

# **The Strange Pathways of Fulvia Ferrari**

**A historical look at the anarchist movement in San Francisco at the turn of the  
19th century**

Anonymous

2019

# Contents

<b>The Strange Pathways of Fulvia Ferrari</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Return of Fulvia Ferrari; or, A Brief History of Cybernetics</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The Flight of Fulvia Ferrari</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>The Illumination of Fulvia Ferrari</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The Fires of Fulvia Ferrari</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Fulvia and the Savios</b> . . . . .	20
<b>My Time on the Waterfront</b> . . . . .	21
<b>Sacred is the Flame</b> . . . . .	22

# The Strange Pathways of Fulvia Ferrari

*On the subject of strategy, we have learned all the lessons from the tradition of the defeated. We remember the beginnings of the labor movement. The lessons are near to us...the power of the American proletarians at the beginning of the industrial era stemmed from the development, within the community of workers, of a force of destruction and retaliation against Capital, as well as from the existence of clandestine solidarities.*

-The Invisible Committee, *The Call*, 2003

In recent years, the number of anarchist history books and academic studies have blossomed thanks to the tireless work of AK Press (among others) and the thankless authors and researchers who've sold their souls to the academy. For the first time in over a century, the complete works of Errico Malatesta have been published in English and US anarchists now have access to the original strategies of insurrectionary anarcho-communism, a common-set of practices that thrived between the 1880s and the 1910s.

At the current moment in history, these century-old practices are being revived across North America, although many still remain to be uncovered. Rather than look for national and transnational structures to the old anarcho-communist movement, we should search no further than our own cities and towns for the material practices that once bolstered our strength. Knowledge of our past deeds have been suppressed for decades, a tactical move on the part of our enemy meant to keep us atomized, and we're the only ones who can recover it.

As the Invisible Committee puts it, *the political techniques of capitalism consist first of all in breaking the attachments through which a group finds the means to produce, in the same movement, the conditions of its subsistence and its existence...in separating human communities from innumerable things — stones and metals, plants, trees that have a thousand purposes, gods, djinns, wild or tamed animals, medicines and psycho-active substances, amulets, machines, and all the other beings in their realms that co-exist with humans...just as it was necessary to liquidate the witches — which is to say their medicinal knowledge as well as the movement between the visible and invisible worlds which they promoted.* In order to recover this lost knowledge, we should search directly beneath our feet, and to illustrate how revealing these investigations can be, we'll look no further than our own back yard: San Francisco.

While many people try to deny it, the majority of the early US labor unions were hotbeds of racism with many owing their initial strength to anti-Chinese hysteria. This was certainly the case in San Francisco during the 1870s, a period that makes the Italian 1970s pale in comparison. For anyone who might have been an anarchist, the struggle of 1870s was less against bourgeois capitalists than it was against the pimps, crimps, ship-owners, and racist lynch mobs of the labor movement. In short, the struggle was against local tyrants who preyed on the most vulnerable.

Since the boom of the Gold Rush in 1848, one neighborhood held strong against these racist mobs and maintained its interracial character well into the 20th century: Telegraph Hill. First pop-

ulated by prostitutes from Mexico, Chile, and Peru, this hill withstood numerous racist attacks in the 1850s and 1860s until it became a veritable bastion of freedom protected by clandestine forces. Unless they were from the neighborhood, no one ever went to the eastern slope of Telegraph Hill. It was far too dangerous.

Situated just above the waterfront and far removed from downtown, the eastern slope of Telegraph Hill provided an ideal sanctuary for vulnerable populations fleeing the racist hysteria of the land-based trade unions. It also became a refuge for honest sailors. Given the international scope of their work, sailors tended to be far less racist, if not out-right anti-racist, and they remained unorganized throughout the anti-Chinese programs. By the 1880s, the federal government had crippled the racist demagogues by officially outlawing all Chinese immigration to the US, depriving these union bigots of their main scapegoat.

The collapse of the anti-Chinese hysteria did nothing to change the racist character of most San Francisco labor unions, although it did allow an opening for a certain anarchist sailor. While anarchists affiliated with the first Black International had lived in San Francisco since the 1860s (the decade Bakunin first arrived in town), their first major initiative was spearheaded by a Polish Jew named Sigismund Danielewicz, a man who'd just returned from organizing against the San Francisco sugar barons on their Hawaiian plantations.

He waited out on the waterfront one night, stood beneath a gas-lamp, and called for the sailors to gather around. In a frantic speech, he denounced the crimps who sold off their labor to the greedy ship-owners and called on them to form a union. By the next evening, March 6, 1885, Sigismund had recruited over 400 members into the Coast Seamen's Union. Rather than try and take over existing racist unions, the anarchists appear to have chosen the profession most conducive to anti-racist anarchism. As we've noted, sailors traveled the world and worked alongside men of every race and color, partially immunizing them from common prejudices. Beyond this, the only legal slaves still allowed in the US were prisoners and sailors. When faced with a tyrannical captain, sailors could either engage in mutiny (an illegal act) or submit to the captain's brutality, making them official slaves (at least while on the seas), a fact acknowledged by a few liberal politicians of the era.

The crimp system further enslaved the sailors by extorting a percentage of their paycheck in exchange for placement on a crew. There was no way for a sailor to find work on the San Francisco waterfront unless they were *crimped* out by these agents of the ship-owners. For all these reasons, the anarchists chose to focus on the sailors, and by July 1886 their union had grown to over 2,000 members. For the first time in the city's history, sailors could find work through a union hiring hall rather than be gouged by a crimp. A long and bloody history followed the creation of this anarchist union, but the main point is this: the anarchists targeted an unrepresented and heavily exploited workforce to create their first inroads into the local labor movement. While this union materially benefited all sailors by cutting out the crimps, it also materially allowed the anarchist sailors to travel the world with a valid union book. Right off the bat, the San Francisco anarchists were sailing the high seas.

In years to come, San Francisco would be one link in a long chain that extended from Lisbon, Buenos Aires, Valparaiso, Vancouver BC, the far reaches of Alaska, the frozen shores of Siberia, the Yangtze River of Imperial China, and every port in between. Thanks to this transnational *network* (as it was spelled back then, by sailors), the remnants of the Black International were able to circulate between the continents and establish concurrent unions in the major ports. While it

was easy for anarchists to obtain union sailor books through similar methods, they still had to face down brutal captains.

One local rebel, a teenager named Enrico Travaglio, witnessed a captain shoot down a fellow sailor and was told to keep his mouth shut. Rather than suffer this tyrant any longer, Enrico jumped ship in Siberia and made his way down to China in 1890. It was on the Yangtze River that he met a friend of Elisee Reclus, the famed anarchist geographer, and Enrico was hired to pilot his boat for a cartographic expedition into the center of Imperial China.

When he returned to San Francisco in 1894, Enrico had become a committed anarchist, although bad news awaited him at home. In his absence, Enrico's mother Giussepina had passed away, leaving him alone with his step-father Cesare, an anti-religious newspaperman from Milan. Perhaps to deal with their pain, these two men utilized Cesare's printing press to produce San Francisco's second anarchist newspaper: *Secolo Nuovo*. It was printed in modern Italian, unlike Sigismund Danielewicz's *The Beacon*, the city's first anarchist newspaper. Its audience was primarily the growing Italian population of the Latin Quarter, the neighborhood directly behind Telegraph Hill, while *The Beacon* was mailed out to English-speaking anarchists across the US. Danielewicz himself was fluent in Italian, although most local anarchists could only read or speak one language. In any case, he stopped publishing *The Beacon* in 1891, leaving *Secolo Nuovo* the only anarchist paper in town.

While it was a weekly publication between 1894 and 1906, no more than 2000 copies of *Secolo Nuovo* were ever distributed per issue. The paper was subsidized by friendly merchants (Chinese, French, Spanish, Italian) taking out ads for their businesses along with clueless Anglos who didn't realize they were financing an Italian insurrectionary newspaper. Back then, modern Florentine-based Italian was still a language of the upper classes and dialect was the preferred language for many "Italian" immigrants. In this regard, composing the paper in Italian might have been a way to communicate to a broad audience, although it could simply be modernist elitism no different from contemporary versions. Either way, *Secolo Nuovo* definitely made a splash in the Latin Quarter and riled up the Italian bourgeois with its fierce and unrelenting criticism. While the non-literate, dialect speaking "Italians" were shut out of this conversation, their interests were certainly served by *Secolo Nuovo*, a paper that ridiculed the rich *prominenti* of the Latin Quarter and their exploitation of recent immigrants.

*Secolo Nuovo* was joined by *Free Society* in 1897, an English-language anarchist journal run by the Isaak family. After escaping a police crackdown in Odessa, this Ukrainian family reunited in Portland, Oregon where they started *The Firebrand* newspaper with several other anarchists. When the editors were jailed for publishing an "obscene" Walt Whitman poem, their paper was discontinued and the group disbanded. Most went north of Olympia to the anarchist commune in Home, Washington while the Isaaks moved to San Francisco and started *Free Society*. Emma Goldman was close friends with the Isaaks, just as she knew Enrico Travaglio, and all of them were arrested together in Chicago, charged with conspiring to assassinate President McKinley in 1901.

Before he was arrested, Enrico Travaglio had left San Francisco with the Isaaks in 1900 and worked on their paper in Chicago. He eventually moved to Spring Valley, Illinois where he collaborated on another paper with two Italian anarchists, Ersilia Cavedagni and Giuseppe Ciancabilla. This couple fled the Italian Kingdom in 1898 and settled in Patterson, New Jersey, the headquarters of North American insurrectionary anarcho-communism. In this bastion of freedom, Giuseppe served as editor for *La Questionne Sociale*, the most popular Italian-language

anarchist newspaper published in the back room of a bar at 325 Straight Street. Errico Malatesta was the paper's next editor and the insurrectionist Luigi Galleani would later take over, proving the depth of these trans-national connection.

Giusseppe served as editor of *La Questionne Sociale* from 1898 to 1899 while his partner Ersilia Cavedagni joined the anarcho-feminist *Gruppo Emancipazione della Donna* and performed plays in their *Teatro Sociale*. During their years in Patterson, a local anarchist named Gaetano Bresci traveled to Milan and assassinated King Umberto of Italy, bringing attention to their insurgent city. Shortly after this, Ersilia and Giusseppe moved to Spring Valley, Illinois where they'd come to meet Enrico Travaglio, editor of *Secolo Nuovo*.

Giusseppe was arrested in 1901 along with Enrico, Emma Goldman, and the Isaaks, although Ersilia remained off their suspect list. After being released, Enrico, Giusseppe, and Ersilia returned to San Francisco in 1903 where they began publishing *La Protesta Humana*. Not only did they start another anarchist newspaper, Ersilia began organizing public festival and performances to promote their cause. These open-air plays, speeches, and picnics came at a time when anarchists were losing interest in the union strategy, although it had taken them nearly two decades to get there.

After the creation of the Coast Seamen's Union in 1885, the San Francisco waterfront was paralyzed by maritime strikes in 1886, 1892, 1893, and 1899, culminating in the Great Waterfront Strike of 1901. After the first sailor's strike in 1886, it was clear that a port blockade could paralyze the economy of an entire major city. This tactic was further elaborated by Errico Malatesta in 1889 during the Great Dock Strike of London where he helped the unorganized dock workers form a union that shut down imperial London for an entire month. This success led Malatesta to advocate forming unions of unorganized workers, infiltrating the labor movement, and building towards a general strike.

According to this strategy, wage gains were incidental to the grander project of paralyzing the economy and seizing vital infrastructure. All the delusions about "stable economies" and "fair workplaces" are products of the 20th century. In the days of insurrectionary anarcho-communism, the workplace was a site to be infiltrated, pillaged, seized, and either destroyed or re-purposed. There was no hope of creating fair capitalism, nor was there any transition period to a worker's state. As the Invisible Committee puts it, *the overthrowing of capitalism will come from those who are able to create the conditions for other types of relations. Therefore the communism we are talking about is the exact opposite of what has been historically termed "communism," which was mostly nothing but socialism, a form of monopolist state capitalism. Communism is not made through the expansion of new relations of production, but rather in their abolition.*

This remained the dominant strategy for many years, although the Great Waterfront Strike of 1901 disillusioned many San Francisco anarchists. After organizing all the maritime trades into a single federation, the unions shut down the waterfront and paralyzed the city for three violent months. Even with President McKinley assassinated by an anarchist, the unions kept up their pickets on the waterfront and engaged in roving gun-battles on Market Street. When it was clear the strike would end in civil war, the governor threatened to bring in the state militia and scared the current head of the Coast Seamen's Union into surrender. To make matters worse, the disillusioned unions renounced the general strike and voted the Union Labor Party into power. While this elected Party effectively outlawed scabs and private detectives, their officials took bribes from the high-capitalists and forbid the Labor Council from approving any wildcat strikes.

When the Paterson anarchists arrived in the Latin Quarter in 1902 with their street festivals and park performances, it must have surely been a relief from the tedium of union labor. After decades of the waterfront organizing strategy, the anarchists had been betrayed by their very own sailor's union, and many looked outside the workplace for a path forward. These outdoor festivals were proof that anarchism could be furthered on the streets of their neighborhood rather than on the job where every stolen hour would only enrich the capitalists. This era reveals the split between *organizzatori* and *anti-organizzatori*, although history shows they all worked together long into the 1920s. This split may even have been exaggerated to catch police informants, and by all accounts, their ranks were never infiltrated until Donald Vose of Home, Washington betrayed his anarchist mother in 1914. This snitch was later depicted killing himself in *The Iceman Cometh* by Eugene O'Neill, a classic American play-write who died in 1953 with an unfinished play about Errico Malatesta in his drawer.

Between 1903 and 1905, the anarchists of the Latin Quarter began providing supplements to their newspapers that included texts in other languages. One of their publications was printed in French, Spanish, and Italian, providing immigrant their neighborhood with a Rossetta Stone they could use to decode each other's languages. In 1905, the Mexican anarchist Praxedis Guerrero arrived in San Francisco and began publishing his short-lived *Alba Roja*, a Spanish language newspaper aimed at local immigrants. Praxedis and his two friends found work as longshoremen on the waterfront, proving there were still many radical connections to the maritime trades. According to local legend, Praxedis and his friends hung out at *Luna's Mexican Restaurant*, a well-known gathering spot for sailors and longshoremen. Despite the downfall of the Great Waterfront Strike, the anarchists never relinquished their sway among these maritime workers, nor did they give up their sailor's union books.

Not only had Bakunin passed through San Francisco after escaping imperial Russia, the port had been used by Emma Goldman to smuggle weapons to both the Philippine and Russian insurgents. Elisee Reclus utilized the waterfront in his journey's across the Pacific, just as many Russian refugees landed there after the collapse of their 1905 revolution. San Francisco went on to cultivate both Chinese and Japanese anarchism, harbored the blossoming IWW, and rivaled only Paris in its cultural impact. In short, San Francisco was a safe harbor for anarchists fleeing repression and a center of resistance for the international movement. It joined dozens of other North American cities in the global anarchist struggle, each with their own stories as rich as this one. Their strength lay in their particularity, not their uniformity, and when combined they were capable of changing history. These anarchists were generally our grandparents, great grandparents, or great-great grandparents, making their pasts easy to trace for those who are curious. Matters get more confusing in San Francisco.

The old anarchist Latin Quarter came to a fiery end when the Great Earthquake of 1906 set off an inferno that burned nearly all of city, including the official records dating back to 1848. Old identities were erased, new identities created, and suddenly everyone came from San Francisco. Oddly enough, one of the few neighborhoods to escape destruction was the rebel bastion of Telegraph Hill, proving its resilience against all opponents, even earthquake and fire. According to legend, it was saved by the neighborhood dousing their houses with red wine, although the story's far more complicated.

With that in mind, we've offered this short video about two anarchist women who lived on Telegraph Hill in the time period just described. A lot of evidence supports their legends, although only a single picture remains of Isabelle Lemel Ferrari (taken by Jack London). In the

year 1914, Isabelle and Enrico Travaglio conceived a daughter they told no one about, mostly because Isabelle didn't want a husband, lover, or father. Isabelle named her daughter Fulvia but soon left her in a Northern California commune to go aid her comrades in Russia. The rest of the story is described in the video, although we've utilized clips from the San Francisco noir-film *Thieves' Highway* to act as an allegory for Fulvia Ferrari's story.

There are no known pictures of Fulvia, nor if that's actually her name, and it's possible she's still alive, making her 103 years old. Her mother Isabelle's legends are well known from the history of the Ukrainian anarchist movement, although the only glimpses of Fulvia swirl around in the Beat era, get doused with LSD in the 1960s, shot up with heroin in the 1970s, given a market value in the 1980s, turned into Hollywood movies in the 1990s, and rendered digital in the 2000s. Some scholars say Thomas Pynchon wrote about her in his novels, while others claimed she knew Philip K. Dick and Ursula K. Le Guin.

It's hard to know what to believe, but we prefer the stories of annoying people at local cafes and old women sitting at bus-stops on warm evenings. Some of them say Coit Tower of Telegraph Hill is the same as the Sacre Coeur of Montmartre, a victory column over vanquished territory. They say Isabelle and Fulvia's house on Telegraph Hill was destroyed in the 1920s and that Coit Tower's shadow falls over its ruin. If one travels there today, that portion of the hill is covered in trees, plants, vines, wild parrots, and sculptures. There's no plaque to mark any of this, just a few cryptic statues, offerings, and monuments that confirm all the wingnut's stories.

We hope some material practices have been revealed through this essay that might prove useful in the present moment, just as we hope the video illustrates how effectively US radical history was suppressed by the victors of the twentieth century. We encourage our readers and viewers to investigate their own North American cities and connect the dots between 1879 and 2018. Between these two dates, our miserable present came into being, although so did the secret to its reversal. San Francisco was ripped apart by the high-capitalists as punishment for its rebellious history, just as they try to defile every center of resistance that truly threatens them. As we move into this turbulent future, we hope you can take a moment and listen to what the past is saying. As we've demonstrated, the ghosts of the defeated are handing us weapons at every moment. All we have to do is take them up. As the Invisible Committee wrote, *we believe there is no revolution without the constitution of a common material force. We do not ignore the anachronism of this belief. We know it is both too early and too late, which is why we have time. We have stopped waiting.*



# The Return of Fulvia Ferrari; or, A Brief History of Cybernetics

Back in the old days, around 2010, anarchists in North America began taking up the argument of how to engage with social media and smartphones. Some argued it would be like refusing to use the printing press in the 1500s if anarchists didn't engage with the new social platforms and smartphones. Others argued this comparison was absurd. If a printing press had transcribed every word uttered by the rebel printers, filmed their interactions, tracked their movements, and instantly delivered that information to the ruling power's archive, then perhaps that comparison might make sense. As history decided for us, most anarchists involved in that debate began to engage with social media and smartphones. That was nine years ago.

It was the so-called "Arab Spring" of 2010 and 2011 that mass-popularized the idea of using social media platforms and smartphones for revolutionary ends, a narrative that was embraced deeply within the Occupy Movement. This new movement, appearing during the "Arab Spring," was the first in the US to fully utilize social-media platforms and smartphones, laying the basis for our current digital reality. Occupy fit so perfectly between the Twitter-fueled Iranian Insurrection of 2009 and the Ukrainian Insurrection of 2013-2014, appearing as just another blip in some wave of global revolt fueled by social media. When the Ferguson Uprising broke out in 2014, it was perfectly normal for radical organizers in the US to use social media. Despite the epic Snowden leaks of 2013, most people weren't careful as the US was rocked between 2014 and 2016, with those historic events transmitted through Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Between 2016 and 2019, the entire digital landscape changed, especially for social movements. Where a Twitter posts could once trigger an uprising in Baltimore, there's now just heavily-policed social networks watched over by NATO's very own Atlantic Council. In their effort to combat the 'fake news' from Russia after Donald Trump's election in 2016, any social media post remotely threatening to the ruling order is suppressed and rendered irrelevant, mostly by algorithm. Since the hey-day of 2011, the radical utility of social-media has rapidly declined to its current level, where only Donald Trump and AOC are allowed to use Twitter to organize massive demonstrations. Everyone else is relegated to bumbling around in their tiny social networks, cut off from the larger flows of power that now dominate social media platforms.

As the Invisible Committee told the Chaos Computer Club in 2014, *it's becoming clear that Facebook is not so much the model of a new form of government as its reality already in operation. The fact that revolutionaries employed it and still employ it to link up in the street en masse only proves that it's possible, in some places, to use Facebook against itself, against its essential function, which is policing.* In the four years since these words were written, the entire situation has changed, with the loop-holes of social media now forbidden to the public. When they delivered this 'Fuck Off Google' address, the Invisible Committee were also trying to rekindle an interest in cybernetics, the 20th century science that still dominates our world, *an art of governing whose formative moments are almost forgotten but whose concepts branched their way underground, feeding*

*into information technology as much as biology, artificial intelligence, management, or the cognitive sciences, at the same time as the cables were strung one after the other over the whole surface of the globe.*

The creator of cybernetics, Norbert Wiener, once wrote that *communication is the cement of society and those whose work consists in keeping the channels of communication open are the ones on whom the continuance or downfall of our civilization largely depends.* According to the Invisible Committee, *cybernetics is now producing its own humanity. A transparent humanity, emptied out by the very flows that traverse it, electrified by information, attached to the world by an ever-growing quantity of apparatuses. A humanity that's inseparable from its technological environment because it is constituted, and thus driven, by that...Political economy reigned over beings by leaving them free to pursue their interest; cybernetics controls them by leaving them free to communicate.*

While there's much more to the story, the main point is this: cybernetic capitalism is actually the ruling ideology of our time, and it rules us through our devices. Even the most secure internet user is still being pulled into the cybernetic project simply by using the endless succession of new devices and components. A few recent North American anarchist critiques have questioned our movement's reliance on digital technology and we hope to encourage this line of thought. It's been twelve years since the iPhone was first released and almost a decade since North American anarchists began using social media platforms, a convenient moment to pause and reflect on where to go next.

The recent uprisings in Sudan and Haiti, heavily repressed by the ruling powers, has not triggered the same kind of social-media response as did the Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan, Syrian, Turkish, and Ukrainian uprisings of 2010 to 2014. The rulers of Sudan are allies with Saudi Arabia, hence allies with the US and the EU, and thus their revolt is forbidden from becoming viral on social media platforms. It's the same story with Haiti, whose ruling powers are allies of the US. All of this illustrates exactly what the NATO/Atlantic Council censorship of Facebook and Twitter look like in practice. Popular support for a coup d'etat in Venezuela is allowed to circulate, as are the words of Trump and AOC, but an anarchist uprising will never find its genesis on social media platforms. If that was ever possible, those days are long past.

It's important to not get too bleak about this entire situation. Just because it's normal for everyone to be linked to this cybernetic network, doesn't mean it's a good idea. Starting from cybernetics being a bad idea, move on from despair and resignation into actively forming a strategy to escape the control of power and order. As a reminder of how this is done, we've composed a short documentary about the history of cybernetics and one of the early revolts against its reign, a revolt that leads us back to San Francisco, California.

Fulvia Ferrari, the daughter of local SF anarchists, went looking for her mother Isabelle in the 1930s. Her mother had disappeared in the Russian Civil War and was rumored to be fighting the Red Army from within Stalin's dictatorship. Fulvia eventually tracked her to Poland but was eventually captured after the Nazis invaded the country. She never found her mother and spent four years in a German concentration camp, surviving until her liberation by US soldiers. After returning to San Francisco, Fulvia learned the extent to which WWII was a global counter-revolution against the rebel movement built by her mother, and in the act of rekindling her family's revolt, she'd soon come up against the technologies birthed by this same war: the atom bomb, the rocket, the jet, and the digital computer.

While the governments of the US and the USSR built large computers to control their populations, the banks and corporations built huge mainframes, and the military used vast computers

to select its next bombing targets, a movement of computer hackers began to build an alternate computer vision so that normal people could access the new power of digital technology for rebellious purposes. As the Invisible Committee would later write, *the virtue of the hackers has been to base themselves on the materiality of the supposedly virtual world*. Much of this computer hacker movement was birthed in the San Francisco region during the 1950s and 1960s when Fulvia Ferrari was living there with her lover, a moment of extreme political discord across the US.

Fulvia took this moment to encourage various rebels of San Francisco to steal this new technology from the government and capitalists by any means necessary and to release that information to the public. As the Invisible Committee wrote, *the hacker pulls techniques out of the technological system in order to free them. If we are slaves of technology, this is precisely because there is a whole ensemble of artifacts of our everyday existence that we take to be specifically "technical" and that we will always regard simply as black boxes of which we are the innocent users*. While Fulvia also encouraged young hippie radicals to destroy the large government and corporate computer mainframes, most people only remembered the easier suggestion of stealing the technology, copying it, and releasing it. If she knew where these suggestions would lead, she might have only recommended destroying this new technology, not extending its reach. As history is so fond of reminding us, all of our words have consequences.

Fulvia never revealed her name or who she was and moved through these various outlaw scenes with an aura of mystery. Dozens of young hippie anarchists, tripping on hallucinogens, would remember a woman with either a French or Italian accent telling them to pillage and destroy the new digital temples of state and capital. She was always pushing for the maximum, everywhere. As the Invisible Committee would write, *understanding how the devices around us work brings an immediate increase in power, giving us a purchase on what will then no longer appear as an environment, but as a world arranged in a certain way and one that we can shape. This is the hacker's perspective on the world*.

During the revolts of the 1970s that followed, these rebel hackers popularized the notion of personal computers and one of them eventually created a business called Apple to sell them across the world. Where this hacker had once enabled the public to enjoy free long-distance telephone calls through the blue box (a useful tool in those violent times), he was now a capitalist selling small computers to the public. After large government computers had been used to fight the war against the North Vietnamese Army and crush the guerrilla movement in West Germany, the global revolts of the 1950-1980s were coming to a close and the alleged triumph of capitalism set to begin.

For a brief moment in the 1990s, many people convinced themselves this triumph was real, especially some of the former hippie hackers, and they resigned themselves to selling their personal computers and software to a growing consumer base. While some of these hackers might have been anarchists, the majority held dubious beliefs about the indigenous and US capitalism, among other things. In the 1980s and 1990s, the first children were provided with these computers at public schools, just as the former hippie radicals threw themselves into designing more software for them to use. While these hippie era hackers might have encoded some rebellious content into their digital constructions, they also created the conditions for today's children who are now partly raised by hand-held computers.

Many who grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1980s and 1990s were repeatedly told by the Baby Boomer generation that the hippies didn't really sell out by becoming bankers

or corporate officials, they'd simply infiltrated the enemy camp and were preparing the big take down of the man. One of the ways they were going to do this was through computers. Over the years, it became clear this wasn't close to being true, especially after the attack on the NYC World Trade Center in 2001 and the global police state that followed, a moment when the internet became a militarized chess-board. Six years into that destructive era, the first smartphone was released by Apple, fulfilling the conditions for putting a computer into the hands of the people, albeit under totalitarian internet conditions. As the first people started using Facebook from their smartphones, the powers of the NSA, the CIA, and the FBI were rapidly expanding.

For better or worse, the hippie era hackers gave the people a chance to use digital technology for revolutionary ends, and the 2007 to 2016 period was partially a result of suggestions made by a mysterious woman from San Francisco to rooms full of long-haired radicals high on amphetamine, THC, or LSD. Either French or Italian, no one could remember which, Fulvia floated through the counter-culture of the 1950s and 1960s, priming the youth for the impending confrontation with capital. It was no easy task to rebuild the Black International after WWII, but thanks to the efforts of Fulvia Ferrari and hundreds of other anarchists, our International still exists today. Now that our movement has been sucked into the digital realm, we offer these words and images as fuel for critical thought. There are no straight lines, no black and white, and this is the history we're stuck in.

During the first hey-day of our movement, in the period between 1871 and 1939, there was a moment of extreme psychic exhaustion permeating modern societies. At the end of the Industrial Revolution, when the modern world had become littered with steam engines, factories, pipelines, and massive iron constructions, millions of people were growing depressed from the broken promises of industrial technology. Rather than making life easier or more utopian, industrial technology was in fact making life worse with its poisoned earth and blackened skies. Part of this cultural depression fed into the Spiritualist movement of psychics, mediums, and reincarnations, while another part fueled the anarchist revolts of coal miners, foundry workers, textile workers, and every other wage-slave of the new technological order. By the 1880s, this cultural depression was transmuting itself into conscious rebellions against the iron laws of industrial capitalism, and the anarchist movement rapidly grew up to the 1910s, a moment when the impending confrontation was fast approaching.

Just before WWI triggered a global counter-revolution, the Czar of Russia was being counseled by a Spiritualist mystic named Rasputin, indigenous anarchists were fighting a revolution in Mexico, and the commune of Home in Washington State was being populated by a unique mixture of insurrectionist anarchists and Spiritualist mystics. At that moment, just before the war, faith in industrial technology was shaken to its core, both politically and spiritually. Not only did technological industry grind up human labor to satisfy its insatiable appetite, it impoverished the minds and bodies of those it claimed as subjects. We are all living in a similar moment, where the tech overlords are now forbidding their children from using smartphones, sending them to nature-immersion schools, and finding Rasputin life-coach gurus to guide their souls through this technological nightmare.

As the Invisible Committee correctly observed, *the majority of Marxists and post-Marxists supplement their atavistic inclination to hegemony with a definite attachment to technology-that-emancipates-man, whereas a large percentage of anarchists and post-anarchists are down with being a minority, even an oppressed minority, and adopt positions generally hostile to "technology."* While this strange situation is occurring in radical circles, the public is growing suspicious of the

smartphones, homeless camps, 'fake news,' social-media, cultural brutality, environmental collapse, and mass-shootings of the current era. It remains unclear what will happen to the digitally-nurtured iGen (or Generation Z) when they begin their inevitable wave of mass-revolt, but it's possible these young rebels might have a critique of technology. By all accounts, their parents are still unable to account for the current digital landscape, a world their children are now completely intimate with. In some cases, parents ration their children's screen time or access to the internet. In other cases, parents give their children a smartphone as soon as they can touch the screen. History will determine what these children end up creating.

While this new spiritual crisis is occurring within modern digital culture, the modern anarchist movement now stretches from Japan to Indonesia, from Australia to Afghanistan, from Iran to Greece, and from Moscow to Seattle. True to ourselves, for better and worse, the anarchist movement has never been very powerful, but it's survived against impossible odds and never took state power like the communists. We're still not very powerful, but we're everywhere, just like a hundred years ago, and if we have any luck, we won't make the same mistakes as before. The alleged triumph of capitalism was never total, not in the 1910s, not in the 2010s, and not in the 2020s. Its reign was never secure and the coming years will see it crumble even further towards dissolution, a moment we should prepare for. As many have noted before, if an uprising ever generalizes into a full-scale revolt, the ruling powers will censor the internet. If that doesn't work, they'll simply turn it off. It would be wise to plan for this eventuality, not ignore it.

# The Flight of Fulvia Ferrari

Fulvia Ferrari was the daughter of a San Francisco anarchist named Enrico Travaglio, although few ever knew this to be true. After her mother Isabelle disappeared in Russia, Fulvia went searching for her in the 1930s only to end up imprisoned in a German concentration camp. Once the US Army liberated the survivors, Fulvia returned to San Francisco under a false name and tried to reclaim the lost worlds of the anarchist Latin Quarter and insurgent Telegraph Hill. When she'd finally achieved some of these goals, Fulvia decided to meet with her father, although she never called him that, preferring to use his first name: Enrico.

Fulvia was born in 1915 and grew up in a Mendocino County commune just north of San Francisco. She moved to San Francisco in the early 1930s and it was here that she first met her father. After returning from Seattle in the 1920s with his third wife Esther, Enrico settled in the bayside town of Sausalito before moving back to his beloved San Francisco. According to the oral histories compiled by Paul Avrich in his *Anarchist Voices*, Enrico was “fiercely anti-Bolshevik after the Russian Revolution and broke with some of his friends who became Communists.” While he was still living in Sausalito, Enrico would “meet Eric Morton on the San Francisco Ferry,” although according to his wife Leah, “they never talked about anything important.”

Eric Morton was no ordinary anarchist, and just like Enrico Travaglio, he was also a sailor. When Alexander Berkman was imprisoned for his assassination attempt against Henry Clay Frick, it was Eric Morton who attempted to dig a tunnel to rescue him. Eric Morton helped Emma Goldman smuggle dynamite and arms into Russia between 1905 and 1907, edited *The Blast* newspaper with Alexander Berkman, and remained in San Francisco to fight the local Italian fascists during the rise of Mussolini. According to Emma Goldman in her 1931 autobiography, Eric Morton was “a man of intelligence, daring, and will-power.” When he would meet with Enrico Travaglio on the San Francisco Ferry in the 1920s, the Russian Revolution now a decade past, these two men were certainly discussing the future. A few years later, when Enrico had moved back to San Francisco, his secret daughter appeared at the front door, looking for her mother Isabelle.

The 1920s and 1930s were a violent time in the former Latin Quarter of San Francisco, now known as North Beach. As fascists took over the Italian state, their local supporters became more aggressive on the streets, triggering bloody clashes over the next decade. Between 1926 and 1927, the local Catholic Church was hit with four bomb blasts, a campaign that targeted the church for its support of Mussolini. During the fifth attempted blast, two anarchists were shot by police before they could light the bomb and one of them soon died from his wounds.

In 1927, two Italian anarchists were transporting a bomb through the Richmond District of San Francisco when it suddenly went off. Rather than blow up the Italian Consulate as planned, Angelo Luca lost a leg while his comrade was instantly killed. Despite receiving a permanent wound, Angelo denied any knowledge of the bomb and was never convicted of a crime. A decade earlier in 1917, he'd married a painter named Jessey Dorr, one of the first graduates from the all-woman Mills College in Oakland. Just before she married an insurrectionary anarcho-communist,

Jessey had burnt all of her canvases and swore to never paint again, an event that signaled her shift away from the bohemian world (although a few of her paintings survived). She lived with Angelo in a house in the Mission District at 650 Capp Street and raised their two children, one of whom became an art and sculpture lecturer at UC Berkeley. For the rest of his life, the family of Angelo Luca would remain close friends with Enrico Travaglio.

In the middle of classical fascism's rise, the massive 1934 Waterfront Strike took place in San Francisco, a violent labor conflict that left nine people dead, including Fulvia's three uncles. While this effort led to a General Strike and the creation of the ILWU union, it also caused a wave of repression against the perceived Communists who'd infiltrated the labor movement. Using modern machine guns and federal soldiers, the bosses subdued the strike just as Hitler was throwing anarchists and communists into concentration camps. In this horrible time period, Fulvia decided to leave San Francisco to find her lost mother, the last surviving member of her family besides Enrico, who she hardly knew.

When she returned in 1947, having lived through Stalin's USSR and the Nazi's concentration camps, Fulvia immediately reclaimed her family's lost waterfront territory. After she was secure in her new San Francisco life, Fulvia met with her father in 1951 and began a relationship that would span the rest of Enrico's life. While never revealing who she was to Enrico's wife, Fulvia met with her father on a regular basis, hoping to rebuild the anarchist world he'd lost. In the process, she read Enrico's elusive history of anarchism in the United States, learned the secrets that led up to her birth, and discovered her father was born in Milano, just like her maternal grandfather Antonio.

During the late 1940s, the nephew of IWW leader Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and son of Carlo Tresca moved to San Francisco and began working as a sociology teacher. In 1953, he opened City Lights Bookstore with Lawrence Ferlinghetti before returning to New York a few years later. The bookstore is still there on the corner of Broadway and Columbus, the former gathering spot where fascists had once listened to Mussolini's radio broadcasts. During the late 1950s, it would become a major center of the beat movement and publish books that mentioned the Wobblies, anarchism, and the gone world of their parents generation. Fulvia Ferrari was often there.

In 1956, during one of their meetings, Enrico asked Fulvia to visit his old hometown and do what she could to help the anarchist movement. Starting that year, Fulvia began a series of trips to Northern Italy that culminated with her involvement in the Torino Fiat Strike and the Piazza Statuo Riots of 1962. It's this period in Fulvia's life, between 1956 and 1962, that we've documented in our short film *The Flight of Fulvia Ferrari*. While posing as an art dealer, Fulvia's trips across the ocean helped divert money into the anarchist movement and breathed new life into the global struggle. With her lover, she also smuggled weapons onto the Cape Verde Islands and Guinea Bissau from the late 1950s to the early 1960s, helping the anti-colonial rebels begin their uprising against the Portuguese. Despite her efforts, Moscow eventually stepped in to replace their operation. This pattern would only repeat itself.

Fulvia returned from Torino in 1963 and remained in San Francisco until the late 1970s, a moment when she was forced to permanently leave her beloved coastline. In 1968, she'd sat in front of the television with Enrico and watched as the Parisian riots of May filled the screen, a spectacle that brought great joy to her old father. With militant struggles breaking out across the planet, Enrico Travaglio died happy in July of 1968. His friend Angelo Luca would pass away four years later in 1972, followed by his wife Jessey in 1977. By then, most of the old-school anarchists had moved south to Los Gatos where they had "picnics from time to time to raise money for the

Italian and English anarchist press.” Years after Fulvia vanished from the San Francisco Bay Area, these anarchists continued to reside in Los Gatos, with many of their children still living in the region. The last of these elders who gave their oral histories to Paul Avrich died in 1993. Most of them were born in the 19th century. Today, their final refuge of Los Gatos is the home of Netflix corporate headquarters.

While we were completing this third installment of our series on Fulvia Ferrari, the actress who stood-in for Fulvia passed away from natural causes. Valentina Cortese, born in Milano in 1923, became a movie actress during the fascist dictatorship and starred in her first role in 1940 at the age of seventeen. Her first two films were made at Cinecittà studios, a film-production company established by Benito Mussolini that carried the slogan: *Cinema is the most powerful weapon*. The studios were bombed by the Allies in 1943, the same year over one thousand Jews were taken from Rome to Auschwitz. Like many other artists, writers, directors, communists, and anarchists who lived in Italy through these events, Valentina didn’t do very much to fight against the dictatorship during the 1940s, and most spent the rest of their lives trying to redeem themselves. Once the war was over, Cinecittà became a refuge camp for two years before returning to film production. Since then, the studio has tried to forget its origins.

After the end of WWII, Valentina signed a contract with 20th Century Fox and began filming movies with US directors. Her first role during this time period was in the 1949 noir-film *Thieves Highway*, filmed almost entirely in San Francisco. It’s a massively subversive film with the notion of “free-enterprise” heavily critiqued. It depicts a Greek sailor just returned from WWII who’s instantly exploited by the market and turns to a waterfront sex-worker for help. Valentina knew exactly what kind of film she was making and was allowed the freedom to deliver her best performance. The director was Jules Dassin, a former Communist who’d renounced his affiliations with the Party when Stalin made a non-aggression pact with Hitler. Despite his hatred for state communism, Dassin was soon put on the Hollywood Blacklist and completely shut out from the US film industry.

Unlike him, Valentina Cortese continued to make movies for Hollywood but was never given the full-on star treatment or elevated to the heights of her Anglo-Saxon peers. According to an interview Valentina gave in 2012, “I could have remained in Hollywood for who knows how long, but I never made compromises. Never was in a producer’s bed.” Because of her refusal to sleep with an unnamed director, Valentina’s career was destroyed. She remained independent her whole life, acting in a Brecht play and an Antonioni film, and she died last week in Rome on July 10, 2019. May she rest in peace, and may these images from her films bring you closer to a better world.

**Long live Fulvia Ferrari! Long live Valentina Cortese!**



## The Illumination of Fulvia Ferrari

We're happy to present *The Illumination of Fulvia Ferrari*, our fourth installment on this mysterious woman and her family. This latest video reveals more details about her life in the San Francisco Bay Area and the people she met along the way, including Mario Savio, Chet Baker, and a future member of the Symbionese Liberation Army named Mizmoon. Between 1964 and 1978, Fulvia lived through an intoxicating, violent, and warlike time that eventually forced her to flee California forever.

When she arrived back from Italy in 1963, Fulvia had access to both the younger generation of new anarchists popping up in San Francisco and the older generation of anarchists like her father, Enrico Travaglio. There were others as well, such as Vincenzo Ferrero, an anarchist who arrived from Northern Italy in 1905. Just two years older than her mother, Vincenzo became one of the main anarchist figures in the Latin Quarter and edited the *L'Emancipazione* newspaper from 1927 to 1932. This paper would eventually transform into *Man!*, the first English language publication put out by this group of Italian anarchists. *Man!* existed up until 1939 and connected the older generation of anarchists with the young ones who now spoke English. As it turned out, Enrico Travaglio never liked Marcus Graham, the editor of *Man!*, but he remained friends with Vincenzo Ferrero for the rest of his life.

Shortly after Fulvia arrived in San Francisco, Vincenzo was arrested across the bay in Oakland along with his friend Domenico Sallitto. In the spring of 1934, these two anarchists were imprisoned until their deportation proceedings and a massive solidarity campaign was launched to prevent them from being shipped directly to fascist Italy. Domenico was ultimately freed but Vincenzo was ordered back to Italy by the judge, a man who knew this deportation was a death sentence. Vincenzo was luckily out on bail and went into hiding once the deportation order was given. All of this occurred in the lead up to the 1934 General Strike that saw San Francisco paralyzed for days on end, a historic battle that nineteen year-old Fulvia fought in from start to finish. Once the smoke cleared, her three uncles had been killed by agents of the ship-owners, the city was taken over by federal soldiers, and the dark tide of fascism was still rising across the planet.

Vincenzo lived a clandestine life in the San Francisco Bay Area from the 1930s until 1974, the year he revealed his true identity to Paul Avrich. During all that time, this anarchist went by the name John the Cook and inhabited the underground realms of those fleeing from the law. Before she left for the USSR in 1938, Fulvia was able to meet with Vincenzo in his hide-outs and passed messages for him back to their comrades in the Latin Quarter. When she returned in 1947, Vincenzo was still underground and knew much more about navigating a clandestine existence within the US, a set of skills he shared with Fulvia whenever they'd meet on the waterfront for a drink. Despite his ability to stay invisible, the post-WWII police-state with its ID cards and Social Security Numbers made their lives more difficult. Even worse, the FBI was now given a free hand to begin its anti-communist witch-hunt and scrutinize the members of the old radical circles.

Vincenzo lived in the San Francisco Bay Area until his death in 1985, over six years after Fulvia had fled. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, he gave Fulvia advice on the quickly

changing political landscape and helped her understand the days leading up to her birth. Her father Enrico Travaglio had left San Francisco in 1906 after the Great Earthquake and spent the next two decades in the Pacific Northwest, mostly between Home, Tacoma, and Seattle. Unlike her father, Vincenzo remained in San Francisco and knew Fulvia's mother Isabelle quite well before she left in 1915, although she never did say goodbye to him. Isabelle's final acts were to travel north to Home, sleep with Enrico, give birth to Fulvia on her aunt's commune, and then board a ship for the journey to Siberia. It remains unclear if Vincenzo knew who Fulvia really was, although he did remain friends with her father until Enrico's death in 1968. After this old sailor's ashes had been scattered at sea, the social conflict in the US kicked up into a higher register of violence and disorder.

The decade between 1968 and 1978 was the fever pitch of the Cold War and Fulvia fought her version of it from her home in San Francisco. While we've detailed her involvement with Mario Savio in the video, one relationship that deserves mentioning here is Fulvia's brief meeting with a young woman named Patricia Soltysik, later known to the world as Mizmoon. One stoned evening in Berkeley in 1973, Fulvia spoke to Patricia and her lover Camilla about the true evil of the Hearst empire. Starting with their oil fields in Mexico, Fulvia detailed the Hearst family's every crime, including the overt fascism of the late William Randolph Hearst. Given they were in Berkeley, with its streets and university buildings named for the Hearst family, these revelations struck Patricia and Camilla to the core. During her final meeting with the couple, Fulvia took them on a walk and reminded them the *San Francisco Chronicle* had just printed the full Berkeley address of Patricia Hearst in its society column. Fulvia said it would be shame if something happened to such an innocent UC Berkeley student.

When young Patricia Hearst was eventually kidnapped by a group calling itself the Symbionese Liberation Army, Fulvia knew exactly who'd done it. The group had already lost its mind on LSD and assassinated the first black school superintendent in Oakland for a pointless reason, an act that made Fulvia highly suspect. It was later revealed that its leader Cinque had been a police informant in Los Angeles, making the assassination even more suspicious. Nevertheless, the group desperately grasped for a good idea after this vile act when two of its members were arrested and they soon settled on a suggestion of Mizmoon and Camilla's: they'd kidnap the granddaughter of an old California fascist and demand his son feed the entire state. Along with millions of others, Fulvia was genuinely surprised when Patricia Hearst announced she was joining the SLA and showed up at a bank robbery in San Francisco with a machine gun in her hands. Within months, most of the group had been incinerated by the police on live television during a 1974 shootout in Los Angeles, a brutal reminder of what these guerrilla groups were facing. By 1975, the rest of the SLA was arrested in their San Francisco safe-houses, along with Patricia Hearst.

The urban guerrilla struggles of the 1960s and 1970s quickly transformed from organic expressions of rebellion into a geo-political chess-game between the USA and the USSR. While the anarchist versions of these groups acted continuously from the 1950s to the 1980s, they never received the sheer amount of material support as their communist counterparts. Unlike the anarchists, armed groups such as the Red Army Faction and the Red Brigades obtained arms, money, and logistical support from the satellite nations of the USSR. Unlike these communists, the anarchists only had the money and arms they could raise themselves, some of it supplied by Fulvia and her friends. Despite all her efforts, Fulvia watched the global conflict become polarized between the two super-powers, with most of the young people flocking to either the communist

or capitalist banners. To many of these US baby-boomers, anarchism was an antiquated political philosophy from their parent's time that was far less exciting than Leninism and Maoism, the shiny new ideologies of the 20th century.

Fulvia did what she could within this nightmare and only left San Francisco when her life was seriously in danger. The fateful month she left, November 1978, saw Jim Jones poison almost a thousand of his followers at their compound in Guyana, most of them plucked from the Bay Area. Many of their ashes are now buried in Oakland. This terrible month culminated in the assassination of Harvey Milk in San Francisco by a former police officer and led to the fiery White Night riots in 1979, although Fulvia was gone by then. A cloud of darkness fell on San Francisco in the 1980s that brought with it intense corporatism, the AIDS epidemic, Reagnism, and the consumerist conclusion of the Cold War. Luckily for us all, international anarchism survived through the collapse of the USSR and continued to grow until the present day.

We hope our latest video sheds some light on Fulvia's activities during the 1960s and 1970s and reveals the clear links between her time and our own. As we've stated before, Fulvia was one of thousands of others who kept anarchism alive through the darkest periods of history, and like thousands of others, her name and story have been mostly lost to collective memory. Our cinematic narrative has nearly reached the present day and in our final installment we'll reveal how close we are to this unbelievable and uncanny history of resistance. We hope these words and images find you well, wherever you might be on this earth, and with any luck we'll be able to finish the rebellion started by people like Fulvia, her mother Isabelle, and her grandmother Josephine.

# The Fires of Fulvia Ferrari

*My San Francisco comrades could work strenuously; they took their tasks very seriously;  
but they could also love, drink, and play.*

–Emma Goldman, 1931

## Fulvia and the Savios

My connection to Fulvia Ferrari is pretty simple, so I hope you're not expecting much. My family was very close with the Savio family, as in Mario Savio, leader of Berkeley's Free Speech Movement in the mid-1960s. One day, a woman appeared at the Savio house wearing sunglasses and a black shawl. On her way to the front door, this woman appeared elderly and unable to walk without Mario's assistance, although this was meant to fool anyone surveilling the house. Once she was inside, the woman suddenly transformed into a lively firecracker with a thick, deep laugh.

She spoke fluent Italian, just like the Savios, only her accent seemed a bit French. She came back a few more times, once when my family was there, and my favorite description of Fulvia is her dancing with Joe Savio between his rows of tomato plants. No one ever really knew who she was or what she did. When I heard these stories, she was either described as *that French lady from 'Frisco* or *that old school Italian lady from North Beach* or some combination like that. Everyone in my family who met her said Fulvia was the epitome of *cool*. When my family imagined San Francisco, a place they'd never been back then, they always thought of Fulvia. She was definitely cool.

Fulvia was friends with Mario Savio despite being decades older and visited his family in Southern California as a way assuring them he was in good hands. She only visited a few times, the last being sometime in 1967. By that point, the FBI harassment of the Savios had revved into high gear and despite the fact that Mario lived in Berkeley, there was hardly a day without an unmarked car parked outside their house in suburban LA County.

While this repression took its toll on Mario's mental health, it had grave repercussions for his mother Dora. Dora is the reason Mario was a rebel. Dora is the reason my grandmother, also an immigrant, started to defend herself when the Anglos tried to gouge her at the grocery store. In short, Dora was filled with fire, although she was also just a human. Starting in the late 1960s, Dora began to scream and cry on a daily basis, unable to control the raw panic caused by the FBI stalking her son. The sounds of her screams filled the Savio house on a nightly basis, a fact the FBI hoped would pressure Mario into ending his rebellious practices.

At the height of Dora's mental illness, my young aunt, no older than three or four, walked right into her bedroom during one of my family's visits, grabbed Dora's hands, and literally sucked the darkness out of her soul. That might not make any sense to you, and I really don't care what you believe, but for the rest of her life, Dora never fell into another spell of screaming

and crying. She only lived another decade after this, her life shortened by the FBI harassment, and when she passed away everyone knew it was the federal government that killed her. Even her son's life ended early because of this repression, and Mario passed away in 1996 at the age of 54. I learned all of this growing up and had no illusions about the federal government or what it was capable of. Thanks to my family, I also knew how to deal with the darkness that followed this type of repression, although it was never easy, or simple.

## **My Time on the Waterfront**

When I was a young teen in the San Francisco Bay Area, my friends and I used to spend all our free time skateboarding, and there was no better place for this than the SF waterfront. It was here that all of us could skate with the pros and be treated as equals, so long as we didn't fuck up their tricks or photo shoots. It was nice to see these "pros" were just grown up versions of ourselves who liked to chill, paint, smoke weed, and hated the police. Back in those days, we were constantly on guard against the cops who came to evict us from our legendary skate spots: Pier 7, EMB, and the Hubba Hideout. When the city would stencil the phrase NO SKATEBOARDING on the waterfront, we'd paint over it and then keep skating. When ten police cruisers would descend on Pier 7, all of us would scatter, often pursued by some pathetic cops with nothing better to do. For whatever reason, I always ended up skating away from the police in the direction of Telegraph Hill, a natural sanctuary.

Standing directly over the waterfront and criss-crossed by staircases, this hill was where I made a dozen escapes and hid-out with my friends until the heat passed. While none of us realized this at the time, we were reenacting a historical pattern. In the 1850s, when racist vigilante mobs attacked anyone who wasn't white, all those who fled ended up on Telegraph Hill, and by the 1870s, the neighborhood was a bastion of outcasts, refugees, and rebels. Long story short, it's always been a place to hide, whether from racists or the psycho SFPD who used to snort lines of coke before chasing after us little skaters. In the 1890s, the rebels on the SF waterfront were a bunch of sailors who fought the cops on the picket lines. In the 1990s, the rebels were us skaters, terrorizing the yuppies and keeping the docks wild and crazy.

I stopped skating on the waterfront around 1999, the year the cops and gentrifiers got the upper hand. They covered our ledges in metal kinks, passed ordinances outlawing skateboarding, and turned the waterfront into the yuppie tourist nightmare you see today. Plus, being of high-school age, I was always at risk of some bullshit arrest for truancy, a misfortune that befell more kids than I can remember. If someone were to write the definitive account of the SF waterfront during the 1990s, they should try and reconstruct just how many of us were arrested and thrown in juvi. Little did we know that all of us were the front-line against gentrification, tiny soldiers keeping the waterfront from being colonized by terrible yuppies, and after years of fighting, we lost.

Between 1999 and 2002, I kept going to the waterfront, but not to skate. After cutting school, my first stop was always Telegraph Hill, a chill place to smoke a blunt over the water, watch the sailboats go by, and listen to the wild parrots shriek through the air. If I wasn't with my buddies, I was alone, and when I was alone on Telegraph Hill, I began to learn some of its history. An old lady who lived in the ivy told me three witches used to have a house on Greenwich Street. An old man outside Cafe Trieste told me the hill used to be filled with rebels. A twenty-something

woman let me know Telegraph Hill was a literal magic crystal where time could be bent and reshaped. At the time, I wrote her off as some candy-kid raver who took bad ecstasy, just as I wrote off everything else as schizo ramblings of street people. In my teenage ignorance, I had no idea what to do with all this information. All I knew was that I loved the geography of Telegraph Hill, its aura, its ambiance, and its safety.

In 2005, I happened to remember that *old school Italian lady from North Beach* my family met at the Savios, and when I asked about her, I was told that, yes, she lived on Telegraph Hill with all the *artists and weirdos and freaks*. This revelation suddenly made everything click, although at first I wrongly assumed Fulvia was one of the three witches who lived on Greenwich Street. I learned there had in fact been a house on Greenwich that was torn down to build a retaining wall in the 1920s. This was the house where the three witches were said to live, only now it was just a garden filled with statues and shrines and the sound of shrieking parrots. By 2007, I'd pieced together enough history to know Fulvia never lived there, it was her grandmother, her mother, and her great-aunt who lived there from the 1870s to the 1910s. By the time Fulvia got to San Francisco, all that was left of her maternal family's home was a barren hillside and a mafia-run speakeasy standing above it. As it turned out, Fulvia was an anarchist. So was her mother. And her grandmother.

I was also an anarchist, thanks to my family and the local punks, and in 2007, I began the process of writing the history of these strange women. Once I dived into this project, I realized it was a rabbit hole with no clear end. I'm still in that rabbit hole, but recently I've begun throwing my discoveries back up into the light. It might have been dangerous to tell these stories at one point, but that time is long past. Now more than ever, we need to remember these women who devoted their entire lives to crushing the tyrants that still rule the land.

## **Sacred is the Flame**

This is the last video The Cinema Committee will release on Fulvia Ferrari and her family. As an editor of this project, I wanted to end this saga on a personal note. The name Fulvia gave to my family and the Savios wasn't real. I checked. As far as I know, there's no record of her owning property on Telegraph Hill. No one ever heard from her after 1978. The last person I know she spoke to was Mario Savio and all she said was goodbye. According to Mario, his friend Fulvia had survived four years inside a concentration camp. When he asked why she was in Nazi occupied Poland to begin with, Fulvia said she'd been looking for her mother. She laughed and tried to make it seem like she was lying, but Mario never forgot.

Whether you believe this history or not is up to you. Why you would prefer to live in a world without the witches of Greenwich Street is something I don't understand, but feel free to disprove any of the facts revealed in this project. I assure you, even the harshest skeptic will get stuck in the same rabbit hole I fell into. In the process, you'll probably learn more than you could have ever imagined. Many people involved in this story are dead, but if you want to follow a few threads, you might be able to ask Diane de Prima. Maybe she knows something about that weird French lady from San Francisco. Or maybe not. You'll have to find out for yourself.

We hope those of you who've read and watched this series were able to gather some of the flame that Fulvia left for us. We're the only ones who can keep this fire alive, so summon your breath, put your face close to the heat, and exhale until the wood begins to crack and pop and

the flames reach their arms towards the sky. In case you haven't noticed, it's already working, and 2019 is just the beginning. Get ready for what comes next.

**Feliz Dia de los Muertos!**

**Long live Fulvia Ferrari!**

**Long Live Anarchy!**

**With love,**

**An Editor**

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)

Anti-Copyright



Anonymous

The Strange Pathways of Fulvia Ferrari

A historical look at the anarchist movement in San Francisco at the turn of the 19th century

2019

Retrieved on 20 March 2024 from <[thetransmetropolitanreview.wordpress.com](https://thetransmetropolitanreview.wordpress.com)> (Part I),

<[thetransmetropolitanreview.wordpress.com](https://thetransmetropolitanreview.wordpress.com)> (Part II),

<[thetransmetropolitanreview.wordpress.com](https://thetransmetropolitanreview.wordpress.com)> (Part III),

<[thetransmetropolitanreview.wordpress.com](https://thetransmetropolitanreview.wordpress.com)> (Part IV),

<[thetransmetropolitanreview.wordpress.com](https://thetransmetropolitanreview.wordpress.com)> (Part V).

The videos these essays are accompanying are available online at:

<[archive.org/details/thestrangepathwaysoffulviaferrari](https://archive.org/details/thestrangepathwaysoffulviaferrari)> (Part I)

<[archive.org/details/fulviasreturn](https://archive.org/details/fulviasreturn)> (Part II)

<[archive.org/details/theflightoffulviaferrari](https://archive.org/details/theflightoffulviaferrari)> (Part III)

<[archive.org/details/theilluminationoffulviaferrari](https://archive.org/details/theilluminationoffulviaferrari)> (Part IV)

<[archive.org/details/thefiresoffulviaferrari](https://archive.org/details/thefiresoffulviaferrari)> (Part V)

**[usa.anarchistlibraries.net](https://usa.anarchistlibraries.net)**