

***DEPORTED. EMMA GOLDMAN AND THE  
RUSSIAN REVOLUTION***

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis focuses on Emma Goldman and her criticism of the Russian Revolution. The research is oriented around the changes in Goldman's thought after her departure from Russia. The main question of the research is how Goldman's view of revolution was transformed under the influence of her experiences during two years of her stay in Russia. The method employed consists of reevaluating the letters Goldman wrote when she was in Russia and her memoirs of the Russian Revolution under the light of the current literature on Goldman's life. The main finding of this study is Goldman's new theory of revolution which can be briefly explained as a nonviolent process of reconstruction and education. This new view of revolution represents a significant revision if not a total break with her former belief in the necessity of violence in political change.

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*“Life is indeed a crazy quilt made of patches.”*

Emma Goldman

*My Disillusionment in Russia*, ch. 23.

## **Introduction**

Revolution is going on. It can be approached as a political overthrow of a regime, in a narrow sense. There are many parties, organizations and movements in the history of mankind that aim to overthrow the government to install their own rule. Violence is a necessary and inevitable method for the revolutionaries of the Marxist bend. The Shining Path in Peru, the Red Army Fraction in Germany, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and Kurdistan Workers’ Party in Turkey are revolutionary organizations that use armed warfare to achieve a revolution in their homelands. Revolution as a violent breakdown of the existing regime is a continuing myth that glorifies the martyrdom of the guerilla and does not hesitate to sacrifice human life. The end, the “glorious” revolution, justifies the militant means for these revolutionaries.

Revolution took a different significance in other revolutionaries’ life. Emma Goldman’ faith in revolution never halted but she changed her view of revolution after she observed the Russian Revolution and what became of it under the dictatorship of the Communist Party. The revolution that she championed before witnessing the practices of the Socialist State was very similar to that of other revolutionary individuals who saw the violent overthrow of the state as a necessary predicament for the construction of the dream society. She had to modify the method of revolution under the pressure of her experiences that led her to disclaim political violence.

Emma Goldman represents a challenge to the revolutionary discourse with her unapologetic rejection of terror as a legitimate means to achieve revolution. The research for

this thesis stemmed from a question to explain the relationship between an individual and a revolution. Revolutions in world history, when succeeded, always resulted in the formation of a new state power over a national territory. Even socialist revolutions imbued with the idea of internationalism failed to transcend being political changes in the history of a particular nation. Anarchism, a prominent ideology that defied nationalism and government, was somehow linked to the major revolutions in the early twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> In the Russian Revolution, anarchists' role became known after their persecution by the Bolshevik state and their letters from exile and prison in socialist Russia.<sup>2</sup>

It is not anarchists as a group or anarchism as a unified body of ideas that constitutes the object of this study. Instead, the purpose of this study is to show how a revolution changed an individual's opinion concerning the same revolution. This study proposes to ask why and how Emma Goldman, the most eminent exponent of anarchism in America in the First World War, transformed her view of revolution without abandoning her faith in the construction of just society. The main argument of this thesis is that revolution must be imagined as a process of construction and education rather than as a spectacular event that culminates in the replacement of the old powers with the new ones.

Emma Goldman, among other anarchists, strikes as an extraordinary example because of the still growing literature about her thought and life that exposed a remarkable character and a diverse legacy. Her way of life presented itself as a worthy model for coming radicals involved in feminist, leftist, anti-militarist and other social movements. She was one of the most colorful fighters of freedom of speech in America and deserves a venerable place in the

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<sup>1</sup> For a study of the anarchists' contribution to the Chinese revolution, see Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> For a collection of letters sent by revolutionaries of varying political affiliations, of whom a considerable part was constituted by anarchists, see Roger Baldwin, et. al. *Letters from Russian Prisons. Consisting of reprints of documents by political prisoners in Soviet prisons, prison camps and exile*, London: the International Committee for Political Prisoners, 1925.

history of freedoms.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the anti-militarism of her identity and the impetus she gave to the conscientious objection movement in the USA in 1917,<sup>4</sup> which was awarded two years' imprisonment by the American court, made the study of her life more relevant now than ever before because of the Greek and Turkish governments' current attack against conscientious objectors.<sup>5</sup> At the end of her prison sentence, she was deported to Russia in December 1919 as an "alien radical".<sup>6</sup>

In order to deport Goldman, a US citizen, the government played a trick by denaturalizing her first husband in 1907; "on the pretext that the man was not fully of legal age at the time of his naturalization – about 20 years before – the mighty Republic of America declared the citizenship of the man of unknown whereabouts and against whom no crime or offence of any kind was ever charged, as null and void."<sup>7</sup> The Anti-Anarchist law, passed in 1902, laid the ground for the deportation of non-US citizen anarchists and was used to prohibit the entry of John Turner, English trade unionist, into America in 1903.<sup>8</sup> Goldman's deportation was the precedent for the practice of banishment in American history that repeats even today in the case of İbrahim Parlak.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A group of researchers in the University of California, Berkeley specialized in the history of Emma Goldman and produced collections of documents derived mainly from the Emma Goldman Archive in the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam and from the US governmental files. These were reproduced in a microfilm edition as well as published in a series of volumes. The first two volumes are titled; *Made for America, 1890-1901* and *Making Speech Free, 1902-1909*. In addition, the same group published a curriculum for middle and high school students that aims to incorporate Goldman into the national history. Falk, C., Reese, L., Dougherty, M.A. *The Life and Times of Emma Goldman: a curriculum for middle and high school students*. Berkeley, Cal.: University of California, 1992. The group calls themselves "Goldmaniacs" in the newsletter of the Emma Goldman Papers Project, *Open Road* (2000).

<sup>4</sup> For the history of conscientious objection in England during the WWI, see Central Board for Conscientious Objectors, *Troublesome people: a re-print of the No-Conscription Fellowship souvenir: describing its work during the years 1914-1919*, London: Central Board for Conscientious Objectors, 1940?.

<sup>5</sup> For the cases of Lazaros Petromelidis in Greece and Halil Savda in Turkey, who are in prison for disobedience to military orders, see <http://www.ebco-beoc.org/>. Accessed on June 8, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> The American legal system is innovative in divesting persons of their legal rights. The US army today detains hundreds of suspects captured in Afghanistan and Iraq under the category of "enemy combatant".

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, *Deportation, Its Meaning and Menace*, Ellis Island, NY: 1919. p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Ross Winn, "The Case of John Turner", in *Winn's Firebrand*, vol. 2 no. 7 December 7, 1903.

<sup>9</sup> The US State Department granted Ibrahim Parlak political asylum in 1992 but the Department of Homeland Security asked the Immigration Court in 2004 to send him back to Turkey, where he served 16 months in prison. Additionally, Turkish government has already revoked Parlak's citizenship. He was held in Calhoun County Jail, Michigan for 10 months and his case remains under appeal. For an article on Parlak's case, see Alex Kotlowitz, "The Politics of Ibrahim Parlak", in *The New York Times*, March 20, 2005.

The years of Goldman's life previous to her deportation to Russia are not covered in this study due to the fact that the existing literature sufficiently deals with her activism in America.<sup>10</sup> Since the aim of this thesis is to trace the changes in her view of revolution, this is only possible by focusing on the period of Russian exile and its aftermath. In the first chapter a theoretical framework will be provided by evaluating the published sources on Emma Goldman. The literature will be explored to show the diversity of perspectives on Goldman's life emanating from different layers of interest. There is a striking number of authors who saw Goldman primarily as an American followed by several others who considered Goldman as a feminist. Some Canadian authors diverted from this pattern to highlight those episodes in Goldman's life when she traveled in Canada to establish an anarchist movement. Naturally, works evaluating Goldman as a part of the anarchist tradition are not few, which concentrated on the issue of violence.

The second chapter stresses the mixture of radical elements that prepared the October Revolution and locates the anarchists involved in the making of the Russian Revolution. This chapter presents the necessary historical context to grasp the enthusiasm of anarchists and other revolutionaries toward the experiment in Russia. Goldman was caught in the fervent hope of the revolution like her comrades and expressed statements that bolstered the Bolsheviks. The court process that drove Goldman in and out of jail from June 1917 until her deportation occupied Goldman and filled her with resentment against the American justice

The third chapter evaluates Goldman's participation in the Russian Revolution through an analysis of her correspondence. This chapter discusses the reasons behind Goldman's evasion from referring to the harassment of dissenters by the Bolshevik state in her letters to her niece, Stella Ballantine. The discussion continues with Goldman's attempts to adjust into the Russian Revolution and her work in the course of the two years. The observations she

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<sup>10</sup> Candace Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984.  
Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman, an Intimate Life*, London: Virago, 1984.

made in Russia provides the foundation for the revision of her view of revolution that will be discussed in the last chapter.

The final chapter is an analysis of Goldman's theory of revolution expressed intermittently in the articles, books, and letters she wrote after her departure from Russia in December 1921. The main factors that brought the end of the Russian Revolution will be clarified first. The second section will inquire what the predictions for the future of Russia were. Thereafter, the opportunities will be identified that should have been realized if the Russian Revolution would prove to be a true revolution. Goldman's new theory of revolution will be brought into light in the final section.

## **Chapter 1: An Analysis of the Literature on Emma Goldman**

The purpose of this chapter is to group the authors who have dealt with the life of Emma Goldman. There were many writers who evaluated Goldman as a character of importance and they used different perspectives to engage in different kinds of accounts of her life. The first group is the people who wanted to incorporate her into the national cultural heritage. To this category fall the American and Canadian authors. The second group is the feminists, who discovered the importance of gender in the thought of Emma Goldman. Anarchists form the third category because of their affinity to Goldman as a comrade. There are of course authors who fall somewhere between the boundaries of these groups. I will try to group major contributions to the literature on Goldman according to the patterns.

The survey of literature in this chapter will highlight the Russian episode in Goldman's life. The most important aspect of Goldman is her staunch loyalty to the idea of revolution although she was in Russia between 1919 and 1921 and criticized it vehemently. There are some critics of Goldman who argued that Goldman was insincere and even that she was a collaborator with the right wing attack against the Russian Revolution in the Western media. There is a grain of truth in these criticisms; indeed, Goldman in Russia was tranquil and reticent as she might never have been if she were in the USA. The incidents she came to know were not reconcilable with a human state, let alone anarchy, which she conceived in her earlier years. Albeit this fact, she did not criticize the Russian government openly in the American press until 1922. A further question that must be answered is why she did not leave Russia early and stayed in a dictatorship. This question can be answered by pointing to what

were Goldman's beliefs before going to Russia, what she aimed at during her days there, and what the other anarchists were doing who ended up in Russia voluntarily or involuntarily. These points will be discussed in the next chapters.

### **1.1 Goldman's own work as the historian of her life**

The first historian of Emma Goldman's life is Goldman herself. She finished her autobiography in 1930 in St. Tropez, France and Alfred Knopf published *Living My Life* in New York in 1931. This one thousand page book is a testimony of her life. Goldman originally intended to finish the narrative with her deportation from the United States but she added further chapters in accordance with Knopf's insistence to cover the years in Russia. It is not apologetic and it chronicles events with a historian's sense of loyalty to the truth. The account for the years in Russia is the starting point for the study of her activities in the country of the revolution.

An earlier book by Goldman is even more focused on her days in Soviet Russia. When Goldman wrote her reminiscences and criticism of Russia in 1922 in Berlin, she intended to entitle it "My Two Years in Russia". At that time the American publishers were eager to print Goldman's sarcastic words about Russia because her disappointment in the land of revolution was a selling story. When Doubleday printed the first half of Goldman's manuscript on Russia in 1923 in New York, it was printed under the title *My Disillusionment in Russia*. One year later Doubleday consented to publish the second half too, this time under the title *My Further Disillusionment in Russia*. Goldman protested that the title suggested that she gave up her hope and faith in revolution. One of the aims of this thesis is to demonstrate that Goldman was able to distinguish between the Russian Revolution and the Russian government. Furthermore, it will be shown in the second chapter that Goldman attacked the government and always struggled for the revolution. Even in Russia she was hopeful of the gradual

dissipation of authority from the Bolshevik masters. The argument that Goldman gave up the revolution when she fled from Russia does not represent the truth.

## **1.2 American authors**

The history of Goldman's life was appealing to the American historians first. They saw in her the fighter for the freedom expression in the history of their country. The reactionary forces that drew Goldman from the US made it impossible to reach a clear conclusion about Goldman's achievements and they argued for the proper treatment of Goldman's character in the history of American radicalism. The first biography of Emma Goldman *Rebel in Paradise* by Richard Drinnon is still indispensable. Printed in Chicago in 1961, this scholarly work chronicles the entire life of Emma Goldman. Drinnon is apologetic in his assessment of Goldman's life and makes a sympathetic judgment of Goldman's life. The book primarily discusses the political actions and statements made by Emma Goldman and attempts to place her on the scene of great American politicians. Drinnon emphasizes the unfair treatment of Emma Goldman by the US authorities and blames it on the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of her politics and philosophy in America. The unfair treatment was the demonization of Goldman as the "Queen of Anarchy", etc. and the subsequent aversion felt by the American public against her. Drinnon's biography opened the way for further scholarly interest in Goldman's life and especially woman scholars after Drinnon showed interest in Goldman.

The historian who redeemed Emma Goldman and gave her another life in letters is Richard Drinnon whose 1961 biography of Emma Goldman preceded the scholarship about this eminent personality. Drinnon's account of Goldman's years and activities in Russia was not very critical and he reproduced her own view in main lines. Relying on Drinnon's biography Shulman portrayed Goldman as a martyr and hero. Drinnon tried to present the picture of Goldman in Russia as in harmony with her anarchist identity as possible. Drinnon's

Emma emerged from the test of Bolshevik dictatorship untainted. Moreover Drinnon presented some evidence that contradicts with Goldberg's argument about Goldman and Berkman's complicity in the Bolshevik dictatorship. Berkman had refused to translate Lenin's "Left-wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder" although he was often defending Bolshevism against Goldman's criticism.<sup>11</sup> Berkman and Goldman wrote a letter of protest to Zinoviev demanding to resolve the Kronstadt conflict without violence on May 5<sup>th</sup>. AS this evidence suggests the complicity of Berkman and Goldman in the Bolshevik regime is not as straightforward as argued by Goldberg. Although Goldman was reluctant to speak about the atrocities in Russia during her stay there, she spoke with utmost clarity right after she left Russia to the masses of the West. Her articles were reprinted in London too. She wrote her first critical articles while she was in Stockholm at the cost of losing the favor of the socialist Prime Minister Karl Branting.<sup>12</sup> Chicago Tribune and the New York World, the only newspapers that showed an interest in Goldman's articles were especially eager to print the repentance of an old revolutionary. There opened a schism between Goldman and her comrades over the issue of those articles. Goldman raised her voice at the cost of losing the sympathy of her closest associates, even Berkman. The ordeal that Goldman went through in Germany and in England to raise the consciousness for the suppression of thought in Russia once more shows that expressing dissent with the Bolshevik government was not any easier outside of Russia than inside. Her identity as a revolutionary was brought under suspicion once she distanced herself from the Bolshevik government. She painfully tried to underline the difference between the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik State but her contemporaries, including Bertrand Russell, were at hazards in grasping this fine distinction. She was persistently misrepresented and misunderstood. Not alone the communists vilified her as a renegade but also the mainstream press distorted her voice. Her book appeared as a

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<sup>11</sup> Richard Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961. p. 235.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.* p. 242.

testimony of disillusionment suggesting a change in her belief in the revolutionary cause. Her article refining the distance between anarchy and Soviet Communism was tailored as “There is no Communism in Russia.” It can not be argued with consistency that Goldman was insincere about her words because it took a lot of power to express her opinion about Russian Revolution, inadvertently alienating her own people.

Candace Falk discovered some of Emma Goldman’s letters to Ben Reitman in 1975 in a guitar shop in Chicago. She wanted to combine the intimate life of Emma Goldman with her politics. The Goldman-Reitman love affair leaves some doubts about the significance of anarchism and the ideology of free-love in Goldman’s life. In 1984 *Love, Anarchy, & Emma Goldman*, Falk persistently weaved together the public image of Goldman together with her emotional letters. Nevertheless, her biography is not deep in analysis and loaded with excerpts from and summaries of Goldman’s letters and autobiography. Concerning the period of Goldman’s life in Russia, Falk does not go beyond what is available in *Living My Life*, and she does not discuss Goldman’s actions in terms of the revolutionary politics she was propagating in America. Falk is the chief editor of the *Emma Goldman Papers Project* at the moment.

This project is undertaken by the University of California at Berkeley and it is funded partly by the federal government. The editors collaborated with an extensive network of archivists, librarians, and friends to gather copies of documentary material relating to Goldman’s life. It is the most significant scholarly attempt to inscribe the life of Emma Goldman as a champion of civil liberties in the United States. The guide to Goldman’s life prepared by the editors is the most important, complete and systematic source for researchers into the subject. Claiming to be a documentary history, the project editors refrain from engaging into debates and assessments about Goldman’s activities and thoughts, therefore, the guide is factual and informative. However, since they rely on the most thorough collection of

sources, the introductory essays presented in the guide provide a fair picture of Goldman's years in Russia. Although the editors did not give any explanation for Goldman's reticence about Bolshevism while she was in Russia, they asserted that Goldman and Berkman began their anti-Bolshevik campaign as early as January 7, 1922, less than one month since she left Russia.

The evaluation of Goldman's life was at a peak in the late 1960s because of the growing resistance to the Vietnam War in the US. Draft resisters were seeking refuge in Canada and Goldman's anti-military activism half a century before was gaining a new significance. The American radicalism was increasing its level of violence and indulging in terrorist attacks. Manifestoes of feminists, African Americans and student organizations were resonating with the pages of Goldman and Berkman's journals. Richard Drinnon emphasized the defiance of violence by Goldman and Berkman as a revolutionary tactic and advised the terrorist Revolutionary Youth Movements to follow their example of friendship. Drinnon paid attention to the letters between Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman in the late 1920s where they discussed the role of violence as a revolutionary means and thereupon condemned the futile bombings of IBM offices in the name of revolution. Highlighted by the experiences of Goldman and Berkman, Drinnon requested the radicals to show respect for the need for patience and the need for love as much as the need for resistance.

Marian Morton wrote another biography of Goldman, but this time with a purpose to place her life in the context of the American Left. The biography relied on published sources and to a large extent summarized Goldman's own accounts. However, Morton put Goldman's experience of Russian revolution side by side with the experience of other radical American leftists. Morton made also important suggestions to understand why Goldman did not leave Russia earlier than December 1921. Morton argues that Goldman was not disillusioned with Bolshevik government as early as her later writing contended. In light of the achievements of

the revolution, Goldman was not hopeless for the future of the revolution in Russia. Furthermore, Berkman, who Goldman saw as her model of a revolutionist, did not give up hope with the Bolshevik government until the Kronstadt rebellion in 1921. Yet, Morton did not pursue why Goldman did not denounce the Bolshevik government but questioned only why she did not leave Russia. To understand better why Goldman and Berkman did not leave, a research into the experience of other deported anarchists in Russia must be undertaken starting with Mollie Steimer, Senya Fleshin, Samuel Lipman, Ethel Bernstein, and Jack and Mary Abrams.

There is one short essay by Harold Goldberg published in 1975 addressing precisely when Goldman and Berkman expressed dissent with the Bolsheviks. Although Goldman's reminiscences gave the impression that her ideals and enthusiasm vanished immediately upon her arrival in Russia, January 1920, Goldberg argued that both Goldman and Berkman remained loyal to Bolsheviks longer than they accept. Sifting through Goldman's and Berkman's letters to the comrades outside Russia, Goldberg concluded that they did not mention any criticism until the suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion in March 1921, more than one year after their arrival. During their stay they came in contact with other anarchists who opposed the Soviet regime. Goldman observed the forced mobilization of labor, requisitioning of grain, the omnipotence of the secret police violence, and the internment of every political expression not subservient to the state. However, she did not write her opinion on these injustices until the quelling of the Kronstadt rebellion lest Russia would have been harmed in her struggle for survival. Goldberg emphasized Goldman's belief in the Russian Revolution in the beginning and drastically juxtaposed it to her later protest. The letter Goldman wrote in late November 1920 is the first instance when Goldman began venting her distress to her niece by complaining about her uselessness and inability to participate in any revolutionary constructive work. By that time, Goldman and Berkman had returned from the

tour through Ukraine and had seen many objectionable aspects of revolutionary Russia; however, she did not mention any of them in her letter. Berkman and Goldman started to challenge the Bolshevik government in April and May 1921 and were suspecting the Russian government's interruption in their letters to comrades abroad. Her letters in the second half of 1921 until her departure from Russia in December carry bitter indictments against the Soviet regime. Goldberg's conclusion is unfairly harsh against the two anarchists and blaming them almost with insincerity and lying. He reviles them for being a few months too late to attack the Bolsheviks but he does not give any reason why this delay is so important. Indeed, Goldman was aware of the peril that anarchists were encountering and hence was ambivalent in deciding her path. Her reticence in her letters too can be understood given the omniscience of the Bolshevik machine and on the basis of what Goldberg presented further research can start with the earliest indications of her disillusionment in the correspondence of late 1921. Furthermore, most of the evidence in support of Goldberg's argument came from Berkman's correspondence and it is known that he was the more eager one to work with the Bolsheviks. It is also maintained by Morton that Berkman was the model of a revolutionary for Goldman and she was following his steps into Russia. Goldberg also admits that Goldman was prudent in her involvement with Soviet projects and chose to stay in the backstage while Berkman assumed official roles. Therefore, Goldberg's argument does not hold because they the two can not be put in the same box.

### **1.3 Feminist authors**

The feminist movement gained momentum in the 1970s and there was a growing search for precursors of the movement. The American feminists looked back to the anarchist Emma Goldman, the queen of anarchy and the most dangerous woman, and discovered her feminist side. Alix Shulman wrote a partisan biography of Goldman relying largely on Drinnon's work, Goldman's autobiography and earlier essays. Shulman's purpose was re-

publicizing Goldman's career as a forerunner militant activist for women's rights and the biography was published in 1971 as a part of the *Women of America* series. *To The Barricades*, true to its title, is the most partisan account of Goldman's life and was addressed to a particular audience; "Now, in the 1970's, new generations of radicals are taking up Emma Goldman's fight. Like her, they are willing to face jail, exile, and even death because they believe that the world must be made over according to a new vision."<sup>13</sup> The book deals mainly with the American years and restricted the discussion of Goldman's critique of the Russian Revolution to her unsympathetic reception in England. Shulman wished to portray a hero and a martyr, who faced alienation in response to her speaking the facts about revolution. Furthermore, Shulman was very influential in constructing Goldman's feminist identity in 70s and 80s. She defended Goldman's feminist vision in spite of her conflict with the women suffragists<sup>14</sup> and made the most important contribution to integrate her into the feminist cannon.

The wave of feminism and the interest of the American academia collided in the 1980s which outpoured a number of works dedicated to Goldman's life. Alice Wexler published yet another biography of Emma Goldman in two installments. The second volume, 1989 *Emma Goldman in Exile*, covers the rest of her life from her deportation from the US on. This competent account embeds the life of Emma Goldman into the social and political situation around her. There is a discussion of the early years of the Russian Revolution to explain the factors that led to Goldman's bitter experience in Russia. Wexler provides theoretical questions about Goldman's politics as well as a narrative of her life. Wexler judged the thoroughness of Goldman's anarchist views in action in the revolutionary milieu of Russia.

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<sup>13</sup> Alix Shulman, *To The Barricades*, New York: Crowell, 1971. Preface.

<sup>14</sup> The movement for women's right to vote in the USA was a milestone for American feminism. Therefore it poses a difficult problem to reconcile a woman who looked condescendingly on suffragist women with feminism. Alix Shulman eventually succeeded in incorporating Emma Goldman into feminist cannon in America although Goldman's scorn for the women who were active in the suffragist movement caused her to be called a "man's woman".

However, Wexler's criticism of Goldman's writings on Russia was based on a psychological reading of Goldman's emotions about Russia versus America. Moreover, Wexler argued on thin ground that Goldman's rejection of Russia is due to her sense of isolation caused by the deportation from the US. Wexler reduced the weight of Goldman's criticism of Russia by means of psychologizing her subject and also attributed to Goldman an obsessive anti-Communism that resonated with the right wing in the US.

Emma Goldman was adored by the feminists in America because of her staunch public image that showed a consistency throughout her life. The biographies by Falk and Wexler made a subtle change in this image by showing the inconsistent and contradictory aspects of Goldman's public acts and her love letters. Rosenberg stressed that the feminist politics was not in need of an invincible hero and the modifications introduced by Goldman's biographers would give a more balanced picture of Goldman's life.

Emma Goldman's life is still continuing to attract attention. *A Dangerous Woman*, a comic telling the story of Goldman's life appeared in 2007 in New York. This work draws heavily on Goldman's autobiography and Wexler's biography, however, it sheds a new life by means of drawings of the events and characters. It devotes most of the pages to Goldman's life in the US but it also portrays the exiled Goldman in Russia. The author and drawer of the book, Sharon Rudahl, is the daughter of an immigrant Russian Jew family and involved in the feminist and labor struggles in the 1970s when she was an art student. Rudahl depicted the exiled Goldman as if she were conscious of the bankruptcy of revolution shortly after she arrived in Russia. Goldman appeared to pronounce courageously the oppression of liberties in Russia since the beginning to the prominent people she met in there. This portrait only functions to redeem Goldman as a true anarchist despite the hardships of Revolutionary Russia.

## **1.4 Perspectives from the different countries**

A surprising contribution to the body of literature on Goldman's life came from an established Indian scholar of economics. Birendra N. Ganguli delivered lectures on Emma Goldman in 1977 at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi and published them as a portrait of a rebel woman. This portrait did not dwell so much on the feminist aspect of Goldman as its title suggests rather it focused on her life and the theory of anarchism, relying mostly on Drinnon's biography. Ganguli was a positive rationalist and saw in anarchism Kant's categorical imperative. His evaluation of Goldman's controversy over the Bolshevik revolution was sympathetic with Marxism and Lenin. Moreover, he condemned Goldman with being incapable of understanding the historical necessity of violence in a revolution trapped by imperialist attacks. Ganguli discussed the role of violence in revolution according to the anarchist theory in the final chapter of his book. There he exposed Kropotkin's admission of limited violence and extended this view to Goldman until 1920's. Thereafter the author pointed to the similarity between Goldman's rejection of any violence embodied in her theory of revolution after the revolution and Gandhi's method of non-violent resistance. Gandhi and Goldman agreed on the belief that the ends do not justify all means. This poorly written work with many mistakes did not pose any serious question to Goldman's years in Russia.

In 1980s Goldman's popularity must have been at a peak so that Paul Kennedy prepared and presented a four weeks long program for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1983. In four parts the program aimed at narrating the life of Emma Goldman through interviews with historians, authors, and her comrades. Paul Avrich, major historian of anarchist movements, drew the attention to Goldman's support for the Bolsheviks before the November Revolution. He explained this contrast with her later thought with Lenin's anarchistic pamphlets and slogans before the Bolsheviks took over the Provincial government. Avrich also pointed to the fact that despite the lack of anarchist press in Lenin's

Russia, Goldman and Berkman still wanted to serve the revolution. Drinnon, Goldman's biographer and a participant in the program, interpreted the job Goldman and Berkman had in a museum as not directly complicit in the authoritarian regime. George Woodcock, Canadian anarchist author and historian of anarchist thought, and David Porter, editor of Goldman's writings during the Spanish Revolution expressed the view that the liberal press in England was in the communists' hands and Goldman's propaganda campaigns in behalf of Russian or Spanish anarchists were met with indifference among the socialists in London. The narrative of the program was not entirely loyal to the chronology of Goldman's life and on one respect at least distorted the sequence of events. The content of the first three parts of the program is conspicuously devoid of any reference to Goldman's multiple visits to Canada although the third part covers until 1931. On the fourth part, however, the audience is bombarded with interviews of Canadian anarchists and Goldman's comrades. It seems that the editor played around with the order of the interviews to suspend the interest in the program until the final part, although CBC did not try to represent Goldman as a Canadian intellectual.

### **1.5 Canadian authors**

It is not only the US academia that seeks to establish Emma Goldman as part of the intellectual heritage of their country. Canadians also spent an effort to integrate Goldman to the social history of Canada and assert the significance of her years in Canada as part of her activist life. Theresa and Albert Moritz wrote a new biography on the ground that the previous biographers left the three Canadian episodes in the last fifteen years of Goldman relatively under shadow. Moritzs started with Goldman's marriage in England that enabled to her obtain a British passport and travel in the dependencies of Great Britain. Then the book chronicles Goldman's days in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Edmonton. The first visit in Canada between 1926 and 1928 proved to be a success as a public figure after her deportation from the US. She delivered numerous lectures especially to Jewish anarchists. Moreover, the book

provided remarkable information about fellow Jewish anarchists who helped Goldman organize the lectures. The biography is very close to a factual narrative and is far away from feminist view point and avoids psychological explanations. It unearthed hitherto less-known local sources including various newspapers and journals published in Canada. Furthermore, the book brought into the center the debate around Russia in 1920s. Not surprisingly, the communists were hampering Goldman from revealing the absence of freedom in Russia by calling her an ally of capitalists and a liar. The Jewish anarchists on the other hand were not ready either to hear propaganda against the Soviet government because the latter was believed to effectively end anti-Semitism in Russia. The authors describe Goldman's struggle among Jewish comrades in Canada to articulate her genuine position against the Soviets.

### **1.6 Anarchist literature**

Goldman's friends and fans started the literature on Goldman even during her life and it grew after her death. Numerous biographical sketches were published in sympathetic journals. One of her close friends Joseph Ishill, a Jewish printer, wrote such a piece to emphasize Goldman's contribution to American art and literature. Goldman corresponded with Ishill from 1912 through 1935. Eunice Minette Schuster incorporated the life of Goldman into the history of American anarchists, published in 1932, but she had a pessimistic view of the American anarchism. Goldman's return from Russia with a loss of hope in the immediate revolution became the epitome, in Schuster's book, of the loss of burning passion for the coming of anarchist revolution. Schuster narrated the story of American anarchism as the life cycle of a decaying body and finished her book with the court accounts of minor anarchists persecuted in the American courts.

The age of glasnost and perestroika in Russian politics generated some interest in Emma Goldman and her ideas about Russian Revolution. In an anarchist journal in London, Nicolas Walter reviewed Goldman's work before and after she entered Russia. The article is

dry in terms of criticism and analysis but it is a very factual account of the publication history of Goldman and Berkman's books and pamphlets. Walter did not engage in any debate with other biographers concerning why Goldman delayed criticizing Russia in front of the public. However, he praised Goldman's work as a contribution to the libertarian critique of the Bolshevik state. He accurately represented the reception of Goldman's articles that appeared on the "capitalist" press but he did not go beyond the story of books and printing.

Recently a political scientist from Australia, Jim Jose, has published an article in *Anarchist Studies* to show that Emma Goldman was not simply an agitator but was a theoretical thinker in rank with founding fathers of anarchism. Although largely Goldman's ingenuity for political theory is dismissed by her biographers and historians of anarchism, Jose argued that Goldman's contribution to political theory is valuable on at least three topics, one of them political violence. The terrorist side of anarchist movement is attributed to Nachaev's influence on Bakunin<sup>15</sup> and "propaganda by deed" did not prove to be a successful method of gaining support from the masses. Steel workers' disapproval of Berkman's attempt to kill Frick in 1892 demonstrated to Goldman that assassination was not in line with desired results, yet she still acknowledged force as an individual's right to strike back at organized power and to defend against invasion.<sup>16</sup> In her defense before the jury in 1917 she stressed that the cause of political violence is organized violence on top of the social hierarchy and she declined to reprobate unfortunate criminals likewise a physician cannot condemn a patient for contracting a sickness. But this does not mean that she defended political assassination and attack to property, Goldman had no illusions that a revolution was necessarily a violent process.<sup>17</sup> At the same time Jose argued that her reaction to the Bolshevik government did not arise from unacceptability of violence as endorsed by the fact that she was content with the Spanish anarchists' destruction in the face of realities. She objected to the transitional period

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<sup>15</sup> James Joll, *The Anarchists*, London: Methuen, 1979 (1966). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

<sup>16</sup> Goldman to the journal *Free Society*, 1901. Quoted in Jose, "Nowhere" p. 38.

<sup>17</sup> Jose, "Nowhere" p. 39.

at which the goals of revolution were kept aside and ignored until circumstances were ripe and revolted to oppression in the name of making the new society.

Goldman's views on violence is discussed in its own right by Cliff Hawkins in the pages of *Anarchist Studies* in 1999 where Hawkins argued that Goldman never shirked from her defense of individual acts of violence. The article was not very clear in its message but Goldman's affinity to violence emerged definitely. This sharply contrasts with Drinnon's image of Goldman's relationship with violence. Hawkins entirely depended on Goldman and Berkman's brochures and essay printed in the *Mother Earth* which stopped appearing in 1916. Drinnon, on the other hand drew Goldman's picture based on her letters in the 1920s. Therefore, Hawkins' representation has to be qualified and does not give the full picture. The relationship between violence and Goldman is truly a deep one as demonstrated by the number of publications discussing this theme. Further research into Goldman's views about the role of violence in revolution especially in 1920s will open new windows to paths of non-violent revolutions.

## Chapter 2: Anarchists and the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution

The aim of this chapter is to show the blurred boundaries between the anarchists and the Bolsheviks at the high time of the Revolution in 1917. The common ideals of the revolution and Communism temporarily united the fates of a plethora of revolutionaries of diverse colors. The Bolsheviks and anarchists fought for the immediate destruction of the state power, the Provisional Government. They were also united in the hope of ending the war and removing the bourgeois ownership of the means of industrial and agricultural production. The propaganda activities undertaken by the anarchists and the Bolsheviks during 1917 reflect a great degree of harmony. As a matter of fact, the proclamations of the Bolshevik leaders were resonating with anarchist formulae for the solution of social problems.

It is no surprise that many anarchists including Emma Goldman were eager to support the Bolsheviks at the time of the October Revolution. Goldman was defending her cause against militarism and war in the USA and was facing a pending sentence of two years imprisonment when Lenin took power in Russia. Since she was not involved in the day-to-day struggle in Russia, it would be demanding too much of her to expect that she should have anticipated and denounced the spoliation of the revolution in Russia at the kernel of the October Revolution. Moreover, she was impressed by the Bolshevik leaders' endeavor to finish the world war. Therefore, it will be contended in the present chapter that Goldman's early support for the Bolsheviks is clearly understandable given the fact that the majority of the anarchists sympathized with the October Revolution and that she felt it was her duty to acquit the revolutionaries from the accusations hurled by the American journalists.

## **2.1 The Bolsheviks and the Russian Anarchists in the Russian Revolution**

To begin with, it is important to note that there was no organized group behind the forces of the Russian Revolution. The February Revolution was not organized by anarchists. It was not organized by anybody. It was the spontaneous rising of every element in Russian society. It started in Petrograd in the last week of February with strikes and bread riots.<sup>18</sup> Mobs surged through the streets of the capital in angry demonstrations against the government. Troops were sent to restore order, but they joined the crowds instead. The forces of law and order quickly melted away. Out of this turbulence, soviets of workers emerged following a pattern set by the revolution of 1905. The Tsar's police director attested to the fact that the rioters were not led by any radical group or political ideology and described the upheaval as a purely spontaneous phenomenon.<sup>19</sup>

As the news of the revolution spread, Russian Anarchist émigrés, dispersed to many corners of the world, hastened to return back to their homeland. Some of them published greetings to the Revolution and urged Russian people to move ahead by thoroughly destroying the state.<sup>20</sup> Replacing the Tsardom in Russia, the Provisional Government was hurriedly erected by a coalition of parties under the premiership of Alexander Kerensky. This government was troubled by lack of popular support throughout its short existence. As a preliminary measure to gather the backing from a range of political orientations, Kerensky granted amnesty to opponents of the Tsarist regime. Together with many dissidents including even assassins, Anarchists were released from prisons, labor camps and exiles. The improving freedom was not satisfactory for anarchists who had expected a social revolution in the aftermath of February. Their hope for the dissolution of the state was disappointed by the

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967. p. 123.

<sup>19</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 123.

<sup>20</sup> V.M.Eikhenbaum (Volin), "The Revolution Ahead," in *Golos Truda* (New York) 23 March 1917, translated and reprinted by Paul Avrich, *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1973. p. 31-33.

establishment of the Provisional Government. So, they had to press further for the realization of the social revolution.

Lenin steered the Bolshevik party away from Marxist doctrine toward a direction almost converging with the anarchist path of revolution.<sup>21</sup> In the wake of the February Revolution the only radical party on the scene was the Bolsheviks who similarly pressed for the immediate destruction of the bourgeois state. The intense hostility the anarchists had felt for years towards Lenin dissipated rapidly in the course of 1917. “[The Bolsheviks] 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.”<sup>22</sup> Impressed by a series of ultra-radical statements that Lenin had been making since his return to Russia many anarchists came to believe that the Bolshevik leader had forsaken Marxism for a new theory of revolution quite similar to their own. After he returned from exile, Lenin made a series of proclamations that conspicuously lacked any reference to the Constituent Assembly or the Marxist doctrine. In *April Theses*, Lenin repudiated the period of capitalism which, in Marx’s system, must precede the socialist revolution. Therefore, orthodox socialists went on to argue that Lenin had become an anarchist in his long exile: one of them even allegorically crowned Lenin on Bakunin’s throne.<sup>23</sup> The iconoclastic *April Theses* proposed the transformation of the imperialist war into a revolutionary struggle against the capitalist order and the substitution of a regime of soviets modeled after the Paris Commune instead of a Russian parliament, together with the abolition of police, army, and the bureaucracy. The difference in aims between the Bolsheviks and anarchists became negligible, notwithstanding Lenin’s preoccupation with the seizure of power. In *The State and Revolution* (1917) Lenin reaffirmed

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<sup>21</sup> Alexander Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, Berlin: Der Syndikalist, 1922. p. 38.

<sup>22</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 128.

that his ambition was the eventual dissolution of the state.<sup>24</sup> Hence, his appeal to the anarchists as a circumstantial ally and revolutionary leader was keen and unequivocal.

There were two main groups of anarchists in Russia that diverged in terms of revolutionary method. Before the émigrés flocked back to Russia Anarcho-Communists constituted the majority of anarchists and they had committed some of the terror caused by indiscriminate killings during the beginning of the 1900s. Unsatisfied with the substitution of Tsardom by a social democratic government, this group resorted to systematic expropriations of property by the spring 1917. In June and July they staged short-lived uprisings in Petrograd that were easily crushed by the forces of the Provisional Government.<sup>25</sup> They occupied mansions, liberated criminals, and goaded the soldiers and sailors into a disheveled mutiny.<sup>26</sup> However, these tactics were not favored by the Anarcho-Syndicalists who arrived in Russia in summer 1917.<sup>27</sup> Their immediate task was to organize the forces of labor. The first issue of their journal, *Golos Truda*, appeared in Petrograd in August 1917, edited by Maksim Raevski, Vladimir (Bill) Shatov, Vsevolod Mikhailovich Eikhenbaum (Volin), Alexander Schapiro, and Grigorii Petrovich Maksimov. They announced their primary goal as an anti-statist, Syndicalist and federalist revolution that would replace the centralized state with a free federation of “peasant unions, industrial unions, factory committees, and the like in the localities all over the country.”<sup>28</sup> This pro-Syndicalist journal was actually founded in the New York City and was the weekly organ of the union of Russian workers in America, the country of refuge for most of the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalists.

One of the points of convergence between anarchists and the Bolsheviks before the October Revolution was the call for workers’ control in the industry. Early in March striking factory workers in Petrograd started to iterate the popular slogan of “workers’ control”. It

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<sup>24</sup> *idem.* p. 129.

<sup>25</sup> Alexander Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, Berlin: Der Syndikalist, 1922. p. 22.

<sup>26</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 133.

<sup>27</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 135.

<sup>28</sup> *Golos Truda* No. 1, 11 August 1917, p. 1, quoted in Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 140.

meant not only higher wages and shorter hours but also a voice in the hiring and firing of laborers through factory committees. This was not an Anarcho-Syndicalist or a Bolshevik invention but rather an outcome of the elemental impulse of the workers once the forces of government were slackened. By April or May, the hopes stirred by the overthrow of the tsarist regime in February were disappointed by all parties except the anarchists and Bolsheviks, who kept proclaiming the end of the war and workers' control. Anarcho-Syndicalists came closest to the radical spirit of Russian labor; however, they were unable to capitalize on it because they repudiated a centralized party apparatus and never dominated the factory committees.<sup>29</sup>

Bolsheviks were more efficient than anarchists in championing workers' control against the Menshevik minister of labor's obstinacy to retain the ownership of factories in the hands of the capitalists. Bolsheviks lacked neither an effective party organization nor a conscious will to power; thus it was left for them to capture the backing of the factory workers. Lenin was temporarily content to ride the spontaneous tide of revolt undermining the Provisional Government. The organ of the Bolshevik party, *Pravda*, endorsed the slogan of "workers' control" and demanded the workers to seize the factories immediately.<sup>30</sup> Anarcho-Syndicalist journals were deceived by Lenin's strategy and replied enthusiastically to his pronouncements.<sup>31</sup> Mensheviks, who held the ministry of labor in the Provincial Government, insisted on a period of bourgeois-democratic phase to follow the February Revolution and denied the expediency of factory committees for the revolution. They represented the common enemy for both anarcho-Syndicalists and Bolsheviks, who voted together at labor conferences in support of workers' control.

The fate of Kerensky's regime was sealed when workers were armed and organized under a committee led by the Bolsheviks and anarchists. In the face of an attempted *coup*

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<sup>29</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 142.

<sup>30</sup> *Pravda*, May 17, 1917. quoted in Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 143.

<sup>31</sup> *Rabochaia Mysl'*, No. 8, 3 December 1917; quoted in Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 143.

*d'état* from general Kornilov in August<sup>32</sup>, the Provisional Government was forced to attract the armed support of workers. Spurred by the threat of counterrevolution, detachments of Red Guards that were swiftly organized in Petrograd by the factory committees and labor unions consisted of Bolsheviks as well as anarchists, left Socialist-Revolutionaries and left Mensheviks.<sup>33</sup> Loads of grenades were dispatched from the previously confiscated gunpowder factory and distributed by the Central Council of Petrograd Factory Committees among the laborers. The Provisional Government tried in vain to rally the populace by convening a Democratic Conference which would pave the way for a Constituent Assembly. However, the slogan "All power to the Soviets!" was sweeping through Russia, and Kerensky's regime was shaking.<sup>34</sup> On October 16, the Petrograd Soviet defiantly organized the Military-Revolutionary Committee consisting of 48 Bolsheviks, 14 left Socialist Revolutionaries and 4 anarchists.<sup>35</sup> On 22, one day before the Petrograd Soviet ordered the Kerensky Cabinet to withdraw within 48 hours, a demonstration took place in Petrograd demanding the complete transfer of power to the soviets.<sup>36</sup> On October 25, Red Guardsmen, garrison troops, and Kronstadt sailors occupied the key points in the capital without any resistance except at the Winter Palace, headquarters of the Provisional Government.<sup>37</sup> The October Revolution stands in sharp contrast to the February Revolution, as a *coup d'état* compared to the spontaneous mass revolt.<sup>38</sup>

Anarchists collaborated with Bolsheviks to overthrow the Provisional Government but disagreements surfaced immediately after the success of the revolution. The Military-Revolutionary Committee proclaimed the creation of a Soviet Government which shattered the jubilation of anarchists. A central Soviet of People's Commissars (*Sovnarkom*) was

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<sup>32</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 22.

<sup>33</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 157.

<sup>34</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 158; Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 22-23.

<sup>37</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 158.

<sup>38</sup> Compare Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 21-23. Berkman first claims that October events were a social revolution, and then attributes social revolution to the process between February and October.

conjured on the second day of the revolution composed exclusively of Bolshevik members. The anarchists were quick to criticize, saying that the revolution was deviating from the intended path and disclaimed the *Sovnarkom* as a fledgling authority.<sup>39</sup> The next blow was the *Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia*, published on November 2, which bestowed the creation of an independent state on the grounds of every nation's inalienable right to self-determination. By the proclamation of state anarchists were once more frustrated. Furthermore, they anticipated that Bakunin's prophecies about Marx's followers became true in the form of the dictatorship of the party. *Golos Truda* furiously predicted the end of the revolution and warned against its contamination by the Bolshevik party.<sup>40</sup>

To add insult to injury, the Bolsheviks swiftly annihilated the autonomy enjoyed by workers at the factory committees. Lenin strangled workers' control by the creation, on December 1, of the Supreme Economic Council (*Vesenkha*) to replace the chaos reigning in industry. Thereafter, between January 7 and 14, 1918, the First All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions met in Petrograd. It was the Bolsheviks' desire to subjugate factory committees under trade unions and bring control over the country through economic centralization.<sup>41</sup> Maksimov was among the six anarcho-Syndicalist delegates in the congress who raised his voice for the transfer of power from intellectuals to workers.<sup>42</sup> The overwhelming Bolshevik majority in the congress succeeded in transforming the factory committees into mere appendages of trade unions.

The relations between anarchists and the Soviet Government grew more and more strained during 1918, although anarchists were not yet completely pushed aside from participation in the decision-making bodies. The most contested issue between anarchist and

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<sup>39</sup> Voline, *La Revolution inconnue*, pp. 190-191; quoted by Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 159.

<sup>40</sup> *Golos Truda*, No. 14, 4 November 1917, p. 1; quoted by Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 160.

<sup>41</sup> Emma Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, London: Freedom Press, 1922. First published in the *New York World*, March 22, 1922.

<sup>42</sup> *Pervyi vserossiiskii s'ezd professional'nykh soiuzov*, 7-14 ianvaria 1918 g. (Moscow, 1918), p. 50; quoted by Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 169.

Bolshevik representatives was the signing of a peace treaty. Anarchists were unanimous in their opposition to concessions to Kaiser Germany that would result in invasion of Russian territory and cessation of industrial regions. Alexander Ge, a member of the Soviet Central Executive Committee<sup>43</sup> and a leading anarchist-Communist protested against the conclusion of a peace treaty with German imperialism.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Volin laid down a strategy of defense by guerilla bands<sup>45</sup>; whereas, Lenin was resolute to obtain the peace at any cost as a “breathing spell” for the Russian nation. The Bolshevik delegation signed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 3 which supplied the much needed space for the consolidation of Bolshevik power. After the threat of external invasion was dispelled and soldiers returned from the frontier thankful for the peace, Lenin could turn his attention to settle the accounts with anarchists who participated in the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks broke their alliance with anarchists as disagreements over the direction of the revolution turned into conflict. The days of peaceful harmony between Bolsheviks and anarchists were over and the Bolshevik leadership moved to strike against anarchists as early as April 1918: 40 were killed and more than 500 were taken prisoner by Cheka in Moscow.<sup>46</sup>

Stirred by the Bolshevik repression, the relations between anarchists and the Russian government plunged into unscrupulous terrorism. On the brink of the Civil War in the summer of 1918, terrorist attacks by radical Socialist Revolutionaries were launched against Soviet officials. Attacks included the assassinations of prominent Bolsheviks, of the German ambassador, and of the head of Cheka. Moreover, Fanya Kaplan shot Lenin himself. Meanwhile, anarchist terrorism and destruction increased dramatically in Ukraine. At the same time the anarchists in Moscow were driven underground by the Bolshevik persecution. Lev

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<sup>43</sup> There were 14 anarchist delegates in the Fourth Congress of Soviets convened on March 14, 1918, to ratify the peace treaty. Ge and his associates voted in opposition. Avrich, p. 183.

<sup>44</sup> *Pravda*, 25 February 1918, p. 2; quoted by Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 182.

<sup>45</sup> Volin, *Revoliutsiia i anarkhizm* (n.p., 1919), p. 127; quoted in Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 182.

<sup>46</sup> *Izvestiia VTsIK*, 13 April 1918, p. 3; quoted in Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 184.

Chernyi<sup>47</sup> was one of the underground anarchists who denounced the Bolshevik dictatorship as the worst tyranny in human history.<sup>48</sup> This underground group bombed the headquarters of the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party and killed 12 members on September 25, 1918. In retaliation, Cheka unsparingly hunted down anarchists. Maksimov and other Syndicalists, on the other hand, scorned the terrorist tactics of their Communist colleagues.<sup>49</sup> The violent clash between the two groups put bystanders in jeopardy. Anarcho-Syndicalists found themselves on a dilemma between the two brutal extremes and defied the destructiveness of both of them. Maksimov censured the bloody and terrorist orgy and denounced the state of street fighting prevailing in the relations between anarchists and the Bolsheviks. While condemning the sinister onslaught unleashed by his underground comrades, he went on to criticize also the state capitalism of the Soviet regime. In fact, he underlined the rise of administrators and bureaucracy as the new ruling class.

Once the Civil War started the position of anarchists in Russia became even more hazardous. Under the threat of counterrevolution the decision of anarchists with respect to Bolsheviks was not an easy one. Any active resistance to Bolshevik government might have implied assistance to the White forces. On the other hand, the repressive policies of the Soviets were utterly reprehensible from the point of view of the libertarian principles of anarchism. Although a majority of anarchists provided various degrees of support to the beleaguered Soviet regime, there were still some who did not reconcile with the Bolsheviks but maintained grudging neutrality. Anarcho-Syndicalists were more eager than other anarchists to cooperate with the Bolsheviks and postpone the “third revolution” until the greater evil could be eliminated. Some anarcho-Communists also did likewise. However,

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<sup>47</sup> P. D. Turchaninov (Lev Chernyi) was a well-known poet, the son of an army colonel, and the proponent of a brand of Anarchist-Individualism known as “associational anarchism”, which called for the free association of independent individuals derived from the ideas of Stirner and Nietzsche. He will be executed by Cheka in September 1921 together with Fanya Baron.

<sup>48</sup> *Anarkhiia*, No. 1, 29 September 1918; quoted by Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 188.

<sup>49</sup> *Vol'nyi Golos Truda*, No. 4, 16 September 1918, p. 3; quoted by Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 190.

there were militant anarcho-Communists who reprehended their renegade comrades and labeled them “Soviet anarchists”.<sup>50</sup> Syndicalists like Bill Shatov<sup>51</sup> were attacked venomously by their fellow anarchists. The fissure in the midst of the anarchists grew as the Civil War transformed the Russian Revolution into hysterical “war Communism” and Russian anarchists completely lost common ground for coordinated action. The castigation of anarchists that worked for the Russian government went so far as to accuse them of treachery but a study of the reasons for collaboration dispels the moral force of this blame.

Looking at the options available at the time of Civil War, it seems understandable to throw one’s stake with the government because after all its leaders were men of extraordinary standing. First of all, Lenin and Trotsky were victims of protracted persecution and knew the dearness of the revolution as much as any other revolutionary. Second, doing something constructive was the ambition of every revolutionary at revolutionary times. Shatov and other anarchists, who searched for jobs that could aid the revolution or defend it, were not acting on such treacherous motives as some of their comrades purported. The irreconcilable anarcho-Communists blamed Syndicalists with accepting party cards from the Bolsheviks for a few crumbs at the statist table.”<sup>52</sup> Nor was Shatov alone among the anarchists to do jobs for the Bolsheviks. Iustin Zhuk and Anatolii Zhelezniakov were officers in the Red Army and were killed in action by the White troops;<sup>53</sup> and Alexander Ge was a high Cheka official when he was murdered in the Caucasus. Alexander Schapiro and German Sandomirskii were working for the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Aside from anarchist doctors who became medical commissars, there were even anarchists in charge of Soviet propaganda in Turkistan. In sum,

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<sup>50</sup> *Anarkhicheskii Vestnik*, No. 1 July 1923, pp. 56-72; quoted by Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 197.

“Generally speaking, the ‘Anarcho-Bolshevik’ epithet was used in 1917 and early 1918, while ‘Soviet anarchist’ came into vogue during the Civil War.”

<sup>51</sup> Bill Shatov returned to Russia in 1917 from the USA and was a member of the Golos Truda group. He was one of the most active anarcho-Syndicalists together with Giorgii Maksimov. Shatov was a member of the Military-Revolutionary Committee in the October Revolution. In Fall 1919 he was an officer in the Red Army and played a heroic role in the defence of Petrograd against the advance of General Iudenich. He was called to the Far Eastern Republic to serve as the Minister of Transport, but it is doubtful if he served in that capacity.

<sup>52</sup> *Svoboda* (Kiev), No. 1, September 1918, p. 28; quoted by Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 196.

<sup>53</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 198.

there were anarchists who took government positions, held military office, and also those who served in the capacity of their professions. However, in some cases, cooperation with the Bolsheviks turned into crossing to the enemy's camp: other anarchists actually joined the Communist party such as Vladimir Zarezhniev and Daniil Novomirskii.<sup>54</sup> A few anarchists who were influential in the revolution of 1905 and returned to Russia after the February revolution were given minor government posts in recognition of their former reputation, and consequently they kept a low profile. Almost all of the "Soviet anarchists" acknowledged the fact that any attempt to overthrow the new regime would benefit only the Whites, who were a worse evil than the Bolsheviks.<sup>55</sup>

Justifying the collaboration with the Bolsheviks took many forms. Apart from the argument from the circumstances, that the Bolsheviks were an enemy but the Whites had to be eliminated first, the Universalists proposed another argument from theory. The Universalists were a group of Moscow Anarcho-Communists formed in 1920 by the Gordin brothers and a member of the Soviet Central Executive Committee. The Gordins, who were rabid anti-intellectualists, endorsed the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and felt the allure and mystique of Bolshevik power. Soviet anarchists Iuda Roshchin and Apollon Karelin also put an effort to work out an anarchist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat; however, their formulae were based on sheer expediency and practical necessity. The Universalists articulated in slightly more comprehensive words the need for a temporary dictatorship as a necessary stage in the transition to stateless Communism.<sup>56</sup> This attempt to reconcile the anarchist view of revolution with a transitional form of government is critical because it was never resolved in anarchist literature how the abolition of state would be carried through. The

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<sup>54</sup> *Idem.* p. 199.

<sup>55</sup> Waclaw Machajski, *Rabochaia Revoliutsiia* (The Workers' Revolution), No. 1, June-July 1918, p. 6; quoted in Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 200.

<sup>56</sup> A. Gordin, "Anarkho-Universalizm", *Burevestnik* (New York), No. 3-4, December 1921-January 1922, pp. 32-40; quoted by Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 202.

Universalists' position reflects the uncertainty of a diverse group of anarchists in the Russian Revolution who hesitated for a long time to dismiss the course of the Bolshevik state.

As it is interesting to see the reasons for anarchists' involvement in the Russian government, it is also interesting to see the reasons provided by Goldman to defend the Bolsheviks. So far the role of anarchists in the October Revolution and its aftermath has been discussed, and in the following section an account of Goldman's early reaction the Russian Revolution will be studied. It will be more clear in the next chapter that Goldman's later theory about the revolution explicitly defy any transitional government as had been argued by the Universalists. The next section will open with a brief history of the factors that resulted in her deportation to Russia in 1919.

## **2.2 Emma Goldman on the Bolsheviks in 1918**

An American citizen could not be deported but the Immigration Bureau contested Goldman's citizenship status by arguing that her ex-husband's naturalization to US citizenship was void because he did not have the necessary qualities.<sup>57</sup> The file of US vs. Emma Goldman is full of implications that state authorities were prejudiced against her and consciously worked for her deportation.<sup>58</sup> In addition, there was anti-anarchism law that prohibited the entry of foreign anarchists into the USA. By proving that Goldman was not a US citizen and that she was an anarchist, Edgar Hoover, director of Justice Department's General Intelligence Division,<sup>59</sup> succeeding in expelling her.<sup>60</sup> The involvement of the USA in the WWI was criticized by Goldman in February 1917; furthermore, she invited US soldiers

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<sup>57</sup> Goldman entered the USA through Castle Garden in 1885. Wilton S. Tifft, *Ellis Island*, Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1990. p. 111.

<sup>58</sup> Richard Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*. Candace Falk, "Introduction" to the *Emma Goldman. Guide to her life and documentary sources*.

<sup>59</sup> This division later transformed itself into Federal Bureau of Investigation under Hoover's guidance in 1920s. He was the head of the Enemy Aliens Registration Section in the Justice Department before. "Hoover persuaded the courts to deny Goldman's citizenship claims, thus making her eligible for deportation under the 1918 Alien Act, which allowed for the expulsion of any alien found to be an anarchist. On December 21, 1919, Goldman, Berkman, and 247 other foreign-born radicals were deported to the Soviet Union on the S.S. Buford." <http://jwa.org/exhibits/wov/goldman/deport.html> Accessed on May 22, 2008.

<sup>60</sup> *August 23, 1919. United States National Archives, Record Group 60*; quoted in <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Exhibition/deportation.html>. Accessed on May 22, 2008.

to be conscientious objectors and announced her support for the conscientious objectors through the manifesto of the No-Conscription League.<sup>61</sup> This opposition to war was charged with two years imprisonment and \$25000 bail under the pretext of countering the US defense measure and dissuading the people from registering and conspiring against the draft. She spent most of 1917-19 in prisons and courtrooms. The law that punishes conspiring against the draft is still intact in the Turkish Penal Code, Article 318, and conscientious objectors and their advocates are meted out harsh punishments on the basis of that Code in present day Turkey.

The position of Emma Goldman with regards to the Bolsheviks has been widely debated. Points of view range from denying her collaboration to claiming that she was not distant enough. She was an anarchist in the USA, and this is primarily why she was deported to Russia. Before she left the USA her support for the Bolsheviks was strong. She even defied Peter Kropotkin's antagonism to the Bolsheviks and expressed her support for them.<sup>62</sup> Goldman's initial support for the Bolsheviks later caused great pressure when she started to criticize the Russian government. Her initial response to the October Revolution was positive like that of almost all radicals around the world. This response is expressed in a pamphlet that came out just before she went to serve a 24 month sentence in Jefferson City prison.

As the title of the pamphlet suggests, *The Truth About the Bolsheviki* is constructed to counter the falsities disseminated by the American press about the October Revolution.<sup>63</sup> Goldman's aim was to establish the dignity of the work done by the leaders of the Russian revolution. The integrity of Lenin and Trotsky had been venomously debased by the mainstream American press and Goldman stood in their defense. Her main motive was to

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<sup>61</sup> No Conscription League Manifesto. Records of the Department of War and Military Intelligence Division, Record Group 165, National Archives, Washington D.C. Reproduced in <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Curricula/Anti Militarism/manifesto.html>. Accessed on May 22, 2008.

<sup>62</sup> Emma Goldman, *The Truth about the Bolsheviki*, New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1918. p. 11.

<sup>63</sup> See also Goldman, "The Russian Revolution" in *Mother Earth Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 3, December 1917.

clear the accusations hurled against the Bolshevik leaders. The defense of the Russian leaders against the American right is a role that Goldman took on herself because she saw it as a duty toward the Russian people. From this pamphlet it appears that although she was advocating the Bolsheviks nominally, she intended to be the lawyer of Russian people. As a result she ended up representing the cause for Bolshevik policies.

The separation between Marxism and the Bolsheviks, Goldman argued, was a miraculous result of the Russian Revolution. She thought that, in response to the February Revolution, Lenin and Trotsky had adopted anarchist revolutionary tactics.<sup>64</sup> As most other anarchists did in Russia in 1918, Goldman also believed Lenin's words discrediting the historic function of the bourgeoisie. She presumed that Lenin was opting for an anarchist view of revolution and forgoing his adherence to Marxist doctrine.<sup>65</sup>

Goldman applied quite some effort to showing why Trotsky and Lenin could not be German agents in the pay of the Kaiser. The Allied Powers were furious at the separate peace negotiated between German Empire and Russia in Brest-Litovsk and it was in the interests of the Allied Powers for Russia to continue to fight Germany on the eastern front. Emma Goldman was an anti-militarist and an opponent of war and, her sympathies were therefore with the Russian government, who provided for peace in spite of the American, French and British governments, who were waging a war allegedly to make the world safe for Democracy. Goldman in her 30-odd years in the USA had seen that democracy may be nothing more than a high-sounding phrase. For example, the Industrial Workers of the World were actively campaigning against patriotism before WWI, and their members were whipped, lynched, shut up in prison, outraged and cast out of the country. So, making the world safe for

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<sup>64</sup> Goldman, *Truth*, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> John (Jack) Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World*, published in 1919 one year before the authors' death in Moscow culminated the peak of enchantment and jubilation in the American left felt towards the Bolsheviks. Goldman too read this treatise during her imprisonment in Jefferson City prison and was fundamentally moved by the account. Therefore, it was not only in Russia but also in the USA that anarchists and non-marxist left were drawn to the radical opportunist lure of the Bolshevik party.

democracy was not a convincing reason – nor is it now – to wage wars. On the basis of this argument, Goldman could not accept the US’s will to protract the war. Moreover, she could not keep silent when American journalists were attacking the Bolsheviks for ending the war.

In praising the Bolsheviks, Goldman was not without reservations. She set a boundary between unconditional support for the Bolsheviks and a call for revolutionary work. In her explanation of the Russian Revolution, she underlined the need to eliminate economic and social authorities as well as political ones. In other words, the overthrow of the autocracy must constitute the beginning of a more comprehensive revolution if the Russian Revolution is to remain loyal to the demands of the people. “They are powerful only because they represent the people. The moment they cease to do that they will go, as the Provisional Government had to go.”<sup>66</sup> However, she fell short of explaining how the Bolsheviks will go if they failed to redistribute the land to the peasants. Her rhetorical statements imply that the revolution cannot stop even if the Bolsheviks become stagnant and reactionary once they seize power, simply because the Russian people are not contaminated with democracy and they will not be satisfied by replacing one master with another. In addition, she did not account for how the Bolsheviks took over the Provisional Government.

The most significant aspect of Goldman’s 1918 pamphlet is its contradiction with the anarchist views on the peace treaty. The views of anarchist-Communists and Syndicalists in Russia were in stark contrast to Goldman’s preaching of the Bolsheviks’ peaceful mission.<sup>67</sup> The fact that Goldman gives many reasons for the necessity of peace does not mean that she was merely a Soviet Anarchist, but rather it indicates the anti-militarism of her thought. Goldman had opposed the war consistently even when Kropotkin called workers to join the Allied forces to defeat Germany, which, in his view, was threatening the essential basis of European civilization. Goldman served two years in prison for supporting the Conscientious

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<sup>66</sup> Goldman, *Truth*, p. 7.

<sup>67</sup> Alexander Ge. Volin.

Objectors in WWI.<sup>68</sup> She denounced American patriotism and preparedness for war as the evils that slandered democracy.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, her position can be interpreted as one of defending the peace as much as rallying for the Bolsheviks, and her anarchism is untainted when she represents the Bolsheviks as the voice of the Russian masses. After all, the people were searching for peace while it is the governments who capitalize on war. She stressed the fact that decisions to make war are taken by government apparatuses and that rank-and-file people of the warring countries are alienated from their common interest in peace.

Emma Goldman, together with Alexander Berkman and 246 other radicals, was deported to Russia in December 1919. The deportees landed in the land of the revolution with the expectation of applying their revolutionary capacity to the unfolding of the Russian Revolution. Emma Goldman's letters from the period of her stay in Russia lack any reference to the Bolsheviks, as attested by Goldberg<sup>70</sup>. She explained her position contra bolshevism in Stockholm and in Berlin in January 1922, shortly after her departure from Russia through Estonia and Sweden. Goldman hurled her attack versus the Soviet regime in the conservative American newspapers and this gravely angered her comrades, including, even, Berkman. On the basis of this fact, a biographer in the 1980s, Alice Wexler, criticized Goldman as a collaborator of the right wing reaction against the early progressive stage of Leninism. Goldman was conscious from the beginning of the consequences of her writing in the popular press but she chose this way in order to reach the biggest number of readers and enlighten the mass. Moreover, her intention was approved by important anarchists, such as Max Nettlau and Errico Malatesta. Besides, the articles reappeared in the anarchist magazines too. It was

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<sup>68</sup> *The Trials of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman*. New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1917.

<sup>69</sup> Emma Goldman, *Preparedness the Road to Universal Slaughter*. New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association.

<sup>70</sup> Goldberg, Harold J. "Goldman and Berkman view the Bolshevik Regime," in *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 53, no.131, April 1975. pp.272-276. The letters from 1920-21 are full of allusions like "read between the lines" and "everything can not be written".

the beginning of a years-long campaign to awaken the labor movement in the west from being blindly dominated by the Communist Party of Russia.

## Chapter 3: Emma Goldman in Russia Writing the Revolution

Goldman's opinion of the Russian Revolution was eagerly awaited by the American press who wanted to print the confessions of a revolutionary. There was a common estimation in the public opinion that those radicals who were deported or fled or traveled to Russia would soon remember the pleasantness of American life and repent. The American right wing press tried to solicit confessions from Goldman and looked forward to signs of malcontent in her reports. From her exile in Russia Goldman wrote a letter to Frank Harris<sup>71</sup>, editor of Pearson's magazine, about the deplorable conditions on board Buford ("Soviet Ark"), the ship that took the first group of Russian radicals to Russia,<sup>72</sup> and this letter was rephrased in other journals as a symptom of agony. A different case of manipulation by American journalists came from the reporter of the Chicago *Tribune*, who reported that Goldman kept a shrine in honor of the American flag in her Petrograd room. These reports in the American press filled a void of silence strenuously maintained by Goldman for the two years she was in Russia. This chapter explores the reasons behind her prolonged muteness.

To begin with, Goldman was not isolated in Russia from the western press and she associated with several American and English reporters who published their accounts of the Russian Revolution. One of the members of the Petrograd Museum expedition was Henry Alsberg, a Zionist, socialist, Jewish American journalist, who offered good companionship during the expedition trip in the Ukraine. Lansbury, the editor of the Daily Herald in London,

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<sup>71</sup> Emma Goldman Papers Project (EGP), Microfilm edition, reel 12. Accessed in the International Institute of Social History at Amsterdam.

<sup>72</sup> Wilton S. Tift, *Ellis Island*, Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1990. p. 111- 117.

supplied Goldman and Berkman with a special train car that would take them from Moscow to Dmitrov for a visit to Peter Kropotkin, where the theoretical leader of Anarchist Communism sought refuge from the Bolshevik State after he returned to Russia from his exile in England. When the British Labor Commission inspected the conditions in Russia in spring 1920, Berkman aided them as a translator. Until his death in Moscow, Jack Reed, the editor of the *Masses*, and his wife Louise Bryant were among the journalists who kept in contact with Emma Goldman in Russia. The cohort of journalists did not supply Goldman with long standing friendships, and also she did not follow them in passing a hasty judgment on the Russian Revolution.

Even when manipulative reports appeared in the American press attributing to her an alleged discontent in Russia, she denied offering counter statements that might represent the revolution. After the Chicago Tribune story about the American flag, Goldman's comrades at home were angered because of the seeming contradiction in Goldman's ideals and her sentimental connection to capitalist America. Goldman had to respond to her friends' interrogating questions through letters but she did not express her opinion of Russia in full and never while she was staying there. Goldman expressed this desire to keep silent when, angered by the news stories attributed to her, she admonished her niece in these words:

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 breath freely, stretch her limbs and strike out for her new life have I anything to say, remember that and never again believe what is being said in my name.<sup>73</sup>

Since throughout her career in America Goldman was reputed as an articulate critic of social injustices, her reticence in Russia needs to be reviewed with respect to the circumstances surrounding her. The two main questions that must be addressed are: first, why Goldman did not mention any harrowing cruelties committed by the Bolsheviks in the name of the revolution or sing the praise of the Revolution. The second question regards why she

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<sup>73</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, November 3, 1920, from Petrograd. EGP reel 12 p. 280-81.

stayed in a country ruled by the Bolshevik government for almost two years, whose working was nearly a total anathema to Anarchist principles. For the first question, procrastination, fear of surveillance and the misrepresentations in the western press would seem to be the main reasons that explain the absence of references to the Bolshevik cruelties in Goldman's correspondence. After an analysis of her letters, it would seem that Goldman did not leave Russia because she was willing to contribute to the revolution. Meanwhile she occupied herself with jobs that facilitated her research trips in Russia and permitted her to keep a distance with the Bolshevik State.

### **3.1 The reasons behind Goldman's silence**

The answer to the first question requires a look into the reaction Goldman showed to the other reports about Russia that appeared during her stay. Goldman criticized the American press for misrepresenting the Bolsheviks as German spies in 1918, but she was not speaking so much about misrepresenting them as the pure heroes of the revolution. Her letters from 1920, shortly after she arrived in Russia confirm that she began distancing herself from those reports on Russia that were far too positive. Goldman was searching for her own voice critically distanced from the misrepresentations on both extremes and hence she postponed explaining phenomena until she secured the right stance in relation to the Bolsheviks. She justified procrastination by a lack of knowledge and experience about the Russian circumstances. For example, she declined Frank Harris' demand for letters because she did not think that she was qualified enough to speak for the Russian Revolution.<sup>74</sup> Because Goldman was absent during the October Revolution she regarded herself as unqualified to judge.<sup>75</sup> Another reason she proposed to procrastinate was the incapacity to write at the time of mental turmoil. "I don't know whether I will ever again be able to write or to speak. I am

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<sup>74</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, May 25, 1920. From Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 249-50.

<sup>75</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, November 28, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 291.

quite sure I cannot do it now.”<sup>76</sup> A chronic reason was the lack of time, which was very pressing when Goldman and Berkman returned from the expedition through the Ukraine. “Shall write in greater detail later, but there is neither time nor opportunity just now. This letter is, I fear, very disconnected, written as it is in snatches, between telephone calls, visits, meals. Very busy.”<sup>77</sup> Moreover, when pressed by Ballantine and Fitzgerald to write for the comrades rather than publication, Goldman replied by saying that one’s self no longer exists in the terrible struggle and turmoil of the revolution.<sup>78</sup>

Adding to the procrastination, there was also an acute fear of surveillance that prevented Emma Goldman from dispatching news unfavorable to Russia. Much of the content of the early letters to her niece, Stella Ballantine, is taken up by descriptions of the medium through which the letters will arrive in New York. Also, the reliable addresses in Russia were meticulously described. There were many individuals mediating Goldman’s letters through European capitals to safe hands in the USA. Because of the flux of people caused by the Russian Revolution, Goldman had to trust her letters to constantly changing people. In each letter, it was a great concern how to settle the route of the next exchange.<sup>79</sup> Even though there was a steady flux of letters, she was anxious to know if the letters were reaching their destination. In the first six months Goldman could not receive letters regularly from America and thus she felt as if she was “writing into space”.<sup>80</sup> She was anticipating an intervention from Russian or American governments to her letters and in fact, US authorities were following Goldman and monitoring her letters and kept a copy of each letter she sent from

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<sup>76</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, June 8, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 258-60.

<sup>77</sup> Letter to Eleanor Fitzgerald, October 23, 1920, from Moscow. EGP, reel 12, p. 272-74.

<sup>78</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, November 28, 1920, from Petrograd, EGP reel 12, p. 291.

<sup>79</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, May 25, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 249-50.

<sup>80</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, June 8, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 258-60.

Russia.<sup>81</sup> Hence she added to many letters the admonition that “I hope you will be able to read between the lines.”<sup>82</sup>

However, Goldman’s reticence cannot be explained only with procrastination and surveillance because her letters after she returned from the expedition through the Ukraine reflect a conscious auto-censor. “Overwhelming sadness because I know that I could not say all I want to say in reply to your dear letters. I can only hope you will read through the lines. There is so much in your letters I should love to go into, but it cannot be done. Even if I could write freely you would not understand. No one outside of Russia understands. Not even the friends who come to Russia. Most of them remain only a little while, they are hampered because of their ignorance of the language, they rarely get further than Petrograd and Moscow. Why, even we, who have been in the country almost 10 months, know the language, have traveled on the Ukraina, even we don’t understand many things, how should you or the others. *And so much must remain unsaid.* (emphasis added.)”<sup>83</sup> These words betray a notion of unreadiness and an expectation of the way ahead.

Goldman’s faith in the revolution was not flinched by the ugly sights she had witnessed under the reign of the Bolsheviks or in the war-stricken Ukraine. Kropotkin, her mentor, had advised Goldman to work for the relief of the Russian people before his death and rekindled in her the hope for the future of the revolution. She wrote to Ballantine that “the Russian people will yet triumph, the fires which they have lighted three years ago will yet aflame the world. I have undying faith in the Russian people whatever faith I may have lost in other directions.”<sup>84</sup> Following her return from the Ukraine, Goldman gave up the hope of working in cooperation with the Bolshevik government who used the other directions that she did not want to follow. When Goldman received offers to posts in the beginning of her

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<sup>81</sup> These copies are available in EGP, reel 12 and other reels.

<sup>82</sup> Letter to Stell Ballantine, May 25, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 249-50. and other letters.

<sup>83</sup> Letter to Stell Ballantine, November 4, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 285-87.

<sup>84</sup> Letter to Stell Ballantine, November 4, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 285-87.

sojourn, she was willing to work unless she could remain true to her ideal.<sup>85</sup> She avoided putting anarchist principles into practice thereby transgressing the limits around individual action in Russia as she sufficed it to remain loyal to her ideal in abstract, without taking the burden of speaking up or allying with the organized anarchists such as Nestor Makhno's peasant army in the Ukraine.

### **3.2 Two years in a Dictatorship**

The second question, why Goldman lived in Russia for almost two years and additionally took a post in the Petrograd Museum of the Revolution requires a study of occupations available at that time. Berkman expressed the main motivation behind their involvement in the expedition as the capacity to move on away from the old and new capitals. The circle around the anarchists was closing down as the struggle in industrial centers between the Bolsheviks and dissidents grew ever more difficult. Therefore, they left for the country not only to “gather the material which will enable us to make a thorough study of the forces which led to the October Revolution and its *painful* aftermath”,<sup>86</sup> but also to have a recess. In addition to the museum job, nursing was a probable career for Goldman due to a lack of skilled nurses in the Russian hospitals. Although Goldman alleged in her autobiography that she rejected to work as a nurse due to a conflict of ideas with the commissariat of health, her letters imply that she was more prone to take up a job that necessitated travel than nursing, which would have tied her to Petrograd or Moscow.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, Goldman discontinued her work for the Petrograd Museum of the Revolution after the second expedition through Archangel in the north. The Petrograd Museum was ultimately sponsored by the Bolshevik Government and the terms of the job were more strictly controlled by the Bolsheviks in the beginning of 1921. Immediately after the funeral

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<sup>85</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, May 25, 1920. From Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 249-50.

<sup>86</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine and Eleanr Fitzgerald, June 15, 1920, from Alexander Berkman in Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 263.

<sup>87</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, November 3, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 280-81.

of Kropotkin in Moscow, Goldman hastened to organize the Kropotkin Museum together with a few other anarchists and they refused to be supplied by the Bolshevik government and their project was funded mostly by contribution from the comrades in Europe. The new project demanded Goldman's devotion and she opted for this job and quit her work in the Petrograd Museum of the Revolution. This decision can be interpreted as a clear reflection of Goldman's attempt to distance herself from collaboration with the Bolshevik state and it also shows that given the ripe options Goldman's priorities were inclined towards her anarchist friends.

Goldman suppressed her will to work for the "third revolution", that is the overthrow of the Bolshevik State while she was on duty for the Petrograd Museum of the Revolution in the Ukraine. Nestor Makhno led the continuous battle against the Austrian army, the White generals, the Polish army, and intermittently against the Red army. In the autumn of 1921 Makhno came to blows with the Red Army led by Leo Trotsky, who succeeded in decimating Makhno's sporadic forces and assassinating the commanders of the guerilla units. Makhno, through the medium of his own wife, asked the support of Goldman who was traveling through the south of Russia during the late autumn. Goldman declined to help Makhno on the pretext that warfare must be stopped in the Ukraine before any reconstruction were feasible and advised Makhno to figure out a way of co-operating with the Bolshevik decrees. Even though this may seem like a concrete betrayal of ideals by Goldman, in fact she was driven to this conclusion as a result of her witnessing the devastating repercussions of instability and combat. Changes of government followed one another more than a dozen times in the course of three years in the Ukraine, which left the Jewish population mutilated after each change. Therefore, Goldman thought it wiser to compromise rather than extend the hardship suffered by the peasants.

Goldman's compromise concerning violence in the Ukraine was not a rash decision but rather it took months of research and painful observations in the region. The scholarly ambition in Goldman and Berkman's initiative to join the museum expedition also accounts for their voluntary employment by the Bolshevik state. Among other observations that Goldman made during the trip, the effects of the pogroms in the Ukraine were the most striking and she was tantalized. The pogroms of 1919 were started by the unruly units of the army of the short-lived Ukrainian National Republic (aka Petlura's government) and they reached the peak under General Denikin's offensive.<sup>88</sup> There were also pogroms enacted by the soldiers of the Red Army, the Polish Army and even the Makhnovites.

I found the Ukraine the sufferer of unspeakable pogroms by Petlura, Denikin, the Poles and bands, but Denikin surpassed them all in fiendishness and number of victims. Visited Fastov, among similar places, once a busy prosperous city, now practically a ruin. Two thirds of the Jewish population murdered, some in the most horrible manner, killed by lynchings, eyes and tongues cut out before they were finally slain. Not a single Jewish girl or woman in Fastov today that was not outraged, some numerous times. Met a girl of 16 in the Kiev hospital, spoke with her, the whole family, father mother brothers killed before her eyes and she outraged by 14 men. These are not isolated cases.<sup>89</sup>

As an outcome of her observations in the Ukraine, Goldman became more conscious of the Jewish question. Confronted with such hazardous events, Goldman came to realize that the Jewish question existed separately from the social question in general. This is a change in Goldman's ideas that resulted from her experiences with the widespread anti-Semitism in the Ukraine. She was a member of the Jewish workers' communities in America but she had distanced herself from those activists who sought a national solution to the problems of the Jewish people. She did not become an active Zionist after these observations either but she definitely came to a closer grip of the problem at the expense of compromising from pure

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<sup>88</sup> Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917-1920*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. p. 113. This source is a thorough and statistical study of the pogroms of 1919 in Ukraine, see idem Chapter 4: The Pogroms of 1919, pp. 109-141.

<sup>89</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, October 23, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP reel 12, p. 272-74. For other accounts of the pogroms from the victims, see Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917-1920*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. p. 127-29.

internationalism. She emphatically underlined that anti-Semitism was not wiped out when the Bolsheviks took over the Ukraine but it was coercively brought under control.

In her years in Russia, Goldman rallied for support to the Bolshevik State at least once when she linked the struggle against anti-Semitism in the Ukrainian context with defeating the enemies of the Russian Revolution. Despite the fact that Goldman carefully refrained from venting any criticism of the Bolshevik state in her letters to her comrades in the USA while she was in Russia, she almost never launched any campaign to support and praise the Bolsheviks' deeds as the ruling party. On the issue of pogroms, however, Goldman sought indirectly the positive intervention of the Jews in America for the behalf of the Bolsheviks. Since the pogroms were carried out predominantly by the Whites and occasionally by the Polish soldiers, the aggressors of the pogroms collided with the enemies of the Bolshevik State. In addition, the Red Army was commonly held responsible for thwarting the pogromists.<sup>90</sup> Consequently, Goldman argued that if the Allied blockade and support for the counter-revolutionary armies were cut off, it would result in assisting the work of bringing the pogroms to an end. Moreover, the Jewish victims that Goldman met in the towns of the Ukraine beseeched the American members of the expedition to communicate the massacres that they had survived to the Jews in the USA. Therefore, Goldman pleaded support from the Jewish community in America to take responsibility in their hands for their brethren in the Ukraine and defend the revolution by cutting the Allied supply to the enemies of the Russian government.

I only wish to add that of all our experiences the result of 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 the Ukraina. I found every Ukrainian saturated with anti-Semitic feelings and if under Soviet regime it does not

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<sup>90</sup> Bolsheviks were perceived as a Jewish movement in Ukraine. Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917-1920*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. p. 112.

assert itself as it does under the Poles, it is only because the Soviet government rigidly holds in check Jew hating and baiting at least in any organized form. But with every change of authority on the Ukraina 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 half crazed with the recollections of the scenes they were made to witness during the pogroms. The head physician of the Jewish hospital in Kiev, it is now called the Soviet hospital, told us that the children to this day suffer from terrible hallucinations and wake at night with dreadful shrieks. It is almost certain that the entire Jewish race will be wiped out should many more changes take place on the Ukraina. If for no other reason this alone ought to induce 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>91</sup>

Apart from the eagerness to learn about the massacres that the Jews of the Ukraine endured, Goldman and Berkman were operating through a more supple approach to the situation in Russia than anarchist theory would allow. Their flexibility with the Bolshevik state came from a resoluteness to take the Russian Revolution as it was, without bothering with the previous predictions of anarchists. They refuted a clear cut theory in favor of the facts unfolding in Russia and argued that there are new lessons to be studied in the revolution. It is not merely enough for Goldman to denounce Bolshevism on the basis of certain facts, which she repeatedly declined to expose, because the new generation of Russians had to be raised in the midst of the revolutionary upheaval by the work of libertarians like her.<sup>92</sup> The commitment to the coming generations gave justification to her stay in Russia in order to study the development of the revolution and participate in the construction of the new society.

Stripped from all other considerations, the bare fact that Goldman and Berkman were deported to Russia despite their whim, left them without much other choice than working for the Bolshevik government. In a state where the centralization of economy and administration was headlong going on, there was not any medium of dissent allowed to operate. "In a country state-owned and controlled as completely as Russia it is almost impossible to live

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<sup>91</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine and Eleanor Fitzgerald, November 3, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 280-81.

<sup>92</sup> Letter to Comrades, November 1920, from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 277-78.

without the ‘grace’ of the Government.”<sup>93</sup> The main periodicals of the anarchists were shut down and the anarchists’ right to assemble was not tolerated. Writing articles for the American press was an option that Goldman persistently refused as long as she remained in Russia. A few other occupations that Goldman and Berkman tried in collaboration with the Soviets never flourished due to a number of reasons connected to the upper handedness of the Soviet bureaucrats.<sup>94</sup> Still, they did not give up working for the Bolshevik State lest they would have to remain idle. Besides, they arrived in Russia with hopes of utilizing their revolutionary aspirations and Russia had seemed to be the place where their dreams would come true.

Ah, if only we had come here in the days of the revolutionary glory, the October days, we might now be better qualified to judge. All my life I had hoped to be in the thick of the revolution to die if need be in its birth. But fate willed it otherwise. Perhaps it is conditioned in life that each should play one part in the revolutionary process. I don’t know, I only know that I never longed so much to give out of myself to the revolution and never found myself so utterly unable to give. However, since I can do so little in Russia I want at least to say or do nothing which may even remotely bring it harm. I can well appreciate your surprise at our inability to find our share in Russia’s struggle. But the fact remains that so far we could only work for the Musee which is neither the most burning need of the day or the most satisfactory. We do that in order to keep at work.<sup>95</sup>

Goldman was at the same time very picky about the jobs she considered that would fit her. She did not look for jobs that could give her privileges to travel abroad. She did not want to negotiate with the Soviet government for favors because she thought accepting favors would bind her to complicity with the government. “I cannot get an appointment to some post in Great Britain. My desperate spiritual struggle of sixteen months makes it impossible for me to accept any kind of a post. How do you [Ballantine] suppose one can keep one’s integrity while pledging oneself to any kind of an agreement? One must keep such a pledge, must not one? And how is one to do it without feeling under obligation? If I had wanted to do that I

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<sup>93</sup> Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, New York: Doubleday, 1923. ch. 28.

<sup>94</sup> For the reasons of Goldman’s discontent on the various jobs that she was involved in, see Goldman, *Living My Life*, Vol II.

<sup>95</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, November 28, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 291.

would have had more than one important post. Dearest, don't you know that one cannot remain true to oneself if one binds oneself?"<sup>96</sup>

Being fair to Russia is a concern for Goldman that she found lacking in many of her contemporaries. The *New York World* requested articles from Goldman around the time Kropotkin died. She was angry at the proposal that invited her to produce a judgment on "the most stupendous thing in the world's history."<sup>97</sup> She did not want to associate with the authors who published on Russia and wrote to her niece that "neither the *World* nor any other paper will get me furnish the same kind of rot."<sup>98</sup> For instance, Bertrand Russell, who was a member of the British Labor Commission to Russia in 1920, wrote his view of the future of Russia in a book, which did not flatter the Bolsheviks. Goldman admitted that Russell is "the only one who shows some understanding, much fairness and above all a large grasp of Russia."<sup>99</sup> Yet even he could not do the matter justice because of linguistic insufficiency and the shortness of his stay. Moreover, he, like the other members of the Commission, "had to rely on a teller pro or con."<sup>100</sup> It does not mean though that Goldman did not foresee an occasion in which she would disclose her opinions about the Russian Revolution. She was planning that occasion to be in book form; however, Goldman was not very sanguine about her book because she wrote to her niece that the world's fascination with the Russian Revolution was not likely to be shattered in the near future. "If I were not here I too would not understand. No one can, not for the present anyhow. It may take fifty years to get beyond the great myth."<sup>101</sup>

Not long after she returned from the expedition through the Ukraine, Goldman started looking for possibilities to escape from Russia. The authors that she criticized for the unfairness in the representation of Russia penned their accounts after they departed from

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<sup>96</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, April 21, 1921. from Moscow. EGP, reel 12, p. 323-24.

<sup>97</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, February 25, 1921. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 311-14.

<sup>98</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, February 25, 1921. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 311-14.

<sup>99</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine and Eleanor Fitzgerald, January 29, 1921. from Moscow. EGP, reel 12, p. 306-10.

<sup>100</sup> Letter to Comrades, November 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 277-8.

<sup>101</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, April 21, 1921. from Moscow. EGP, reel 12, p. 323-24.

Russia for their home countries. Goldman complained that “to do justice to the subject” entailed “a more peaceful frame of mind” that she lacked being stationed in Russia. She needed a respite “away from the scene of strife and struggle” in order to gain distance from her experiences so that she could write about them. She declared her intention to visit some European country just after she returned from the Ukraine.<sup>102</sup> But at that time, in the autumn of 1920, she was still full of eagerness to study further the great Russia by traveling around the countryside by means of a compatible job. After Kropotkin’s death, Goldman wrote to a Swedish comrade, Carl Newlander, to inquire whether Sweden would let her in during summer 1921, who made contact with Goldman in the name of a Swedish publication, *Brand*, to get articles. In her reply, Goldman repeated her refusal to publish through letters or interviews even more forcefully, adding that writing on this question would inevitably be a distortion and a sacrilege. In a letter to Stella Ballantine, Goldman announced her definite will to leave Russia by the spring of 1921. “Dearest Stella, I have definitely decided to ask for permission to leave Russia.”<sup>103</sup>

By the spring of 1921, Goldman spent concrete efforts to spread the dissatisfaction she suffered since her deportation. A doctor from the USA visited her in Russia and returned with a message from her. Goldman confided in some of her former acquaintances, who were shortly in Russia, with the news and descriptions of the conditions that she could not utter in her letters. Goldman felt under pressure of the expectations of her friends at home who awaited news of Goldman’s revolutionary activity.

Darling mine (Stella) do not be so sure of my usefulness or reward in life. I have never felt more useless. That I should feel thus in Russia is ever more terrible to me than anything that has ever happened. Perhaps you will understand after the Doctor talked to you. As to reward, whoever cared for that? There is no such a thing for those who are organically unfit to adjust themselves to the unadjustable, or rather cannot reconcile the irreconcilable. But you must not worry sweetheart I will survive, I hope, a wiser person.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Letter to Eleanor Fitzgerald, October 23, 1920. from Moscow. EGP, reel 12, p. 272-74.

<sup>103</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, April 21, 1921. from Moscow. EGP, reel 12, 323-24.

<sup>104</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantne, March 2, 1921. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, p. 316-17.

When Stella Ballantine learnt about Goldman's discontent in Russia, she advised her to find a government post abroad. Goldman was very angry at her niece's recommendation to obtain a post in Great Britain because she thought her niece was incapable of understanding her situation, although her niece had already talked to Goldman's messengers coming back from Russia.<sup>105</sup> There were misunderstandings between Goldman and her comrades at home due to the insufficient and meandering communication concerning the difficult condition of the Russian revolution.

There was a shift in the tone of Goldman's letters with the onset of the slaughter in Kronstadt in March 1921, but there was certainly no major criticisms addressed against the Bolshevik government. One year before, when Goldman reached Russia, she asked her friends to send gold together with other goods, but now she pleaded for her niece, Stella, to stop shipping anything. The fact that the goods were not conveyed to them by the Soviet authorities was only part of the reasons; the other reasons were impossible to write. Furthermore, she asked her comrades to stop considering to pay a visit to her in Russia.<sup>106</sup> Although the main motive behind her request was the fact that anarchists were not welcome in the country of the revolution, a latent motive was the discrepancy between the American and Russian anarchism. She never openly debated with the Russian anarchists about their differences in point of theory, but she acknowledged in her letters that "we have no one of our own in ideas or thought."<sup>107</sup> The difference of viewpoint particularly in anarchist ideas made itself visible by the fact that Goldman never associated with other anarchist bodies, except in a petition to Gregory Zinoviev and the Petrograd Soviet of Defence on behalf of the Kronstadt rebels.<sup>108</sup> She never invited her comrades to Russia in her letters or in her pamphlets therefore it would be groundless to hold her responsible for the misfortunes that the anarchists coming

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<sup>105</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, April 21, 1921. from Moscow. EGP, reel 12, 323-24.

<sup>106</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, April 10, 1921. from Moscow. EGP, reel 12, p. 320-22.

<sup>107</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, January 28, 1920. from Petrograd. EGP, reel 12, 213-222.

<sup>108</sup> March 5, 1921. Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, pp. 197-98.

from the USA went through in Russia as some scholars did. Nevertheless, she was an outspoken supporter of the Bolsheviks before her deportation and hence she found herself in a tense position with respect to those anarchists who left the USA after her. Some of them were deported like Goldman and there was not a question of responsibility on her side in such cases. However, anarchists from New York were making plans of travel to Russia when Goldman had already made her mind to escape from Russia. She urged her friends to dissuade other anarchists from coming to Russia and wrote reprehensively that “Why must they all rush on blindly?”<sup>109</sup> Quite out of her will, Mollie Steimer and members of the Industrial Workers of the World were already detained on Ellis Island to be deported to Russia.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Letter to Stella Ballantine, April 21, 1921. from Moscow. EGP, reel 12, 323-24.

<sup>110</sup> Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988. p. 222.

## Chapter 4: After Russia Goldman reevaluate revolution

Goldman wrote her criticism of the Bolsheviks soon after she left Russia and it was published in March 1922 in a series of six articles in the *New York World*. The reasons for her protracted silence are discussed in the previous chapter. It was also argued that her complicity with the Russian State was conditioned on the prevailing situation in Russia at that time. Goldman emerged from Russia in January 1922 as an outspoken critic of the practices of the Bolshevik State. She did not lose time but started to publicize those elements in the Russian Revolution that she felt had to be enlightened lest the awe that the revolution inspired in the labor movements in the West be misappropriated by the Bolsheviks. This urge to awaken the naïve friends of the revolution was so great that Goldman did not fear losing the favor of the left in Europe which thought Russia as a paradise of workers. Her chastisement of the acts of the Bolshevik government was very comprehensive and aimed at the most striking contrasts between the Bolshevik state and the ideals of the revolution.

Goldman drew a boundary line between what is permissible in a revolutionary situation and what is a return to the darkness of the age of tyrants in a couple of pages that concludes her narrative of the two years she spent in Russia. *My Disillusionment in Russia* is an anecdotal memoir of a revolutionary who found herself lost in the midst of an unprecedented transition to a new centralized society. This account is written in the four months following the appearance of her articles in the *World* and completed in Berlin, August 1922. The story of the publication of the manuscript, originally entitled “My Two Years in Russia”, is told in the second preface to the book which was finally published in whole in

1925. *My Disillusionment* is a narrative constructed around the personal story of Emma Goldman in Russia and underlines the individualism of its protagonist. The account is refurbished by the editing efforts of Alexander Berkman, who left Russia with Emma Goldman and Alexander Schapiro. The lack of references to other participants in the events that Goldman witnessed, such as the journalist Henry Alsberg, leaves some doubt about the consent of those individuals in this account; nevertheless, this can be a conscious omission in order to protect the people who were still in Russia at that time. Despite the suspicions to the credibility of the account, *My Disillusionment* is an account that reveals the main sources of Goldman's discontent and weaves her individual story into the unfolding of the events under the pretense of social revolution.

The experience of living in the land of the revolution was not as rewarding as Goldman had hoped it would be before she was deported from the USA. She was a bold supporter of the Bolsheviks at the time of the October Revolution when she was in penitentiary institutions in America serving her sentence due to opposing the war. Later she came to learn that the Russian Revolution was far different from the expectations of many anarchists among other revolutionaries because of the discrepancy between the image that was forged by the Bolsheviks and the actual path their politics took. Goldman expressed this disappointment in a few accounts from her early articles in the *World* to her autobiography and late pamphlets such as "Trotsky Protests Too Much" (1936). These accounts are the basis of an anarchist's reaction to the "delusion" that the Bolshevik state represented the Russian Revolution. Together with Maksimov, one of the leading anarcho-syndicalists, who lived through the Russian Revolution and later went to exile in the USA<sup>111</sup>, Goldman was the most communicative critic of the Bolshevik regime whose works supply the anarchists' view of the

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<sup>111</sup> G.P. Maksimov, *The Guillotine at Work. Twenty Years of Terror in Russia*. Chicago, Ill.: The Chicago Section of the Alexander Berkman Fund, 1940.

facts of the Russian Revolution. In this chapter I will explore the main reasons behind Goldman's dissatisfaction with the Bolsheviks and pursue the meaning of revolution for her.

The analysis of Goldman's reaction to the Russian Revolution falls into three sections. The first section is the study of the factors that explain what went wrong in the Russian Revolution. The main factors can be classified as the Brest-Litovsk treaty, the suppression of the people's will and the hierarchical centralization of administration. The second section will inquire the predictions of the future of Russia. The central prediction was the growth of the laborers' will and the formation of an opposition along syndicalist lines. Finally, there will be an analysis of the revolution as conceived by Goldman and her fellow anarchists. The basic assumption of Goldman's review of the Russian Revolution rests on a differentiation between the state and the revolution in Russia. Thereupon, Goldman embarks on sketching the chief ethical premises that the revolution must be based upon. Alexander Berkman's review of the Russian Revolution that appeared under the title of *The Russian Tragedy* complements Goldman's perspective because they live in Russia together and they shared very similar views. Following the analysis of Goldman's reaction to the Russian Revolution, in a fourth section Goldman's theories about the form of the future revolution will be studied based on her correspondence in the second half of the 1920s.

## ***4.1 The Unsuccessful Revolution: the mistakes of the Bolsheviks after they took power.***

### **4.1.1 The Brest-Litovsk Treaty**

Goldman wrote favorably about the peace before she came to Russia and she resented her words afterwards. Russia approached Germany for a separate peace in February 1918 although her allies were continuing the war. Goldman received the peace process with praise of the Bolsheviks, who, she thought, represented the will of the masses. The peace with Germany meant the loss of considerable territory in the western and southern Russia that was protested by several groups including the anarchists in Russia. The concession of territory was

interpreted by the opponents of the treaty as a betrayal of the Soviet countries that recently gained a right to self-government after the October Revolution. It also meant the submission to Imperialism. Goldman changed her view about the Brest-Litovsk only after discussing the issue with revolutionaries who were in Russia at the time of the signing of the peace treaty. What seemed a worthy attempt to attain the peace changed to the betrayal of the revolution in Goldman's eyes as she gathered the opinions of people who opposed the treaty. Maria Spiridonova, the leader of the Left Social Revolutionaries, was one of the people who talked to Goldman about the treaty and influenced her view.<sup>112</sup>

Left Social Revolutionaries raised their voice and actively protested against the ratification of the peace treaty because of the heavy loss it incurred on Russia. Some of them assassinated the German ambassador in Russia and faced harsh punishment by the Bolshevik forces. The Brest-Litovsk treaty was ratified after an embittered battle between the revolutionary groups over the leadership of the revolution. In the end the discipline of the Communist Party overwhelmed other critics and Lenin's will prevailed even in the face of criticism from the high echelons of the party. Trotsky and Radek were among the communists who saw the treaty as a dangerous compromise but their voices were stifled by Lenin, who justified the concessions to gain a "breathing spell". The fourth Soviet Congress ratified the peace and concluded the first stage of the Russian Revolution.<sup>113</sup>

The Brest-Litovsk treaty was a turning point in the evolution of the Russian Revolution which opened the door for subsequent evils. Goldman, repudiating her earlier remarks on the signing of a peace treaty, saw the Brest-Litovsk as the Bolsheviks' denial of their earlier revolutionary proclamations that promised self-determination of all oppressed peoples.<sup>114</sup> The fact that the treaty was conducted through a diplomatic process excluding the voice of the Russian and German peoples was a deliberate denial of the Bolsheviks' earlier

<sup>112</sup> Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment*, ch. 16.

<sup>113</sup> Alexander Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy. A Review and an Outlook*. Berlin: Der Syndikalist, 1922. p. 26.

<sup>114</sup> Emma Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, London: Freedom Press, 1922. p. 8.

promise of peace without secret diplomacy and indemnities. Goldman attributed the following Civil War and its repercussions on the unity of the revolutionary forces to the Brest-Litovsk treaty. Linking the beginning of the Red Terror to the treaty, she argued that Lenin's "breathing spell" paved the way that led to the destruction of the Russian Revolution.

#### 4.1.2 Suppression

The Brest-Litovsk peace was, then, a symbolic event before the succeeding attempts that can be categorized as the suppression of the popular expression. The road to the dictatorship of the proletariat, or "the dictatorship of the Communist Party over the proletariat", was prepared by the suppression of vistas that gave expression to the needs of the Russian public. The first group that was banned in connection with the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty was the Left Social Revolutionaries who came under attack after the assassination of the German Ambassador. When the Revolutionaries resisted to submit the assassin and armed skirmishes resulted between this group and the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (Cheka). The Bolsheviks exploited the resistance of the Revolutionaries and waged a political campaign against them, claiming that the latter attempted to seize the government by force.<sup>115</sup> The Bolsheviks proceeded with outlawing the Left Social Revolutionary Party and the task of exterminating its members was left to the Cheka. At the end of this process, the Bolsheviks rid themselves of a significant competitor and banished the legitimate political expression of a substantial group, which largely represented the interests of the peasantry.

Beside the elimination of political organizations such as the Left Social Revolutionaries economic organizations that ameliorated the strain of the Russian people were also abolished. The cooperatives<sup>116</sup>, spread around the countryside, were economic units which established trade between provincial and urban producers. The cooperatives emerged

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<sup>115</sup> Alexander Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 27.

<sup>116</sup> For an account of the accomplishments of the cooperatives in Novorossiysk in 1917, see Boris Yelensky's *Memoirs of the Russian Revolution*. Yelensky later published G.P. Maksimov's work and was a central figure in the Anarchist Black Cross.

as an active network of distribution and exchange before the February Revolution and it was suppressed by the Bolsheviks on the pretext of alleged counter-revolutionary activity. The work of the cooperatives was heralded by Kropotkin, the scientific anarchist, who founded in Moscow the Federalist League<sup>117</sup>, a group of political economy specialists, with the aim of publishing monographs for the reconstruction of industry and agriculture. The government dissolved the League in 1918 as they did the cooperatives, “whose economic functions were vital to the interests of Russia and of the Revolution.”<sup>118</sup> The trade unions were also hindered when their loyalty to the Communist Party was suspected. Therefore, economic organizations which were not dominated by the Bolsheviks were eradicated, frequently by violence. The government’s attitude toward peasants and proletariat was characterized by antagonism. “The Bolshevik tactics encompassed systematic eradication of every sign of dissatisfaction, stifling all criticism and crushing independent opinion or effort.”<sup>119</sup>

In consonance with Marxist theory, the social fundamentals of the October Revolution have been deliberately destroyed. The ultimate object being a powerfully centralized State, with the Communist Party in absolute control, the popular initiative and the revolutionary creative forces of the masses had to be eliminated. The elective system was abolished, first in the army and navy, then in the industries. The Soviets of peasants and workers were castrated and transformed into obedient Communist committees, with the dreaded sword of the Cheka ever hanging over them. The labor unions governmentalized, their proper activities suppressed, they were turned into mere transmitters of the orders of the State.<sup>120</sup>

Berkman was even harsher than Goldman in his critique of the Bolsheviks’ suppression and ruthlessness. He generalized the violence and harsh treatment of the peasants to the extent which reduced the complexity of the Russian Revolution to a systematic effort of the Bolsheviks to dominate the country. He claimed that the Communist State was a monstrous Leviathan which aspired to bring the Russian people to heel by use of military power. He observed the applications of this policy in the Ukraine against the peasants and in Kronstadt against the soldiers and in Petrograd and in Moscow against the workers. Instead of

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<sup>117</sup> Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, ch. 26.

<sup>118</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 28.

<sup>119</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 28.

<sup>120</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 31.

constructive proposals, the Bolsheviks crushed protests with an iron hand not excepting whipping the unsatisfied peasants and razing their villages with artillery.<sup>121</sup> Goldman, on the contrary, was more perceptive of the effects of the suppression on the victims and she related the loss of autonomy and interest from the point of view of the oppressed while avoiding representing the Bolsheviks as a monolithic body of oppressors. She keenly observed the contrast between the popular participation in the revolutions of 1917 and the apathy of the people towards government four years later. She found the Bolsheviks guilty of dissipating the people's zeal and ardor in taking control of the production, not so much the intervention anymore.

Cynicism and coarseness have taken the place of the idealist aspirations that characterized the October Revolution. All inspiration has been paralyzed; popular interest is dead; indifference and apathy are dominant. Not intervention not the blockade – on the contrary, it was the internal policies of the Bolshevik State that alienated the Russian people from the revolution and filled them with hatred of everything emanating from it.<sup>122</sup>

The role of terror in the alienation of the Russian people from the Bolshevik State was very significant and the Extraordinary Commission (Cheka) was mainly responsible for the Terror unleashed against the people. The original reason behind the Cheka was fighting against counterrevolution and speculation but it transcended its primary function and became the terror of every worker and peasant. Arrest, night search, house arrest, execution were its common practices.<sup>123</sup> Goldman and Berkman underlined the summary justice exercised by the Cheka; also, they maintained that most of the conspiracy plots uncovered was in fact invented by the Extraordinary Commission itself in order to prove itself indispensable for the government. The members of the Tsarist secret police were recruited by the Cheka, which gradually became independent from the Government.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 31.

<sup>122</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, London: Freedom Press, 1922. p. 7.

<sup>123</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 28.

<sup>124</sup> Bertrand Russell, *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921.

Goldman's account of the Cheka gave a distinctly dramatic aspect to its operations that lacked in Berkman's words. Goldman described a typical night raid by the Cheka by narrating the event from the point of view of a terrified innocent.

The sudden flight of light in a district, the noise of madly speeding Cheka automobiles are signals for the alarm and dread of the community. The Cheka is at work again! "Who are the unfortunates caught in the net this night? Whose turn will be next?"<sup>125</sup>

Side by side this theatrical language, Goldman used quotes from the Bolshevik press to verify her account of the Cheka which disagreed with the deceptive image of Bolshevik justice. She quoted a statement by the head of the Cheka, Dzerzhinsky which confirmed that they applied justice as they saw fit. Moreover, the weekly organ of Cheka defied protests against torture as "sentimentality".<sup>126</sup> Referring to a session of the Petrograd Soviet where Dzerzhinsky was declared "a saint devoted to the revolution", Goldman employed the metaphor of the Dark Ages to show the real character of the Bolshevik regime.<sup>127</sup>

### 4.1.3 Centralization

Berkman and Goldman went to enumerate the factors that led to the crushing of the Russian Revolution with the centralization. The number of office holders in Russia grew larger since the revolution and it resulted in the loss of efficiency. The officialdom took great pains to exclude the lay initiative causing the paralysis of the economy. The popular will was not reflected in the Soviets and the government monopolized every aspect of the public life. The mechanical centralization of the government caused the separation between the people and the revolution. "A bureaucratic machine is created that is appalling in its parasitism, inefficiency and corruption."<sup>128</sup> The "inefficiency of the centralized bureaucratic machine" is attested by Goldman in a factory warehouse in Kharkov, where she witnessed huge stacks of

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<sup>125</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 15.

<sup>126</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 16. The weekly organ of Cheka No. 3.

<sup>127</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 17.

<sup>128</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 29.

agricultural machinery lying idle.<sup>129</sup> Although these machines were greatly needed by the peasants, who were forced to deliver their products in return for empty promises, the executives of the Communist Party did not undertake the distribution of the machines. Goldman mentioned this as one of countless examples demonstrating the bankruptcy of the authoritarian centralization of Moscow.

The authoritarianism was reinforced by the introduction of the *Yedinolitchiye* (one person management) system, which stripped the factory committees of all power. This system handed the management of every mill, mine, and factory, the railroads and all the other industries to a single expert authority. This specialist was mostly selected from the Tsarist bourgeoisie, and hence the former bankers, mill owners, etc. assumed the full control of the industries. Their power over the workers became absolute since they entertained the authority to hire, discharge, deprive the workers of the food ration, and even turn them over to the Cheka for punishment.<sup>130</sup> Although Lenin heralded this new system as the savior of industries, for Berkman, the transfer of power in the industry back to the old bosses was the worst betrayal of the freedom of workers, and it filled the workers with hatred of socialism.<sup>131</sup> Berkman saw lucidly the inevitability of terrorism emanating from the centralization. The Bolsheviks' belief that a small avant-garde group can achieve social transformation was, in Berkman's words, a "fanatical delusion". Bukharin, the ideologue of the Bolsheviks, advocated the use of terror to transform human nature into suitable Bolshevik citizens, and Lenin derided the liberty of speech and press as a "bourgeois prejudice". Berkman expressed the authoritarian government that would follow from these leaders thus: "The central government is the depository of all knowledge and wisdom. It will do everything. The sole duty of the citizen is obedience. The will of the State is supreme."<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 9.

<sup>130</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 29.

<sup>131</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 30.

<sup>132</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 30.

The obsession of the Bolsheviks to hold power in their hands led to the distrust of the peasants and they discriminated against the peasant representatives in the Soviets. “The agrarian population as a whole was branded by the Bolsheviks as ‘petty bosses’ and ‘bourgeois’, ‘unable to keep with the proletariat on the road to socialism’.”<sup>133</sup> Ukraine was invaded by “a million troops” that testified to the “love of the Ukrainian peasants for the Communist State”.<sup>134</sup> The method of forcible food collection (*Razvyorstka*) aggravated the unpopularity of the government. The Bolsheviks argued that they were compelled to resort to this method because of the refusal of the peasants to feed the city.<sup>135</sup> Goldman claimed, on the other hand, that the peasants’ right to deal with the workers directly was denied and hence their refusal. She went on to maintain that the grain requisitioning system was responsible for the ensuing famine on the Volga in 1922 because the government robbed the peasants of their seeds for the next planting.<sup>136</sup>

On top of all the policies of centralization, mobilization of labor was the next element that subdued the free initiative of the masses and stripped the urban population of their consent and choice of occupation. Although this policy was later withdrawn by Lenin, who admitted the mistake of its implementation, it accomplished to establish “chattel slavery”.<sup>137</sup> It furthered the parasitism of the Bolshevik overseers who drove the workers to toil and punished the deserters. “Men and women, young and old, thinly clad and in thorn shoes, or with only rags on their feet, were indiscriminately driven into the cold and sleet to shovel snow or cut ice. Pleurisy, pneumonia, and tuberculosis resulted.”<sup>138</sup> Under such conditions it was no wonder that the people shirked the work.

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<sup>133</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 25.

<sup>134</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 8.

<sup>135</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 9.

<sup>136</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 9.

<sup>137</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 13.

<sup>138</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 13.

Goldman and Berkman were two of the leaders of the war resisters' movement in the USA and they encouraged conscientious objectors against registering the US army in the WWI. Obligatory military service was reintroduced by the Bolsheviks and it was definitely unacceptable for them who sacrificed so much to end any domination of men over men. Conscientious objectors are an inevitable product of compulsory military service in every land but only some countries acknowledge this right today. Then in Russia, desertion from the army was rampant and conscientious objection was wide spread. The Bolsheviks imposed the death penalty on the conscientious objectors. This horrible practice was largely unnoticed by the other observers of the Russian Revolution. Berkman and Goldman counted the execution of the conscientious objectors among the reasons of the failure of the Russian Revolution.<sup>139</sup>

#### **4.2 Predictions for the Future of the Revolution in Russia.**

Goldman and Berkman left Russia in December 1921 but their hopes for the coming of anarchism in Russia were not thoroughly extinguished. Goldman expected that a period of reconstruction was necessary after the revolution until the country was prepared for anarchism. However, the Bolsheviks' conception of the revolution was entirely different from the expectations of the anarchists, so Goldman and Berkman realized the futility of remaining in Russia which turned into a country without any liberty. Even though the course of events was diverting from the path of true revolution in the anarchist sense, they made some predictions for the eventual restitution of the revolution back to its original owners, the people.

The Soviets were dominated by the Bolsheviks by corrupt means. Goldman witnessed the exclusion of anarchist representatives from the Moscow Soviet and she could not remain optimistic for the entry of people's representatives into the Soviets through election mechanism. The Bolsheviks made sure to poll a majority in every election by employing vile tactics, and

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<sup>139</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 17; Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 31.

even arrest. Yet, she did not lose hope of the people's reclaiming their vote because Kropotkin taught her that it was impossible even for the Bolsheviks to rule a country so huge without the consent of the people. The workers would continue to organize and anarcho-syndicalism seemed to Kropotkin and Goldman as a viable alternative to state socialism.

The future of the revolution in Russia was not totally doomed according to Alexander Berkman, who was more sanguine about the importance of the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Russia. The state was the main employer and it exploited Russian agriculture and industry. When industry developed in Russia, labor organizations were bound to reemerge and they would inevitably clash with the state.<sup>140</sup> Berkman's prediction of the coming of a strong anarcho-syndicalist labor movement relied on the workers' memory of the expropriations of the factories in 1917. The syndicalist tendency prevalent in the Labor Opposition within the Communist Party was Berkman's evidence for the syndicalist character of the future labor movement in Russia. Berkman predicted that the "Communist Dictatorship" would encounter the difficult problems arising out of a strong labor movement.<sup>141</sup>

### **4.3 What was missed? How the revolution should have been made?**

Except Berkman's few remarks on the continuity of the labor movement in Russia, the anarchists did not see a promising future for the Russian Revolution. Goldman was almost sure that the defeat of the revolution by the state was complete; therefore, she did not elaborate on how the Russian Revolution could be rescued. Instead, Goldman and Berkman identified the mistakes that led to the end of the revolution and showed how the revolution should have been made.

The peace treaty should not have been signed at the cost of exposing the Russian people to the German army and imperialism. The defense of the revolution could have been furthered by guerilla warfare and peasant bands. Trotsky proposed this hypothesis in

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<sup>140</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 36.

<sup>141</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 37.

December 1917 and Left Social Revolutionaries called the peasants to arms. Nestor Makhno waged successively against invading Austrian armies with units of peasant bands. “The revolutionary ardor of a people fighting for the fruits of their great revolution” was invincible.<sup>142</sup>

The peasants should not have been discriminated and the administration of the country should have taken their interests into account equally with the workers.<sup>143</sup> The dictatorship of the proletariat was inherently an exclusive conception that left the majority of the laborers outside the government. The resentment of the peasants was well founded who was refused an equal share.

The cooperatives should have been preserved rather than being liquidated. This organization represented an important economic force for the reconstruction of Russia with its 25,000 branches and 9,000,000 membership spread over the country in 1918.<sup>144</sup> Instead of destroying the entire organization, the cooperatives should have been permitted to function with a revolutionary role.

The popular enthusiasm with the revolution should have been kept vital. The survival of the revolutions relies on the participation of the people in the direction of the revolution. The masses should not have been alienated from the decisions regulating their own lives.

If a revolution is to survive in the face of opposition and obstacles, it is of the utmost importance that the light of the revolution be held high before the people; that they should at all times be close to the living, throbbing pulse of the revolution. In other words, it is necessary that the masses should continuously feel that the revolution is of their own making, that they are actively participating in the difficult task of building a new life.<sup>145</sup>

In her analysis of the Russian Revolution, Goldman concluded that what brought the revolution to its end was not the Bolsheviks but their statism. She argued that even if another party took over the result would not change because it is the

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<sup>142</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 27.

<sup>143</sup> Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*, p. 25.

<sup>144</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 10.

<sup>145</sup> Goldman, *The Crushing of the Russian Revolution*, p. 7.

centralization that contradicts with the tenets of the revolution.<sup>146</sup> For Goldman revolution was not a substitution of one dictatorship with another, rather it was the “transvaluation” of human values. She claimed that the socialist conception of the revolution was bankrupt because it focused on obtaining the power on behalf of one class. In actual practice even the seizure of power in the name of the workers did not mean a substantial change because Lenin simply took over the Romanovs’ throne. The revolution did not go beyond the formal rearrangement of institutions and it failed short of achieving the social revolution which could only be brought by a change in the feelings and values of the people.

Goldman wrote that it was a mistake to penalize the intelligentsia only because they had access to education and the intelligentsia should have been depended on in the making of the new life after the revolution.<sup>147</sup> Suppressing the intelligentsia resulted in the paralysis of any innovative effort in the cultural field and she argued that the creativity of the intelligentsia must have been encouraged so that the revolution could have found vital expressions. With every independent initiative suppressed, the Russian Revolution was bound to sink into the heap of previous revolutions that achieved nothing but “scene shifting”.

The statist tendency of the state socialists converted the revolution into a debacle of power seeking. The Bolsheviks sacrificed even the sanctity of human life and justice for the security of their throne. The very essence of revolution, the sense of justice was violated by the Bolsheviks, who equated the reasons of the state with the interests of the revolution and the people.

The revolution must not be devoid of ethical considerations. Goldman found the fundamental error of the Bolsheviks in their separation of the means and ends. She

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<sup>146</sup> Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, ch. 33: Afterword.

<sup>147</sup> Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, ch. 33: Afterword.

argued that the means to attain any worthy purpose must resonate with the purpose. In other words, ends do not justify all means. However lofty the purpose of the revolution might have been, the revolutionary should bear in mind that every action is not justified. The inevitability of violence in every evolution was granted by Goldman who thought that violence must not be made a principle and terror cannot be made an ideal practice in the struggle against the enemies of the revolution. Once the revolutionary methods became devoid of ethical concepts, it was impossible to save the revolution from sinking into the depths of demoralization. The identity of the revolution was described by Goldman in these words:

No revolution can ever succeed as a factor of liberation unless the MEANS used to further it be identical in spirit and tendency with the PURPOSES to be achieved. 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 redistributor of social well-being. It is all that, yet more, much more. It is, first and foremost, the TRANSVALUATOR, 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.

Its first ethical precept is the identity of means used and aims sought. The ultimate end of all revolutionary social change is to establish the sanctity of human life, the dignity of man, the right of every human being to liberty and well being. Unless this be the essential aim of revolution, violent social changes would have no justification. For external social alterations can be, and have been, accomplished by the normal processes of evolution. Revolution, on the contrary signifies not mere external change, but internal, basic, fundamental change. That internal change of concepts and ideas, permeating ever-larger social strata, finally culminates in the violent upheaval known as revolution.<sup>148</sup>

The revolution, then, was not an institutional change for Goldman. She understood revolution as a process in which human dignity is preserved and human beings are not restrained from liberty. Therefore, revolution is not necessarily a violent upheaval to remove the old tyrant, it is rather an ever going struggle to defeat the

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<sup>148</sup> Goldman, *My Disillusionment*, ch. 33: Afterword.

obstacles before the liberty and the persecutors of dignified human existences. There is no role of armed struggle involved in the revolution because the purpose and the means of the revolution was infused with the ulterior goal of opening up vistas for free expression and protecting the sanctity of human life. Since taking away the government from one set of rulers in favor of another is not the purpose of the revolution, its means cannot be the forcible removal of the old regime by power of guns and a momentary culmination of power take over is not worthy to be titled a revolution.

#### **4.4 A New Theory of Revolution**

Goldman's idea of the revolution continued to evolve after she wrote her memoirs of Russia and started to collect funds for the imprisoned revolutionaries in Russia. Berkman was more dedicated to the work of prisoners' relief than Goldman who left Germany for England where she launched speaking activities. Her lectures revealed the actual face of the Russian Revolution to the labor movement in England which was awed by the success of the Bolsheviks. In her correspondence with a reviewer of her book, *My Disillusionment*, she explained her outlook on the role of the revolution in the revolutionary process. Her views reflected that revolution itself was not her aim anymore and she was content with a harder challenge of preparing the masses for anarchism through education.

Above all, she repudiated her former belief that the revolution could usher the way for anarchism. She realized that a more subtle and constructive process could be the way rather than social upheavals that would cost destruction and human lives. Nevertheless, she unwittingly admitted the necessity of violence due to the stubbornness of the old institutions, and she retained the inevitability of revolutions because they were nothing else but the breaking point of accumulated evolutionary forces. However, she thought that the amount of violence could be reduced by preparation and progress that would remold the masses.

I have never, as far as I can remember, believed that revolutions will usher in a social structure which will rest upon individual liberty and voluntary social cooperation. I did

believe that the present system will not go without some violent upheaval. Not because I am in favor of violence, but because old institutions have a tremendous tenacity to hang on. However, I have not thought in the past and it certainly does not occur to me now that a violent change of institutions would be sufficient to usher in a new era.

It is true that my Russian experience has made me see what I did not see before, namely the imperative necessity of intensive educational work which would help to emancipate people from their deep-rooted fetishes and superstitions. With many revolutionists I foolishly believed that the principal thing is to get people to rise against the oppressive institutions and that everything else will take care of itself. I have learnt since the fallacy of this on the part of Bakunin – much as I continue to revere him in other respects – that the “Spirit of Destruction” also contains the element of construction.”

Certainly the Russian experiment failed to demonstrate this idea. The people who so heroically made the Revolution were so easily whipped into line and so easily became submissive to the communist state because they were taught that it is sufficient to make a revolution and the rest will follow. Two years in Russia compelled me to transvalue my values.<sup>149</sup>

She grew weary of violence to the extent that she acclaimed Tolstoy and Gandhi for their position on non-violence, although she kept claiming that fundamental changes always would be violent. Therefore she transformed her view of the revolution from a violent breakdown of the old regime to a process of reconstruction. This process would be one of education. The defense of the revolution, she argued, should never go so far as to suppress others’ opinions and the revolutionary must always allow the expression of others by acts and by words. “I want to eliminate as much as possible the need for violence. I want the revolution to be understood as a process of reconstruction rather than what we believed it to be until now, a process of destruction.”<sup>150</sup>

The issue of violence still haunted the mind of Alexander Berkman who undertook the writing of a textbook on anarcho-communism. Berkman asked for suggestions from Emma Goldman on topics that proved unsolvable to him with regards to the crimes that would be committed during the revolution. He could not resolve the question of how to

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<sup>149</sup> Emma Goldman, letter to Havelock Ellis, November 8, 1925. from Bristol. Reproduced in Richard and Anna Maria Drinnon (eds.), *Nowhere at Home: Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman*, New York: Schocken Books, 1975. p 68-69.

<sup>150</sup> Emma Goldman, letter to Alexander Berkman, June 29, 1928. from St. Tropez, France. Reproduced in Richard and Anna Maria Drinnon (eds.), *Nowhere at Home: Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman*, New York: Schocken Books, 1975. p 87.

punish a murderer or a rapist and came to a dead end in his theoretical account.<sup>151</sup> He saw no way out of the dilemma of crime without establishing court, prison, and police. Goldman sternly advocated for the abolishment of prison in the revolutionary course that would lead to anarchism and argued that his problems arose from an impossible urge to solve those questions that can be solved only in the natural flow of life. Furthermore, she insisted that if the revolution was understood as a process of reconstruction, whose purpose was transformation, and then terror and prisons would become unnecessary with the rest of other evils.<sup>152</sup> The need of violence and the revolution led Goldman to a dilemma between the two and she refused to bow to the need of systematic violence at the expense of the revolution. The argument for the need of violence came from the historical example of the French Revolution. She believed in the progress of mankind and in the advance of science in dealing with social issues; therefore, she recognized the imperative to change the ideal of the revolution accordingly. She was aware of the developments in the modern science and followed the new definitions of crime and new techniques of punishment. This awareness guided her judgment that historical examples could not rule the coming revolutions, which should be as untainted with violence as possible.

If revolution cannot solve the need of violence and terror, then I am against revolution. And I am done with the thought of revolution in terms of destruction and terror for all times. I insist if we can undergo changes in every other method of dealing with social issues, we will also learn to change in the methods of revolution. I think it can be done. If not, I shall relinquish my belief in revolution. That not only because of so much waste of human lives, but also because it is all so futile, an endless repetition of the same old refrain, “the French Revolution was that way. All revolutions must be that way.”<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Alexander Berkman, letter to Emma Goldman, June 25, 1928. from Paris. Reproduced in Richard and Anna Maria Drinnon (eds.), *Nowhere at Home: Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman*, New York: Schocken Books, 1975. p 83.

<sup>152</sup> Emma Goldman, letter to Alexander Berkman, July 3, 1928. from St. Tropez, France. Reproduced in Richard and Anna Maria Drinnon (eds.), *Nowhere at Home: Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman*, New York: Schocken Books, 1975. p 89.

<sup>153</sup> Emma Goldman, letter to Alexander Berkman, July 3, 1928. from St. Tropez, France. Reproduced in Richard and Anna Maria Drinnon (eds.), *Nowhere at Home: Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman*, New York: Schocken Books, 1975. p 90.

Goldman's theory of revolution developed from concrete negative examples she experienced in the Russian Revolution to a positive definition. This new definition encourages gradual efforts rather than momentous political changes. This transformation of the value of revolution is a significant change from her previous perception of the revolution and the role of violence in it. Goldman recognized the wisdom of Gandhi and Tolstoy's pacifism; she still persisted in asserting that violence can occasionally be necessary. However, she thought the reduction of the inevitable violence must be the work of the revolutionary by education and organization, but not the precipitation of the revolution by violence because revolutions were, Goldman claimed, like natural disasters.

## Conclusion

The Russian Revolution was a world event which transformed many nations and individuals as it absorbed the energies of uncountable revolutionaries. Anarchists were among the first who gathered under the flag of the revolution and some of them sacrificed their lives in its defense. The Russian Revolution, however, did not develop as they hoped and the Bolshevik State smothered their expectations for the emergence of the stateless society out of the ashes of the collapsing Tsardom. Quite a few anarchists perished under the heels of the Bolshevik State and more left Soviet Russia to survive and to rekindle the hope of anarchism. With the “success” of the Russian Revolution, revolution in another country became more difficult, if not impossible, because the ranks of labor in the West became enchanted with the Soviet Russia. Against this current in the mass politics of the 1920s, very few individuals could remain distanced from the spell of the “Bolshevik myth”.

Several factors contributed to Emma Goldman’s silence during her two years in Russia: procrastination and fear surveillance were especially salient reasons behind her silence. She also avoided bringing harm to the revolution by inadvertently playing into the hands of the counter-revolutionaries. Goldman stayed in Russia for two years although she was aware that the regime was leaning towards dictatorship because she was curious about the origins of the revolution and she wanted to study the reasons of the failure of the revolution by herself. The work that occupied Goldman and Berkman during the second half of 1920 gave them opportunity to travel in the country and observe the effects of the revolution on the peasants and urban centers in the provinces.

Goldman's criticism of the Russian Revolution was centered on the state ideal of the Bolsheviks. Goldman and Berkman attacked the Brest-Litovsk treaty and the policy of suppression and centralization as the main wrongs done by the Bolshevik state. Berkman predicted the development of a syndicalist labor movement in the future in Russia. Goldman argued that the cooperatives should not have been abolished and masses must not have been alienated for the revolution to be kept on its tracks toward a libertarian ideal in Russia. Goldman in later years developed the theory of revolution through discussions with her correspondents to encompass a process of transformation and transvaluation.

Emma Goldman had fought 30 years in America for the ideal of anarchism and was filled with joy when she received the news of the overthrow of the Provincial Government in Russia. The Bolsheviks, who undertook the organization of the post-revolutionary Russia, seemed to Goldman in her American prison like the foam on the waves of revolutionary Russian masses. The awakened masses, she thought, would not surrender the government to a new power elite and that the Bolshevik leaders had to go if they ceased to express what the people needed. Her belief was shattered when she saw the reality of the Russian Revolution after her deportation and she no longer believed in the revolutionary character of the Bolsheviks after the Kronstadt rebellion. Goldman left Russia completely disillusioned with the Bolshevik State and suspicious of her former perception of how revolution should be. In a few years, Goldman came to see the revolution that would usher the anarchist organization of life not so much as a violent destruction of the old institutions but as a gradual effort of building up.

The new value that Goldman attributed to revolution is paradigmatic for the social movements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that aspire for a more balanced and more just organization of life on a global scale. Revolution, in the outmoded, Bolshevik sense of the word, does not correspond to the needs of current revolutionary movements, which struggle to transform the

world on many frontiers. The precious values of the world are coming under attack by diverse forces of capitalism. New identities are constantly emerging and they become selectively marginalized. The revolutionary individuals realize the futility of seizing the reigns of the state for short-term victory. The revolutionary consciousness of today can be raised along the lines of Goldman's late definition of revolution. Patiently building for the preparation of a just order and for the elimination of repression must be the model of revolution among the socially conscious activists.

One of the major threats posed against the dignity of human beings and the safety of human life is deportation. Emma Goldman was one of the early victims of deportation. Modern states monopolize a territory and deny free entry to the citizens of other states, except those who are granted a visa. If a person is not a citizen of any state or does not have a passport, then she cannot enter the territory of any state. Within their territory, states entertain absolute power to decide which immigrants can be tolerated, while those who fail to obtain an extension for their residence or an asylum have to go. In Turkey, Greece, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, illegal immigrants are imprisoned until they are deported. In Sweden, refugees demonstrate for their rights with the slogan "no one is illegal". The number of people, who face the threat of deportation today, is more than it was ever before and this multitude is growing more and more conscious of the common danger it is exposed to. For this reason, there is a new identity that can be defined as vulnerability to deportation. Emma Goldman can be reinterpreted by the future historians, who will bear sensitivity to this new identity, as a forerunner of deported people. Her case can be exploited for arguments against deportation.

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