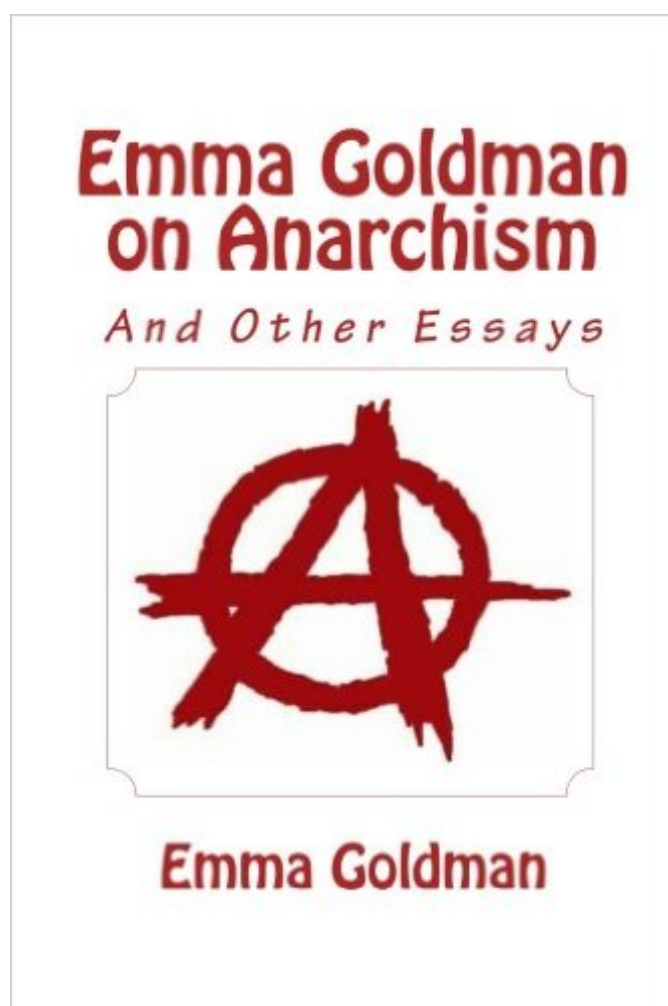


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Emma Goldman On Anarchism (and Other Essays)



Synopsis

Being historically one of the more important yet obscure figures in American history, Emma Goldman's anarchist thought is as relevant today as it was when she wrote "Anarchism, and Other Essays". In an age where political apathy, intellectual ignorance and spiritual corruption are the failings of modern civilization, Emma Goldman's Enlightenment thought is illuminating in its message of the power of direct action as she so lucidly illustrates: "Anarchism urges man to think, to investigate, to analyze every proposition... (Anarchism is 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." And, "the new social order rests, of course, on the materialistic basis of life; but while all Anarchists agree that the main evil today is an economic one, they maintain that the solution of that evil can be brought about only through the consideration of every phase of life,--individual, as well as the collective; the internal, as well as the external phases." One more quote from Goldman reads "a thorough perusal of the history of human development will disclose two elements in bitter conflict with each other; elements that are only now beginning to be understood, not as foreign to each other, but as closely related and truly harmonious, if only placed in proper environment: the individual and social instincts. The individual and society have waged a relentless and bloody battle for ages, each striving for supremacy, because each was blind to the value and importance of the other. The individual and social instincts,--the one a most potent factor for individual endeavor, for growth, aspiration, self-realization; the other an equally potent factor for mutual helpfulness and social well-being." From just that little excerpt it is easy to understand why any and all authority was terrified of Emma Goldman and why her important contributions to society have been muzzled from histories - down the "memory hole" to use an Orwellian expression. "Anarchism, and Other Essays" is as relevant today as it was in Emma Goldman's day and necessary material for anyone truly interested or involved in altruistic direct action.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've heard from many people who are interested in reading books about anarchism (although I think the term "anarchism" is incorrect) that most books about anarchy are "heavy" and difficult to get through much less understand because they aim their content to readers that have a good background of political understanding (its terminologies, its "schools" of thought, its currents and so forth..). If this happens to be your problem then this book will be ideal if you want to discover what this political philosophy stands for and what its issues are and, indeed, have been for a long time. Emma Goldman, a woman with as fiery a personality as they come, has put together here a number of essays about anarchy that are easy to comprehend and definitely thought inspiring. Despite this book having been first published in 1917 it loses nothing of its importance in the current state affairs as all of the issues Goldman deals with not only remain unsolved but they have -in the meantime- become a social burden or a social disaster much worse than back in her time. Oh, and back in her time things already looked bad enough. What you get here is, summarily, the following: -anarchy, what is it and what does it stand for? Beyond the mainstream media cliches anarchy stands for personal and societal freedom of the highest conceivable order. A freedom, anarchists insist, that is not a utopia. It's basically a hard lesson in crushing your illusions and opening unthought of doors of perception of what freedom really means. That would be then something other than being in a cage and having food thrown in. Even if the cage is invisible.. -Hard punching essays about the prison system and the ever self-destructing notion of patriotism..

Being historically one of the more important yet obscure figures in American history, Emma Goldman's anarchist thought is as relevant today as it was when she wrote "Anarchism, and Other Essays". In an age where political apathy, intellectual ignorance and spiritual corruption are the failings of modern civilization, Emma Goldman's Enlightenment thought is illuminating in its message of the power of direct action as she so lucidly illustrates: "Anarchism urges man to think, to investigate, to analyze every proposition... (Anarchism is 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." The new social order rests, of course, on the

materialistic basis of life; but while all Anarchists agree that the main evil today is an economic one, they maintain that the solution of that evil can be brought about only through the consideration of every phase of life,--individual, as well as the collective; the internal, as well as the external phases."A thorough perusal of the history of human development will disclose two elements in bitter conflict with each other; elements that are only now beginning to be understood, not as foreign to each other, but as closely related and truly harmonious, if only placed in proper environment: the individual and social instincts. The individual and society have waged a relentless and bloody battle for ages, each striving for supremacy, because each was blind to the value and importance of the other.

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