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# An Anarchist on Russia: A Reply to Emma Goldman.

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Emma Goldman's series of articles recently published and syndicated by the *New York World*, were mendacious in thought, malicious in intent, but relevant in purpose. It is Emma's desire to return to the United States, where she enjoyed the plaudits of an adolescent audience. The people of Revolutionary Russia are far beyond any radical ideas that Miss Goldman ever had.

The articles must be considered as they are intended, a gentle tapping of the lady at the doors of the United States. The doors which she, with a regretful whimper describes as locked and sealed. She is not angry at the United States, which she says "robbed her of her home and hearth," but is viciously mad at Soviet Russia, which gave her admittance, employment, shelter, and sustenance. Is her reward to the Soviet government any less than ingratitude?

Her egoism is for the time being satiated in knowing that the mongers of sensationalism took advantage of her malignant attacks on Russia, and flamboyantly peddled them all over the United States. She will protest a little under her breath to think that no Labor or Socialist papers or publications of radical tendency have seen fit to reproduce her stories even in part. The fact is a vast majority of the workers of the United States are and will remain loyal to Soviet Russia and its revolution, notwithstanding the fact that Emma Goldman has hitched herself up with Sam Gompers, whose warped mentality has never conceived a constructive thought or nursed a radical idea.

Miss Goldman tripped up on the *World* articles, and has started to fall. When a woman falls, there is no telling the limit to which she will go. In my opinion there will be more articles, of the most scurrilous character from her pen, the instrument with which she is trying to pick the locks of the bourgeois doors sealed against her, while every word of the story she writes will condemn her in the minds of her erstwhile friends, who know that when she came to Russia that she was welcomed, and was assigned an important post by the Soviet Government, equipped with special cars and assistants, her duty being to collect the documents and relics of the revolution for the museum established by the Workers' Republic. Failure in this important work was due to inability, or perhaps, what is so prominent in so many Anarchists, lack of the sense of coordination.

Miss Goldman, unlike the Ibsen character she referred to, who untied a knot and unraveled the entire fabric, presents a skein more difficult to untangle. For example, she says, "How 'indecent' of the Russian people to light a conflagration which might have fired the whole world with, revolution, just at the time when war profits were running high and Imperialism was so confident of complete triumph!" Then she twists herself into the assertion, "Perhaps the revolution was doomed at its birth, coming as it did on the heels of four years of war, which had drained Russia of her best manhood, sapped her blood and devastated her land. The revolution may not have had the strength

to withstand the mad onslaught of the world.” She truthfully proceeds, “The interventionists murdered millions of Russians, the blockade starved and froze women and children by the hundreds of thousands, and Russia turned into a vast wilderness of agony and despair.” Then she, with more entanglements, contradicts herself, and the preceding statement, which the world knows to be true, by the following foolish remarks, “The Marxian policies of the Bolsheviki, the tactics, first extolled as indispensable to the life of the revolution, only to be discarded as harmful after they had wrought misery and despair. This trust and antagonism were the factors that slowly undermined the faith of the people in the revolution.”

After telling that the Russian revolution was doomed at its birth, fought by united capitalism of all countries, she tries to show that it was only the Marxian policies that weakened the strength of the revolution. Not entirely satisfied with this statement, which she knew to be false when she wrote it, she adds, “Counterrevolutionists, Right Socialist Revolutionaries, Cadets, and Mensheviks were the disrupting internal forces against Russia.” She could have also truthfully said, “Anarchists of the Makhno school, leader of the bandits,” of which Emma seems to be a warm disciple. Something more will be said of the viciousness of this type of anarchist. Miss Goldman quotes from somewhere, “It was not against the Russian people, but against the Bolsheviki — they have instigated the revolution, and they must be exterminated.” This is given as the hypocritical attitude of the interventionists, but I ask if it is not exactly the thing she had in her heart to do with her miserable malignant stories.

After assigning several causes for the death of the revolution, first, that it was weakened unto death at its birth, then throttled by the interventionists, murderers who caused the blockade and starved and froze women and children by the hundreds of thousands, crippled by tactics that undermined the faith of the people, mortally

wounded by the acts of the counterrevolution, she then blandly asserts, “The revolution was slain by the Bolsheviki.” Attempts to prove that the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was “the first of all the evils,” strangely saying that “it strangled the revolution”; blaming the ratification on Lenin, who demanded it as a breathing spell.

I have received from Trotsky his opinions on the Brest-Litovsk Peace, which I submit for the reader’s enlightenment. The following are his words:

I have read the newspaper cuttings which you sent me containing the articles — the author of which apparently has not yet grown out of her infancy — discussing the Russian Revolution and the Brest-Litovsk peace.

In one of the articles you sent me it is stated that I was “opposed to the Brest-Litovsk peace, but I submitted to the discipline of the Party; that this Brest-Litovsk peace, which signified the trampling under foot of all the principles we have proclaimed,” was the source of all the misfortunes that have beset the revolution; that the civil war was a punishment for our “treachery,” and that we surrendered Estonia, Latvia, and the Ukraine to German Imperialism.

Although it is inconvenient to give up some of one’s time to criticize this childish prattle, one nevertheless must do so, for this prattle is published, and evidently somebody reads it.

1. We signed the Brest-Litovsk peace because Germany had a mighty capitalist army, and we had not then a revolutionary army. The Brest-Litovsk peace may be regarded as a betrayal to the same extent that the acceptance of unfavorable conditions by workers after an unsuccessful strike may be regarded as a betrayal.

We “betrayed” Latvia and the Ukraine. But was it possible for us at that time to free them? If so, in what way? And why does our magnanimous but stupid author confine her commiseration for Latvia and the Ukraine? Why does she not demand that we should have liberated Germany itself, and several other countries which were then groaning and which are still groaning under the oppression of Imperialism?

As a matter of fact, it was with the greatest effort that we managed to retain part of our territory at the time when German militarism, at that time omnipotent, seized the other part.

2. Why did I oppose the Brest-Litovsk peace? The author states the case falsely. It is perfectly true that I, in complete agreement with our Party, did not sign the Brest-Litovsk peace, hoping that the German

workers would not permit the Junkers to send their troops against Revolutionary Russia after the latter had openly declared that it would stop fighting and demobilize her army. Comrade Lenin regarded this step too risky, and thought that the Hohenzollerns would crush the Revolution before the German workers would rise.

After my refusal to sign the peace treaty in Brest-Litovsk, the German army took up the offensive. We were quite impotent. What should we have done? We could either have thrown the half-armed flower of the working class against the Kaiser, and thus sealed the fate of the Revolution, or we could have accepted temporarily the noose of the Brest-Litovsk peace. We did the latter.

Thus we did all we could. Disarmed as we were at that time, we refused to capitulate, and appealed for assistance to the German workers, to the European workers and to the working class of the whole world. But the Junkers' offensive commenced sooner than the assistance of the proletariat materialized. We had temporarily to capitulate in order the more surely to prepare the revolutionary "revanche." The class-conscious workers of the various countries understood the sense of our action in connection with the Brest-Litovsk peace. But the sentimental, anarchistic sheep, in bleating out her articles, did not trouble to think about historical realities, relation of forces, etc. It has its own tactics; in New York it bleats against capitalism, then it strays into Moscow, and there bleats against the treachery of the Soviet Republic, and then strays back again into the fold of the capitalist countries. It is much simpler to bleat against history than to take a real part in the making of it.

3. All talk about the Brest-Litovsk peace being the cause of the civil war is not less foolish. The civil war was the result of the irreconcilability of interests between the victorious proletariat and the defeated bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie sought aid from the Germans and the Allies. A proletarian revolution is impossible without civil war. The intervention of one or another foreign army is only an episode in it. The statement that the Ukrainian peasant became hostile to the Bolsheviks owing to the Brest-Litovsk peace is all nonsense. On the contrary, under the oppression of the Junkers, Bolshevism in the Ukraine became the standard, not only of social, but also of national emancipation. All the insurgents began to call themselves Bolsheviks.

It is strange that Emma Goldman did not take issue with the Brest-Litovsk Peace before she left the United States. Perhaps she knew that criticizing the Bolshevik revolution would not give

her the same opportunity for exploitation as the means she resorted to. At any rate, it is a long silence from March, 1917, until March, 1922. It may be that, knowing that she was to be deported to Russia, she felt that silence was golden, while her collections were mostly currency and silver.

If Emma Goldman had been describing the famine area, one could understand what she meant when she speaks of only having seen one child in Russia who laughed. Because it is true that in that vast territory comprising several provinces, hunger has daily counted its tolls of hundreds of once smiling and laughing children. Starving children can't laugh. It is to be regretted that Emma could not have visited Sparrow's Hill, and seen there the thousands of children, boys and girls, robust and rugged, rosy-cheeked and beautiful in their remarkable collective exercise. Or have spent days at Pushkino, or some of the many hundreds of similar communities throughout Russia, where the summer homes of the bourgeoisie are turned into children's colonies. At one of these homes I saw between 40 and 50 of these little tots just after their bath, romping and frolicking, laughing and full of glee, a sight that would please the heart of almost any man or woman. Too bad that Miss Goldman could not have visited the Moscow River within the environs of the city, where on summer days anyone could see the naked boys and girls at play enjoying a plunge in the water. She should have met the children that Mary Heaton Vorse had temporarily adopted while here. Little Demitrus and his friends would have been other laughing children to her credit. It is a great loss to think that she did not visit Children's Town. There the babes are learning, as they do in play, the advantage of association and solidarity. It is possible that Miss Goldman might have learned, even from the little ones, that rules of order, discipline and self-government are the essentials of a socialized community. Miss Goldman would mention in the same breath men of such splendid character and attributes as Lunacharsky and Gorky, comparing

them with that crooked little politician, Judge Lindsay, who conducted the Juvenile Court in Denver, Colorado, and who only by the efforts of the officials of the Western Federation of Miners was prevented from sending little boys, who for delinquency were dealt with in his court, to work in the beet fields of Colorado, there to take the place of Russian emigrants who seasonally migrated from industrial centres for that work.

Emma admits, "More and more I came to see that the Bolsheviki were trying to do all they could for the children, but that their efforts were being defeated by the parasitic bureaucracy their State had created." She does not explain that the Soviet government, which is trying to do all it can for the child has been compelled to depend largely upon teachers of the old regime. These and their cohorts are the parasites of which she complains, but of them she makes no mention.

Lunacharsky, the head of education, and hundreds of splendid Communist women, among them the wives of Zinoviev and Radek, are striving for the children's sake to for ever entomb the "dead souls," and to correct other detrimental influences. Miss Goldman knows, but she does not write about the hundreds of children that daily starve to death in the United States, the many thousands that go to school hungry every morning — this in a country with an abundance of food! Russia with one bountiful harvest, and the children of this great Republic will come into their own.

Russia is an agricultural country where 87 percent of its vast population are engaged in the farming industry. This great multitude of people prior to the revolutions was dominated by an absolute monarchy. A large number of the workers and peasants were either slaves or serfs, physically to the Tsar, nobles and landlords; mentally to the Greek Catholic Church and priests. Now it is different as a direct result of the Bolshevik revolution, with the slogan of "All Power to the Soviets," these people are free men and women.

In the terrible days of privation and actual starvation, where millions have succumbed to famine and disease, the Soviet Government has done all within human power to relieve the situation and to succor the people. They have done that which only a socialized government could do — they have appropriated the gold, silver, and jewels of the churches to buy food for the perishing. They have garnered the grain from all quarters of the Republic to provide seed and sustenance.

Were it not for the blockade of the ports and borders by unscrupulous capitalist nations, civil war precipitated by the same powers, counterrevolutionary plots, of disgruntled anarchists, monarchists, Cadets, and Socialist Revolutionaries, millions of lives could have been saved. Four years of devastation and bloodshed would have been turned into four years of reconstruction and service. Russia would have been the guiding star, which she is destined to be, for the oppressed of the world.

In Russia there are no trade unions. Miss Goldman to the contrary notwithstanding. There are more than 7,000,000 organized workers, millions of whom have been united under the guidance of Communists. It is true that for a time membership was compulsory. The Open Shop policy had no footing in Russia. The union is likewise open; there are no restrictions to membership. Dues are deducted, as a small percentage was from the rations of members. Are not the miners of the United States fighting for the check-off, to deduct dues, fines, and assessments from the pay of members? It is compulsory that all men employed shall be members, where the miners are organized.

In Russia the dues are deducted by the union and used for the benefit of the membership. No per capita is paid for the formation of an appendix like the AF of L, which is not even a reliable mouthpiece. In Russia labor is paramount, the unions are "schools for communism"; some anarchists and no capitalists like the idea. Educational and cultural courses are provided. It is likewise the

proud boast of Russia that in a comparatively short time there will not be an illiterate man in the army.

The unions control their magnificent buildings. The ownership of all the buildings is vested with the government. Streets, boulevards, academies, vessels, etc., are in many instances dedicated to labor and its stalwart champions. The mighty labor forces of Russia are united through the various unions of industry, sections of which are developing into labor trusts. These, in their initial efforts are supported by the Soviet Government. The membership is being educated and is rapidly learning the practical methods of industrial administration.

Emma Goldman, after her experiences in the United States, after two years under the Soviet government, ventures the assertion "I was never more convinced of the truth of my ideas, never in my life had greater proof of the logic and justice of anarchism." Kropotkin, speaking, says: "We anarchists have talked much about the revolution, but how many have ever taken pains to prepare for the actual work during and after the revolution? The Russian Revolution has demonstrated the imperativeness of such preparation of practical reconstructive work."

Lucy Parsons, widow of the martyred, anarchist, Albert Parsons, severely criticizes Emma Goldman because she sold herself to the capitalist press of the United States. She characterizes the Goldman articles in effect as a rehash of the supercilious vaporings of capitalist reporters.

The following excerpts of a letter which Miss Goldman has read, written by a former anarchist, shows that she has received better advice than her vagaries would indicate.

And the Revolution is "Bolshevism." History has written it, and you or I cannot unwrite it. The world is split into two divisions now for battle, for war. In mar dictatorship wins and nothing else can win. Dictatorship is bad, so are gut-ripping bayonets bad, but dictatorship and bayonets win for one side or the other, and there are only two

sides. From now on there can only be the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat until the bourgeoisie is exterminated (as a class). You can call it "the dictatorship of Communist Politicians" if you like, and that won't alter the case in the least; the revolution is going to proceed, and the dictatorship of the proletariat is going to exterminate by force, and with what you may call "injustice," the property-owning class, as a class, and all that unconsciously serves the property-owning class by opposing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

When it is all over with, shall you say that you have not taken part in the great final struggle, because you did not like the way life decreed that the struggle should be? Or do you imagine that the revolution is going to take some other form than the dictatorship of the proletariat against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie?

I know you look with horror and disappointment upon my comparative unconcern with the fate of the men I knew in the past as revolutionists, and who are threatened with being crushed by the revolutionary trend which they oppose. You will not look out and see that a hundred times as many as they, better men than they, die in a single day of the revolution, and you will not see that their opposition costs the revolution a hundred times as many lives as theirs. I know that they are sincere. So were the Left SRs. So was Kerensky. So was Babushka (Breshkovskaya). For the fate of sincere people I, too, have regard; but I can only give them a glance or a minute while the revolution is going on, and when the revolution is threatened I cannot give them that. I know ten times as many as they who are sincere as they, and who are dying day by day for the revolution. The follies of those first mentioned are costing the lives of the better men, better in the sense that they serve the revolution better. I am not moralizing; no man is better than another in the abstract. One is better than another only for a specific purpose; and during the revolution, the Revolution is the only purpose that I can value things for.

A good sample of "revolutionary individual initiative" is the Kronstadt affair. I have given it a little study since I saw you last. There is no question that if the Kronstadt affair had not been wiped out, it would have resulted in the downfall

of the Soviet Power. There is no doubt that many of the participants who called themselves Anarchists and SRs were sincere in their notions. Subjectively they were doubtlessly highly moral revolutionists. But objectively it was a filthy counterrevolution. I don't give a damn for the moral values. The counterrevolutionary officers came over from Finland (protected by the Finnish Government!) and joined the anarchists and the SRs and the Mensheviks. The French Navy lay outside the frozen area, waiting for the "Anarchists" (who could compromise enough to associate with Cadet officers), to hold Kronstadt until the ice would break and let the French and British battleships fight for "Soviets without Bolsheviks"! Yes, that is a fine example of free and easy "revolution" without discipline. The fellows that did this crazy thing, killed thousands of the best and youngest and bravest of the soldiers that the revolution had. And yet there are people who call themselves "Anarchists," and ask me to pity the fellows who were responsible for the Kronstadt affair. Monks that ponder in their cells on the misfortunes of man in general can pity them, I have not time to pity such men.

There are people calling themselves "Anarchists" that are now saving that Kronstadt was the real "Revolution." If such people were to be allowed to operate with "free speech" and "free demonstration" within the circle that is held by the bayonets of the Red Army, the revolution would be dead now, and here would reign the "democratic freedom" and pogroms of Capitalist Hungary, with Wrangel, Semënov, Pilsudski, Harding, Briand, and Lloyd George guaranteeing you your "freedom of revolutionary initiative."

Miss Goldman heard Bukharin at the Congress of the Red Labor Union International tell of some of the counterrevolutionary deeds of the anarchists in Russia. In the October days of '17, anarchist groups sprang up in the Soviets, having neither program nor slogan of their own, were carried along by the hurricane of the mass movement. Their actions are recorded in a Communist document. "It was the terrible crisis of the spring of 1918 the anarchists began to counter and oppose the efforts of the Soviet Government, who,

realizing the needs of the country, were endeavoring to reestablish industry. Systematically they, opposed the decrees of the Communist Party, undermined the discipline of labor, also took advantage of many disgruntled rich farmers and dissatisfied speculators, organizing them into groups both in village and town, under the black flag of anarchism. When that criminal Keburie robbed the All-Russian Land Union and was arrested the anarchist groups in Moscow demanded his release."

White Guards and interventionists, finding the "anarchist" belief identical with their own, began to finance and assist them in their exploits. This sort of "anarchist" forgot to have their representatives in the Soviet; all they were concerned with was plunder. Makhno and his anarchists believed in no discipline but their own, indulged in excesses and debauchery. He joined forces with Denikin in the drive north, and at the time these forces were within 70 miles of Moscow a bomb was thrown by anarchists into the Communist Party Executive offices, on Leontovsky Place, resulting in the killing of 12 responsible workers and wounding of 55 others, many of whom were employed in the factories of Moscow. Among the injured was Bukharin, editor of *Pravda*, whom many workers in the United States will remember when he was on his speaking tour in that country. The dead were train conductor Ignatova; Volkova, department store girl; Zargoski, 20 years connected with the revolutionary movement; Razerenov-Nikitin, engraver; Nikolaev, secretary of the Railroad Workers' Union of Moscow; Titov, molder; Kroptov, an old teacher; Haldina, aged 18, communist girl worker; Safonov, molder; Kvasha, one of the first organizers of the Sabotnik (voluntary Saturday work); Kolbin and Tankus, worker-students of the Sverdlov University.

The "anarchist" Makhno is mentioned by Emma Goldman as a friend and sending food to Kropotkin. In a diary of Fedora-Gianko, the wife of Makhno, are recorded facts and dates to show

that these marauders were guilty of arson, train-wrecking, murder, robbery, all committed against the Soviet Government. By them workers were killed, villages destroyed, bridges blown up, wrecks caused by wild engines turned loose against approaching trains until Makhno was driven from the country. This kind of work against the Soviet Government meets with the approval of Miss Goldman. Her heart was never with the Bolshevik revolution. Compelled to leave the United States, she came to Russia as there was no other place to which she could go. Friends have not cut her off; she has excommunicated herself.

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