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# The Unstoppable Anarchist Ersilia Cavedagni

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12 September 2023

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*rima nemica dell'ordine, or bitter enemy of order.* The last document concerning Ersilia is from 1941, when she was 77 years old. While the date and place of her death remain a mystery, what's clear is she remained a committed anarchist for her entire life, something all of us should aspire to. May the story of Ersilia Cavedagni give you strength, and while her deeds are many and great, she was still just a person like any of us.

There is no known picture of Ersilia Cavedagni, but we would like to think this is her, printed in *Cronaca Soversivva* for the recurring column *Between Books, Magazines, and Newspapers*.

**Long Live Anarchy!**

**Long Live Ersilia Cavedagni!**

**Long Live The Black International!**

So it was that at the age of fifty, Ersilia left her lover Leon Morel, then thirty-two. Leon went on to start his own foundry in Seattle, and his work still stands across the city. When the authorities were trying to deport him, Leon was accused of smuggling Ersilia into the US from Canada for immoral purposes, given they were never legally married. He never identified Ersilia by name in his deportation case, which he beat, and his descendants still run Morel Industries.

The mysterious *Italian woman* of the deportation case moved to San Francisco in 1915, and she was in the city when the Preparedness Day Bombing occurred on July 22, 1916, planned by the same Italian anarchists of the *Volontà* Group who Ersilia knew quite well, like her friend Michele Bombino. The bombing against a parade of soldiers killed 10 people, wounded dozens more, and triggered a wave of repression against the local radical movement, with four militants jailed and threatened with death sentences despite not being involved.

IWW halls in the Bay Area started to get raided in 1917, just as Ersilia's friends started to be arrested and threatened with deportation, and the *Cronaca* was eventually banned by the US Postal Service, although Luigi kept printing and distributing the paper until 1920

In the September 8, 1917 issue of *Cronaca*, we find Ersilia donating fifty cents from Inglewood, California. She appears to be back in *Frisco* a few weeks later, donating \$2.00 from there, and perhaps she went to Inglewood to raise funds, as the donations from that city show. Her name doesn't appear in *Cronaca Sovversiva* after 1917, likely due to the mounting repression that would consume the US anarchist network for the next years.

From all the available evidence, it seems Ersilia lived the rest of her life in San Francisco, remaining active in the movement through the 1920s, the 1930s, and into the 1940s, when the Italian fascist authorities were still looking for this *acer-*

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For whatever reason, the last time *La Salute e' in Voi!* was sold in the *Cronaca* was in the May 20, 1916 issue, listed in the distro with just a title and a price, still just 25 cents. In this same issue, we find a strange letter written by the anarchist Adolfo Antonelli from San Francisco: *Nothing else is needed: I did better. I searched and found. We will talk during the week and I hope that the good way to the honest and desired solution will be found.* Antonelli was an individualist anarchist stonemason who once published a newspaper called *Nihil*, just as he was one of the anarchists who joined the PLM and IWW in their invasion of Tijuana in 1910. He was on one side of the debate on the Mexican revolution, and it's unclear who he's writing to with his semi-sweaty appeal in the *Cronaca*.

Over a year later, in 1917, Ersilia donated two dollars from *Frisco*, then again, but in the May 26 issue, Ersilia wrote the following to a guy named Rocco from Chicago: *want your contact details. Are you dead or alive? Greetings.* She then provided her address in *Frisco*: 258 Eureka Street, in the Eureka Valley below Twin Peaks. It's unclear if she moved there from Telegraph Hill, or if it was simply a mailing address, and while the Italian fascist authorities believed she lived at this address up until the 1930s, all that's truly known is that Ersilia lived in San Francisco after leaving Seattle.

The only explanation of why Ersilia left Seattle lies in the previously mentioned *Ex parte Morel*, where the authorities narrate Ersilia and Leon's lives in the spring of 1914: *a business venture in which Morel had engaged proved unprofitable, and his judgment was criticized by the woman. At about this time the parties learned through some newspaper report that their marriage was not in accordance with the laws of California, where they had lived, nor of the state of Washington. Morel offered to marry the woman, but she declined, and they separated; he paying and delivering to her all of the funds and property which had been left after the business venture. They have not lived together since.*

on the same Bainbridge Island farm that Ersilia had helped him buy. While she was mostly absent from the *Cronaca* from 1915-1917, there is one reference to her whereabouts in *Tomorrow is Beautiful*, the autobiography of the anarchist Lucy Robins Lang, who also lived at Home.

Sometime in 1915, after the arrest of David Caplan, Lucy and her partner Bob moved into a two-story house on Collingwood Street in San Francisco, located in the Eureka Valley. It became a *center for visiting radicals*, and one day a kid from Home named Donald Vose came knocking on the door. He wanted a place to crash for a few days, so being the son of the anarchist Gertie Vose, he was let inside and given shelter. It was here, on Collingwood Street, that Lucy rifled through Donald's bag when he was out, and it was Lucy who first outed this snitch to the wider anarchist network. Lucy even went along with a kidnapping plan, hoping to keep Donald tied up and hidden until his handlers at the Burns Detective Agency admitted their lies. However, this kidnapping plot was abandoned at the insistence of the prisoners, and Lucy had to physically restrain Alexander Berkman from shooting the little snitch.

Once he was officially outed, Lucy moved out of the Eureka Valley, and as she explained, *we couldn't bear to stay in a house that had been polluted by the presence of Donald Vose, and we moved in with four Italian Anarchists who had a home on Telegraph Hill*. As she went on to describe, there were three men, Victor, Nick, Bambino, and a woman identified only as Cilia, *the fourth member of the quartet who the male comrades behaved in the most chivalrous way toward*. As Lucy describes, *all of them wrote pamphlets in Italian commenting on current events from the Anarchist point of view, and paid for their publication out of their meager earnings*. The person identified as Bambino is very likely Michele Bombino, member of the *Volontà* group and the IWW, as well as being a contributor to *Cronaca* in the donations columns, often giving \$1.00.

Unlike most anarchist women, we know a lot about Ersilia Cavedagni, although only her early history. It's in the US that her path begins to blur into fragments, eventually dissolving into a mystery shared by many other anarchist women. No one knows when she died, just like her friend Frankie Moore, nor where she might have died, and the latest record of her existence is from 1941, when she had already left her mark on the west coast of the US.

## Anarchismo Bolognese

Ersilia was born Ersilia Amedei on April 2, 1864 in the city of Bologna, Italy, home to the oldest university in Europe. She only completed her first level of education in this scholarly city, given her parents weren't rich, and at an early age she became a housekeeper for the wealthy. Clearly this situation didn't sit right with Ersilia, for soon enough she married an Italian anarchist named Giulio Grandi, with whom she had a daughter, Edvige, and their family apartment became a meeting spot for the anarchists of Bologna.

Ersilia was close friends with Pietro Gori, the anarchist musician and songwriter, even offering him shelter when the authorities wanted to imprison him. Some other close friends were Luigia Minguzzi and Teresa Fabbrini, two anarchists from Firenze, and together they helped form a solid network of Italian anarcha-feminists in the 1890s, one they would soon stretch to the farthest corners of the world.

In September of 1894, at the height of the European anti-anarchist panic, Ersilia was arrested for her subversive activities and sent into *internal exile* in Bassano Veneto, a form of house-arrest. She was released in April of 1895, just after her thirty-first birthday. Unperturbed, she immediately resumed her activities and helped form the anarchist group *Circolo Giordano Bruno*, named after the scientist burned at the stake by the

Inquisition in the year 1600. This *anti-clerical* group was just a cover for their anarchist meetings, and it was eventually denounced to the police by a snitch in July of 1897, leading to the forcible closure of their meeting hall.

In these years, Ersilia was in contact with anarchists across Italy, from Napoli in the south to Genoa in the north, just as she worked with the anarchists in Alexandria, Egypt and Paterson, New Jersey, printing their words and spreading their propaganda. It was in September of 1897, among the Bologna comrades, that Ersilia met an anarchist named Giuseppe Ciancabilla, who she quickly fell in love with, having left her husband. Giuseppe was eight years younger than Ersilia, and to this day, it is still uncommon for Italian women to be with younger men, making her choice even more radical.

When Ersilia first met Giuseppe, he was in the Italian Socialist Party, not an anarchist. Likely under Ersilia's influence, Giuseppe decided to interview Errico Malatesta for the Party's paper *Avanti!* in October 1897. This candid interview about the values of anarchism thoroughly enraged the Party, who tried to spin it as anarchism's evolving in the direction of Marxist socialism. To top it all off, that issue was suppressed by the state, with all copies physically impounded for the crime of speaking honestly about anarchism. In disgust at the Party, Giuseppe wrote a long declaration in which he not only resigned, but publicly proclaimed himself an anarchist. With this published declaration, Giuseppe became a wanted fugitive, and as he fled across the border to Switzerland, at his side was Ersilia Cavedagni, who soon followed him to Belgium.

## The Wandering Italian

Eventually settling in Paris with her lover, Ersilia helped him and Jean Grave publish articles in *Les Temps Nouveaux*, one of the most important anarchist newspapers in France. The is-

ing words: *and in the hope of soon giving you news of success, I greet you fraternally.*

Within two months, the comrades in Vancouver wrote to the *Cronaca* in Vermont, printing a short item in the back which asked Ersilia if she wanted a newspaper which was mailed to her Venables address, and where she could be contacted. In other words, her comrades in Vancouver didn't know where she was. For the rest of 1914, Ersilia was absent from the pages of the *Cronaca*. The only mention of her name was in the donations column, where she saluted Luigi Galleni along with fifty cents. According to this entry, she was back in Seattle.

## Put It Down For The West Side

At the beginning of 1915, in the January 23 issue, we find a description of one of Ersilia's *festas* in Seattle where a drama was acted out by *amateurs*, who staged an anarchist play called *Reduce di Tripoli*, mocking the Kingdom's invasion of Libya. Copies of this play were advertised in the *Cronaca* in the *Between Books, Magazines, and Newspapers* column, a recurring section which featured the etching of a woman who may or may not be Ersilia, the organizer of this dramatic production.

As the *Cronaca* writer explains, her production was a *magnificent Sunday evening*. *And it could not have been otherwise, if one thinks that the soul of the party was comrade Ersilia, who never fails in enthusiastic fervor when there is way to make propaganda without saving effort and time.* After this, there isn't any mention of Ersilia in the *Cronaca* for a year until she made a dollar donation from San Francisco, no longer in Vancouver, apparently.

A month later, still from *Frisco*, she uses the back columns to apologize to some comrades for not writing, but they didn't enclose their addresses. One explanation for this gap was the sudden arrest of David Caplan on February 18, 1915, nabbed

have done so from Vancouver. After this, there is a request in the December 27, 1913 issue of the *Cronaca*, taken on her behalf, for issues of *Volontà*, for which she paid \$6 via *international postal money order N. 58172*. The anarchist newspaper *Volontà* was published in Acona, Italy by none other than Errico Malatesta, who had snuck back into Kingdom and was now planning an uprising in that port city, one which would soon be known as the *Settimana Rossa*, or the Red Week.

In the next issue, published on January 3, 1914, Ersilia published an account of a different uprising, one that happened months earlier. It's unclear how much her group participated in the uprising, but on August 12, 1913, armed riots broke out in the Vancouver Island coal-mining towns of Nanaimo, Extension, Ladysmith, and South Wellington.

In response, the state sent in the militia, who arrested many strikers, and as Ersilia described, *against the arrest of one hundred and eighty miners who were later sentenced by the complicit judiciary to the maximum sentence, we organized a grandiose protest meeting which was attended by over four thousand people. We then had five hundred billboards printed to be displayed in the windows of the main shops of the city, with this simple wording, **this store is for the immediate release of the Nanaimo strikers**, thus provoking a large current of public sympathy in favor of the strikers and simultaneously collecting a good stack of money for the agitation, having exacted a dollar from each store for the issued poster.*

She later explained how her group was *grateful to the entire Italian working-class colony for the outcome, which has a large and lively sympathy for us. And we do everything in our power to make it wider, more unanimous, starting a series of performances of social dramas for the coming winter.* In the same article, she breaks down their latest *festa* proceeds, with money split between *Mother Earth*, *Cronaca Sovversiva*, *Les Temps Nouveaux*, and other papers like *Volontà*. She concludes with the follow-

sue for June 17, 1898 featured Giuseppe on the front page with an article titled *The Italian Uprising*, detailing the massive insurrection spurred by hyper-inflated wheat prices, all caused by a single Chicago speculator named Joseph Leiter, who bought up and stored nearly all of the world's surplus, hoping to increase the price in order to make an exorbitant profit, as famously chronicled in *The Pit* by Frank Norris. This didn't work out for Leiter when the wheat price finally collapsed and he lost millions, but it did ignite an insurrection across Italy.

It began in the south at the start of 1898, spreading across cities like Napoli and Bari, even hitting Firenze in the north, where rioters controlled the city for an entire day. Starting in early May, strikes and riots escalated, especially in Milano, where a massive demonstration of 60,000 paralyzed the city on May 7, and in the battle that followed, hundreds of rebels were massacred, with thousands left injured from police bullets and artillery. This all became known as the *Fatti di Maggio*, or *The Events of May*, and the exile Giuseppe Ciancabilla wrote about this uprising in the pages of *Les Temps Nouveaux*, published out of 140 Rue Mouffetard, Paris.

For this article, Giuseppe Ciancabilla was expelled from France and he returned to Switzerland with Ersilia, although he was again expelled for applauding the assassination of Empress Elizabeth of Austria at the hands of the anarchist Luigi Luccheni, who stabbed her in Geneva on September 10, 1898. No longer welcome in Switzerland, Giuseppe and Ersilia got on a boat to New York City and passed through Ellis Island sometime towards the end of 1898. This was not a pleasant trip for Ersilia, who was subjected to racist insults for being Italian, and as she reflected, *how wicked is a society which arouses in the minds of its children this stupid aversion to other beings similar to them, who have no other fault than not speaking their language, of being born under another heaven, where chance placed their relatives, and of having different habits.*

After arriving in New York, Ersilia and Giuseppe made their way to the anarchist stronghold of Paterson, New Jersey, and it was here that Ersilia helped define the schism between the *organizzatori* and the *antiorganizzatori*. As a trusted comrade of both Pietro Gori and Errico Malatesta, Giuseppe became the editor of *La Questione Sociale*, the main anarchist newspaper in the United States, and he helped publish every issue through 1899, all while his lover Ersilia was engaging with *Il Gruppo Emancipazione della Donna*, or the Women's Emancipation Group, a circle of anarchist women who had been active since 1897, all of whom had read her dispatches in *La Questione Sociale* written from European exile. Now that she was in Paterson with these women, Ersilia got right to work, forming the *Teatro Sociale*, a popular theater group that put on plays like *Emancipata*, focusing solely on the struggle of women.

## Della Donna

In her own words, Ersilia told the readers of *La Questione Sociale* that *we must imitate the priests who know how to mobilize those of our sex. If we were to have many anarchist women, oh, believe me, the movement would grow substantially.* She would go on to write, *O young woman that suffers, I believe that if you knew the cause of this you would rebel. Look at the well dressed, well fed, well educated, well instructed woman, that spends her life happy and joyful; why do you think she has the privilege to live happily while you suffer? It is nothing else but money that her parents make with exploitation, rape, violence, and force. Don't let the word anarchy scare you. It is an idea, a remedy in the struggle for liberty and the suppression of every system of authority.*

Many have speculated on how the conflict between Giuseppe Ciancabilla and Errico Malatesta played out, with

reason that Ersilia was actually in Vancouver is a photo of her and Leon's house in Home, dated from 1913, in which it is identified as the house of the anarchist Gaston Lance and his family, who purchased the property from *the Morels*. Given all the facts, it seems that Ersilia and Leon left home in 1913, eight years after they first arrived. Ersilia was forty-nine, Leon was thirty-one, and life was doing anything but slowing down.

During her time in Vancouver, Ersilia got busy raising funds. In the winter of 1913 she staged *Wallet* by Octave Mirbeau and *Rebellion* by Nellie Rousselle, both performances followed by a *fiesta*, and as she advertised in the *Cronaca*, once the drama was over, *it will be the turn of the layabouts and they will be able to joke and laugh and dance, above all dance until daybreak, and all those who have good hocks will rest assuredly tomorrow.*

In the April 26, 1913 issue of *Cronaca*, we find she helped raise \$58.50 at one of these *fiestas*. \$10 went to *Cronaca*, while *Les Temps Nouveaux* in France got \$5. The rest was distributed to other Italian anarchist papers like *Rivolta* and *Libertario*, with another \$10 going to the defense of the fourteen IWW prisoners arrested during the Little Falls Textile Strike of 1912. The remaining balance of \$28.50 went to the fund for Luigi Galleani's next lecture tour.

In that same issue, Ersilia wrote to the anarchists in the coal mines of Vancouver, telling them that if they want to distribute Maria Roda's pamphlet *The Anarchists And What They Want* among the striking miners, all they have to do is send her a letter with enclosed postage to be *sent a package of pamphlets corresponding to the need*. She even provided an address to write her, possibly where she lived: 1217 Venables Street, Vancouver, BC, right in the seedy post-Victorian East Side built along the waterfront.

Oddly, we find that Ersilia appears to have donated money in the September, 1913 issue of an anarchist newspaper called *Why?* published in Tacoma, Washington, and she appears to



paper. As she put it, *we are now reduced to a single newspaper that is truly anarchist and truly revolutionary, and we leave it to languish as if all the libertarians of the United States had neither nerves, nor gratitude, nor will.* This means that Ersilia wasn't overly fond of *The Agitator*, Home's local newspaper, which had been drifting into anarcho-syndicalism.

Ersilia called for people to have anarchist *festas*, meetings, and fundraisers in support of the *Cronaca*, and in response a flood of letters arrived in Barre, Vermont, bearing funds and letters to Ersilia, written from places like Chelsea, Massachusetts to the Potosi Mine, Nevada. At a raffle in New York, an anarchist group raised \$21.60, while one respondent sent \$5.00.

Her initial call for all this fundraising was signed from Seattle and dated April 17, 1912. Behind the scenes, later that June, David Caplan sold his share of the land he was hiding on back to Leon and Ersilia, for whatever reason. After that, the next big news from Ersilia came from the *Cronaca* donation column, where it appears she donated \$1.00 on January 4, 1913 from the port town of Vancouver, BC. Unlike all of the other entries in this column, her appearance in Canada seems to have been real.

In the above mentioned 1923 court case *Ex parte Morel*, we find the following narration from the authorities: *[Leon and Ersilia] came to Seattle, where they lived together as husband and wife until 1913, when they went to Vancouver, B.C., where Morel was engaged to do some work in his line of business, and there lived as husband and wife. At the conclusion of the work, after some 13 months, they returned to Seattle in February, 1914; Morel preceding the woman a few days. He left funds with her to provide for her transportation, and on entering at the port of Blaine she represented herself as the wife of the petitioner, and they lived together as husband and wife in Seattle until they separated.*

This simple border crossing would have many grave repercussions, mostly for Leon Morel, but that will come a bit later. For now, it appears that Ersilia was really in Vancouver, routinely donating to the *Cronaca*, as well as writing for it. One

some suggesting that Giuseppe was jealous of Errico's affection and friendship with Ersilia, but what is known for certain is that Giuseppe resigned from the editorial staff of *La Questione Sociale* in the summer of 1899, no longer believing that static anarchist organizations were the way forward and advocating an anti-organizational approach of coming *together spontaneously, and not with permanent criteria, according to momentary affinities for a specific purpose.* The one thing about the *anarchist organizations* being advocated by Errico Malatesta was that nearly all of them were dedicated to the labor movement, and many mothers and young wives didn't work, being forced to replicate everything needed for their husband and children's day at the factory.

As the Jewish anarchist Emma Goldman infamously noted, *all Latin men still treat their wives, or their daughters, as inferiors and consider them as mere breeding machines as the caveman did.* In a similar vein, the Irish anarchist Elizabeth Gurley Flynn erroneously noted, *there were practically no women in the Italian movement—anarchist or socialist. Whatever homes I went into with Carlo [Tresca], the women were always in the background, cooking in the kitchen, and seldom even sitting down to eat with the men.* Elizabeth simply couldn't speak Italian, and she also didn't bother looking too hard, because there were plenty of Italian women who weren't content to be *always in the background.*

One of these women was Maria Roda, a writer for *La Questione Sociale* and one of Ersilia's close friends. As she famously declared, *men say we are frivolous, that we are weak, that we are incapable of supporting the struggle against this intolerable society, that we cannot understand the ideal of anarchism. But they are the cause of our weakness, our undeveloped intellects, because they restrict our instruction and ignore us.* She would also say, *let our men—who suppress our will, who do not allow us to think and act freely, who consider us inferior to them, who impose on us their authority, as father, brothers and husbands,*

*and, believing to be stronger than us, trample us, oppress us, and sometimes even hit us—let our men know: we want freedom and equality too.*

Ersilia remained by Giuseppe's side when he left *La Questione Sociale* in the hands of Errico Malatesta, who became the editor during his time in Paterson. Meanwhile, Giuseppe and Ersilia started a new paper, *L'Aurora*, based out of West Hoboken, just across the river from Greenwich Village. Before they printed the first issue, an anarchist meeting took place at the Tivola and Zucca Saloon in West Hoboken on September 3, 1899, and it was here that Errico Malatesta was shot in the leg by a likely police informant while propounding his pro-organization beliefs. At the end of the day, these Italian anarchists were all comrades, and the person who disarmed the would-be assassin was an anti-organization anarchist named Gaetano Bresci, who will soon feature prominently in this narrative.

A few months later, Ersilia would publish an article in *L'Aurora* entitled "La Donna" in which she rips apart what she calls *the majority* of anarchist men. She asks the reader, *frankly, isn't it true that anarchists who care about educating and, above all, forming an anarchist conscience in the woman who is their wife or companion are very rare?* She then amps it up by asking *how many times do gentlemen comrades respond with an annoyed expression, with a grimace of carelessness and almost disdain because they consider themselves superior beings, quasi worthy of only taking care of certain things, while women have only to take care of the kitchen and other household chores!*

Ersilia didn't stop there, telling the reader that it seemed to her that men *do not fully realize the social mission that women carry out in today's society, and are destined to carry out more in the society of the future. The woman is and will always be the educator of the family, the one who has and will always have the most direct and most important influence on her children, the*

that he had preferred to remain silent until *L'Era Nuova* demanded his opinion, and when his opinion was bullshit, it was met with even more bullshit. This conflict makes no one look good, not even Ersilia, who at least had the decency to say nothing about a revolution she didn't understand, although she did call *L'Era Nuova* a bunch of *lazzaroni*, a gang of *comorra*, a pack of *maramaldi*, and basically just inflamed the situation. Despite her cussing, everyone seems to have listened to her advice of shutting the fuck up.

This conflict reveals much about the speed of information in 1912, given that the *Plan de Ayala* of Emiliano Zapata was finally obtained by the *Cronaca* over a month after it was published in Mexico. Beyond this, while Ersilia wrote her response on January 26, it wasn't published in the *Cronaca* until March 9, when it appeared on the back page. In the weeks that followed, references to Mexico turned into a trickle, and eventually the *Between Books, Magazines, and Newspapers* section featured an ad for the latest issue of *Mother Earth*, the newspaper run by Emma Goldman, and not only was Goldman a known supporter of the Mexican Revolution, this latest issue ran an article championing it.

What's even more baffling is that much of the *Cronaca* staff would eventually flee to Mexico in 1917, among them Umberto Postiglione (or *Hobo*), Emilio Coda, Umberto Colarossi, Carlo Valdinoci (or *Carluccio*), Mario Buda, Nicola Sacco, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. By the time they all crossed over to Mexico and hid out in Monterrey, the conflict among the Italians was over, at least in regards to Mexico, and *L'Era Nuova* and the *Cronaca* soon healed their differences.

## Northern Exposure

As far as the pages of the *Cronaca* are concerned, Ersilia was in Seattle writing a call for May 1, 1912 in support of the

## The Mexican Storm

Unfortunately, in the August 19, 1911 issue of *Cronaca*, an article ran on the front page titled *The Mexican Storm*, written by Luigi Galleani himself. For two whole pages, he explains why the Mexican Revolution has no revolutionary character, and in the middle of all this, he drops an insanely racist reason to back up his argument: *if for a population that reaches in all probability fourteen million, seven million are pure Indians, four mestizos, two Creoles, half a million Negroes, Zambos, mulattoes, it is clear that for Mexico there is no possibility of a movement with an openly social revolutionary character, if the most lively, most numerous and most diligent of the population are not interested.* While he does call these ethnic groups *the most lively, most numerous and most diligent*, his logic is undeniably racist and false, given the indigenous helped initiate the revolution and were the primary actors in the war against Diaz.

The discourse only grew worse after that, although that was the most racist it became. Some anarchists, like the *L'Era Nuova* group in Paterson, wanted people to go fight in Mexico with Generals Madero, Villa, or Zapata, but others, like the editorial staff of *Cronaca*, questioned whether any of those men were actually anarchists and discouraged people from joining their armies, given many Italian anarchists had already done so. After many months of this back and forth, the *Cronaca* ran an article in the January 13, 1912 issue titled "*The 'comrade' Emiliano Zapata,*" in which they also printed the full *Plan de Ayala*, or the *Plan de Mapaztlan*, the political program of Zapata's army in which he breaks from Madero, makes clear his intention to hold elections, and reveals a liberal democratic platform nearly identical to the 1906 constitution of the *Partido Liberal Mexicano*, the anarchist front group started by the Magon brothers.

For whatever reason, Ersilia took the side of Galleani, claiming he was goaded into writing his racist, erroneous bullshit,

*one who will communicate to them the first impressions, the first suggestions, the first criteria of social life, the one who, finally, above all, will be able to decide on the entire formation of a new society.*

Speaking to anarchist men married to women who weren't anarchists, she wrote, *before spreading propaganda to strangers, do it at home, comrades. And then you will see that the woman, instead of forbidding you to go to conferences, to meetings, and finally to participate in the anarchist movement, will herself be sorry when, due to domestic duties, she too will not be able to participate actively.* Ersilia ends this article by telling her women readers, *true emancipation can only be her own work. As long as she waits with supine resignation for man to emancipate her and make her free, she will always remain submissive to him.* All of this article could have been written in the 1970s, or in 2023, and it would still be just as relevant as it was on October 28, 1899.

Meanwhile, four months after Malatesta was shot in West Hoboken, in the January 6, 1900 issue, we find Ersilia publishing an article titled simply "*To My Comrades,*" in which she claims *the basest insinuations, slanders, and vilest lies are hurled against my companion of faith and affection [Giuseppe Ciancabilla] by Malatesta and his cronies.* It remains unclear what exactly this is in reference to, but *L'Aurora* was still based in West Hoboken, and the schism between organization and anti-organization was raging on in the background.

About a year later, in the October 13, 1900 issue when *L'Aurora* was temporarily based out of Yohoghany, Pennsylvania, we find another article by Ersilia entitled "*The Maternal Mission*" which rips into all those mothers who fill their children's head with garbage. As she described, *the mother instills in the tender minds of her children the prejudice of servility, of religion, of submission to corrupt customs, of obedience to the laws, to everything that is authority, and to the fatality, finally,*

*of resigning ourselves to the miserable fate to which destiny damns us.*

In the most riveting section, Ersilia instructed all mothers *to make the child understand: 1. that all people are born equal and therefore have equal rights; 2. that the existence of a god who regulates the universe is absurd, useless, criminal, because religious belief serves precisely the masters, the rulers, the priests to obtain paradise on earth for themselves, leaving their neighbors to work in the hell of all suffering; 3. that the boss, necessary today for the poor to live, will not be necessary tomorrow, when workers want to work and produce for themselves and not for others, when it will be understood that labor is necessary for capital and not capital for labor; therefore, inspire constant rebellion against the masters and against all exploitation; 4. that laws are made by rulers to defend today's system of oppression, that is, to defend capitalists and exploiters: therefore, to excite hatred against every law in the child, and make them understand that law is synonymous with violence, because the law is always imposed by force; 5. that, having been named, the son must refuse to wear the ignoble soldier's uniform, since the army, with the pretext of defending the homeland (another prejudice) in reality serves only to defend the rich against the poor who they starve.*

In addition to Ersilia's articles, their paper soon featured many articles by Jean Grave and Pyotr Kropotkin, odd choices given that both were pro-organization anarchists. In 1900, Ersilia and Giuseppe eventually moved *L'Aurora* to Spring Valley, Illinois, a small coal town that was becoming an anarchist sanctuary, given its proximity to Chicago. During its brief run, *L'Aurora* became the genesis of what would later be dubbed insurrectionary anarchism, although it also was individualist in nature and advocated for what we now call *affinity groups* over trade or craft union formations.

The year they moved to Spring Valley, an anarchist from Paterson named Gaetano Bresci traveled across the sea to Italy. Months earlier, he had resolved to kill the King of Italy in

have been Caplan's lover in this time period. One thing that is certain is Flora Caplan's abortion of David's child, something which occurred while David was in hiding and Flora was in San Francisco. Meanwhile, on February 25, 1911, in the donations column of *Cronaca Sovversiva*, we find a fifty cent donation from one P. Elena, given with *salutations to Galleani and Ersilia Cavedagni*. If it's not clear by now, Ersilia was viewed as an equal to Luigi Galleani back then, a towering figure in the world of insurrectionary anarchism, and her circle of women from Home were powerful beyond belief.

When the Seattle Modern School run by Anna Falkoff needed funds, Ersilia and Leon cast busts of Francisco Ferrer and Eugene V. Debs to be sold at benefits and through Home's new *Agitator* newspaper. When the *Cronaca* needed funds to potentially leave Barre, Vermont (due to mafioso threats), Ersilia and Leon donated five bronzes to be raffled off. All of these pieces were being fabricated at Home amid the repression following the *Los Angeles Times* bombing, adding more validity to the assertion that Ersilia and Leon were often at Home rather than in Seattle with the rest of the *Cronaca* group.

The funny games continued regarding Ersilia's whereabouts, with the August 5, 1911 donations column of *Cronaca* claiming she was in the remote town of Cle Elum, just over the Cascade Mountains. Maybe she was really there, giving a lecture, but who can say? All that's clear is that her next major appearance in the *Cronaca* is on March, 26, 1912 when she intervened in a conflict that was ripping apart the Italian anarchist network, one that revolved around the questions of whether the Mexican Revolution had any anarchist character and if anarchists across the globe should join in the battle.

of *Cronaca Sovversiva* that Ersilia lived in Seattle, not some remote backwater in the Salish Sea. It's likely that Ersilia commuted much like her friend Anna Falkoff, the anarchist school teacher of Home who helped found the Seattle Modern School in 1910, and it's more than possible that Ersilia and Anna traveled together by ferry across the Salish Sea.

Anna and Ersilia both lived on the south-eastern shore of Von Geldern Cove, below what is now Hoff Road. They lived about a ten minutes walk apart, and everyone on that bank of the cove utilized the same road to the communal bridge. While the founders and early residents of Home lived on the north-western bank along what is now A Street, the new residents like Ersilia and Anna inhabited the wild shoreline that faced the sunset, a place where the commune's most subversive residents hid from the spotlight.

Far away from the communal pier that served the ferry, this cluster of houses took some effort to get to, and it was just below Anna Falkoff's house that Ersilia and Leon built their second foundry at Home, utilizing their skills to fabricate parts for printing presses, pile drivers, agricultural equipment, pulleys, and everything else a rural anarchist commune might need.

It was amid all of this that a tremendous explosion destroyed the *Los Angeles Times* building on October 1, 1910, killing multiple employees and instantly triggering a wave of repression. One of the anarchists involved in this attack, David Caplan, had supplied the dynamite from San Francisco and was quickly sent north to Home to hide out. Home was much too hot, so Ersilia and Leon used their real names to help Caplan purchase five acres of farmland further north on Bainbridge Island, with the transaction recorded on January 10, 1911. In total, Ersilia, Leon, and Caplan paid \$1,200 for these five acres.

Ersilia appears to have resumed her normal activities after this, entrusting the safety of Caplan to her friend Frankie Moore, who seems to have either pretended to be or to really

revenge for the massacre in Milano in 1898, and with money given to him by the pro-organization *La Questione Sociale* (which he helped found) this fervent *antiorganizzatori* bought a .38 caliber pistol, a steamer ticket across the Atlantic, and on July 29, 1900, he assassinated King Umberto I of Italy in the city of Monza, shooting him four times.

Without question, Ersilia and Giuseppe had been close comrades with Gaetano, and his act cast a giant spotlight on his adopted hometown of Paterson. Luckily for them, Ersilia and Giuseppe were in Spring Valley, although another conflict would soon emerge in this violent coal-mining town.

Months after setting up their print shop, on Sunday, December 16, 1900, Ersilia and Giuseppe tried to pass an amendment at the local *Prosperity Club* where women would be allowed entrance. Giuseppe introduced the ammendment and *explained the reasons why, from the point of view of workers' emancipation, it is necessary, indeed urgent, to worry, first of all, about the emancipation of women.*

As Ersilia went on to describe, *our companion had not spoken for five minutes before a tumult of wild beasts arose from all parts of the assembly. Screams, uproar, invectives, protests, etc. And in the midst of the chorus of shouters one could distinguish the charming jokes of certain—what should we call them?—who shouted: — “What? Women must be relegated to South America...Women are worse than dogs, because ‘they are bitches...Women have long hair and short brains...” And so on with these graceful apostrophes which indicated all the kindness of sentiment and education in these gentlemen.*

With heavy sarcasm, Ersilia continued: *the super-great thing was that even some self-styled anarchists joined the chorus of protests against our comrade's proposal, and one of these people, with an equivocal and creeping phrase, admitted that our comrade was right, but...it wasn't appropriate, because it offended the sentiment of the masses, and therefore if the women wanted, they should have created a club on their own.*

*If necessary, he and other orchestra directors would have put themselves at the head of this new female institution. As you can see, a proposal from a truly self-styled anarchist, who, depending on how the wind blows, instead of propagandizing and attracting the masses for themselves, adapts for convenient opportunism to the level of ignorance and brutalization of the unconscious masses.*

According to this article, “*The Question Of The Woman*,” published a week later on December 22, 1899, brave Giuseppe tried to push for a vote on the amendment to allow women into the *Prosperity Club*, only to be met with a new explosion of shouts, protests and threats, and even someone spoke of lynching our comrade and his friends, accused of being disturbers of public peace, just for having spoken in favor of women’s emancipation. After narrating everything that happened that previous Sunday, the article then launches into territory which is fresh even today in 2023, almost 125 years after it was written.

Suddenly shifting into the male point of view, the writers declare, *if women today occupy a lower place in society, it is because we condemn them, not because they are destined for it by nature. We are the ones who force women to only take care of the kitchen, the laundry, the mending of socks, the sweeping of the house; we are the ones who pretend to be solely capable of associations, social relationships, even higher professions... for the sole and stupid reason that we are men, that is, because we animalistically have some degree of muscular strength to impose ourselves like brutes and dictate the law.*

Hammering home a point which still resonates today, *those same people who shout so much against women and pretend to despise them are the first to feel up their skirts with admiration as soon as a woman appears to them who has the great virtue...of reasoning and dealing with things it seemed only men had monopolized up until now. People’s narrow brains immediately think that those women – propagandists, orators, writers – are djinn, beyond all common intelligence; and instead they*

*La Salute e’ in Voi!* first appeared in the *Biblioteca dei Circolo Studi Sociali* distro column of the February 3, 1906 issue of the *Cronaca*, listed without description, only the title and price. After that, it was semi-regularly listed in both the *Biblioteca* column and the *Pubblicazioni di Propaganda* section alongside titles like *Tolstoismo e Anarchismo* and *Verso il Comunismo*, both 5 cents. Of all the titles, *La Salute e’ in Voi!* was the most expensive, nearly half a day’s wage, but apparently it contained much of value to the common worker, as it was sold year after year. It is highly likely that Ersilia knew exactly what *La Salute e’ in Voi!* was and not only did she approve, she regularly donated to the publishers.

In the September 4, 1909, issue, Ersilia donates \$2.00 dollars from Youngstown, recently annexed into what is now West Seattle. The next year, in the September 7, 1910 issue, she gives a glowing revue of Luigi Galleani’s recent lecture in Seattle, an event where she noted *an unusual confluence of workers; new faces that had never before been seen appearing in similar circumstances. The longing to listen to our companion’s word was evident in one and all, they attended the two conferences very satisfied to finally be able to hear the truth ringing loud and clear, that truth barely glimpsed in the sadness and darkness of their own consciences.*

In the September 10, 1910 issue of the *Cronaca*, we find this: **E. Cavedagni—Seattle, Wash.**—*We have received your letter with the amount of subscriptions made during the Galleani conferences. We are now waiting for the names of the subscribers to publish them in the administrative report and to send them the newspaper. In the next issue we will also give space to your correspondence. Thanks and fraternal greetings.*

From all of this, it appears that Ersilia might have been living in Seattle, although getting there from Home was easy enough by ferry, especially in 1910, and residents of Home remember *the Morels* being there long enough to build two foundries. By November of 1910, it would seem to any reader

her old words could now reach thousands, and it wouldn't be the last time her words were published in this subversive newspaper. The next entry is possibly the most clever.

In the January 20, 1906 issue of *Cronaca Sovversiva*, a small item in the backpage columns reads as follows: *Comrade Ersilia Cavedagni begs her companions in correspondence to take note of her new address which is currently at 1343 Sedgley Avenue, Philadelphina, Pa.* By all accounts, Ersilia wasn't living in Philadelphia, although she wanted the authorities to think she was, just as she wanted to be able to read the letters in response to her *Free Union* article. In the March 10 issue, we find this in the *Little Post* section: *Phila, Pa.—Ersilia Cavedagni—Comrade V. Riolo of Sacramento cannot answer you because you have not sent him your address. Write: V. Riolo, 721 E. St. Sacramento.*

In the August 10, 1907 issue, we find an instance of Ersilia donating from where she lived, the Lake Bay, Washington post office, just down the way from Home. From here, Ersilia sent \$1.00 to the comrades in Barre, Vermont. Later, in the February 15, 1908 issue, we find this in the donation column, sent from Home, Washington: *Ersilia protesting against the slanders*, followed by a \$2.00 donation. It is unclear what these slanders were.

In 1908, the *Cronaca* makes it appear that she is living in Seattle with a small item about money in the November 7 issue. The next year an article featured her name in the May 29, 1909 issue where she signed alongside the entire Seattle group affiliated with the *Cronaca* in donating just over \$15.00. That same issue also features an advertisement for a pamphlet titled *La Salute e' in Voi!*, or *Health is Within You!*, described as an *indispensable booklet for all those comrades who like to educate themselves. Also on sale in our library at 25c a copy.* This humble, innocuous sounding pamphlet was actually a bomb-making manual, printed with a red card-stock cover and featuring a woodcut of Ravachol, the French anarchist bomber executed by the state.

*are unable to understand that those women, generally no more intelligent than the others, have no other merit than that of having left the narrow circle of the domestic hearth, to which society wanted them condemned, and of participating in public life.*

Taking things to an entirely different level, the writers state that, *like all beings and races held in a state of violent subjection by the strongest and most overbearing, women try to take their revenge indirectly. Because they are considered to be exclusive instruments of love and pleasure, women use love and pleasure to dominate over the sex which is very mistakenly called strong. From courts and palaces to humble workers' hovels, women generally reign supreme. Using wiles, meditated in a harsh satisfaction of revenge, using coaxing, intrigues, caresses, seductions, and, if necessary, impositions, the woman, the weaker sex, instead delights in being in reality the mistress of life, the arbiter of human destinies, the skilled director of human puppets in social existence.*

As if this could not get any crazier, the authors direct the following question to anarchist men in their community: *how many of you are not in your family the slaves—yes, the slaves—of your companions; and you don't dare challenge their wrath, and you abstain from attending meetings, from participating in party or association movements, and you hurry home, because you are afraid of female fury, because it bothers you in bed if then the woman abruptly turns her back on you! And those same among you who are not married to women and seem stronger and more independent, poor things, how many times would they not fall at the feet of some woman, ready for all her whims, as long as she deigned to give them a benign look!*

The authors conclude that *this revenge that women take is, ultimately, logical and right* before stating quite simply that if men were remove women from this state of **apparent** inferiority in which you forcefully keep her, give her rights and a way to express the activity of her spirit for her own good and that of everyone, make her equal to you, socially, and the woman will no longer consider that a man is like a brute beast to be tamed with

*coaxing and caresses, to be made his own laughing stock, but an equal being.*

Once again, this was written in 1899, and in an eerie passage, after reiterating the importance of mothers in the shaping of a child's development, Ersilia explained that *if mothers are still slaves to the prejudices of religion, of authority, of submission to the laws, etc., their offspring will necessarily raise the cult of such prejudices; and the work of the innovators of the future, of the revolutionaries, will be no less tiring and difficult than it is now.*

All of this was in the article titled "*The Question Of The Woman*" and was signed by two groups, *Il Gruppo I Nuovi Viventi* (The New Living Group) and the *Gruppo Femminile Luisa Michel* (Louis Michel Women's Group). The so-called *Prosperity Club*, which the authors claimed should be called the *Brutalization Club*, had been co-founded by some of their anarchist comrades as a place to gather and drink without having to pay a corrupt, grafting saloon keeper, which Spring Valley was full of. Despite not letting women into the club, after two members were arrested by the saloon keeper mayor, the front page of *L'Aurora* for the February 23, 1901 issue ran the bold English headline: **A PROTEST: To the People of Spring Valley, Ill.** Below this were two articles, in English and Italian, explaining what had happened to the club as well pledging the solidarity of the collective signature **A Group of Italian and French Anarchists.** From what it seems, Ersilia and Giuseppe had a lot of what people call *good faith*.

This issue of *L'Aurora* is the last that's publicly available, and for now it's unclear if the remaining issues from 1901 exist in one or several academic institutions. There is potentially a lot more of Ersilia's work in there, and it's clear she was busy the whole time she was in Spring Valley, but as the year 1901 progressed, her attention soon turned towards Chicago.

A lot of anarchists were converging in Chicago in 1901, people like Emma Goldman, the Isaak family, Hippolyte Havel, and

apart for their iron, copper, lead, and then melted apart to make useful tools and objects. In a display case of the Key Peninsula Historical Society, we find a brass key, figurines, type-face for printing, and according to the text in the display, *Morel fabricated his utensils, a stove, steam kettle, door hinges, lamps, and even copper trellises for his climbing roses. Many of his metal creations were ornamented with intricate scroll work.*

It's unclear how long Ersilia and Leon lived in Home, but it appears to have been some years, at least until 1913. During her first months at Home, we find Ersilia republishing her article "*Free Union*" for the December 23, 1905 issue of *Cronaca Sovversiva*, the newspaper printed on the press once used for her *L'Aurora*, the same paper that first printed "*Free Union*." In that issue, one could read: *what good is the civil and religious bond, if love does not exist or is missing later? Can marriage restore peace of mind to two beings who no longer love each other and must, by virtue of a prejudice, remain united because they are married?*

She went on to write, *if we do not know how to take these rights of ours, it is useless to wait for man to accord them to us spontaneously, because, given the bad social organization from which we suffer, he has every interest in keeping us subject to him.* In her conclusion, she told the reader *by all contributing, little by little, to the formation of new social relationships based on morals and sensations, the nucleus of healthy energies and fertilizing elements will be formed within this same corrupt society, which will give life to the new future society, worthy of free and civilized beings, such as we want to become.*

This short article advocating for *free unions*, a simple relationship outside of the law or church, was printed in Barre, Vermont by a crew of insurrectionary anarchists, among them Luigi Galleani. *L'Aurora* had a limited circulation between 1899 and 1901, and the initial publication of "*Free Union*" perhaps reached a few hundred people, based on the subscriptions listed in the back columns. With the new *Cronaca Sovversiva*,



the *Italian woman* he married in San Francisco in 1904. As he described, *we had about 14 or 15 friends on each side one night in the home, and we just made ceremony between us and got married like that.* Later in the court transcript, it's revealed that Ersilia and Leon left San Francisco in 1905, although for whatever reason, the authorities were led to believe they went straight to Seattle, not the anarchist commune of Home, Washington.

When they were married, Ersilia was forty, while Leon was twenty-two, and the next year they moved north to Home. As is recorded in the November 15, 1905 issue of *The Demonstrator*, the commune's local paper, this new couple *bought land across the bay* at Home, meaning it happened sometime that previous week. According to Radium Lavene, one the commune's residents, Morel and Ersilia soon established the Morel Brass Factory, which *was first located at the head of the bay* and that *later it was moved to property directly across the bay from Home dock.*

The first location was just across the Home bridge, which had been built with collective funds and communal, voluntary labor. As one Home local remembered, it was here, on the other side of the road from the Kranz family chicken farm and orchard, that Morel *built his boxes for casting sand, made his moulds, melted and poured brass fittings.* This same local believed that Morel learned his skills in *the midwest*, meaning either this local didn't remember, or that Morel simply lied, given he learned his trade as a teenage indentured servant at the French foundry which poured all of Rodin's artwork. According to this same local, *within a few years, the Morels moved their operation to a new location between Sandy Point and Rocky Point in Home.*

This is quoted from a text titled *Early Business in Home* which has never been duplicated outside of a small museum near Home, a text which confirms that Ersilia and Leon ran the foundry together, and according to contemporary historians, their first material came from beached ships which were torn

Enrico Travaglio. The Isaak's paper *Free Society* had recently moved to Chicago from San Francisco, bringing a lot of this crew with them. Spring Valley was around four hours away from Chicago, at least by train, and Ersilia was quite caught up in the flow between the two locations, all the while editing and writing for *L'Aurora* with her young lover Giuseppe. 1901 was a good year for Ersilia, the beginning of the great *novocento*, a century filled with nothing but promise.

## Secolo Nuovo

The new century truly got off to an explosive start when a strange Polish anarchist walked into the house of the Isaak family at 515 Carroll Avenue in Chicago, the building where *Free Society* was printed. This strange man asked to see Emma Goldman, who briefly struck up an acquaintance with him, although soon enough *Free Society* was warning its readers of this stranger who was constantly advocating lethal violence against the rulers of capitalist society. A week later, this Polish anarchist named Leon Czolgosz shot and killed President William McKinley, the man who initiated the invasion of the Philippines on behalf of Wall Street.

Another tyrant was dead, although the police arrested Emma Goldman, everyone at 515 Carroll Street, as well as dozens of others, all for allegedly conspiring to kill the president. Giuseppe soon wrote an article praising the assassination in *L'Aurora*, and for this he was promptly arrested. While he was in jail, Ersilia continued to write for, edit, publish and print *L'Aurora*, as unstoppable an anarchist as ever, now just over thirty-seven years old.

One of her comrades would later remember how *at the [post office] more and more money was accumulating from Italy and America – especially through the work of Ciancabilla and Ersilia Cavedagni – generously flowing for us, to support our battle, to*

*encourage our resistance, to comfort our sacrifices.* It was this same unstoppable spirit which allowed Ersilia to weather the storm that followed her lover Giuseppe's release from jail.

In December of 1901, the authorities raided and evicted the home in which they published *L'Aurora*, forcibly suppressing the paper, and Ersilia and Giuseppe soon fled to Chicago. All of their comrades were now out of jail, but the repression only intensified, and sometime in late 1902, Ersilia and Giuseppe moved across the country to San Francisco, where the repression continued, not just from the US government and police, but from the Italian consulate. It's in this time period that US authorities referred to her as a *very dangerous anarchist* and of *limited formal instruction but much audaciousness*, and to prove them right, she and Giuseppe immediately began printing their latest paper, *La Protesta Humana*, or *The Human Protest*, published from San Francisco, California.

This paper ran through 1903 and into 1904, and all the while Ersilia began spreading her ways through the Latin Quarter of San Francisco, staging open air anarchist *festas* in Washington Square Park and emboldening the women just as she had in Paterson. As she would write, *it is now common opinion accepted among the Italians of San Francisco that the only feste where one can have a good time with the family and also receive teaching as well as a political education, are the anarchist feste.* For this, Ersilia became quickly beloved by the entire San Francisco anarchist community, but unfortunately Giuseppe's health was worsening from years of physical trauma and repression, dimming the brightness of what she brought to the Latin Quarter.

The printing press for *L'Aurora* which they'd abandoned in Spring Valley was soon bought and transported to the anarchist commune of Barre, Vermont where the latest editor of *La Questione Sociale* was now hiding from the police. Luigi Galleani, who replaced Errico Malatesta as main editor of the paper, was now going to publish a new one, *Cronaca Sovversiva*,

or the *Subversive Chronicle*. As Luigi and his comrades began to use Ersilia and Giuseppe's old printing press, tragedy struck.

On September 17, 1904, the great Giuseppe Ciancabilla died at the age of thirty-two, and when a final tri-lingual issue of *La Protesta Humana* was released on October 1, Ersilia didn't sign her name in the long list of comrades who wished to honor Giuseppe, although that's probably because she wrote the full text below the signatures, an article in Italian titled simply *In Memory of Giuseppe Ciancabilla*. As is revealed in this article, his nickname was Cianca, and perhaps Ersilia called him that when they were together, alone, writing articles for their many anarchist newspapers.

## Does The Pope Shit In The Woods?

Once this memorial article was published and printed, Ersilia effectively vanished, at least in the eyes of the authorities. The US state, the Italian state, the private detective agencies, all of them managed to lose track of a *very dangerous anarchist*, a woman who brought rebellion wherever she went. For a variety of reasons, this article will be the first time history records that Ersilia Cavedagni soon became lovers with Leon Morel, an anarchist metal-worker from France, and together they moved north to the anarchist commune of Home, Washington State. Leon Morel was one of the comrades who signed his name to the memorial article for Giuseppe, and in the spirit of *free love*, there is no record of any anarchist raising questions of this union, for any reason.

In truth, there is a record of Ersilia in this time period, although she is identified only as an *Italian woman*. This record is a court transcript from a Red Scare case in 1923, known to lawyers as *Ex parte Morel*, 292 F. 423 (W.D. Wash. 1923). The Morel in question is Leon Morel, husband of Ersilia Cavedagni, and he was fighting deportation when he told the court about