary information about them. At the beginning, they also had to find their own position in the new post-revolutionary order of Soviet Russia; Goldman in particular seemed to struggle with this, and it was reported in the United States that she felt quite "homesick."<sup>24</sup> After their arrival, the two anarchists met with former comrades who had previously moved to Soviet Russia in support of the revolution. Bill Shatov, whom the US playwright and author Manuel Komroff (1890–1974) would later describe as "the Danton of the Russian Revolution,"<sup>25</sup> was one of them, and he was unwilling to give up his belief in and support for the revolution.<sup>26</sup> In contrast to Goldman and Berkman, Shatov was not really "concerned

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**20** Alexander Schubin, "Die Machno-Bewegung und der Anarchismus," in *Anarchismus und russische Revolution*, ed. Philippe Kellermann (Berlin: Dietz, 2017), 67.

**21** *Ibid.*, 70–71.

**22** *Ibid.*, 75–79.

**23** *Ibid.*, 80–81.

**24** "Emma Goldman 'Homesick,'" *The New York Times*, May 8, 1920, 2.

**25** Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 303, note 2.

**26** *Ibid.*, 303–304.

by the apparent lack of freedoms in post-tsarist Russia,”<sup>27</sup> although he had the possibility to witness the Bolshevik wrongdoings in real time. Goldman would also meet John Reed (1887–1920), the US journalist who had provided one of the earliest accounts about the Russian Revolution,<sup>28</sup> and she “was shocked by his disquieting reports about conditions in Russia.”<sup>29</sup> According to Reed, Goldman was shocked for one simple reason: “You are a little confused by the Revolution in action because you have dealt with it only in theory.”<sup>30</sup> This evaluation might be too easy, as Goldman not only referred to theory but also to freedom, which was one of the most important things for her when it came to criticism of the Bolsheviks. Of course, Goldman was no fool. She realized that a revolution would not go by the book and that the reality was different than theoretical assumptions about revolutionary processes. Nevertheless, the famous anarchist was not so shocked by the discrepancies between utopian beliefs and revolutionary realities, but more by the fact that the Bolsheviks around Lenin increasingly neglected any kind of individual freedom when they pressed post-revolutionary Soviet Russia into a corset of new rules that were enforced by violence and terror.

The critical position of Goldman and Berkman made their lives more difficult, as “true believers” like Reed, Shatov, or Bill Haywood “quickly grew irritated if not downright angry”<sup>31</sup> about such criticism. The longer Goldman was in Soviet Russia, the clearer she saw the problematic situation and the Bolsheviks she had supported so strongly in the years while she was still in the United States. Her mood was consequently not only darkened by homesickness but also by the understanding that she had made a mistake. Consequently, the euphoria the two anarchists had felt when they initially arrived ended quickly as, in contrast to many visitors, they could travel without too much “guidance” and actually talk to people without the “help” of an official translator. Goldman argued that Marxism had corrupted the revolution, as a state and party structure were responsible for the end of the ideal revolutionary aims, and it had simply erected a state rule that was even worse than that of Czarist Russia. Her mood was also worsened by the fact that her sister Helena had died in February

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>28</sup> John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919). Also see Eric Homburger, ed., *John Reed and the Russian Revolution: Uncollected Articles, Letters, and Speeches on Russia, 1917–1920* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

<sup>29</sup> Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 304.

<sup>30</sup> Cited in *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 112.

1920, and melancholy ruled her spirit afterward.<sup>32</sup> She simply could not get out of her isolation in Soviet Russia, not even when she met Maxim Gorky (1868–1936), the famous Russian writer, whom Goldman had so many hopes for with regard to receiving some guidance. In *Living My Life*, the anarchist describes her hopes and disappointment in relation to this meeting with Gorky, which shall be quoted here in some detail:

Maxim Gorki, he would surely tell me which side of the Russian face was the real one and which one false. He would help me, he the great realist, whose clarion voice had thundered against every wrong and who had castigated the crimes against childhood in words of fire. I dispatched a note to Gorki, requesting him to see me. I felt lost in the labyrinth of Soviet Russia, stumbling constantly over the many obstacles, vainly groping for the revolutionary light. I needed his friendly, guiding hand, I wrote him. ... Maxim Gorki stood before me, his peasant face deeply lined with pain. ... I had looked forward with much anticipation to the chance of talking to Gorki, yet now I did not know how to begin. “Gorki knows nothing about me,” I was saying to myself.... “He may think me merely a reformer, opposed to the Revolution as such. Or he may even get the impression that I am just fault-finding on account of personal grievances or because I could not have ‘battered toast and grape-fruit for breakfast’ or other material American blessings.” ... [N]ow I was upset by the apprehension lest Maxim Gorki consider me also a pampered *bourgeois*, dissatisfied because I had failed to find in Soviet Russia the flesh-pots of capitalist America. ... Surely the seer who could detect beauty in the meanest life and discover nobility in the basest was too penetrating to misunderstand my groping. He more than any other man would grasp its cause and its pain. ... I continued: “I also hope you will believe me when I say that, though an anarchist, I had not been naive enough to think that anarchism could rise overnight, as it were, from the debris of old Russia.” He stopped me with a gesture of his hand. “If that is so, and I do not doubt you, how can you be so perplexed at the imperfections you find in Soviet Russia? As an old revolutionist you must know that revolution is a grim and relentless task. Our poor Russia, backward and crude, her masses, steeped in centuries of ignorance and darkness, brutal and lazy beyond any other people in the world!” I gasped at his sweeping indictment of the entire Russian people. His charge was terrible, if true, I told him. ... [H]e replied that the “romantic conception of our great literary geniuses” had entirely misrepresented the Russian and had wrought no end of evil. The Revolution had dispelled the bubble of the goodness and naïveté of the peasantry. It had proved them shrewd, avaricious, and lazy, even savage in their joy of causing pain. ... The roots were inherent in Russia’s brutal and uncivilized masses, he said. They have no cultural traditions, no social values, no respect for human rights and life. They cannot be moved by anything except coercion and force. All through the ages the Russians had known nothing else. ... I protested vehemently against these charges. I argued that in spite of his evident faith in the superior qualities of other nations, it was the ignorant and crude Russian people that had risen first in revolt. They had shaken Russia by three successive revolutions within twelve years, and it was they and their will that gave life to “October.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 305–307.

<sup>33</sup> Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 52.

Considering how much Goldman adored Russian writers, this experience was quite harsh for her: “Maxim Gorki had been my idol, and I would not see his feet of clay. I became convinced, however, of one thing: neither he nor anyone else could solve my problems. Only time and patient seeking could do it, aided by sympathetic understanding of cause and effect in the revolutionary struggle of Russia.”<sup>34</sup> Berkman also realized the incapacity of the anarchists to use the revolution, and their “dream began to morph into nightmare.”<sup>35</sup>

Next to the true believers, there were at least some who shared her concerns, such as the British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872–1970),<sup>36</sup> who visited Soviet Russia as part of a British Labour Party delegation and whom Goldman met in Moscow.<sup>37</sup> She described to her niece what she experienced there in a letter on 25 May 1920:

The English Mission was here and is now in Moscow. Bertrand Russell is with them—very interesting man. If only they will grasp the black crime that the world is committing against poor suffering Russia. They are very touched by the hospitality they received. Will their protest when they reach home express itself only in mild words? S[asha] and I spent much time with the labor men and with Russell. We left nothing undone to impress upon their minds the debt the world owes to Russia, to the marvelous people who have already suffered so much. I wish I had a tongue of fire—I would burn it into the hearts of the American people what crime is being committed against this great country.<sup>38</sup>

Goldman and Berkman could obviously not persuade the delegation members to actively protest against Bolshevism in Britain, where the former would later spend some time and try again (this effort will be described in more detail in the next chapters). While still in Soviet Russia, the two anarchists planned to have a one-month trip through the country to, as Goldman described it, “get in touch with the new Russia which is so different from the old.”<sup>39</sup> After that,

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 114.

<sup>36</sup> Russell published his views on Bolshevism in Bertrand Russell, *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1920). There, he wrote: “I believe that Communism is necessary to the world, and I believe that the heorism of Russia has fired men’s hopes in a way which was essential to the realization of Communism in the future. Regarded as a splendid attempt, without which ultimate success would have been very improbable, Bolshevism deserves the gratitude and admiration of all the progressive part of mankind. But the method by which Moscow aims at establishing Communism is a pioneer method, rough and dangerous, too heroic to count the cost of the opposition it arouses. I do not believe that by this method a stable or desirable form of Communism can be established.” Ibid., 6.

<sup>37</sup> Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 305.

<sup>38</sup> Emma Goldman to [Stella Comyn], Petrograd, May 25, 1920, LMP, Folder 26, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

the future of the two anarchists was unclear: “I [Goldman] may then go into the work of the Board of Health. They are doing wonderful work. They have asked me to join them. In fact, we have had all sorts of offers. But we want to do what will bring the greatest good to the Russian people and yet let us remain true to our ideal. But first of all, we must get close to the Russian people.”<sup>40</sup>

It has often been argued that Goldman only observed the steady corruption of the revolutionary process and did not criticize Lenin and the Bolsheviki before late 1921 or early 1922. This is not the case, as the *New York Times* had already published an interview with her in mid-June 1920 in which the famous anarchist criticized the failures and tyranny of the Bolsheviki, and thereby tried to make up for her praise for Lenin and Bolshevik policies in the past:

We always knew the Marxian theory was impossible, a breeder of tyranny. We blinded ourselves to its faults in America because we believed it might accomplish something. I've been here four months now, and I've seen what it has accomplished. There is no health in it. The State of Socialism or State of Capitalism ... has done for Russia what it will do for every country. It has taken away even the little freedom the man has under individual capitalism and has made him entirely subject to the whims of bureaucracy which excuses its tyranny on the ground it all is done for the welfare of the workers.<sup>41</sup>

Regardless of this early criticism that was aired in the United States, Goldman and Berkman were still not openly criticizing the Bolshevik rule in Soviet Russia. There, they received a stipend from the government and used their freedom to travel a lot through the country, although they might have felt, as Vivian Gornick highlighted, “restless, lonely, and confused, unable to find useful work, much less stability and purposefulness.”<sup>42</sup> Officially, the trip was related to the plan of the Bolshevik leadership to open a Museum of the Revolution in Petrograd, for which Goldman and Berkman were supposed to collect evidence in all parts of Soviet Russia. Regardless of the purpose, for the two anarchists, this task meant that they were able to travel relatively freely to all parts of the country and to talk to all kinds of people.<sup>43</sup>

In July 1920, they started their tour and could see factories in which workers were treated like slaves, prisons that were filled with the “political enemies” of Bolshevism—i.e. Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries, anarchists of all sorts, etc.—and, supposedly, the revolution. In Kiev, Berkman was robbed and lost

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> “Emma Goldman Sees Tyranny in Russia,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1920, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 112.

<sup>43</sup> Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 309. For the experiences of the journey see also Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 232–233.

his Ingersoll typewriter.<sup>44</sup> Goldman was also able to observe “incredible mismanagement, favoritism, corruption, [and] centralized authoritarianism” on every day of their journey, which was like “a nightmare realized.”<sup>45</sup> While in Petrograd, Goldman could have believed that her experiences and observations would not be the norm but rather only a phase of the revolutionary process that would pass, but seeing all these things during the tour through Soviet Russia, she had to realize that the revolution had failed. In particular, the use of force, the systematic suppression of freedom, and the widespread terror were obviously bothering the famous anarchist, whose love of freedom has already been described in Chapter 2. Bolshevism had begun to centralize Soviet Russia and to use the Cheka and its terror to suppress any form of resistance against this project. Lenin had become the new Czar of Russia, although he claimed to rule in the name of the workers and peasants as he had announced the establishment of the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” Like her visit of Maxim Gorky before, Goldman’s visit of Kropotkin in July 1920, shortly before the beginning of the country-wide tour of the two anarchists, was more than disappointing. Goldman later recounted the visit, which seemed to offer some enlightenment about the problems inherent in the Russian Revolution and the related processes, as follows:

In the afternoon, assembled in his study, he [Kropotkin] had again become the scientist and thinker, clear and penetrating in his judgment of persons and events. We had discussed the dictatorship, the methods forced upon the Revolution by necessity and those inherent in the nature of the party. I wanted Peter to help me to a better understanding of *the situation which was threatening to bankrupt my faith in the Revolution and in the masses*. Patiently and with the tenderness one uses towards a sick child he had sought to soothe me. There was no reason to despair, he had urged. He understood my inner conflict, he had assured me, but he was certain that in time I should learn to distinguish between the Revolution and the régime. The two were worlds apart, the *abyss between them* bound to grow wider as time went on. The Russian Revolution was far greater than the French and of more potent world-wide significance. It had struck deep into the lives of the masses everywhere, and no one could foresee the rich harvest humanity would reap from it. The Communists, irrevocably adhering to the idea of a centralized State, were doomed to misdirect the course of the Revolution. Their end being political supremacy, they had inevitably become the Jesuits of socialism, justifying all means to attain their purpose. Their methods, however, paralyzed the energies of the masses and terrorized the people. Yet without the people, without the direct participation of the toilers in the re-construction of the country, nothing creative and essential could be accomplished. Our own comrades, Kropotkin had continued, had in the past failed to give sufficient consideration to the fundamental elements of the social revolution. The basic factor in such an upheaval is the organization of the economic life of the country. The Russian Revolution proved that we must prepare for that. He had

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<sup>44</sup> Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 309–310.

<sup>45</sup> Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 233.

come to the conclusion that syndicalism was likely to furnish what Russia lacked most: the channel through which the industrial and economic upbuilding of the country could flow. He was referring to anarcho-syndicalism, indicating that such a system, by aid of the co-operatives, would save future revolutions the fatal blunders and fearful suffering Russia was passing through.<sup>46</sup>

Kropotkin, who had been exiled from the metropolis to the countryside, where he resided in the small village of Dmitrov, clearly identified the dilemma of the Russian Revolution and the anarchist movement. At the same time, however, they could not criticize the Bolsheviks and thereby support the enemies of the revolution.<sup>47</sup> Kropotkin, a leading figure of the anarchist movement, consequently remained silent, and so would Berkman and Goldman until they left Soviet Russia in December of the following year. While Kropotkin, however, had addressed the international workers to put pressure on their governments to stop the international interventions against the Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution, he had also warned that a revolutionary dictatorship would destroy the revolution as such.<sup>48</sup>

After her meeting with Kropotkin, Goldman was outraged and also complained about the current situation to Angelica Balabanov (1878–1965),<sup>49</sup> who would speak with Lenin about it, who then invited Goldman and Berkman to the Kremlin. Lenin would argue that there were no problems and that the men and women in jail were no anarchists, but simply bandits.<sup>50</sup> When Goldman asked about freedom of speech, Lenin just told her that this was nothing more than “a bourgeois luxury.”<sup>51</sup> While such a statement could only offend Goldman, who had fought for so many years for freedom of speech and mind, in the United States people were being told that the anarchist wanted to return to the United States, even though they were “living comfortably, without working”<sup>52</sup> in the new Soviet order. Another report in the *New York Times* on 23 October 1920 confirmed the “Discontent of Emma Goldman,” who, when met by newspaper correspondents, “had a tiny American flag in her room and was enthusiastic about the United States, to which she desired to return. In fact, she had been spoiled in America, and made soft. In America she was regarded as a little god in her circles, but

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46 Goldman, *Living My Life*, ch. 52. My emphasis.

47 Abidor, “Victor Serge,” 135.

48 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 306–307.

49 Angelica Balabanoff, *My Life as a Rebel* (New York: Harper, 1938), 254.

50 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 234–235.

51 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 111.

52 “Deportees to Russia Want to Come Back,” *New York Times*, October 9, 1920, 14.

when she arrived in Russia she was forced to discover that quite a different spirit reigned there; that the proletarian movement had left her far behind.”<sup>53</sup> The report continues by emphasizing that Goldman’s Russian utopia had nothing to offer when compared to the life she had in the United States: “In America her way of living was certainly not proletarian, but for many years comfortably bourgeois. And now, in proletarian Russia, where the shortage forces every one to the greatest restrictions, she suddenly had to give up many comforts and to be content with the meagre rations of the Russian people.”<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, her status as an internationally famous anarchist provided her with some privileges, such as when she and Berkman were allowed to travel “over the country in a special car gathering statistics on the conditions of labor on the different provinces for the Labor Museum in the Winter Palace.”<sup>55</sup>

In fact, between July and November 1920, the two were allowed to travel relatively freely through the country, where they “were to collect all material concerning the entire life of Russia since 1917”<sup>56</sup> for the Museum of the Revolution. In a letter to Stella Comyn and Eleanor Fitzgerald, Goldman also enclosed a detailed description of her experiences during the trip, which did not solely relate to the revolution but also to its horrible impact for minorities, like the Jewish communities, written in her and Berkman’s names, which shall be presented here in some more detail. In Ukraine, Goldman had witnessed pogroms against the Jewish population and wrote the following with regard to these events: “the terrible pogroms most impressed itself upon my mind. There are no words to picture the suffering, horrors and outrage to which the Jews have been subjected by the various pogrom beasts. When I was in America I did not believe in the Jewish question removed from the whole social question. But since we visited some of the pogrom regions I have come to see that there is a Jewish question, especially on [sic!] the Ukraine.”<sup>57</sup> The consequences of the Russian Revolution could especially be felt there for the Jewish population, because “with every change of authority on the Ukraina [sic!] and there have been 17 changes already, the unfortunate Jews are the first to pay a bloody toll. Entire towns are wiped out, the male population brutally murdered or crippled for life. The women, young and old outraged and mutilated. The most dreadful conditions are those of the children, they are hald crased [sic!] with the recollections of the scenes they were

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53 “Cofirms Discontent of Emma Goldman,” *New York Times*, October 23, 1920, 10.

54 *Ibid.*

55 *Ibid.*

56 Alexander Berkman to [Stella Comyn] and [Eleanor Fitzgerald], Petrograd, November 3, 1920, LMP, Folder 26. Emphasis in the original.

57 *Ibid.*, 1.

made to witness during the pogroms.”<sup>58</sup> With regard to antisemitic violence, the Russian Revolution had consequently hardly provided any better perspective for the Jewish people living on Ukrainian territory. Goldman could only react with shock and pain to the things she had seen and emphasized; according to her own considerations and in relation to her own witnessing, “[i]t is almost certain that the entire Jewish race will be wiped out should many more changes take place on [sic!] the Ukraina [sic!]. If for no other reason this alone ought to induce [sic!] the Jews of America to demand recognition of Soviet Russia. But the capitalist Jews of America, like other capitalists, are much more concerned in their class interests than in the unfortunate members of their race who are being murdered by the enemies of the Russian Revolution.”<sup>59</sup>

In the letter to her niece, Goldman would, however, also refer to her personal situation in Soviet Russia. With regard to the reports about her homesickness, she emphasized:

That I long for America is quite true, but let no one think it is the America of ... reaction, the America which is robbing and exploiting the people, the America which has sacrificed her ablest youth on the fields of France ... for profits and for the strengthening of her Imperialist power. The America I long for is the one of my beloved people, of my numerous devoted friends—of my brave comrades, the America where I have ... struggled for 30 years to awaken a real understanding for liberty among the masses and a deep love for what is worth while and true in the country. I do indeed long for that America. ... I have not and shall not change my attitude towards capitalist America. I shall fight it always. As to the America[n] government both stupid and brutal, nothing can change my hatred for it.<sup>60</sup>

Goldman also felt it necessary to let her niece and Eleanor Fitzgerald know that “I have not and do not intend to give interviews. If ever the time comes when I can write my version of the Russian Revolution it will be over my own signature and not otherwise. But that time has not yet come, not until the combined wolves at the throat of Russia now have released her, not until she can breathe [sic!] freely, stretch her limbs and strike out for her new life have I anything to say ... I still feel that I know Russia too little for any profound estimate of what is going on in the country.”<sup>61</sup> With this statement, Goldman at least partially explains why she remained silent for so long and did not criticize the Bolshevik rule too openly, although, as mentioned before, reports in the US press had already given a glimpse of the fact that she and Berkman were no longer

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58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., 1–2.

61 Ibid., 2.

in support of the revolutionary process and the related utopia of a better world in Soviet Russia.

In a letter on the following day, 4 November 1920, Goldman stressed that it was the circumstances that were responsible for her silence: “Even if I could write freely you wouldn’t understand. No one outside of Russia understands.”<sup>62</sup> She stressed the fact that even she and Berkman, “who have been in the country almost 10 months, [who] know the language, ... even we do not understand many things, how should you or the others. And so much must remain unsaid. Time is the clarifier of all doubts and misunderstandings. Time will also throw light on the greatest event of our time, great and tragic.”<sup>63</sup> At this point, however, Goldman also still believed that the revolution was not yet lost, that its ideals could still be saved and defended against the Bolshevik rule, which is why she enthusiastically declared: “Thus, the Russian people will yet triumph, the fires which they have lighted three years ago will yet inflame the world. I have undying faith in the Russian people whatever faith I may have lost in other directions....”<sup>64</sup> The two anarchists tried to reach this triumph by supporting the Russian people, but they were unwilling to support any form of government directly. Goldman had, to name just one example, also proposed to set up a League of Russian Friends of American Freedom, which would supposedly stimulate a similar revolutionary upheaval as had occurred in Russia in the United States, and Lenin seemed to be willing to support the idea. Yet, in the end, Goldman and Berkman were mostly involved in the work for the Museum of the Revolution and were thereby virtually sidelined from political processes.<sup>65</sup>

While they continued their work, the two anarchists were “quartered in delegate houses where one is certainly not starved,”<sup>66</sup> and Goldman really disliked the coverage of her person in the American press, as it presented her as a homesick whiner all the time. In addition, she complained to Stella about the reports about Soviet Russia:

As for myself, I really do not care what is being written about me. I care much more about the superficial stuff written about Russia. Here is the greatest historic panorama in view of the whole world. Here are a people heroically starving and freezing and enduring untold misery. Here is a social cataclysm uprooting the old, transvaluing the old values, smashing theories, tearing as under preconceived motions. Yet some ... write about after a few months

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<sup>62</sup> Emma Goldman to [Stella Comyn], Petrograd, November 4, 1920, LMP, Folder 26, 1.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 308.

<sup>66</sup> Emma Goldman to Stella Cominsky and M. Eleanor Fitzgerald, Moscow, January 29, 1921, LMP, Folder 27, 2.

or even weeks in Russia. Wells spends 14 days, Mrs. Sheridan a few weeks. Amazing people!<sup>67</sup>

On Clare Sheridan (1885–1970)<sup>68</sup> and her writings about Soviet Russia, Goldman did not have a single positive word to say, because “Mrs. Sheridan’s English blood boils when she has to git [sic!] in the same box with Hindoos and Egyptians. I hope the blood of the Hindoos and Egyptians boiled even more when they had to be near this English snub whose class has shed so much Hindoo, Egyptian and Irish blood.”<sup>69</sup> Stella must have liked Sheridan’s writing though, seeing as Goldman added that “the ‘lady’ writes interestingly and humanly. She writes not badly, but the stuff is silly and superficial.”<sup>70</sup> Again, Goldman emphasized her respect for Bertrand Russell, who seemed to be “The only one who shows some understanding much fairness and above all a large grasp of R[ussia] ... I am just reading his book. But even he is not in a position to do the matter justice. Without the language, and only after one month in Russia, how can [he] or anyone else?”<sup>71</sup> This also shows that Goldman considered only herself able to truly write about the failure of the Russian Revolution, as she was one of the few who had actually witnessed its corruption first-hand. Ironically, Goldman criticized many observers and intellectuals who wrote about the events without actually knowing many details, criticizing exactly what she herself had done before being deported from the United States.

Goldman, however, at the same time also fought with Berkman, who defended the Bolshevik position against any criticism and argued that the problems would end once the enemies of the Russian Revolution had been defeated and the situation stabilized. That does not mean that Berkman did not criticize the Bolsheviks at all. He, for example, refused to translate Lenin’s *The Infantile Sickness of “Leftism” in Communism* (1920)<sup>72</sup> when Karl Radek (1885–1939) asked

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67 Ibid.

68 Sheridan was an English journalist and had also been part of the British delegation, whose members Goldman had met in Moscow. Sheridan would later publish her writings about her Soviet Russian experiences in 1921. Clare Sheridan, *Mayfair to Moscow: Clare Sheridan’s Diary* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921).

69 Emma Goldman to Stella Cominsky and M. Eleanor Fitzgerald, Moscow, January 29, 1921, LMP, Folder 27, 2.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., 3.

72 Vladimir I. Lenin, *The Infantile Sickness of “Leftism” in Communism* (Moscow: Executive Committee of the Communist International, 1920). On Radek’s role during the Russian Revolution, see Wolf-Dietrich Gutjahr, *Revolution muss sein: Karl Radek – Die Biographie* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau 2012), 235–320.

him to do so.<sup>73</sup> Berkman would not give up his belief that the revolution could still be saved before 1921, when every hope seemed to have been lost; however, his “stubborn defense of the Bolsheviks and Emma’s growing alienation from them produced a serious rift between the two old friends.”<sup>74</sup> Goldman, in contrast to Berkman, neither believed in a pre-determined course of the revolutionary process and the Marxian idea of a proletarian dictatorship, nor did she support a state- or party-led revolution, because, as she often emphasized, a revolutionary process was driven by the masses and not led by a Marxist government. As an anarchist and life-long rebel against any kind of suppression, her day to day Russian experience must really have been shocking. Berkman’s awakening, however, needed a real shock, which would be provided in March 1921 by the “portent” of the Kronstadt Rebellion.<sup>75</sup> Around one month earlier, on 8 February, Kropotkin had died, Goldman’s “beloved teacher and comrade, one of the world’s greatest and noblest spirits.”<sup>76</sup> It was at his funeral, and only a short time before the Bolsheviks would crush one of the last attempts to save the revolution, that “the black flag of anarchism was paraded through Moscow for the last time.”<sup>77</sup>

The Kronstadt Rebellion of March 1921 was the dichotomic counterpart to the Kronstadt naval rebellion of 1917,<sup>78</sup> when the second phase of the revolution began to gain momentum and the Bolsheviks could use their influence in the fleet and its sailors to gain ground for their own plans to radicalize the revolutionary process further in October 1917.<sup>79</sup> The Russian fleet had traditionally been “a hotbed of revolution and thus responsive to Bolshevik, Socialist-Revolutionary, Anarchist and Maximalist propaganda,”<sup>80</sup> which is why the events of March 1921 were so tremendously bad for the Bolsheviks, who seemed to have lost one of their almost traditional support groups. In 1917, the writer, journalist and later fleet commander Fyodor Raskolnikov (1892–1939) had played an im-

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73 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 235.

74 *Ibid.*, 236.

75 Helmut Bock, “Das Menetekel: Kronstadt 1921,” in Helmut Bock et al., *Das Menetekel: Kronstadt 1921—Kriegskommunismus und Alternativen* (Berlin: Helle Panke e.V., 2011), 5–20.

76 Goldman, *My Further Disillusionment in Russia*, ch. 5.

77 Avrich, “Russian Anarchists,” 305.

78 Francis Poulin, “Velimir Xlebnikov’s Nočnoj Obysk, 3<sup>5</sup>+3<sup>6</sup>, and the Kronstadt Revolts,” *The Slavic and East European Journal* 34, no. 4 (1990): 511.

79 On the Bolshevik organizational structures in Kronstadt since February 1917, see David Longley, “Some Historiographical Problems of Bolshevik Party History (The Kronstadt Bolsheviks in March 1917),” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, Neue Folge* 22, no. 4 (1974): 494–514.

80 David A. Longley, “Officers and Men: A Study of the Development of Political Attitudes among the Sailors of the Baltic Fleet in 1917,” *Soviet Studies* 25, no. 1 (1973): 50.

portant role in establishing Bolshevik influence in Kronstadt, where he, together with other agitators, published a newspaper to spread Bolshevik ideas and propaganda, among other things.<sup>81</sup> That this stronghold would now openly rebel against Lenin's Soviet state in 1921 was problematic in many ways, but first and foremost it eroded the image of and trust in the Bolshevik leadership. American historian Robert V. Daniels (1926–2010) emphasized the crisis Kronstadt actually created when he stated that “[t]he effort to comprehend the causes and aims of the Kronstadt revolt sheds much additional light on the contemporary nature of the Soviet regime, the crisis which it was then experiencing, and the trend of its evolution. Conversely, the Kronstadt movement itself becomes much more intelligible when viewed in this broader context.”<sup>82</sup>

In fact, the uprising had not been planned but happened rather spontaneously.<sup>83</sup> The sailors, however, “rose in revolt against the Bolshevik government, which they themselves had helped into power,”<sup>84</sup> to defend the idea of the soviets as the organizational expression of the democratic participation of the masses. Due to their fight against Bolshevik dictatorship and Lenin's moral corruption of the Russian Revolution, they became martyrs for all those who had believed in the utopian dream of a classless society and those who kept fighting for an ideal society against the forces of a centralized state power and its ruling party regime.<sup>85</sup> Like the February Revolution of 1917, the revolt had started as a protest movement, which were beginning to be seen in many parts of Soviet Russia in early 1921.<sup>86</sup> It all began in Petrograd, where a strike wave, led by the same men that had supported the rise of the Bolsheviks in 1917,<sup>87</sup> shook the Bolshevik rule in late February, during which the workers expressed their criticism of Bolshevik bureaucracy, the centralization of the state and many other aspects that made many groups join the protesters. The response to the strikes was lockdowns and military force, and news about the harsh reaction of the Bolshevik rulers in Petrograd soon spread to other cities. The anger with the Bolshevik politics ran deep in Kronstadt as well, and the news from Petrograd was probably

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**81** Norman E. Saul, “Fedor Raskolnikov, a ‘Secondary Bolshevik,’” *The Russian Review* 32, no. 2 (1973): 133.

**82** Robert V. Daniels, “The Kronstadt Revolt of 1921: A Study in the Dynamics of Revolution,” *The American Slavic and East European Review* 10, no. 4 (1951): 241.

**83** Abidor, “Victor Serge,” 137.

**84** Paul Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921* (New York: Norton, 1974 [1970]), 3.

**85** *Ibid.*

**86** Daniels, “The Kronstadt Revolt,” 241.

**87** For the continuities with regard to the revolutionary sailors in 1917 and 1921, see Evan Mawdsley, “The Baltic Fleet and the Kronstadt Mutiny,” *Soviet Studies* 24, no. 4 (1973): 508–509.

just the last drop that was needed to turn anger into open protest there as well. The people in Kronstadt wanted to support their fellow workers in Petrograd, and the demand for freedom seems to have been back on the revolutionary agenda of the masses. They demanded “free elections to the soviets; freedom of speech and press for workers and peasants, anarchists and left socialist parties; freedom of assembly; a political amnesty; abolition of the political departments in the army and industry ...; equal rations for everyone except people in hazardous work ...; freedom of economic activity and organization for the peasantry ..., but not the right to hire labor; [and] permission of craft manufactures.”<sup>88</sup> A Temporary Revolutionary Committee was formed in Kronstadt, and one could have got the idea that it was 1917 all over again. A new soviet needed to be elected soon, especially since the revolutionary process was now, like four years before, triggered by war, yet this time by the Russian Civil War and the failures of Lenin’s overall policy. It was war communism that had “failed to transform Russia into a socialist society,” and by the time of the Kronstadt Rebellion, “the worsening political and economic situation demanded another approach,”<sup>89</sup> which is why the protesters this time did not demand the end of the Czar but the end of the rule of Lenin, whose decisions had obviously only replicated the evils of the order that people had already protested against in 1917. People were suffering all over Soviet Russia and, as American historian Jonathan Coopersmith emphasizes in his evaluation of the economic situation, in 1921 this “looked bleak: a devastated transportation network, empty factories, rampant inflation, recalcitrant peasants, famine and accompanying epidemics, high unemployment, little trade with the West, and distinctly nonrevolutionary, if not hostile, international relations.”<sup>90</sup>

What surprised many observers, including Alexander Berkman, was the speed and the violence with which the Bolsheviks reacted to the Kronstadt Rebellion. The workers, according to the exiled American anarchist, were misrepresented as counter-revolutionaries, while they demanded nothing but honest elections and a return to the revolutionary ideal of direct democracy. The reaction by the Bolshevik leadership was therefore considered too radical, especially since the latter should have had the same interest in a free and open discourse.<sup>91</sup> Of course, such a discourse was impossible in 1921, when Lenin was no longer in-

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<sup>88</sup> Daniels, “The Kronstadt Revolt,” 243.

<sup>89</sup> Jonathan Coopersmith, *The Electrification of Russia, 1880–1926* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 192. See also Mawdsley, “The Baltic Fleet,” 506.

<sup>90</sup> Coopersmith, *The Electrification of Russia*, 192.

<sup>91</sup> Alexander Berkman, *The Bolshevik Myth (Diary 1920–1922)* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1925), 300–301.

terested in alternative revolutionary paths that would have led away from him holding supreme power in the new state order. Robert V. Daniels speculated that “Lenin and Trotsky must have made a hurried decision that dealing with the Kronstaders would be too risky, that it was imperative to discredit Kronstadt in the eyes of the rest of the country, and that therefore they must without hesitation denounce the movement as unqualifiedly counterrevolutionary.”<sup>92</sup> Open criticism against Bolshevism in Soviet Russia in early 1921 simply provoked violent reactions as the regime had already thrown the old revolutionary ideals overboard, and the only question of relevance was how to stay in power. If Lenin and Trotsky had given in to talks at this time, they would have tacitly accepted such criticism and opened the door to those who also felt the need to demand more than they had, a scenario that would have eroded the uncontested position of the Bolsheviks in post-revolutionary Russia. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that violence was the chosen method to suppress any form of anti-Bolshevik criticism—even if it came from Kronstadt, a symbol of the revolutionary events of 1917.

Furthermore, anti-Bolshevik groups had joined the protests very quickly, which is why every day of their existence threatened Lenin’s position. That the sailors had joined the protests in 1921 was not only due to the economic situation and their solidarity with the workers in Petrograd and other cities but also to the restructuring of the democratic changes according to the demands of war communism.<sup>93</sup> What eventually unified all protesters was the sense that their revolution, with all its hopes and ideals, had been betrayed by the Bolsheviks.<sup>94</sup> Goldman and Berkman had tried to find a way to a peaceful solution and had made an argument for a negotiation between the Bolshevik leadership and the protesters in Kronstadt, especially since they wanted to “avert a bloodbath”<sup>95</sup> and the further spread of violence against political forces who were also solely interested in a more ideal-oriented course of the revolutionary process. Regardless of such attempts and different options at hand, the Bolshevik leaders decided to use force to suppress the revolt, and on 17 March 1921, the Kronstadt Rebellion was crushed with violence and without any hesitation.<sup>96</sup> The meteorologist J. Neumann also emphasized that the winter season of 1920/21 was warmer than usual, which made the Bolsheviks worry about the number of interventional options in the near future, and they might therefore have chosen the fast but

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<sup>92</sup> Daniels, “The Kronstadt Revolt,” 246.

<sup>93</sup> Mawdsley, “The Baltic Fleet,” 511.

<sup>94</sup> Abidor, “Abidor, Victor Serge,” 138; Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 311.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 312; Daniels, “The Kronstadt Revolt,” 248.

bloody answer to the protest in Kronstadt accordingly: “In a few weeks the ice in the Finnish Gulf would melt, and supplies and reinforcements could then be shipped in from the West, converting the fortress into a base for a new intervention. Apart from the propaganda involved, Lenin and Trotsky appear to have been genuinely anxious over this possibility.”<sup>97</sup>

In the meantime, the Temporary Revolutionary Committee in Kronstadt had also started to prepare the protesters for the coming fight, and on 10 March 1921 declared that “[t]he Bolshevik power, with the bloody field-marshal Trotsky at its head, preserving the autocracy of the Party, has decided no matter what to suppress the will of the laboring masses by shooting hard-working people and by violence against their families.”<sup>98</sup> Less than two weeks later, the Kronstadt Rebellion ended in a bloodbath when troops of the Red Army crushed the protest there. The events of Kronstadt were a watershed, and those who had still believed that the Bolshevik rule was a necessity to achieve the classless society had to accept that it was nothing more than a dictatorial rule that had been established.<sup>99</sup> Like many revolutions before, the Russian Revolution had failed to achieve what so many had hoped for: a better and just world. Kronstadt was really “a severe blow to Soviet prestige at home and abroad”<sup>100</sup> and left no doubt that the Bolsheviks had already sacrificed the revolutionary ideals of February 1917 and were only interested in keeping their powerful position at the top of the new state bureaucracy. The severe and violent reactions, however, show that the powerful position of the Bolsheviks was not yet uncontested, and the “young and insecure state, faced with a rebellious population at home and implacable enemies abroad who longed to see the Bolsheviks ousted from power,”<sup>101</sup> obviously could not afford to negotiate a compromise, as this would have emphasized its fragile status and probably invited further interventions from the outside and protests from within. Paul Avrich’s assessment that “Kronstadt must be set within a broader context of political and social events, for the revolt was part of a larger crisis marking the transition from War Communism to the New Economic Policy, a crisis which Lenin regarded as the gravest he

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<sup>97</sup> J. Neumann, “A Note on the Winter of the Kronstadt Sailors’ Uprising in 1921,” *Soviet Studies* 44, no. 1 (1992): 5.

<sup>98</sup> *Izvestija* of the Temporary Revolutionary Committee, March 10, 1921, cited in Daniels, “The Kronstadt Revolt,” 248.

<sup>99</sup> Abidor, “Victor Serge,” 140.

<sup>100</sup> Ivar Specter, “General Ali Fuat Cebesoy and the Kronstadt Revolt (1921): A Footnote to History,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3, no. 4 (1972): 491.

<sup>101</sup> Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921*, 4.

had faced since coming to power”<sup>102</sup> is consequently right in its emphasis of the overall context of the Kronstadt Rebellion in 1921 and its explanation for the violent course chosen by Lenin and his followers.

All in all, Kronstadt was a rather short episode, considering the long Russian Civil War and the fact that the revolting sailors had no support from the outside, but it was nonetheless an important event and should be more than this short episode—a symbol of how the revolution eventually turned against the revolutionaries of the first hour, of how the revolution devoured its own children. Berkman would later sum up the tragedy as follows:

Kronstadt is of great historic significance. It sounded the death knell [of] Bolshevism with its Party dictatorship, mad centralization, Tcheka terrorism and bureaucratic castes. It struck into the very heart of Communist autocracy. At the same time it shocked the intelligent and honest minds of Europe and America into a critical examination of Bolshevik theories and practices. It exploded the Bolshevik myth of the Communist State being the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government”. It proved that the Communist Party dictatorship and the Russian Revolution are opposites, contradictory and mutually exclusive. It demonstrated that the Bolshevik regime is unmitigated tyranny and reaction, and that the Communist State is itself the most potent and dangerous counter-revolution. Kronstadt fell. But it fell victorious in its idealism and moral purity, its generosity and higher humanity. Kronstadt was superb. It justly prided itself on not having shed the blood of its enemies, the Communists within its midst. It had no executions. The untutored, unpolished sailors, rough in manner and speech, were too noble to follow the Bolshevik example of vengeance: they would not shoot even the hated Commissars. Kronstadt personified the generous, all-for-giving spirit of the Slavic soul and the century-old emancipation movement of Russia. Kronstadt was the *first* popular and entirely independent attempt at liberation from the yoke of State Socialism—an attempt made directly by the people, by the workers, soldiers and sailors themselves. It was the first step toward the third Revolution which is inevitable and which, let us hope, may bring to long-suffering Russia lasting freedom and peace.<sup>103</sup>

Everyone could clearly see now that the argument of the critics, namely that “the Soviet regime was becoming a bureaucratic, corrupt, violence-ridden parody of the ideal,”<sup>104</sup> was true, and Berkman also had to eventually agree that Goldman’s criticism was correct. Kronstadt, however, was not a representation of intellectuals whose eyes were opened afterward, but the raising of the voices of the revolutionary masses of 1917 in the hope of saving something of what they had protested for during the initial period of the Russian Revolution. What they de-

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**102** Ibid., 5.

**103** Alexander Berkman, *The Kronstadt Rebellion* (Berlin: Der Syndikalist, 1922). Accessed May 20, 2020, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/alexander-berkman-the-kronstadt-rebellion#toc8>, afterword. Emphasis in the original.

**104** Daniels, “The Kronstadt Revolt,” 249.

manded was a “third Revolution” that would overcome the wrongs of the second one, i.e. the Bolshevik one of October 1917 that had initiated the centralization and bureaucratization of the Soviet Russian state.<sup>105</sup> This aspect is important as Kronstadt would be emblematic for those who would criticize Lenin and probably even Stalin for their betrayal of the revolutionary ideals in the years to come.<sup>106</sup>

Trotsky would later argue that Kronstadt was the event that created a “popular front of its own kind”<sup>107</sup> as it combined Russian Mensheviks, Social Democrats in London, and many others in their criticism of the further course of events in Soviet Russia. The anarchists in particular would use the “symbol of Kronstadt” to argue for the only “true anti-state communism” and against the Bolshevik rule.<sup>108</sup> Trotsky would also argue that the relation between the minority, i.e. party avant-garde, and the majority, i.e. the revolutionary masses, would determine the character of the revolution. He considered the Kronstadt Rebellion to have been a counter-revolutionary expression of the masses, which is why the minority had to use force to secure the revolution against a transition of the masses to supporters of the counter-revolution.<sup>109</sup> Such comments would, however, hardly persuade the critics.

After the events in March 1921, Goldman and Berkman had finally lost any thought about a better future once Bolshevism ruled uncontested by foreign intervention or the Russian Civil War. They had realized that the dream related to the February Revolution of 1917 could not become true and that everything they had hoped for had been ruined by a party-government and their suppression of free speech and any form of criticism against the Bolshevik leadership.<sup>110</sup> Due to the latter’s “brutality, mendacity, oppression and hypocrisy,”<sup>111</sup> Goldman was left bitterly disappointed. Instead of a better world, the revolution had only brought hunger and despair and, even worse for the famous anarchist in exile, she had supported the Bolshevik rise with her praise for Lenin and his followers between 1917 and 1919. During the siege of Kronstadt, “Emma and Berkman wandered helplessly in Petrograd’s streets or sat in unbelieving agony in

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**105** *Ibid.*, 251.

**106** Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921*, 3.

**107** Leon Trotsky, “Das Zetergeschrei um Kronstadt,” *New Internationalist*, January 15, 1938. Accessed April 12, 2020, <https://www.marxists.org/deutsch/archiv/trotsky/1938/01/kronstadt.htm>.

**108** *Ibid.*

**109** *Ibid.*

**110** Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 311–312.

**111** Abidor, “Victor Serge,” 159.

the Hotel International,”<sup>112</sup> and in the following months the two anarchists would deny any cooperation with Bolshevism or reliance on Bolshevik support: “Moving into small quarters in Moscow, they lived like thousands of other ordinary Russians, hauling their own wood, preparing their own food, caring for their own clothes.”<sup>113</sup> Eventually, “Russia under Bolshevik rule had become unbearable”<sup>114</sup> for both of them, and it seemed time to leave before they fell victim to the Bolshevik terror as well, especially since political arrests had increased after the events in Kronstadt. Anarchists were the victims of these arrests in many cities of Soviet Russia, while journals, book stores, and anarchist clubs had been closed, and eventually the Cheka began its bloody work.<sup>115</sup> When friends of the two anarchists were among the arrested, they realized that it had become to be too dangerous for anarchists in Soviet Russia, and between March and December 1921, Goldman and Berkman tried not to appear too vividly, i.e. critically, on the Bolshevik radar. In September the Cheka arrested their friend, the anarchist Fanya Baron (1887–1921), who was executed without any sort of trial. While Goldman thought about protesting against these practices by the Cheka and “considered making a scene in the manner of the English suffragettes by chaining herself to a bench in the hall where the Third Comintern Congress was meeting and shouting her protests to the delegates,”<sup>116</sup> she ultimately did not say anything.

In December 1921, the two anarchists received passports and left Soviet Russia for Latvia. As they were not allowed to continue their journey to Germany at this time, they ended up in Sweden, where they began their anti-Bolshevist agitation that would determine their following years of exile.<sup>117</sup> Considering that Goldman herself, however, had supported the Bolsheviks before she went to Soviet Russia, it made her position and now suddenly expressed criticism difficult to classify, especially for her friends in the United States. Furthermore, her works since 1922, like her books on her disillusionment in Russia, “ultimately alienated the left as well as the right,”<sup>118</sup> and Goldman would feel more isolated in her fight against Bolshevism. Yet regardless of this situation, Goldman would never give up trying to shed light on the things she had seen in Soviet Russia,

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112 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 237.

113 *Ibid.*, 238.

114 *Ibid.*, 239.

115 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, 312.

116 Avrich, “Russian Anarchists,” 305–306.

117 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 239–241; Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, 195–196; Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 92–139; Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 92–113.

118 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 108.

on the fact that Lenin had corrupted the revolution, and on the difference between revolutionary ideals and Bolshevik rule. The famous anarchist therefore never gave up her belief in revolutions and hoped that the masses would, at one point in her life, become truly revolutionarily conscious. But beforehand, she needed to make sure that people did not make the mistake of equating the Russian Revolution of February 1917 and its achievements with the Bolshevik rule, which was just born out of the moral degradation of the former. This fight would become Goldman's life after December 1921 and will be taken into closer consideration in the remaining two chapters.

## 6 Against Bolshevism

Although Goldman was aware of the problems in Soviet Russia, given that she and Berkman were confronted with different testimonies about the Bolshevik rule after their arrival in January 1920, the famous anarchist believed that the Russian Revolution would return to its former glory and ideals once the danger of the counter-revolution had been averted.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, she wrote to IWW activist Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (1890 – 1964) on 10 January 1920, before her actual arrival in Soviet Russia, as follows: “Faint in body, yet strong in spirit, Russia defies the world of greed and sham, and holds her own against the combined power of the international conspiracy of murder and robbery. Russia, the incarnation of a flaming ideal, the inspiration of the New Day.”<sup>2</sup> During her stay in Russia between January 1920 and December 1921, Goldman would, however, find out about the post-revolutionary realities. At the beginning, she and Berkman tried to assess Lenin’s attitude towards anarchism when they sent questions to the Bolshevik leader in March 1920: “What is the present official attitude of the Soviet Government to the Anarchists? What is to be the definite attitude of the Soviet Government toward the Anarchists?”<sup>3</sup> The anti-anarchist course of the Bolsheviks, however, spoke for itself, and Goldman got more and more frustrated. The Second Congress of the Comintern in the summer of the same year was also frustrating for Goldman. While many delegates were on a kind of “fact-finding mission,” the famous anarchist was still insecure about her own position towards Bolshevism and lost a chance to openly criticize the corruption of the revolutionary ideals of February 1917. In her talks with some of the delegates, however, she also sensed a lack of critical considerations by the international visitors, who would become agents of Bolshevism abroad.<sup>4</sup>

Goldman’s situation was additionally worsened by two factors, namely her melancholy about having been deported from the United States and “her own

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1 Harold J. Goldberg, “Goldman and Berkman View the Bolshevik Regime,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 53, no. 131 (1975): 273.

2 Goldman to Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, 10 January 1920, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn papers, cited in *ibid.*

3 Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman to Lenin, ca. March 1920, Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History (RTsKhIDNI). Accessed July 8, 2017, <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/goldman/images/eg30%20Goldman%20and%20Berkman%20Pose%20Questions%20to%20Lenin-large.jpg>.

4 Reiner Tosstorff, “Die Syndikalisten und die Oktoberrevolution,” in *Anarchismus und russische Revolution*, ed. Philippe Kellermann (Berlin: Dietz, 2017), 172, 180.

inability to contribute to the revolutionary cause.”<sup>5</sup> As was shown in the previous chapter, the events at Kronstadt in March 1921 presented the final blow to Goldman’s and Berkman’s acceptance of the post-revolutionary order, i.e. Bolshevik rule, although the former had taken a more critical stand against Lenin’s political course before. However, Berkman, who was quite supportive with regard to Bolshevism until March 1921, also eventually realized that “[t]error and despotism have crushed the life born in October [1917].”<sup>6</sup> Goldman formulated it quite well in a letter to an unknown recipient on 23 July 1921: most visitors to Bolshevik Russia had arrived there “in the grip of the great delusion” but would leave “heart broken,” a formula that described her own experiences so well.<sup>7</sup> She would, at the same time, complain to Polish-born American anarchist Michael A. Cohen (1867–1939) that the delegates of the British trade unions had ignored the realities in Soviet Russia and therefore promoted a positive and uncritical image of it abroad. In her letter to Cohen on 23 July 1921, Goldman also made it quite clear both that she needed to get out of Soviet Russia and whom she held responsible for the failure of the revolutionary process: “[I]t is not the R[ussian] Revolution which is to blame for the general debacle. It is the regime. But about that when we meet again, or when I am somewhere where I can again raise my voice. As I said before, we are trying desperately to get out. I do not know whether we will succeed. I only know it is beyond me to stay here another winter. I manage to go on only by sheer force of will.”<sup>8</sup>

Goldman and Berkman were eventually able to leave Soviet Russia in December 1921, and the moment the two anarchists successfully reached a safer environment, they began their attempt “to convince the world of the crimes of the Bolsheviks.”<sup>9</sup> Wexler was correctly criticized for her view that Goldman’s “obsessive anti-Communism” and the motivation for her anti-Bolshevism was, to a large extent, a consequence of her melancholic mood,<sup>10</sup> and I would rather argue here that her melancholic mood was related more to the failings and cor-

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5 Goldberg, “Goldman and Berkman,” 274.

6 Berkman, *The Bolshevik Myth*, 319.

7 Goldman to ?, Moscow, July 23, 1921, Yivo Institute of Jewish Research, New York, cited in Goldberg, “Goldman and Berkman,” 275–276.

8 Emma Goldman to Michael A. Cohen, Moscow, July 23, 1921, Michael A. Cohen Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 313, Box 1, Untitled Folder, 1.

9 Goldberg, “Goldman and Berkman,” 276. Some of the important texts Goldman and Berkman would publish in the early 1920s have also been edited and are available in Andrew Zonneveld, ed. *To Remain Silent Is Impossible: Emma Goldman & Alexander Berkman in Russia* (Atlanta, GA: On Our Own Authority! Pub., 2013).

10 Marshall S. Shatz, “Review: Wexler, Emma Goldman in Exile,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 83, nos. 3–4 (1993): 458–459.

ruption of the Russian Revolution by the Bolsheviki rather than solely being the consequence of her homesickness and emotional isolation in Soviet Russia. A focus on her emotions as the reason for her anti-Bolshevist activities would eventually also diminish her theoretical reflections about the Russian Revolution and her role as an anarchist intellectual of her times. As historian Marshall S. Shatz accurately described it, “Goldman was particularly sensitive to the darker sides of the Bolshevik regime” and “[g]iven her political perspective [as an anarchist] ... it is not surprising that Goldman found Bolshevik rule an anarchist nightmare come true.”<sup>11</sup> It is true, however, as Wexler pointed out, that Bolshevism would turn into “a metaphor for Goldman’s sense of betrayal and loss, a mirror of her own interior landscape of desolation.”<sup>12</sup> Her Americanness might also have played a role, but in a different sense to how Wexler interpreted it, because, to quote Shatz once again, “[l]ike many exiles, she seems to have become more American once she left America. Some of her criticism of Soviet practices, for example, bespeaks a typically American exasperation at inefficiency and red tape.”<sup>13</sup> It is safe to state here that Goldman’s American identity and experiences in the United States played an important role in her criticism of Bolshevism, but it was not simply an emotional reaction fueled by her melancholic mood. Quite the opposite. Goldman was an intellectual who felt heartbroken due to the failure of the Russian Revolution, probably even more so because she had admired, supported, and even defended the Bolsheviki against criticism from other revolutionaries, such as Catherine Breshkovskaya, while still in the United States. This realization made her sad but also angry, and it would become one of the reasons the famous anarchist reacted so fiercely against Bolshevism in the years to come.

Having experienced 23 months of real-life Bolshevism in Soviet Russia, Goldman also felt obliged to testify to the world, especially the radical left world, what she had seen there and the extent to which the revolutionary ideals of February 1917 had been corrupted by Lenin and his followers. However, after they left Soviet Russia, Goldman and Berkman “were truly in exile, stateless in every sense of the word.”<sup>14</sup> In a letter to the Yiddish anarchists Pauline and Solomon Linder (1886–1960) in August 1923, Berkman confessed that he was a “lonesome fellow, who is without place, country or name,”<sup>15</sup> forced to live in a

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 459.

<sup>12</sup> Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile*, 80.

<sup>13</sup> Shatz, “Review: Wexler,” 460.

<sup>14</sup> Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 115.

<sup>15</sup> Alexander Berkman to Polya [i.e. Pauline] and Solo[mon Linder], n.p., August 9, [1923?], Solomon Linder Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 443, Box 4, Folder 63.

world where anarchists like him and Goldman no longer seemed to have a place as they were considered enemies by the “liberal” states and Bolshevik Russia alike. As Hoover had alerted all European intelligence agencies about the two dangerous anarchists, it was hard for Goldman and Berkman to find asylum anywhere after having left Soviet Russia. Via Riga, however, they were able to reach Stockholm, and from there Berlin.<sup>16</sup> The bureaucratic “paper wars” the two radicals had to go through, the insecurities of status, and the danger of another expulsion must have caused constant anxiety and feelings of hopelessness. However, once she had arrived in Stockholm, Goldman’s heart was lightened, not only by her affair with the 30-year-old Swedish anarchist Arthur Svensson but also by the possibility to freely write about her experiences in Soviet Russia. Her affair with the Swedish man, whose “intelligence, his fluent English..., his devotion, and his youthful blond, blue-eyed good looks drew Emma with a force that suggested she hoped to regain her own past and thereby erase the unhappy present,”<sup>17</sup> consumed her emotions, but Svensson soon lost his interest in the 52-year-old anarchist after three months and became rather more interested in Goldman’s younger secretary. From Berlin, to which Svensson had intended to follow her, Goldman admitted, maybe more to herself than Svensson, that this relationship had no future: “If you came to let me know where you want to go, I will be very glad. If not, it can not be helped; I only want you to know that I want to assist you and make *our separation as painless as possible*.”<sup>18</sup> Berkman had also warned her of the Swede, who seemed to use Goldman only for his own advantage.<sup>19</sup> More important than the affair, however, was the possibility for Goldman to tell the world about the true nature of Bolshevism, especially since, as Drinnon emphasized, she must have “felt a crushing responsibility to reach a larger audience, however, both for the sake of the politicals and for her earlier presumption for having written in America her exceedingly naive pamphlet on the Truth about the Boylsheviki.”<sup>20</sup> The socialist Prime Minister Hjalmar Branting (1860–1925) had prolonged their visas so that the two anarchists could begin their anti-Bolshevist campaign on Swedish soil, which they would continue together in Germany and, later, in France (Berkman) and Britain (Goldman) respectively. Goldman and Berkman, who also helped each other with their works on Soviet Russia, began to produce articles and to send them to the United

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16 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 115.

17 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 243.

18 Emma Goldman to Arthur Svensson, Berlin [n.d.] 1922, EGP-IISH, No. 158, 10. The letters of Svensson can also be found in EGP-IISH, No. 158.

19 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 243; Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 117.

20 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 241.

States. On 10 February 1922, Berkman sent one to Eleanor Fitzgerald, whom he instructed as follows:

Enclosed herewith an article—a rather long one. It is a complete review and an outlook in re [sic!] Russia. I have tried to do careful work. Every quotation is correct. Every fact verified. I do *not want this* for the Freie Arb[eiter] ST[imme] I am very anxious to have this appear in *English*. ... May be the Nation would take it, to be published in two installments, perhaps. If you can induce the Editor *to read* it, I think he'd be interested. I do not want it to appear in any out and out capitalistic paper. As for the liberal press, use your own judgement, for I am very eager to have it appear in English. Of course, nothing must be changed. I permit no editorial corrections whatever on my work. But you know all that, dear.—The Forward would probably take it, except the last part, especially the criticism of Marxism. I am afraid that if they take the whole, they might on the quiet change my Marxian attacks. I do not trust Cahan<sup>21</sup> or the others in *such* matters. At any rate, I want at least \$250.00 for this article, whoever takes it. But that, too, is left in your hands.<sup>22</sup>

Berkman also planned to have this article published in pamphlet form before long, so it might have been a shorter version of *The Russian Tragedy* (1922).<sup>23</sup> In this regard, he added: “At any rate I want this as a pamphlet, because I think the subject vital, timely, and the thing well written.”<sup>24</sup> He also mentioned that he intended to do so in Germany, where the publication costs were cheap enough to produce it, and later actually went through with this.

All in all, however, the situation was not easy for Goldman or Berkman, as they now had to make a living and were no longer supported in any way by the Soviet Government, and receiving support from the United States was not that easy either. In addition, the working process was complicated, as Berkman shared a typewriter with Goldman, and, as he emphasized in a letter to Michael A. Cohen on 12 February 1922, “as we live in different places it is a big handicap. Besides she is herself doing considerable writing now, so I can't use the machine when I need it. It's hell.”<sup>25</sup> In this letter, he also admitted how hard life in Soviet Russia had actually been: “Well, dear friend, I have had some hard luck in my life, but my two years in R[ussia] beat it all.”<sup>26</sup> The lack of financing for their anti-Bolshevist activities, however, was probably the most bothersome issue in

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<sup>21</sup> A reference to the socialist newspaper editor Abraham Cahan (1860–1951).

<sup>22</sup> Alexander Berkman to Fizzie, Stockholm, February 10, 1922, Michael A. Cohen Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 313, Box 1, Untitled Folder, 1. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Alexander Berkman to Michael A. Cohen, Stockholm, February 12, 1922, Michael A. Cohen Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 313, Box 1, Untitled Folder, 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

early 1922 as “there is the money question, damn it. Of course the boys here, in Norway etc., will issue my pamphlets at their expense. They are, of course, too poor to pay me anything, and I don’t want them to do it, either. Nor could the German or English comrades pay. That will have to be done by the U.S. It is a very unpleasant thing for me to speak of this, but as you know I have no means of living. I believe I already told you that life is terribly dear here. Worse than in America.”<sup>27</sup> Goldman and Berkman consequently needed money to be able to work and, even more importantly, to survive.

That the transatlantic anarchist network still worked quite well was proved by the money Cohen sent to Berkman, a check for 360 Kroner, which arrived “as a godsend.”<sup>28</sup> The actual necessities of making a living also limited the two anarchists’ productivity, and Berkman told Cohen that “living under this pressure it is somewhat hard to write articles on serious subjects. One needs a bit of quiet. This uncertainty and constant hounding get on one’s nerves, especially after those two harrowing years in Russia.”<sup>29</sup> The Scandinavian environment also seemed to be a mismatch for the necessities of the anarchist activists:

As to the cleanliness, it’s almost awful. No place in the whole city where to spit. As to the houses, well, a tobacco-chewing American would cause a revolution here. Everything as neat as a new pin, and much cleaner. It’s so clean, it gets on your nerves. Yet, for all that, the women here are not attractive. Neither graceful nor goodlooking. Just the reverse, as a rule. And as for expression of face, a wooden Indian is just overflowing with passion, by comparison. In that the men and women are alike. I recently attended here an unemployed demonstration and mass meeting. The speakers talked themselves hoarse—but the audience—nary a sign that they even understood what [t]he[y] w[ere] saying.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, there was the status issue, and Berkman seemed to get fed up with his bureaucratic struggles for a visa. On the day of his letter, he and Goldman had received notice that they would have to leave Sweden soon, but where would they go? “We came for a short visit, they tell us, and now it is time to go; in fact we have overstayed our welcome. We were ordered to leave tomorrow. Of course, that is an impossibility. We can’t go so suddenly; besides, where to? No one wants us. So, there has been much running about today, and now it looks as if they will leave us alone for another week. And to tell you the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander Berkman to Michael A. Cohen, Stockholm, March 14, 1922, Michael A. Cohen Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 313, Box 1, Untitled Folder, 2.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

truth, we still have no other place to go to.”<sup>31</sup> Goldman had at least received a visa for Czechoslovakia and needed to apply for a transit visa through Germany. All this bureaucracy got on Berkman’s nerves, and while Goldman would use this opportunity, Berkman “ha[d] decided to cut the Gordian knot by going as a stow-away. To hell with all those legalities, I am sick of it all: we’ve been at it two months and more. Of course, I take a chance—but nothing risked, nothing gained.”<sup>32</sup> In the United States, meanwhile, only the *New York World* had been interested in Berkman’s article—which he had withdrawn<sup>33</sup>—in contrast to Goldman, who would publish her articles there later to gain at least some attention.

At least the *Freedom* published a letter by the two from Sweden in 1922.<sup>34</sup> In it, Goldman and Berkman accused the Bolshevik regime, which had filled “[t]he prisons of Russia, of Ukraina, of Siberia ... with men and women—aye, in some cases with mere children—who dare hold views that differ from those of the ruling Communist Party.”<sup>35</sup> At the same time, one could go to prison without committing a crime, as “in the Russia of to-day it is not at all necessary to *express* your dissension in word or act to become subject to arrest; the mere *holding* of opposing views makes you the legitimate prey of the *de facto* supreme power of the land, the Tcheka, that almighty Bolshevik Okhrana, whose will knows neither law nor responsibility.”<sup>36</sup> From Goldman’s and Berkman’s perspective it was, as a consequence of their experience, clear that

of all the revolutionary elements in Russia it is the Anarchists who now suffer the most ruthless and systematic persecution. Their suppression by the Bolsheviks began already in 1918, when—in the month of April of that year—the Communist Government attacked, without provocation or warning, the Anarchist Club of Moscow and by the use of machine guns and artillery “liquidated” the whole organisation. It was the beginning of Anarchist hounding, but it was sporadic in character, breaking out now and then, quite planless, and frequently self-contradictory. Thus, Anarchist publications would now be permitted, now suppressed; Anarchists arrested here only to be liberated there; sometimes shot and then again importuned to accept most responsible positions. ... [It was the] Tenth Congress

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**31** *Ibid.*, 1.

**32** *Ibid.*, 2.

**33** *Ibid.* Berkman would try a different form of publication and wrote: “Well, then, since I don’t want my articles in daily capitalist papers, and since the so-called liberal ones will not take them, nothing remains but to publish my articles myself, in pamphlet form. That I intend to do as soon as I am in Germany. In the latter country it will be cheapest to publish, as well as to live.” *Ibid.*

**34** Alexander Berkman/Emma Goldman, “Bolsheviks Shooting Anarchists,” *Freedom* 36, no. 391 (1922): 4

**35** *Ibid.*

**36** *Ibid.* Emphasis in the original.

of the Russian Communist Party, in April 1921, at which Lenin declared open and merciless war not only against Anarchists but against “all petty bourgeois Anarchist and Anarcho-Syndicalist *tendencies* wherever found.” It was then and there that began the systematic, organised, and most ruthless extermination of Anarchists in Bolshevik-ruled Russia. On the very day of the Lenin speech scores of Anarchists, Anarcho-Syndicalists, and their sympathisers were arrested in Moscow and Petrograd, and on the following day wholesale arrests of our comrades took place all over the country.<sup>37</sup>

Critical voices would ask why the two anarchists, who had been in Soviet Russia at that time, had not raised their voices against these methods, but instead waited until 1922 to express their criticism, which came not only belatedly but in a situation wherein they themselves had turned their backs on post-revolutionary Soviet Russia. From the perspective of a foreign observer, this turn of the two anarchists against Lenin and Bolshevism seemed to be quite abrupt, especially since they had demanded support for the Bolsheviks before. Now, the tone of Goldman and Berkman was demanding quite the opposite, as they claimed in early 1922 that “[i]t is high time that the revolutionary Labour movement of the world took cognizance of the blood and murder regime practised by the Bolshevik Government upon all politically differently minded. And it is for the Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists, in particular, imperative to take immediate action toward putting a stop to such *Asiatic barbarism*, and to save, if still possible, our imprisoned Moscow comrades threatened with death.”<sup>38</sup>

In an article in the *Washington Times* on 27 March 1922, US readers were informed that Goldman had reassessed the situation in Soviet Russia, where the revolution had been killed by Lenin and his followers.<sup>39</sup> The paper reprinted some of Goldman’s comments and made it clear why a rather “conservative” newspaper would do so: “Because of the fact that an arch-anarchist, a woman who has devoted her life to attacking existing forms of government, turns upon the aegis of Lenin with such fury, The Washington Times thinks it worthwhile to print her views on Bolshevism.”<sup>40</sup> In the article, received from Stockholm, Goldman declared that

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. It is quite interesting that the two anarchists, who were born in Russia themselves, considered Bolshevism to be something “Asiatic” here and thereby replicated images of Asian barbarity and backwardness, which could often be found in late 19th- and early 20th-century European discourse about Russia.

<sup>39</sup> “Bolshevik Blunders Bared by Goldman,” *The Washington Times*, March 27, 1922: 1.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

[t]he Russian revolution, as a radical social and economic change means to overthrow capitalism and establish communism, must be declared a *failure*. ... What is known is that the Russian and allied interventionists were not the only actors in the great social drama which ended in the death of the Russian revolution. The other actors are the bolsheviks [sic!] themselves. ... I yet insist it was *not so much* the attacks from without as the senseless and cruel methods within Russia that have *killed the revolution* and placed the yoke of despotism upon the people's neck.<sup>41</sup>

Goldman became obsessed with the betrayal of the Russian Revolution,<sup>42</sup> and what Kropotkin had told her about the division of the revolutionary ideals and their Bolshevik corruption would determine her position in an already ongoing and very heated discussion about the nature of the Russian Revolution.<sup>43</sup> In March and April, Goldman's articles about Soviet Russia were published by the *New York World*, an offer Berkman, as described above, had declined, but again, Goldman acted pragmatically, considering that she and her anarchist companion had to live off something during their odyssey. Regardless of her intentions to reach the widest possible audience with her works, she was also criticized by other radicals in the United States for having published a negative view of the Russian Revolution in a capitalist paper.<sup>44</sup> These articles consequently "alienated many former comrades,"<sup>45</sup> maybe also because nobody had expected such an assessment of Soviet Russia from a former supporter of the Bolsheviks.

The letters were later reprinted in a collected format, and Goldman's work *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution* (1922) provides an early document of her anti-Bolshevist interpretation of the revolutionary process in Russia since October 1917.<sup>46</sup> The anarchist asserted to her readers that "I was never more convinced of the truth of my ideas, never in my life had greater proof of the logic and justice of Anarchism."<sup>47</sup> Goldman also emphasized that she considered that "the Russian problem is entirely too complex to speak lightly of it" and criticized other publications for being "so superficial" in their assessment of the situation in Soviet Russia. Goldman was nevertheless aware that her views would attract criticism from all sides: "I know I shall be misappropriated by the reactionaries, the enemies of the Russian Revolution, as well as excommunicated

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41 Ibid. My emphasis.

42 Ashbolt, "Love and Hate," 5.

43 For a detailed analysis see Jacob, *1917*, 149–202.

44 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 242.

45 Ashbolt, "Love and Hate," 5.

46 Emma Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution* (London: Freedom Press, 1922), University of Warwick Library Special Collections, JD 10.P6 PPC 1684.

47 Ibid., 3.

by its so-called friends, who persist in confusing the governing party of Russia with the Revolution.”<sup>48</sup> Her reflections were not too obsessed not to blame the international intervention for having helped the Bolsheviki, who were able to strengthen their regime due to these interventions, because “[t]he Russian people, who alone had made the revolution and who were determined to defend it at all costs against the interventionists, were too busy on the numerous fronts to pay any attention to the enemy of revolution within.”<sup>49</sup> She had eventually been able to observe how Lenin and his followers “[s]lowly but surely ... were building up a centralised State, which destroyed the Soviets and crushed the revolution, a State that can now easily compare, in regard to bureaucracy and despotism, with any of the great Powers of the world.” The revolution had been corrupted, and “the greatest event of centuries, has been lost,” and to Goldman, “the experience of Russia, more than any theories, has demonstrated that all government, whatever its form or pretences, is a dead weight that paralyses the free spirit and activities of the masses.”<sup>50</sup> The famous anarchist also made it clear why she had published her critical evaluation: “I owe this [explanation] to the revolution, nailed to the Bolshevik cross, to the martyred Russian people, and to the deluded of the world.”<sup>51</sup> The dictatorship of the proletariat had been an illusion, as it was only “[f]or a brief period after the October Revolution [that] the workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors were indeed the masters of their revolutionary fate. But soon the invisible iron hand began to manipulate the revolution, to separate it from the people, and to make it subservient to its own ends—the iron hand of the Communist State.”<sup>52</sup> The Bolsheviks, who “are the Jesuit order in the Marxian Church,” had betrayed the masses and the ideals of the revolution alike, and “Communism, Socialism, equality, freedom—everything for which the Russian masses have endured such martyrdom—have become discredited and besmirched by their tactics, by their Jesuitic motto that the end justifies all means.”<sup>53</sup> The Bolsheviks had eventually driven a wedge between the masses and the revolution, betraying the former while corrupting the latter, and eventually ended any hope for a truly better world.

In 1922, while she was living in Berlin, Goldman, supported by the German anarchist Rudolf Rocker, published her first longer pamphlet in German. *Die Ur-*

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48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., 5.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., 7.

53 Ibid.

*sachen des Niederganges der russischen Revolution* (1922)<sup>54</sup> offers the first coherent analysis of the reasons for the failure of the Russian Revolution, and the manuscript, which Goldman had finished in Sweden in January 1922, also offers some insight into her own position in the preceding years and an explanation for why her criticism had not been expressed earlier. Goldman also emphasized that she had not given up believing in the ideals of the Russian Revolution and that American newspapers that reported on the US flag in her room, trying to turn her image into that of a Sunday preacher who now regretted her sins against America, were totally wrong.<sup>55</sup> She also highlighted that she had not been able to address the problems in Soviet Russia while it had still been under attack by foreign powers.<sup>56</sup> “Now, however, the time of silence is over,” and Goldman intended to “openly express what needs to be expressed,” although the anarchist knew that she would be misunderstood by the reactionaries and the enemies of the revolution on the one hand, and by the “so-called friends [of the revolution], who confuse the Russian Communist Party with the Russian Revolution” on the other.<sup>57</sup> In the United States, Goldman continued, she had been turned into a criminal “because I dared to raise my voice against the World War.”<sup>58</sup> Yet it was this “war for democracy,” this “war to end war” that had turned the world into “hell.”<sup>59</sup> The latter war had been characterized by hunger and death, and the ruling elites had turned the world into a “fortress, a political prison, in which freedoms and rights of the people ... had been shackled to the ground.”<sup>60</sup> However, the “noble pair of high finance and militarism did not expect the Russian Revolution.”<sup>61</sup> It was also an imperialist conspiracy that had attacked the revolution in Russia and thereby paved the way for the centralization of Bolshevik power in the new political order. The external threat made the people look the other way, and Lenin and his followers could establish their rule uncontested by the Russian people. The more power the Bolsheviki gained, the more centralized the state became, and so too were the soviets destroyed and the revolution and its ideals suppressed. What was eventually created was a bureaucratic and despotic state that was no better than any other exploitative state

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54 Emma Goldman, *Die Ursachen des Niederganges der russischen Revolution* (Berlin: Der Syndikalist, 1922).

55 *Ibid.*, 9.

56 *Ibid.*, 10.

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*

59 *Ibid.*

60 *Ibid.*, 10–11.

61 *Ibid.*, 11.

in any other country of the world.<sup>62</sup> According to Goldman, the “Marxist statesmanship of the Bolsheviks”<sup>63</sup> was simply acting pragmatically, declaring and discarding new politics and needed measures that consequently destroyed the trust of ordinary people in the revolution and its potential to create a better world. Goldman declared that a successful revolution needed to be defended against resistance and obstacles, and therefore needed to precede like a lit torch the mass of the people, who needed to feel the passionate heartbeat of the revolution. The masses consequently always had to have the feeling that the revolution was their own work, and they had to be actively involved in keeping the revolutionary fire burning.<sup>64</sup>

In fact, the course of the Russian Revolution had been determined by workers, soldiers, and peasants, but it was soon to be controlled by the “iron hand of the communist state [which] divided the revolution from the people”<sup>65</sup> and who would abuse it for its own purposes. The Bolsheviks, whom Goldman here also referred to as the “Jesuit Order of the Marxian church,”<sup>66</sup> corrupted the revolution and hindered it from reaching the ideals the people had initially supported it for. Those who questioned the new order were accused of being counter-revolutionaries, speculators, and bandits and would lose their freedom.<sup>67</sup> The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had not only betrayed those people whom the Bolsheviks had promised a chance for self-determination, but it also alienated the peasants from the revolution. While Lenin had requested a break for the revolution, he had in reality strangled it to death.<sup>68</sup> Food was collected using violent methods, and the peasants were terrorized by the Bolsheviks because the industrial goods that had been promised in exchange for food supplies never reached them, and those peasants who refused to support the new government were punished severely.<sup>69</sup>

It was consequently unsuitable for the famous anarchist to refer to Russia in 1922 as Soviet Russia or to call the Bolshevik state a soviet government because the soviets were no longer in power. They had traditionally represented the interest of the masses, of the common people, but Lenin, the “clever and foxy Jesuit,” demanded all power for the soviets for as long as he needed their support to get

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62 *Ibid.*, 12.

63 *Ibid.*, 14.

64 *Ibid.*, 15.

65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*

67 *Ibid.*, 16.

68 *Ibid.*, 17–18.

69 *Ibid.*, 18.

into power, and, once there, he began to erode their power in the new system until the soviets were no more than a shadow of their former selves.<sup>70</sup> Ultimately, the soviets did nothing more than confirm the decisions of the Bolshevik rulers, and other political opinions, due to the lack of freedom, could not even be expressed. “What once used to be an ideal—the free exchange of opinions by workers, peasants, and soldiers—became an ordinary comedy, which was not demanded by the people and in which everybody had lost her or his faith.”<sup>71</sup> It was no surprise that the revolution lost its support when the people were forced to work and began to identify the communist state as the “leech that sucked their vitality out of their veins.”<sup>72</sup> The protest by the workers, or by the sailors in Kronstadt, was consequently nothing other than “the outcry of a soul that wrestled with death, the outcry of the souls of all Russian people, who had longed for and achieved an extraordinary level of enthusiasm during the revolution, and who now had been chained by the Bolshevik state.”<sup>73</sup> To achieve this, Lenin and his followers had reestablished a secret police that was worse than the Czarist Ochrana.

For Goldman, the Cheka was “without any doubt the darkest institution of the Bolshevik regime,”<sup>74</sup> and “one would have to have the pen of a Dante to display the hell that had been created by this organization to the world’s eyes in its full monstrosity,” especially since it had only brought “suspicion, hate, suffering, and the agony of death”<sup>75</sup> over Russia and its people. The Cheka was a “spy, policeman, judge, jailer, and executioner in one person” and represented the “highest power against which an objection does not exist.”<sup>76</sup> Its work, usually at night, had shocked whole districts in urban Russia and established a rule of terror in which a reference to the Cheka was enough to frighten women, men, and children alike. At the same time, the labor unions had lost their power and were turned into militarized, state-indoctrinated organizations that were used to control the workers’ minds and to prevent unnecessary questions about the new order.<sup>77</sup> The unions were only “divisions of the state machinery whose tactics and activities were fully controlled by it”<sup>78</sup> and were abused

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70 *Ibid.*, 22.

71 *Ibid.*, 24.

72 *Ibid.*, 26.

73 *Ibid.*, 27.

74 *Ibid.*

75 *Ibid.*, 28.

76 *Ibid.*

77 *Ibid.*, 33–35.

78 *Ibid.*, 35.

to exploit the Russian workers for the purpose of state consolidation, while the Bolsheviks would lie to them by stating that they would only rule in their name, i.e. in the form of the “dictatorship of the proletariat.”

When Goldman had been deported from the United States, she had had so many hopes for the future that was lying ahead, yet once she arrived in Russia, she realized that the revolution of February 1917 and its ideals had been betrayed.<sup>79</sup> Even the great anarchist Kropotkin could not provide her with any hope when he declared that he feared the Cheka too much to actually put his criticism of Bolshevism into writing.<sup>80</sup> After her first visit of Kropotkin in March 1920, Goldman’s “heart was full with the great Russian tragedy, [her] mind confused and worried about all the things [she] had heard.”<sup>81</sup> The longer Goldman stayed in Russia, the more agony she faced, and in 1922 she eventually confessed that

The first seven months of my stay in Russia had almost destroyed me. I had arrived with so much enthusiasm in my heart, totally inspired by the passionate desire to plunge into work and to help defend the sacred cause of the revolution. But what I found in Russia overwhelmed me. I was unable to do anything. The wheel of the socialist state machine passed over me and paralyzed my energy. The terrible misery and oppression of the people, the cold-hearted ignoring of their wishes and needs, the persecution and oppression were like a mountain on my soul and made my life unbearable. ... Was it the revolution that had turned idealists into wild beasts? If so, the Bolsheviks were merely chess pieces in the hands of an inevitable fate. Or was it the cold, impersonal character of the state, which had managed to force the revolution into its yoke through reprehensible and dishonest means in order to whip it in ways that were indispensable to it? I couldn’t find an answer to these questions—at least not in July 1920.<sup>82</sup>

If one was willing to believe Kropotkin, the anarchists had simply not been prepared for the necessities for a revolution and were consequently not ready to react in the appropriate way.<sup>83</sup> Goldman, on the other hand, considered the anarchists and the revolution per se to be the victims of state power, namely Bolshevik state power in the concrete case she had witnessed in Soviet Russia.

Berkman, who had been in steady contact with Goldman, and it can be assumed that they “worked together”—in the broadest sense—on all their manuscripts in the early 1920s, had also started writing about his experiences when they arrived in Sweden, and he tried to detect and counter some of the Bolshevik

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 61–62.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

lies with regard to the anarchists in Russia and abroad.<sup>84</sup> While in Stockholm, Berkman finished the first draft of a manuscript titled “The Russian Revolution: A Review and an Outlook,”<sup>85</sup> which was later published as *The Russian Tragedy: A Review and An Outlook* (1922) while the two anarchists were in Germany. In the first of the two texts, Berkman attempted to highlight that there was a lot of confusion about the events in Soviet Russia:

Even intelligent persons, especially among the workers, have the most confused ideas about the character of the Russian Revolution, its development, and its present political, economic and social status. Understanding of Russia and what has been happening there since 1917 is most inadequate, to say the least. ... Generally speaking, the views expressed—friendly or otherwise—are based on very incomplete and unreliable, frequently entirely false, information about the Russian Revolution, its history and the present phase of the Bolshevik regime.<sup>86</sup>

What Berkman therefore offered, similarly to Goldman, and what was particularly important at that time were some first-hand impressions of the events in Soviet Russia that went beyond the official narrative of the Bolshevik rulers. The anarchist argued that a critical reflection about the events was tremendously important, as “[o]n the correct estimation of the Russian Revolution, the role played in it by the Bolsheviks and other political parties and movements, and the causes that have brought about the present situation ... depends what lessons we shall draw from the great historic event of 1917.”<sup>87</sup> Regardless of its obvious failing five years after it began, Berkman was emphasizing its role within world history and trying to make sure that this would be understood by his readers: “I am even inclined to think that, in point of its potential consequences, the Revolution of 1917 is the most significant fact in the whole known history of mankind. It is the only Revolution that aimed, de facto, at social world revolution; it is the only one that actually abolished the capitalist system on a country-wide scale, and fundamentally altered all social relationships existing till then.”<sup>88</sup> Such an evaluation was definitely not overemphasizing the meaning and impact of the Russian Revolution, which would determine the course of the “short” 20th century. Like Goldman, Berkman also reflected on his personal development in relation

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**84** Alexander Berkman, Some Bolshevik Lies about the Russian Anarchists, February 1922, ABP-IISH, No. 183. The article was published in *Freedom* (April 1922), 24–26.

**85** Alexander Berkman, The Russian Revolution: A Review and an Outlook, Stockholm, February 8, 1922, ABP-IISH, No. 182.

**86** *Ibid.*, 1.

**87** *Ibid.*

**88** *Ibid.*

to the Russian Revolution and Bolshevik rule in Soviet Russia. He also had admired the revolution, but would find out that the reality had nothing in common with his utopian dreams:

We were received with open arms. The revolutionary hymn, played by the military Red Band, greeted us enthusiastically as we crossed the Russian frontier. ... With bowed head I stood in the presence of the visible symbols of the Revolution Triumphant. With bowed head and bowed heart. My spirit was proud [of the Russian Revolution]. ... And I became conscious of the great happiness it offered me: to do, to work, to help with every fiber of my being the complete revolutionary expression of this wonderful people. They had fought and won. They proclaimed the Social Revolution. It meant that oppression has ceased, that submission and slavery, man's twin curses, were abolished. ... What I learned, I learned gradually, day by day, in various parts of the country. I had exceptional opportunities for observation and study. I stood close to the leaders of the Communist Party, associated much with the most active men and women, participated in the work, and traveled extensively through the country under conditions most favorable to personal contact with the life of the workers and peasants. At first I could not believe that what I saw was real. ... Russia seemed to reflect the Revolution as a frightful perversion.<sup>89</sup>

That he did not want to accept such a perversion to be real has been discussed before. Berkman needed to witness the events of Kronstadt to finally believe in this perversion, and, as he states in his reflection, it was not easy for him to finally do so: "I fought relentlessly, bitterly against myself. For two years I fought. It is hardest to convince him who does not want to be convinced. And, I admit, I did not want to be convinced that the Revolution in Russia had become a mirage, a dangerous deception."<sup>90</sup> It was hard for Berkman to come to this conclusion based on the realities, but he did not hesitate to share this insight, almost as a form of final confession about his Russian experience: "Against my will, against my hopes, against the holy fire of admiration and enthusiasm for Russia that burned within me, I was convinced—convinced that the Russian Revolution *had been done to death*."<sup>91</sup> The Bolsheviks suppressed any other opinion, any other political alternative, and once "in exclusive control of the government," they began to pervert the revolutionary process and "[t]he fanatical delusion that a little conspirative group, as it were, could achieve the fundamental social transformation proved the Frankenstein of the Bolsheviks."<sup>92</sup> They would only rule by "decrees and terror," and the state became the supreme power, with the Central Committee of the Communist Party at its summit, which meant the

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 4–5.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 8–9.

rule of an omnipotent group, which Berkman called the “Big Five.”<sup>93</sup> To keep this rule in existence, the Bolsheviki had done everything in their power to eliminate “the popular initiative and the revolutionary creative forces of the masses.”<sup>94</sup> The events of Kronstadt in March 1921 had made this more than clear, as a protest against Bolshevik rule had been suppressed with violence and the protesters drowned in blood. It was clear, even for the last doubter, that it was not the “dictatorship of the proletariat” that ruled in Soviet Russia, but the “dictatorship of the inner circle of the Communist Party,” which criminally staged a “bloody Comedy of Errors.”<sup>95</sup> The latter, represented by the Bolshevik policies, in Berkman’s view demanded “another revolution,”<sup>96</sup> especially since humanity had again been unable to push a revolutionary process through uncontested to finally achieve a better society, a better world.

In his pamphlet *The Russian Tragedy: A Review and An Outlook*, the one he had written about in his letters to Michael A. Cohen and which was published in Germany in 1922, Berkman concluded that the revolution in Russia “has failed—failed of its ultimate purpose.”<sup>97</sup> It had started as one of the most glorious events in human history, because the Russian Revolution was more than just another upheaval against autocratic rule—it had been “revolutionising the thought and feeling of the masses of Russia and of the world, ... undermining the fundamental concepts of existing society, and lighting the torch of faith and hope for the Better Day”<sup>98</sup> and therefore inspired so many women and men around the globe. It was—like the French Revolution for the “long” 19th century—the beginning of a new age, a supposedly better time. It would need “a great many volumes” and probably generations of people to understand what had actually happened in Russia and how yet another revolution could have been corrupted, even perverted, by the Bolsheviki, but this “understanding of the Russian situation is most vital to the future progress and wellbeing of the world. On the correct estimation of the Russian Revolution, ... on a thorough conception of the whole problem depends what lessons we shall draw from the great historic events of 1917.”<sup>99</sup> Although the Russian Revolution failed in the end, like many other revolutionary processes had failed before, for Berkman, Goldman and probably many other left intellectuals of their time, it was “the most significant fact in the whole known

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93 *Ibid.*, 9.

94 *Ibid.*

95 *Ibid.*, 10, 13.

96 *Ibid.*, 13.

97 Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, 3.

98 *Ibid.*

99 *Ibid.*, 4.

history of mankind. It is the only Revolution that aimed, de facto, at social world revolution; it is the only one that actually abolished the capitalist system on a country-wide scale, and fundamentally altered all social relationships existing till then.”<sup>100</sup>

The lessons about Soviet Russia were problematic for Goldman and Berkman, who intended to spread their witness reports, which presented a special form of migrant knowledge at that time<sup>101</sup> in that “most of those who visited Russia simply lied about the conditions in that country,—I repeat it deliberately. Some lied because they did not know any better: they had had neither the time nor the opportunity to study the situation, to learn the facts.”<sup>102</sup> Neither the International Communist Congress nor the Revolutionary Trade Union Congress, which were both held in Soviet Russia in 1921, changed this situation, and, like Goldman, Berkman was frustrated by the fact that many visitors were unwilling to accept the realities. But due to the fact that the latter considered it important to learn from the mistakes that had been made during the revolutionary process since 1917, it was essential that the lies about the Bolsheviki’s system of rule, exploitation, and terror stopped, especially within the left circles of the West. Lenin and his followers had betrayed not only the anarchists but all people who had enthusiastically supported the Russian Revolution and its idealist aims since February 1917. One problem was the Marxist identity of the Bolsheviki, who

[a]t heart ... had no faith in the people and their creative initiative. As social-democrats they distrusted the peasantry, counting rather upon the support of the small revolutionary minority among the industrial element. They had advocated the Constituent Assembly, and only when they were convinced that they would not have a majority there, and therefore not be able to take State power into their own hands, they suddenly decided upon the dissolution of the Assembly, though the step was a refutation and a denial of fundamental Marxist principles. ... As Marxists, the Bolsheviki insisted on the nationalisation of the land: ownership, distribution and control to be in the hands of the State.<sup>103</sup>

Against protests from anarchists and Social Revolutionaries, who did not want to support further imperialist exploitation and the annexation policies it caused, Lenin agreed to sign the Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 and ignored any kind of protest.<sup>104</sup>

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100 Ibid.

101 Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move.”

102 Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, 5.

103 Ibid., 10.

104 Ibid., 11.

However, as the protesters were not only single voices but could rely upon a larger number of followers, the Bolsheviki felt threatened and, to keep their own power, they began “to crush every form of expression not in accord with the government.”<sup>105</sup> While the influence of the unions was checked and the latter, as Goldman had already remarked, turned into governmental tools of rule, the Bolshevik government began “monopolising every avenue of life [and] the Revolution [was] divorced from the people. A bureaucratic machine [was] created that [was] appalling in its parasitism, inefficiency and corruption.”<sup>106</sup> Only Lenin and his followers had a say about the future, and protesting against the government could have been fatal; the only aim the Bolsheviki had was to further centralize the new state in order to tighten their grip on the Russian people.<sup>107</sup> This, however, was interpreted similarly by Berkman to Goldman, because the Bolsheviki were ultimately nothing other than orthodox Marxists:

Significant admission! In truth, present Bolshevik policies are the continuation of the good orthodox Bolshevik Marxism of 1918. Bolshevik leaders now admit that the Revolution, in its post-October developments, was only political, not social. The mechanical centralisation of the Communist State—it must be emphasized—proved fatal to the economic and social life of the country. Violent party dictatorship destroyed the unity of the workers and the peasants, and created a perverted, bureaucratic attitude to revolutionary reconstruction.<sup>108</sup>

From an anarchist perspective, the final judgment of the events in Russia could do nothing more than point out the fact that the existence of a government and a centralized state was responsible for the corruption of the revolutionary ideals. Freedom was the aim, but it could never be reached as long as free opinions or free speech were suppressed by the Bolsheviki.<sup>109</sup>

In October 1922, Berkman reflected in another text, viz. “The Bolshevik Government and the Anarchists,” on the situation of the anarchists in Soviet Russia, and he again highlighted that nobody could close her or his eyes on the cruel events that had been taking place under the Bolshevik rule since October 1917 and “[a]nyone who today still talks of the Bolshevik Government or the Communist Party of Russia as synonymous with the Revolution is either a fool or a scoundrel.”<sup>110</sup> The dreams of so many could no longer be more than another uto-

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**105** *Ibid.*, 12.

**106** *Ibid.*, 13.

**107** *Ibid.*, 14–17.

**108** *Ibid.*, 18.

**109** *Ibid.*

**110** Alexander Berkman, *The Bolshevik Government and the Anarchists*, October 1922, ABP-IISH, No. 185, 1.

pia, because their revolutionary hopes had turned into Bolshevik realities. Berkman continued his evaluation by highlighting the following: “Politically it [Russia] is an unmitigated despotism, with absolute government power concentrated in the hands of a small clique of the Communist Party. In other words, Russia is a Constitutional Republic in name only. De facto it is an absolutism complemented by State capitalism” and, as he emphasized, “[i]t is the height of perversion of terms to call the Russian politico-economic State the dictatorship of the proletariat.”<sup>111</sup> Anarchism, however, still had a future in Russia, where a third revolution was now necessary but could yet be successful: “That revolution, profiting by the experience of the Bolshevik fiasco, and the bankruptcy of State Socialism, will be inspired by the constructive abilities of the masses themselves and will not again permit their liberties and well-being to be usurped by a centralised government.”<sup>112</sup>

Considering that Goldman’s and Berkman’s works about Soviet Russia were closely linked, not only by their process of production when both worked together—although they did not live together—but also by their content, it is not surprising that there existed, at least to a partial yet significant extent, some competition between the two as well. Regardless of these problems and the visa issues they had faced since leaving Soviet Russia, both eventually arrived in postwar Berlin, though they would not live together there either—Goldman had a flat at Rüdeshheimer Straße 3 and Berkman lived at Lauenburger Straße 17.<sup>113</sup> Having arrived in Berlin, Goldman nevertheless began to work on her first major book project about the Russian Revolution and her personal experiences there. Initially, however, Goldman was rather unmotivated in every sense. She wrote to Leon Malmed from Berlin on 9 August 1922 in this regard:

In fact I have not written to any one of my friends in the States for nearly three months. I cannot go into the causes which affected me mentally and spiritually. Primarily it is the utter hopelessness of the Russian situation. I suffered keenly under it while I was there, but always consoled myself with the thought that when I got out of Russia I would be able to do much to arouse the workers against the terrible things that were happening there. Since I came to Germany, I seem to have gotten into a state of lethargy. I could not get myself to work, or even to concentrate on any one given thought. You can well imagine that I was in despair. However, I believe I have myself in hand.<sup>114</sup>

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**111** Ibid.

**112** Ibid., 7.

**113** Alexander Berkman to Michael A. Cohen, Berlin, April 13, 1922, Michael A. Cohen Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 313, Box 1, Untitled Folder, 4.

**114** Emma Goldman to Leon Malmed, Berlin, August 9, 1922, LMP, Folder 28, 1.

Goldman was still worried about her perception by the international Left, although she intended to counter pro-Bolshevist lies with the new book she had begun working on, but “That will, of course, be of an entire different nature—not a history of the Russian revolution—I leave that to the historians who fifty years from now will interpret the great Russian event in a cold and detached manner.”<sup>115</sup> Goldman’s account was supposed to serve a different purpose, because, as the famous anarchist worded it, “[a]bove all I want to translate the heroic struggle, the hopes and the fate of the Russian people. I do not know how well I shall succeed, but I mean to try very hard.”<sup>116</sup> The writing process as such, however, was quite hard, and on 22 September 1922 Goldman wrote to Michael A. Cohen to say that she had finished 85,000 words of the manuscript, but she expected a later date for delivery: “I think it will be ready much later, I do want to give something good and to write about Russia which is living through Purgatory all over again.”<sup>117</sup>

In 1923, Doubleday, Page & Co. would eventually publish her book, but the work that was supposed to be titled “My Two Years in Russia” was renamed *My Disillusionment in Russia*, which was bad enough for Goldman, but when she realized that 12 chapters of her manuscript had not been included in the book, because the delivery by the literary agency, the McClure Syndicate,<sup>118</sup> had been incomplete, Goldman was outraged about this “butchery of her work.”<sup>119</sup> Doubleday, Page & Co. would later publish the missing parts as *My Further Disillusionment in Russia* (1924), but the manuscript was split. It is, however, interesting that only two reviewers, namely a critic for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and a librarian in Buffalo, actually recognized that the first book had been published in an incomplete form.<sup>120</sup> Regardless of its problematic format, *My Disillusionment in Russia* “brought down on [Goldman] a storm of left-wing abuse from which there would be no recovery.”<sup>121</sup> Her book shocked all those who were currently in love with Bolshevist Russia, i.e. a large part of the international Left, and since anarchism had been declining since the end of the First World War as a powerful political and transnational movement, the audience for such writings was also decreasing in numbers. Besides this, the fact that Goldman had

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115 Ibid.

116 Ibid., 2.

117 Emma Goldman to Michael A. Cohen, n.p., September 22, 1922, Michael A. Cohen Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 313, Box 1, Untitled Folder, 2.

118 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 245.

119 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 118.

120 Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 245.

121 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 118.

used Berkman's material for her own work almost drove a wedge between the two anarchists. In October 1922, Berkman remarked in a letter to a friend that Goldman's "forte is the platform, not the pen, as she herself knows very well. ... As her book will be out first, what interest could my book ... have ... It is a tragic situation. Of course, my writing is different in style, and to some extent in point of view, but the meat I have given away. And yet I could not do otherwise."<sup>122</sup> The critics might have claimed Berkman's *The Bolshevik Myth* (1925) to be superior to Goldman's works, and even the publisher had been optimistic that it would "sell a great many more copies both to radicals and conservatives than practically any other title we could hit upon,"<sup>123</sup> but the reviews for the publisher, like the one by Manuel Komroff, were not that splendid, as "the title of Berkman's book, as it stands at present, is one that shows immediately a bias, if not a decided prejudice."<sup>124</sup> *The Bolshevik Myth* was ultimately also quite expensive at US\$ 3 per copy, and when Berkman requested information about the sales in June 1925,<sup>125</sup> the answer from Horace B. Liveright (1884–1933), who had published it, was rather sobering: "This has, unquestionably, been the worst book season that I have ever experienced. Novels that would ordinarily sell 10,000 copies have sold 3,000 or 4,000. Books of a more serious nature have failed even worse, so I can't say that I am disappointed yet when I report to you that *The Bolshevik Myth* has sold about 625 copies to June 1st."<sup>126</sup> In March 1926, Liveright sent Berkman the final blow to his hopes for successful sales of his book when Eleanor Fitzgerald was informed by the publisher that "it would take us so long to get rid of even 250 copies that it certainly wouldn't warrant our reprinting."<sup>127</sup> By 1926, only 999 copies of the book had sold, and in the first half of that year, only 12 were bought in the United States and just two in Canada.<sup>128</sup> Goldman and Berkman wrote for a movement that no longer existed as it had before the First World War, and those who still remembered the two anarchists were probably not in favor of their views. As said before, they wrote about a topic of interest, but their perspective was not one the possible audiences in North America were interested in.

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**122** Cited in Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 244.

**123** Horace B. Liveright to Eleanor Fitzgerald, New York, December 15, 1924, ABP-IISH, No. 169.

**124** Memorandum by Manuel Komroff to Horace B. Liveright, New York, December 12, 1924, ABP-IISH, No. 169.

**125** Alexander Berkman to Horace B. Liveright, Berlin, June 6, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 169.

**126** Horace B. Liveright to Alexander Berkman, New York, June 17, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 169.

**127** John S. Clapp to Eleanor Fitzgerald, New York, March 19, 1926, ABP-IISH, No. 169.

**128** Royalty Statement for Alexander Berkman, Boni & Liveright, June 30, 1926, ABP-IISH, No. 169.

Since the present book is, however, not only interested in the sales of Goldman's book but also their content, the two volumes, which must be understood and read as one, shall be taken into closer consideration here. In her manuscript for *My Disillusionment in Russia*, which Goldman had written in 1922/23 to reflect on her experiences in Soviet Russia, she begins by writing about her deportation from the United States and later describes her impression of the British Labour Mission<sup>129</sup> as well as her work for the Museum of the Russian Revolution<sup>130</sup> and how she and Berkman had visited Kropotkin.<sup>131</sup> The aim of Goldman's work, however, as mentioned before, was not to write a history of the Russian Revolution, but to rather provide an eyewitness account, i. e. a description of her own life in Soviet Russia:

[R]eal history is not a compilation of mere data. It is valueless without the human element which the historian necessarily gets from the writings of the contemporaries of the events in question. It is the personal reactions of the participants and observers which lend vitality to all history and make it vivid and alive. Thus, numerous histories have been written of the French Revolution; yet there are only a very few that stand out true and convincing, illuminative in the degree in which the historian has *felt* his subject through the medium of human documents left by the contemporaries of the period.<sup>132</sup>

In *My Further Disillusionment in Russia*, she also recalls the raids by the Bolshevik government on the anarchists in the larger cities, where prisons were soon filled and bookstores and anarchist clubs were prohibited, while the Cheka patrolled the streets looking for potential political antagonists. What followed was, according to Goldman, a

systematic man-hunt of Anarchists in general, and of Anarcho-syndicalists in particular, with the result that every prison and jail in Soviet Russia is filled with our comrades, fully coincided in time and spirit with Lenin's speech at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party. On that occasion Lenin announced that the most merciless war must be declared against what he termed "petty bourgeois Anarchist elements" which, according to him, are developing even within the Communist Party itself owing to the "anarcho-syndicalist tendencies of the Labour Opposition." On that very day that Lenin made the above

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**129** Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia* (New York: Doubleday, 1923). Accessed May 20, 2020, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emma-goldman-my-disillusionment-in-russia>, ch. 10.

**130** *Ibid.*, ch. 13.

**131** *Ibid.*, ch. 17.

**132** *Ibid.*, Preface. Emphasis in the original.

statements numbers of Anarchists were arrested all over the country, without the least cause or explanation.<sup>133</sup>

In *My Further Disillusionment in Russia*, Goldman, like Berkman and she herself did in other works as well, would criticize what Goldman not only in her work but also in her letters would refer to as the “travelling salesmen of the Russian revolution,” who were “more responsible than the Bolsheviks themselves for the lies and dissipations about Russia.”<sup>134</sup> She characterized them in detail and eventually divided visitors to Soviet Russia into three classes or categories:

The first category consisted of earnest idealists to whom the Bolsheviks were the symbol of the Revolution. Among them were many emigrants from America who had given up everything they possessed to return to the promised land. Most of these became bitterly disappointed after the first few months and sought to get out of Russia. Others, who did not come as Communists, joined the Communist Party for selfish reasons and did in Rome as the Romans do. There were also the Anarchist deportees who came not of their own choice. Most of them strained every effort to leave Russia after they realized the stupendous deception that had been imposed on the world. In the second class were journalists, newspapermen, and some adventurers. They spent from two weeks to two months in Russia, usually in Petrograd or Moscow, as the guests of the Government and in charge of Bolshevik guides. Hardly any of them knew the language and they never got further than the surface of things. Yet many of them have presumed to write and lecture authoritatively about the Russian situation. ... The third category—the majority of the visitors, delegates, and members of various commissions—infested Russia to become the agents of the ruling Party. These people had every opportunity to see things as they were, to get close to the Russian people, and to learn from them the whole terrible truth. But they preferred to side with the Government, to listen to its interpretation of causes and effects.<sup>135</sup>

The Bolsheviks used these “travelling salesmen” quite well for their own interests and “sent them forth into the world generously equipped in every sense, to perpetuate the monstrous delusion that the Bolsheviks and the Revolution are identical and that the workers have come into their own ‘under the proletarian dictatorship.’”<sup>136</sup> Voices that told a different story in or about Soviet Russia feared for their lives, a fear Goldman herself had experienced and remained

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**133** Emma Goldman, *My Further Disillusionment in Russia* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1924). Accessed May 10, 2020, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emma-goldman-my-further-disillusionment-in-russia>, ch. 7.

**134** Emma Goldman to ?, n.p., n.d., Michael A. Cohen Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 313, Box 1, Untitled Folder, unnumbered. See also Goldman, *My Further Disillusionment*, ch. 8.

**135** *Ibid.*

**136** *Ibid.*

silent between January 1920 and December 1921. Now she had found her voice again and could not be silent anymore, not while anarchists were being left to rot in the Bolshevist prisons of Soviet Russia.

In her preface, written in Berlin in June 1924, Goldman clearly highlights one of the reasons for writing about her experiences: “If my work will help in these efforts to throw light upon the real situation in Russia and to awaken the world to the true character of Bolshevism and the fatality of dictatorship—be it Fascist or Communist—I shall bear with equanimity the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of foe or friend. And I shall not regret the travail and struggle of spirit that produced this work, which now, after many vicissitudes, is at last complete in print.”<sup>137</sup> The second part of her work, published one year later than her initial 12 chapters, especially the afterword, provides a deeper insight into Goldman’s reflections about the Russian Revolution and the problems it faced after February 1917. It at the same time provides an understanding of the anarchist’s view on revolutions as historical and contemporary phenomena of her own time. Perhaps due to the lack of attention to the second part of her work, Goldman was often sidelined in theoretical discussions about revolution theory, especially when anarchists were discussed. She was more than just a bystander in Soviet Russia, and more, in contrast to Berkman’s evaluation, than just a popular writer. Goldman was an inspiring mind, and she was able to separate the ideals of the February Revolution of 1917 from its corruption by the Bolsheviki after October 1917. Therefore, her text and its reflections about a phenomenon of global modernity need some closer reading and deeper reflection to reach a critical understanding of them.<sup>138</sup>

Karl Kautsky and others had argued before that the Russian Revolution was a revolutionary oxymoron due to the backwardness of the country in which it took place and should not have taken place there so early.<sup>139</sup> Goldman countered such assumptions as an “orthodox Marxian view” of the revolutionary process that “leaves an important factor out of consideration—a factor perhaps more vital to the possibility and success of a social revolution than even the industrial element. That is the psychology of the masses at a given period.” Goldman consequently argued that “[t]he psychology of the Slav proved stronger than social

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**137** *Ibid.*, Preface.

**138** The following quotes are taken from *ibid.*, ch. 12 (Afterword).

**139** See Karl Kautsky, *Demokratie oder Diktatur*, 5 and Klein, “Austromarxistische Reflexionen,” 127. Kautsky also accused the Bolsheviki, before Goldman even arrived in Soviet Russia, of having betrayed the revolution’s democratic values and of having established a dictatorial regime instead. Karl Kautsky, *Terrorismus und Kommunismus: Ein Beitrag zur Naturgeschichte der Revolution* (Berlin: Verlag Neues Vaterland, 1919), 133.

democratic theories.” However, the activities of the masses had been prohibited and contained by the Bolshevik rule, whose leaders did not accept any alternative political ideas or demands. Lenin, whom Goldman called “a nimble acrobat, was skilled in performing within the narrowest margin. The new economic policy was introduced just in time to ward off the disaster which was slowly but surely overtaking the whole Communist edifice.” In retrospect, the famous anarchist further characterized the famous Bolshevik:

During my first interview I received the impression that he was a shrewd politician who knew exactly what he was about and that he would stop at nothing to achieve his ends. After hearing him speak on several occasions and reading his works I became convinced that Lenin had very little concern in the Revolution and that Communism to him was a very remote thing. The centralized political State was Lenin’s deity, to which everything else was to be sacrificed. Someone said that Lenin would sacrifice the Revolution to save Russia. Lenin’s policies, however, have proven that he was willing to sacrifice both the Revolution and the country, or at least part of the latter, in order to realize his political scheme with what was left of Russia. Lenin was the most pliable politician in history. He could be an ultra-revolutionary, a compromiser and conservative at the same time. When like a mighty wave the cry swept over Russia, “All power to the Soviets!” Lenin swam with the tide. When the peasants took possession of the land and the workers of the factories, Lenin not only approved of those direct methods but went further. He issued the famous motto, “Rob the robbers,” a slogan which served to confuse the minds of the people and caused untold injury to revolutionary idealism. Never before did any real revolutionist interpret social expropriation as the transfer of wealth from one set of individuals to another. Yet that was exactly what Lenin’s slogan meant. The indiscriminate and irresponsible raids, the accumulation of the wealth of the former bourgeoisie by the new Soviet bureaucracy, the chicanery practised toward those whose only crime was their former status, were all the results of Lenin’s “Rob the robbers” policy. The whole subsequent history of the Revolution is a kaleidoscope of Lenin’s compromises and betrayal of his own slogans. ... As a matter of fact, Lenin was right. True Communism was never attempted in Russia, unless one considers thirty-three categories of pay, different food rations, privileges to some and indifference to the great mass as Communism.

Goldman understood not only that Lenin had corrupted the Russian Revolution, she also observed which pragmatic means how he used to do so while still arguing in public that he was defending the revolution and its ideals against those who threatened it from both the inside and the outside. That Lenin was relatively successful with this strategy is obvious, especially when one considers how Goldman’s anti-Leninist position was received after the publication of her books and during the following years in which she tried to persuade representatives of the international Left on both sides of the Atlantic that the Russian Revolution was no longer in existence, but had been replaced by a Bolshevik regime that was simply based on capitalist exploitation and violent terror. She therefore emphasized:

It is now clear why the Russian Revolution, as conducted by the Communist Party, was a failure. The political power of the Party, organized and centralized in the State, sought to maintain itself by all means at hand. The central authorities attempted to force the activities of the people into forms corresponding with the purposes of the Party. The sole aim of the latter was to strengthen the State and monopolize all economical, political, and social activities—even all cultural manifestations. The Revolution had an entirely different object, and in its very character it was the negation of authority and centralization.

Since Lenin and the Bolsheviks intended to rule, they could not be interested in freedom as an ideal. Consequently, there were “two opposing tendencies” that Goldman identified in her work and that “struggled for supremacy: the Bolshevik State against the Revolution. That struggle was a life-and-death struggle. The two tendencies, contradictory in aims and methods, could not work harmoniously: the triumph of the State meant the defeat of the Revolution.” It was therefore the Bolsheviks who had to be made responsible for the failure of the Russian Revolution. For Goldman, this also justified the traditional anarchist anti-Marxist struggle, because “[i]t was the authoritarian spirit and principles of the State which stifled the libertarian and liberating aspirations. ... It was Marxism, however modified; in short, fanatical governmentalism.”

What consequently needed to be secured during every revolutionary process was the freedom of and democratic supervision by the masses. Goldman argued in this regard that

no revolution can be truly and permanently successful unless it puts its emphatic veto upon all tyranny and centralization, and determinedly strives to make the revolution a real revaluation of all economic, social, and cultural values. Not mere substitution of one political party for another in the control of the Government, not the masking of autocracy by proletarian slogans, not the dictatorship of a new class over an old one, not political scene shifting of any kind, but the complete reversal of all these authoritarian principles will alone serve the revolution.

It was consequently Bolshevism, relying on a Marxist idea of a state, that “killed the Russian Revolution and it must have the same result in all other revolutions, unless the *libertarian idea prevail*.”<sup>140</sup> It was particularly tragic, according to

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**140** Emphasis in the original. Goldman also presented a very detailed argument against the socialist conception of revolution as such: “Yet I go much further. It is not only Bolshevism, Marxism, and Governmentalism which are fatal to revolution as well as to all vital human progress. The main cause of the defeat of the Russian Revolution lies much deeper. It is to be found in the whole Socialist conception of revolution itself. The dominant, almost general, idea of revolution—particularly the Socialist idea—is that revolution is a violent change of social conditions through which one social class, the working class, becomes dominant over another class, the

Goldman's evaluation, that the Russian Revolution did not achieve what it had aimed for, but instead ended in the transition of power from one autocratic Czarist regime to another, a Leninist or Bolshevik one. Lenin and his followers had perverted the revolutionary process, ruling by the slogan that "the end justifies all means." Regardless, however, of all the misery she had seen, Goldman did not want to give up her hope for a revolution that could eventually make the world a better place. With regard to this hope, the famous anarchist highlighted that "[i]t cannot be sufficiently emphasized that revolution is in vain unless inspired by its ultimate ideal. Revolutionary methods must be in tune with revolutionary aims. The means used to further the revolution must harmonize with its purposes. In short, the ethical values which the revolution is to establish in the new society must be *initiated* with the revolutionary activities of the so-called transitional period."<sup>141</sup> It is very inspiring, especially from a contemporary perspective, that Goldman did not give up her hope for the future after her depressing experience in Soviet Russia. For her, the revolution remained—in the words with which Goldman closed her work—"the mirror of the coming day; it is the child that is to be the Man of To-morrow."

When Lenin died in January 1924, Berkman summarized the problems he had left as a consequence of his post-revolutionary politics: "Lenin's Marxism has completely triumphed in Russia, in so far as the establishment of an all-powerful Communist Party State is concerned. At the same time it has reduced itself ad absurdum by paralyzing the revolutionary development, initiative, and social activities of the people, with the result of being compelled to re-introduce capitalism. The dictatorship of a small minority cannot escape this vicious circle."<sup>142</sup>

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capitalist class. It is the conception of a purely physical change, and as such it involves only political scene shifting and institutional rearrangements. Bourgeois dictatorship is replaced by the "dictatorship of the proletariat"—or by that of its "advance guard," the Communist Party; Lenin takes the seat of the Romanovs, the Imperial Cabinet is rechristened Soviet of People's Commissars, Trotsky is appointed Minister of War, and a labourer becomes the Military Governor General of Moscow. That is, in essence, the Bolshevik conception of revolution, as translated into actual practice. And with a few minor alterations it is also the idea of revolution held by all other Socialist parties. This conception is inherently and fatally false. Revolution is indeed a violent process. But if it is to result only in a change of dictatorship, in a shifting of names and political personalities, then it is hardly worth while. It is surely not worth all the struggle and sacrifice, the stupendous loss in human life and cultural values that result from every revolution. If such a revolution were even to bring greater social well being (which has not been the case in Russia) then it would also not be worth the terrific price paid: mere improvement can be brought about without bloody revolution."

<sup>141</sup> Emphasis in the original.

<sup>142</sup> Alexander Berkman, A few words about Lenin and the probable effects of his death, January 26, 1924, ABP-IISH, No. 188.

He could not foresee the rise of Stalin with all its consequences yet, but in contrast to Goldman in 1924, he also did not express his hope for another revolution in the near future. Both of them, however, would face hard times after their anti-Bolshevist publications had been read by old friends who were now in support of Lenin and the Russian Revolution, or at least what they considered to be the Russian Revolution.

Once Goldman had moved to England in September 1924, she could get a personal sense of the impact of her writings: "I can see already that I am going to have a desperate time. The people I have met are of two sorts, one absolutely ignorant and blind to the things that continue in Russia and therefore unwilling to listen to facts, and another who are well informed but refuse to support any open criticism of the Russian Regime. Among the latter are nearly all of the labour and trade union leaders."<sup>143</sup> This, however, did not stop Goldman from continuing her anti-Bolshevist crusade, and the *New York Times* printed one of her articles in April 1925.<sup>144</sup> In it, she "attacks the Bolshevist rule more scathingly than ever" and accuses the reports of the British Trade Delegation to Soviet Russia of being full of lies, as its members "[f]rom the vantage point of favored, fêted and chaperoned official guests they saw everything in glaring color."<sup>145</sup> They had been influenced by Lenin's hypnotic powers and the reports are as far away from reality as possible, "[b]ut the credit for [this] must be given to the ingenious artists in Moscow, whose mastery over credulous minds and innocent hearts surpass[es] anything known in history. Having been under the sway of the Moscow magicians for a brief period, I can perfectly understand how easy it is to succumb to the many charms lavishly heaped on every official visitor the moment he or she touches Russian soil."<sup>146</sup> Regardless of her repetition of the facts, namely that the Cheka had established a reign of terror to secure the rule of the party government, which had led the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" ad absurdum, this did not change a lot. Goldman was far away from the United States, which is why her power as a public speaker could not be applied, and the US public, and especially the Left, seemed to have gotten tired of her superior attitude, as the famous anarchist referred to herself as one of the few who really knew the truth. Goldman's position consequently seemed rather unimportant for many, and the utopian assumptions about Soviet Russia continued to exist.

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<sup>143</sup> Emma Goldman to Michael A. Cohen, n.p., December 9, 1924, Michael A. Cohen Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 313, Box 1, Untitled Folder, 1.

<sup>144</sup> "Emma Goldman Denounces Rule of Soviet," *New York Times*, April 5, 1925, 4

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

In London, she also had to make a living, and therefore she took up her lectures on Russian drama again, especially since these were those she could get paid for.<sup>147</sup> At the same time, Goldman's anti-Bolshevist activities in Britain seemed to stand no chance against the trade unions and would only strengthen the conservative forces there.<sup>148</sup> In the United States, there were former comrades and friends whom Goldman had steady contact with, but even if they expressed discontent with the Soviet regime, it did not change a lot on the other side of the Atlantic. Roger Baldwin, for example, highlighted the problems of political prisoners in Soviet Russia at a speech on 9 March 1925, but this was hardly more than lip service:

Although I wholly disbelieve in the principle of dictatorship, I recognize that a period of chaos and transition may make it a practical necessity. But the need for persecuting opponents merely for their opinions is no necessary part even of such a dictatorship. The excuse for it in Russia has long since passed. Soviet Russia is today one of the most stable of governments. It can afford to be as generous in dealing with offenses of opinion as any other government in the world. ... The peculiar tragedy of the Russian political prisoners today is the fact that many of them have been prisoners under two regimes. Exiled or imprisoned in the old days of the Czar for their revolutionary activities, those who disagree with the soviet dictatorship still find themselves the object of governmental persecution.<sup>149</sup>

Berkman, now in France, and Goldman, living in London, also tried to get support for their anarchist comrades in Soviet prisons, and the former served as secretary-treasurer for the Relief Fund of the IWMA for Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists Imprisoned and Exiled in Russia while Goldman tried to collect money during her lectures in England for the prisoners, although she "had a terrific fight there in getting people interested in [her] lectures."<sup>150</sup> Although the two anarchists kept in steady contact with the prisoners in the Soviet Union and were regularly able to send them small sums of money,<sup>151</sup> they struggled financially for

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**147** Emma Goldman to Isaac Nachman Steinberg, London, September 20, 1925, Isaac Nachman Steinberg Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 366, Box 11, Folder 250, Correspondence Emma Goldman, 1.

**148** *Ibid.*, 2.

**149** Press Service International Committee for Political Prisoners, Speech by Roger N. Baldwin at the Town Hall, March 9, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 128

**150** Alexander Berkman to Saul Yanovsky, St. Cloud, January 20, 1927, Solomon Linder Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 443, Box 4, Folder 63, 2.

**151** Alexander Berkman to Michael A. Cohen, Saint-Cloud, April 11, 1927, Michael A. Cohen Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 313, Box 1, Untitled Folder.

years, and only support from some of their American friends was able to keep them going for so long.<sup>152</sup>

Goldman eventually seemed to lose her faith, as she confessed in a letter to Grace Kimmerling Wellington on 5 October 1931 that “Russia has cured me from the belief in the magic power of revolutions that are not prepared thoroughly in advance.”<sup>153</sup> Nevertheless, Goldman continued to explain the difference between the communist utopia and the Bolshevist realities, as presented in her text “Communism—Bolshevist and Anarchist: A Comparison.”<sup>154</sup> Even in the 1930s, according to Goldman, there were many people who remained without a clear idea of Bolshevism: “Some talk of it with the exaggerated enthusiasm of a new convert, other fear and condemn it as a social menace. But I venture to day that neither its admirers—the great majority of them—nor those who denounce it have a very clear idea of what Bolshevik Communism really is.”<sup>155</sup> Especially in the United States, people seemed to be confused about Bolshevism, even more than ten years after the events of the Russian Revolution, and there “the lack of real understanding of Bolshevism is as great among its friends as among its enemies.”<sup>156</sup> Through a comparison of anarchist and Bolshevist ideas, Goldman attempted to make sure to transmit the message that Bolshevism was a perversion of the revolutionary ideals that had longed for the creation of a truly communist society, i.e. classless, without any hierarchies, and, even more importantly from an anarchist perspective, without any state. In contrast to these ideals, “the alleged communism of the Bolsheviki ... is admittedly of the centralised, authoritarian kind. That is, it is based almost exclusively on governmental coercion, on violence. It is not the communism of voluntary association, of community interests. It is compulsory ‘state communism.’”<sup>157</sup> In reality, as Goldman explained, “[t]here is no trace ... of any communism ... in Soviet Russia. In fact, the mere suggestion of such a system is considered criminal there, and any attempt to carry it out is punished by exile or death.”<sup>158</sup>

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**152** Alexander Berkman to Michael A. Cohen, Saint-Cloud, March 2, 1928, Michael A. Cohen Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 313, Box 1, Untitled Folder.

**153** Cited in Ashbolt, “Love and Hate,” 6.

**154** Communism—Bolshevist and Anarchist: A Comparison, n.d., EGP-IISH, No. 192. The text was a draft for “There Is No Communism in Russia” (1935). Accessed May 20, 2020, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emma-goldman-there-is-no-communism-in-russia>.

**155** *Ibid.*, 1.

**156** *Ibid.*

**157** *Ibid.*, 8.

**158** *Ibid.*, 12.

Regardless of her numerous and steady attempts to persuade the world, especially the international Left, that Bolshevism had corrupted the Russian Revolution and all its dreams for a better, i. e. communist, world order, Goldman was unable to reach a larger audience that would consider her criticism and therefore redefine their attitude towards Bolshevism. Goldman must have felt terrible, especially since her own attitude had changed from admiration to frustration about the failure of the Russian Revolution. That she was unable to cause the same change of attitude with regard to the international Left frustrated her even more. The Spanish Civil War might have given her a spark of hope in later years, that she might still have the chance to see a successful anarchist revolution, but reality caught up with her again. On 7 March 1939, she wrote a letter to the former People's Commissar for Justice Isaac Nachman Steinberg (1888–1957) in which she highlighted her misery, which was even intensified by the experience of the Spanish Civil War: "I am at my wits end from the daily letters of misery and suffering of the refugees, men, women and children. If only I could get into the States I could do a lot for the martyred Spanish people but here I can reach no one. Never in my life did I feel such a failure. Perhaps it is all my fault, I do not know how to get under the skin of English people."<sup>159</sup>

Emma Goldman was one of the few intellectuals who intended to separate the Russian Revolution from its Bolshevik perversion to keep the ideals of the former uncontested and uncorrupted. Her works, as they have been presented in the present chapter, provide an insight into her thoughts and arguments for this division. However, they failed to reach a broader audience that would agree with her, since such an agreement would have been like a declaration and acceptance of failure, namely the acceptance of the end of the Russian Revolution, which, like the revolutionary processes in 1848 and 1871, had ultimately been unable to change the existent social order. In order not to give up on this dream, many continued to believe in Lenin into the early 1920s, and Goldman was ostracized by her own radical milieu. She and Berkman remained politically isolated, and although they were often supported by old friends from the United States, they were rather irrelevant to the larger political developments there in general, and the positioning of the left towards Bolshevism in particular. This must have further fueled the melancholy of Goldman, who definitely believed herself to be an important witness whose reports and warnings, however, had simply been ignored. How bitter this experience was for her, as she steadily tried to convince people to acknowledge the Bolshevik regime as such but felt

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<sup>159</sup> Emma Goldman to Isaac Nachman Steinberg, London, March 7, 1939, Isaac Nachman Steinberg Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG 366, Box 11, Folder 250, 2.

that she was not taken seriously, will be highlighted in the following and final chapter of the present book.



## 7 No Support for Anti-Bolshevist Emma

In a letter to her then lover and manager Ben Reitman, supposedly written in 1914, Emma Goldman described herself as “the fighter, the warrior, the woman battling against a thousand odds” who also shared “elemental love and passion”<sup>1</sup> with those who shared life and bed with her. With her works about Soviet Russia, which were discussed in some detail in the previous chapter, Goldman caused a storm of outrage directed against her views that would demand much courage from the self-described anarchist “fighter” to resist the wish to simply cry and get lost in eternal sadness, as the accusations she had to face since the early 1920s were more than an ordinary human being could easily take. Yet Goldman fought, Goldman never gave up, and Goldman repeated her accusations against Bolshevism, her descriptions of Soviet Russia, and her evaluation that the Russian Revolution had been betrayed by Lenin and his followers. She consequently remained “the woman battling against a thousand odds” during her exile years, although it was not easy for her to accept her isolation in the fight for the truth about Soviet Russia to be heard.

Goldman might have felt such isolation before, be it in her relations with the US press when the “newspapers ha[d] completely boycotted” the famous anarchist, or in her personal relationships, e.g. in her toxic relationship with Ben Reitman, who was “born to be a manager” and hence was “not born to love [Goldman].”<sup>2</sup> When Goldman had started her anti-Bolshevist crusade in January 1922, it was hard for her to find allies, although the things she described seemed more than obvious and therefore reasonable, especially to herself: “Now in the face of overwhelming evidence of cruellest oppression and persecution in Russia, the world remains silent and callous. The heroic martyrs are left to the tender mercies of the Tchecka, to suffer the Golgotha of the body as well as of the spirit, in the name of an ideal that has long since been betrayed by the Communist State and its Party dictatorship.”<sup>3</sup> She would repeat similar statements in her lectures, in her publications, and in her letters to comrades and friends, but Goldman seemed unable to actually persuade anyone to take a stand against the Bolsheviks who ruled Soviet Russia and later the Soviet Union. The radical intellectuals of the world seemed unwilling after 1917 to criticize the corruption of the Russian Revolution too openly, maybe because some of them feared to discredit the idea of a revolution once and for all, or maybe because others were still will-

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1 Emma Goldman Letter to Ben Reitman, n.d. [1914], EGP-IISH, No. 132, 1.

2 Emma Goldman Letter to Ben Reitman, Denver, July 13, 1916, EGP-IISH, No. 132, 2.

3 Emma Goldman, Heroic Women of the Russian Revolution, EGP-IISH, No. 221, 5.

ing to believe that the Russian Revolution had actually achieved and fulfilled a social change that had only been utopian before. Nevertheless, for Goldman, the years after 1922, like her whole life, as she later confessed in a letter to Arthur Ross on 30 December 1933, “had been nothing else but a test of patience and endurance.”<sup>4</sup> In her public lectures, however, she would not admit this, and she continued to explain true anarchism and how the Lenin and the Bolsheviki had destroyed the Russian Revolution, betrayed the Russian people, and corrupted their revolutionary ideals since the Red October of 1917.

Due to events related to the Russian Revolution, Goldman would, in her lecture notes for “Anarchism and What it Really Stands For,”<sup>5</sup> naturally also reflect on the modern phenomenon of revolution from an anarchist perspective. In her notes, which were a continuation of her text from 1910 by the same title,<sup>6</sup> she argued that “[i]t is in the interest of those who hold power to keep the delusion that the state, law, and government had originated in the need of protecting the weak against the strong” and that “the state originated in conquest and confiscation, as a device for maintaining the stratification of society permanently into two classes: an owning and exploiting class, relatively small, and a propertyless class.”<sup>7</sup> An anarchist would consequently have to resist any attempt to establish a state rule, as it would only be erected to suppress the masses of the people and individual freedom alike. Anarchism, in contrast to any other political philosophy, consequently, as Goldman continued in her reflection, “is the only social philosophy that maintains that there never has, or could be, a human being or a group of men so all knowing and wise to fathom that [sic!] what is to be the best interest of another. Nor should they be placed in a position that would give them the might to coerce others to their wisdom.”<sup>8</sup> An anarchist would also have to carefully resist any form of hierarchy, as “[p]ower over others corrupts, brutalises and destroys the sense of proportion. It makes for conflict, strife and disintegration.”<sup>9</sup> Consequently, no anarchist could support Bolshevism:

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4 Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, Toronto, December 30, 1933, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jan. 4, 1933 – Dec. 30, 1933, 1.

5 Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and What It Really Stands For*, n.d., EGP-IISH, No. 191.

6 Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Mother Earth, 1910). Accessed May 20, 2020, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emma-goldman-anarchism-and-other-essays#toc3>, ch. 1.

7 Goldman, *Anarchism and What It Really Stands For*, 3.

8 *Ibid.*, 5.

9 *Ibid.*, 5<sup>1/2</sup>.

Truth is every Anarchist is also a socialist, because he recognizes the imperative need of the socialization of the land, and the means of production and distribution. Certainly we Anarchists go further than the Marxian adherents. For we insist on SOCIALIZATION, NOT NATIONALIZATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES. ... [F]or this reason we insist that it matters little whether the balance of economic power is in the hand of a private individual, or as it is today in the hands of rugged individualism, or in the hands of the Socialist State, or under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. All need and use the machinery of government to impose their will on others to coerce those who cannot and will not submit to their regime.<sup>10</sup>

The Russian Revolution, or more accurately what Lenin had turned the February Revolution of 1917 into, was nothing revolutionary anymore, as “the masses have grown to believe in the sanctity of tyranny, they have become voluntary slaves. Habit is indeed the most vicious slave driver.”<sup>11</sup> In her reflection, Goldman tried to give an idea of the history of anarchism from antiquity to modernity, but it is, of course, more than obvious what role the corruption of the Russian Revolution played in Goldman’s perception and interpretation of Marxist communism and Leninist Bolshevism.

For Goldman, it was Lenin who had betrayed the Russian people and “unmade the Revolution.”<sup>12</sup> He may have supported the masses and the revolution at one point, but “[h]is aim, however, was something quite separate and distinct from the aims of the people. It was the Marxian State—a formidable, all inclusive, all absorbing, all crushing machine—with Lenin and his party at its helm.”<sup>13</sup> His time would come in 1917, “[w]hen the revolutionary waves swept Lenin into Power, his hour had come—the hour to realise his dream. Not even his bitterest enemies can say that Lenin ever stopped at anything to achieve his aim.”<sup>14</sup> He then made it possible for the Marxist state to emerge “out of the blood and ashes of the great beginning”<sup>15</sup> and, by doing this, sacrificed the alliances with those forces that had helped him to achieve power. Lenin turned against anarchists and Social Revolutionaries alike and filled Soviet prisons with his former comrades together with anyone else who was brave enough to openly criticize the developments under the Bolshevik rule. For Goldman, Lenin was consequently corrupt through and through: “Largeness of spirit, generosity of heart, understanding for and compassion with an opponent, were utterly lacking in the man who was yet so very human in errors and often criminal

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10 Ibid., 5<sup>1/2</sup>-6.

11 Ibid., 10.

12 Emma Goldman, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin, 1924, EGP-IISH No. 270, 1.

13 Ibid., 1–2.

14 Ibid., 2.

15 Ibid.

blunders.”<sup>16</sup> Although one could critically discuss if Lenin had planned to corrupt the revolution or if he acted out of multiple necessities to do so due to international interventions or the Russian Civil War, for Goldman, it was clear that the Bolshevik leader had acted purposefully to corrupt it.

From her point of view, “Lenin had greatness, but it was the greatness of Jesuitism, the will to cunning, to unscrupulousness, and an utter disregard for the stupendous sacrifice brought to the altar of his Deity.”<sup>17</sup> With his actions since October 1917, he had proved to be “reactionary” and that his policies were a consequence of “his counter-revolutionary inclinations.”<sup>18</sup> It was the Cheka that had “turned Russia into a human slaughterhouse,” the New Economic Policy was nothing more than a “reintroduction of Capitalism,” and, all in all, it was “not only Russia, the whole world has paid for the Jesuitism of Lenin, for it has disintegrated the ranks of the oppressed everywhere.”<sup>19</sup> Goldman, who would live longer than Lenin, would also witness the dangerous consequences of the latter’s policies, which would lead to more sorrow and suffering in the Soviet Union in the years after his death: “Lenin injected a dangerous poison in the ranks of the proletariat. Gradually, his own ranks were infected by it. So long as Lenin held the Bolshevik scepter, nothing was permitted to come to the surface. Now, when death itself has relaxed the iron hold, the poisons so long dammed up, have rushed forth, and is threatening to engulf the whole edifice so painfully built up by the great Jesuit of modern times. ... The Revolution is dead. Long live Leninism!”<sup>20</sup>

Goldman would repeat these statements again and again, but since she had left Bolshevik Russia in December 1921, it was hard for her to find an audience, whether in Europe or in the United States. The current chapter will present these problems that the famous anarchist had to deal with during the 1920s. It will therefore take a look at Goldman’s time and activities in Britain, where she failed to gain attention and support in different forms, before taking a look at her struggle with American intellectuals, who obviously did not seem to be interested in the things the famous anarchist had to say about Bolshevism. It is impressive that Goldman, regardless of all the criticism she received, never gave up her crusade for freedom in a time when nobody wanted to see or believe her argument that the Russian Revolution had been betrayed by some of the people that had been central to it during its foundational process.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 5–6.

In Britain, the reaction within the national Left towards the events in Russia in 1917, especially after Red October, was enthusiastic, and anarchists and Marxists alike supported the new Soviet government.<sup>21</sup> Journals like *The Spur* even defended Bolshevism when anarchists and Social Revolutionaries in Russia began to attack it for having betrayed the revolution.<sup>22</sup> Considering the pro-Bolshevist standing of many British leftists, Goldman's anti-Bolshevism, which she expressed whenever she had the possibility to do so, must naturally have caused problems for her since she had moved from Berlin to London in September 1924. During a dinner in the English capital, at which important British leftist intellectuals like Rebecca West (1892–1983), Edward Carpenter (1844–1929), Havelock Ellis (1859–1939), Bertrand Russell, H. G. Wells (1866–1946) and Israel Zangwill (1864–1926) participated on 12 November 1924, Goldman delivered a speech that would cause immediate antagonism.<sup>23</sup> She emphasized that “[i]t took [her] two years in Russia to find out [the] grievous mistake in believing that the ruling power was [an] articulate of the Russian Revolution.”<sup>24</sup> She made clear that it was a mistake to believe that the Bolsheviks would act in the interest of the revolution and that it was unfortunate that Kropotkin had already died: “Alas the Grand old man is no longer with us, and there seems to be no one else of his brain and heart to do what he would most assuredly have done now as he did then, to speak and write against the terror going on in Russia under the new regime.”<sup>25</sup> Knowing how hard her position would be to defend, Goldman also clearly expressed that she was ready to counter every criticism and that she would not give up her task to bring the truth to light: “I know I shall be burned in oil by the followers and friends of Moscow, I shall be denounced as a counter revolutionist, in the employ of the Whites. ... [But nothing] can stop me from my determination to articulate the dumb misery and suffering of Russia's politicals.”<sup>26</sup>

The dinner “was a disaster,” especially since most attendants had not read Goldman's books before and considered her attitude towards Bolshevik Russia a “betrayal.”<sup>27</sup> The famous anarchist would feel her ostracized position even more sharply during the years she spent in Britain and, as Gornick correctly highlight-

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21 Martin Durham, “British Revolutionaries and the Suppression of the Left in Lenin's Russia, 1918–1924,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 20, no. 2 (1985): 204.

22 See for example the *Spur* issues from July and September 1918.

23 Emma Goldman, Speech at Dinner in London, November 12, 1924, IISH-EGP, No. 284.

24 *Ibid.*, 2.

25 *Ibid.*, 3.

26 *Ibid.*

27 Gornick, *Emma Goldman*, 118.

ed, “Now she found herself triply cast out: alienated from an exhausted postwar world in which political activism held no allure; harassed by government authorities who continued to see her as a threat to the state; separated from a weakened European and American left which shrank, repelled, from her denunciation of the Bolsheviks.”<sup>28</sup> It is impressive, and in retrospect even more so, that Goldman did not give up her attitude and was unafraid to touch raw nerves, even if that meant an estrangement with the political Left of her time. The famous anarchist was never known for seeking compromises, and when it came to the betrayal and corruption of the Russian Revolution by the Bolsheviks, Goldman was not willing to move even an inch. For many British radicals, nevertheless, “her analysis of Russia in 1920 and 1921 was so overwhelmingly negative—a black-and-white depiction of what was still only a revolution in trouble.”<sup>29</sup> And the anarchists? The movement had been extremely weakened by the First World War and its consequences and, leaving the history of the Spanish Civil War that also revitalized Goldman one last time to one side, it would take around five decades until anarchism attracted the masses again for a revolutionary fight against capitalism.

Personally, Goldman did not gain a lot from her severe anti-Bolshevist stance, but morally she never gave in and continued to defend her views on and position towards Lenin’s and later Stalin’s rule. While she and Berkman were unable to revive the anarchist movement in the 1920s, they at least held up anarchist values high and made it possible for the latter to survive during the age of extremes. In the meantime, however, Goldman had to make tremendous changes to her personal life, considering her former emphasis on total individual freedom. To be able to stay in London, the famous anarchist married James Colton, a 65-year-old anarchist and mine worker from Wales, to gain citizenship, albeit for “her least favorite country.”<sup>30</sup> It would take two years in the English cold before Goldman and Berkman bought, with the financial support of Peggy Guggenheim (1898–1979), who would also help finance the anarchist’s autobiography,<sup>31</sup> a cottage in Saint Tropez, where Goldman would begin to work on *Living My Life* and reflect upon her multiple struggles with authorities of all sorts, states of all kinds, and betrayals on both the professional and personal level.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>31</sup> Goldman, *Living My Life*, Appreciation. On Guggenheim see, among other works, Francine Prose, *Peggy Guggenheim: The Shock of the Modern* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

Before she began her work on her autobiography in France, Goldman continued her anti-Bolshevist crusade during her years in London. The famous anarchist still had hopes of persuading the British leftists of the truth about Bolshevism and what she had seen in Soviet Russia.<sup>32</sup> Goldman did not omit to mention that “while [she] was never a Bolshevik, [she] yet sincerely believed that the Bolsheviks were interpreting the ideals of the Russian people, as registered by them in the Great Russian Revolution,”<sup>33</sup> this being a reason she had supported Lenin and his followers during her last two years in the United States. Once she was sure that she would be deported, Goldman “preferred to go to Revolutionary Russia to help in the sublime effort of the people to make the Revolution a living factor in their lives.”<sup>34</sup> The famous anarchist could accept that many left intellectuals were still at this point with regard to their attitude towards Bolshevik Russia, which is why it was even more necessary to listen to and understand Goldman’s experience, who was shocked by the things she saw during her two years in Soviet Russia:

What I actually found was so utterly at variance with what I had anticipated that it seemed like a ghastly dream. I found a small political group ...—the Communist Party—in absolute control ... Labour conscripted, driven to work like chattel-slaves, arrested for the slightest infringement ... the peasants a helpless prey to punitive expeditions and forcible food collection ... the Soviets ... made subservient to the Communist State ... a sinister organisation, known as the “Cheka” (Secret service and executioners of Russia), suppressing thought ... the prisons and concentration camps overcrowded with men and women ... Russia in wreck and ruin, presided over by a bureaucratic State, incompetent and inefficient to reconstruct the country and to help the people realise their high hopes and their great ideals.<sup>35</sup>

However, in a letter to Roger Baldwin from 6 November 1924, Goldman made it clear that it was not easy to persuade the British left that these observations of hers were actually true. Too many did not listen, and in the letter she wrote that “[t]he main obstacle will be the confusion and superstition prevalent in England about Russia. In that respect I think it is like America, where Radicals and Liberals alike have been mesmerised by the hypnotic spell of Moscow, or rather by the myth foisted upon the world by Moscow.”<sup>36</sup> Bolshevism was “a popular tide”<sup>37</sup> at the time Goldman began to criticize it, which was another reason

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32 Emma Goldman, *What I Saw*, IISH-EGP, No. 284.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*

36 Emma Goldman to Roger Baldwin, London, November 6, 1924, IISH-EGP, No. 52, 2.

37 *Ibid.*

why she did not get much support. And that despite the fact that, realistically, everyone with some knowledge about Russia and Bolshevism would have to have realized that the revolution had been betrayed. From Goldman's perspective, therefore, "all those who refuse to face the facts of Russia are dealing with nothing else but attitudes. Their emotions have blinded them to such an extent that they are utterly unable to listen to any critical analysis by people who speak, not from hearsay, but from actual experience and knowledge."<sup>38</sup> It might have been Goldman's attitude of superiority with regard to knowledge about Soviet Russia that also repelled her British audiences a bit, but Goldman's evaluation of attitudes would of course only have included others' attitudes and not her own.

However, the steady confrontations with other left intellectuals about Bolshevism also made Goldman melancholy, as a letter to Berkman from 22 December 1924 shows: "As it is I am a wreck from lack of sleep and feel ill all over. It is mainly the realization of the terrible power of the Bolshevik lie which so depresses me."<sup>39</sup> The radical milieu in London, in addition, was quite different from the one in New York City, about which Goldman also complained: "If only we had people of our own. That is the bitter thing to me; we have absolutely no one, not among the English people, and the Jews are unknown. It is heart breaking. I must therefore have some committee and I will not get it for what I had intended to do [i. e.] present the facts about Russia and my conclusions. God damn that fake Purcell."<sup>40</sup> Albert Arthur Purcell (1872–1935) was a British trade unionist and probably Goldman's fiercest antagonist with regard to the interpretation of Bolshevism. He had also denied Goldman access to the trade unions, where she was consequently not allowed to lecture. In general, it was problematic for Goldman to find places to lecture about Soviet Russia. Kingsway Hall was not an option, as the organizers were afraid of communist interventions during one of Goldman's speeches, while it was also not easy to cover such events financially.<sup>41</sup> Goldman asked Berkman for help with regard to statements from Russian Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, which she could probably use as witness accounts for her lectures, but in general the former "queen of anarchists" was alone and "sick talking, talking, talking about R[ussia] and yet not move any one of these politicians."<sup>42</sup> Goldman became really frustrated with her British comrades and told Berkman that "[t]o move Anglo Saxons from any of their

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, December 22, 1924, IISH-ABP, No. 23, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 2.

preconceived ideas is like moving the Rockies.”<sup>43</sup> Communists would in addition interrupt her meetings, and it was almost impossible to find a place to lecture on a more regular basis. A representative of a professional lecture agency at the same time was “afraid of the disturbance made by the Communists that would give his bureau a bad reputation,”<sup>44</sup> which was why Goldman could not hope for a more steady income from lecture tours either. With regard to her publications and income from single lectures here and there, her financial situation would hardly become any better: “Even if I should succeed in work on Russia I could not accept any money from lectures or meetings. I could not stand the thought of it. On the other hand I am not hopeful of getting stuff accepted here, not enough to secure me for very long.”<sup>45</sup>

In February 1925, Goldman, regardless of her financial shortcomings in London, established the British Committee for the Defense of Politicals in Russian Prisons, and although she was only able to attract a few members early on, the anarchist did not give up hope.<sup>46</sup> Although Berkman suggested looking for some better options in order to publish regular articles, which would then also give Goldman a bit more financial security,<sup>47</sup> nothing much changed, and by the end of February 1925, Goldman had only £41 left, “just about enough for two months, what then? I see no chance whatever of earning a penny by writing, and I can take no money from our people for lectures on Russia. I am terribly worried.”<sup>48</sup> The female anarchist also had trouble when she was looking for a cheaper place to stay, as “[t]he English beat the Germans in prudery and hypocrisy when it comes to women,”<sup>49</sup> especially when Goldman was looking for a place to live alone. Yet even more troublesome was the British attitude towards Moscow, particularly from left intellectuals, because, as Goldman wrote to Berkman, other than themselves, “everybody else has been hypnotized. We know how well the Moscow gang can do it, don’t we?”<sup>50</sup>

The British Trade Union Report about Russia by the delegation that had visited the Soviet Union in late 1924<sup>51</sup> was another blow for Goldman, who could

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<sup>43</sup> Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, January 5, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, February 2, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23, 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, February 5, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Alexander Berkman to Emma Goldman, Berlin, February 6, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, February 25, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23, 1.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>51</sup> Trade Union Congress, *Russia: The Official Report of the British Trade Union Delegation to Russia in November and December 1924* (London: Co-Operative Printing Society, 1925), Warwick

simply not believe why such an uncritical view on Bolshevism could continue to be repeated. Goldman was really in a bad mood: “I shall not be able to swim against the terrific stream of prejudice any longer.”<sup>52</sup> To Berkman, she wrote plain and clear that “the situation here is too impossible, the conspiracy of silence too thick, the prejudice too much, I must have something that would help me in the struggle. I feel a pamphlet would be a tremendous weapon.”<sup>53</sup> She therefore hoped that her friend would write her such a pamphlet, which could then be used to hold up the fight against pro-Bolshevist lies. Goldman was quite disappointed when Berkman turned her down this time, as he was busy working on his own projects.<sup>54</sup> While she was quite disappointed, it did not take her long to forgive her lifelong companion, whom Goldman really appreciated for being a part of her radical and emotional life: “The greatest of joys however is the fact that you have remained in my life, and that our friendship is as fresh and intense as it was many years ago, more mellow and understanding than when we were both young and unreasonable. My heart goes out to you on this our day with deep love and devotion.”<sup>55</sup> It might have been the security of always being able to rely on Berkman in her life that gave Goldman some spirit to continue her fight against Bolshevism in Britain as well, although “Moscow buys everybody, directly, or indirectly. It is like swimming against the flood.”<sup>56</sup>

At the same time, Goldman did not want to cooperate with other anti-Bolshevist forces and prohibited Mensheviks from becoming members of her British Committee for the Defense of Politicals in Russian Prisons because she feared a numerical takeover. In a way, she thereby sabotaged her own work, but in a letter to Berkman from 8 June 1925, Goldman simply claimed: “I do general propaganda against the regime in R[ussia], and not merely work for the politicals. In the case of the latter one certainly must include all who are victimized by the Moscow outfit, all Socialist factions.”<sup>57</sup> However, she also had to confess that anarchists in Britain offered no more reason than other political movements and were “as unreasonable, intolerant, and fanatical as the rest,”<sup>58</sup> a fact that made Goldman’s position even more tragic. That her and Berkman’s books about Soviet

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Digital Collections, No. 292/4/21/36. Accessed May 20, 2020, <https://wdc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/russian/id/11>.

52 Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, March 16, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23, 1.

53 *Ibid.*

54 Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, March 19, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23.

55 Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, May 18, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23, 1.

56 Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, June 6, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23, 1.

57 Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, June 8, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23, 1.

58 *Ibid.*

Russia, as was discussed in the previous chapter, did not sell too well was bad, but for Goldman this was not related to the works per se. Since the reviews of Berkman's book were "simply marvelous," she argued, the reason for the failure of their books on the market must have been bad advertising by the publisher.<sup>59</sup> Regardless of some good reviews, however, Goldman did not seem able to find substantial support for her anti-Bolshevist activities in the United Kingdom.

Even Bertrand Russell, an intellectual she had had high hopes for when she met him in Moscow before, let her down while she was in London. He had invited her to visit him to talk about the Soviet Union in early October 1924,<sup>60</sup> and they met again in November of the same year to continue their talk.<sup>61</sup> In February 1925 Goldman, who had tried to recruit Russell for a lecture series, sent him a letter in which she expressed her disappointment about his reluctance to help to shed light on the failure of Bolshevism:

[A] series of lectures on various phases of the Russian Revolution [is going] to take place in different parts of this City, in Town Halls. I am telling you this, not because I think you have any interest but simply that you may know that there are a few people in this country who feel the need of light on Russia. I had hoped that you would be among the first to see that need. I confess I am painfully disappointed that you, who so bravely and brilliantly stand out for the truth, should find it necessary to keep aloof from any critical work of the regime which has crushed the truth.<sup>62</sup>

However, Goldman tried again to persuade Russell to support her cause: "I appeal to you, Mr. Russell, if you do not want to ally yourself with me, that is of course your right, but do not remain silent in the fact of such wrongs as are being perpetrated every day by the Tchecka and by those in power in the Russian Government."<sup>63</sup> Russell replied a few days later, but the answer was far from causing cheer for Goldman:

I am prepared to ... protest to the Soviet Government, on documented statements as to the existing evils; ... But I am not prepared to advocate any alternative government in Russia: I am persuaded that the casualties would be at least as great under any other party. And I do not regard the abolition of all government as a thing which has any chance of being brought about in our lifetimes or during the twentieth century. I am therefore unwilling

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<sup>59</sup> Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, London, July 13, 1925, ABP-IISH, No. 23, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Bertrand Russell to Emma Goldman, London, October 2, 1924, EGP-IISH, No. 144.

<sup>61</sup> Bertrand Russell to Emma Goldman, London, November 30, 1924, EGP-IISH, No. 144.

<sup>62</sup> Emma Goldman to Bertrand Russell, London, February 9, 1925, Emma Goldman Papers, New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division, ZL-386, Reel 1 (henceforth EGP-NYPL), 1. A copy of this letter can also be found in EGP-IISH, No. 144.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

to be associated with any movement which might seem to imply that a change of Government is desirable in Russia. ... I think ill are the Bolshevists in many ways, but quite as ill as their opponents. I feel that your movement, even against your wishes, will appear as political opposition to the present Soviet Government.<sup>64</sup>

Regardless of his reluctance to support anti-Bolshevist activities, in a letter to Berkman from 15 June 1925, Russell confirmed that he had the same opinion about Bolshevism as the anarchist, whose work on the Bolshevist myth Russell had carefully read: "My judgement of the Bolsheviks is substantially the same as yours; I went through the same disenchantment, having come with the same hopes."<sup>65</sup>

At the same time, for Goldman, Russell's unwillingness to join her efforts against the Bolshevist regime on behalf of political prisoners in the Soviet Union was another blow to the anarchist's activities in London. She must have felt alone, without friends and comrades to support her, and the fact that her and Berkman's books were not perceived very well by a larger audience also seemed to show her that her former level of notoriety and celebrity had diminished. It was no different with regard to the United States, as the American press now mostly relied on other voices; while Soviet Russia was a topic of interest, "[t]he early pro-Soviet American observers of the Russian Revolution were a picturesque and adventurous group of 'poetic journalists and journalistic poets,' as they were sometimes called at the time."<sup>66</sup> Positive attitudes towards Lenin and Trotsky were consequently shared by many left intellectuals in the United States as well, and when Goldman began her anti-Bolshevist activities in early 1922, she was consequently criticized for damaging the image of the Russian Revolution. It was hard for Goldman to counter these opinions, especially as her influence there had vanished since she had been deported in late 1920. In addition, she had criticized famous figures in the United States like Bill Haywood for his involvement in the recruitment of American workers for the Kuzbass Autonomous Industrial Colony.<sup>67</sup>

When Goldman reflected about "Good and Evil Points in the Makeup of America," she had to acknowledge that the Russian Revolution had failed to

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<sup>64</sup> Bertrand Russell to Emma Goldman, London, February 14, 1925, EGP-IISH, No. 144, 2–3.

<sup>65</sup> Bertrand Russell to Alexander Berkman, London, June 15, 1925, EGP-IISH, No. 144.

<sup>66</sup> Dimitri von Mohrenschildt, "The Early American Observers of the Russian Revolution, 1917–1921," *The Russian Review* 3, no. 1 (1943): 65.

<sup>67</sup> Letter to Roger Baldwin, London, January 5, 1925, EGP-NYPL, 4. Berkman also criticized Haywood: "Of course, it is easy for an American labor leader, playing to the radical element, to write glowing reports about the condition of the Russian workingmen, while he is being entertained at State expense at the Lux, the most lucrative hotel in Russia." Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, 6.

start a world revolution that could have freed the world and that, at the same time, “the exploitation of the masses is nowh[e]re quite so intensive as in the United States.”<sup>68</sup> It was quite sad that events in Soviet Russia since 1917 had failed to provide a revolutionary stimulus in North America and that, at the same time, so many left intellectuals believed the news from Soviet Russia that was still painting a utopia rather than the reality of Bolshevik state rule. She would also receive quite a lot of criticism for her attitude towards the American Left, including former anarchist comrades of hers, which, especially when they were received from friends of the past, must have been painful for her as well. Some letters from Ben Reitman must have been particularly heartbreaking for Goldman.

In late January 1925, Reitman had written a letter to his former lover, explaining to Goldman that he had left his radical times behind and now would spend his life as a physician and that he had turned to religion, of all things: “Jesus and some religious activity are apparently the next big factor in my life. Jesus is always wonderful to me. He’s like a lover who once beautifully seduced your mind and body, and ‘satisfies your longing as nothing else can do.’”<sup>69</sup> He also told Goldman about his wife Anna, who “is a worthy successor. As the years pass on we have learned to make the adjustment that makes [our] relationship fairly beautiful and home desirable.”<sup>70</sup> Reitman nevertheless emphasized that he had a high opinion of his anarchist lover of the past:

Many of your lectures and interviews in Berlin or Paris or London are gossip at the American breakfast table. You were a great woman, you are a great woman, and when you cross the bridge to the Great Unknown, you’ll still be great. Posterity will give you a proper appraisal. Your great brain, your mighty voice, your tremendous love for the poor and the downtrodden, your hatred for injustice and stupidity, your divinity, will never die. ... In the last half a dozen years I’ve written to you seldom. There was really nothing much to say. But I say to you now what I have said to my friends, and in public—that Emma, you’re a very great woman. You’re a child of the gods. The decade associated with you and your work was the greatest period in my life.<sup>71</sup>

A close reading of Goldman’s and Berkman’s works about Soviet Russia, however, seemed to have changed this opinion, as another letter from Reitman in July 1925 provided a totally different evaluation of the anarchist and her personality,

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**68** Emma Goldman, *Good and Evil Points in the Makeup of America*, n.d. [1924], EGP-IISH, No. 189, 3.

**69** Ben Reitman to Emma Goldman, Chicago, IL, January 28, 1925, EGP-IISH, No. 132, 1.

**70** *Ibid.* 2.

**71** *Ibid.*

which should be presented here as well. Reitman must have truly hurt Goldman with his letter from 10 July 1925, and consequently it is quoted here at some length:

Your first book on Russia left me sympathetic to Russia. I felt that Russia gave you a chance in the world, that they put themselves out to let you and Sasha work and be helpful but true to yourselves. YOU WERE AS YOU ALWAYS WERE HARD\* CRITICAL\* BITTER\* SELFDETERMINED\* UNWILLING TO FALL IN WITH NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY\* (Now don't label this refusal to compromise). What I am trying to say [is] that you and Sasha wanted your way (and that is characteristic of the ANTI-Mind) and refused to work for God, for society, or humanity or what ever you may call it unless it was your way. ... You are always knocking, kicking, criticizing, seeing the worst side of everything, whining until you have your reader HATING\* ... you have no idea of your whinfulness and bitterness and unjust critical attitude. Wake up and be happy. ... when I understood that the Bolshevik has to deal with minds like your[s] I was not surprised at the Kronstadt bombardment and Prisons and all the terribel [sic!] things they did to the ANTIMINDS—yes you are a typical *antimind* you always oppose the thing that is ... How in the hell could the Bolsheviks live and thrive if they allowed you and minds like you[rs] to have power\* ... Your and Sa[s]ha[s] books convince any thoughtful student that MINDS like your[s] will never permit the world to have anything that approaches Socialism or much less Anarchism. I think the Bolsheviks were kind to you and you were most unjust to them.<sup>72</sup>

In her reply, Goldman somehow underplayed her anger and just wrote: “If anything at all, your letter amused me. You must have thought that you are preparing a sermon for your congregation, a regular Billy Sunday sermon, fire and brimstone upon the heads of us poor sinners.”<sup>73</sup> She also disagreed with Reitman’s accusation that she and Berkman had prevented her former manager from using his literary talent. She now even encouraged him to use his accusations against the two anarchists in his planned book: “If you are going to say the same things about me in your book as you have in your last letter, your book will be a great seller, the Communists will buy up the entire edition.”<sup>74</sup> The exchange between the two former lovers, however, clearly highlights one problem Goldman was facing with regard to the US audience and her works about Soviet Russia. Many would share Reitman’s evaluation, and the fact that Goldman had waited until 1922 to share her criticism, when the discourse about Bolshevism had been heavily shaped by other works and opinions, made it hard for her to gain both credibility and interest in her work alike.

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<sup>72</sup> Ben Reitman to Emma Goldman, Chicago, IL, July 10, 1925, EGP-IISH, No. 132, 1–2. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>73</sup> Emma Goldman to Ben Reitman, London, August 4, 1925, EGP-IISH, No. 132.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

Goldman also had some important correspondence about Bolshevism with Roger Nash Baldwin (1884–1981), the first executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, whom she considered to be one of her pupils and friends.<sup>75</sup> Baldwin supported Goldman in her struggle to support political prisoners in the Soviet Union and shared her worries about the Bolshevik lies that were still having a strong influence in the Left's milieu. From Berlin, she wrote to Baldwin on 3 June 1924 as follows: "I am so glad that you have taken up the cause of the unfortunate victims of Soviet rule. Believe me it was highest time. So many lives could have been saved, so many truly worthwhile people rescued from despair and suicide if most of the radicals had not been so completely under the hypnotic influence of Moscow."<sup>76</sup> However, Goldman was not surprised by the latter fact, as she knew "the hypnotism was unavoidable, I was under its spell for many months myself. I can, therefore, understand everybody who is still in the trance."<sup>77</sup> Regardless of her understanding, she tried to unmask the "myth, which will have it that Bolshevism, Leninism and the Russian Revolution are identical. It is this myth which prevents people from seeing that Bolshevism has crushed the Revolution and is now crushing the best there is in Russia."<sup>78</sup> Goldman thought she had no choice, because as long as this myth remained in place, the Bolsheviks could continue their rule of terror and many innocent people would be sent to jail simply for having different opinions about the revolution and the form of government it had eventually resulted in. The world had to see that the revolution had been betrayed, its ideals corrupted and its supporters imprisoned, and Goldman attempted to do everything necessary and use her knowledge and experience to provide the true narrative about the political developments in Soviet Russia since 1917, no matter if the left in particular tended to ignore the valuable first-hand insights she had to offer. In this regard, she explained to Baldwin that

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<sup>75</sup> Goldman wrote as follows to Arthur Ross on 30 December 1933: "I can assure you that I never at any moment doubted the sincerity of Roger Baldwin, or his friendship for me. Don't forget he is a pupil of mine. And while not all pupils give cause for pride on the part of their tutors Rogers [sic!] stand during the war had already been sufficient to gladden my heart. The work he has been doing in the States since our deportation made him stand out among all those who had claimed me as their teacher. No, I had never doubted his sincerity. But I had too many occasions to doubt his judgement in a number of issues. Primarily, I found him most naive in his faith in people in authority. Being perfectly honest himself he takes everything as gospel truth what his friends in power tell him." Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, Toronto, December 30, 1933, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jan. 4, 1933 – Dec. 30, 1933, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Emma Goldman to Roger Baldwin, Berlin, June 3, 1924, EGP-NYPL, 1.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

The Soviet Government with its experiment and method has had a most deteriorating and disintegrating effect both on revolutionary thinking and organization. In fact, it has poisoned the whole social and revolutionary movement. It has inculcated distrust, espionage and cynicism in the ranks of the masses unknown since the days of Jesuitism; it has discredited everything of any value ever fought for by revolutionary men and women the world over. To my mind, it has perverted revolutionary thinking and organization.<sup>79</sup>

This perversion needed to be understood by those who still supported Bolshevism and who still believed that Lenin had actually worked for the development and not the corruption of the revolutionary process. With regard to the anti-oppositional policies of the Bolsheviks, Baldwin declared in a response to Goldman on 24 November 1924:

- 1) That the persecution of opponents is not only wholly unnecessary but destructive of revolutionary progress, not only because it kills off those whose contributions are most needed, but because it imposes the temper of tyranny on the ruling classes;
- 2) That the centralization of power in the hands of a bureaucratic government is having the same effect of killing off those spontaneous experimental growths toward communal production and distribution which alone seem to me an enduring basis of economic stability in which the individual can find his widest freedom.<sup>80</sup>

He consequently agreed with Goldman, and this must have been a moment of joy for her in those days, although Baldwin would argue, like many others, that the Bolsheviks had no other choice than to use violence to defend themselves against the enemies of the revolution. Goldman disagreed on that point, as she considered the Bolshevik state and its government to be “the very institution which made political terror inevitable.”<sup>81</sup>

Goldman also highlighted more than once that “while I am opposed to Bolshevism and fight it with all my abilities, I am yet in deep sympathy with the Russian Revolution and the Russian people; it is because I feel that there is an abyss between the Revolution and Bolshevism that I have taken my stand against the latter.”<sup>82</sup> In response to Baldwin’s argument that the Bolshevik terror was a necessary evil that had to be accepted for the eventual success of the revolutionary process, Goldman angrily declared:

I insist that the terror used by the Bolshevik Government has not been imposed upon them by outside circumstances but is inherent in the Dictatorship. It is that which compelled

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<sup>79</sup> Excerpts from a letter from Emma Goldman to Roger Baldwin, November 1924, EGP-NYPL, 2.

<sup>80</sup> Roger Baldwin to Emma Goldman, New York, November 24, 1924, EGP-NYPL, 2.

<sup>81</sup> Emma Goldman to Roger Baldwin, London, January 5, 1925, EGP-NYPL, 2.

<sup>82</sup> Emma Goldman to Mrs. J.D. Campbell, St. Johns Wood, London, January 30, 1925, EGP-NYPL.

Lenin and the rest to eliminate every one who could or would not bow to the Dictatorship, I do not deny that counter-revolution from within and intervention from without may not in a measure have been a contributory factor. But they also helped to strengthen the arm of the Dictatorship because they furnished it with ever so many excuses for the terror employed. But over and above that is the idea of the Dictatorship, the obsession that the transformation period must be directed by an iron hand which at the exclusion of all other methods will impose itself upon the whole country. ... There is no difference ... between the old belief of Divine rights of the King whom God hath put on the throne, and the Divine rights of the Bolsheviki whom Marx hath put on the throne and the Tcheka continued to keep there.<sup>83</sup>

Those who actually still believed in the continuation of the Russian Revolution and the idea that the Bolsheviki had really established a dictatorship in the name of workers and peasants must, in Goldman's view, have been naive, and she called Baldwin "really childish" for his hopes: "The fact is that today the dictatorship is like all governments in the interest of a privileged class and that class is the Communist Party with those who are working with the Communist Party for material reasons and not out of conviction, and the ultimate aim of that privileged class is State Capitalism with all the resultant evils that Capitalism contains."<sup>84</sup>

In later years, Goldman would continue to use her lecture tours, such as in Canada, to collect money for political prisoners in the Soviet Union<sup>85</sup> or to highlight her position against Bolshevism, usually pointing out that they had nothing in common with the Great Revolution that was supposed to have led the way to a better future in the 20th century. However, her attempts were not always successful; for example, she described her experience in Montreal during her Canadian lecture tour in 1926/27 as follows: "[M]y visit there was not crowned with great success. In fact I was so discouraged I wanted to take the next steamer back ... But I am not made to give up easily. I stuck out Montreal though the meetings were badly organized, hence badly attended, only two English meetings tried and given up because of lack of interest, and mainly I felt rotten because I found no spirit whatever among the Montreal comrades of whom there are very few."<sup>86</sup> While "Montreal was disheartening,"<sup>87</sup> her experience in Toronto, where Yiddish lectures also attracted larger audiences, provided a more hospitable environment and was much better, and this cheered up Goldman a bit. The

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<sup>83</sup> Emma Goldman to Roger Baldwin, Norwich, April 20, 1925, EGP-NYPL, 1–2.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>85</sup> Emma Goldman to Doris Zhook, Toronto, December 24, 1926, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939, 1.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

main success of her lecture tour in Canada, however, was her proximity to the United States and having the chance to meet family members, like her niece Stella, and some friends in person. Regardless of her initial heaviness of spirit and the relatively small success in attracting larger audiences to her lectures, in the end, the Canadian tour allowed her to raise more than \$300 that would be sent to Berkman to support anarchist prisoners in the Soviet Union.<sup>88</sup> Regardless of her experience, Canada seemed to have become a possible alternative for a place to stay in the future, according to Goldman's summary of the tour that was sent to her friend Doris Zhook:

As I already said, I do not think I will get much out of this visit, but as I am coming back in March for another month, I hope then to raise part of my expenses of coming here. And of course I am also going back to Montreal before sailing. I do not think I will get away from Canada before May, in fact the comrades are very anxious for me to remain here altogether, or at least for a year or two. I am certain if I would put in as much effort as I did in England the results would be far beyond anything I had there. However, it will be impossible for me to remain here for next winter, but at least I know there is a field in C[anada] I can turn to. That is something.<sup>89</sup>

Yet it would be St. Tropez, where Goldman bought a house for Berkman and herself in 1929, where she eventually settled. The first installment of 30,000 Francs was, as mentioned before, paid by some of her friends, and a sum of 50,000 Francs remained to be paid in the following years. Goldman hoped to cover these costs with proceeds from her autobiography that she was then working on.<sup>90</sup> Her 50th birthday, according to the famous anarchist, “was certainly the most perfect birthday I have had since I became a conscious human being,” and Goldman enjoyed it a lot: “After our tea, we had a grand banquet. ... We had ordered our dinner, and believe me, it was the grandest feed I have had in years—perfectly prepared and exquisitely served. Then we danced and danced and danced.”<sup>91</sup> The next morning, however, was terrible as Goldman was quite sick. But nonetheless, she was positive with regard to her future that day: “[I]t seems nothing will kill E[mma] G[oldman] except death, and if she can help it

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**88** Emma Goldman to Doris Zhook, Winnipeg, January 17, 1927, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939.

**89** *Ibid.*

**90** Emma Goldman to Doris Zhook, St. Tropez, July 3, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939, 2. She commented on her purchase as follows: “It is a comfort to know that in my old age I will have a roof over my head and a definitive place to which I can return and where I can keep my books which are the only valuable things I have.” *Ibid.*

**91** *Ibid.*, 3.

she is going to tell the Old Gentleman to wait at least until her book is completed.”<sup>92</sup>

The book in question here was her autobiography, which would fulfill two purposes. On the one hand, it gave Goldman a chance to reflect upon her five decades of life, and on the other hand, it genuinely seemed important to her and she really hoped that it would help her to gain some income to take her financial sorrows away from her consciousness. Her attorney Arthur Ross would help her with that, and on 18 July 1929 she informed him that she was aware of the problems with selling such an extensive work: “I quite agree with you that two volumes of a work, unless it is a novel, are a dangerous undertaking. I am going to insist with the publisher who will bring out my book to make it one large volume.”<sup>93</sup> Yet Goldman wanted 15% royalties, which was a demand that did not comply with the sales of her last works. Knopf, the publisher, offered her a \$4,000 advance payment and 10% on the first 5,000 copies. Afterwards, Goldman would get the demanded 15%, but the anarchist also considered Simon & Schuster for an obvious reason: “I realise that Knopf from a point of quality as a publisher is perhaps preferable than Simon & Schuster, but on the other hand, the latter are the most skillful advertisers and recklessly enterprising. More than any other publisher ... Schuster ... would get my book over in a large way. That is my reason for begging off from Knopf until I hear from the others.”<sup>94</sup> Goldman had clearly understood two things: 1) how capitalism worked, and 2) the fact that she probably only had this one shot left to make sure that she would not face financial troubles in the years to come. The Canadian lecture tour had already shown her that her star had been fading in the years since 1917, and now she needed to make the best out of her situation; therefore, she was trying to get the best possible deal with the best paying publisher.

Liveright, with whom her last works had been published, was out of the question for her this time. They had failed to publish and advertise her books on her Soviet Russian experience appropriately and therefore could not offer what she expected for her autobiography. In addition, Horace Liveright had previously sent her an unfriendly letter: “A man who can write in the tone that Horace L. did is not an agreeable person to deal with. I therefore want to get out of having anything to do with him unless there should be some hitch with Knopf.”<sup>95</sup> Ross was supposed to negotiate with Knopf and demand the fulfillment of three

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, July 18, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 1.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

essential points: 1) the book should be published in one volume, 2) it should cost less than \$5, and 3) Knopf should actually advertise the book.<sup>96</sup> At the same time, Goldman wanted to keep the European rights for her book—she had already had offers from a German and a Danish publisher—regardless of the language, which also meant retaining exclusive rights to sell her book in Britain, while Knopf would only hold the rights for the United States and Canada.<sup>97</sup> The autobiography's sale price was important, as Goldman wanted to reach the widest possible audience, albeit no longer for her anti-Bolshevist views but for a reflection on her life and impact:

You are quite right that I cannot insist on whether my book is to appear in one or two volumes, and the same applies to the selling price of the book. My only reason for mentioning these points is that a one volume autobiography is likely to sell better, and a \$5.00 edition, though prohibitive for a great many people, would nevertheless not be so exclusive as \$7.50. After all, we need not deceive ourselves. The people most interested in the story of my life will be intelligent advanced workers and professional people and they are the very ones who cannot afford such a high price.<sup>98</sup>

Goldman was very picky on these details, because, as mentioned before, the formerly famous anarchist had realized that her career had already declined and that her last deal needed to be a big one to make a nice life in St. Tropez affordable for the years that remained for her and Berkman. To Ross she confessed that

I hate awfully to seem to you or Knopf "captious." Any one who knows me well knows that it is not my nature and that I have not practised such things. But I cannot emphasize too strongly in my letters to my dear ones, of whom you are one, that my book is my first and last chance in life to get enough material results to secure myself for whatever few years there are left me to live. It is for this reason that I am very eager to make the best possible arrangements with Knopf in regard to the returns that are likely to accrue from the publication of my autobiography.

While she had agreed to limit herself with regard to the extent of her autobiography to secure higher sales, the 300,000 – 350,000 words seemed too few for her into which to pack her whole life.<sup>99</sup> At the same time, Goldman was willing to

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<sup>96</sup> Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, August 8, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929.

<sup>97</sup> Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, August 24, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 1–2.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>99</sup> Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, September 10, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 3.

leave the translation rights to Knopf, who had obviously treated her better than Liveright: “I am writing him today ... simply to tell him I am satisfied with his assurance of a large advertising campaign, as well as with the general tone he has maintained so far. In fact I must say I am delighted to find in Knopf a man of such fine tact and large spirit.”<sup>100</sup>

As long as these legal issues remained unsettled, Goldman seemed hardly able to focus on actually writing.<sup>101</sup> Knopf eventually offered her a \$7,000 advance if world book rights were secured for the publisher, and Goldman agreed with Ross that it would actually be easier to let the publisher handle such issues once the book was finished and ready for sale,<sup>102</sup> a process that had been slowed down by Goldman, who had had some other writing obligations on the one hand and the possibility to live rent-free in Paris for a while on the other.<sup>103</sup> Once the

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**100** *Ibid.*, 4. Goldman emphasized that the Jewish community in the United States would probably be the one that was most interested when it came to possible translations for Knopf. While Knopf would get the translation rights, he was supposed to secure Goldman’s interests as well. Goldman wrote to Ross about this on 15 September 1929: “[I]n whatever country he [Knopf] gives permission for the publication of my book he should ask for advance on royalties. I know that the \$2,000 I am to get soon and the \$2,000 when the manuscript is completed look like a very large amount of money. It is, of course. But I have many debts and I am dying to get a rest away somewhere [sic!] from writing. Inasmuch as there will be no returns from royalties on the book until the \$4,000 are deducted, I will need more money to keep me in comparative comfort and peace of mind. For this reason I am very anxious to get advance sums wherever I possibly can.” Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, September 15, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 1.

**101** On 19 September 1929, she wrote to Ross that “I will be happy when the business end is settled and I can again give myself wholly to writing. I am very unfortunate in being so easily distracted from my work. Every little thing ruins my mood. Perhaps I am only grabbing at such distractions as an excuse, like children who do not like school. However, once the material end is off my back and my visitors have left me at the end of the month I will again be able to write like a house on fire.” Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, September 19, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929.

**102** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, September 24, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 1.

**103** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, September 29, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929. According to her letter, the *Ladies’ Home Journal* had offered her \$2,000 for an article and it still seemed like that her ties to the female bourgeois elites in the United States were still financially worthier than those to the US workers’ movement. The journal later rejected Goldman’s article and the literary agent Mr. Bye accused her of having sent a bad article so as to easily keep the \$700 advance payment. See Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, Paris, November 8, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 1 and Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, Paris, November 13, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 1. Goldman consequently did not believe “that anything

contract with Knopf had been signed, however, Goldman felt the pressure on her mind to finish the book: “Human nature, though, is a contrary thing: now that everything is settled, I may find it more difficult to keep going, and heavens only knows it has never been anything else but difficult since I began writing the story of my mad life. The thought that I am pledged to a difinite [sic!] date has already started to haunt me.”<sup>104</sup>

Nevertheless, when Goldman received the first payment installment from Knopf over \$3,325, she felt “certain that everything is contained that ought to be in that legal document” and thanked Arthur Ross for his steady support.<sup>105</sup> What she was unhappy about was the fact that she needed to pay taxes on her royalties from Knopf in the United States: “I think it is a rotten shame that I should have to sustain the U.S. Government. Instead of giving me an indemnity for depriving me of citizenship, raiding our office and robbing us of everything we had built up in the way of literature etc., I am now compelled to pay a tax on the royalties of my book. This serves to prove my contention that governments are cut-throats, even worse than ordinary hold up men.”<sup>106</sup> At the same time, she felt “entirely indebted to some American publishers I have dealt with for the lessons they gave me about the necessity of becoming ‘a hard-boiled business woman.’”<sup>107</sup> This time, after her bad experience with Liveright in the past, she avoided a title being chosen by the publisher, who favored “Red Years” as a possible title. Goldman, who herself claimed to now be “on the way of becoming a ‘bloated capitalist,’”<sup>108</sup> was nevertheless happy to have received quite a lot of money from the United States, which she bitterly needed at that time.

Goldman took \$1,000 immediately to pay off some debts, because for the previous eight months she had been borrowing from several friends to survive. The next payment of \$650 for the house was also due, and \$500 needed to be paid back to Ross, who had lent her some money for the initial down payment. The financial situation was tight, and she realized that “unless I get any returns from serial sales or articles, I will have to hang on to the second advance for a

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has changed in America to make the average magazine less cowardly than they have been in the past.” *Ibid.*, 2.

**104** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, October 6, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 1.

**105** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, October 13, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 1.

**106** *Ibid.*, 2.

**107** *Ibid.*

**108** *Ibid.*, 3.

long time because it is not likely ... [to] get another sou from royalties until Knopf has taken out his advance."<sup>109</sup> To sell articles would also be hard, as long as Goldman insisted on her critical tone.<sup>110</sup> At least Goldman was able to send her autobiography to Knopf, once Berkman had revised her manuscript.<sup>111</sup> Her editor at Knopf, Harry Payne Burton, surprised her as, in contrast to her previous experience with US editors, he had done quite a remarkable job with Goldman's manuscript, and she wrote to him on 26 July 1930:

I cannot tell you how pleased I am to discover that you not only have good judgment, but that you have approached *LIVING MY LIFE* with sincerity, understanding and sympathy so seldom found in the average literary editor. ... Of course, most of the deletions you have made I had intended to make myself in the final revision. ... I hope some day I may be able to thank you in person, but that will only be possible if you come to Europe. With America more reactionary than when I had left it, there is no hope for Mohamed to come to the mountains.<sup>112</sup>

While many people had supported her during the process of writing and considered her work an important one, given its reflections upon the history of anarchism in the United States, she would be criticized again for her remarks on Bolshevism and Soviet Russia. American writer Upton Sinclair (1878–1968) had pointed out some spelling errors in Goldman's book, which Goldman commented on with the following remark: "I have a rotten memory for names anyhow and I can't boast of being faultless in my spelling. But I would take Berkman's word as final because he is perfect and almost as pedantic as you seem to be. Whatever corrections there will be will go to Knopf together with some other wrong spelling."<sup>113</sup> The female anarchist did not like this kind of nitpicking, but she angrily replied to another of Sinclair's criticisms, namely that she had not mentioned the Five Year Plan in her book: "Living My Life is a record of my experiences and not of mere hearsay or myths. And as I have not been in Russia since the new 'miracle' was begun I could not in good taste or veracity write about it. I thought you

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**109** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, Paris, November 4, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 2.

**110** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, Paris, November 28, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929, 2.

**111** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, Paris, December 23, 1929, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jul. 18, 1925-Dec. 23, 1929.

**112** Emma Goldman to Harry Payne Burton, St. Tropez, July 26, 1930, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross et al., Jan. 22, 1930-June 12, 1939.

**113** Emma Goldman to Upton Sinclair, Paris, December 14, 1931, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross et al., Jan. 22, 1930-June 12, 1939, 2.

as a writer would understand that. But it seems your desire to see in every Soviet move the hand of god has somewhat affected your literary values. That is as it must be with people who remain true to the church whatever its faults.”<sup>114</sup> It seems clear that Goldman still could not stand any pro-Soviet opinion or demand.

In contrast to her position towards Sinclair, she thanked Baldwin for doing everything possible to promote the autobiography, which, as predicted by the anarchist, hardly found any customers in the United States, especially since the country had been struck by a recession since 1929.<sup>115</sup> In April 1932, Goldman went on a book tour through Scandinavia, namely Sweden and Norway, to increase book sales there and to stimulate interest in translating her autobiography. At the same time, Goldman also dealt with Simon & Schuster again, offering them some translations of European works, including a book by Sergei Tretyakov (1892–1937) published by Malik Verlag in Berlin.<sup>116</sup> Berkman could, in the case of a contract, probably make some money from the translations, but Simon & Schuster considered the offer too expensive.<sup>117</sup> Goldman was again under financial pressure, and Ross helped her to prepare a lecture tour in the United States for 1934,<sup>118</sup> which would turn out to be her last visit to the country in which she had been active for so long. In 1933, meanwhile, Goldman lectured in less lucrative regions of the world, such as Wales<sup>119</sup> and other parts of Britain, but the expected steady financial income from her autobiography failed to materialize.

For the once-famous anarchist, it was the publisher’s fault that her autobiography’s sales remained below the expected numbers: “Living My Life was botched in America owing to the mad price.”<sup>120</sup> Goldman still had hopes for the English market, but the book needed to be really cheap there, and her lectures

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**114** Ibid.

**115** Emma Goldman to Roger Baldwin, Berlin, March 28, 1932, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross et al., Jan. 22, 1930–Jun. 12, 1939, 1.

**116** Emma Goldman to Clifton Fadiman, Simon & Schuster, Inc. New York, St. Tropez, May 25, 1932, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross et al., Jan. 22, 1930–Jun. 12, 1939.

**117** Emma Goldman to Clifton Fadiman, Simon & Schuster, Inc. New York, St. Tropez, September 6, 1932, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross et al., Jan. 22, 1930–Jun. 12, 1939.

**118** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, Toronto, January 4, 1933, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jan. 4, 1933–Dec. 30, 1933.

**119** Emma Goldman to Doris Zhook, Glanamman, February 17, 1933, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook et al., Dec. 24, 1926–Jul. 31, 1939.

**120** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, London, March 12, 1933, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jan. 4, 1933–Dec. 30, 1933, 1.

tended not to attract large audiences there either.<sup>121</sup> Her British lecture tour had been rather eyeopening in this regard: “[M]y so called tour is over. I have to confess to having been defeated by the British. Their frigidity has a paralyzing effect on me. Their complacency drives me to drink. No, nothing can possibly happen to them that did to others. As to Fascism, of course, it will never come to England. All this in the face of the world cataclysm. ... I tried my damndest to make them realize that plague ... But it was all in vain.”<sup>122</sup> Just as Goldman had failed to persuade the British audiences that Bolshevism was something evil in the 1920s, she had also obviously failed with regard to fascism in the 1930s. It is hard to understand why Goldman at the same time believed that her book would sell well in Britain, but maybe her wishes had been the father of that thought, and Duckworth,<sup>123</sup> a British publisher who had been in contact with Knopf, had already declined to buy more copies of *Living My Life* because they claimed that “there was no demand for it.”<sup>124</sup> Goldman eventually wrote a letter to Alfred A. Knopf (1892–1994) himself, complaining about the situation:

It sounds as if you are holding me responsible for your losses on my book. Yet it was I who pleaded with you to make LIVING MY LIFE accessible to a larger public. In trying so hard to induce you to reduce your price, I was moved more by my concern in your returns than in mine. Surely that should have been proof enough that I did not want you to suffer any financial loss. I feel therefore that you are most unjust in throwing the blame for the unfortunate failure on my shoulders. After all, I did not sit on your doorstep and plead for your acceptance of LIVING MY LIFE. ... You know yourself that your loss is not due to [any] lack of quality of my work; that it was the crisis and your insistence on a prohibitive price. Why not admit that you had erred in the matter? None of us is always right, dear Mr. Knopf. No, not even you.<sup>125</sup>

She argued that Knopf’s price was simply too high for a British audience and blamed the company for not granting review copies in larger numbers to promote her autobiography.<sup>126</sup> 1933 was consequently a bad year for Goldman, and that not only because she had to witness Hitler’s final step to uncontested power in Germany.

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**121** *Ibid.*, 2.

**122** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, Jersey, May 1, 1933, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jan. 4, 1933–Dec. 30, 1933, 1.

**123** Gerald Duckworth and Company.

**124** Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, Jersey, May 1, 1933, 3.

**125** Emma Goldman to Alfred A. Knopf, St. Tropez, August 5, 1933, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross et al., Jan. 22, 1930–Jun. 12, 1939, 1.

**126** *Ibid.*

While her positive perception of Knopf turned into anger the moment her autobiography had financially flopped,<sup>127</sup> her Canadian tour for the next winter had also been canceled, since the money she had requested to secure her income and coverage of the costs could not be raised. While this situation was quite problematic for her, as she needed to create some financial income to cover the continuing costs, she remained enthusiastic and declared in a letter to Ross on 15 August 1933:

I seem to be like a cat. I [land] on my paws no matter how deep the plunge. I already wrote to England, Holland and a few other countries about a possible tour this winter. It is not only that I can't remain alone here in the bad weather. It is that I can not keep silent and inactive in the face of the harrowing event in Germany. I dislike England, I can't bear its frigidity and its complacency. I never yet had any kind of response [sic!] in that damned country. But it will be preferable to sitting hands folded. As to the other countries. There are so few left where one may hope to be heard.<sup>128</sup>

Goldman was eventually granted the possibility to visit the United States for a lecture tour in 1934 and now included fascism as a topic into her lectures, although she used it in comparison with Bolshevism early on when talking about “the two dictatorships now infesting the world.”<sup>129</sup> Anticipating theories about totalitarianism by Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), Carl Joachim Friedrich (1901–1984) and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski (1928–2017) in later years,<sup>130</sup> Goldman emphasized the similarities between the two ideologies and the methods left and right dictatorships shared:

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**127** Goldman wrote to Arthur Ross about the issue: “I finally had to give the man [Knopf] a piece of my mind. The stubborn mule has only himself to blame that he is still out so much on *Living My Life*. He keeps hinting that I am at fault after I had tired so desperately to make him see how absurd and downright criminal it had been to put the work out at \$7.50. Now, I [do not] give [a] damn whether he will have a cheap edition or not. I [have] had enough heart ache over the matter. I really can't worry any more.” Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, St. Tropez, August 15, 1933, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross, Jan. 4, 1933-Dec. 30, 1933, 1.

**128** *Ibid.* With regard to Germany, Goldman emphasized that “the German situation is more than a ‘mess’. It is the most tragic event in centuries. A country of such high culture, of such thinkers, poets, writers and supreme musicians sunk deep into savagery, all its achievements thrust in the gutter, besmirched with blood.” *Ibid.*, 2.

**129** Emma Goldman, *Dictatorship, Bolshevist and Fascist*, n.d., EGP-IISH, No. 209, 1.

**130** Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken, 1951); Carl Joachim Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956).

[T]hough the two dictatorships are of different origin and claim different aims, they are yet identical in their methods and in their effect upon the social, political and spiritual life of the people in the respective countries ... Out of the orgy of war. Out of two revolutions emerged the two newest political phenomena, the Left and the Right—Bolshevism and Fascism. Both are popular movements although fundamentally different in social origin and content. Both believe that force can perform miracles—that it can turn social misery into social paradise. ... Bolshevism began with Socialist and Communist revolutionary phrases. It promised freedom, equality [sic!], bread. Instead it is developing Capitalism—State and private, with terror as its highest revolutionary deity ... Fascism began with National revolutionary phrases.<sup>131</sup>

For Goldman it was tragic, to say the least, that “[t]o the reactionary mind revolution is like a red rag to the bull [and that t]he reactionary conveniently forgets that whatever liberties he enjoys have come on the heels of revolution in his own country.”<sup>132</sup> Bolshevism was from Goldman’s perspective no better than Fascism or National Socialism, as “Bolshevism far from being revolutionary has as a matter of fact crushed the Russian revolution, that is has gone back on its own revolutionary origin, and is fast becoming as reactionary as his European cousins.”<sup>133</sup> Yet in contrast, while Bolshevism had originated within the revolution, the other totalitarian regimes in the Europe of the 1930s had their origins in counter-revolutions. Nevertheless, Fascism was less dangerous for Goldman, as it was “composed of the riff raff thrown ashore by the backlash of the war, a murderous gang who never had ideals and never suffered for them.”<sup>134</sup> Bolshevism under Lenin, and later Stalinism, were much more dangerous from an anarchist perspective, as too many workers and leftists believed that the Soviet Union actually represented their interests: “To maintain that in Russia the proletariat was ever the dictatorship is to perpetuate a delusion and a snare. From the very inception the Bolshevik dictatorship was over the proletariat and not of the proletariat. ... In Russia, the dictatorship has crushed the free Soviets, has embittered the peasantry, has eliminated the intelligentsia [sic!], in fact, everyone who has helped to make the revolutions now fills the dread[ful] Soviet prisons and former Tsarist places of exile.”<sup>135</sup>

Goldman considered both forms of dictatorship to be the “Fetishes of our time,”<sup>136</sup> promising a world of order after years of chaos and violence, yet in re-

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131 Goldman, Dictatorship, 1–2.

132 Ibid., 4.

133 Ibid., 5.

134 Ibid., 7.

135 Ibid., 10, 14.

136 Emma Goldman, Fascism and Dictatorship, n.d., EGP-IISH, No. 209, 1.

ality their rule was as bad as that of their autocratic predecessors. What was different were the intellectual capacities of the leaders. While fascist leaders, according to Goldman, were far from smart—similar things could be said here about present-day fascists, no matter if they are American, Brazilian, British, German, or otherwise in origin—, “Lenin the creator of the Bolshevist dictatorship towered mountain high intellectually and spiritually over the pigmies that have infested numerous countries with [f]ascism.”<sup>137</sup> She continued her evaluation by emphasizing that “Hitler ... had never had a single solitary idea for human betterment, nor had he ever suffered for it. A Bully and a brute he knows how to play on the lowest traits in mass psychology. Neither he nor Mussolini could lace Lenin’s boots.”<sup>138</sup> All in all, Goldman argued that Bolshevism, Fascism, and National Socialism “in theory can not be compared, in methods unfortunately they meet, and have an identical effect upon the peoples who are coerced into [submission] to their respective regime.”<sup>139</sup>

Considering the rise of Hitler, the “Tragedy of Germany,”<sup>140</sup> Goldman held the SPD (Social Democratic Party) and the KPD (Communist Party) to be responsible. The former

accepted the Republic. But they did nothing to direct its course in constructive channels that would have helped to realize, if not all their programme had proclaimed for the workers, at least part of it. True they had helped to frame the Weimar Constitution, and then forgot all about it the moment it had been safely tucked away in the holy shrine of the state. ... [I]t is safe to say that the workers would not have been caught in the end had they not being misled by their own leaders. Had they not seen every effort at revolutionary resistance checked and declined in the Party Press as provocations [which] the workers should have nothing to do with. And finally had they not witnessed guns directed by Noske against their own comrades in the Spartacist uprising. The world knows only of the outstanding personalities who had lost their lives in a brave attempt to stem the tide of Hitlerism. It knows only of the tragic end of Rosa Luxemburg, [Karl] Liebknecht, [Gustav] Landauer, [Matthias] Erzberger, [Kurt] Eisner and [Walther] Rathenau.<sup>141</sup>

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137 *Ibid.*, 4.

138 *Ibid.*, 5. Goldman would say in another lecture that Hitler, who was “obsessed by the Arian hallucination, is himself a ‘mongrel mixture’ of various non-German nationalities.” Emma Goldman, Hitler, n.d., EGP-IISH, No. 209, 1. In contrast to Italian Fascism, German National Socialism, for Goldman, seemed to be more barbaric and violent. Emma Goldman, Hitler and His Cohorts – Their World Menace, Draft, n.d., EGP-IISH, No. 265, 1.

139 Goldman, Fascism and Dictatorship, 5.

140 Emma Goldman, The Tragedy of Germany and the Forces that Caused It, Draft, n.d., EGP-IISH, No. 265.

141 *Ibid.*, 6, 12.

The KPD, Goldman continued, “can also not be exempt from the doubtful honor of having added their sauce to the Nazi stew,”<sup>142</sup> especially since they had been internally weakened by struggles with Moscow. The Bolshevik interpretation of the Russian Revolution and the realities it had created in Soviet Russia, and later the Soviet Union, weakened the German left and prevented a united front against National Socialism. Since the German Revolution of 1918/19, the Damoclean sword of Bolshevism hung over the chances for a truly better Germany, whose revolution had also been betrayed and violently suppressed by new and old elites.<sup>143</sup>

National Socialism had eventually succeeded in channeling the violent potential in Germany into a political movement and was probably as heavily based on the support of fanatics and the use of violence as Bolshevism had been in Soviet Russia. Goldman described it as follows:

National Socialism is no respecter of persons, ideas, creed or race. It is an insatiable monster who thrives on human blood. Thousands of Gentile German Communists, Anarchists, Syndicalists, Socialists, Pacifists, Intellectuals of the highest type, workers of the best human material, in short everybody who can not or will not put their heads in the Hitler noose, sing that infamous Horst Wessel Song or Heil Hitler until they lose their voices, have [been] and are savagely beaten, tortured, subjected to the most sickening humiliations and [were] carried half dead to hideous concentration camps.<sup>144</sup>

The rise of Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy, and Stalin in the Soviet Union made Goldman think further about dictatorship on a more theoretical level, and she prepared “some notes for a possible long lecture on this topic.”<sup>145</sup> Like revolutions, something Goldman omitted here with regard to their role for the possible erection of dictatorships, the latter “always appear at a time of storm and stress; that is to say, at a time when the people in general are disillusioned, miserable, and lacking hope of better things.”<sup>146</sup> Its success is based on the “*longing* for some ideal, however vague and misty,” which “is intensified by the feeling of misery and disillusionment with the existing.”<sup>147</sup> Dictators like Napoleon (1769–1821) in France and later “Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler have all risen on the back of despair and disillusionment, at a time when the people, despoiled and duped by their old governments, were hungry for some deliverer, some savior to lend

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**142** *Ibid.*, 14.

**143** Jones, *Am Anfang*.

**144** Goldman, *The Tragedy of Germany*, 16–17.

**145** Emma Goldman, *Notes on Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler*, November 1935, EGP-IISH, No. 209.

**146** *Ibid.*, 1.

**147** *Ibid.* Emphasis in the original.

them out of their misery.”<sup>148</sup> To rise, all of them had used some kind of idea, maybe even a system of ideas, i.e. an ideology, like Hitler had in Germany: “The new savior was clever enough to put the word Socialism on his banner to secure immediate following. He added Nationalisms to it to appeal to the traditional German spirit of being ‘a people elect’. And he cemented the whole of it with Jew-baiting, the spirit of which had been cultivated in Germany for generations past.”<sup>149</sup>

The 1930s consequently were far from easy as an observer, but they had been even worse for her from work- and income-related perspectives. She had had trouble with her US lecture tour, as she had traveled without a manager, and James B. Pond, who had prepared Goldman’s tour at Pond Bureau, Inc., New York, had the impression that she was collecting money for her lectures without sending it back to his office.<sup>150</sup> Pond argued that “I entrusted you to look after the money matters in order that we both might save money. The net result is that you have retained all the money received, and we have had neither money nor accounting. ... Everybody is telling you all the things they would have done for you. I have been on the firing line and I can tell you in pretty terse words what your friends think of you.”<sup>151</sup> He also emphasized what Goldman might have been struck by the most during her US tour, namely that her lectures were rather unsuccessful from a financial perspective. Yet Pond was not willing to take the heat for this failure:

I repeat another thing, when this tour started out you, yourself, spoke of Madison Square Garden. There wasn’t a single person connected with your family or friends, but [you] thought Mecca Temple was the proper place. You all had the same feeling that I and every other showman had that you were going to draw large audiences. Now, because you have had two successful meetings, out of an otherwise consistent run of failures, you inform me that the reason for the whole debacle was myself. There was a whole lot deeper reason than that. If any of the people who have been associated with you in the past had told me in advance what you were telling me now, we would have handled everything differently.<sup>152</sup>

Had Goldman dreamed too big? Were the times of success over for the “anarchist queen”? The formerly famous anarchist was, of course, not willing to accept this.

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>150</sup> James B. Pond to Emma Goldman, New York, March 30, 1934, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross et al., Jan. 22, 1930-Jun. 12, 1939, 1.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–2.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

She provided an itemized list for her income of \$478.10, of which \$238 had already been sent as a check to Pond, and the rest she would keep for possible expenses. With regard to the failure of the tour, she again emphasized the high admission fees: “Your reason for presenting Emma Goldman was purely financial. I am not finding fault with that. I regret your disappointment even more than mine. Just the same, I wish I had insisted from the very beginning on the lowest possible admission fees. I am certain I would have drawn large crowds.”<sup>153</sup> Regardless of her pride, Goldman was sad to leave the United States again after her tour was over and confessed to Rudolph Rocker: “Yes, I admit it will be extremely painful. Much more so than 15 years ago to leave America. Then I turned my face to Russia, and my hopes went high, but now I know that I will never be able to do any kind of real work in Europe. It is only here that I can find myself, and I am sure you will not take it as braggadocio when I tell you that I never was in better trim, and never did better work. The greater the tragedy that I could reach so few people.”<sup>154</sup> Financially it had been a waste of time, as “old Emma will leave America as poor in cash as she has arrived.”<sup>155</sup> In her own mind, it was the topics she was allowed to talk about, the high admission fees and the high rent for lecture venues that sabotaged the success of the tour, but Goldman did not realize that she had reached her nadir. The anarchist movement had decreased in numbers, the Russian Revolution was lying in the past, and, for many Americans, Goldman herself was nothing more than a relic from a time that had long been left behind. Instead of reflecting on these reasons, Goldman ultimately searched for somebody else to blame and even turned her voice against the anarchist movement in the United States as such:

Frankly, as far as our comrades are concerned, I could say that with an easy conscience, for in the last 15 years, most of them are the last to have made one step forward or who have done anything for our ideas. They stick in their own little groups with 25 opinions for a dozen people; they have remained as petty and cantankerous as I have known them in the early years of my development. My faith in Anarchism would be shattered indeed if I were to believe that these people will construct a new society. Even if they could, I would be the last one to want to live in it for it would be more unbearable than now. Besides, they do not move a fly, let alone anything on the structure of American life. But it is Anarchism itself which burns like a red, white flame in my soul and it is for this reason that

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**153** Emma Goldman to James B. Pond, Chicago, IL, April 2, 1934, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Arthur Ross et al., Jan. 22, 1930-Jun. 12, 1939, 3.

**154** Emma Goldman to Rudolph Rocker, Pittsburgh, PA, April 12, 1934, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939.

**155** *Ibid.*, 2.

I would rather die in exile and poverty than I would detract one iota from its beauty and its logic.<sup>156</sup>

Europe, however, seemed to offer Goldman little more than the sadness she felt in the United States in 1934. The rise of National Socialism had endangered anarchists in Germany as well, where they were suppressed or worse, like the German anarchist Erich Mühsam (1878–1934), who “was among the first victims of the Nazi beasts, was subjected to the most terrible tortures and indignities and was finally strangled by the fiends.”<sup>157</sup> Goldman had to witness another system that would turn against her friends, but the survival of the Russian abyss did not suffice to gain a better and secure life for herself either.

In 1936, Goldman was alarmed by Berkman’s suicide due to prostate cancer on 28 June, only a few weeks before the Spanish Civil War began.<sup>158</sup> His death was a “shattering blow,” and Goldman lost all hope: “The *raison d’être* of my life is gone. What matters all else?”<sup>159</sup> Now, the anarchist was truly alone. She had been isolated for a long time, but at least Berkman had been there as a steady support, an intellectual companion, and a true friend. Without him, Goldman was lost, and if Spain had not offered her a new task, she might not have survived her melancholic state any longer. The Spanish Civil War could have been the last chance for a new order that would follow anarchist ideas. This revitalized Goldman once more, who had already spent close to 15 years telling people the truth about Bolshevism. Nobody had listened. She had written about her life. Nobody wanted to read about it. She had talked about the similarities between Bolshevism and fascism. Nobody had listened. She had attempted to reawaken the American workers’ movement by her presence during her lecture tour in the United States. Nobody had listened. And without Berkman, nobody would ever listen again. There was Spain now, but it would be another tragedy for her that the events between 1936 and 1939 could not correct the events between 1917 and 1936. For Goldman, living her life remained quite a tragic affair, and probably the greatest failure, from her perspective, was that the world was not only having to live with the consequences of the corruption of

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**156** Emma Goldman to Jeanne Levey, New York, April 23, 1934, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939, 1.

**157** Emma Goldman to Doris Zhook, Toronto, August 21, 1934, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939.

**158** Emma Goldman to Doris Zhook, St. Tropez, July 17, 1936, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939.

**159** Emma Goldman to Doris Zhook, St. Tropez, August 8, 1936, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939, 1–2.

the Russian Revolution by Lenin, it was now also witnessing an even worse dictatorship under Stalin. Goldman could not defeat a state, she could not defeat a government, and neither in the United States nor in the Soviet Union was she successful. Maybe the sun of Spain would see an old anarchist's dream finally come true.



## 8 Conclusion

At the end of her life, Goldman again got involved in a struggle between two opposing factions, namely in support of the anarchists against fascism during the Spanish Civil War.<sup>1</sup> This war was important, as “[a]narchism had not received such prominence since Nestor Makhno founded an anarchist republic in the Ukraine during the Russian Civil War.”<sup>2</sup> Initially, Goldman seemed to worry about the consequences for the anarchists in Spain: “The Spanish situation also does not add to my joy in life. Our people are being exterminated by the thousands, and everybody will be if the Fascists should succeed. The International pack of hounds are doing their share to help the murderous gang in Spain. Not so the so called Socialist government. It refuses to help the workers. The same old treachery.”<sup>3</sup> However, once she got involved and was invited to participate in the anarchist effort, her mood changed: “I am coming for a REAL purpose. Our heroic comrades in Barcelona have asked me to go to England to start a campaign of publicity to counteract the misrepresentations in the British and American Press about them and their truly gigantic fight against Fascism.”<sup>4</sup> The Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) and the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI) had asked her to support the anarchist effort in Spain by raising funds in Britain. For Goldman, this mission was important and brought her back from her melancholic mood that had endured since Berkman had committed suicide: “The call has saved my life. It has inspired me as nothing has since the Russian Revolution. It has pulled me out from the awful pall that was hanging over me.”<sup>5</sup>

Thousands of women and men from all over the world went to Spain to support the cause against fascism, and they would all be bitterly disappointed as they failed to win a better future.<sup>6</sup> Goldman would soon lose her way in the com-

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1 Porter, *Vision on Fire*. On her post-war work in Canada during her last years, see Theresa Moritz and Albert Moritz, *The World's Most Dangerous Woman* (Vancouver: Subway Books, 2001).

2 Robert W. Kern, “Anarchist Principles and Spanish Reality: Emma Goldman as a Participant in the Civil War 1936–39,” in “Conflict and Compromise: Socialists and Socialism in the Twentieth Century,” special issue, *Journal of Contemporary History* 11, no. 2/3 (1976): 237.

3 Emma Goldman to Doris Zhook, St. Tropez, August 18, 1936, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook, et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939.

4 Emma Goldman to Doris Zhook, St. Tropez, September 2, 1936, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook, et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939.

5 *Ibid.*

6 On anarchism and the Spanish Civil War, see, among others, Danny Evans, *Revolution and the State: Anarchism in the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2020).

plicated Spanish context and was attacked by Alexander Schapiro in a letter on 20 March 1937: “You are a good polemicist, Emma, but for heaven’s sake, even in a polemic one must know the subject one talks about.”<sup>7</sup> Goldman reacted angrily, as she was being attacked from different sides for being either too lax or too critical with the Spanish anarchists. Eventually, as Robert W. Kern put it, she “was caught in the middle, discouraged by factionalism, and unsure of what was actually happening in Spain.”<sup>8</sup> Goldman still had dreams for an anarchist future, obviously not having realized that the age of extremes had already begun. She nevertheless remained a fierce anti-communist, or better anti-Stalinist, in this period. Yet as soon as failure of a united anarchist front was obvious, Goldman also turned against the Spanish anarchists, and she must have realized that even anarchists could be corrupted by power and were therefore no better than the Bolsheviks and Lenin had been.<sup>9</sup>

In June 1938, she summarized her two years of experiences in Spain in a letter to Arthur Ross as follows:

I had gone to Spain two years ago. I found there part[s] of the ideas and ideals which I had held high all my life were in the process of being realised, a great dream come true. I went again last year and was overjoyed to find that the magnificent constructive work which had been started by my comrades in Spain was still intact although the struggle had become more acute and more intense. It was no doubt naive to expect that our mad world would permit so great a libertarian experiment as the Spanish Anarchists launched after July 19th, 1936, to continue without a terrific price. I do not have to tell you what the price is. Not only the Fascist powers, but the so-called democracies, are in league to crush the Spanish people and to destroy utterly their revolutionary constructive achievement, but here it is nearly two years and the Spanish people are fighting on. They are fighting on because they are the only people in the world who still love liberty passionately enough to be willing to die for it.<sup>10</sup>

Spain had shown that there was still support for anarchism on a global scale, but it had also shown that it was not only the Bolsheviks who could corrupt ideals to remain in power. Goldman, again, was disappointed by the course of history. The anarchist later told the Russian revolutionary Angelica Balabanov that she was still willing to keep up her fight for a better world: “It is very disheartening and yet I must keep up the struggle as I know you do, for what else would life mean to us unless we continued active service, even if we have to eat out our

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in Kern, “Anarchist Principles and Spanish Reality,” 244.

<sup>8</sup> Kern, “Anarchist Principles and Spanish Reality,” 244.

<sup>9</sup> Tosstorff, “Die Syndikalisten und die Oktoberrevolution,” 186.

<sup>10</sup> Emma Goldman to Arthur Ross, London, June 17, 1938, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook, et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939.

hearts because of the poor response, we have to go on nevertheless to the bitter end. ... As for myself, nothing will stop me to continue to my last breath.”<sup>11</sup>

Stalin turned out to be worse than Lenin, as he had not only betrayed Spain and left it to the fascists but would also sign an alliance with Hitler in 1939. These tragedies, however, were only the consequences of Bolshevist rule since 1917, as Goldman highlighted in a letter to British philosopher Herbert Read (1893–1968) in October 1939, one month after Hitler’s attack on Poland: “Stalin’s treachery in Spain and his pact with Hitler are merely links in the chain of events introduced by the ascendancy of Bolshevism in the world. Nor is this the end. Stalin’s lust for imperialist power is as insatiable as Hitler’s and it will not be appeased in any more humane manner than that of his German colleague.”<sup>12</sup> Goldman herself therefore considered her main task to be that of all anarchists and declared “we, Anarchists, are vindicated in our stand against the hydra-headed monster, the dictatorship whether red, brown or black.”<sup>13</sup> In the same letter to Read, she would point out her general position:

My attitude in re the war is exactly the same as it was in 1917. I diverted from that stand only on behalf of the Spanish struggle because I believed it was in the defense of the revolution. I have never thought that wars imposed on mankind by the powers that be for materialist designs have or ever can do any good. But that does not mean that I do not stress the need of the extermination of nazism. It seems to me however that must come from within Germany and by the German people themselves. ... Its [the dictatorship in Russia] terrible power will never be broken and eradicated from Russian soil except by the people themselves. ... I am with every fibre of my being against dictatorship of every sort and I am certainly ready to carry on propaganda against it.<sup>14</sup>

It was clear that Goldman was not only a revolutionary but also an activist against any form of dictatorship that seemed to be the result of failed revolutions. Goldman’s life as an anarchist, however, was determined by many factors she could not control. The anarchist exchange had always been a transnational one, since many anarchists, like Goldman herself for large parts of her life, had to live in exile. They were considered a menace by state governments, and the Russian Revolution and its international support had intensified this perception of danger.

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<sup>11</sup> Emma Goldman to Angelica Balabanoff, Toronto, July 31, 1939, Emma Goldman Papers, TAM 12, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Doris Zhook, et al., Dec. 24, 1926-Jul. 31, 1939.  
<sup>12</sup> Emma Goldman to Herbert Read, Toronto, October 7, 1939, EGP-TAM, Box 1, Emma Goldman Correspondence to Herbert Read, Nov. 20, 1939-Mar. 10, 1952, 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

Like many others, and as the present book presented in detail, Goldman was expelled from her country of choice due to America's first Red Scare. She had supported the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviki, who resembled true revolutionaries, before they began to corrupt the revolutionary process and the ideals of February 1917. Eventually, Goldman was part of the first group of expelled radicals who were forced to find a new home in Soviet Russia. Within a few years after the First World War, the anarchist decline could be felt by the "queen of anarchists,"<sup>15</sup> whose struggle against Bolshevism after 1922 did not find a lot of support. Although Goldman could look back on many struggles in her life, she decided to focus on her anti-Bolshevist crusade in the 1920s and early 1930s as she seemed to be obsessed with correcting a mistake of her past, namely that she had supported Lenin and Bolshevism in 1917 and 1918. The present book has shown how her initial admiration for the Russian Revolution turned into frustration while she was exiled in Soviet Russia, and she later fought against it in Germany, England, France, and the United States once more in 1934. It was tragic that Goldman could not persuade other left intellectuals like Bertrand Russell or Roger Baldwin to take an open stance against Bolshevism with her either. The fear of sacrificing the revolution, which had already turned into a party dictatorship under Lenin's command, was too strong.

However, Goldman would never give up her hope for a truthful revolution at some point in the future, and her lecture notes answer why she was an anarchist who believed in such a revolution. They are still a witness to her hopeful belief even today:

You will ask if I insist that the experiment in Russia is a failure [and if] I still believe in Revolution to bring about the society I pictured. I most decidedly do, and what is more I say that not the Revolution but the Russian State has failed. ... Yes, I believe in Revolution, but I want the people to learn from the mistakes of Russia to be better prepared for the task of the day after the Revolution. ... Lenin's real politic has proven that the method was a wild Utopia and had to be abandoned in the end. ... I do not mean to say that the government machine alone is to blame. The Russian people too must take their share because they so easily fell into the snares of the newly fledged state. The Russian people were not sufficiently on their guard, neither were they prepared for their task. For this very reason I believe more than ever in the urgent need of showing up the viciousness of every government. The people themselves must learn how to organize the economic and social life on the day after the revolution, to organize it on the basis of voluntary co-operation, mutual helpfulness and social solidarity.<sup>16</sup>

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15 Carl Levy, "Anarchism and Cosmopolitanism," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 126–127.

16 Emma Goldman, *Why I am an Anarchist*, n.d., EGP-IISH, No. 191, 10–13.

These words are the essence of Goldman's own experience with regard to the Russian Revolution, and we should consider them carefully and keep them in mind for every revolutionary change we hope for. Every revolution can be corrupted and therefore must be carefully and democratically secured against a possible dictatorship—be it by a single person or a party—at its end. Or, as Goldman worded it, “it is only intelligence and sympathy that can bring us closer to the source of human suffering, and teach us the ultimate way out of it.”<sup>17</sup> Revolution remains possible for us, but we have to be as careful as possible not to open the door for another party that claims to be the revolutionary avant-garde, as it is only the consensus, be it based on anarchist ideas or other forms of grassroots democracy, that will allow us to reach what Hannah Arendt<sup>18</sup> defined as, and that Goldman would have approved of as the main purpose of every revolutionary attempt: freedom.

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<sup>17</sup> Emma Goldmann, “The Psychology of Political Violence,” in *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader*, ed. Alix Kates Shulman (New York: Schocken Books, 1982 [1972]), 256.

<sup>18</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Die Freiheit, frei zu sein*, 3rd ed. (Munich: DTV, 2018), 38.



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