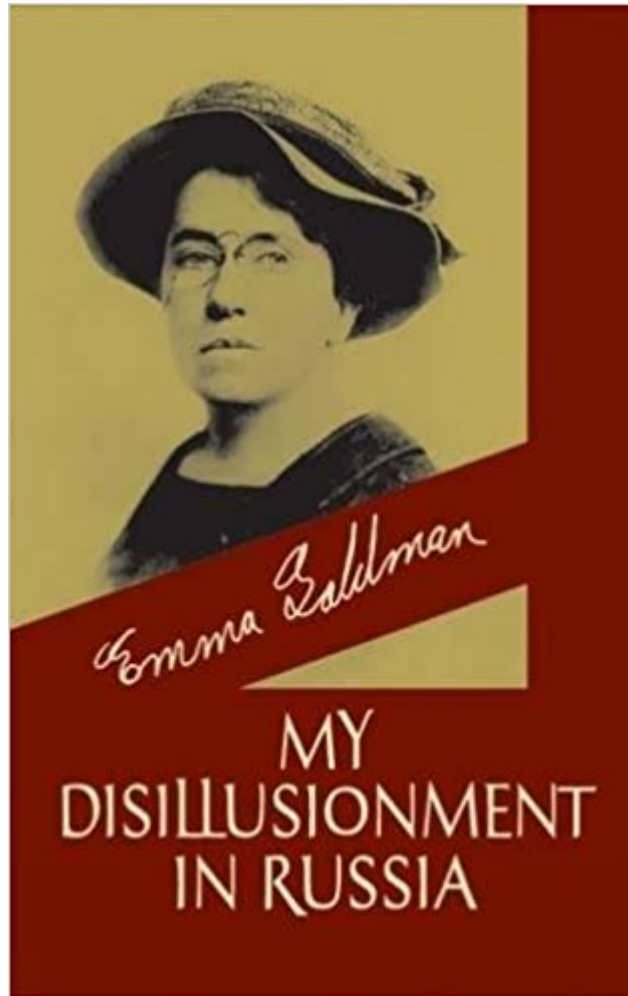




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My Disillusionment In Russia



Synopsis

A teenager when she and her family emigrated to the United States, Emma Goldman (1869–1940) was so greatly affected by Chicago's Haymarket Square tragedy in 1886 that she became a revolutionary and campaigned for such then-controversial transformations in society as higher wages, the eight-hour workday, birth control, and abolition of the draft. Because of these activities, she was deported to Russia in 1919, where she was able to witness the Revolution's aftermath firsthand. Horrified by what she saw in major cities and revolted by the Bolshevik dictatorship, she left the country in 1921 and, soon after, set down her thoughts in two books – *My Disillusionment in Russia* and *My Further Disillusionment in Russia*. She wrote passionately about political harassment and forced labor inflicted upon the masses, rampant opportunism raging throughout the Soviet government, industrial militarization, persecution of anarchists, and the government's increased use of deportation as a political weapon. Her writings helped turn a large number of socialists against the Bolshevik government. Her two books have been combined in this Dover edition – a volume that will be of value to teachers, students, and anyone interested in the socio-economic problems of the early 20th century.

Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications (November 19, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 048643270X

ISBN-13: 978-0486432700

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.6 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 11 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #453,061 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #125 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Anarchism](#) #438 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Russian & Former Soviet Union](#) #1199 in [Books > History > Asia > Russia](#)

Customer Reviews

Emma Goldman (1869–1940) was an anarchist known for her political activism, writing and speeches. She played a pivotal role in the development of anarchist political philosophy in North America and Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. Born in Kovno in the Russian

Empire (now Kaunas in Lithuania), Goldman emigrated to the US in 1885 and lived in New York City, where she joined the burgeoning anarchist movement. Attracted to anarchism after the Haymarket affair, Goldman became a writer and a renowned lecturer on anarchist philosophy, women's rights, and social issues, attracting crowds of thousands. She and anarchist writer Alexander Berkman, her lover and lifelong friend, planned to assassinate Henry Clay Frick as an act of propaganda of the deed. Though Frick survived the attempt on his life, Berkman was sentenced to twenty-two years in prison. Goldman was imprisoned several times in the years that followed, for "inciting to riot" and illegally distributing information about birth control. In 1906, Goldman founded the anarchist journal *Mother Earth*. In 1917, Goldman and Berkman were sentenced to two years in jail for conspiring to "induce persons not to register" for the newly instated draft. After their release from prison, they were arrested—along with hundreds of others—and deported to Russia. Initially supportive of that country's Bolshevik revolution, Goldman quickly voiced her opposition to the Soviet use of violence and the repression of independent voices. In 1923, she wrote a book about her experiences, *My Disillusionment in Russia*. While living in England, Canada, and France, she wrote an autobiography called *Living My Life*. After the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, she traveled to Spain to support the anarchist revolution there. She died in Toronto on May 14, 1940. During her life, Goldman was lionized as a free-thinking "rebel woman" by admirers, and derided by critics as an advocate of politically motivated murder and violent revolution. Her writing and lectures spanned a wide variety of issues, including prisons, atheism, freedom of speech, militarism, capitalism, marriage, free love, and homosexuality. Although she distanced herself from first-wave feminism and its efforts toward women's suffrage, she developed new ways of incorporating gender politics into anarchism. After decades of obscurity, Goldman's iconic status was revived in the 1970s, when feminist and anarchist scholars rekindled popular interest in her life.

--This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Emma Goldman was deported from the USA back to her native Russia in 1919. Her excitement upon returning to Russia was to assist in implementing the goals of the combined "soviets" in their quest to change Russia after 300 years of the Romanovs dynastic rule. The book you are about to read contains her personal views of the Revolution and her eye witness account of the aftermath. In it, she raises some interesting points as she contrasts the "Revolution" and "Bolshevism". These two movements were mutually destructive and contradictory in aims and methods. Every Revolution has a counter-revolution, so it seems. The Americans defeated the British Colonial masters for a Democratic slave-owning Republic, controlled by elitist politicians; the French Jacobins traded their

monarchy for equally-oppressive rulers; The Russian Revolution banished one oppressive regime for another as the Tsar was overthrown and the "peoples" Revolution was shanghaied by the Bolsheviks. A small minority of the movement included Lenin and Trotsky as they took over the Revolution and subverted the intent of the originators. Much later, Stalin would do the same as he maneuvered the focus from a world-wide Revolution to one of local control, Russia. Emma's book is a day-by-day chronology of activities in which she participated during her stay in Russia. Her investigative reports revealed vital information from people involved in "orchestrating the movement" as well as from those who were its victims. Hers is a front row seat to historical events unfolding before us. The struggle for reform was messy, cruel and merciless. She gets into the "weeds" of human encounters as she travels and meet anarchists, some of whom left America to join in the "fight", and other ordinary people engaged in finding a way to survive amid the graft, corruption, and mayhem. Her purpose was to see what conditions existed that would ease the tyranny against ordinary people. However, the minutia is a bit overwhelming. As she met with Lenin and John Reed, leaders of the Bolsheviks, she endeavored to find out why anarchists were jailed and censored and actively sought their release since they had similar nihilistic aims in overturning the Tsarist Government as did the revolutionists. Her efforts failed. Her biggest disappointment was that the Communist State sought to strengthen and deepen the very ideas and conceptions which the Revolution had come to destroy. Disillusioned, she left Russia in 1921.

If you are going to read this book, you might as well buy "My Further Disillusionment with Russia" by Emma Goldman at the same time. There was a mistake made at the time this book was printed and they left out over 90 pages of the end plus the Afterword that tied together her impressions, experiences and her political opinions before and after she took on this historical adventure. Emma Goldman was a woman so far ahead of her time that you could easily see her in American politics today representing any of our bluer states. The word 'Anarchist' conjures up images of youths in balaclavas vandalizing downtown Seattle on May Day but in reality it would be better to describe it as variant on 'Libertarian.' Emma Goldman seems to rail against those who believed in the centralized and total power of any state as being her Enemy and that she slowly saw the decision-making in Communist Russia going less from the hands of the workers, peasants and individual citizens to the few people with connections in the Politburo. Her journey across Russia and the Ukraine as part of her work for the Museum of the Revolution only strengthened her belief that the Russian Revolution had truly failed and that the idea of a Marxist economic system was being used a cover for the authoritarian totalitarianism that would go on to rule Russia and it's

neighbors for the next sixty years. This book was extremely fascinating for me because I read it as part of a homemade trilogy of sorts starting with John Reed's "10 Days that Shook the World," followed by this book and then "Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar" by Simon Sebag Montefiore. John Reed saw the Communist revolution from the point of view of a true believer and I even felt myself getting caught up in his optimism and hope that things were only going to get better for the lower classes of Russia from that moment forward. Then you get into this book and you see that the ideals that fueled the revolution were being bent and twisted by people who were given power with no experience nor education to use it with responsibility and a total inability to reflect on their actions nor to properly manage each other with reasonable checks and balances. Then you fast forward to Stalin and the unbelievable numbers of prisoners, slaves created and murders committed all with the insane goal of constantly cleansing the population in order to keep the spirit of the revolution, whatever that meant to Stalin at the given moment, alive. I can't wait to go on to read Emma Goldman's autobiography "Living my Life" and see how she weathered the rest of the part of the 20th century that she got to live through and affect with her words and actions. In this book she manages to clearly explain, with logic and anecdotal evidence, where she stood politically before, during and after her time living in Russia. She doesn't try to say that she was never wrong or explain that all her actions were part of one long-term political goal like every politician we hear talk about themselves in our day and age. She simply lays out her reasons for losing hope in the Communist revolution in Russia and, in a way, gives an argument for Libertarian ideals that I think would have found an easy home in any Ron Paul 2012 rally. I recommend this book to all people who enjoy recent world history, personal narratives and contemplating the role of government in the lives of people around the globe.

This book refutes any notion that there are any Communist countries in this world. The former USSR, China, N. Korea, Cuba, Vietnam none of these countries adhered to the principles of communism or socialism.

The book title and cover does not match the inside book!!!! I.e. it is totally different book inside. I suspect this is poor quality control of this "book reproduction process....")

I rec'd the Nabu Press edition of this item and was "delighted" to see that its actual contents were Edmund Burke's "Letters and Tracts on Irish Affairs." Normally that would make me laugh, but now I have to figure out how to return it! Boo, Nabu!

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