

With Speech as My Weapon: Emma Goldman and the First Amendment

A Unit of Study for Grades 8-12

by

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
University of California, Los Angeles

APPROACH AND RATIONALE

The National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) working in collaboration with The Emma Goldman Papers Project, has developed the following collection of lessons titled *With Speech as My Weapon: Emma Goldman and the First Amendment*. This adds to more than 60 NCHS teaching units that are the fruit of collaborations between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. They represent specific dramatic episodes in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative.

By studying a crucial episode in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

NCHS teaching units are based on **primary sources**, taken from documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers and literature from the period under study. As you know, a primary source is a **firsthand** account of any event in history. For example, the telecast or the script of a speech would be a primary source. A secondary source is a secondhand account of an event. This would be, for example, the newspaper account of the speech the next day or a newscaster's report about the speech. All historical accounts, such as textbooks, are by their very nature secondary sources. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: 1) **Teacher Background Materials** and 2) **Lesson Plans with Student Resources**. This unit is designed as a supplement to your customary course materials. We have chosen to pitch the various lessons on different grade levels, and they can usually be adapted to a slightly higher or lower level.

The **Teacher Background** section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific **Dramatic Moment** to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to

TEACHER'S GUIDE

share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The **Lesson Plans** include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources that accompany each lesson. These resources consist of primary source documents, handouts, and student background materials, and in many cases, a bibliography.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction.

I. UNIT OVERVIEW

Emma Goldman (1869-1940) is a major figure in the history of American radicalism and feminism. In a period when the expression of controversial ideas was itself dangerous, Goldman insisted on her right to challenge convention. Goldman devoted her life to asserting the individual's potential for freedom that otherwise was obscured by a system of social and economic constraints. She was among America's most prominent advocates of labor's right to organize, reproductive rights, sexual freedom, freedom of speech, and freedom of the individual.

As passionate in her personal life as in her political life, Goldman left an intriguing body of personal papers, including correspondence and writings; and her activities generated extensive newspaper coverage, government surveillance reports, and legal papers. The documents in this curriculum unit are drawn from a massive archive collected by the Emma Goldman Papers Project, at the University of California, Berkeley.

Goldman was part of a blossoming culture of dissent. Her anarchism was one of many popular political philosophies of her time, including socialism, communism, utopianism, populism, and progressivism, that challenged and influenced the evolution of the dominant social and political culture. As an anarchist, Goldman maintained that social justice and individual freedom could not be legislated by the state. Instead, she argued for a complete transformation of social values and economic relations.

In nationwide lecture tours, Goldman took her message to the people and in the process tested a democratic society's tolerance for dissent. Goldman believed that "the most violent element in society is ignorance." The government and most newspaper reporters responded fearfully to Goldman's iconoclastic ideas as well as to her confrontational style. She was shadowed by police and vigilantes determined to suppress her talks and was arrested frequently. In 1919, after spending a year and a half in prison for her open opposition to conscription and to U.S. entry into World War I, Goldman was deported.

Standard school texts often ignore Goldman and other challenging voices, or only briefly mention them. This absence of an historical record of controversy in the curriculum not only denies students access to a full range of ideas but also ultimately limits their ability to understand and analyze the past. Recent educational reforms encourage classroom use of primary sources as the best way to present opposing points of view. For example, the documents from the Emma Goldman Papers on free speech are compelling because they expose the student to firsthand accounts of a long struggle to affirm the right to disagree. The immediacy of the issues of the period are experienced through newspaper accounts, political cartoons, speeches, pamphlets, and autobiographical narratives rather than through synthesized historical texts.

TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIALS

II. UNIT CONTEXT

The lessons in this unit of study focus on issues relating to freedom of expression and the limitations placed by local, state, and federal governments to control unpopular speech. The unit supplements the study of the American labor movement, anarchist activities, free speech, the Red Scare of the post-World War I era, and the deportation of aliens in 1919. It provides teachers an in-depth study of issues relating to freedom of expression using Emma Goldman as a case study. The lessons are most effective if placed within the context of a study of domestic issues of the 1920s.

“In the Aftermath of War: Cultural Clashes of the Twenties,” “Women in the Progressive Era,” and *“The Constitution in Crisis: The Red Scare of 1919-1920,”* are other National Center for History Teaching Units that relate to the topics addressed in this unit.

III. CORRELATION TO NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR UNITED STATES HISTORY

With Speech as My Weapon: Emma Goldman and the First Amendment provides teaching materials to support the *National Standards for History, Basic Edition* (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996). Lessons within this unit assist students in attaining Standards 2C and 3A of Era 7, “The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930).” Students analyze the impact of public opinion and government policies civil liberties and evaluate government reactions to the growth of radical political movements.

This unit likewise integrates a number of Historical Thinking Standards including: explain historical continuity and change; assess the credibility of historical documents; compare and contrast different sets of ideas; analyze cause-and-effect relationships; support interpretations with historical evidence; and, marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances.

IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. Distinguish between unsupported expressions of opinion and informed hypotheses ground in historical evidence.
2. Draw upon visual sources to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in a historical narrative.
3. Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas and values.
4. Analyze cause and effect relationships.

V. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Emma Goldman was born in the city of Kovno, Lithuania, then part of the Russian Empire, on June 27, 1869. As a child she and her family experienced blatant anti-Semitism and observed peasants beaten, government officials bribed, and young men dragged off to serve in the army. Hating the injustices she saw, she welcomed the idea of revolution that promised to change Russia. She hoped for a new world of equality and justice.

Goldman's family life was hard. Goldman felt that her father found fault with everything she did. He sent her out to work at an early age and wanted her to get married to someone of his choosing when she was only fifteen. To avoid such a fate, Goldman and her older sister Helena fled Russia for America.

Full of optimism, she arrived in America in 1885 expecting to find the freedom she was denied back in Russia. Relatives in Rochester, New York, offered her a place to live and helped her find work in a clothing factory. Unhappily, she discovered that working conditions in America were not so different from those she had left behind.

For Goldman the Haymarket tragedy of 1886 was a transformative event. At the height of the fight for the eight-hour day, a mass meeting to protest the police shooting of strikers at the McCormick Reaper Works the previous day drew a large evening crowd to Haymarket Square, Chicago. As the peaceful meeting drew to a close and the crowd began to disperse, a bomb exploded, killing seven police officers and injuring dozens of bystanders. In an atmosphere of fear and suspicion, eight anarchist leaders were convicted of murder. Seven of the eight were sentenced to death, though the sentences of two of them were commuted and another later committed suicide. The execution of the remaining four on November 11, 1887, led Goldman to devote her life to the anarchist ideal.

Goldman began to read everything she could find on anarchism. Determined to make her adopted country live up to the ideals of freedom, harmony, and prosperity for all, Goldman left her sweatshop job in Rochester and went to New York City where she hoped to meet other people who shared her ideas. There she learned that anarchism had many definitions and strategies which spanned from philosophical to militant. She was attracted to those anarchists who lectured about the challenge and the promise of their political ideas. Yet, the press often stereotyped the anarchist movement as "bomb-throwers" because some anarchists believed that political violence was a justifiable means for bringing about revolutionary change. Goldman found herself between these two poles.

Within New York City's anarchist circle, Goldman befriended Alexander Berkman and was eventually associated with his attempt in 1892 to kill Henry Clay Frick, manager of a Carnegie Steel plant, after Frick had ordered an armed attack on striking workers. The newspapers sensa-

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tionalized the event. Later, in 1901, when President William McKinley was assassinated by an anarchist, Goldman was suspected even though she was not involved. After this, Goldman briefly changed her name, led an underground life, and from then on was watched carefully by agents of the government. When it became safe for her to appear in public, she distinguished her conception of anarchism from the characterizations of it by the press. In 1906, she started the anarchist magazine *Mother Earth*. It gave writers, artists, and political thinkers with radical ideas a place to express themselves.

Among her many challenges to convention was Goldman's distrust of the institution of marriage. She believed that marriage restricted the freedom of both men and women and, at the same time, gave them a false sense of security. Throughout her life, she fell in love many times—the most passionate was her ten-year love affair with her lecture tour manager, Dr. Ben Reitman. Even though her lectures espoused the principle of free love, her letters to Ben show that she could not rid herself of her own feelings of jealousy when he followed his attraction to other women.

Goldman was a talented public speaker. She toured the country several times a year lecturing about politics, drama, birth control, economic freedom for women, education, anti-militarism, and other vital issues of her day. Goldman believed that anarchism would bring total social, economic, political, and spiritual emancipation without government regulation. Because of a common fear of anarchism, she faced constant threats from policemen and vigilantes determined to suppress her message. She was arrested countless times and spent over a year and a half in jail.

She spoke out against U.S. participation in World War I because she believed the war was being fought first and foremost to promote the economic interests of the very rich. In addition, she encouraged young men to exercise their right to free choice and resist compulsory military service. Arrested and convicted of conspiracy to obstruct the draft, she went to prison. During that time, her citizenship was invalidated by a government eager to rid the country of her influence. On December 21, 1919, Emma Goldman and 248 other foreign-born radicals were rushed aboard the ship S.S. *Buford* at dawn and deported to Soviet Russia.

Emma Goldman stayed in her native Russia for only twenty-three months. Despite the overthrow of the czar by a revolutionary government, Goldman was shocked by its continuing disregard for political freedom. She met with V. I. Lenin, the Soviet leader, and questioned him about the lack of free speech. Unhappy with his response that free speech at that point in Russian history was a luxury not a right, Goldman eventually left the country in disgust and disappointment. She was determined to alert the world to what she saw as the Bolsheviks' betrayal of the ideals of the revolution.

For the rest of her life Goldman felt like “a woman without a country,” moving from place to place, and allowed to return to the United States only once in 1934 for a brief lecture tour. In 1936, she visited Spain and witnessed the optimism of the Spanish anarchists and their hope that a real revolution would occur in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. When the dictatorship of

TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIALS

Francisco Franco triumphed, a defeated Goldman went to Canada to help raise funds for the refugees of the Spanish war and to be closer to the country in which she had felt most at home.

Emma Goldman died on May 14, 1940. The United States government permitted her body to be returned to America. She is buried in Chicago near the anarchists who were executed for the Haymarket incident.

Throughout her life Emma Goldman wrote many letters, articles, speeches, and a number of books. The most notable of her writings is her autobiography, *Living My Life*.

VI. USING PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Before beginning the unit you may wish to duplicate copies of the Document Analysis Worksheet (*Student Handout*) as a means of assisting students in working with the numerous documents that are included in the four lessons in this unit. Encourage students to examine the documents for bias and question the material to determine the author's frame of reference. Caution students not to accept without question evidence presented in documents and to always examine documents in the context of the time in which they were written. Students should make a habit of testing the data presented in primary source materials with evidence gleaned from their study of history.

Dramatic Moment

In her autobiography, *Living My Life*, Emma Goldman describes her feelings as a seventeen-year-old arriving in a new country in 1885, and her feelings as a fifty-year-old woman upon her deportation from the United States in 1919, cast out of her chosen home.



My first contact with the sea was terrifying and fascinating. The freedom from home, the beauty and wonder of the endless expanse in its varying moods, and the exciting anticipation of what the new land would offer stimulated my imagination and sent my blood tingling... Helena and I stood pressed to each other, enraptured by the sight of the harbour and the Statue of Liberty suddenly emerging from the mist. Ah, there she was, the symbol of hope, of freedom, of opportunity! She held her torch high to light the way to the free country, the asylum for the oppressed of all lands. We, too, Helena and I, would find a place in the generous heart of America. Our spirits were high, our eyes filled with tears . . .

. . . It was almost midnight when suddenly I caught the sound of approaching footsteps. "Look out, someone's coming!" Ethel whispered. I snatched up my papers and letters and hid them under my pillow. Then we threw ourselves on our beds, covered up, and pretended to be asleep.

The steps halted at our room. There came the rattling of keys; the door was unlocked and noisily thrown open. Two guards and a matron entered. "Get up now," they commanded, "get your things ready!" . . .



Deep snow lay on the ground; the air was cut by a biting wind. A row of armed civilians and soldiers stood along the road to the bank. Dimly the outlines of a barge were visible through the morning mist. One by one the deportees marched, flanked on each side by the uniformed men, curses and threats accompanying the thud of their feet on the frozen ground. When the last man had crossed the gangplank, the girls and I were ordered to follow, officers in front and in back of us. . . .

I looked at my watch. It was 4:20 A.M. on the day of our Lord, December 21, 1919. On the deck above us I could hear the men tramping up and down in the wintry blast. I felt dizzy, visioning a transport of politicals doomed to Siberia, the *étape* of former Russian days. Russia of the past rose before me and I saw the revolutionary martyrs being driven into exile. But no, it was New York, it was America, the land of liberty! Through the port-hole I could see the great city receding into the distance, its sky-line of buildings traceable by their rearing heads. It was my beloved city, the metropolis of the New World. It was America, indeed, America repeating the terrible scenes of tsarist Russia! I glanced up—the Statue of Liberty!

Emma Goldman, The Making of a Radical (one to two days)

A. Objectives

1. Examine pivotal periods in Goldman's life.
2. Explain the factors which helped form Goldman's political and social philosophy.
3. Compare and contrast conflicting definitions of anarchism.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Set the stage for discussion of the life and times of Emma Goldman by establishing the historical context of the period, especially immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe from the 1880s to World War I. Students should be aware of factors that prompted Russian Jewish emigration including the pogroms of czarist Russia. Before beginning the lesson, students need to read text accounts of radicalism in the U.S. labor movement at the turn of the century and the growing public outcries against immigration as a source of socialist agitation and anarchism.
2. Have students read the biographical essay on Emma Goldman (**Document 1**). Divide the class into small groups and distribute a copy of the time line (**Document 2**) to each group. Ask students to review the pivotal periods in Emma Goldman's life and elaborate on historical events that helped formulate her radicalism. Refer to the text or source books on late nineteenth-century U.S. history to insure that students understand the context of the time. How did world events influence Goldman's life and ideology? What was the significance of the Haymarket Affair (1886) in shaping Emma Goldman's political philosophy? How did Goldman view the Homestead Strike of 1892?
3. Using the definitions provided in **Document 3**, define anarchism. Describe, in your own words, Goldman's definition. Examine the glossary of a basic United States history or government textbook to compare and contrast the definitions of anarchism with the dictionary or encyclopedia definition. How do standard definitions of anarchism differ from Emma Goldman's definition? In a brainstorming activity list examples of the use of the term anarchy or anarchism in today's world—in slogans, graffiti, music lyrics, groups or cults. Does the meaning of the word change in different contexts?

LESSON ONE

4. Show the class the cover of the first issue of Goldman’s anarchist magazine, *Mother Earth* (**Document 4**). Working in groups, analyze the illustration, studying the images and symbols that are used. What does the scene call to mind? How are symbols used to convey a message? Based on what students have gleaned from Goldman’s definition of anarchism, what symbols on the cover of *Mother Earth* are intended to illustrate her concept of anarchism? Which medium conveys the power and meaning of a complex political concept more effectively—the written word or visual imagery? Explain.
5. Extend the lesson by having students redraw the cover illustration of *Mother Earth* to reflect their perception of Goldman’s definition of anarchism or to design a cover of a magazine reflecting a conflicting definition of the term. What symbols are incorporated in these drawings? How did students use symbols to convey different feelings? What symbols or images were used to appeal to pre-conceived public attitudes?

Document Analysis Worksheet

1. Type of Document: (check one)

_____ Journal

_____ Letter

_____ Speech

_____ Telegram

_____ Other (specify type) _____

_____ Legislative Resolution

_____ Newspaper Editorial

_____ Congressional Record

_____ Memorandum

2. Date of the Document: _____

3. Author (or creator) of the document:

4. For what audience was the document written?

5. Document information:

A. List important pieces of information presented in the document.

B. Why was the document written?

STUDENT HANDOUT

C. What evidence in the document helped you to determine why it was written? (Quote from the document if appropriate.)

D. List two things the document tells us about the United States at the time it was written.

E. Write a question to the author which is left unanswered by the document.

Biographical Essay on Emma Goldman

Secondary Source

Emma Goldman was born in the Jewish quarter of a small Russian city in modern Lithuania on June 27, 1869. Her painful recollections of childhood include witnessing violence against women and children, peasants brutalized by landlords, Jews ghettoized and frequently forced to move in search of work, and endless streams of corrupt petty officials extorting fees from a relatively powerless constituency. Her family life was difficult. Goldman's father, whom she referred to as "the nightmare of my childhood," made her the special object of his frequent rages. Her mother, who could plead eloquently and persuasively on behalf of young men about to be drafted into the Russian army, was nonetheless emotionally distant from her children and frequently depressed.

At thirteen, Goldman moved with her family to the Jewish ghetto in St. Petersburg where ideas of revolution filled the air. The Russian populists and nihilists sparked Goldman's imagination and reinforced her faith that injustice could and must be confronted. An avid reader, Goldman devoured forbidden novels and political tracts and found role models in the young women of the revolution. Goldman desperately wanted to help create a new world of equality, justice, and family harmony.

Goldman's father had no such public vision of his daughter's future, instead he was determined that she marry young and live a conventional life. His attempts to secure her engagement at age fifteen precipitated her flight from home. She and her older sister Helena fled Russia for America. Full of optimism, Goldman entered a new country where she assumed that she had escaped the traditional barriers to women's freedom so pervasive in the old world. She settled with relatives in 1885 in Rochester, New York. Sadly she discovered that family life in the Jewish ghetto of Rochester and piecework in the textile factory did not differ significantly from what she had left behind in Russia. Asserting her new freedom in intimate life in America, Goldman soon fell in love with a co-worker and chose to marry him.

*In 1886, a shocking political event changed her life. To protest the suppression of a strike at the McCormick Reaper Works, labor and radical activists held a mass rally in Chicago's Haymarket Square. A bomb exploded, killing seven police officers and injuring many protestors in the crowd. Hundreds of socialists and anarchists were rounded up and eight anarchists were indicted. All eight were found guilty and seven were sentenced to hang. On the day before the execution, one of the seven committed suicide and the governor of Illinois commuted the sentence for two others; the remaining four were executed. From **the***

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 1

scaffold, August Spies cried out, "The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today." Goldman recognized a similarity between the ideas of the Chicago anarchists and those of the Russian populists. She began reading everything she could find on anarchism.

With the crystallization of Goldman's political ideas came changes in her personal life. Risking the stigma of divorce, Goldman left her husband and headed for a new life, first in New Haven, Connecticut, and then in New York City. Within a year she was living in an apartment with other Russian-born anarchists, including her first great love and eventual lifelong comrade, Alexander Berkman. The twenty-year-old idealist soon became a prominent member of New York City's immigrant anarchist community.

Her newfound stability was undermined in 1892 when Henry Clay Frick of the Carnegie Steel Company provoked a bloody confrontation with workers during a strike at Carnegie's plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Berkman and Goldman decided to retaliate; Berkman went to Homestead to shoot Frick to demonstrate to the world that violence begets violence and that workers would no longer accept the brutality of the capitalist factory owners. Instead, Berkman wounded Frick but did not kill him; he served a fourteen-year prison term, not as a hero of the working class but rather as the catalyst for the resurgence of a nationwide fear of anarchists. Insufficient evidence of collaboration in the attempt on Frick's life allowed Goldman to escape indictment, but her widely known intimate association with Berkman inspired the press to sensationalize its portrayal of "Red Emma" as the fearsome demon of unharnessed sexuality and violence.

This violent image was reinforced in 1901 when President William McKinley was assassinated by Leon Czolgosz, who claimed to be an anarchist acting under Goldman's influence. Although she did not know the young man who evidently had attended one of her lectures, she was immediately arrested as an accomplice to the crime. The stigma of this association was so great that even after she was set free for lack of evidence against her, it was several years before she could safely appear in public under her own name. Even so, she tempted the fates by continuing to address select meetings. By the time she re-emerged fully, her lectures were prefaced by a disavowal of the efficacy of the tactics of individual acts of political violence with one caveat to the public: she asked them to resist the inclination to abandon political prisoners whose tactics may differ from their own. Based on her growing conviction that "the most violent element in society is ignorance," she founded a political and literary magazine, *Mother Earth*, which ran from 1906 to 1917. It was not only a forum for anarchist ideas and news of international movements but also an opportunity to publish poetry and drama criticism. It introduced its subscribers to dramatists like Ibsen, Strindberg, and Shaw, and to political cartoonists and artists like

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 1

Man Ray. The magazine's circulation was not limited to the United States. Gradually its influence and readership spread to Europe as Goldman's international reputation grew.

Goldman expanded her audience in the United States through national lecture tours on behalf of the magazine. For almost ten years, from 1908 until 1917, she was assisted in her tours by an amorous and flamboyant road manager, Dr. Ben Reitman. Goldman and Reitman crisscrossed the country, appearing before ever widening audiences curious about Goldman's political and social challenge and appreciative of the support she gave to each locality's labor and political battles. On their 1910 tour, for example, Goldman spoke 120 times in thirty-seven cities in twenty-five states to 25,000 people.

Her lectures were varied and expansive. It was not unusual for Goldman to speak on "The Intermediate Sex: A Discussion of Homosexuality" one night and "The Social Value of Modern Drama" the next. Appreciating literature and drama as powerful vehicles for awakening social change, particularly on sex and gender issues, Goldman welcomed the challenge of alerting and educating the American public to the importance of modern European and Russian drama. She believed that education was a lifelong process and that public schools often excluded open-ended discussions and provocative challenges to the status quo from the curriculum. As a proponent of the Modern School movement, which fostered independence and creativity, she often asserted that a state-run school "is for the child what the prison is for the convict and the barracks for the soldier a place where everything is being used to break the will of the child, and then to pound, knead, and shape it into a being utterly foreign to itself."

This belief in the importance of widening the experience of the individual had specific ramifications for women. Goldman will be remembered for her pioneering work for the liberation of women, identifying birth control as an essential element in the larger battle for women's sexual and economic freedom. Goldman believed that the law that denied women access to birth control information was symptomatic of general social and economic injustice as well as the particular oppression of women. She was a political mentor to the young birth-control pioneer Margaret Sanger, though Sanger eventually parted ways with Goldman and shifted her focus to the single, more pragmatic goal of winning the legal right to distribute birth control information. Goldman continued to insist that the battle for woman's control over her body should be part of a broader struggle against the social, economic, and political conditions that fostered and reinforced inequality.

This was not the only time Goldman broke with the other feminists of her day; she criticized the women's suffrage movement for its claim that the vote was the

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 1

best vehicle to secure the equality of women, pointing out that it would not adequately address the issue of the liberation of working-class women, nor ensure a gentler form of government.

Goldman spoke eloquently on the political dimension of personal life, and women, from within and outside of the suffrage movement, crowded into Goldman's lectures. Of particular interest was her lecture on "Marriage and Love" in which she articulated the liberating potential of free love in contrast to the stifling aspects of marriage for women. As an anarchist, she hoped to be the living example of her ideal. Yet privately she agonized over whether her own failure in love made her unworthy of delivering this message. Throughout her ten-year love affair with her road manager Ben Reitman, her passionate letters reveal dark feelings of jealousy written at the same time she spoke eloquently on the platform about the corrosive effect of possessiveness in love; similarly she wrote to Reitman with a longing for security and rest, just as she became the symbol and the harbinger of the total independence of women. Her inner doubts and anguish prompted her to fear that if she remained "an abject slave to her love" she would stand "condemned before the bar of [her] own reason."

Goldman's eloquence on the themes of personal life as they related to political and social forces was in part the key to her popularity. Threatened by her anarchist politics, her persuasive powers, and her discussion of topics often considered taboo, the police and local authorities frequently banned her lectures. Inevitably a debate over the rights of free speech would follow. Goldman was relentless in her assertion of the critical importance of the right to freedom of speech in a democratic society. Braving the mounting obstacles to speaking on unpopular issues, Goldman paid dearly for her principles. Under surveillance most of her adult life, she was arrested and jailed countless times and spent her last eighteen months in the United States imprisoned on federal charges.

Her longest jail sentence was the direct result of her organizing efforts against the involuntary conscription of young men into the military. Within weeks of America's entry into World War I, Goldman and her old friend Alexander Berkman helped launch the No-Conscription League to educate and encourage conscientious objection to the war. In the past, Goldman had condemned U.S. expansionism during the Spanish-American War and denounced British imperialism during the Boer War, but the patriotic fervor surrounding World War I bred a more severe intolerance for dissent, considering such opposition to war a "clear and present danger" to the nation. The government had Berkman and Goldman arrested on the charge of conspiracy against the draft. They were convicted and sentenced to two years in prison with the possibility of deportation upon their release.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 1

Alarmed by the post-World War I labor turbulence and by recurring bombing incidents, the Wilson administration retaliated against the most vulnerable radical and progressive organizations. Just after her release from prison on September 27, 1919, Goldman was re-arrested by the young J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Justice Department's General Intelligence Division. Writing the briefs and building the case against Goldman himself, Hoover quietly worked behind the scenes to persuade the courts to deny her citizenship claims and to deport her. On December 21, 1919, Goldman, Berkman, and 247 other foreign-born radicals were herded aboard the S.S. Buford and sent to the Soviet Union.

With the exception of a brief ninety-day lecture tour in 1934, Emma Goldman spent the remaining twenty-one years of her life in exile from the United States. During this period she lived in Russia, Sweden, Germany, France, England, Spain, and Canada, never finding a political "home" outside the United States.

In no country did Goldman feel more estranged than in her native Russia. She was shocked by the ruthless authoritarianism of the Bolshevik regime, its severe repression of anarchists, and its disregard for individual freedom. Among the first vocal opponents on the left to criticize Soviet Russia, she alienated many of her peers in Europe and America. In a face-to-face meeting with Lenin in 1920 she questioned the Soviet leader on the lack of freedom of speech and the press in Soviet Russia. Disillusioned with the direction of the revolution, Goldman and Berkman eventually left Russia.

*Exiled, wandering from country to country, Goldman felt constrained and often depressed. In the 1920s and 1930s, while struggling to survive economically, she engaged in a variety of literary projects. The most enduring product of this period of self-reflection was her autobiography, *Living My Life* (1931).*

Goldman was sixty-seven years old when the Spanish Civil War erupted in July of 1936. The promise of an anarchist revolution in Spain revived her broken spirits. When Spanish comrades asked Goldman to direct their English propaganda campaign, she visited collectivized towns and farms in Aragon and the Levante and was electrified by what seemed to her to be the beginnings of a true anarchist revolution. Dismayed but not vanquished by Franco's triumph in early 1939, Goldman moved to Canada where she devoted the last year of her life to securing political asylum for women and children refugees of the Spanish war, publicizing legislative dangers to free speech in Canada, and campaigning on behalf of foreign-born radicals threatened with deportation to fascist countries.

*After Goldman's death on May 14, 1940, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service allowed her body to be readmitted to the United States. **She is***

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 1

buried in Waldheim Cemetery, Chicago, near the Haymarket anarchists who so inspired her.



From *The Life and Times of Emma Goldman: A Curriculum for Middle and High School Students* by Candace Falk, with Lyn Reese and Mary Agnes Dougherty (University of California Regents, 1992)

Time Line

- 1869 Emma Goldman born in Kovno, Lithuania.
- 1885 Goldman emigrates to the United States, settling in Rochester, New York.
- 1886 Haymarket bombing: At the height of the fight for the eight-hour work day, a bomb is thrown at police at a mass meeting in Haymarket Square, Chicago, to protest the police shooting the previous day of strikers at the McCormick Reaper Works. Though the culprit is never identified, eight anarchist leaders are tried for murder and found guilty.
- 1887 Goldman marries Jacob Kersner, gaining U.S. citizenship; unhappy in the marriage and attracted increasingly to anarchism, Goldman divorces Kersner within the year.
- 1887 Execution of four of the Haymarket anarchists.
- 1889 Goldman moves to New York City.
- 1890 Goldman's first lecture tour; speaks in Rochester, Buffalo, and Cleveland.
- 1892 Homestead, Pa., steel strike leads to a bloody confrontation between strikers and Pinkerton detectives; Goldman's comrade Alexander Berkman attempts to assassinate Henry Clay Frick, superintendent of the Carnegie Steel Company, and is sentenced to twenty-two years in prison; Goldman suspected of helping to plan the attempt on Frick's life.
- 1893 Goldman prosecuted for a speech at a demonstration of the unemployed in Union Square, New York City; found guilty of aiding and abetting an unlawful assembly; sentenced to one year in prison on Blackwell's Island, where she apprentices as a nurse to the inmates.
- 1894 Strike at the Pullman railroad car plant to protest layoffs and wage cuts spreads to many western railroads after the Pullman strikers appeal for support to American Railway Union leader Eugene Debs; strike is broken by court rulings against the union and by federal troops under orders from President Grover Cleveland.
- 1895-96 Goldman receives formal training in nursing in Vienna.
- 1898 Spanish-American War: the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam ceded by Spain to the victorious United States.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 2

- 1901 Assassination of President William McKinley by an anarchist. Goldman is unjustly implicated, arrested, held for questioning, and released. Goldman changes her name and, for a brief period, goes underground to avoid public harassment.
- 1903 Goldman helps found the Free Speech League in New York City in response to the first prosecution under a federal anti-anarchist law that barred anarchists from entering the country.
- 1905 Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) founded.
- 1906 *Mother Earth* magazine is founded by Emma Goldman and comrades; published until 1917.
- 1906 Goldman begins annual lecture tours to raise money for the magazine, speaking on a broad range of issues including modern European drama, women's equality and independence, sexuality and free love, child development and education, and religious fundamentalism.
- 1906 Alexander Berkman released from prison.
- 1908 Goldman denied the use of auditoriums in Chicago for meetings; meets Ben Reitman, who offers her his "Hobo Hall," and eventually becomes her lover and the manager of her lecture tours.
- 1908 IWW free speech fight in Missoula, Montana.
(Free speech fights occurred often during this period when people like Goldman and organizations like the IWW tried to hold public meetings to express their views but were prevented from doing so by local authorities.)
- 1909 IWW free speech fight in Spokane, Washington.
- 1909-10 "Uprising of the Twenty Thousand," a general strike by women garment workers in New York City.
- 1910 Goldman's *Anarchism and Other Essays* published.
- 1911 Fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York City kills 146 people, mostly young women, when exits that were kept locked to prevent union organizers from entering the premises prevented workers from escaping the fire, forcing many of them to jump to their deaths.
- 1912 Free speech fight in San Diego; Ben Reitman dragged from the city by vigilantes and brutalized.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 2

- 1912 Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile strike led by the IWW.
- 1913 IWW strike of Paterson, New Jersey, silk mills.
- 1913 Colorado coal strike to protest low pay, dangerous working conditions, and mine companies' domination of all aspects of workers' lives.
- 1913 The Armory show in New York City introduces European modern art to an American audience for the first time, creating a public scandal.
- 1914 Goldman's *Social Significance of the Modern Drama* published.
- 1914 Ludlow Massacre: Colorado National Guard troops and mine guards attack a tent colony inhabited by striking miners and their families; among the dead are two women and eleven children; in response, the miners mount an armed rebellion, which is crushed after ten days by federal troops.
- 1914 World War I begins in Europe.
- 1915-16 Goldman lectures frequently on birth control and is arrested several times; spends fifteen days in jail on one occasion for distributing birth control information.
- 1916 Goldman and Berkman defend Thomas Mooney and Warren Billings, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment on the charge of throwing a bomb into the crowd at a Preparedness Day parade in San Francisco, which killed ten and wounded forty people.
- 1917 The United States declares war on Germany, entering World War I. Federal government imposes a draft. Goldman founds the No-Conscription League with Berkman, M. Eleanor Fitzgerald, and Leonard Abbott to oppose the draft. Goldman and Berkman tried and convicted for conspiracy to obstruct the draft, sentenced to two years imprisonment.
- 1917 Espionage Act passed.
- 1918 Sedition Act passed.
- 1918-19 Goldman serves time at state penitentiary in Jefferson City, Missouri, Berkman in Atlanta federal penitentiary.
- 1919 Goldman and Berkman deported from the United States with 247 other alien radicals. (Goldman's husband had been denaturalized by the government in

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 2

- 1908 in order to deprive her of her citizenship. The 1918 Alien Act provided that an alien could be deported, if found to be an anarchist, at any time after entering the United States.)
- 1919-20 “Red Scare”: In the United States, the intolerance and suspicion of foreigners and radicals increases in the postwar years as the Bolsheviks consolidate their victory in Russia, producing fear of worldwide revolution; climaxes in the 1920 Palmer raids, when thousands of foreign-born radicals are rounded up, and many deported.
- 1920 Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution (giving women the right to vote) ratified.
- 1920 Sacco and Vanzetti, two Italian anarchists, arrested for the murder of a payroll guard in Massachusetts; the accused widely seen as victims of the anti-radical and anti-foreign sentiment of the period, an impression confirmed by the conduct of the trial.
- 1920-21 Goldman and Berkman in exile in Soviet Russia, where they confront the Bolsheviks’ denial of free speech and expression and especially the suppression of anarchists.
- 1921 December, Goldman and Berkman leave Russia.
- 1922-24 Exile in Berlin, Germany, after a brief stay in Stockholm, Sweden.
- 1923 Goldman publishes *My Disillusionment in Russia*.
- 1924-26 Goldman lives in London, writing and lecturing on conditions in Soviet Russia and on modern drama.
- 1926-28 Goldman lives in Canada. Based in Toronto, she writes and lectures on Russia, modern drama, and social issues.
- 1927 Execution of anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti provokes international outcry.
- 1928-36 Goldman finds a base for her writing and a respite from her lecture tours in a cottage in Saint-Tropez, France, purchased for her by philanthropist Peggy Guggenheim.
- 1931 Goldman publishes her autobiography, *Living My Life*.
- 1932 Goldman lectures in Scandinavia and Germany on the menace of fascism and the rise of Nazism.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 2

- 1933 Goldman expelled from Holland.
- 1934 Goldman granted a visa to enter the United States for a ninety-day lecture tour.
- 1936 Ill with cancer, Berkman commits suicide.
- 1936-38 Goldman visits Spain and enlists in the Loyalist cause in the Spanish Civil War, later opening an office in London to raise support for the Spanish anarchists fighting on the Loyalist side.
- 1939 Goldman moves to Canada after the defeat of the Spanish Loyalists to raise funds for women and child refugees from the Civil War.
- 1940 Goldman dies in Toronto and is buried in Chicago near the Haymarket anarchists who first inspired her in 1887.



STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 3

Anarchism

Emma Goldman's definition of anarchism differs from standard dictionary definitions. Goldman's definition is excerpted from her writings in *Anarchism and Other Essays*.

I shall begin with a definition: Anarchism: the philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.

Anarchism, then, really stands for the liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion; the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property: liberation from the shackles and restraint of government.

Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth; an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations.

Anarchism is the great, surging, living truth that is reconstructing the world, and that will usher in the dawn.

The following definitions are taken from an unabridged dictionary and a standard encyclopedia.

Anarchism

- 1 the theory that formal government of any kind is unnecessary and wrong in principle; the doctrine or practice of an anarchist.
- 2 anarchy; confusion; lawlessness.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary.

Anarchism

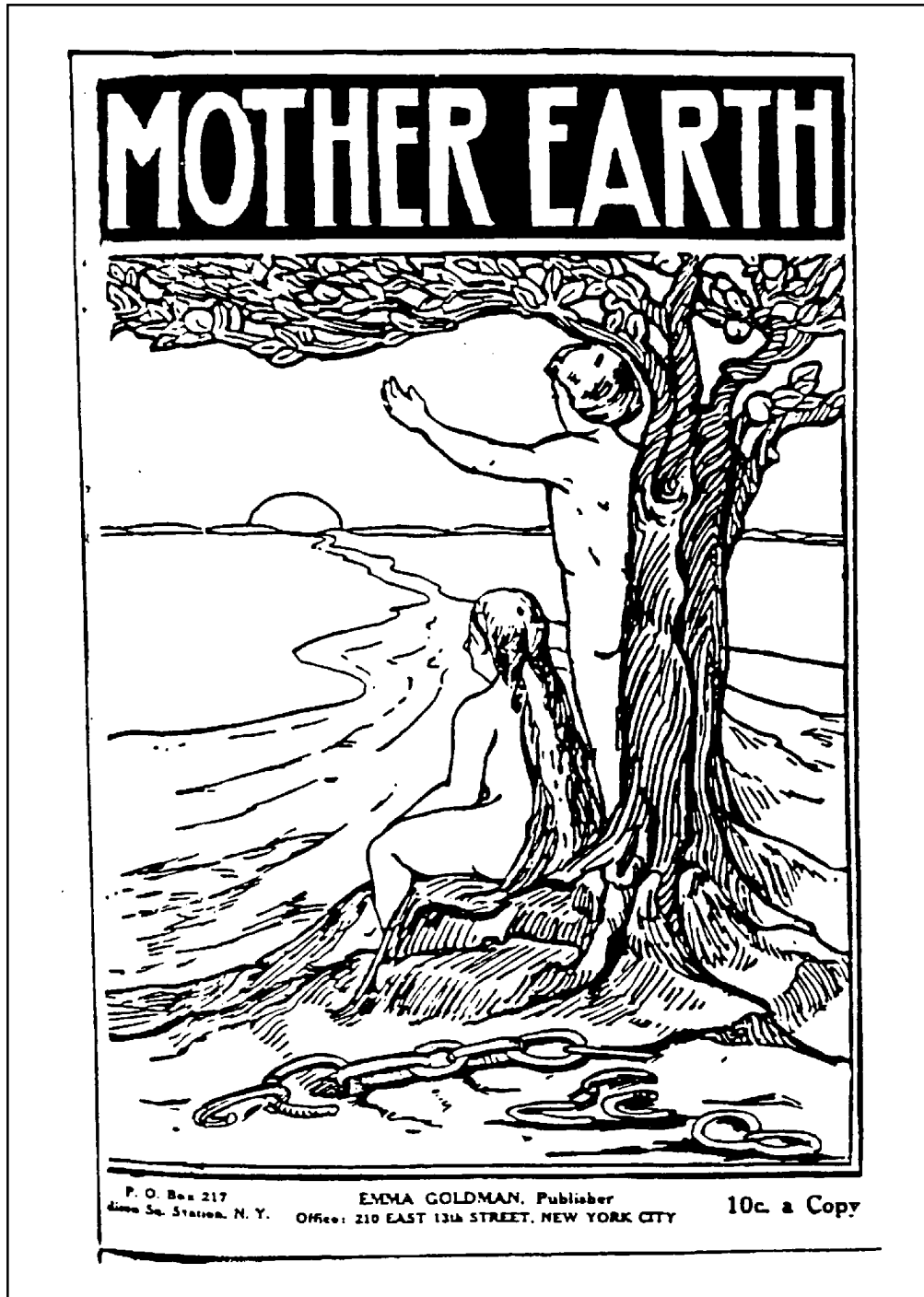
Anarchism is the belief that it is practicable and desirable to abolish all organized government, laws, and machinery for law enforcement. Anarchists aim at a stateless society in which harmony is maintained by voluntary agreements among individuals and groups . . .

Government, anarchists believe, is only needed to defend injustice. Without state support, they expect that unjust social arrangements will quickly disappear and be replaced by fair and equitable agreements freely accepted and maintained by all.

Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 1

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT 4

The illustration below appeared on the cover of the first issue of Goldman's anarchist magazine, *Mother Earth*. The magazine published writings on anarchism, news of national and international anarchist and labor activities, and poetry and drama criticism.



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