

Fag Hag

Lola Miesseroff

Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith

Afterword by H el ene Hazera

"Some girls fancy sailors, others fancy soldiers. But you, my dear, are a fag hag!"

Lola Miesseroff's childhood certainly predisposed her to be a rebel. She was born in Marseilles in 1947 to immigrant parents, her mother a Russian-Jewish social worker, her father an Armenian-Russian with a sandpaper-making workshop in sheds left behind by the Americans. The family ran and lived in a nudist colony, a place where the men were allowed to be feminine, the women masculine. Hers was what she calls a "degendered" childhood: "I never suffered from identity problems. There were two genocides in my background, one Jewish, the other Armenian, and my education was Russophone, naturist and libertarian, not least with respect to love and sex. In other words, we were marginal in every possible way."

Lola's picaresque memoir *Fag Hag* tracks her peregrinations through what she calls the "Outer Left"—always deeply committed and involved in women's liberation, sexual liberation, gay, and LGBTQ liberation—yet always on the fringe of formal organizations (or driven there) because of her belief that anarcho-communist revolution (not her term) trumps all (inter)sectional struggles without reducing them. From Marseilles to Avignon and Paris, Lola's trajectory epitomizes a far left that opposed a spirit of provocation and raillery to the austerity of many militant groupuscules and experimented enthusiastically with communal and polysexual living.

"I have dredged my memory," Lola writes, "in the hope that revisiting the past might help illuminate our present; if it doesn't, I shall have failed. I want to contribute in some small measure to the struggles of today by exposing the strengths and weaknesses of the struggles of the past, and to contest fragmented identity politics in favor of all-for-one-and-one-for-all. Which is my way of continuing to challenge the power structure."

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Lola Miesseroff was destined to join the struggle against "the old world." Born in 1947 in Marseilles, her Russian-speaking  migr e parents ran the local nudist colony, where men were allowed to be feminine, women masculine. Lola's "degendered childhood" and libertarian upbringing put her on course to be a lifelong rebel. Coming of age during the wildness of "the long 1968," her life has been a trip through experiments in communal living, free love, radical feminisms, and oppositional communisms. Lola is the author of *Travels on the Outer-Left*, collected memories of veteran 1968ers. And she is a lifelong proponent of sexual freedom and polyamory as a weapon integral to the revolutionary life.

Born in Manchester, England, **Donald Nicholson-Smith** is a New Yorker by adoption. A sometime Situationist (1965–67), he has translated many writings of the Situationist International. PM Press has also published his translation of Anselm Jappe's magisterial intellectual biography of Guy Debord. Otherwise, he has Englished works by Henri Lefebvre, Apollinaire, Artaud, etc., and is responsible for bringing the noir fiction of Jean-Patrick Manchette into the Anglosphere.

H el ene Hazera is a trans woman who was a leading light in the Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action (FHAR), founded in 1971, and in the more radical spinoff group Les Gazolines (1972–74). She has acted in and directed films and worked as a television and later a music critic for the daily *Lib eration* (1978–99). For many years later, as a passionate lover of Francophone and Arabic-Andalusian music, she deejayed regular shows on France Culture radio.



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