

ČASOPIS ZA POVIJEST
ZAPADNE HRVATSKE

WEST CROATIAN
HISTORY JOURNAL

Monografski broj / Special issue:

Revolucije i revolucionari:
iz rodne perspektive

Revolutions and revolutionaries:
from the gender perspective

Uredila / Edited by

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RIJEKA,
XI./11. 2016.

The Revolution of the Women Without Anything, Without a Name

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UDK: 355.426 (460) “193671939”
305-055.2 : 355.01

Prethodno priopćenje/Preliminary paper
Primljeno/Received: 15.05.2017.
Prihvaćeno/Accepted: 14.11.2017.

Undoubtedly, the events of 18, 19 and 20 July 1936 constitute one of the most excessively interpreted historical facts in recent Catalan history. And, all the same, after eighty years we still know very little about them. The originality of the 1936 social revolution, which was structural and inherent to it, goes beyond the Spanish Civil War and its end in a forty-year long Fascist dictatorship that masked the significance of the revolutionary brunt, or even beyond the tendentious readings from both sides –including the republican sector’s internal contradictions-. It stems from an insurrection led by its basis, by people from across the working-class neighborhoods of the city of Barcelona. Certainly, it was the people who had nothing –nor anything to lose- who stopped the military coup, inch by inch, street by street, practically unarmed and with the only collaboration of the Generalitat de Catalunya’s assault guards.

It was the people who had nothing who mainly volunteered to the militias to fight the fascism at Zaragoza. It was the people who had nothing, especially the women, who collectivized around 70% of Barcelona’s factories (electrical industry, water and gas supply companies, textile and wood industries, harbors, food industry, transport companies, or metal industry), as well as a great part of the economy of the country (trade, food distribution, barber’s shops, entertainment shows, schools, media, croplands, swimming pools, or leisure facilities...). During those months, for the first and perhaps the only time in history, the women who had nothing except their dignity, did have everything. To them I want to dedicate my research and to pay homage.

Keywords: Spanish Civil War, historiographical silences, women’s work, workers’ revolution, urban collectivities.

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About the women who gave offering of the best of themselves in order to improve the human condition, and, particularly, the working-class women, little has been written. And they deserve admiration and affection the most, and I mingle them in a fraternal embrace with those who suffered persecution, torture, and death in the 1936-1939 great commotion, and, in sum, with all those who gave their energy in combat, in collectivities, in all workplaces, in childcare services, and who, in one manner or another, contributed to maintain the fight against the oppression of General Franco's regime.

Lola Iturbe, *La mujer en la lucha social*

Introduction

The Spanish Civil War was a social, political and military conflict triggered in Spain by the partial failure of the coup d'état of 17-18 July 1936, led by a faction of the Army against the Second Republic's government (1931-1939). After the blockade of the Strait of Gibraltar and the following airlift that, thanks to the prompt cooperation of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, carried the rebel troops to the Iberian Peninsula in the last weeks of July, a civil war broke out. It would end on 1 April 1939 with the last war report signed by Francisco Franco, in which he announced his victory, and from which he established a dictatorship that would last until his death on 20 November 1975. As explained by Santos Juliá:

It certainly was a class struggle by means of arms, in which someone could die for having covered his head with a hat or having put an espadrille on his feet, but it was not to a lesser extent a war of religion, of nationalisms facing each other, a war between a military dictatorship and a republican democracy, between revolution and counter-revolution, between Fascism and Communism.²

Undoubtedly, the events of 18, 19 and 20 July 1936 constitute one of the most excessively interpreted historical facts in recent Catalan history. And, all the same, after eighty years there are still important gaps in knowledge of them. The originality of the 1936 social revolution, which was structural and inherent to it, goes beyond the Spanish Civil War and its end in a forty-year long Fascist dictatorship that masked the significance of the revolutionary brunt, or even beyond the tendentious readings from both sides –including the Republican sector's internal contradictions-. It stems from an insurrection led by its

basis, by people from across the working-class neighborhoods of the city of Barcelona. Certainly, it was the people who had nothing –nor anything to lose- who stopped the military coup, inch by inch, street by street, practically unarmed and with the only collaboration of the Generalitat³ de Catalunya's assault guards. It is known that the Catalan Government was informed about the preparation of a movement against the republic, for which reason it had taken security measures days before with the forces at its disposal in order to defend itself against this eventuality.⁴

Popular outrage and the wish to fight powerfully made their way without regard to anything else. Throughout the afternoon of 18 July, assemblies were urgently gathered at the main centers of the workers' movement to know the situation and to come to an agreement. The workers' and republican central premises became a constant to-and-fro of activists, who came from everywhere in search of information and departed quickly for their places of origin carrying the orders that had to be followed and transmitted to their comrades. In some towns, the organizations who were contrary to the coup d'état established the first Liaison Committees, who assumed direction of war operations and determined the first preventive measures. The seriousness of the situation, and the possibility that the rebel movement could gain ground, facilitated consensus among the organizations about the formation of the first defence groups that would finally establish control over road travel, and proceed to arrest suspicious individuals and confiscate weapons and vehicles. The call for a general strike extended immediately. That very 19 July, when the military uprising was a fact in Barcelona, a manifesto of the National Confederation of Workers' (or CNT)⁵ Regional Committee published in the *Solidaridad Obrera* newspaper though hacked to bits by the censorship performed by Catalan authorities, alerted to the initiatives of the participants in the coup d'état in Morocco, clamored for resistance and for fighting against fascism, and brought forward the general strike issue in case the rebels found any support in Catalonia. All workers' organizations had made –or would make in the next hours- a similar appeal. In Barcelona, the strike received support since the first hours of Sunday from all sectors in which there were people at work.⁶

³ Catalan self-government body according to the Law of 15 September 1932, when the Statute of Autonomy was promulgated.

⁴ Frederic ESCOFET, *Al servei de Catalunya i de la República / La victòria (19 de juliol de 1936)*, París: Edicions Catalanes, 1973, vol. II, 155-160.

⁵ According to its initials in Spanish. A confederate union of Spanish autonomous trade unions of anarcho-sindicalist ideology, it was born in Barcelona between 30 October and 1 November 1910.

⁶ *La Vanguardia* (22 July 1936). Thus was the report of that day according to this newspaper: *in compliance with the agreement reached by the workers' organizations, immediately after having knowledge of the presence of rebel troops in the streets of Barcelona, it was made the call for a general strike that received support from all working elements, and taking into account that it was Sunday, it reached only urban transports and those other establishments that work on public holiday, such as bars, restaurants, etc. Taxi drivers took their taxis back to the garages, and trams and buses did not depart as they should at that time. However, some trams that were already out in the open were abandoned by their drivers. Due to the order of the workers' organizations, the general strike continues in an absolute manner.*

² Santos JULIÁ, *Un siglo de España. Política y sociedad*, Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1999, 118

It has been accepted by the majority of the present-day historiography that the popular response to the coup d'état turned into a workers' revolution. This was precisely the kind of movement that the insurgents wanted to prevent, suffocating it before it could have a chance to reveal.⁷ The rebellion of part of the State machinery against the same State cut a slit through which entered not only the will to fight the fascist menace that the generals embodied, but also the hopes and frustrations of thousands and thousands of men and women, workers and peasants, whose aspirations had not been satisfied by five years of republican regime. The spark that would finally light the fuse of the revolution correlates with the enormous political meaning of the failure of the military rebellion in the face of popular resistance. It is well known that this strong reaction did not only stop at the fight against those who had taken up arms against the people, nor against their civilian sympathizers. It is widely documented that, in parallel with efforts at confronting the military uprising, wherever this latter was defeated a movement arose that affected the real foundations of the capitalist society. This was directed against the whole ruling classes, and against such those as the Church, who had created a century-old image of itself in which it was associated with power –of which it was part- and the powerful.

Thus, among a great variety of initiatives, most of them produced by the enormous drive of the workers' activism and of the workers who had taken to the streets, the fight against the insurgents was accompanied by a series of revolutionary changes that would have consequences in every field of political, economic and social life. The starting point of these revolutionary transformations and their most characteristic traits were the generalized attack on private property, the working-class assault on political power, and the desire to advance towards a new society by means of a radical change in the existing relationships between social classes. The social revolution yielded to a vast variety of revolutionary measures, in the economic field –in a clear anti-capitalist sense- as much as in that of the procedures for controlling the State machinery. In this essay, I am going to analyze the double defeat of this workers' movement: that of the war that was lost, and that of the revolution, and, especially, the triple invisibility⁸ of the role played by the women in the revolutionary Summer of 1936. An invisibility due to the prevailing silences.

I propose several interesting and unconventional theses to complement the mainstream civil war narrative, into aspects of the role of women in wartime

⁷ Pierre BROUÉ, 'Espagne 1936: Front Populaire et politiques militaires', *Cahiers Leon Trotsky*, 27 (September 1986). Broué has certainly been one of the hispanists who has insisted the most on this issue since its already classic essay written together with Émile TÉMIME, *La Révolution et la Guerre d'Espagne*, Paris: Minuit, 1961.

⁸ Basing her work on memory texts –oral testimonies, diaries, autobiographies and correspondence-, Shirley Mangini González studies women before, during and after the Civil War. She divides women in the *visible* –those who tried to become part of the leading politics throughout the turbulent decades of 1920 and 1930-; and the *invisible* –those of the revolution, the activists against the military insurrection of 1936. See Shirley MANGINI GONZÁLEZ, *Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1995.

Barcelona. Martha Ackelsberg states in her book *Free Women* than the years from 1868 to 1936, served as a preparation for the social revolution that broke out in July 1936, contrary to Franco's *coup d'état*. During these previous years, a foundation and anarcho-syndicalist organization had been created, giving shape to what would be the libertarian movement. One of the facts that shows that the mobilizations and changes began to be relevant, it was that many women workers began to actively join anarchist unions. In 1881, at the Federación Regional Española de la AIT congress, declared that the woman he could exercise the same rights and fulfil the same duties as man. Plus, in 1910, the National Confederation of Labour (CNT) was created –previously the working class was organized with the Federation of Solidarity Worker. The CNT had a basis a revolutionary trade unionist with a libertarian ideology. Another event that demonstrates how society was preparing for change during the Tragic Week, a week in which women played an important role in the social movement, that the Catalan people revolted against the central government, why they disagreed with that the young people had to go to the camps for the Moroccan War. Many women took leadership roles, in demonstrations and strikes. This revolutionary situation was different than in other historical periods, the behaviour of Barcelona's women an example of other European revolutionary events represented a unique example in the context of European revolutions, especially in the field of anarchist implementation.

Approaches and historiographical silences

As a sociopolitical phenomenon, Anarchism has given rise to an abundant historiography of long tradition, although it has not always presence in current academic debates. These do not frequently reflect the singularity of Catalan anarchism, which appears undifferentiated from the Spanish one.⁹ In Spain, the break that meant the Civil War and the long dictatorship that followed marked the historiography. In terms of professional research, many topics were forbidden during the dictatorship's first decades, and when they began to be addressed, then the official historians were in charge with the intention of making clear the responsibility of the anarchists for their dramatic defeat in the Civil War. However, at the same time, and with an opposite purpose, a vast literature was generated from the anarchist ranks in exile. Based on testimony and analysis, it had exculpation as common factor. Its authors wanted to leave evidence of the anarchist view of their own performance during the war, justifying their own faith and defending their beliefs dogmatically.

⁹ Xavier Díez, 'La historiografía anarquista als Països Catalans. Una llarga tradició entre el desconeixement i la vitalitat', *Afers*, 59 (2008), 155-170. This is a reflection on the anarchist historiography issued from the activists' own ranks, and on the way in which it has been addressed by the later historiography.

Simultaneously, hispanists such as Gerald Brenan¹⁰ showed their interest in Hispanic anarchism from a different professional and political environment –particularly the Andalusian anarchism, whose behavior was mistakenly extrapolated-, being attracted by the more primitive traits of the *spontaneous* and *millenarist revolt*, which were frequent in the Mediterranean area but were far removed from the anarchism developed in the so-called Catalan Countries.

A more professional and anti-Franco-committed historiography about the workers' movement in general, and the anarchism in particular, prospered during the last years of the dictatorship. A result of research at universities, this historiography has gone on until present day, distancing itself from activist discourse and historical analysis. In this sense, its first essays, which were about the study of anarcho-syndicalism and are still valid, were written with an express will to secure the foundations of the history of the workers' movement. The appearance of studies on the anarchism was a constant until the decade of the mid-1990s, when they experienced a clear fall. Favorite issues were the formation and the development of the anarcho-syndicalism and its regional peculiarities, rural mobilizations, international relations, Libertarian press and culture, and, above all, topics related to the Civil War.¹¹

To which extent the revolution that begun on 19 July in Catalonia and all over republican Spain tried to replace the ruined mechanisms of the State and to get their bearings to establish a new social regime, it always has been a very polemical issue. Repeatedly suggested from a purely political point of view, and mechanically reproducing the doctrinal discussions of the period, this reasoning is part of the already classic debate that has accompanied most part of the historiographical output about this period. In fact, together with the controversy about the class-nature that the future Spanish revolution would have, it concentrates all the polemics that had already polarized arguments between the different trends of the workers' movement during the Civil War and in the preceding period.¹² At that time the CNT was the

10 The work of Gerald, BRENNAN, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943, still being reprinted in Great Britain, constitutes the paradigmatic example of this.

11 There is a review of the historiography about the anarchism between 1968 and 1988 at Pere GABRIEL, Eulàlia VEGA and Julián CASANOVA, 'Anarquismo y sindicalismo', *Historia Social*, 1 (1988), 45-76. A more comprehensive compilation, at Salvador GURUCHARRI, *Bibliografía del anarquismo español, 1869-1975*, Barcelona: La Rosa de Foc, 2004. The special number of *Cahiers de civilisation espagnole contemporaine* of October 2012, 'L'anarchisme espagnol', is interesting; available at: <https://ceec.revues.org/3905> [Accessed 2 April 2017]. See also Joël DELHOM, 'Inventario provisorio de las memorias anarquistas y anarcosindicalistas españolas', 2009, available at: <https://ceec.revues.org/2677#tocto2n4>; and Walther L. BERNECKER, 'El anarquismo en la guerra civil española. Estado de la cuestión', *Cuadernos de historia contemporánea*, 14 (1992), 91-115. Available at: <http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/CHCO/article/view/CHCO9292110091A> [Accessed 2 April 2017].

12 These controversies endured through time. Thus spoke Federica Montseny about communists men and women: *History is written on the basis of tendentious information [...] and sometimes according to graphic documents that are available and that can be used for a film or for a TV report. In this regard, the communists will always be superior to us because we never 'pose' before history; we are too occupied in the defense of revolution and making it a reality*, see MANGINI GONZÁLEZ, *Memories of Resistance...*, 48.

most influential organization due to its great number of members among the workers –the main figures in that victory-,¹³ and their basic plans were those of the supposed alternative to manage to transform society: the building of a society whose main social purpose had to be to reach a global and egalitarian development as a whole, and of each individual in particular. Global, because it aspired to encompass the whole needs and aspirations of people, economic as much as spiritual, as well as those who refer to body welfare and development. Egalitarian, because it would benefit everyone to the same extent.

Classic historiography has focused on analyzing the revolutionary experience from the point of view of the leaders who took part in it, and in some cases trying to explain these facts from a more political rather than social perspective. Part of the official historiography has not shown any interest in studying it in depth. It has tiptoed around it and diminished the importance of the revolutionary facts of Barcelona, as well as other parts of the Iberian Peninsula. At present, new historiography focuses on studying the revolutionary experience from the perspective of the manual workers and their relatives, who played a direct part in the events. We are interested in reconstructing the history of anonymous people and grassroots. Interest is also arisen among the new historiography in studying the importance and the implementation of the new culture of self-management and mutual support at working-class neighborhoods, and the following involvement of these workers in the revolutionary events.¹⁴

It must be pointed out that, among the historiographical silences, very little or no attention has been paid to women of the utopian summer's revolution. The role played by anarchist women has drawn poor attention of the official history. Mary Nash was the first historian who made the effort to lift out of the anonymity the significant task of a group of women, by publishing in 1976¹⁵ an anthology of some of the most representative texts written at the core of *Mujeres Libres*. Also to be taken into account is the highly valuable contribution of Martha Ackelsberg, who published several works on

13 About these figures, opinions differ depending on the source of information and the date: Josep M. BRICALL, *Política económica de la Generalitat 1936-1939*, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1978, 299, footnote 3, establishes it in a million and a half contributors in 1934 along with those of the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation, according to its initials in Spanish). Pujol agrees on the figures, but he places them in 1937, when being a member of a trade union had become practically compulsory. Josep PEIRATS, *La CNT en la revolución española*, Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1971, vol. I., 27, quotes that in 1919 its membership exceeded half a million only in Catalonia. On the front page of its edition of 5 May 1933, the official CNT newspaper *Solidaridad Obrera* fixed the numbers to 559,294 confederate workers from 988 trade unions.

14 Chris EALHAM & Michael RICHARDS (eds.), *España Fragmentada. Historia Cultural y Guerra Civil Española*, Granada: Comares, 2010; Xavier Díez, *L'anarquisme individualista a Espanya 1923-1938*, Barcelona: Virus, 2008; Miquel IZARD, *Que lo sepan Ellos y no lo olvidemos nosotros. El inverosímil verano del 36 en Buenos Aires*, Barcelona: Virus, 2012.

15 The collected articles had been originally published between 1936 and 1939 in the *Mujeres Libres* review and other anarchist newspapers of the period. See Mary NASH, 'Mujeres Libres': *España 1936. 1939*, Barcelona: Tusquets, 1976. In 1977 she defended her Doctoral Thesis at the University of Barcelona: *La mujer en las organizaciones políticas de izquierdas en España, 1931-1939*.

the Spanish anarchism, among which is *Free Women of Spain*.¹⁶ Although it is true that there has been an interest in militiawomen¹⁷ and feminists, the impact of the working-class women on the revolutionary events of 19 July and onwards has been generally subsumed under the universal male invisibilizer: when there is a discussion about collectivizations, this is always about men, whereas nothing is said about those women...¹⁸ It is time, then, to do justice to them.

Women and Work

The 1930 population census –the last one taken before the Civil War, the next being taken in 1940- offer the following data on the men and women registered in Barcelona¹⁹ according to sex, age, marital status, and jobs or industries:²⁰

INDUSTRIES	SECTORS/POSITIONS	MEN	WOMEN
I Fishing	1 Fishing	605	71
II Forest and farming	2 Forestry	307	–
	3 Agriculture	2,046	133
	4 Livestock farming	459	19
III Mines and quarries	5 Coal mining	221	–
	6 Iron ore mines	–	–
	7 Lead mines	9	–
	8 Copper mines	122	–
	9 Mercury mines	2	–
	10 Other mines	19	–
	11 Quarries	2,637	–
	12 Mineral springs	122	–

16 Martha ACKELSBURG, *Mujeres Libres. El anarquismo y la lucha por la emancipación de las mujeres*. Barcelona: Virus, 2000.

17 I have given attention to them in a recent congress (*Congreso Internacional 80 Aniversario Guerra Civil Española*, URV, Tarragona, November 2016), Coral CUADRADA, *Hacer la revolución, no la guerra* (pending publication).

18 Mary Nash adds some rough outlines to the collectivities in the section 'Control obrer i jerarquia de gènere' of *Treballadores: un segle de treball femení a Catalunya*, Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya. Departament de Treball, 2010, 117-119. In *Rojas* she stresses the dichotomy between militiawoman and heroines, and *the appropriate place for women: the rearguard*, see *Rojas. Las mujeres republicanas en la Guerra Civil*, Madrid: Santillana, 2006. In the section dedicated to 'La mujer y la lucha social', she speaks about the troubles faced by women and the little regard that the anarchism show to their rights, but not about their achievements. See *Mujer y movimiento obrero en España 1931-1939*, Barcelona: Fontamara, 68-76.

19 Available at: <http://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/pdfDispacher.do?td=103474&ext=.pdf> [Accessed 3 May 2017].

20 I do not include here rentiers nor pensioners, schoolchildren, unproductive people and those whose jobs were unknown.

	13 Salt mines	15	–
IV Food industry	14 Grinding	480	104
	15 Cheese and butter	347	75
	16 Sugar	127	34
	17 Oil	269	243
	18 Wine, beer and others	2,571	859
	19 Bakery and confectionery	15,964	4,311
	20 Tinned food	945	730
V Chemical	21 Others	1,535	379
	22 Alcohol	91	37
	23 Pharmacy and perfume	1,346	571
	24 Tobacco	1,084	1,075
	25 Fertilizers	50	–
	26 Petroleum and coal	1,931	48
	27 Explosives and flammable materials	247	76
	28 Colourant, paint, varnish	1,304	352
	29 Rubber and gutta-percha	951	138
	30 Paper and cardboard	1,474	794
	31 Others	1,343	566
VI Graphic arts	32 Printing, engraved, bookbinding	1,188	32
	33 Photography	105	7
VII Textile industries	34 Spun fabric	3,108	5,126
	35 Linen and hemp fabrics	5,417	712
	36 Cotton fabric	2,331	1,282
	37 Wool and silk fabrics	1,654	1,854
	38 Lace, blond lace, embroidery and passementerie	12,316	41,755
	39 Horsehair and feathers	1,129	854
	40 Others	9,933	2,136
	VIII Dressmaking	41 Tailoring	6,903
42 Sewing		162	8,224
43 Upholstery, lingerie, linens		1,356	2,732
IX Leather and fur	44 Hat- and umbrella making	777	2,376
	45 Others	449	434
	46 Leather and fur tanning	122	35
	47 Fur clothing	306	579
	48 Shoemaking	4,444	555

	49 Other leather and fur products	744	775
X Wood industries	50 Sawmills	254	–
	51 Carpenter's workshops	16,706	1,410
	52 Ships	207	59
	53 Carriages	1,223	252
	54 Cabinetmaker's workshops	6,794	515
	55 Others	1,211	1,038
XI Metallurgy	56 Iron	17,157	–
	57 Other metals	864	18
XII Metalworking	58 Iron smelting	1,288	–
	59 Forging, smithery and locksmithing	4,984	391
	60 Boilermaking	364	–
	61 Smelting and melting of other metals	1,273	112
	62 Tools	120	–
	63 Wireworking and chains	28	–
	64 Weaponry	104	17
	65 Precision and measuring instruments	1,010	99
	66 Machine tools	31	25
	67 Engines and transport machinery	127	–
	68 Ships	4	–
	69 Tinwork and plumbers	479	101
	70 Others	10,122	1,668
XIII Fine metalworking	71 Jewelry and craftsmanship in precious metals	65	4
	72 Costume jewelry and pieces of art	11	–
XIV Construction	73 Bridges, harbours, roads and streets	1,634	–
	74 Water pipe	1,899	12
	75 Stonework	833	–
	76 Bricklaying	19,127	24
	77 Frameworks	59	24
	78 Glassworks, chimney sweeping and painting	5,386	36
	79 Lime, plaster and cement manufacturing	184	18
	80 Brick, tile and cement objects manufacturing	419	16

	81 Other construction industries	793	–
XV Various industries	82 Electric power production and supply	1,967	543
	83 Electrochemical	16	39
	84 Glass, crockery, porcelain and pottery	195	117
	85 Various	51,622	28,462
XVI Transport	86 Post, telegraph, telephone and radio	1,128	442
	87 Railway	4,439	71
	88 Trams	2,003	63
	89 Sea and river navigation	6,622	13
	90 Other transports	6,406	16
XVII Commercial sector	91 Food	4,058	267
	92 Hotels, restaurants and off-licence	2,887	371
	93 Chemists and pharmacists	463	49
	94 Book- and stationery shops	145	31
	95 Fabric and materials for clothing	981	99
	96 Machinery and tool sales	270	14
	97 Pound shops and large retail stores	25	13
	98 Shows	956	275
	99 Banks, insurances, business agencies	3,207	232
	100 Other businesses	11,827	1,096
XVIII Domestic service	101 Domestic service	3,753	29,871
XIX Public forces	102 Army	12,110	–
	103 Navy	423	–
	104 Civil Guard, border guards and police	3,221	–
XX Public administration	105 Public administration	4,760	714
XXI Cult and clergy			
XXII Liberal occupations	110 Legal occupations	2,278	30
	111 Medical occupations	2,374	623
	112 Teaching occupations	1,163	2,272
	113 Architecture and engineering	2,039	4
	114 Fine arts	715	77
	115 Other liberal occupations	7,565	2,750

Although it is evident that women are found to be working at different fields, with a notable presence at some of them –bakery, tobacco, spinning, blond lace, lace and passementerie, dressmaking, upholstery, lingerie, linens, hat and umbrella making, fur clothing, domestic service-, this does not mean that their job situation was the most acceptable. We can have a look at some examples. Between 1911 and 1920 the increase in the number of workers at the Spanish textile sector was of almost 90,000, of whom little more than 70,000 were women. Nearly all this increase in employment demand occurred in Catalonia. This growth slowed within the following decade, but it became established in spite of the crisis suffered by the sector, which was the one who employed more female workforce in Spain together with the domestic service. When it comes to hiring, one can see a variable behavior, since in periods of economic expansion to which increases in employment demand are related, more women were hired for lesser wages, whereas in periods of crisis dismissal affected especially working-class women. In all textile sectors, women were present in larger numbers than men, except for dye and stiffening (water-based industries).²¹

After the failure of the 1902 general strike, the Barcelonese anarchism swung to Syndicalism. It laid the foundation for the creation of the first female textile trade union, *La Constancia*, which responded quickly to the needs of the working-class woman, subjected to a double workday at the factory and home. The trade union raised the issue of the great strike of 1913 in favor of workday reduction in the textile industry. Despite the success of this strike, *La Constancia* run counter to male opposition to its autonomous organization. To increase, the opposition took advantage of the creation of the Single Trade Union in 1918, an organizational model that integrated *La Constancia*'s working-class women into the Textile and Manufacturing Arts, and in the same trade union that encompassed water-based industries and textile *contremaîtres*. Male textile trade unions resisted integration into the Single one principally because of their fear of losing privileges and having to share the process of making decisions with mixed management committees. Without any representation at the management committees, women's interests were again subordinated to those of the men: the new working-class syndicalism has not resolved the gender issue yet. As the old trade unions, their customs firmly rooted in the patriarchal family, the new ones did not approve the involvement of women in social and workers' affairs.²²

21 Álvaro SOTO CARMONA, *El trabajo industrial en la España Contemporánea (1874-1936)*, Barcelona: Anthropos, 1989, 92.

22 Carles ENRECH, 'Género y sindicalismo en la industria textil (1836-1923)', Cristina BORDERÍAS (ed.), *Género y políticas del trabajo en la España contemporánea 1836-1936*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2007, 162.

But not all women respected these approaches. Thus, Balbina Pi Sanllehy (1896-1973),²³ textile worker, took part in the conflict of her industrial sector in 1913 in an outstanding manner; she became a member of the CNT Manufacturer and Textile Trade Union in 1917 and was appointed representative of the Local Federation for the town of Sabadell, where she made her first political speech together with Ángel Pestaña. In February 1918 she was busy supporting the strike against price rise. In the following years, she gained prestige as public speaker along with Rosario Dolcet and Lola Ferrer, going on propagandistic tours across the Llobregat, Vallès, and Berguedà regions with the goal of getting the women involved in the syndical movement. María Rius (1909-?)²⁴ was another syndicalist very respected at that time. She became an early enthusiast in the syndical struggle, and was part of the clothing trade union's management committee. She had the trade union card number 1. Her dynamic and determined nature caused her to be inclined towards more radical activities. So, she was an activist of action. This explains why María, who had been in charge of the organization as a representative few times, was, however, one of the most well-known and most respected comrades among the members of the CNT media and the anarchist groups. Vicenta Sáez Barcina (1898-1971)²⁵ migrated to Barcelona in the 1920s, where she worked as a knitter. In the Catalan capital she became part of the anarchist

23 <http://anarcoefemerides.baleaerweb.net/> [Access 10 April 2017]. She was born in Sant Boi de Llobregat. Of her tours, stood out one of a campaign in favour of those deported to La Mola de Mahón (1920) and one in the Llobregat, el Penedès and Cartagena (1923). Due to a speech made at the Montaña cinema of the Clot, published in the *Solidaridad Obrera*, she was incarcerated. During the years of the gun law, she approached the republican federalism, and, besides her confederate activism, she was part of the Republican Women of the Federal Republican Circle, through which she launched an intense campaign against the repression being suffered by the workers' movement. In 1923 she attended the Catalan Regional Plenary Session of the CNT in Lleida. She collaborated with *Nuestra Voz* and *Solidaridad Obrera*, using often as pseudonyms 'Margot' and 'Libertad Caída'. Throughout the republican years, she was part of the most radical sector of the anarchism and the anarcho-syndicalism: according to Joan García Oliver, she embroidered the fists black-and-red flags. When the fascist uprising of 1936 took place, she marginalized herself because of disagreements with the confederate organic structure, although she was part of the Female Anticlerical Association.

24 <http://www.alasbarricadas.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=10&t=6157> [Access 12 April 2017]. A workers' daughter, she could have no education. She began working when she was nine as an apprentice of shirtmaker. She stood out particularly in the struggle for the freedom of prisoners. In 1924 she was arrested for having been found a real arsenal at his house, and sentenced to eight years in prison. To defend the innocence of a man who had been sentenced to death, she swore in front of the judge that at the moment of the incident –a robbery in Sabadell- he was with her in a very intimate situation. This saved the accused's life, but it meant the breakdown with her partner. She had to flee to France when it was revealed that she was the organizer of an escape plan. Back to Barcelona after the fall of Primo de Rivera, María took part decisively in the female mobilizations that assaulted the women's prison as soon as the republic was proclaimed, and reached as far as the Generalitat with the goal of demanding the liberation of the prisoners of the Modelo prison. During the Civil War she fought at the front as a militiawoman, and at the end of the conflict she sought shelter in France.

25 <http://www.alasbarricadas.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=10&t=6157> [Consulta 10.04.17]. Partner of the libertarian activist Donoso Germinal. Because of her activities during the gun law years, she had to be in exile, landing with him in France in 1927. In 1931, once the Second Republic was proclaimed, she went back to the Peninsula, where Donoso became the administrator of the weekly newspaper *Tierra y Libertad*, a task that she helped much to perform. In 1939, with the fascist triumph, she went into exile in France.

movement, showing herself especially dynamic as an advocate of activists of action and of prisoners' aid.

The numbers show that in the first third of the twentieth century there was an increase in the female participation in the Barcelona's metal industry, a real fact confirmed by the working-class press of the period. The census divide the metalworking occupations in two subsectors: 1) metallurgy –foundry and first transformation- and 2) metalworking and other metals, including all type of machinery production and of metal finishing products. Women were practically excluded from the metallurgy, but they began to be hired as metalworkers. So, whereas in 1856 there rarely was a woman working in that sector, in 1930 they accounted for the 10,8% of the workforce.²⁶ The beginning of the serious economic crisis in the sector early in the 1930s opened a period of strong opposition of the metallurgic trade unions to women's work. After the unsuccessful attempt of 1931 to restrict hiring of women for heavy work jobs, the Socialists and the communists succeeded in their own attempt in 1934. Simultaneously, they imposed wage equality only in regards to traditionally male specialties. Both measures were an attempt to avoid female competition with the workmen. The trade unions banned also women from formal apprenticeship, thus preventing them from accessing to highly qualified jobs. On the other hand, given the lesser pressure in defense of female wage, the trade unions contributed to the depreciation of women's work, consolidating the existing differences in wages.²⁷

The mobilization of women, especially during the 1918-1920 strike cycle, highlighted the existence of specific needs and particular courses of action that were not taken into account by the trade unions' male management.²⁸ The few voices of women who managed to break the anonymity after their articles had been published by the working-class press –Remedios Romero, María Guasch, the words of 'a comrade from the Z'-, spoke in a very different tone from that of the men, and took responsibility for issues such as the use of fight strategies different from the general strike, sexual assault, or the defense of their areas inside the plant. But the trade unions, far from questioning their politics on women's work, recurred to the weight of tradition and domestic workloads to keep women away from the workers' associations, although they occasionally had proved more than enough that they were capable of mobilizing effectively, autonomously, and even without organizing. Libertad Ródenas (1882-1970)²⁹

26 Ildefons CERDÀ, *Monografía estadística de la clase obrera*, 1856; working-class census of 1905 and National Population Census, 1920-1930.

27 Conchi VILLAR, 'Clase y género. Estrategias de exclusión del sindicalismo en el sector del metal. Barcelona, 1900-1936', *Género y políticas del trabajo...*, 189.

28 Jordi IBARZ GELABERT, 'Con gesto viril. Política sindical y trabajo femenino en la industria del vidrio de Barcelona (1884-1930)', *Género y políticas del trabajo...*, 224.

29 <http://anarcoefemerides.baleaerweb.net/> [Access 13 April 2017]. Libertad was involved in the actions of the so-called Free Trade Unions, publicly denouncing them as assassins. She was arrested and she took part actively in the Committee in favour of the Prisoners. In 1936 Libertad left Barcelona with Durruti's first column and was involved in the fighting at the front.

stood out in the revolutionary crisis of 1917 due to her rhetorical skills. She moved from Xera (Valencia) with her family to Barcelona, and became one of the most active propagandists of the CNT in Catalonia. During the period of employers' terrorism,

the house of Libertad was a shelter for all those that the society regarded as damned. At her home, the unemployed, the persecuted, the woman who had left the brothel in order to look for a job, were took in. All those who lacked bread, affection and justice, knew that they would find some friendly hands at that place,

as Lola Iturbe put it. The house of Libertad became a real armory for working-class self-defense groups.

The Revolution

The origin of the revolutionary experience dates back to 1870, when the proletariat, mainly of Bakuninistic trend in regards to Barcelona, began to organize autonomously by founding rationalist schools, cooperative societies, editorial projects, theatres... The street, an extension of the proletarian home, and the neighborhood also, were central spaces of socialization from the early twentieth century. Unlike many contemporary revolutions, this was a revolution from below, practically without leaders, thanks to the high level of organization of the proletarian classes. These practices were not just a coincidence but a consequence of a slow cooked intergenerational articulation of the community, reached through the development of a differentiating sociability, a culture of resistance and mutual assistance, implemented throughout decades by workers' movements in working-class neighborhoods and villages.

In Barcelona, the workers and their families were organized apart from the bourgeois society. The origins of this *parallel society* date back to 1870, when the Barcelonese working-class societies adhered themselves to the AIT.³⁰ Together with a strong anti-statist feeling among the civil society, this made the workers aware of the need to organize themselves apart from the State. They had rationalist schools attended by their own sons and daughters. They counted on their own newspapers, editorials, hiking centers, cooperative societies, theatres... Maria Rosa Alorda Gràcia (1918-2006)³¹ learned to read and write at the rationalist school of the Verdi street, in the Barcelonese

30 International Workers Association (according to its initials in Spanish).

31 <http://autogestionacrata.blogspot.com.es/2012/01/maria-rosa-alorda-gracia.html> [Access 6 May 2017]. She was born in Barcelona, was member of the Libertarian Youth, and when the fascist coup occurred in 1936 she enlisted the column of Ferrer Carod to go towards the Aragonese front, where she worked as a teacher in a literacy campaign in favor of the militiamen who had not attended school. After being pregnant with her daughter Blanca, she left Blesa (Teruel) and returned to Barcelona.

neighborhood of Gràcia, and at the Popular Athenaeum Vila, where she later would work as a teacher. Before the Civil War, Pilar Grangel (1893-1987)³² was in charge of the rationalist school Escuela Pestalozzi of the Barcelonese neighborhood of Sants, as well as that of the school of the Wood Industry Trade Union. Together with other comrades, she founded the Brisas Libertarias group, attached to the Sants' Single Trade Union of Liberal Occupations³³ with the goal of teaching evening lessons to female workers. During the war, she replaced Áurea Cuadrado Castellón at the Maternity House of Barcelona as educational director, a position that she left in order to evacuate a group of children to Sète (Languedoc, France). The State played only a residual role, and it was associated with repression and charity. To illustrate this, the rationalist school Natura del Clot became a real 'breeding ground' for revolutionaries, as defined by Abel Paz.³⁴ This school was attended by many of the activists from this Barcelonese neighborhood that took part in the Libertarian Youth throughout the revolutionary period.

In contrast to the French or the Russian Revolutions, in Barcelona no one believed the destruction of the State machinery to be necessary. They needed no other structures than those of their own to develop the revolution. The CNT was more than a trade union understood from a classic point of view. It was the entrance door for the immigrants who arrived at Barcelona, and the only organization willing to receive the newcomers just as they were. They took in anyone who had any problem or need. Thus, it is not strange to come across biographies of immigrant women: Ana María Cruzado Sánchez (1907-1982)³⁵ was from La Carolina (Jaén). Born into a CNT-activist family, she migrated at an early age with her family to Barcelona. In 1936 she entered the CNT Clothing Trade Union and the Libertarian Youth. Concha Dávila (1903-1974)³⁶ was born in Las Moreras (Murcia) and migrated to Barcelona, where she worked as a dressmaker. During the war years, she was a telephonist at the telephone exchange of the CNT Barcelonese headquarters. Júlia Romera

32 <http://puertoreal.cnt.es/bilbiografias-anarquistas/2704-pilar-grangel-pedagoga-racionalista.html> [Access 6 May 2017]. Born in Castellón de la Plana, she affiliated with the Teaching Section of the Single Trade Union of Liberal Occupations of the CNT. In 1932 she collaborated with *Solidaridad Obrera*. In 1936 she attended the Congress of Zaragoza; that very year she adopted a child because of the general strike, whereas she already had two daughters –Electra and Violeta. During the war she was a member of the *Mujeres Libres*; in September 1936 she was cofounder –together with Ernestina Corma, Eugenia Bony, María Colomé and Palmira Puentes, among others- of the Female Committee of Libertarian Solidarity of the SULP, that had been created with the objective of establishing a dressmaking workshop which had to provide the front with clothing, teach short courses of nursing and childcare, give talks about propaganda, etc. On 1 May 1937 she made a speech in a meeting of antifascist women for the trade union that took place in the Olympia theatre of Barcelona, together with Nita Nahugel and Libertad Ródenas from the CNT, and Caridad Mercadé, Isabel Azuara and Dolors Piera from the UGT (General Workers Union, according to its initials in Spanish).

33 Or SUPL, according to its initials in Spanish.

34 Abel PAZ, *Paradigma de una Revolución. 19 de julio 1936 en Barcelona*, s.l., s.d., 1967.

35 <http://puertoreal.cnt.es/bilbiografias-anarquistas/4971-ana-maria-cruzado-sanchez-de-las-juventudes-libertarias.html> [Accessed 6 May 2017].

36 <http://www.alumbraalumbremazarron.org/ficha-biografica/davila-garcia-ma-concepcion> [Accessed 6 May 2017].

Yáñez (1916-1941)³⁷ was born in Mazarrón (Murcia) into a working-class family. She became motherless when she was two years-old, for which reason her family migrated to Santa Coloma de Gramanet (Barcelona), where she began working at Pañolerías Baró. In 1931, when the Republic came, she became a member of the Libertarian Youth, of which she would be appointed secretary-general during the Revolution of 1936. Romera combined this latter position with her task at the *Aurora Libre* newspaper.

The real protagonist of the revolution was the manual worker, and, especially, the immigrant who arrived at Barcelona during the first decades of the twentieth century. As José Luís Oyón points out,³⁸ the 80% of the militiamen had arrived at Barcelona since 1910, and the peripheral neighborhoods that provided with more militiamen were the second metropolitan areas and the historical centre, where they gathered. Josefa Alcázar García (1920-2009)³⁹ was born in El Esparragal (Murcia) and migrated to Barcelona as well. As a teenager, she became an activist at the Casas Baratas de Can Tunis,⁴⁰ in the Barcelonese neighborhood of Horta. Between 1931 and 1932 she was actively involved in the rent strike, and signed a manifesto along with other 505 women against police harassment in the neighborhood. In 1935 she spearheaded a demonstration in Las ramblas hoisting the Republican flag. At that time she was, as she explains in her own correspondence, a regular at demonstrations, meetings and libertarian talks.

The one of the construction sector was one of the trade unions of the Republican Barcelona that had more members. The majority of these workers had affiliated with the CNT, and given that they had nothing to lose, the revolution was for them an entrance door for changing the unfair society they lived in. Women, as said before, were used to work mainly in the textile and clothing sectors. María Rosa Alorda began to work as a dressmaker in a clothing factory. Like her mother, Emérita Arbonés Sarrias (1920-2015)⁴¹ worked in the textile sector; she became part of the FOUS.⁴² But there were

37 <http://historiadejuventudes-libertarias.blogspot.com.es/2007/10/julia-romera-yaez-mrcia-1921-barcelona.html> [Accessed 6 May 2017].

38 'Mundo obrero, inmigración y radicalismo cenetista en la Barcelona de la década de 1930', *Cercles. Revista d'Història Cultural*, 18 (2015), 9-20. Available at: <http://www.raco.cat/index.php/Cercles/article/view/298909/388175> [Accessed 6 May 2017]. The conservative press of the period the contemptuous term of *murcianos* to allude to the most sensitive of the Barcelonese working-class. In this sense, they expected that radicalism would be related with immigration, but they did not succeed.

39 <http://www.estelnegre.org/documents/alcazargarcia/alcazargarcia.html> [Accessed 6 May 2017].

40 Pere LÓPEZ SÁNCHEZ, *Rastros de rostros en un prado rojo (y negro). Las Casas Baratas de Can Tunis en la revolución social de los años treinta*, Barcelona: Virus, 2013.

41 Josefina PIQUET IBÁÑEZ, *Un silenci convertit en paraula*, Barcelona: Ajuntament, 2008, 394-395. She was born in Barcelona, in the neighborhood of Gràcia, to working-class parents who were activists of the CNT. As her mother before her, in 1936 she met Vicenç during a meeting at the factory, who supported the POUM (Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, according to its initials in Spanish). By the moment they married she was sixteen and he, twenty-three. They did it in February 1937, fearing what could happen to him at the front. That very year the strong repression at the POUM occurred, Vicenç was arrested and Emérita decided to become a member.

42 Workers' Federation of Syndical Unity (according to its initials in Spanish).

women also in other fields, such as Antonia Fontanillas Borrás (1917-2014),⁴³ who found a job in a lithograph and adhered to the CNT and the Libertarian Youth of Graphic Arts.

A tool at the service of the lower classes, the CNT addressed daily life problems, reached as far as the State did not, making life easier for workers and their families. It facilitated contacts to get housing, it helped the new-coming workers to educate their children at the rationalist schools. It allowed them to be included in the cultural and ludic activities of the working-class neighborhoods. The CNT organized itself through neighborhood trade unions. This made it unnecessary for them to move to other parts of the city, and encouraged a more participative membership who was involved in making decisions that affected the resolution of syndical conflicts as much as aspects of daily life that concerned them. The street was the space of socialization where life flew. The houses of the workers were of reduced size, for which reason the street was an extension of the domestic sphere. Everyone knew each other, and this made it easier for solidarity to emerge. In times of repression, for instance, Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, the trade unions were closed down, but the activity continued, the revolutionary capacity held unharmed thanks to the upholding of youth forms of sociability such as clubs, parties, and social gatherings that could be held without any problem in a socialization space impossible to close down, the street.

The 19 July has to be seen as an epiphenomenon, an extraordinary fact that culminated a long cycle of protest full of little everyday gestures, of combustion of antagonistic ways of life, that went through monarchies, restorations, dictatorships, and still was in a position -though to a lesser extent than before- to face and stop the military coup. Concha Pérez⁴⁴ tells that:

43 <http://www.portaloaca.com/historia/biografias/9429-antonia-fontanillas-borras-in-memoria-23-de-septiembre.html> [Access 6 May 2017]. She was born in Barcelona to two trade union members, and was granddaughter of the renowned libertarians Francesca Saperas and Martí Borrás. When she was eight, she migrated to Mexico with her family, only to come back in 1933. Once the war broke out she tried to enlist as a militiawoman in the expedition to Mallorca. She ended up as an administrative worker of the *Solidaridad Obrera* newspaper in Barcelona.

44 Concha Pérez (1915-2014) had been born in Barcelona. She was daughter of Joan Pérez Güell, an illiterate anarcho-syndicalist who was put in prison in the Modelo during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. She began working when she was thirteen in a textile factory, then in a printing house. As the Republic was proclaimed, she entered the libertarian movement, frequented the Libertarian Athenaeum Cultural Association 'Faros' at the Mistral avenue of Barcelona, and entered the Libertarian Youth through the Graphic Arts Trade Union of the CNT and the Iberian Anarchist Federation (groups Sacco and Vanzetti, first, and Always Forward, later). She took part in the anarchist insurrection of 1933 as a member of the Movement 8 January of Joan García Oliver, and ended up in the female prison of Amalia during five months for having hidden the gun of a comrade in her chest. She took advantage of her imprisonment to read much. Around 1935, Pérez became member of the Humanity Athenaeum of the Corts and of its school of self-management Élisée Reclus, founded by Félix Carrasquer. After that, she enlisted the Ortiz Column, where she remained for half a year. Back in Barcelona, she worked at the soup kitchens of the Maternity, then going back to the front -at Almuédvar-, being attached to the group of Carlo Rosselli. Once again in Barcelona, she worked in a weapons factory in Sants and was involved in the factory council. Pérez was wounded during the events of May 1937. The transcription of the interview that was conducted with her in 2011 is highly recommended: <http://www.sinpermiso.info/textos/index.php?id=4435> [Access 1 April 2017]. As well as the *El País* interview. Available at: <http://www.lahaine.org/entrevista-en-el-pais-a> [Access 1 April 2017]. See also ACKELSBURG, *Mujeres Libres...*, 118-122.

The night of the 18 July we went in a truck to the Pedralbes headquarter and we took the arsenal with us. Due to the excitement we forgot the ammunition, we went back, we captured the Maternity, we established soup kitchens, we cordoned off the neighborhood, we seized the convent of Loreto without killing anybody, we formed the Ortiz Column and we marched towards the Aragonese front.

Barricades were a distinguishing external element as well as symbolic, a fixed value in the combat in that city, the so-called 'Rose of Fire'. They played their part in the deeply rooted tradition of protest of the Barcelonese neighborhoods. They appeared already during the Tragic Week of 1909. On 19 July 1936 they were built immediately all across the city, especially in the working-class neighborhoods. They symbolized rebellion and also unity in front of the injustice. The fact that they were so spontaneously built does not necessarily imply that they were uncoordinated. During the first days of the revolution, the Federation of Barricades was organized by the workers with the main objectives of defending and controlling the urban space. It had also other functions, such as providing the soup kitchens with food, or regulating the enlistment of volunteers to the popular militias. We can consider the Federation of Barricades as one of the few revolutionary institutions created by those grassroots. They would be seen again during the events of May 1937. Various testimonies of the period mention that some workers always have a spoon in their pockets, ready to use it as a lever with which the first paving stone could be separated, to, right after, build a barricade.⁴⁵ María Mateo Bruna (1902-1992)⁴⁶, from Teruel, took part in the building of the barricades of the Barcelonese neighborhood of Gràcia on 19 July 1936, providing the combatants with the supplies they needed and taking care of the wounded. Soledad Real (1917-2007)⁴⁷ also explained how the resistance was organized in her *barrio*, la Barceloneta:

We organized in my barrio, Barceloneta, a cultural/sports club called Avanti. It's a worker's district of longshoremen, metal workers, ship salvagers, and fishermen. There were no battles right there. Rather, we organized a resistance group to close off the barrio, with all the stuff sitting on the dock like cotton, things that had been shipped in. But a moment came when there were so many wounded people that we had to open up the barrio to take advantage of the clinics there. [...] Some of the girls got together and decided to go around asking for sheets and cloth; we washed them and cut them into strips. We shouted through the streets: 'Give us

45 Josep PIMENTEL, *Barricada. Una historia de la Barcelona revolucionaria*, Badalona: Centre d'Estudis Llibertaris Federica Montseny, 2016.

46 <http://www.alasbarricadas.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=10&t=6157> [Consulta 10.04.17]. As the war came to an end, she moved to France, where she established together with her partner, the confederate poet Miguel Alba Lozano, who collaborated with *Cenit* (1991-1996) in Toulouse de Languedoc, always supporting the Spanish Libertarian Movement (MLE, according to its initials in Spanish).

47 https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soledad_Real_L%C3%B3pez [Accessed 6 May 2017].

sheets for the wounded! What impressed me from the very beginning was the call to arms.⁴⁸

The collectivities

It was the people who had nothing, the people who –according to Joan García Oliver⁴⁹ *had no name, who had no pride*, who mainly volunteered for the militias in order to go to Zaragoza to fight the fascism. The dispossessed, especially the women, collectivized around the 70% of Barcelona's factories: the electric sector, the water and gas supply companies, textile and wood industries, harbors, food or metal industries.

In a similar manner, they also collectivized great part of the country economy: trade, food distribution, barber's shops, entertainment shows, schools, media, croplands, swimming pools, transport companies,⁵⁰ leisure facilities. During the months described by Enzensberger as *The short summer of anarchy*,⁵¹ for the first and perhaps the only time in history, the women who had nothing excepting their dignity, did have everything. It was a breath of fresh air, a spring in that short summer. The workers daydreamed. In the Ramblas of Barcelona ties and hats, external symbols of the bourgeois, disappeared; gratuity was abolished because it was deemed despicable; mendicity disappeared; soup kitchens were founded at trade union headquarters, old hotels and other places in which ecclesiastical and bourgeois orders were previously based. The soup kitchen that have produced more literature and memories among the testimonies being drawn, was the Gastronomic Hotel No. 1 (old Hotel Ritz).

In this revolutionary Barcelona, 50,000 portions of food were distributed every day. María Mateo Bruna started working in the people's collectivized canteens. Pawnshops and money-lenders saw how pawned objects were recovered by their owners, because many working-class families had pawned the few valued objects they possessed due to hunger. Mostly,

48 MANGINI GONZÁLEZ, *Memories of Resistance...*, 71.

49 *El eco de los pasos*. Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1978, 171, 184 ff.

50 PIMENTEL, *Barricada...* In his book, Pimentel pays especial attention to the collectivization of the metro of Barcelona. He has had the possibility to consult the reports of the collectivized company from 1936 and 1937, studying the changes made due to the collectivized management of this public service. It is significant that the previous private direction of the company had dedicated between 1932 and 18 July 1936 more than 1,300,000 *pesetas* to finance the press and the radio, stockbrokers, trips to Madrid and other expenses that were very difficult to account for, in a clear attempt to buy consciences that could lead to more benefits. The Workers' Committee of the collectivity of the Metropolitan Railway of Barcelona established an integrated fare system, in which at a cost of 10 *céntimos* per trip (previously at a cost of 15 *céntimos*) one could use the metro, the tram and the buses in an interconnected manner. The public transport became free of charge for children, elderly men and women, injured people, wounded militiamen and militiawomen and disabled people. It is surprising what the workers' organization could accomplish without any employers doing it from above.

51 Hans Magnus ENZENSBERGER, *El corto verano de la anarquía. Vida y muerte de Durruti*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2010. In an interview at Barcelona, the author described that period of the Spanish anarchism as 'one of the most fascinating adventures of the twentieth century'.

workers' wives began retrieving their belongings, and with them, their lost dignity. The main retrievable objects in this sense were sewing machines, although mattresses and trousseaus were also recovered. The press of the period published notices to communicate that workers who had been dismissed in their employers' previous reprisals had the possibility to return to their jobs.⁵²

At the beginning of the Civil War, Emma Goldman (1869-1940)⁵³ was invited by the German journalist Augustin Souchy (1892-1984), who was responsible for the international propaganda of the CNT-FAI in Barcelona: *Your revolution will destroy forever* [the idea] *that anarchism is a synonym for chaos*, she said while walking along the agricultural collectivities. For this anarchist, 1936 was the *most solemn hour* of the Spanish State. In her visit to Valencia, she described an example of collectivization of a monastery that was turned into a cooperative factory. The workshop's production was not only based on voluntary agreement, but also on the idea of dedicating a place to the physical and cultural life of the people who worked there: they had an infirmary, a conference room, a library and a reading area at their disposal. This is just an example of a social, political and economic transformation that was unprecedented in those zones where the military revolt did not succeed. In front of the collapse of the republican State and the flight of the owners, and continuing with the traditional insurrection of the previous years, a revolution that was spontaneous, plural, and decentralized in many fields, was unleashed. Agrarian collectivizations, as well as those in the industry and services, constituted the clearest expression of the revolutionary changes. Goldman got carried away by the experiences of collectivization that she had the opportunity to see, and thus she reflected it in her letters and her articles of those years. Though she considered that they could be defeated, these men and women *will have given to the world the first historical example of how the revolution has to be made* –she states–, and she adds that contrary to what it is always said by their enemies, here the anarchists proved that they know how to build things. She visited factories and industries where the same men and women of working-class that had been preparing themselves for the time to assume the control of production, were the ones who set out the freedom gained as the main achievement of their organization.

Collectivism was a deeply rooted tradition in the organized Iberian anarcho-syndicalism, and this was taken into account in its congresses. In Barcelona, the collectivization was the constructive work of the revolution, in which the workers took control of the companies. In contrast with the Russian Revolution, a considerable part of the technical teams joined it and was assimilated by the collectivities. By way of illustration, in the Collectivity of the Metropolitan Railway of Barcelona there were various station officers,

52 On 25 August 1936, workers were offered an opportunity to be readmitted in case of having been dismissed in 1928 as a reprisal of the company known as La Maquinista Terrestre y Marítima.

53 David PORTER (ed.), *Visión en llamas. Emma Goldman y la revolución española*. Barcelona: El Viejo Topo, 2012.

electromechanical technicians, accountants, and an en-route officer who integrated themselves into the collectivities. In the Collectivity of La España Industrial, those in charge left the country and the majority of the technical teams integrated themselves into the collectivity, Rabadà, Labuena o Joaquim Albuena among them. But in other cases, and especially in small companies, those in charge integrated themselves into it. That is the case of a family company, the Juliachs, located in the Barcelonese neighborhood of Sant Antoni, and dedicated to furniture trading.⁵⁴ The bourgeois press in general has criticized the collectivities because they meant a change in the order that they represented. Despite the fact that various authors have shown that the collectivities were more efficient, productive and just, there has been always attempts to criticize and ignore them.

Among others, there were three essential factors that contributed to the blackout of the revolutionary period: the hunger, the events of May, and the indiscriminate bombing of the civilian population. The hunger, since when there is a shortage of basic consumer goods, the revolution shifts to the background and the search for food becomes the main concern for the men and women who inhabit Barcelona since July 1937. The lack of supply of basic consumer goods make street vendors reappear, the exchange and the black market become widespread. The events of May are another cause. They exemplify the disconnection between the protagonists of this revolution, that is, the manual workers who were at the barricades, and the leaders of the syndical organizations who did not care about mundane issues. The *Solidaridad Obrera* newspaper and the radio exhorted to dismantle the barricades and to cease fire in the streets of Barcelona. On 7 May 1937, they proclaimed: *Down with the barricades! Let every citizen take his paving stone with him! Let's go back to normal life!* That these leaders requested the dismantling of the barricades meant renouncing to the main source of power of the revolutionary Barcelona: the street. Finally, the indiscriminate bombings, whose purpose was to spread terror among the civilian population, demoralize it and undermine its self-esteem. It was the first time that a bombing was put into practice and in an indiscriminate manner against a big European city. In the terrible working day of 18 March 1938, more than 1,000 people were murdered by bombs and 3,000 more wounded to various degrees. The majority of the working-class neighborhoods of Barcelona were destroyed by bombs.⁵⁵ At La Barceloneta, two of every three buildings were damaged by the bombing effects. These three elements, together with the military defeat, led to the occupation of Barcelona by the Franco troops on 26 January 1939, followed by repression, imprisonment, executions, humiliation and exile.

54 PIMENTEL, *Barricada*, 57-62.

55 During the Barcelona bombings, Emèrita Arbonés was in charge of opening the door of the air-raid shelter of the Revolució square.

By way of epilogue

We are the ideological reserve force. When all fails, only us will stand, proclaimed Federica Montseny in the mid-1970s.⁵⁶ Some of the continuous questions put down in Federica's discourses and texts turn out to be very difficult to formulate; others, however, still seem pending to us after being put on ice due to the defeat of the republic and the revolution. At this moment, we find it difficult to know if the revolution is more than a word. We certainly can ask ourselves: to which extent are we contemporaneous of the revolutionary ideals? And the question is absolutely appropriate, and not easy to answer; but at the same time, we must also remember that already in 1934 Simone Weil, a thinker who was part of the Durruti Column, wrote: *The first duty that the present imposes on us is that of having enough intellectual courage as to ask ourselves if the term 'revolution' is more than a word.* And she added: *The question sounds impious, due to the noble and pure beings who have given everything, even their own life, to this word.*⁵⁷

Among the great revolutionary women, theorists as much as activists, there have been many different ways of understanding the revolution, but it could be said that in almost everyone dominates the certainty that a woman cannot be a revolutionary if she does not love to live. On one hand, they consider the revolution to be a struggle against anything that can hamper life, in a way that they are at a significant distance from the idea according to which the revolutionary movement can be delineated as a pre-established plan from the offices of the professional revolutionaries: they understand, however, that life is more complex and full of events than any bureaucratic reference book or any sketch of the party strategists. So, practically all of them emphasize *the people*—a term that invites us to think once again, at such a moment as that of ours, in which the most frequent words, and by now interchangeable ones, are *the citizenship* and *the consumers*, or, at the most, and from a supposedly critical perspective, one speaks about *anonymous crowd*.

Perhaps a way to pay homage to the figures of the women who fought and believed in the revolution of the summer of anarchy, and to recognize ourselves as their heirs, is to have the courage to reconsider the place that revolution and liberty occupy in our days.⁵⁸

56 *Qué es el Anarquismo*, Madrid: La Gaya Ciencia, 1976. She believed that the anarchist revolution could be reborn. For her the May of 1968 had been an evidence.

57 Letter of Simone Weil to Georges Bernanos. Available at: <http://www.deslettres.fr/lettre/lettre-de-simone-weil-a-georges-bernanos-jai-reconnu-cette-odeur-de-guerre-civile-de-sang-et-de-terreur/> [Access 6 May 2017].

58 I have addressed this issue before, see Coral CUADRADA, 'Siguen realistes, demaneu l'impossible', *Quaderns de la Igualtat* (2011), 33-58.

Sažetak

REVOLUCIJA ŽENA BEZ IČEGA, BEZ IMENA

Coral CUADRADA

Nesumnjivo, događaji 18, 19 i 20 srpnja 1936. označavaju neke od najistraživanijih povijesnih činjenica nedavne katalonske povijesti. Istovremeno, nakon skoro osamdeset godina, znamo toliko malo o tim događajima. Ishod revolucije 1936. prevazilazi Španjolski građanski rat te njegov kraj koji je rezultirao u četrdeset godina dugoj fašističkoj diktaturi. Ovi događaji proizlaze iz ustanka kojeg su vodili ljudi iz radničkog sloja. Naime, upravo su ljudi koji nisu imali ništa za izgubiti zaustavili vojni prevrat, boreći se metar po metar, ulicu po ulicu praktički nenaoružani te jedino uz pomoć Generalitat de Catalunya jurišnika.

Upravo su ljudi koji nisu imali ništa, svojevolumeno ušli u milicije s ciljem borbe protiv fašizma Zaragoze. Ljudi koji nisu imali ništa, posebice žene, koje su činile 70% radne snage u tvornicama Barcelone (elektroindustrija, dobavljači vode i plina, tekstilna i drvna industrija, luke, prehrambena industrija, transport ili industrija metala), kao i veći dio ekonomije zemlje (trgovina, distribucija hrane, brijačnice, zabavne emisije, škole, mediji, i sl.). Tijekom tih mjeseci, prvi i možda jedini put u povijesti, žene koje nisu imale ništa osim svojeg dostojanstva, imale su sve.