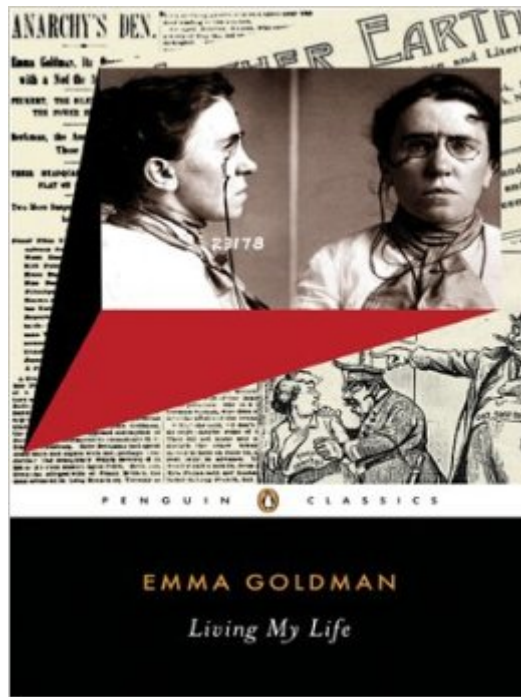


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# Living My Life (Penguin Classics)



## Synopsis

Anarchist, journalist, drama critic, advocate of birth control and free love, Emma Goldman was the most famous and notorious woman in the early twentieth century. This abridged version of her two-volume autobiography takes her from her birthplace in czarist Russia to the socialist enclaves of Manhattan's Lower East Side. Against a dramatic backdrop of political argument, show trials, imprisonment, and tempestuous romances, Goldman chronicles the epoch that she helped shape: the reform movements of the Progressive Era, the early years of and later disillusionment with Lenin's Bolshevik experiment, and more. Sounding a call still heard today, *Living My Life* is a riveting account of political ferment and ideological turbulence. First time in Penguin Classics. Condensed to half the length of Goldman's original work, this edition is accessible to those interested in the activist and her extraordinary era.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have no issue with the book itself, I'd just like those who purchase this book to know that this is only the first half of Emma Goldman's "Living My Life". I bought this copy under the impression that it would be her entire autobiography. It would be helpful if this important piece of information were included in the description of this book somewhere.

I consider this autobiography as essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the United States, or early 20th century international political history. Beyond its value as a historical document,

'Living My Life' is also a gripping read. Goldman was a real adventurer, a real revolutionary after a design that seems forgotten today. The stories that come from her rough and tumble experiences in America, the still-born Soviet Union, and Europe, are breathtaking, heartbreaking, and pertinent in our own age of political and economic instability. I firmly believe that this book should be required reading in American high schools or junior highs, especially for young women. The very fact that Goldman still comes off as so dangerously radical is testimony to both her brilliance and courage, and to the lack of change that typifies most of the world's social systems. I agree with other reviewers' assessment of Goldman's writing abilities, but she was an ideologue more than an artist. Where her political philosophy is concerned, she is definitely uncompromising. However, Goldman seems to me much more human than many of the era's major revolutionary figures. Her devotion to the liberation and well-being of women and her renouncement of terrorist tactics in her later life demonstrate this quite sufficiently. The long relationship between Goldman and Alexander Berkman reveals the personal cost of revolutionary activity and is probably worth a book of its own.

Emma Goldman (1869-1940) was an important Russian-born anarchist in North America and Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, who was also an important precursor to the later Women's movement. Some of her other writings are *Anarchism and Other Essays* and *Marriage And Love*. The previous volume is *Living My Life, Vol. 1*. She says, "To me anarchism was not a mere theory for a distant future; it was a living influence to free us from inhibitions, internal no less than external, and from the destructive barriers that separate man from man." (Pg. 556) Of the aftermath of WWI, she states, "And Woodrow Wilson, that innocent at the diplomatic gaming-table, how easily he had been duped by the European sharks!... how pathetic was his failure, how complete his collapse! I kept wondering how worshipful American intelligentsia felt at seeing their idol no longer protected by his Presbyterian mask. The war to end war terminated in a peace that carried a rich promise of more terrible wars." (Pg. 682) She admits, "Life in prison, unless one has vital interests outside, is deadly dull." (Pg. 685) Later, she adds, "In the isolation and loneliness of the cell one finds the courage to face the nakedness of one's soul. If one survives the ordeal, one is less hurt by the nakedness of other souls." (Pg. 694) While in Russia, she records, "The very brawn of the revolutionary struggle was crying out in anguish and bitterness against the people they had helped place in power. They spoke of the Bolshevik betrayal of the Revolution, of the slavery forced upon the toilers, the emasculation of the soviets, the suppression of speech and thought, the filling of prisons with recalcitrant peasants, workers, soldiers, sailors, and rebels of every kind... These charges and denunciations beat upon me like hammers and left me stunned."

(Pg. 733) She concludes, "Soviet Russia has become the modern socialist Lourdes, to which the blind and the lame, the deaf and the dumb were flocking for miraculous cures. I was filled with pity for these deluded ones, but I felt only contempt for those others who ... had seen with open eyes and understood, and yet been conquered." (Pg. 916) Goldman was certainly one of the most interesting political figures of the first half of the twentieth century, and this book clearly illustrates why.

Obviously, I love it. It's my introduction. But I'm puzzled by the objections about the font and size. The Penguin edition has not been issued in small print. I am not a young reader with excellent vision. No problem with the size of print. Also, I wish to caution readers that this is an abridged version of Volumes I and II of the autobiography as originally published by Norton. Sorry I haven't logged in sooner.

This is great Emma Goldman, but in a truly \*terrible\* edition. The cover and binding look like some kind of horrible on-demand crapola, the text is 284 pages of close-to-6-point type in some annoying face that looks like spider tracks, and there's no publisher info beyond the ISBN. Who dealt this mess?

an impressive account of a single life of this remarkable women. Those who care for improving human conditions might enjoy learning about the struggles from 100 years ago for things we take for granted now.

Knew only that she was an anarchist. She was so many other things, had so many talents. She was both tough and kind. Never gave up on her basic beliefs even though Russia was a big disappointment in its exercise of communism. Enjoyed the 1000 pages!

You have got to be kidding. I waited excitedly for this book to come. What a bummer it is! The print is so small I cannot read it. For the first time I feel ripped off by . I've never returned anything, but this book is going back. I had to put one star or this review would not go through.

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