



Interview in the *New York World*, July 28, 1892

Anarchy's Den

....
Emma Goldman, Its Queen, Rules with a Nod the Savage Reds.

....
Peukert, the Silent Autonomist, the Power Behind Her.

....
Berkman, the Assassin, the Tool of These Leaders.

....
Their Headquarters in a Cheap Flat on Fifth Street.

....

[. . .]And Here Was Emma Goldman.

In the far right-hand corner of the second room, near a dusty, cobwebbed window, sat a woman. Alone in that gathering of hard-faced, half clad men, enveloped in a dense atmosphere of choking smoke, she reclined placidly in a barroom chair, reading. She seemed rather pretty. The back of her chair was tilted against the rear wall, and her left foot rested on the rung of a chair in front of her. A white straw hat, with a blue band streaked with dotted white, lay on the table at her elbow.

Chestnut-brown hair that had been parted on the side fluffed over her forehead, leaving only a trace of the part. At the back the short hair was as negligently arranged. She has a shapely head; a long, low, white forehead; light bluish-gray eyes, shielded by glasses; a small, finely chiselled nose, rather too wide at the nostrils for symmetry; a colorless complexion; cheeks that once had been full, but now are slightly sunken, giving a moderately pinched appearance to a face that loses its beauty of form in the rapid decline to the chin. The mouth in repose is hard and sensual, the curves gross, the lips full and bloodless.

A neck that once was rounded was still well poised, but as she turned her head the tendons bulged out into scrawniness, and blotches here and there added to the sharp disappointment one met with after leaving the upper part of the face. A trim figure, five feet four or five inches tall, well moulded with hard flesh, clothed in a white blouse, a tan-colored belt and a gown of blue sateen striped with white, and tan shoes.

That was Emma Goldman as she sat in the Anarchist drinking den, ¹ at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon.

"You are Miss Emma Goldman?"

"I am."

The reporter passed some pleasantries and she smiled. Her lips wreathed into lines that were uglier than when her face was in repose. The two front teeth were set wide apart, and on either side there were dental hollows, making the interior of the mouth look black, or rather that dull opaque hue characteristic of the mouths of some snakes. She spoke English well, with a positive tone, but there was a noticeable accent.

Proud of Being an Anarchist.

"Yes, I know Berkman. He is a splendid man--a man of brains and courage. Am I an Anarchist? I am, and I am proud of it. They have arrested Mollock, I see. Well, I am sure that Mollock had nothing to do with that little affair in Pittsburgh."²

"But Mollock and Berkman were friends?"

"Oh, yes, they were friends, and I suppose Mollock owed Berkman some money. In fact, I know he did, and that is why he sent it to him."

"When did you last see Berkman?"

"Oh, some time ago; a week, maybe, or ten days. I don't remember exactly."

"Did he tell you where he was going and what he was going to do?"

"No, he does not make confidences with people in that way about such matters!"

"But you are his wife?"

"Ha! ha! yes, I am his wife, but in the anarchistic way, you don't know what that is! The anarchists don't believe in marriages by law. We want no law and when we agree to marry, why ha! ha! there you are."

"The anarchist wife then does not expect the confidences of her husband?"

"Why should we? But that is a matter I don't propose to discuss."

"You lived with Mrs. Mollock?"³

"Yes."

"The name under the bell is Pollak, is that her real name?"

"I suppose so. She is Mollock's wife, as I am Berkman's. She couldn't live with her first husband and went with Mollock."

"But Mollock signs his name to his letters to her as Pollak?"

"Is that so?"

Miss Goldman tried to be arch. It was a dismal failure she did not repeat.

"The Police Make Me Tired."

"Mollock met his wife in Buffalo, and when they came here Berkman assisted them and we all lived together in Chrystie street. No, I don't know where his wife is now, but I believe she has gone to Long Branch to see her husband. The papers made a big fuss about me, but I have not been concealing myself. I have been around town all the time."

"Were you called upon last night by Chief O'Mara, ⁴ of the Pittsburgh police?"

"No, I was not. The police make me tired. They are mostly fools. They go about mysteriously and do nothing. All they ever did was to put that old fool, Most⁵, in jail."

"You are a friend of Most's?"

"A friend! The old fraud! I only wish that when I had a chance to do it, I had made him give me some of his money. He is a coward, and an Anarchist for revenue only."

"Were you not his Anarchistic wife before he took up with Lena Fischer ⁶ and you met Berkman?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Again that hard, unmusical laugh. This time it had a ring of insincerity in it that belied her words. "I was not," she said decisively.⁷

"When was it that you had a chance to make him give you money?"

"You reporters are too impertinent. I hate reporters."

"Why?"

"Because I hate all inquisitors. I have travelled all over this country, lecturing to the groups, and I have spoken here when that paltroon Most was afraid of the police. Yes, I am a Russian, but from what part of Russia I don't propose to tell. But above all I am an Anarchist."

"You are proud then of your lover's achievement?"

"Indeed I am; we all are."

"You received several telegrams last Saturday; were they from Berkman?"

"Now, I don't propose to say any more. I have told you enough, and I suppose you will write a lot of lies. You all do, because your people must pander to the capitalists who give you bread, and the capitalists like to read the lies about us Anarchists."

"Won't you tell me when you last heard from Berkman?"

"That is no concern of the public. Now, sir, I will say no more. If you were to ask questions all night I would not answer."

The Other Anarchists Aroused.

One by one the swarthy, half-clad and grimy Anarchists in the front room had been coming near to where their queen sat. Some one of them probably gave her a sign to say no more. A dozen stalwart black and redbearred Anarchists stood a few feet back of the reporter. Another reporter approached and asked Emma Goldman a question. With her eyes glancing with a significant look at the group of her friends, she said in a voice far louder than was necessary, so loud that it could have been heard in the front room:

"I have nothing to say. Will you not let me alone?"

As if her words were a signal, half a dozen Anarchists closed about the reporter, waving their fists in the air and hurling oaths and objurgations in German and Russian at the reporters. One man stood near a table with an ice-pick in his hand.

"All Reporters Should Be Killed."

The group grew larger. Emma Goldman rose to her feet. One burly Anarchist, broader chested than Sullivan⁸, clinched his fists and, with face aflame with beer, heat and anger, exclaimed in German that all reporters should be killed.

"Yes, he can understand German!" he howled. "You -- --!"

"No," replied the woman in German, "he is an American." She smiled that hollow cavernous smile, her eyes shone behind her glasses. A glad and proud look was on her face, and while she made a faint display of quieting her slaves her pale face took on some color and she stood there wreathed in smiles amid smoke and beer fumes[...]

....

New York World, 28 July 1892, p. 2; includes sketch of EG. The article continues featuring brief interviews with [Claus Timmermann](#) and [Josef Oerter](#), both of whom protected themselves from police investigation with vague and evasive responses to the reporter's queries. The headline refers to Joseph Peukert, anarchist communist and a leader of tyhe Gruppe Autonomie (*Autonomy Group*).

¹ Zum großen Michel, the saloon at 209 Fifth Street and the regular meeting place of the Gruppe *Autonomie* as well as the address of *Die Brandfackel* and of Claus Niedermann, who edited *Brandfackel* while its editor and founder Claus Timmerman was imprisoned on Blackwell's Island

in 1893. The reporter later noted that "the walls were hung with advertisements of Anarchistic papers and on a rack were bound files of *La R[é]volt[é]*, *[Die] Autonomie* and other periodicals evidently of Anarchistic views."

² Police in Long Branch, New Jersey, acting on a request from Pittsburgh police, arrested [Frank Mollock](#) on the basis of his having sent six dollars to AB in Pittsburgh on or around 23 July. Mollock admitted sending the money but denied any part in AB's attempt to assassinate [Henry C. Frick](#), the "little affair" EG refers to in this interview. AB recounted in prison how he had tried to collect money owed him by various comrades immediately after arriving in New York on 10 July.

³ Josephine Mollock, whom EG and AB had lived with, apparently locked EG out of the apartment under pressure from the landlord after AB's *attentat*.

⁵ Pittsburgh Police Chief O'Mara had recently claimed that AB's attempt on Henry C. Frick's life was part of an anarchist conspiracy to murder seventy millionaires whose names appeared on a list discovered in the desk drawer of Pittsburgh anarchist, and suspected accomplice, [Henry Bauer](#).

⁶ [Johann Most](#) had recently been released from prison where he had served a sentence (June 1891 to April 1892) for his incendiary speech on 12 November 1887, the day after the Haymarket martyrs were executed.

⁷ Lena Fischer was the sister of Haymarket anarchist [Adolph Fischer](#), although the reporter may have confused her with Helene Minkin, a young anarchist who had lived with EG and AB, and later married Johann Most.

⁸ In fact, EG had been drawn to Most as a lover and mentor soon after she first moved permanently to New York. He encouraged and helped organized her first lectures, sparking the beginning of her public speaking career.

⁹ A reference to world heavyweight bare-knuckle boxing champion John L. Sullivan, who held the title from 1885 to 1892.