

BlackRock 77

Venezia 84

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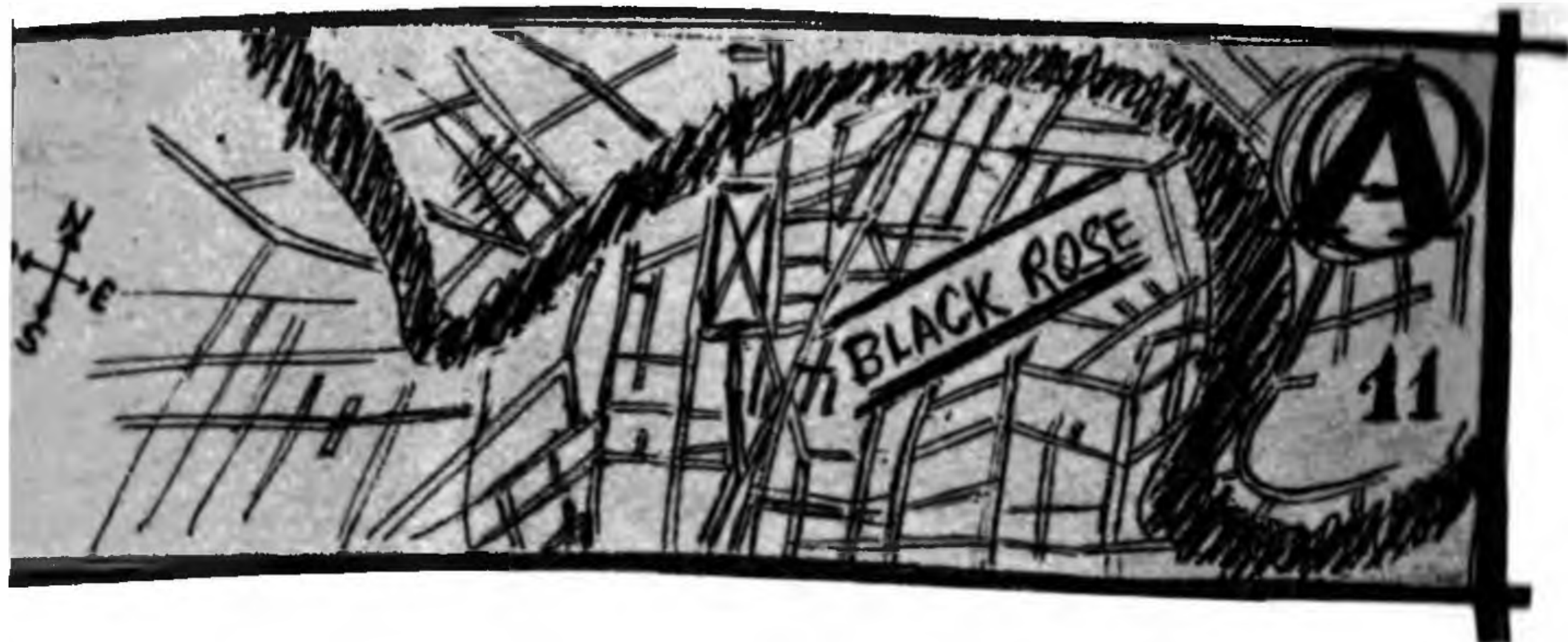
Analysis

**Anarchia**

Incontro/Versions







### **Black Rose Collective**

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# Introduction

*"I felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me."*

Whitman, 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry'

*Black Rose* is not a magazine which organizes each issue around a given theme, as some publications will issue numbers largely devoted say to labor or feminism and so on. This number of *Black Rose*, however, seems to have a common thread running through it. In this issue we are presenting a number of brief reports, impressions, evaluations of the recent international anarchist *incontro* held in Venice, Italy. We are also presenting an interview with Candace Falk, author of a recent book on Emma Goldman, as well as the usual assortment of poetry and graphics. What struck us as we prepared this number for publication was that all of the articles raised the issue of the need for a reevaluation or reconsideration of anarchism, and, in particular, examination of what has come to be called the problem of the 'personal and the political.'

The anarchist movement today, though not without influence, certainly does not exercise much mass impact on existing social movements. The movement is hardly flourishing at the present. Thus the necessity for a reevaluation. We would like to see this reevaluation stick to the serious issues at hand and not get bogged down in rhetorical disputes over whether a 'new' anarchism is needed as opposed to the 'old' anarchism, whether a labor emphasis should take precedence over a cultural one, and so on. Otherwise one might just as well abandon any pretense of having an anarchist movement and go on to something else, something which would be, frankly, more 'relevant.'

*Black Rose*, however inadequately, has always sought to be a part of such a reevaluation, but with one caution: We see anarchism as being as much a cultural phenomenon as a political one, something as much an intrinsic part of personal makeup as it is a political expression. Anarchism is not something experienced as much as it is something lived.

There is an almost indefinable something that makes an American an American, something beyond mere recitation of the Declaration of Independence, something beyond adherence to political beliefs. An American is an American because of a whole range of assimilated attitudes and understandings which are a part of his or her psychological makeup, an unconscious part if you will, because of what he or she is and does. This is a cultural phenomenon as much as a political one. In the same way anarchism is a behavior, an attitude, a mode of expression, a way of living as much as it is a catalogue of political beliefs. Indeed, in my opinion it is more so. That is why the poetry and the graphics in *Black Rose* are just as important as the more traditional articles, for there anarchism is not just expressed but embodied, and this sort of understanding ought to be an important part of any reevaluation that takes place. It is time that this is understood.

—Clym Yeobright



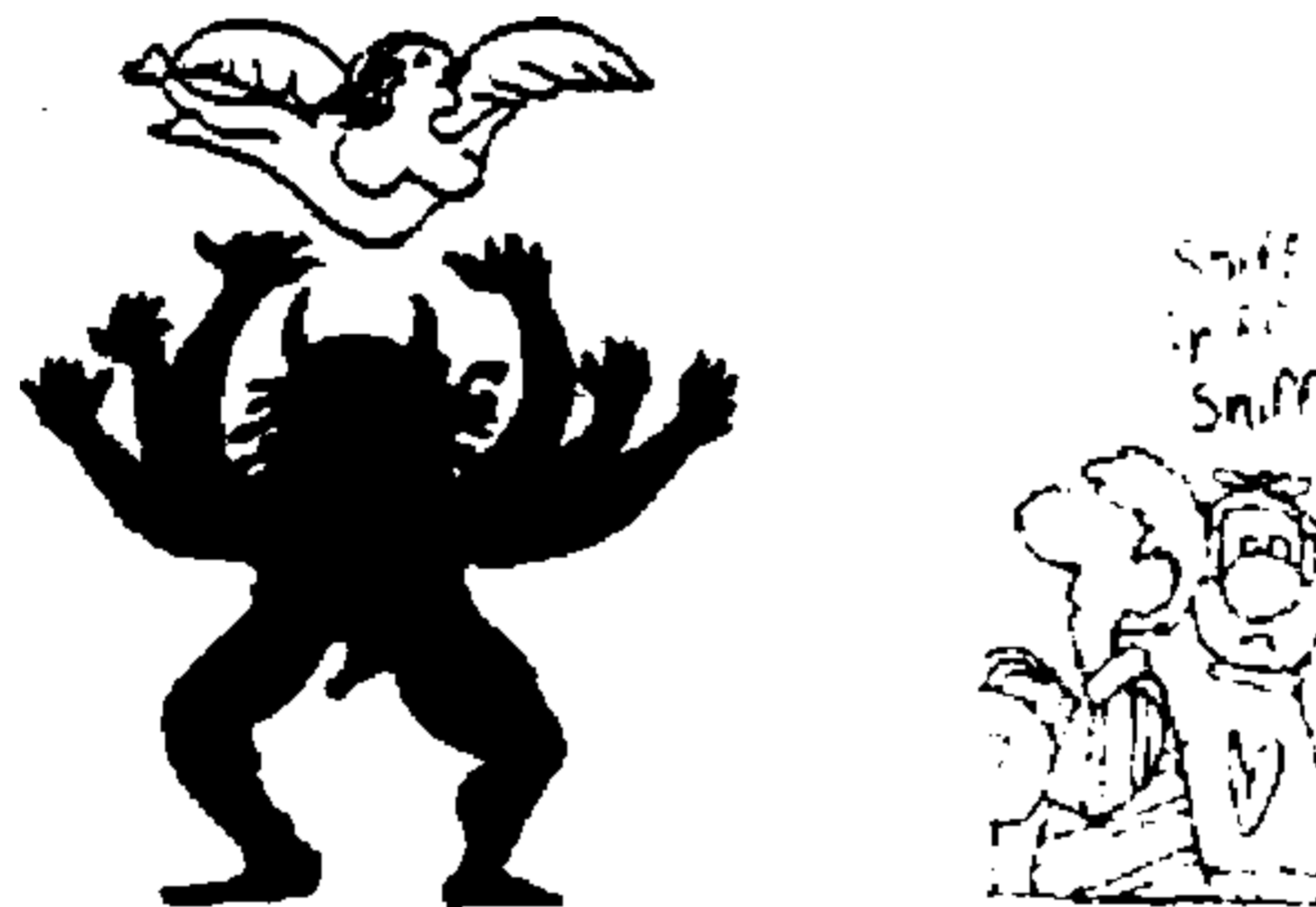
# COM Introduction

*Incontro Internazionale Anarchico/Venezia 1984*—*International Anarchist Gathering/Venice 1984* was organized by the anarchist group Centro Studi Libertari (CSL) di Milano with the collaboration of Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme (CIRA) of Geneva, Switzerland and the Anarchos Institute of Montreal, Canada. After more than one year of preparation the *incontro* took place on September 24-30, 1984. Bypassing the more usual words of congress, convention, symposium, the word *incontro* had been carefully chosen to indicate a wider scope than just an intellectually or politically oriented meeting, but the Italian title, however, had been translated into a slightly off-center English, and the word *gathering* set off some curious gospel-like overtones that were probably not intended—O Shall we gather at the *campo* . . . the gathering of the faithful??? The last part of the title alluded to a conference, which was to be the center of this gathering of utopians, based upon Orwell's anti-utopian novel, *1984*, with "a certain conscious irony." This ironical intent was a bit elusive for some of us, who went slouching off to Venice, not with irony, conscious or otherwise, but with great curiosity about who would show up and what would happen. And with some small anticipation of worldly pleasure. As its own contribution to anarchist ideology and archaeology, *Black Rose* decided to create an outdoor installation piece in a Venetian *campo* (*campo* is Venetian usage for piazza or square).

The sun and warmth of the Italian South changed into the grey damp drizzle of the North as I approached the Queen of the Adriatic to join my fellow *BR* constructivists, Wilfredo and Marcos, who had already been there for several days, busy with initial preparations. Dampness and the quirks of language had held them up: their too literal translation of *chicken-wire* had only confused those trying to help them and their request for potato sacks instead of burlap were met by the amazed mutterings of our Italian comrades, "Do Americans think we grow potatoes in the canals of Venice?" Dampness was not so humorous a problem as language, nor one so readily overcome. The continual rain of the week had not allowed the plaster elements of the installation piece to dry, and,

more apprehensively, had brought the now infamous *aqua alta*; the high water of Venice. When we visited one of the sites of the *incontro*, we discovered it flooded by water bubbling up the very drains that it was supposed to gurgle down. Fortunately all the aquatic anxieties of our organizational comrades were dispelled at the last moment by the sun, and their persevering efforts were rewarded by an auspicious, if slightly damp, opening.

The poster announcing the *incontro* with its powerful design by the noted Italian artist and anarchist sympathiser, Enrico Baj, had been put up throughout Venice. Its imagery—a big-busted Picassoesque female floating over a formidable, many-armed, firebreathing male figure, heavily entrained and prominently penised—dealt, in fact, solely with the theme of the conference, *Authoritarian Tendencies and Libertarian Tensions*. The poster provoked much discussion and criticism. It was decried by some feminists and gays for what they perceived as its macho male chauvinism, while others find it too brutal or just plain ugly, too *uninviting* to be an appropriate choice for an *incontro*. (I, myself, witnessed several small children reduced to tears when they chanced to look upon it.)



Who finally came to Venice for this long-prepared event? The fifty or sixty members of the *Centro Studi* who had done the hard organizational work would have been pleased if their expectation of about 1,000 participants had been met, but their final estimate suggests that over 3,000 persons attended some part of the *incontro*, two thousand of whom showed up for the final weekend. This great and unexpected number included the committed, the curious, the interested, the serendipitous, the young (babies of several months), the old (a ninety-two year old Romagnole anarchist), and, of course, the police, who, though mildly annoying at times, generally kept their distance during the *incontro*.



Participants and anarcho-tourists came from throughout the world, about some forty countries in all—North America (Canada, the U.S.), Latin America (Puerto Rico, Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina), Europe (Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, West Germany, Holland, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece), Asia (South Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia), Australia, New Zealand; some were exiles from Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Iran, Poland, Rumania.

CF The Italians were, of course, the most numerous. Though internal differences within the Italian movement regarding the *incontro* (which were muted and not clear to me) had apparently kept attendance down during the week, many were attracted for the final weekend when the large turnout of non-Italians became evident. Of the non-Italians, the German-speaking were by far the largest contingent, some two hundred or so, mainly autonomous groups from Germany and Austria, who completely surprised the organisers and their contacts in those countries by coming in such numbers. All European countries were well-represented, North America sent 20-30, Latin America a bit more, while solitary figures came from such distant places as South Korea, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand.

The *incontro*, itself, took place in three different locations, each intended to serve a different purpose. Once one discovered the trick of



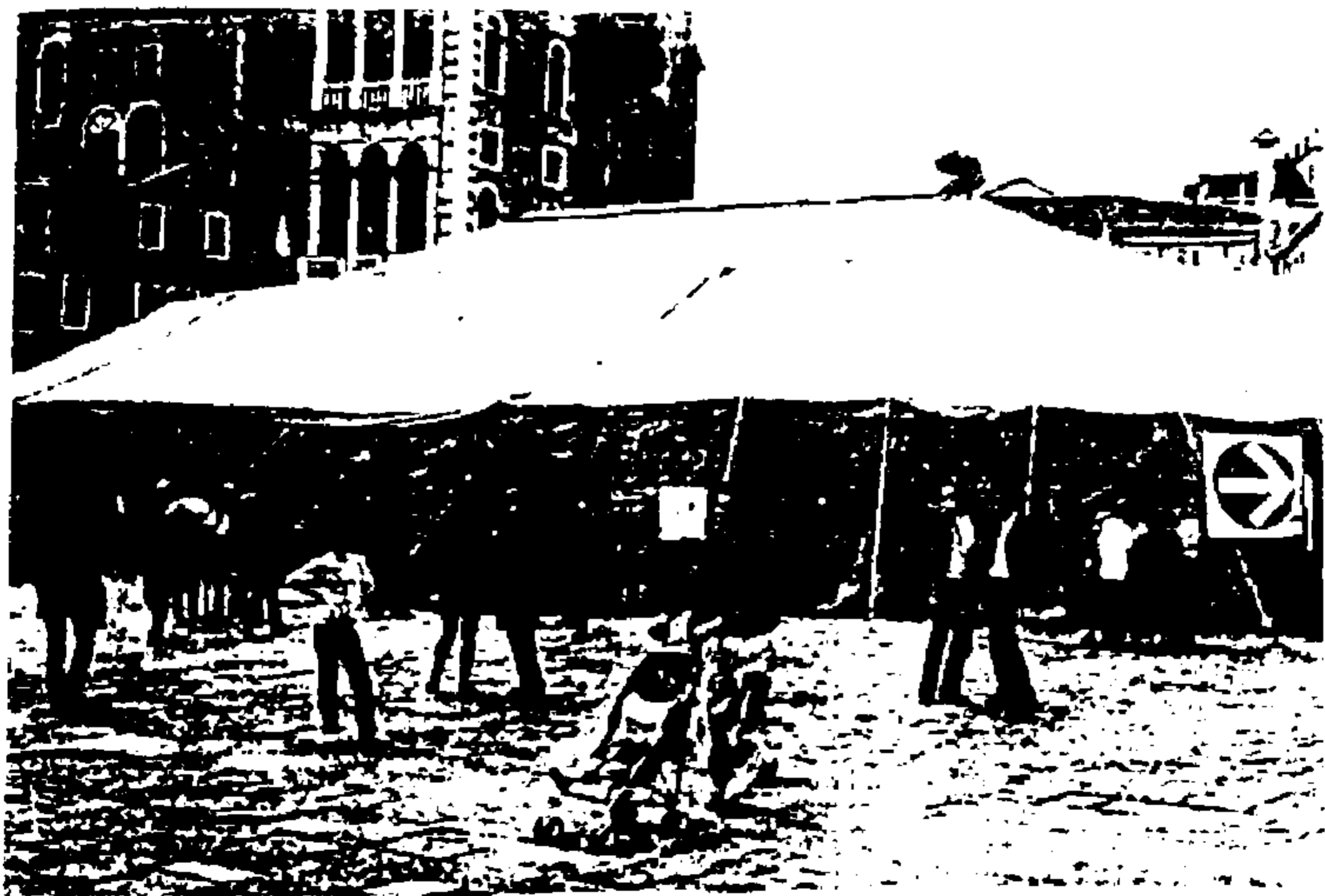


navigating Venice all three locations were within an easy ten minute walking distance of each other and the joy of a city without automobiles was truly immense. (I suspected some ironical intent, however, when I noticed the hotel for North American participants looked out upon Venice's sole parking lot.) One walked everywhere (well, almost everywhere. One did take a *vaporetto* from time to time), and the sounds of everyday life, people, bells, water were not drowned out as in most modern cities, but heard as they should be. The very human scale of Venice was a genuine utopian element of the *incontro*.

*Campo Santa Margherita* was the vital center. "Ciao! Anarchici", it welcomed with a large banner as the newly arrived came to get necessary information about housing, schedules, events, food. It was here that one found the *Cucina*, a kitchen staffed by anarchist comrades where one could get food at very modest prices in contrast to the very expensive Venetian restaurants. Here there were tables, benches, a covered space where one could eat and drink, socialize and make new friends. To show the dimensions of the operation, some 21,000 portions of food were served, mostly *pasta*, but consideration was taken for special diets, and 3,000 bottles of wine were drunk. One of the glories of the *Cucina* was its exceptional wine, supplied by one of Italy's leading wine merchants, Luigi Veronelli, who much to our satisfaction and to the great amazement of the daily press of Italy, turned out to be an anarchist sympathizer. In addition one could browse through an extensive bookfair that displayed anarchist publications from throughout the world, or one could look upon a stage that was used day and night for performance—songs, music, punk, rock, recitals, speeches. Santa Margherita, located in one of the few truly characteristic Venetian quarters that have resisted the onslaught of tourism, had an amazing capacity to absorb many hundred strange and foreign beings and, yet, to retain its own personality. The local stores opened unconcernedly for business, the daily outdoor market went on as usual, the adjoining restaurants allowed their restrooms to be used ungrudgingly, the mostly bemused, though occasionally irritated, local residents went for their daily *passeggiata*, staring at the curious new sights (including some strange red and black ribbon that wrapped itself around a tree) and joining in discussions from time to time; but the children seemed to have the most fun of all—looking, shoving, running, playing. *Campo Santa Margherita* was a lively and wonderful urban site, an inspired choice that gave great pleasure and served its purpose. Its very success as a space did however give rise to certain

difficulties. One of the conditions agreed to by CSL for the use of Santa Margherita had been to suspend all public activities by 11:30 p.m. Some comrades could not understand why their joyful noises should be halted simply to honor an agreement made with the authorities, while others were tipsily unaware of what they were doing. (Tipsiness was mostly induced by wine; very little pot and drugs were in evidence throughout the week.) With formidable patience and goodwill the Italian comrades explained, cajoled, convinced, and quieted the boisterous so that each evening ended without undue incident.

Permission to use the second outdoor site, Campo San Polo, that of the drains that bubbled up, had been held up until almost the last minute by the political maneuvering and infighting common to Italian municipal councils—the communists antagonizing the anarchists for ancient ideological motives, while the democristians were concerned over the effects of the *incontro* upon the public morality... of others. Somehow the CSL inveigled the necessary permits for its use one week before the scheduled opening and, faced with the great pressure of time, came up with a truly ingenious solution to the problem of housing several major displays and the audio-visual center of the *incontro*. In one amazing day





with great panache they erected a huge bright blue and orange circus tent. Its interior certainly induced a strong sense of the world of 1984, particularly when daylight filtered through the translucent orange panels of the tent and bathed everything in a hallucinating orange tint. This very surreal atmosphere did not make it easy to concentrate upon the two informative and nicely mounted exhibits that it contained, *The History and Geography of Anarchism*, assembled by CIRÀ, and *Art and Anarchy*. Because the presence of the huge, brightly colored tent—about the size of a football field—dominated the rather austere milieu of San Polo, the atmosphere of this site seemed a bit weird and less inviting in contrast to the more sociable and amiable Santa Margherita, but the unforeseen drawbacks of reality did not diminish the delights of the solution—not too much, at any rate.

The almost continual presence of films, videotapes and slide shows attracted its own particular crowd, perhaps the youngest of the *incontro*. Its audiences were spontaneous and open, and its events provoked many animated discussions. The events in San Polo, however, seemed to be treated much more casually by the organizers—and, perhaps, this was intended to be its nature—but, as a result, it was too difficult to get information about what was happening ahead of time, causing much fascinating material about the nature of contemporary anarchist practice, particularly in the videotape and slide formats, to pass by relatively unnoticed. Unfortunately the very difficult milieus of San Polo and the study conference hardly seemed to intersect in any vital fashion.

The central element of the *incontro* in the conception of its organizers was to be an international conference of studies. The participants in this attempt at “collective intellectual enterprise” were selected by CSL and the Anarchos Institute and were to deal with the theme, “Authoritarian Tendencies and Libertarian Tensions” in ironical Orwellian accents. The School of Architecture was chosen as the site for the conference. Hmm... irony, or symbolism? What more appropriate place could be found than a school of architecture to draw up plans for a brave new world? At any rate the conference took place in the two top floors of the school. Its main auditorium, which held 5-600 auditors had modern facilities that could supply simultaneous translations in as many as four different languages. Originally the four languages were to have been Italian, French, English, and Serbo-Croatian, but, just as Serbo-Croatian had been so mysteriously included so was it dropped for the conference, while a last-minute attempt was made to accomodate the unexpected

influx of so many German-speaking arrivals. Alas! To get a headset so that one could tune into the many voices of anarchism, one had to surrender one's documents, a requirement (libertarian tension?) that disturbed some anarchist militants who preferred to remain headsetless. Sessions with smaller anticipated turnouts used adjoining rooms that had no such facilities and had to rely on live, consecutive translation. One got another whiff of 1984 when one met people with wireless headsets, tuned into the main hall, strolling into the smaller gatherings to hear two talks at the same time, translated simultaneously and consecutively.

The translational apparatus in Venice turned out to be cumbersome and stultifying. The simultaneous translations, done by professionals and adequate for the most part, nonetheless had a homogenizing effect. Those who spoke quickly were slowed down so that the translators could follow more easily, which often resulted in a deadly monotone, while the kinks of idiomatic speech were either flattened or left out by hard-pressed translators. In the opening plenary session rapid John Clark in his flavorful English almost reduced a translator to tears of frustration when he referred to *Spam in the can* and *pet rocks*. On the other hand consecutive translations bored speakers and auditors by their duration, which often caused the thread of discourse to become hopelessly entangled. (In light of the Venetian experience, I think any future international anarchist meeting should reconsider the role and manner of live translation of papers. Might not all that energy better go into preparing written translations of papers with only live discussion?)

The physical setup of the School of Architecture also played a role in establishing a rigid mood for these sessions. During a session in which I assisted as a consecutive translator—that on education and freedom as it turned out—a member of the audience suggested that if the structure of the seating, a single table of participants facing a room of auditors, were changed to a more sociable and egalitarian circle a more libertarian dialog might ensue. His point was unanimously accepted, but because all the chairs of the Facolta were bolted together in groups of eight (to prevent theft or circles, who knows?), we could only form equilateral triangles.

What was being sent out and how was it being received? Four days, morning and afternoon, of plenaries, round tables, and seminars, chock-a-block full of noted anarchist names contained a plethora of topics—1984, of course, the militant proletariat, feminism and anarchism, self-



management, social ecology, living anarchy, the state and anarchy. Unhappily, the intellectual structure simulated the rigid seating. Despite fine individual contributions, the content was too predetermined, the discussions too restricted—those who were not known were not recognized, most of the curious and the puzzled could not question, and too often had to listen to the convinced and the determined. To be fair, my strictures result from having attended less than one-third of all conference sessions, but similar ones were voices at the final session by younger comrades who had felt especially excluded.

The only unpleasant uproar and disorder of the conference also occurred in this final plenary session. After the criticism of the younger comrades had been presented in a reasonable and non-disruptive manner, several contending fractions of the CNT intervened with a definite intent to halt the session because of the presence of Rudolph De Jong, of the International Institute of Social History of Amsterdam, on the panel. Each of the several different groups wanted the historical CNT archives which had been placed in the custody of the Institute in order to preserve them shortly before the end of the Spanish Civil War. Now that Franco was dead, though the Institute was quite willing to send the archives to a commonly agreed upon address in Spain, each CNT group in Venice seemed to want sole possession of the archive seemingly as a symbol of its authenticity, and all seemed to agree only in accusing Rudolph, as an anarchist and member of the Institute, of unanarchist behavior in not releasing the archives to their particular group. Their actions did not make it very clear how their purpose could be served by *upsetting the final session before an audience which knew little of the matter*, and finally the impatience of the audience led the CNT fractions to end their intervention and to agree to meet De Jong in an open public discussion on the following day. However, none of them showed up at the appointed time to contest De Jong's persuasive account of the situation. According to a rank and file member of the CNT who did show up and who had been embarrassed by the previous day's uproar, these groups did not represent the majority of the CNT membership, who simply wanted the historical archives to be opened as soon as possible in a responsible manner so that the CNT could proceed to deal with more immediate issues in Spain. There was a general agreement that the CNT groups who had created the uproar cut a sorry figure by not appearing to *justify their actions*.

Can one version sum up what happened in Venice? I don't think so. The anarchist presence in its wonderful and sometimes chaotic multiplicity—punks, gays, academics, feminists, militants, syndicalists, students, sympathizers, greens, ecologists, alchemists, etc.—continues to give proof of its vitality. We not only saw each other, but others saw us in the brilliant *mise-en-scene* that was created in Venice by the hard work of so many comrades. The non-anarchist press and media that covered the event churned out their reports, mostly in the usual commonplaces, though some were intelligent. (The CSL had striven to get media coverage—and succeeded. There were accounts of Venice in every major Italian newspaper, an in-house report by Colin Ward in the *Manchester Guardian*, and TV crews from NBC, BBC, and RAI.) Anarchists, not surprisingly, disagreed among themselves about what was worthwhile and what was not. Had the “nipotini di Bakunin” (the grandchildren of Bakunin, as many Italian newspapers described us) come up with a “new” anarchism, emphasizing ecology, feminism, and pacifism instead of the “old” anarchism, proletarian, militant, revolutionary? Had Bakunin been put away up in the attic? Is the anarchism of today no longer a political movement, but a cultural/ethical influence? Is there a break between the “old” anarchism and the “new” anarchism? Did any compelling reformation of anarchist ideas and strategies emerge from Venice?

*BR* presents a number of accounts from others who were there, to comment on such issues and to give a wider perspective on what happened during the *incontro* in the *campi*, in the conference halls, in the circus tents, in the *gabinetti* of Venice. The net effect of our Venetian encounter was not to make us discouraged by the prophecies of 1984, but to be heartened by contact with other anarchists from throughout the world. The memories of Venetian pleasures will instruct *BR* in our attempt to deal with the problem of day-to-day anarchy and our efforts to imagine new utopias. For its part *BR* congratulates the many comrades of CSL who with the aid of CIRA and Anarchos made it happen.

—rd



# Introversion



Venice, that ancient melancholic city, gave host, generously, to that ancient melancholic tribe, the anarchists. This polyglot clan built on towering Babel, but like the old community it was, migrated back and forth between Campo Santa Margherita, Campo San Polo and the Facolta Di Architettura. By ancient sign language or stumbling ventures into the strange tongues of their brothers and sisters, this anarchist convocation touched each other eagerly, groping toward recognition, comprehension and empathy. Despite the fact that these comrades, once called by a sympathetic Trotskiest "The Clay Pigeons of History," rejected the concept of taking political control and power, they filled the air of Venice with an aura of energy and personal power.

The four communist members of the Venetian City Council tried to prevent the meeting from taking place. It wasn't until four days before the announced date of the convocation that the city council finally gave the permission that was required. Perhaps it was the wrath of the old communist pantheon, Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky et al, that called into being the violent storm that destroyed the encampment at San Polo just two days before it was to open as a display center for anarchist history and films. It took a gargantuan effort on the part of the Italian comrades aided by a host of volunteers, to put things right, in time for the meetings to get underway. In both cases, for the venetians and the anarchists, the ancient melancholy was tempered by moments of joy, laughter and good humour; a bright sunshine that illuminated everyone.

It cannot be understated; but the efforts and energies of the anarchist comrades who conceived of, and made real this very complex gathering of what the Venetian papers estimated as 3000 anarchists and

sympathizers, must be praised and saluted. To the initiators and the host of volunteers who aided, I raise my metaphysical hat to you. It was a gargantuan and eminently successful effort. Despite the chaotic moments (not anarchic), and times of confusion, and times of boredom, and times of fraternal contest, the exchanges that were made between comrades from different countries, different disciplines, and despite the difficulties posed by the many languages, something wonderful in Venice. A regeneration of anarchist energies took place. Hopefully energies that will continue to flow and grow and touch some of the multitudes of people who are unaware of our beautiful and possibly only practical solution to the problems that beset the world. If one could succinctly state the consensus of ideas that were expressed at the various meetings [meetings, it was true that had too many speakers, and were too heavily weighted by academics]; one could say that the consensus of the meetings was that we must not hold ourselves aloof from other movements that had libertarian content. But, we must make our anarchist presence felt by participation in the various anti-militarist movements in every part of the world; the various ecology movements; and the growing communitarian and workers control movements. We can't ignore the great danger that our world faces in the growth of the megolithic, militaristic states; the increased danger to our physical environment, and the subversion of humanism by the growing mind control of the electronic media. We must join together with all others who struggle against these tendencies and hopefully by our cooperation and dedication, inform them of our anarchist sensibilities and create an even greater libertarian directions for the world. We must especially be found in the ranks of those that struggle for freedom from brutal oppressors, the third world, the women's movement, the revolutionary gay movement, and join with those who have no advocates in our materialistic society, and by our sense of history; our resistance to totalitarianism, inform them of the pitfalls of violent, marxist, or statist solutions. And the possibilities of voluntary, communal action. Again, despite the fact that this international conference was flawed, I lovingly salute the host of comrades that enabled it to happen and made it eminently successful.

David Koven



I came to Venice carrying with me the somewhat skeptical suspicion that the two or three thousand participants expected for the International Anarchist Gathering would actually turn out to be two or three hundred. Since my family on one side comes from Venice, I was prepared, if the conference turned out to be a fiasco, to do a little geneological research and enjoy the sights of Venice. As it turned out, at least three thousand participants showed up—some put the number as high as five thousand. The conference was a lively affair, moreover, even if in the end it turned out to be a disappointment.

I have been to conferences—mostly in the United States, and in the sixties—which, in deference to a badly distorted notion of participation, turned out to be exercises in group-grope and encountering. I was somewhat afraid that the Venice Gathering, being after all an anarchist affair, might go a similar route. In fact, the problem that it suffered from was exactly the opposite: apparently the convenors, perhaps fearing the same thing, gave the conference a structure which far outdid in its conventional approach and formal structure many professional meetings that I have attended.

I speak here only of the sessions where papers were read, in the School of Architecture. The happenings in the piazzas were imaginative and far more in the spirit of communal gatherings. But the formal sessions were as stultifying as I have seen. The three rooms in which they were held seated—in seats bolted to the floor—several hundred people each. Panelists, having such a gratifyingly large captive audience, for the most part mercilessly subjected them to papers, which once read, then had to be translated into at least two other languages. In one room, simultaneous translation was possible; people wore headsets and listened to the sometimes tortured translations of panelists who seldom made any effort to simplify the language of their offerings.

Being treated to the spectacle of several hundred anarchists patiently listening while papers were read at them, with little opportunity to ask questions or respond (more on that later) was bemusing. Apparently European anarchists are socialized to accept such meetings where Americans—at least in the 60's—would probably have risen up and taken affairs into their own hands. Being rather turned off by the format, I attended only four sessions—two in which I was the offending party (I kept my delivery short, and in the first session naively asked for questions, before I realized that was impossible), and two in which I was one of the offen-

ded. The content of the deliveries varied, but I thought many of them to be thoughtful and challenging. I particularly liked the session on worker management, organized by the editors of Autogestion.

While attending the sessions, I was struck by the fact that during the so-called question period what really took place was more perorations by participants who delivered themselves of their own ideas, unrelated to what had already taken place. It was only later that I found out that these were rally frustrated panelists for whom the program had no room who had been solaced by being allowed to deliver themselves under the guise of raising questions. In fact, few questions were either asked or answered, and given the size of the audience, discussion was impossible. I found out later that a number of Italian anarchist groups had boycotted the conference as being too academic. I don't know what they would have liked to see, but I am sorry they were not there, perhaps they would have raised the objections that the format so richly deserved.

Another deficiency of the conference was its total failure to plan politically or organizationally so as to at least leave room for some sort of ongoing activity. Here was probably the largest anarchist gathering to occur in twenty years; one would think that such a convocation could be used at least to enhance ongoing communication between different countries and different groups, if not to organize some sort of permanent liaison or working groups. But groups were not identified, and no effort was made—no space on the program given, no encouragement, no suggestions made—to see that either a continuing committee or network or working group develop as a result of the get-together. But then, the conference was not structured for this to happen. There could have been country reports, reports by different groups on their activities, or at least sessions devoted to discussion of the status of the anarchist movement. It was as if anarchism was a dead issue, a historical left over, to be dissected by a group of scholars writing academic papers.

If this is where anarchism really is, then it is hardly a relevant movement. Indeed, if its praxis is limited to putting on dry academic conferences, it deserves to be consigned to the intellectual dustheap of history. In fact, I think the problem lay more with the conference organizers than with anarchism as such. They may well have bitten off more than they could chew. Looked at from one perspective, they are to be congratulated for providing food, housing, and facilities for such an extraordinarily large crowd. But there is no excuse for the format. If



anarchists cannot think up participative and liberating formats for gatherings of that size, then they should not attempt them.

What could have been done? The answer depends on how one defines the purpose of such a gathering. If anarchism is more than a historical skeleton, to be periodically dragged out and pawed over, then it should naturally lead to an anarchist practise. A gathering such as the Venice one could have been used as an opportunity to forge new bonds, to develop ongoing working groups, to encourage the further development of anarchist thought and action. How? By identifying representatives of groups at the gathering, by devoting at least part of the conference not to panels but to workshops and interest groups (meals could have been devoted to such interest groups, as they are at professional gatherings), by ensuring that panelists restricted their deliveries and that there was a time and place for genuine questions from the audience.

Are the participants to blame? Perhaps. After all, they could have taken over the conference and made it their own, changing the agenda, developing the panels, but more than that the workshops, interest groups, organizing projects that could have turned the conference into an alive and contemporary response to the social issues of the day. In the end, I do not know why that did not happen, any more than I know what was in the minds of the European organizers of the conference. I know that those of us involved in North America as co-sponsors forwarded suggestions to the European organizers, asking for workshops, for small group discussions, for time to plan something ongoing. None of our requests were heeded, and I can only conclude that indeed there is at least a part of anarchism that occupies itself with looking backward, and that has lost the belief, if it ever had it, that anarchism contains anything relevant to present day social reality.

I came away from the Gathering wondering if the problem with anarchism was the fact that its day of glory indeed lay in the past—with the Spanish anarchists of the 30's, with Emma Goldman and the Wobblies, with the Russian narodniki. Would the Greens of Germany, for instance, bother to concern themselves with Goodman, Bookchin, or Comfort, much less with Kropotkin, Bakunin or Malatesta? Where are those prime examples of anarchist practise, the affinity groups, or those wandering organizers of pre-Civil War Spain? The forms certainly exist—the feminist consciousness raising groups, indeed all manner of

support groups, along with strong decentralist movements for worker management, bioregionalism, community autonomy. But although their anti-authoritarian orientation makes them legitimately a part of the anarchist tradition, they neither identify with it nor understand it. The questions that this raises need to be addressed, but this is not the place for that. One thing can be said at least: the International Anarchist Gathering neither addressed these questions nor provided the format where such questions could be answered.

**C. George Benello**





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# ANARCHOS

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A few themes came up repeatedly during the Venice conference which warrant some further consideration. We offer these thoughts as a way of broadening the context of some of our discussions, and thinking about the strengths and limits of what we accomplished.

There seemed to be a continuing theme of the 'old anarchism' versus the 'new anarchism.' Apparently, the 'old anarchism' connotes a movement oriented primarily (if not exclusively) around labor-union organizing, while the 'new anarchism' is meant to include contemporary counter-cultural movements, ecology, anti-nuclear activism, feminism, etc. On a number of occasions, discussions—often almost bitter—seemed to focus on this distinction, with some appearing to claim that any reliance (or primary reliance) on working-class organization was doomed to failure, and others feeling that to take such a position is to deny not only the history of the anarchist movement, but the vitality of some contemporary workers' movements.

Our sense (deriving, for Martha and Myrna Breitbart, at least), from our studies of the history of the anarchist movement in Spain from 1868 through the Civil War period, is that this dichotomy is false and unnecessary. A single-minded reliance on, or dedication to, labor organizing may have characterized certain Marxist-socialist movements in the U.S. and elsewhere, but it has never reflected the whole story of anarchist organizing—particularly in Spain. There, although the CNT did focus a great deal of its attention on organizing workers (primarily male workers) into unions, that was never the sole focus of the movement as a whole. Practically from the beginning, movement organizers and activists recognized that people live their lives not only at the workplace, and that a truly revolutionary movement must speak to the variety of contexts in which people live and work (and to the variety of people who would make up a movement). Thus, from early on, for example, the anarchist/anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain committed itself to education of workers, recognizing that learning is empowering for people, as well as a good mechanism for organizing. What is important to recognize is that

much of this sort of organizing (particularly that at the local neighborhood level) is work that was then (and is still now) done by women—which, we suspect, may be related to its neglect by male anarchists then and now. In addition, *Mujeres Libres*—founded by women in 1935 to correct some of the neglect with which women and issues of concern to women had been treated within the anarcho-syndicalist movement—nevertheless drew on long-standing anarchist traditions: a commitment to non-hierarchy (in the family and community, as well as at work) and sexual equality, and a recognition that ‘direct action’ means taking action on whatever contexts are meaningful to people. Although they took issue with the mainstream of the movement in some important respects, they were, nevertheless, part of it.

Related to this is the overall treatment of feminist issues at the Venice conference. We were distressed that, aside from the last-minute switch because of Ynestra King’s foot injury, ‘feminism’ was relegated to one particular session, and the rest of the conference was supposedly dealing with ‘mainstream’ anarchism. As Vastra made clear in her presentation on Friday morning, however, feminism is not simply a movement (which needs to be recognized as such), but also a *perspective*, which should be informing all that we as anarchists do. In fact, to the degree that feminism questions hierarchies based on sex, it is the logical extension of an anarchist perspective that questions hierarchy in all its forms. Just as the women of *Mujeres Libres* questioned the practices of much of the mainstream anarchist movement while, at the same time, insisting on their partnership with it, so contemporary anarchist-feminists (or feminists within the anarchist community) question the articulation of these issues, while still insisting on our membership in the larger whole. It is important not just for us, but for the growth of the movement as a whole, however, to recognize that the concerns we raise are not just ‘women’s issues,’ not just ‘of concern to women,’ and not just the feminist movement. We are trying to address some fundamental issues relevant to everyone: but for that to happen, they have to be recognized as relevant by others.

In our view, then, while serious attention to feminist issues by more than a fraction of mainstream anarchists may represent a relatively new emphasis for the movement (and of those concerns is far from unanimous), it is historically incorrect to speak as though concern with issues beyond the workplace is uniquely a contemporary phenomenon. The particular articulation of anti-nuclear activism, feminism, and

ecology may be contemporary; but the place of such activity within a broader anarchist framework has a long and honorable—albeit neglected—history. One can find early reflections of many of these perspectives, for example, in the writings of as ‘old’ an anarchist as Peter Kropotkin. Not to acknowledge these links is to neglect and forget our history, to lose the lessons we might learn from it, and to make all of us feel much more isolated in our struggles than we otherwise need be. What is new about the ‘new anarchism,’ then, is not that attention is being directed to other-than-workplace issues. It is that *men* are becoming more actively involved in, or committed to, such projects—and thus, recognizing their legitimacy!



## Martha Ackelsberg & Ynestra King

The Venice Conference was an extraordinary display of solidarity and organisation. I strongly doubt that ‘leftist’ groups of such diverse opinions involving 3000 people under the vague rubric of ‘anarchism’ could have gathered for a week with such a minimal display of conflict, anger, factionalism, and harsh debates. Apart from a few incidents, particularly during the closing plenary, the conference was marked less by heated argument than searching discussion. The work done by our Italian friends and their associates from other countries was exemplary for its dedication, efficiency, and foresight. The Venice conference was on every account a rare gathering of the libertarian left: numerically larger than anything that anyone could anticipate, implicitly committed to searching discussion rather than ideological wrangling, marvellously organised to express every level of experience from major plenums, group discussions, cultural events, and entertainment in Venetian piazzas—a *tour de force* of coordination and logistics.

But it was also marked by paradoxes we cannot afford to ignore. The size of the gathering was evidence not of the strength of the libertarian left but in some respects of its weakness. That so many people had to



meet each other, to create their own milieu, partly at least reflects their isolation at home. One could be congratulatory that 3000 people gathered in Venice from many different countries if one is not reminded that we have few anarchist *movements* and no vital anarchist milieu in any country today. We had to gather together in large numbers to allay the feeling of isolation that we face at home. On this score, paradoxically, the size of the Venice gathering betrayed our numerical weakness and lack of influence in our respective countries.

Another paradox I should note is that our relative restraint in dealing with conflicting views reflects in part the doubts that trouble us about our traditional anarchist outlook. Our revolutionary optimism has been dampened by the historic decline of the classical workers movement; the enormous growth of the State, reinforced economy; the fading of insurrectionary models that guided anarchism and revolutionary socialism for more than a century (models that have been rendered meaningless in the West by the sophisticated and lethal armamentarium of the State); the extent to which the propaganda and socialization machinery of the prevailing system from schools to mass media have effectively subverted the spirit of rebellion, much less revolution.

Disempowerment has become the malaise of our era, the feeling that the destiny of society no longer lies within the hands of the individual or even the collective. No less than most people themselves, we too feel that the social 'machine' is running without any visible human and rational control along paths that threaten the existence of society itself, indeed of complex life-forms on this planet.

Venice unfolded under the shadow of an eclipsing anarchist tradition of syndicalism and the hidden challenge of so-called 'new social movements' like ecology, feminism, anti-militarism, communitarianism, and urban concepts of what in England is called 'local socialism' and what I have designated for some twelve years as 'libertarian municipalism.' The old working class 'paradigm' of 'wage labor versus capital' is giving way in much of Western society to new movements that cut across traditional class lines and strategies for social change.

In America and most of Western Europe, it is not the labor movement (indeed, apart from rare exceptions one can hardly speak of a *revolutionary* labor movement) but environmental, women's and peace movements which seem to be on the cutting edge of social change — and in England and parts of North America, movements for town and city autonomy. Such movements, far from being incompatible within the

anarchist tradition, originated that tradition as anarcho-collectivism and municipalism before syndicalism pushed this communitarian emphasis to the background. Venice seemed to be haunted by this earlier anarchist tradition and, at least, by the need to develop a perspective that would take account of new developments in capitalism.

If I were asked what constituted the 'hidden agenda' of the Venice conference, I would be obliged to say that it was the almost unexpressed need to develop a libertarian *politics* in the classical sense of the term—not stagecraft, parliamentarism, party 'politics,' and the like, but politics in the sense of managing the affairs of the *polis* or, if you like, the 'commune.' This distinction between forms of local self-management, an active concept of citizenship, municipalization of the economy, participatory forms of decision-making, and the confederation of localities as a dual power against the centralized State and economy on the one hand and parliamentarism and Statecraft on the other has yet to be made in anarchist ideology or at least, fully developed in ways that deal with the new changes introduced by the development of capitalism in the later half of this century.

The Venice conference was left in a state of suspension between the paradoxes I've described and the new needs raised by the closing of an old era and the opening of a new one. It was a magnificently organised conference, a stimulating one, an example of tolerance and élan in our movement—and it was an unfinished one. It requires theoretical study, development, honest clarification and exploration, and the practical application of new ideas, many of which are still inchoate, before we can say in a real sense that it is completed. The conference is still going on—not in any metaphorical sense that it is a 'living memory' but in the problematic sense that it posed crucial questions for anarchism that have yet to be fully explored and answered. I refer to the need for dealing with the 'new social movements' that still puzzle so many traditional Marxists and anarchists alike, the decline of older historical movements that were focused overwhelmingly on the productive sphere, and the need to formulate a libertarian politics that is neither Statist, parliamentary, nor 'social' in the sense of collectives and cooperatives, but municipalist, confederal, localist, and counter to the centralized State and economy.

Murray Bookchin



First, the Venice Conference was significant in that it opened a new page in the annals of international cooperation. Indeed it was a visible display of the new internationalism of the anarchist tradition. It is difficult to appreciate the incredible hard work it took on the part of people with the Centro Studi Libertari (Milano) and C.I.R.A. (Geneva) and the Anarchos Institute. Most particularly we must go on record and express our deepest appreciation to Rossella Di Leo, Amedeo Bertolo, and Marianne Enckell. I stress this because expressions of appreciation are unfortunately not very common. We take this kind of commitment and hard work too often for granted, a trait that is too widespread.

Second, the Venice Conference also illustrated the difficulties of organising an international conference internationally. In spite of evident good will there are not only different ways to organise conferences, there are also different cultural traditions that come into play. Few participants may have realised that the usual problems associated with conference organising were compounded in Venice by the lack of cooperation by the Venetian socialist and communist municipal authorities. We should not hold another international conference again in Venice unless a more cooperative municipal council is in place.

Third, the Venice conference was supposed to be *primarily* a reading or inventory of where contemporary anarchist theory and practice is today. It was not intended to result in a 'practical' outcome except what organisational work took place informally (and there was a lot).

Four, we did not expect 3000 people to come. We hoped for 1000, and that of these a few hundred would participate in the intellectual aspects of the programme while others would participate in the cultural activities. As a result of the human invasion all facilities of the conference were taxed beyond their limits, focus was impossible to maintain, substantial discussions were absent. There were many extraordinary people in Venice, familiar and not. There was a missed opportunity for substantial discussions on a variety of topics of urgency. Notwithstanding the wonderful long evenings in some excellent restaurants with brilliant conversation and debate there was not in my view enough of these exchanges to encourage the maximum cross fertilization of the many creative innovators present.



Can anarchists find a way to bring together, regionally and internationally, those amongst us who want to share our understanding of reality as a means to breakthrough the malaise and confusion that prevails regarding an agenda for the clarification of both theory and practise? The Venice Conference permitted the identification of certain currents of thought, as well as individuals who are doing important intellectual work. What are the next steps in maintaining a network of these and other people. A useful next step will be the international conference in Portugal, but certain other projects should be considered as soon as possible. My inclination is to think of the importance of publications as a means of reflecting current levels of analysis and guides to action. At the moment we have *Volonta* in Italian, and *A Ideia* in Portuguese. There is nothing of the same quality in French, Spanish or English. The new *OUR GENERATION* (see details elsewhere in this bulletin) will correct the situation in English. Clearly we have to encourage the creation of serious journals in other languages with the establishment of a network of international collaboration. If we couple this with a schedule of smaller international conferences every two years in different countries, I am under the impression we will be going a good way to finding a mechanism of creative interaction.

Finally a note on sensibility/emphasis/priority/urgency/relevance. There was a bolt missing in the conference. A bolt attaching us to the social reality of the day. Some thought that an ecological sensibility was not sufficiently present, others thought the nascent philosophy of the new feminism was not pervasive enough, others felt that given the evident collision course of the international arms race an emphasis on anti-war consciousness and action was missing. Contemporary anarchism *must become more synthesized. It is partly suffering from indigestion.* We are experiencing a moment where a nutritional balance is called for, and the consumption of great bulk (represented by the urgencies of the objective situation). For this to happen more organised inter-action is needed between us, and between *anarchists and others.*

**Dimitri Roussopoulos**

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# Quest for the Ragazzaccio

My first impressions of Venice were hostile. All the interminable churches and many tourists made me wonder why this place should be chosen for an anarchist gathering. But I was soon won over by the thousands who came together as anarchists and by the many charms of the city. While the merchants of Venice had been on the cutting edge of commercial capitalism, their streets and canals preserved many corners not yet conquered by monopoly capitalism. And I met many gay men both from the city itself and from those gathered for the anarchist meetings.

I was disappointed by the lack of Lesbian/gay visibility in the official conference program. Not that Lesbians and gay men had been excluded—many were giving papers and working in the book, wine, food and entertainment activities. But they were mainly invisible. At the Living Anarchy session, I stressed the importance of visibility. Homosexuality is not new but visibility is; and past invisibility has caused incredible misery among anarchists. I cited the pederast (man/boy) love relationship between Bakunin and Nechaev. Because they could not be lovers openly their personal lives and the advancement of anarchism were sadly retarded. I held up a copy of *Fag Rag* and explained that visibility was a central concern of gay liberationists today—a visibility which would bring benefits to everyone, not just Lesbians and gay men. I mentioned one of our projects had been the abolition of the vice squad in Boston, where we had successfully organized a large demonstration in which anarchists participated. Our visibility, however, still carried high costs and dangers. A few days after the vice squad demonstration, an arson team from the Boston police and fire departments bombed the *Fag Rag*, *Gay Community News* and Glad Day Bookstore on July 7, 1982. We recovered and perhaps even grew stronger after the complete incineration of our offices; nonetheless, visibility carries for us dangers unknown to heterosexuals.

A group gathered informally to discuss the issues of our Lesbian and gay lives. Many had come to the gathering but found little to interest them in the formal sessions. Representatives from the Greek publication *Kraximo* were there. The Greek government has waged a long campaign

of harassment against *Kraximo*. Paola, the editor, had been dragged into court for writing that "*Kraximo* wishes to talk of the problems of the people that society has marginalized: prostitutes, prisoners, transvestites, homosexuals, psychiatric patients, junkies, petty thieves, motorcycle freaks, callboys and desperate people." In the face of the continuing censorship, trials and harassments, *Kraximo* responds: "There is no advice. Simply resist. Alone or in companies, with groups, organized or not, with all possible ways. Resistance not only to the practices of authority but especially to the ideology of individual inertia which is so consistently cultivated."

Some of the *Kraximo* people raised the question for our group of how anyone could be both an anarchist and a faggot. This was not an easy question to answer and it was closely related to the discussion in the session on Feminism and Anarchism. A woman from Frankfurt had asked whether feminist thought could fit Anarchism and said the costs were incredibly high for women to conform to what anarchist men expected of them. Too often, she said, women were left with a feeling of being insufficient in anarchist groups. Many had difficulties with the poster for the gathering which had a cloud-breast-vulva-angel flying over a man-beast-intestinal-snake-penis. If the poster meant to suggest men should spit snake/ cocks out of their mouth, I pointed out that many of us loved to take them in our mouth.

Our gay liberation group mulled this over and we tended to split much as women had in the formal session, some felt that homosexuality itself was a form of anarchism, that heterosexuals who pretended we didn't or shouldn't exist were actually anti-anarchists, authoritarians mouthing big slogans, but that we in our sexuality were keepers of the true spirit of freedom and rebellion.

Paul Goodman once said he never made out at left gatherings but he always did well at more conservative conferences. I had this feeling. While I talked with a lot of wonderful people and made many new friends, the anarchist gathering was something of a sexual desert for me. I met native Venetians in the *gabinetti* (toilets) and on the Lido (locale of Venice's nude beach), who didn't even know a conference was going on. They were gay enough to have sex with me; they liked the idea of the conference, but they felt little happening there that related to them. Some Venetians joined the gay circle, and I (with my tourist Italian) had to try to translate for them. Two teenagers joined us because they thought we

had some good grass; they didn't understand what the word *omosessuali* meant, but when I explained *cazzo in culo* (cock in ass), they slipped away. But another faggot laughed and joined us when he found out what we were up to.

I felt a great sorrow that I could not bridge the gap between those faggots cruising the *gabinetti* or the Lido and the great ideas and wonderful freedoms being proposed at the faculty of architecture sessions. I also felt that everyone—not just homosexuals—needed to know about *Fag Rag*, *Kraximo* and other struggles among Lesbian and gay anarchists.

The division between faggots in the streets and those in the university halls resembled that between the Punks in the campo and the more scholarly speakers. The latter could learn a lot from the *Indianerkommune*, Nerberg, West Germany. I hope their manifesto stirs some echo in your hearts: "Our political demands: 1) the right to leave home whenever we wish and to live with whomever we wish; 2) abolition of all legal penalties against runaways; 3) abolition of compulsory schooling; 4) abolition of all children's homes, psychiatric institutions, and other prisons; 5) the right of children and youth to enjoy their bodies as they themselves choose and to choose their own friends; 6) abolition of all laws which punish loving sexual relations between and with children; 7) the right to travel anywhere we wish without adult escort; 8) financial independence from adults; 9) recognition that children are not lap hounds to be fondled and pampered by bored and lonesome mothers." Nor by fathers or lovers, I might add.

Perhaps too many anarchists are still debating issues of the nineteenth century or the 1930's. As important as these might remain, we need to be open to anarchist ideas among women, faggots, children and others. No one, of course, needs to have anarchist ideas applied to them, but most anarchists could be better listeners. Our cries may not be the last word in justice, but those who cannot or will not hear us will never know the meaning of justice.

Charley Shively





# Anarchy and Analysis

Alice R. Wexler

*For whatever is his own is  
well-concealed from the owner;  
and of all treasures, it is our  
own that we dig up last.*  
— Nietzsche

Since anarchism first attracted me, in large part because of its emphasis on the psychological dimensions of liberation—especially Emma Goldman's eloquent complaint that most radicals paid attention only to the "external tyrannies" while the "internal tyrants" remained unexamined and undefeated—I was delighted to see a session in Venice entitled "Psychoanalysis and Society." The links between psychoanalysis and anarchism were tantalizing; Goldman herself had attended lectures by Freud, first as a nursing student in Vienna in 1896, and later in Worcester, Massachusetts, where she was present at the famous Clark lectures in 1909. The anarchist historian Max Nettlau too, a fellow resident of Vienna, was familiar with Freud's writing, and even saw resonances between Freud's psychology of religion and that of Bakunin. Certainly Max Stirner's cranky, idiosyncratic critique of repression, which so annoyed Marx, anticipated some of the Nietzschean insights which Freud thought foreshadowed his own. Still, like most radicals, anarchists were suspicious of Freud and of psychoanalysis which had mostly become, in post-war America at least, a theory of conformity and a therapy for the rich. Yet, as Russell Jacobi has recently shown, some analysts were, in their origins, political radicals as well. The social conservatism of contemporary psychoanalysis was not the whole story. In 1968, especially, the Left began to rediscover (and reinvent) Freud. Perhaps influenced by both Marxists and feminists who, since the late Sixties, had sought to recapture a potentially subversive, revolutionary dimension in Freud's thought, some anarchists too have begun asking whether psychoanalytic theory might be usefully applied to anarchist ends.

This was the theme of "Psychoanalysis and Society," a session organized by Roger Dadoun, professor of literature at Paris VIII, and literary editor of the journal, *L'Arc*. That the topic intrigued many people was shown by the expectedly large turn-out that crowded the small room. The gist of the session, as I understood it, was that psychoanalysis—at least certain strands of psychoanalytic theory—did indeed offer useful insights to anarchists. Dadoun, a quick, ironic, energetic man with a flair for the dramatic, made this point persuasively. Anarchism lacks an adequate depth psychology, he said, and psychoanalysis offers a method of confronting and working through certain issues important to anarchism, such as the sexual mechanisms of submission to and acceptance of authority, the attraction to death, the psychological mechanisms of state power. In a certain sense, suggested Dadoun, the basic project of anarchism is psychological; an anarchist can not pretend to love humanity unless he loves himself. Much of our aggression, destructiveness, hatred toward other people derived from self-hatred projected outward, then perhaps the central project of anarchism is that of loving oneself, of self-acceptance. This, according to Dadoun, was the belief of Fernand Pelloutier, in his view the greatest of the French anarchists.

While Dadoun criticized the elitism and hierarchical elements of psychoanalysis as it is generally practiced, which are wholly antithetical to anarchist values, he also noted resonances between anarchism and analysis. For example, the characteristic gesture of anarchism, he explained, was a gesture of rupture. Similarly, the gesture of Freud was one of rupture from the bourgeois, Germanic, Jewish and later medical culture in which he was educated. Later, in his self-analysis, he also underwent a rupture from his own interior self. This was perhaps the most heroic rupture of all. Moreover, Dadoun added humorously, the move of the fetus to separate from the mother in birth is itself a gesture of rupture. "La fetus," he concluded, "c'est anarchiste!"

Dadoun also raised interesting questions about the ways in which Freud's interpretation of dreams—"the insurrection of dreams"—might provide an entry into a libertarian universe; he asked how the Freudian conception of sexuality might lay the basis for an anarchist analysis of sex. As he put it in his own (written) summary, psychoanalysis and anarchism share certain common objectives, including the constitution of the free individual (one who is internally as well as externally free), and the constitution of small groups "which would at the same time allow in-

stinctual outlets and foster resistance to different forms of authority." In short, while not at all uncritical of the conservative strands of psychoanalysis, Dadoun provocatively sketched potential points of congruence between psychoanalytic theory and anarchist ends.

Another speaker, Mario Marrone, a scholarly-looking, soft-spoken Argentine psychoanalyst resident for many years in London, shared Dadoun's criticism of the psychoanalytic establishment which has too often simply served the rich. Like Dadoun, he emphasized the value of psychoanalysis as a theory for illuminating our tendencies to project inner demons—feelings of hate, anger, etc.—onto external reality. He also stressed its value for deepening our understanding of the ways in which "the individual internalizes the normative aspects of the society in which he lives and how these normative aspects influence, on an unconscious level, his social behavior." Anarchists, he argued, must recapture the potentially revolutionary element in psychoanalysis, rediscover its potential as a theory offering new perspectives on social change. Anarchists should also make analytic therapy available to all who need it. Marrone particularly emphasized the importance of the small group—the anarchist social unit par excellence—in psychoanalysis, both theoretically—as the essential point of contact between the individual and society—and practically, as the focus of therapy, i.e. group analysis. "In an age when 'mass society' is ever more standardized," he concluded, "the recover of the identity of the small group has an importance that cannot be played down. So group analysis appears as a useful means of acting in the interface between the individual and society, as part of a sustained effort to combat alienation."

There were other interesting contributions including those by Alain Thevenet, a therapist from Lyon, and by Jacques Guigou, a researcher from Grenoble. My limited French and a noisy, enthusiastic crowd prevented me from grasping the full import of these presentations. Significantly, no one here seemed to be arguing, as leftists often had, that all the evils were outside ourselves, and that emancipation was simply a question of changing external conditions. No one seemed to be arguing against the existence of the unconscious or insisting that therapy itself was reactionary; that therapy for radicals should consist simply of throwing oneself into political work. Ellen Willis, a critic for the *Village Voice* whose work I admire greatly, had argued this point with other feminists in a wonderful, witty 1972 essay called, "The Fantasy of the Perfect Lover."



(*New York Review of Books*, 31 August 1972) At the same time she eloquently explained why radicals needed the insight of analysis. At that time the prevailing feminist orthodoxy was deeply anti-Freudian and hostile to psychoanalysis, favoring a kind of feminist behaviorism. "Yes, of course," Willis wrote,

there is a real enemy out there. Nevertheless my own experience tells me that I do not live only in the present, that I don't always act in what I consciously perceive to be my self-interest, that my fears aren't always rational. I am the product not only of present conditions but of my own history, which is not exactly like anyone else's. I often feel as if I am playing out scenarios that were written a long time ago. And though I understand very well that as a woman I am oppressed, not evil or inferior, understanding is one thing and feeling is another.

As outlined by Freud, said Willis, psychoanalysis "promises nothing less than an opportunity for human beings to recover their wholeness—to exorcise their most profound terrors, to accept their bodies, to regain access to the full range of their emotions." Was this not what Emma Goldman had meant when she pleaded for a vision of emancipation that gave free reign to fantasy and sexuality, and when she defined anarchism as "a living influence to free us from inhibitions, internal no less than external, and from the destructive barriers that separate man from man"? True, Goldman was skeptical of the vogue of psychoanalysis as it had flourished in the Teens and Twenties; she dismissed it as "the new confessional," but her own vision of inner liberation had much in common with the Freudian project of freeing the individual from the domination of unconscious compulsions and obsessions.

If the presentations in Venice seemed to recapitulate arguments that had been made earlier by other feminists and socialists, I was impressed by the particular resonances between anarchism and analysis as they were discussed here, including the centrality of the question of authority to both projects. Although psychoanalysis may argue against the more utopian dimensions of anarchism, I came away from this session with the impression that psychoanalytic theory was potentially a powerful tool and weapon for anarchists in the struggle for a free society. Directed toward radical ends—for example, uncovering the powerful un-

conscious sources of dependence on authority, demystifying the symbolic attractions of the state, unraveling the bonds of erotic domination—an anarchist psychoanalysis may open up creative new directions for anarchist practice, while also inventing new possibilities for psychoanalysis itself.



## THE RIGHT FOLKLORE & THE LIGHT

*the writing on the back of the brain*

that we are suckers for a Mask of double yak  
that the tube is the pinnacle of this transient experience  
Our Father among the Angels is a silver dollar  
& a suitcase of red white & blue coupons

that the immigrant & his offspring  
bought into the Barker's bag of trinkets  
lugging his Class on his bent shoulders  
forgetting the genesis of Labor

that the Past is an archeology of daguerreotypes  
there's only the Deal & a mirror for the ego  
it all begins with me I'm the here  
the world is my crotch & my jukebox

I'm going for the Megabuks the cream of the crumbs  
fuel the hatred for the Welfare free loaders  
all out liberty for the Super Poop  
by hook or crack it's the one on the escape route

Government of the Rich, by the Rich, for the Rich  
disemboweling the ill fed, ill housed, ill treated  
is the blind Buffalo's are you better off  
& here we go again with I'm my brother's keeper

police the globe  
for an ideology of plunder  
from the fear of another's superior democracy  
& a fair distribution of the Goods



Hitler had the majority in Life & Death  
an economy of the military braggadocio  
follows limb into the Holocaust  
by God, guts, guts, ? my Country tis of Me

the earth is a stepping mountain for Star Wars  
dont question the Pentagon  
the Neutron Bomb is the Immaculate Salvation  
& so is the next universe waiting for our apparitions

*the soul's vacant lot*

The guitar's my extra cock  
& cocaine's my soul mate  
after me fuck Alpha Omega

unions are deadend alleys  
there's no one & nothing to believe in  
stay with the dog-track & the rat-race

blessed is the Divine Right's royalties  
energy's the summons for profiteering  
or a stroke of fame & fortune

love is the length of my rod  
& the depth & control of her round muscles  
for blowing out the routine

even *making it new* is a leftover  
words are shot down, buried, & re-mated  
the image is a reflection of an echo

rare vision for an Infant  
or a replica of the parents  
unless I'm on top I have fumbled the ball

competition is the yeast of success  
no one exists till you meet them  
center & circumference have a void between them

suicide is a broken window  
Spirit & Matter are back to back  
education's perpetuating the Hierarchies

force comes with the Father's threat  
haunted & hounded by the same  
the ache of emptiness is a lonely place

### *Stale Supper*

brotherhood is boring & sisterhood is narcissus  
be grateful Death is a crock of surprises

the invisibles are insideout  
the atmosphere's a fall-in of ennui

Sovietski's a green coconut among the sunrise nations  
the Almighty made a America first

Religion's bread is mouldy  
the Word goes begging in the marketring

Faith has no partner  
will this solar system be sucked into the Black Hole

Sex is the seminal commodity  
property's the real Bank  
kneel to the dictates of Chief Near Sight  
blessed are the wide-awake sleepers

– Vincent Ferrini





# Candace Falk On Emma Goldman

*Prior to the publication of Candace Falk's biography, Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman, a portion of the manuscript was excerpted by 'Mother Jones' (Aug./Sept. 1984). In the period between the excerpt and the publication of the book, I interviewed her while doing research at the Emma Goldman Papers Project. I was interested in Falk's responses to the controversy generated by the M.J. article, her decision to focus on the relationship between Emma Goldman's public and private self and her thoughts on the role of idealism in personal life.*

*In their article introducing Falk's forthcoming biography, the editors selected the part of her biography that introduced and analyzed the most erotic and tormented of the letters between Emma Goldman and Ben Reitman. "Amorous Anarchist" drew strong and immediate responses that both questioned the journal's introduction to the new biography and the relevance of the biography itself, whose subject was the private and intimate life of a political figure.*

*"Amorous Anarchist" angered many 'M.J.' readers. Some felt that Emma Goldman's erotic and sexually explicit letters belong in the 'National Enquirer' or 'Playboy,' their publication in 'M.J.' only served to tarnish the journal's political reputation. Critical of the article's threadbare context, others argued that "Amorous Anarchist" cheapened and demeaned Emma Goldman's personal and political struggles, reducing her commitment to anarchism and free love to an obsession with sex. Underlying the responses critical of 'M.J.'s' publication of an article containing the sexually explicit letters of Emma Goldman were doubts concerning the merits of the forthcoming biography.*

*For the majority of 'M.J.' readers, "Amorous Anarchist" was their first exposure to Emma Goldman's complex relationship to Ben Reitman. For others it represented their introduction to the life of Emma Goldman. Having knowledge of their complex relationship, I was not shocked by the letters, rather I was concerned with the magazine's emphasis. One that I felt left out the deeper issues and meaning Emma Goldman's struggle with her personal life reflected. Having since read Falk's biography I find the gap between 'M.J.'s' emphasis and Falk's respectful development and analysis of Emma Goldman's life even more glaring.*

Falk makes a strong contribution to the literature on Emma Goldman's life. I feel that her work represents a breakthrough, because she doesn't present Emma Goldman as an idealized figure but as a complex woman struggling with a vision she was unable to attain in her personal life. I was moved by Falk's ability to capture this untold story of Emma Goldman's idealism. From her book I have gained deeper insight into the conflicts I have experienced in applying my political beliefs to my personal and intimate life.

—Sal Salerno

SS Last night, while I was in a used book store, I overheard a conversation between two men who had read the portion of your book excerpted in **Mother Jones**. "Did you see that article on the new Emma Goldman biography?", one of them asked. "Yes," the other answered, "I thought it bordered on soft pornography. Do we really need to know all the intimate details of Emma Goldman's love life?" I'm sure this is not the first time that you have been confronted with this response to your biography. Do you feel that **Mother Jones**, in choosing to excerpt this portion of your biography has distorted the emphasis of your work?

CF On the one hand, I feel very pleased that an excerpt of the book was published and distributed to as many people as it was in *Mother Jones*. It's material that I would like the left to read and know about. But, on the other hand, whenever you publish anything in a major periodical, you're subject to being sensationalized. The material itself is sensational. I have had to deal with the embarrassment of some people thinking that I wrote an exclusively erotic book about Emma Goldman, but, in my heart of hearts, I don't think that is what the book really is about.

In *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, I built up to the sexual themes very carefully and respectfully. I addressed the issues of the relationship between Emma Goldman's very personal life and her public life. One of the major themes of Emma Goldman's public work was to speak directly to the heart of people's alienation and their longing for love in the world, not only in the private sense but in the public sense of community as well. In a very repressive time, she spoke about birth control before it was widely available. She spoke about free love; she dared to go to the heart of people's disappointments in life and then politicize those issues to make people feel the connection between their personal experiences and the experience of the whole society and culture. I

think that more than other political figures of her time, Emma Goldman addressed both public and private issues. She expected to find a kind of perfection in her private life or a kind of passion and caring that was sustaining that was completely consistent with her public vision. Many biographies of other political figures have a glowing public vision, but never attempt to exact the same standard in their personal lives. E.G.'s life was very much the opposite. She felt very strongly that she wanted her private life to live up to her public vision and when it didn't, to quote from one of Emma's letters, she felt "condemned before the bar of [her] own reason."

To return to the sensational part, the reaction of the people in the bookstore that you opened this interview with is interesting to me. I know that many people have cringed at the exposure of Emma Goldman's darker side, not only anarchists who hold Emma Goldman as a representative figure for the movement, but also feminists and people on the left in general, and anybody who has been sparked by the earlier image of Emma Goldman as someone who is undauntedly political and optimistic. What a shock to see that in her personal life she was so tormented and disappointed, while she was so uniformly courageous in her public life. And yet, if anyone with a vision of a better world is honest with themselves, there is always a clash between one's vision and one's reality, some dilemma about these issues of public and personal life must be resolved. Emma Goldman's experience in this personal arena is as instructive as her contributions to political thought and action, and remarkably contemporary in nature, and, I might add, were among the many parts of her life experience that she wanted to share with future generations.

I'll back track a little and talk about my initial reaction to the letters, because when I found them, their eroticism and torment sparked a reaction in me similar to the reaction of those people in the bookstore. I thought, for Emma's sake, "hide these letters!" And only after looking through hundreds of similar letters did I begin to discern a pattern, and an underlying message from Emma Goldman to a broader public than the recipients of her passionate outpourings and musings about the meaning of love and politics. Emma Goldman felt herself to be in the transition stage between the nuclear family and a family of all individuals bonded by a feeling of community and an ideal. Her letters articulated the loneliness of the transition stage, particularly for women, and an acute sense of isolation that accompanied her role as the harbinger of a better world.



**SS** So, unlike the other biographical accounts of Emma Goldman's life, yours attempts to address the correspondences between her politics and her emotional life.

**CF** Yes, and I tried to analyze these issues and weave them into the fabric of her very rich and colorful life, like an historical novel, so that the reader can experience the ebb and flow of her life and feel that they are privy to Emma Goldman's inner world. There are very few people who have written as many, and as intimate, letters as Emma Goldman did. After I collected and organized the letters, I didn't have to intuit what she was feeling, because she seems to have written down almost every nuance of her inner feeling. Her autobiography was highly selective, and although a masterpiece in its own right, certainly doesn't tell the whole story.

My book, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, traces these issues of Emma Goldman's inner and outer worlds, throughout her life, and yet it is not meant to be a full political biography which analyzes every aspect of her public life, every issue, detail and person. My book complements Richard Drinnon's biography which was more exclusively a political biography. In writing about Emma Goldman's inner life, I hope that a reader who might never have heard of Emma Goldman or even thought that they could do public work themselves, might see in her frustrations and her fears that perhaps what she was doing wasn't going any place or that her vision was all for naught, their own reflection, the common feelings of anyone who attempts to affect the larger world, feelings which cast doubts but still don't hinder the movement from intention to action.

**SS** What led you to the letters and interest in telling Emma's life story?

**CF** After reading Emma Goldman's autobiography in the late 60's and early 1970's, I was inspired by Emma Goldman's daring spirit, and her insistence on passion in politics and her personal life. Whimsically, I named my dog, "Red Emma Goldman." She was an Irish Setter-Golden retriever who accompanied me on a trip through Chicago where I passed a guitar shop where I had a friend who fixed and made guitars. I went to visit him on an impulse, and left my dog Emma at the door. True to her anarchist spirit, she didn't respond to my command to stay at the door. She bounded in, and my friend began to pet her and said, "What a lovely dog, what's her name?" I said, "Emma" — "Red Emma Goldman" very proudly. My friend scratched his own head and said, very slowly, "That's funny, five years ago in the back of the shop I think I saw some letters of hers." Frankly the significance of that moment had not yet dawned on me. He went to the back of the shop and looked on the top shelf, and on a

bottom shelf, and finally found an enormous shoe box — a boot box — of Emma Goldman's letters.

Although the return address on the envelope bore the name, "E. Goldman," when I opened the letters they were not at all like the E.C. I had read about, or named my dog for. These were depressed letters; they were tormented and to my surprise, they were signed, "Mommy." I thought perhaps they weren't from Emma Goldman, although as I read them, it became clear that they were actual letters to Ben Reitman who had been her lover and manager for ten years and was himself ten years younger than she. Her double-edged salutation as "Mommy" seemed to play a part in their flirtation, challenging the passionate incest taboo with the mother — a story in itself. I went off and xeroxed the letters until I came to one of the last letters which said, "if anyone ever saw these letters I'd feel naked before the world." At this point I felt like Emma herself had spoken to me from the grave, and said "don't publish these letters!" So, I actually stopped xeroxing, wrapped the letters I had in a Chicago Maroon, the University of Chicago newspaper, and promptly returned the box of letters. Upon my return West, I deposited the copies of the letters on a shelf in my seashore apartment in Santa Cruz where I was doing graduate work at the University. During this time, my curiosity was aroused to find out how it could be that this public figure who seemed so incredibly honest in her autobiography about her intimate life, who portrayed herself as a woman who never compromised, could have lived in so tormented a state and so much in conflict with her own values.

Emma Goldman had a vision which embraced the whole individual and affirmed women's experience, not only in her own times, but in the 60's and early 70's as well. I had resolved to keep Emma Goldman's secret, although I was very curious about why she had hidden this more conflicted part of her life. I even wondered whether I would have named my dog Emma had I known about that part of her life. Would we have worn Emma's face upon our t-shirts with the same enthusiasm? I began to think that Emma was right to present her more crystal image to the public. In the course of that year, however, I thought about these issues and questioned the validity of the need for heroines and heroes and whether or not we had already come to a point in the development of the movement where a more subtle hero and heroine was needed.

Within a year the owner of the guitar shop called me and asked if I

wanted to buy the letters. At first, I believed that I should buy the letters just to keep Emma's secret, a feeling similar to those expressed by the people in the bookstore who worried about sensationalizing the material. I believed that the letters should only be made public in the context of deep respect for Emma Goldman, and that I had a duty to do my best to muster up enough money to buy the letters in order to keep them out of the public eye. An archivist in Chicago, who also wanted to buy the letters, called me with a frantic plea, "Please don't buy those letters, we have hundreds of others just like them in our library and why should any individual secret them away when they could complete an already public collection?" I reconsidered, with this new knowledge about the other letters in the Ben Reitman collection, and realized that the archivist was right. I should note that this was also the beginning of my appreciation for archival work and the preservation of historical documents. I decided not to buy them but the incident spurred me on to want to write about the dilemma the material itself revealed which added an important dimension to an understanding of Emma Goldman. The conflict between the public and the private, between the aspiration towards free love and the internal anguish of jealousy, between independence and dependence, did in fact deepen her as a woman, and as a model.

In the course of writing about Emma Goldman's relationship with Ben Reitman, I was approached by an editor at Holt, Rinehart and Winston who was intrigued by the idea of following these familiar themes throughout Emma Goldman's life. I agreed to pursue the ideas as a full biography of these issues of love and anarchism without quite realizing at first what a massive undertaking, what a grand puzzle, it would be to recreate this aspect of Emma Goldman's inner life. It took seven years of going from library to library all across the world to Amsterdam, throughout the United States, to private collections, to people who knew Emma Goldman, to piece together the story of her intimate life and connect it in some meaningful way to what her public life was in order to give people another sense of who she was. My book is the product of many years of work and I think it is a new beginning of the discussion about the implications of certain political ideologies on one's personal life. I think most people are secretly anarchists in their personal life—in their underlying hopes for the limitless possibilities of love, so Emma's story is not so alien.



**Could we return to the comments you began to make on the role of the heroine within political and cultural movements. I'm interested in your thoughts on the subject.**

Well, one of the more obvious points is to know that to have a vision doesn't mean that there aren't moments of despair about that vision.

Perhaps it is an obvious point, however, it is one which has been excluded from many biographies and autobiographies of political figures, even Emma Goldman who was so forthright about her emotional ups and downs wrote an autobiography which was unshakable in its commitment to the principles of anarchism, and never gave a voice to the doubts which erupted from the despair she experienced in her personal life.

Emma Goldman was unusual in that she applied the same high standards to her personal life and relationships as she applied to her public life and activities. Often people are scared that their own political vision is in jeopardy from all corners of the society, so they are terrified to expose the doubts and failings of the few heroines or heroes they have, and are extremely threatened when someone else dares to do so. Added to this political purism is an element of puritanism which rears its ugly head when the sexual dimension of a political heroine is exposed. And in fact there is some validity to these fears, what if people take the revelations of my books in the worst sense and think that here is proof that another political activist was merely acting out and compensating for what she didn't get in her early life, missing all the depth of her commitment to justice and freedom which was so necessary and important in her time. Or what if her story is dismissed because the teller did not share the exact political line of the reader, or if it touches on issues so painful, the underside of life which so many people wish to deny, that it only provokes anger, or is trivialized out of fear of facing what is deeply human. What if Emma Goldman's life commitment to a political ideal is so diminished by this newly discovered aspect of her being that it becomes a symbol of cynicism, an excuse to withdraw or never even attempt to live a life which attempts to have an impact on history, another excuse to turn away from politics.

It is interesting that Emma Goldman herself perpetuated the myth of her own perfect image. Although in her autobiography she mentioned Reitman and her torment about their relationship, there is a way in which it is so minimized that you would never believe how much of her life was taken up with obsessions about Reitman and various other men and

even some women who were intimately involved with her. Most people think of Alexander Berkman as Emma's closest comrade, the staple and anchor of her life. He was, that's true, but there were other lovers who came in and out of her life and occupied a tremendous amount of her energy, passion and her longings. I don't think that they should be forgotten, or trivialized or looked upon as a less important part of her life. As feminists, we must not undervalue the personal dimension of life.

**SS** Your book then, not only poses a different identity between the personal and political in Emma Goldman's life, but also questions the role of idealism in personal life.

**CF** There is an underlying critique in my book of some of the ways in which a politics of idealism translates into personal life. One of the things which was hard to say in the book, although, I think that after reading thousands of Emma's letters, following the flow of her life, and thinking deeply about this question, one feels that she colluded in her own unhappiness and her overwhelming sense of disappointment. There are repetitions throughout her life of the same themes, with the high drama that was characteristic of Emma Goldman. Ultimately, I think she had a very glowing wish for a world of perfection in which feelings of jealousy, certain kinds of aggressive behavior and quests for power were intolerable. All of these negatives for Emma Goldman were the result of outside forces that corrupted the basic good of the individual, that the State was in many ways responsible for the internalization of what she termed negative or 'anti-social' characteristics in people. I think there was a way in which she personally was terribly afraid that those tendencies were very prevalent in her own personality and that she was tormented by the idea that she herself was jealous, or cruel or powerseeking. She felt that her jealousy of Ben Reitman's affairs was an inappropriate response for someone like herself, so committed to complete freedom; she wrote to Ben that her jealousy turned her into something foreign to herself. She was tremendously defensive about any kind of criticism of her own being and tended to attempt to live as the shining example which was of course part of her strength and her almost herculean integrity. But there was something distorted about her thinking that all these negatives were external and as long as anyone rejects the negatives poles as an evil outside of themselves they also deny a basic part of the human fabric. This is not to say that a world which encouraged more cooperation and love wouldn't create a different kind of personality structure, but I'm not so certain that it is such a good idea to deny the negatives in one's self in

service of a purist notion that the negatives are only a creation of the outside powers that are corrupting the world. I think that if there is a critique in the book, it is a critique of the illusion of a kind of perfection. So, the question is, can you drop that illusion of exorcising the various different "bad" human characteristics and forces in the world and society, and still keep a vision of freedom and justice?

I'm not sure that Emma Goldman ever did drop her illusions. She did to some extent at the end of her life with the Spanish Civil War not turning out the way she wished it would, but knowing that it was still worth struggling for. But in terms of love, there was still the constant disappointment and alienation that people feel in their personal lives comes, in part, from not reckoning with the part of themselves that doesn't acknowledge these other 'negatives' as part of who they are as well, that it is not out in the external world, nor only in the other person, or the State, but part of the human condition.

**SS** While your biography creates a context through which the relationship between political ideals and inner experience can be examined, your analysis suggests a kind of failure within the radical community to come to terms with the personal contradictions that result in spite of ones commitment to political ideals.

**CF** I feel that there is something basic to the anarchist political vision and to many of us on a personal level, anarchist or not, anyone with a vision, that you can live outside of these struggles, create your own realities. I was thinking of the appeal of the Paris 1968 cry "Be Realistic, Demand the Impossible" — or the wall graffiti in Berkeley "Love Without Restraint, Live Without Dead Time." Anyone who is attracted to that, which includes me, needs to reckon with the flipside of the disappointment that that vision cannot be sustained; and the story of Emma Goldman's inner life is in many ways a poignant reckoning with the effects of attempting to 'be realistic, and demand the impossible.'

I still think that Emma Goldman could have been just as heroic had she acknowledged, maybe even switched her inner slogan to "wish for the impossible, but know what is possible within one's own limits as a human being." But Emma Goldman was terrified that if she didn't have that glowing vision, that messianic message which was the grand finale for every essay and speech from the platform, one day we'll reach the mountain top, that her work would be for naught, because she wanted more than anything else to sustain the transcendent moments of love as the beacon of life. Her vision was appealing and seductive, and in many



ways accounts for her tremendous popularity, then and now. She could articulate this longing for the perfectability, the possibility of a more glorious world to counter the dreariness and alienation which surrounded her. I feel that we are at a time in history now, when we don't need to be blinded by a stellar vision, that we can acknowledge the complexity of making changes in ourselves and in the world with more patience and a sense of the dialectical nature of reality. Without giving up a vision, or becoming reformist in the worst sense, there is a balance which is not a compromise or a surrender, which will not weaken us, but instead will empower us because we will not be slain by our own chronic disappointment or misplaced fury.

**SS** From your perspective, the weight of Emma Goldman's vision, perhaps her legacy, lies in her struggle between her political ideals and inner experience of life. Her struggle to articulate a political vision, to project a public image consistent with her political beliefs, while living out with immense difficulty the negative characteristics she confronted within her personality is the untold story of her idealism and reflects the depth of her commitment to anarchism.

**CF** Yes, and I believe that we are at a point in history when we are ready to hear it.

**SS** Are we now, really more ready to hear and learn from the example of Emma Goldman's life? The alternative press emphasized the more sensational aspects of her experience. Sensationalism and the threat of political reprisals fortunately didn't prevent her from communicating to others the depth of her inner experience. Do you think she foresaw a time when this side of her life might be publicly known?

She said in many of her letters that she knew that someday her letters should become public. She wrote to Ben Reitman, "please do not publish these letters while I'm alive." There was always the implication in her letters that when she was dead, the world could and would know of her suffering and her love. Emma Goldman wrote her letters with the flair and drama of a public speech, perhaps in anticipation of their disclosure. She was not just writing to Ben Reitman, Leon Malmed, Almeda Sperry, or Frank Heiner, she was really addressing a much larger future audience. She kept and organized copies of her own letters, encouraged others to do the same. When the Emma Goldman Papers are published, 20,000-40,000 documents on microfilm and a two volume selected book edition her wishes will be assured. The Emma Goldman Papers will outlive my book, because they are her own words, complete, unedited and in their

original form. And we are still collecting more each day. It will be the raw data that people will harken back to for generations, with a fresh spirit.

**SS** This seems to speak to Emma Goldman's integrity and awareness that at that point in history the personal and public self in relation to political activity had to be hidden. This seems to reveal a complex split within Emma Goldman, but one which she seems to have acknowledged and addressed openly among her intimate friends.

**CF** Her intimate friends had mixed feelings about her talking about these issues. Mollie Steimer, whom I met with in Cuernavaca in 1977, told me that she and Emma had a terrible fight about the autobiography, feeling that Emma had exposed too much of her personal life in the autobiography and didn't talk enough about the Cause. Emma evidently protested and said that Mollie never understood this issue of personal life as critical to what the anarchist movement was and very important to Emma's sense of herself. And yet she was right to be cautious then. I agree with your point.

I think that people are now ready for this expose because in it are the issues of our time, the issues that plague us in this post 60's era. We are ready to examine the complexities of our own visions and myths, our longings and our disappointments, our vision and reality.

Some people will be shocked at the graphic sexual nature of the book and blame it on me. But it is Emma who wrote these letters, who had these experiences, who was brave enough in her own life to talk about them, to give herself to those feelings. I don't think she must be glorified, sainted or de-sexualized, to be appreciated. I think people still exhibit a residue of sexual prudery whether they acknowledge it or not, which becomes part of their definition of a good academic or political biography—a feeling of "oh don't show me this." Emma herself wanted these letters and this part of herself to form a composite sense of her whole historical presence, and it is up to us to make some sense of this side of her personality in the context of the larger public figure and to make it relevant to our own generation, our own time.

In her own historical era, it was the humanity of her vision and her person which was most compelling, and yet in the discovery of the underside of her life, she challenges our own compassion and political intelligence, once again. Though sometimes gruelling, it has always been a profound experience to grapple with and reassemble the many facets of Emma Goldman's life into the biography, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*. It was a labor of love and it is really a thrill to share with you all now.

## AT THE ENDING THE VISION BEGINNING

(who weigh the EARTH  
with the 4 hands of One)

The Great Depression is a palimpsest of the bloodcells  
USA & USSR are in a stranglehold

each is swallowing the other  
& the kindred of terra incognita reaping the Changes

that a LOVE that has not been discovered yet  
is being searched for & really wanted

even the ground is hearing the footsteps of the Heavenly  
people  
O lost & forlorn, estranged from the Heart coming home

the mystery of that Unfound  
is a single trinity of self, family, & community

each a Child of the Cosmos  
equal to, & adding to the ocean of this miracle

November 13, 1984

— Vincent Ferrini





# Last Writes

## Australian Anarchist Centenary Celebrations

The first of May, 1886, was the foundation date of the Melbourne Anarchist Club, the first anarchist group formed in Australia. A celebration is being organised by the Australian Anarchist Centenary Celebration Collective (A A C C C) to coincide with the 100th Anniversary of this event.

From the 1st-4th May, 1986, Melbourne will be host to the Australian Anarchist Centenary Celebrations. Local, interstate and international anarchist speakers will be holding lectures, discussions and workshops on a wide number of topics ranging from the historical role of anarchism in Australia to the relevance of anarchism in modern society.

An anarchist film and art festival, as well as a display of historic Australian anarchist literature, will be held in conjunction with the conference.

Contact address

A A C C C  
P O Box 20  
Parkville, Vic 3052  
Australia

## INTERNATIONAL LIBERTARIAN INITIATIVE PORTUGAL 1987

Carrying on with the set of international initiatives of last years' studies and debates towards the renewal and the thoroughly examination of libertarian theory and culture.

Seeking to prepare anarchism to face the shock of the future and the 21st century and provide it with theoretical means for an effective social intervention.

The Portuguese Libertarians plan to organize an International Conference of Studies on TECHNOLOGY AND FREEDOM, in Portugal, in 1987.

At the same time the Conference will be an opportunity to emphasize the hundredth anniversary of the anarchist movement's autonomy in Portugal through other events, from which we call your attention to the Bibliographical and Iconographical Exhibit on ONE CENTURY OF ANARCHISM IN PORTUGAL. A cycle of cinema, various debates, literary and artistic initiatives are equally planned.

Contacts may be made temporarily through the review 'A Ideia'  
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RECIA

NE

BLACK ROSE

1921



WINTER / SPRING  
185