



Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets (20th Century Political Thinkers)

By Kathy E. Ferguson

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Emma Goldman has often been read for her colorful life story, her lively if troubled sex life, and her wide-ranging political activism. Few have taken her seriously as a political thinker, even though in her lifetime she was a vigorous public intellectual within a global network of progressive politics. Engaging Goldman as a political thinker allows us to rethink the common dualism between theory and practice, scrutinize stereotypes of anarchism by placing Goldman within a fuller historical context, recognize the remarkable contributions of anarchism in creating public life, and open up contemporary politics to the possibilities of transformative feminism.

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Editorial Review

Review

Finally, a study of Emma Goldman's thought that treats her not only as revolutionary activist, sexual liberationist, anarchist or feminist, but as an original and provocative political thinker. Kathy Ferguson's own gift for subtle theoretical work combined with extensive archival research, textual analysis, and keen critical appreciation of Goldman's analytic compass points and political imagination, have together generated a volume of the first rank. (Wendy Brown, University of California, Berkeley)

Taking Red Emma seriously as a political thinker who theorized through her activism, body, and personal relationships, Kathy Ferguson more than provides a usable past for envisioning a just and joyful world. Ferguson offers a methodology for doing theory, a model for contemporary feminist praxis of the highest order that interrogates the archive through critical thought. A stunning achievement! (Eileen Boris, Hull Professor of Feminist Studies, University of California Santa Barbara)

There should be no doubting the importance of this book. Thoroughly and acutely researched it engages with Goldman as a serious political thinker as well as iconic figure, leading us to re-evaluate our understanding of this complex, powerful and, yes, courageous, woman. It is essential reading, and will be for years to come, for anyone wanting to understand Goldman and the philosophy she devoted her life to. (Barry Pateman, Associate Editor Emma Goldman Papers, UC Berkeley)

This is the best book on Emma Goldman out there? Professor Ferguson engages Goldman like no one else, recounting and reliving for us the distinctive weave of political theory, political acumen, fear, joy, courage, and sheer vitality that was the marvelous event called Emma Goldman. Ferguson has created a book with the rarest of combinations: scholarship of the highest caliber and a fantastic read. (Jane Bennett, Johns Hopkins University)

...a significant achievement in its scholarly range and attention to the details of Goldman's habitus, in its sensitivity to the novel challenges of recording the kind of political thinking that arises from oppositional political movements, and in its evident passion for the recovery of Goldman herself as a political thinker who becomes intelligible only when she is placed in this context above all. (*Political Theory*)

Ferguson uses careful, deliberate scholarship to bring Goldman into the academic fold. . . . [S]he does so in a brilliant fashion, applying theoretical lenses while respecting the heart and spirit of Goldman's life which was dedicated to action more than thinking. (Keally McBride, *Theory & Event*)

About the Author

Kathy E. Ferguson is professor of political science and women's studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

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